

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Troops' 'heroic actions' praised

2 US servicemembers, 2 civilians take down gunman on train to France

Associated Press

ARRAS, France — One serves in the Air Force, another recently served in Afghanistan in the National Guard, another is studying physical therapy in California — and all three Americans are being hailed as heroes for disarming a gunman on a high-speed train who may have been known to intelligence services in three countries.

A French citizen, who stumbled on the gunman, a Kalashnikov strapped across his shoulder, also is being given kudos as the first to try to subdue him. And a British businessman jumped in to help subdue the gunman.

Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone was hospitalized Saturday after being stabbed in the attack Friday night as the train from Amsterdam to Paris traveled through Belgium, though the Pentagon said the injury was not life-threatening. A dual French-American citizen was also wounded as he was hit by chance by a gunshot on the train, which eventually was rerouted to Arras, the nearest station in northern France, French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said.

Stone was seen Saturday leaving a hospital in Lille where he was treated for a hand injury. He waved quickly and slipped into a black sedan with diplomatic license plates.

Stone, of Carmichael, Calif., was traveling with childhood friends Anthony Sadler, a senior at Sacramento State University, and Alek Skarlatos, a National Guardsman from Roseburg, Ore., when they heard a gunshot and breaking glass. Sadler told The Associated Press that they saw a train employee sprint down the aisle followed by a gunman with an automatic rifle.

"As he was cocking it to shoot it, Alek just yells, 'Spencer, go!' And Spencer runs down the aisle," Sadler said. "Spencer makes first contact, he tackles the guy, Alek wrestles the gun away from him, and the gunman pulls out a boxcutter and slices Spencer a few times. And the three of us beat him until he was unconscious."

Throughout the brief but terrifying episode, Sadler said, "The gunman never said a word."

But with an arsenal, "he was there to do business. That's for sure," Skarlatos said in an interview shown on French television.

Military leaders hail actions of Americans

Stars and Stripes

Military leaders in Europe praised the actions of two American servicemembers and a civilian friend who subdued a gunman on a high-speed train traveling through Belgium on Friday.

Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone, Oregon National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos and Anthony Sadler tackled the gunman and wrestled away his AK-47 semi-automatic rifle before the man could open fire. They then tended to a passenger who had been wounded by the gunman.

Stone is assigned to the 65th Air Base Group at Lajes Field in the Azores. Skarlatos, a specialist, returned from a deployment to Afghanistan in July, the Oregon TV station KATU reported. Sadler is a senior at Sacramento State University in California, according to reports. The three were traveling together on vacation.

"These men are heroes," Gen. Philip Breedlove, head of U.S. European Command, said Saturday in a news release. "Actions like this clearly illustrate the courage and commitment our young men and women have all the time, whether they are on duty or on leave. We are extremely proud of their efforts and now are praying for our injured airman to have a speedy recovery."

Stone's leaders at Lajes praised his actions. "These are the actions of a dedicated airman who answered the call and did what was needed to be done and made a difference," 65th Air Base Group Commander Col. Richard C. Sheffe was quoted as saying in an Air Force news release. "We wish Airman Stone and all others a fast recovery and thank them for their actions."

Cazeneuve, speaking to reporters in Paris on Saturday, said the suspect may be a 26-year-old Moroccan flagged by Spanish authorities last year for links to Islamic radical movements, but the identity has not been 100 percent confirmed.

An Interior Ministry official said the suspect, if his identity is fully established as the Moroccan, had lived in the southern Spanish city of Algeciras, frequenting a mosque under surveillance there. The official was not authorized to discuss the investigation in progress and asked not to be identified by name.

The suspect was transferred Saturday morning to anti-terror police headquarters outside Paris.

There was some confusion over where the suspect had lived and traveled before he seeded chaos on the high-speed train.

An official linked to Spain's anti-terrorism unit said the suspect lived in Spain until 2014, then moved to France, traveled to Syria, and then returned to France. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to be identified by name. The information contradicted the French interior minister's account, that the suspect lived in Spain in 2014, was signaled to the French in Feb. 2014 because of his links with the Islamist radical movement, then moved to Belgium in 2015.

Cazeneuve said the violence began when a French passenger ran into the heavily armed suspect while trying to enter a toilet and "courageously tried to subdue him" but the gunman fired several times.

