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Marine's conviction sparks custody dispute

American gets 6 to 12 years for killing transgender Filipina he met while on shore leave

By **SETH ROBSON**

Stars and Stripes

OLONGAPO CITY, Philippines — A Philippine court on Tuesday convicted a U.S. Marine of killing a transgender woman he picked up in a bar during shore leave last year and sentenced him to six to 12 years in prison — setting off a custody dispute whose outcome could affect U.S. efforts to rebuild military ties with the island nation at a time of concern over a resurgent China.

Pfc. Joseph Scott Pemberton, of New Bedford, Mass., was found guilty of strangling and drowning Jeffrey “Jennifer” Laude in the toilet of a hotel room in Olongapo, the main city along Subic Bay, in October 2014. The court convicted Pemberton of the lesser charge of homicide rather than murder because the crime was not premeditated and he was impaired by alcohol. He was also ordered to pay nearly \$100,000 in damages to the victim’s family.

After the court clerk spent three hours reading Judge Roline Ginez-Jabalde’s summation, U.S. and Filipino authorities argued for another three hours over who should take custody of Pemberton. Ginez-Jabalde said the 1998 U.S.-Philippine Visiting Force Agreement was ambiguous over the custody issue and ordered Pemberton sent to New Bilibid Prison, the country’s main civilian prison in suburban Manila.

But the Americans refused to hand him over, citing provisions of the agreement that allow U.S. authorities to hold servicemember-defendants “until completion of all judicial proceedings.” Under the U.S. interpretation, those proceedings aren’t complete until all appeals are exhausted.

Following the verdict, Pemberton huddled with several U.S. officials on the top floor of the courthouse while a temporary deal was worked out. After the haggling dragged on until nearly 7 p.m., the judge ordered Pemberton returned to Camp Aguinaldo, a Philippine military base in Manila where he has been guarded by U.S. personnel during the trial.

She gave officials five days to reach an agreement on custody or she would send him to Bilibid.

The issue of where Pemberton will be held is sensitive in the Philippines because of its complex relationship with the U.S., which wants to build a security relationship with the Philippines to counter a rising China and to combat international terrorism. Many Filipinos believe the U.S. has never treated the Philippines, a former American colony, as truly independent and an equal partner. Those suspicions can boil over at any sign of what Filipinos consider special treatment for Americans.

The issue of legal jurisdiction over U.S. troops was among the reasons behind the failure of negotiations to extend the lease on U.S. air and naval facilities in the Philippines in the early 1990s. Those had been the largest U.S. air and naval facilities in East Asia.

When Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith was convicted of rape in 2005 and sentenced to 40 years in prison, many Filipinos were outraged that he was detained at the U.S. Embassy rather than a Philippine prison, and that he was then returned to the United States following a cash settlement with the victim’s family.

That Pemberton was convicted, however, helped defuse public anger, despite concern

that protests could erupt later if the custody dispute cannot be amicably resolved.

Laude’s mother, Julita, said she had hoped Pemberton would be convicted of murder rather than the lesser homicide charge.

“But the important thing is he will be jailed,” she told The Associated Press. “My son’s life is not wasted.”

The Laude family’s private attorney, Harry Roque, told the AP that “this is a bittersweet victory because it is not murder.”

“If what he did isn’t cruelty, I don’t know what is,” Roque said.

Pemberton met Laude on Oct. 11, 2014, in a disco in a red-light district of Olongapo while barhopping with other Marines following joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises. They checked into a hotel, and Laude was later found dead in the bathroom. The cause of death was determined to be drowning; her head was in the toilet.

Pemberton, an anti-tank missile operator assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., testified that he had drunk a half-dozen beers and several shots of liquor on the night of the slaying. He said that when he got to the disco, he was approached by what he thought were two provocatively dressed women who offered sex. Pemberton said that when he discovered Laude was a man, a fight ensued. Pemberton said he used a chokehold to subdue Laude, but he claimed she was still breathing when he left and that someone else must have killed her. A shipmate testified that after Pemberton returned to his vessel, he said, “I think I killed a he-she.”

The case has cast a pall over the renewal of military relations

between the U.S. and the Philippines, providing fodder for those who object to any American presence.

About 100 riot police cordoned off streets around the courthouse in Olongapo, about 80 miles from Manila, as about 200 protesters awaited the judge’s decision on where to house Pemberton. Some in the crowd waved placards with photos of Laude, while speakers told of other crimes committed by U.S. troops over the years.