Cazeneuve said the Americans "were particularly courageous and showed great bravery in very difficult circumstances," and that "without their sangfroid we could have been confronted with a terrible drama."

French authorities are on heightened alert after Islamic extremist attacks in January left 20 people dead, including the three gunmen. In June, a lone attacker claiming allegiance to Islamic radicals beheaded his employer and set off an explosion at an American-owned factory in France, raising concerns about other scattered, hard-to-predict attacks.

Chris Norman, the British businessman who helped the Americans subdue the gunman, said he was working on his computer when he heard a shot and glass breaking and saw a train worker running.

"Then I heard one guy, an American, say 'go get him,' and another American say 'Don't you do that buddy,'" Norman said at a news conference in Arras. He was the fourth to jump into the fray, grabbing the gunman's right arm and tying it with his tie.

"He had a Kalashnikov, he had a magazine full My thought was, OK, probably I'm going to die anyway. So, let's go. I'd rather die being active."

President Barack Obama was briefed on the shooting, and said in a statement, "While the investigation into the attack is in its early stages, it is clear that their heroic actions may have prevented a far worse tragedy."

No. 2 militant killed in US military strike

Associated Press

OAK BLUFFS, Mass. — The No. 2 leader of the Islamic State militant group was killed in a U.S. military airstrike in Iraq earlier in the week, the White House said Friday.

Ned Price, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said Fadhil Ahmad al-Hayali was near Mosul when he was killed Tuesday.

As the senior deputy to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, al-Hayali was the primary coordinator for moving large amounts of weapons, explosives, vehicles and people between Iraq and Syria.

The United States is leading a coalition of countries that has spent the past year striking at Islamic State militants, weaponry and machinery from the

air.

Al-Hayali oversaw the Islamic State group in Iraq, where he planned operations during the past two years, including an offensive the group launched in Mosul in June 2014.

Also killed in the airstrike was Islamic State media operative known as Abu Abdullah.

Price characterized al-Hayali's death as a blow to the organization because his influence spanned finance, media, operations and logistics for the group.

But his removal from the scene is unlikely to affect Islamic State operations or to weaken the group and most likely will lead to even tighter security and secrecy around al-Baghdadi, whom Iraqi officials say has mostly kept out of sight since he was wounded in an airstrike.

Russian sub detection top concern of US Navy

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Navy wants to upgrade its ability to detect Russian submarines in response to naval moves by President Vladimir Putin.

The Navy is seeking to deploy a surveillance device made by Lockheed Martin Corp. in the Atlantic Ocean. The device, towed by a ship, already is in use in the Pacific. As soon as mid-2016, the service also wants to send to the Atlantic a prototype networked "undersea sensor system" that "addresses emergent real-world threats," according to a Defense Department budget document.

The Navy's requests were submitted to Congress three months after Russia's top admiral boasted of increased submarine patrols and a month before Russia unveiled a new, more expansive maritime strategy.

The unclassified requests, still pending before Congress,

provide a glimpse into mostly classified programs. They are the Navy's equivalent of the Army's well-publicized increase in troop rotations, exercises and equipment repositioning in the Baltics and other locations to reassure European allies.

The prototype sensor network will be best used "in a choke-point like Gibraltar" or a stretch of the North Atlantic from Greenland and Iceland to Britain, said Bryan Clark, a naval analyst for the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, in an email. Clark is a retired Navy commander who served on nuclear submarines and as a strategy adviser to the chief of naval operations.

The Navy proposals are evidence "the U.S. military views Russian submarine activity in the Atlantic as both an immediate risk and an emerging long-term threat," said Tom Spahn, a Navy reservist who writes on undersea warfare issues.

Ind. enlists NRA to train Guard on firearms use

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The National Rifle Association has been instructing Indiana's National Guard on how to use concealed weapons after GOP Gov. Mike Pence directed the state's military bases and training centers to beef up security after recent attacks in Tennessee.

According to a survey by The Associated Press, Indiana is the only state to enlist the NRA's help in the training.

Although National Guard members traditionally have not been allowed to carry weapons while conducting most stateside duties, Pence is one of 14 governors who decided to arm them in the wake of a gunman's attacks last month on two U.S. military sites in Chattanooga.