While the slaying has sparked some protests, public support has been growing for a stronger U.S. military presence, particularly with China’s territorial claims in the South China Sea, the ongoing threat of terrorism and the need for international help in coping with the typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that regularly batter the country.

President Barack Obama recently signed an agreement with the Philippines to allow U.S. forces to pre-position disaster relief supplies and other materials in the country. Nevertheless, the deal spawned its own backlash, with the Philippine Senate calling it a treaty that should require Senate ratification.

Patricio Abinales, a Philippines expert at the University of Hawaii, said any fallout from the Pemberton case is likely to be short-lived.

“I think there will be the usual noise from the small left-wing groups, but in the light of what China is doing, and with Obama reiterating American commitment to Philippine security during last week’s APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) meeting, Pemberton’s case will be in the media for at most a week, then disappear to the inside pages,” Abinales said.

Carter: US sending more troops to Iraq

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Tuesday that the United States will send expeditionary military personnel into battle with Iraqi and Kurdish forces against Islamic State militants as part of a stepped-up war effort ordered by the White House.

The special operators will assist the Iraqi and peshmerga forces as well as conduct raids, free hostages, gather intelligence and capture Islamic State leaders, according to Carter's testimony to the House Armed Services Committee. The secretary also said the United States could increase the number of military trainers in Iraq and

special operators deployed to Syria. He did not say how many special operators would be deployed.

The announcement by Carter comes in the wake of coordinated Islamic State terrorist attacks in Paris and amid a wave of criticism from Republicans over what they see as President Barack Obama's weak and faltering war strategy against the militant group.

"In full coordination with the government of Iraq, we're deploying a specialized expeditionary targeting force to assist Iraqi and Kurdish peshmerga forces and to put even more pressure on [the Islamic State group]," Carter testified to the committee. "That creates a virtuous cycle of better in-

telligence, which generates more targets, more raids and more momentum."

Raids will be conducted by request of the Iraqi government, but the forces also could strike unilaterally within Syria, Carter said.

"You don't know at night who is going to be coming in the window, and that is the sensation we want all [Islamic State] leadership and followers to have," he said.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified to the House with Carter and said the forces will not respect any national border between Iraq and Syria when carrying out missions.

"We're going to go where the enemy is," Dunford said.

NATO to keep 12K troops in Afghanistan

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

BRUSSELS — NATO leaders agreed Tuesday to keep 12,000 troops in Afghanistan through 2016, a larger number than previously planned, as the alliance aims to support Afghan security forces in their struggle against a resurgent Taliban.

Afghan troops "continue to make steady progress and to learn lessons, but challenges and capability gaps persist," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said during a news conference.

At NATO headquarters, allies approved continuing their training and advisory mission and worked on a plan to fund Afghan forces through 2020, seeking to shore up commitments on both fronts. But new security threats in NATO's own backyard also are pulling the alliance in other

directions. Those challenges include the Islamic State militant group on NATO's southern flank and Russia's muscular posture on the alliance's eastern border.

On Tuesday, NATO worked on a new strategy for countering such threats, with an emphasis on so-called "hybrid" threats.

Allies will step up plans for dealing with the southern threat, where in recent days Germany and the United Kingdom have announced plans to increase the presence of air and sea power, Stoltenberg said.

NATO will consider ways to bolster contributions to the U.S.-led coalition in Syria and Iraq, as well as more measures for reassuring the security concerns of Turkey, which downed a Russian warplane last week that had allegedly violated its airspace.

Russia may change tone on Assad, Obama says

Associated Press

PARIS — President Barack Obama expressed optimism Tuesday that Russia will ultimately come around on the need for Syrian President Bashar Assad to leave power to end his country's long civil war, but warned the turnaround would not come overnight.

Discussing the Syria crisis with world leaders in Paris, Obama also urged Turkey and Russia to set aside recent tensions that have undermined his efforts to strengthen the U.S.-led coalition fighting defeating the Islamic State group. Instead, he asked the two countries to focus on the Islamic State as a common enemy and on reaching a political solution for Syria.

"I don't expect that you're going to see a 180-degree turn on their strategy over the next several weeks," Obama said. "They have invested for years now in keeping Assad in power. ... That's going to take some time for them to change how they think about the issue."