Gun-control advocates argue it's inappropriate for a state to

involve a political lobbying organization in training members of the military, and even some National Guard officials from states that allow guardsmen to carry weapons question why a civilian organization is needed.

In order to be armed, a guardsman must have a valid conceal-carry permit and undergo training.

Guy Relford, an NRA instructor who recently trained about 65 Indiana guardsmen at an armory in Franklin, said his "basic pistol" course delves into safety scenarios on when and when not to shoot.

The AP survey of the 14 states that have armed their National Guards shows most states had members of the military or law enforcement conduct the training.

DOD looks at transgender ban

USA Today

WASHINGTON — Top Pentagon leaders met last week for the first time to begin dismantling the military's ban on transgender troops, a senior Defense Department official told USA Today.

The committee of about 25 senior personnel officials from each service met Wednesday to discuss issues affecting the estimated 12,800 transgender troops who serve. Last month, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that the ban would be reviewed with the assumption that transgender troops would be able to serve openly in six months.

Issues regarding processing new servicemembers who are transgender were a focus of the initial meeting, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the details of the meeting were not

authorized to be released publicly. There has been no major opposition to rescinding the ban.

Several other issues could present hurdles to lifting the ban, including the cost of treatment for troops transitioning to another sex. Housing and uniforms for transgender troops are also likely to be discussed.

Carter's directive on transgender troops followed moves earlier this year by the services to make it more difficult for commanders to discharge transgender troops by requiring that dismissals be approved a senior civilian Army, Air Force or Navy official.

The military does not track how many transgender troops have been discharged. The estimate of 12,800 transgender troops is based on research by the Palm Center, which studies issues of sexual orientation and the military.

Fiers throws no-hitter against Dodgers

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Growing up, Mike Fiers remembers watching Nolan Ryan throw no-hitter after no-hitter.

After pitching his first one Friday night, Fiers finally got to meet the man who spun so many gems.

Fiers pitched the second no-hitter in the major leagues in nine days, leading the Houston Astros to a 3-0 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Ryan, now an Astros executive who threw a record seven no-hitters, applauded from a suite as Fiers was mobbed by his teammates near the mound after finishing the 11th gem in Astros history.

Then Ryan went down to the dugout to welcome the right-hander into a most fancy fraternity — the No-Hit Club.

“Nolan threw seven of them, seven no-hitters so at that point you’re like: ‘It kind of looks easy,’” Fiers said. “Then you get to this point and obviously it’s not. And it doesn’t happen all the time. For him to congratulate me, coming down in the dugout was something really special ... what a pitcher he was.”

Fiers (6-9) struck out Justin Turner on his 134th pitch to end it and threw his glove high into the air for his first career complete game and the fifth no-hitter in the big leagues this season. Seattle’s Hisashi Iwakuma tossed a no-no on Aug. 12.

“It was like a dream,” Fiers said. “You throw the last pitch. You feel the emotion of everything you’ve been through in your life.”

Fiers said his exhaustion didn’t hit him until he threw his last pitch.

“After I got that last out everything kind of hit me,” he said. “Once you’re in that moment you don’t feel anything really. You’re going off adrenaline at that point.”

Manager A.J. Hinch said he never really considered pulling him.

“I think his best fastball might have been in the ninth with adrenaline pumping,” Hinch said. “He earned every opportunity to finish that.”

Fiers added that they would have had to throw him in the clubhouse and lock him in for him to come out of the game.

Cole Hamels with Philadelphia, San Francisco’s Chris Heston and Washington’s Max Scherzer also have thrown no-hitters this season.

A night earlier the Astros were on the wrong end of a gem, getting just a fifth-inning single against Tampa Bay’s Chris Archer.

Acquired by the Astros at the trade deadline to help with their playoff push, Fiers was stellar in his first two starts for Houston. This was something else, though.

Having never even gotten an out in the ninth inning in his five-year career, Fiers was dominant. He struck out 10

and walked three, retiring the final 21 batters.

Fiers (1-0) needed little help from his defense until Jake Marisnick had to sprint to catch a long flyball by Jimmy Rollins just in front of the bullpen in right field for the first out of the ninth inning.

Fiers crouched in relief then pointed out to his teammate.

“There’s a little more urgency. You don’t want to let anything drop out there,” Marisnick said. “Just go and get it.”

The closest the Dodgers came to breaking it up was in the sixth inning when Turner’s towering shot to left with two outs hooked foul.

“The fact that you get no-hit is kind of like icing on the bad part of the cake,” Dodgers manager Don Mattingly said. “I think at the end of the day it’s a loss and you have to get over it. You can’t afford not to.”

The 30-year-old Fiers allowed a walk in each of the first three innings, but didn’t allow a baserunner after walking Joc Pederson to start the third.

“My command was off a little early, I just tried to stick with it, I knew it was going to come,” Fiers said. “This game is all about playing for your teammates, guys on the field with you.”

After that, he repeatedly had the NL West-leading Dodgers fooled with a nasty curveball and changeup to com-

plement a fastball in the low 90s.

It was the first no-hitter by one Astros pitcher since Darryl Kile blanked the Mets on Sept. 8, 1993. Six Houston pitchers combined to throw one against the Yankees on June 11, 2003.

Fiers was acquired with Carlos Gomez from Milwaukee on July 30 and has been rejuvenated by the move from a last-place club to the top of the AL West. He allowed just one earned run over 12 innings in his first two starts for Houston.

His no-hitter comes after a tough year in 2014, when he hit Miami’s Giancarlo Stanton in the face with a fastball.

Fiers was a 22nd-round pick of the Brewers in 2009. He made his major league debut in September of 2011 and spent his entire career with Milwaukee before the recent trade.

At Washington, most of the Brewers stayed in uniform after their 10-3 win to cheer for Fiers’ final outs.

“We were all watching,” said second baseman Scooter Gennett. “We’re all extremely happy for him and he’s obviously a good pitcher. It was nice seeing him out there and having such a great day.”

Jake Marisnick gave the Astros a 2-0 lead in the second with a two-run homer. Evan Gattis hit a solo home run to left in the sixth.

Brett Anderson (7-8) allowed three runs on seven hits with five strikeouts in six innings.

Cespedes hits three home runs to lead Mets

Associated Press

DENVER — Yoenis Cespedes hit three home runs, including a grand slam, and had a career-high seven RBIs to help power the New York Mets to a 14-9 win over the Colorado Rockies.

Travis d’Arnaud and Michael Conforto also had home runs in the seventh inning in the Mets’ first five-homer game since Sept. 5, 2014, against Cincinnati.

Cespedes led off the eighth with a chance to tie the major league record for most home runs in a game. He singled off reliever Tommy Kahnle for his fifth hit of the game, a career best.

He came up again with two outs in the ninth to face Rafael Betancourt and hit a drive to right-center field that Carlos Gonzalez had to chase down near the warning track, making a running catch.

In all, there were eight home runs in the game. Colorado’s Gonzalez, Ben Paulsen and Nolan Arenado also homered on a night when the ball was flying out of Coors Field.

Blue Jays 9, Angels 2: David Price struck out nine during eight innings of six-hit ball, and Josh Donaldson drove in three runs in streaking Toronto’s victory over host Los Angeles.

Justin Smoak hit a two-run homer and Ben Revere had four hits for the Blue Jays, who opened a weekend meeting of the AL wild card leaders with their 17th victory

in 21 games.

The win by Toronto (67-55) and the Yankees’ (67-54) loss to Cleveland trimmed New York’s lead in the AL East to a half-game.

Price (12-4) was better than he needed to be while picking up his third victory in four starts for the Blue Jays, who acquired the former Cy Young winner for the pennant race.

Indians 7, Yankees 3: Carlos Carrasco (12-9) struck out 11, Carlos Santana homered and visiting Cleveland stopped New York.

The last-place Indians improved to 4-1 against New York this year. A night after a 3-2 victory at Yankee Stadium, Cleveland remained the only sub-.500 team in the majors with a winning record on the road.

Carrasco outpitched Masahiro Tanaka (9-6), giving up one run and five hits in 6 ²/₃ innings. Carrasco has permitted just six runs in his last five starts.

Giants 6, Pirates 4: Madison Bumgarner (15-6) homered in his second straight start and struck out six in 6 ¹/₃ innings to lift visiting San Francisco over Pittsburgh.

Bumgarner crushed a Jeff Locke (6-8) fastball 418-feet over the wall in left field in the second inning, a two-run shot that gave the Giants an early four-run lead and all the cushion Bumgarner would need on the mound. Bumgarner (15-6) allowed two runs and five hits, walking one while winning his fourth consecutive decision.