Subsidies may boost Camp Schwab work

BY ERIK SLAVIN
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Three districts near the construction site of a contentious Marine runway in Okinawa will receive direct federal subsidies of a yet-to-be-determined amount in what may be a government bid to soften protests over the project.

Subsidies are nothing new for the island of 1.4 million, which has long received federal payments for its role as the home to

the largest share of U.S. forces in Japan. However, this time the money is going directly to smaller communities around Camp Schwab, where a major protest campaign has continued since 2013 when Japan obtained a key permit for the runway's construction.

Japanese media outlets speculated that the government hopes the direct funding to districts will soften protests over the runway.

"It will be possible to directly aid [the districts], which will be

affected directly the most from the relocation work, with projects that help preserve the living environment and stability of the residents' lifestyle and reduce the effects of the U.S. military realignment," Defense Minister Gen Nakatani told reporters Friday, according to a transcript.

Henoko, Toyohara and Kushi will each receive up to \$106,000 this fiscal year from Japan's defense budget, government officials said Friday.

Ravens rally to improbable win

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Brent Urban just wanted a chance to play. Will Hill wanted redemption.

On one dramatic, unforgettable play, both Ravens achieved their goals.

Urban blocked Travis Coons' field-goal attempt as time expired and Hill returned it 64 yards for a touchdown, sending Baltimore to an improbable 33-27 victory Monday night over the luckless Cleveland Browns, who dropped their sixth straight game and might have lost starting quarterback Josh McCown for the rest of the season.

Coons' potential game-winner from 51 yards was deflected by Urban, who was making his NFL debut after missing his rookie season with a knee injury and then tearing a biceps in this year's training camp.

"It's surreal," said a beaming Urban, a fourth-round pick in 2014. "After being out so long, it's crazy. I'm almost speechless. It's just a wonderful feeling."

Hill was beaten by Browns wide receiver Travis Benjamin for a game-tying touchdown in the fourth quarter and was willing to do anything he could to make up for his mistake.

"I was praying," Hill said. "I said, 'If we

get a block and it bounced my way, I'm going to take it to the end zone.' Luckily, it did."

Something finally went the right way for the Ravens (4-7), who have been decimated by injuries all season and seem to take every game down to the last ticks on the clock.

"One of the greatest football games you're probably ever going to see in terms of excitement," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said.

Not for the Browns (2-9), who rallied to tie it behind backup quarterback Austin Davis in the closing minutes only to suffer an excruciating loss.

"It's tough to swallow," said Davis, who came off the bench to replace McCown in the fourth quarter.

Baltimore quarterback Matt Schaub, making his first start since 2013, threw two touchdown passes but also a costly interception in the final minute to Browns cornerback Tramon Williams, a turnover that appeared to doom the Ravens.

However, as Cleveland attempted to get closer for Coons, who made his first 18 attempts this season, Davis wasted valuable time because of a communication issue with the sideline. Davis slid during a scramble just feet from the sideline, forcing the Browns to call a timeout.

Coons' kick was low, allowing Urban to

get a hand on it. As Hill sprinted down the sideline, Browns fans, some of whom came to the game with brown paper bags over their heads, felt more disgust.

"It's a tough one to wrap your brain around," Browns coach Mike Pettine said. "It's frustrating we didn't finish it."

For a primetime game with little TV appeal, this one had a little bit of everything:

McCown goes down: No one will ever challenge McCown's toughness, but the 36-year-old quarterback finally succumbed to the pain after taking a hard hit in the fourth quarter.

McCown tried to continue playing, but had to leave the field after throwing an incomplete. He was immediately taken to the locker room and left FirstEnergy Stadium with his right arm in a sling.

Pettine said the team would know more Tuesday, but it appears McCown's season is over.

If McCown can't play, the Browns could stick with Davis or go back to Johnny Manziel, who was stripped of his starting job after a video surfaced of him partying during the bye week.

Lesson learned: Ravens rookie wide receiver Kaelin Clay returned a punt 82 yards for a touchdown in the first quarter and squeezed the ball tightly as he crossed the goal line.

When he was at Utah, Clay infamously dropped the ball just short of the end zone on what would have been a long TD only to have an Oregon defender pick it up and return it 99 yards for a score.

Another concussion: Browns cornerback Justin Gilbert suffered a concussion while returning a kickoff in the third quarter of his first start this season.

Cleveland has been inundated with head injuries. On Monday, the Browns were without Pro Bowl cornerback Joe Haden as well as wide receivers Taylor Gabriel and Andrew Hawkins because of concussions.