Santiago Castilla worked the ninth for his 30th save.

Twins 4, Orioles 3: Kurt Suzuki hit a two-run single in the eighth inning to cap a comeback against All-Star reliever Darren O’Day (5-2) and carry visiting Minnesota past Baltimore.

Baltimore was 51-1 when leading after seven innings, and O’Day (5-2) entered with a 1.15 ERA and a run of 11 straight scoreless appearances.

Brewers 10, Nationals 3: Domingo Santana homered in his Milwaukee debut and the visitors took advantage of several defensive miscues in a victory over struggling Washington.

Jonathan Lucroy had three hits and drove in a run, and rookie Jimmy Nelson allowed two runs in 5 ¹/₃ innings against Washington, which fell one game below .500 at 60-61.

Rays 2, Athletics 1: Drew Smyly (1-2) pitched into the sixth inning for his first win in more than 11 months and visiting Tampa Bay beat Oakland.

Making his second start since missing more than three months with a torn labrum and tendinitis in his pitching shoulder, Smyly gave up seven hits and struck out two in 5 ²/₃ innings.

Padres 9, Cardinals 3: Yangervis Solarte hit a two-run homer in a wild five-run fifth inning and Travis Jankowski had two hits, an RBI and scored a run in his big league debut and host San Diego beat

St. Louis.

The Cardinals, who still have the best record in the majors at 77-44, committed three errors in the fifth behind John Lackey (10-8), who allowed four hits, a walk and a wild pitch in that frame.

Rangers 2, Tigers 0: Colby Lewis (14-5) pitched seven strong innings to help visiting Texas beat Detroit.

Lewis allowed six hits and a walk, but the Rangers defense turned three double plays and threw out another runner at the plate. Shawn Tolleson pitched the ninth for his 24th save, despite allowing Miguel Cabrera’s third double of the game.

Cubs 5, Braves 3: Kris Bryant and Miguel Montero had consecutive RBI doubles in the sixth and host Chicago extended Shelby Miller’s (5-10) winless skid to 17 games.

Red Sox 7, Royals 2: Johnny Cueto (2-2) had his worst start since joining his new team just before the trading deadline, and host Boston handed AL Central-leading Kansas City its second straight loss.

Diamondbacks 6, Reds 3: Rubby De La Rosa (11-5) allowed two runs in seven innings and A.J. Pollock homered in his second consecutive four-hit game to help visiting Arizona send Cincinnati to its seventh straight loss.

Phillies 7, Marlins 1: Jerad Eickhoff (1-0) pitched six scoreless innings and drove in two runs in his major league debut to help visiting Philadelphia over Miami.



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Woods, Hoge tied for lead

Associated Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Tiger Woods has the most recognizable name in golf. Far fewer people know about rookie Tom Hoge.

Including Woods himself.

They'll spend the third round together Saturday in a most unlikely final pairing at the Wyndham Championship.

Woods shot a 5-under 65 on Friday and shared the second-round lead with Hoge at 11-under 129. Hoge shot a 67.

They make quite the intriguing pair.

Woods is chasing his first victory in more than two years, one that would undoubtedly send him into the FedEx Cup playoffs.

The 26-year-old Hoge spent the past three years on the Web.com Tour. This is his 27th career PGA Tour event — and all but one of those have come this year.

When asked if he would recognize Hoge if he saw him, Woods responded: "No, I wouldn't. What is it, or him?"

"I look on the Champions Tour leaderboard and I know every one of those guys because I played against them and I played with them," Woods said. "Now I come out here, I don't really know a lot of people."

Woods followed his best round since 2013 — a first-day 64 — with one almost as good.

He made his big move up the leaderboard on the back nine, with birdies on Nos. 12 and 13 and an eagle on the par-5 15th that gave him a share of the lead.

"I just couldn't get anything out of my rounds (before this tournament) and a couple lucky bounces here, take advan-

tage of those opportunities — it's just the flow," Woods said.

Davis Love III and Chad Campbell were one stroke back. Campbell shot 65 and Love had 66.

Brandt Snedeker matched the tournament record with a 61 that put him in a group of (six) players two strokes behind Woods and Hoge.

But for the second straight day, the big story at Sedgefield Country Club was Woods.

He had missed the cut in three straight majors and this year hasn't finished better than a tie for 17th at the Masters. At No. 187 on the FedEx Cup points list, he would definitely crack the top 125 with a win and qualify for the Barclays next week in New Jersey. Depending on how the math works out, a solo second-place finish also might be enough.

He took advantage of some prime scoring conditions during the first round, shooting that 64 on a course softened by showers that morning. That left him two strokes off the lead.

And then, playing under a hot afternoon sun that sped up those undulating greens, Woods almost matched it.

"I wasn't quite as sharp as I was yesterday," he said.

He capped that run of consecutive birdies with a 25-foot putt on the 13th that drew a mighty roar from the huge gallery.

Then came his eagle.

He placed his second shot about 10 feet behind the hole, and after his downhill putt fell into the hole, he followed with his trademark fist pump.

And as strong as his round was, it easily

could have been even better.

He settled for birdie on the par-5 fifth when his 10-foot eagle putt lipped out, then missed a 15-foot birdie putt on the next hole. He left a 10-foot birdie putt an inch from the hole on the ninth.

"I've shot 59 and I left a couple shots out there," Woods said. "The great thing about golf, you can always get a little bit better."

Love, a former North Carolina player whose two wins in this tournament came across town at Forest Oaks Country Club, played a practice round with Woods on Tuesday. Several times this week, Woods has referred to pointers Love gave him.

Love reeled off three straight birdies early in his round before closing with 10 straight pars.

"It will look boring on the card ... but I made some nice putts for par, and some good up and downs, and kept the round together," Love said.

Hoge, who was born about 70 miles away in Statesville but grew up in North Dakota, shared the first-round lead with William McGirt and two-time heart transplant recipient Erik Compton. Hoge followed his opening-round 62 with another low number with birdies on three of his final five holes.

"Obviously, a new position for me," Hoge said.

Snedeker — who won the Wyndham in 2007, its last year at Forest Oaks — shot just the fifth 61 in the history of the event and the first since Tim Herron's three years ago.

He finished his round with back-to-back birdies on the eighth and ninth holes, closing by sinking a 50-foot putt.

Kyle Busch prevails in Xfinity race

Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Chris Buescher appeared to be one of the few drivers capable of keeping Kyle Busch out of victory lane at Bristol Motor Speedway.

Then a late caution screwed up his strategy, and Busch found a way to win yet another Xfinity Series race at the Tennessee track.

Buescher ran out of gas on the restart of a two-lap overtime sprint to the finish Friday night. It allowed Busch to sail past the leader on the restart for his eighth series victory at Bristol.

"I just saved as much as we could, I let (Buescher) go," Busch said. "I wasn't sure if they were going to make it on fuel and obviously they cut it close. A little too close."

The win was the 73rd series victory for Busch, who holds the record for most wins in NASCAR's second tier series. It also was Busch's third win in six Xfinity Series starts this year, which began with a crash in the season-opener at Daytona that sidelined him for 11 weeks with a broken right leg and broken left foot.

Buescher was leading when the eighth caution of the race fell with five laps remaining. It set up a green-white-checkered finish, and Buescher bobbed on the restart as his Ford ran out of gas.

He faded to 11th.

"Just ran out of fuel," he said. "Lost it in the pickup. I'm mad."

Kyle Larson finished second and was followed by Hamlin as full-time Cup drivers took the top three spots. Ty Dillon was fourth, followed by JGR driver Daniel Suarez, Brian Scott and Chase Elliott.

The fuel miscalculation for Buescher meant his lead in the Xfinity Series standings was cut to 19 by Dillon. Defending series champion Elliott is 23 points back.

Suarez finished fifth to pick up a \$100,000 bonus from series sponsor Xfinity in its Dash-for-Cash program eligible only to full-time series drivers.

In other racing news:

■ Lewis Hamilton topped Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg on Saturday to take pole position for the Belgian Grand Prix.

The defending Formula One champion won his 10th pole of the season by leaving Rosberg nearly half a second behind in qualifying.

Hamilton is looking to increase his 21-point lead over Rosberg in drivers' standings and take his sixth victory of the season.

Bolt, Gatlin through to 100-meter semifinals

BEIJING — Usain Bolt and Justin Gatlin moved closer to setting up the biggest duel of the world championships, striding into the semifinals of the 100 meters with victories in their heats on Saturday.