Special special teams: The Ravens got two TDs on special teams and have blocked a punt or field goal in five consecutive games. It's enough to make coach John Harbaugh, a former special-teams coach, smile.

"All the guys on the field goal-block team that set the wall down the sidelines. That was just a thing of beauty," he said. "We scored two touchdowns on special teams and that's an incredible thing."

Monday blues: Cleveland's first Monday Night Football appearance in seven years couldn't have ended any worse with fans dejectedly heading to the exits and a few tearing off their jerseys in disgust after a heart-wrenching loss.

The NFC East is so bad ...

Associated Press

Six wins will win the NFC East.

This division is so bad even the Dallas Cowboys are still in it, and they're 3-8 and won't have Tony Romo the rest of the season.

The Washington Redskins (5-6) beat the New York Giants (5-6) on Sunday to tighten the race and keep the lowly Philadelphia Eagles (4-7) only one game behind.

Neither the Redskins nor the Giants seem capable of finishing 8-8. The Eagles (4-7) are more likely to lose out than reach seven wins. The Cowboys already went 0-7 without Romo, so even one win will be an improvement.

It was only last year when the Eagles went 10-6 and missed the playoffs. The Cowboys won the division with a 12-4 record.

Now, all the teams are struggling.

The Redskins are 0-5 on the road. The Giants nearly upset the Patriots only to return from a bye with a dud performance. The Eagles were outscored 90-31 in the past two games. All Dallas needs is J.R. Ewing to complete a soap opera season.

OK, 6-10 might be a stretch because the teams play each other a few times in December, and someone likely has to win. But it won't take a winning record to finish first.

Here are other overreactions from Week 12:

Overreaction: The Patriots are in trouble. Rob Gronkowski is hurt and Tom Brady couldn't beat Brock Osweiler.

Realistic reaction: Never bet against Brady.

Overreaction: The Broncos are the new team to beat in the AFC. Osweiler rallied Denver to an overtime win over the Patriots, ending New England's bid for a perfect season.

Realistic reaction: The game wasn't in Foxborough. It'll be tough to beat the Patriots at home.

Overreaction: If Matthew Stafford and Jameis Winston each had five touchdown passes in a five-day span vs. Philadelphia, Brady will throw 10 against the Eagles this week.

Realistic reaction: Ten is a little much. Maybe eight.

Overreaction: Matt Hasselbeck is the new Brett Favre. Hasselbeck became the first quarterback since Favre in 2009 to throw multiple TD passes in three consecutive games after turning 40. He also improved to 4-0 filling in for Andrew Luck.

Realistic reaction: The ol' gunslinger was one of a kind.

Overreaction: The Seahawks are going back to the Super Bowl. An impressive win over the Steelers was Seattle's fourth victory in five games.

Realistic reaction: They're not even guaranteed a playoff berth. A pair of tough

road games, this week at Minnesota and at Arizona in Week 17, won't make it easy.

Overreaction: The Chiefs will run the table. A win over Rex Ryan's Bills was their fifth in a row and Alex Smith is playing well.

Realistic reaction: They don't play a team with a winning record the rest of the way, so it's not unreasonable. The Raiders will be a tough opponent this week.

Overreaction: The Falcons won't win another game. Matt Ryan struggled again in Atlanta's fourth straight loss.

Realistic reaction: The playoffs look unlikely, but there should be one win left on their tough schedule.

Overreaction: Cam Newton will do the Macarena before the season's over. Newton celebrated another TD run with the twist against the Cowboys on Thanksgiving Day.

Realistic reaction: He's too cool for the Macarena.

Overreaction: Jay Cutler will lead the Bears to the playoffs. Chicago upset the Packers at Lambeau Field on Thanksgiving night for its third straight road win.

Realistic reaction: The schedule is favorable, but a 2-5 record against the NFC will hurt the Bears in tiebreakers.

Big Ben still in protocol

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Ben Roethlisberger says he had a migraine. Mike Tomlin says the Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback has a concussion.

Either way, Roethlisberger will remain under the concussion protocol this week as the Steelers prepare to face Indianapolis.

Roethlisberger left Sunday's loss to Seattle in the fourth quarter after self-reporting a potential concussion. Roethlisberger said on his radio show Tuesday he had a "traumatic ocular migraine" that limited his peripheral vision but that his vision cleared shortly after his exit.