Gatlin upstaged the Jamaican with the top time in the first round, even though the American got a little push from nature with a strong back wind of 2.1 meters per second during his 9.83-second race.

Bolt could count on an adoring crowd but faced a slight headwind as he cruised to a time of 9.96, the fifth fastest overall.

"It was OK. It was not perfect," Bolt said. "I still have some adjustments. Just have to concentrate on my technique now."

Gatlin had no such complaints after his run.

"I felt safe, like, after 50 meters so I did not have to push it too much," said Gatlin.

Turf concerns Cowboys

Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — Dallas owner Jerry Jones suggested Friday that the Cowboys could sit quarterback Tony Romo and other starters for a preseason game in San Francisco over concerns with the troublesome turf at Levi's Stadium.

Jones made his comments in a radio interview a day after coach Jason Garrett said, "I'm confident that the league will make sure that field is safe for everybody to play or we won't play the game."

The outspoken Jones later softened his remarks when he met with reporters, saying he has "such respect for what that organization is and what they are going to get done."

The Cowboys and 49ers play Sunday night.

San Francisco coach Jim Tomsula moved some practices out of the stadium early in training camp after large chunks of sod came loose. There were similar issues when the stadium debuted last season.

The turf was replaced after two Taylor Swift concerts on Aug. 14-15.

Stadium operations chief Jim Mercurio has said it will be replaced as needed during the season, perhaps as many as six or seven times.

The year-old, \$1.3 billion stadium is set to host the Super Bowl in less than six months. The NFL is expected to install its own field and is already in regular communication with the 49ers.

"I'm not worried about it," 49ers safety Eric Reid said. "I trust our guys. They take great care of the field. Our practice field is amazing, so I trust they'll get our playing field in that type of shape, too."

Garrett said he was planning a walk-

through at the stadium Saturday, a rarity for a preseason game. He also recalled NFC championship games between the Cowboys and 49ers at rain-soaked Candlestick Park in the 1990s, when he was a quarterback for Dallas.

"I remember they used kitty litter on the field one year and all of that," Garrett said. "What's our role in this whole thing? Make sure your cleats are right. Players get out there early, make sure you've got the right gear on so you can go be your best."

Jones called the situation "interesting" in his radio interview and brought up a preseason game in Mexico City in 1994, when he said there "clumps as big as softballs" in the Houston Oilers' 6-0 victory over the two-time defending Super Bowl champions.

"I can't believe when I look back on it that we kept playing in Mexico City," Jones said in the radio interview.

But Jones backed off considerably with reporters.

"I don't want to overblow that because I have such respect for what that organization is and what they are going to get done," he said. "What I want to do, though, is basically give any consideration to somebody that is on the fence. Everybody needs field conditions as good as they can get them."

The Cowboys were already considering sitting Romo because he could be missing as many as four of his starting offensive linemen, along with receivers Dez Bryant and Cole Beasley.

"A lot of that has to do with who we got up there that are playing in front of him," Jones said. "And who is in his supporting cast."

Petersen says he thoroughly apprised Briles

Associated Press

Washington coach Chris Petersen says he "thoroughly apprised" Baylor coach Art Briles about the circumstances of Sam Ukwuachu's dismissal from Boise State, long before the player's sexual assault conviction this week.

A jury in Texas district court found the 22-year-old Ukwuachu guilty of one count of sexual assault for an incident in Waco, Texas, involving a female Baylor soccer player.

Ukwuachu, a defensive end from Pearland, Texas, started 12 games for Boise State as a freshman. He transferred in 2013 after being dismissed for unspecified reasons, but never played for Baylor. He was ineligible in 2013 because of NCAA transfer rules and suspended in 2014, though Baylor never gave a reason.

"I talked to Chris Petersen personally," Briles said. "No mention of anything beyond Sam being depressed and needing to come home. That was our information and that's what you go by."

Petersen, who coached Boise State from 2006-2013, released a statement later in the day that seemed to contradict Briles.

"After Sam Ukwuachu was dismissed from the Boise State football program and expressed an interest in transferring to Baylor, I initiated a call with coach Art Briles," he said. "In that conversation, I thoroughly apprised Coach Briles of the circumstances surrounding Sam's disciplinary record and dismissal."