Tomlin said later Tuesday that he was told Roethlisberger did sustain a concussion and must remain under the league's concussion protocol, which will require Roethlisberger to pass a battery of tests before he can return to play.

In other NFL news:

■ Terrelle Pryor has run a comeback route to the Browns.

The quarterback-turned-wide receiver has agreed to sign with Cleveland, a person familiar with the decision told the Associated Press on Tuesday. A former Ohio State star and Oakland quarterback, Pryor will join the struggling Browns — as a wide receiver — for the remainder of this season, said the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because the team has not announced the signing.



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Warriors extend winning streak to 19

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Stephen Curry was held in relative check for most of Monday night. The reigning MVP and NBA's leading scorer had 16 points through three quarters as Draymond Green and other teammates did the heavy lifting.

Then came the fourth quarter.

Curry scored 10 of his 26 points in the final 6:20 and the Golden State Warriors held on for their NBA-record 19th consecutive win to start the season after a 106-103 victory over the Utah Jazz on Monday night.

"We've had some battles and, obviously, we've had some lopsided victories," Curry said. "But what gets lost in the record is the tough games we've had to claw our way out of like tonight. Just because we are 19-0 doesn't mean we can just show up and blow teams out and guarantee a win, we actually have to do something about it."

With the game tied at 101 with 51 seconds left, Curry hit a three-pointer from the left wing to give the Warriors the lead. Rodney Hood scored 14 seconds later to bring the Jazz within one.

After Curry missed a three-pointer, the Jazz had a chance to take the lead, but Hood missed a three from the wing with five seconds left. Curry hit two free throws to seal the victory.

"Outside of a layup or an uncontested shot, that's a pretty good look," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said of Hood's three-point attempt.

"That's a good shot for him. ... I'll take Rodney Hood with that shot any day."

Hayward led the Jazz with 24 points.

The Warriors have won 23 straight regular-season games dating back to last season.

The two teams went back and forth down the stretch hitting shots in the fourth quarter. Alec Burks scored six straight and Favors gave the Jazz a 99-97 lead on a three-point play. Then Curry hit another three-pointer.

A pair of Favors free throws tied the game at 101.

"We knew this was going to be one of the tougher challenges for us," Warriors interim coach Luke Walton said. "That team is very well coached and they execute and they got those bigs that are a lot to deal with. Once their crowd got into it and they had their confidence going it was a good solid NBA game."

Curry hit three three-pointers after he checked in at the 6:36 mark of the fourth quarter. One tied the game while the other two gave the Warriors a lead.

"We competed against the best team in the league and gave ourselves a chance to win," Gordon Hayward said. "That's why they're 19-0. That's why he's the MVP. He's going to make shots."

Hawks 106, Thunder 100: Paul Millsap scored 26 points and Jeff Teague made all the big shots down the stretch, helping host Atlanta snap Oklahoma City's four-game winning streak.

Russell Westbrook had 34 points, including a drive with 2:49 remaining, and he knocked down a jumper to push Oklahoma City to a four-point lead.

Teague took control from there. He finished with 25 points, while Al Horford added 21 points and 13 rebounds.

Bulls 92, Spurs 89: Pau Gasol had 18 points, 13 rebounds and three blocked shots, and host Chicago snapped San Antonio's five-game winning streak.

Gasol blocked LaMarcus Aldridge on a drive with 1:06 left, and then hit one of two foul shots on the other end for a 90-89 lead.

Kawhi Leonard and Tony Parker each missed three-point attempts in the final seconds.

Celtics 105, Heat 95: Avery Bradley scored 25 points and forced a big turnover when he knocked away a pass by Dwyane Wade with a minute left, and Boston put all five starters in double figures against host Miami.

Jared Sullinger had 17 points to help the Celtics snap a three-game road slide.

Bucks 92, Nuggets 74: Greg Monroe scored 18 points and host Milwaukee forced 24 turnovers that led to 35 points in handing Denver its seventh straight loss.

Jabari Parker had 16 points and Michael Carter-Williams added 12 points and nine assists for the Bucks, who won for only the second time in eight games.

Pistons 116, Rockets 105: Reggie Jackson had 31 points and Andre Drummond added 24 points and 13 rebounds as host Detroit beat Houston.

Clippers 102, Trail Blazers 87: Blake Griffin scored 23 points, DeAndre Jordan had a season-high 24 rebounds along with 18 points, and host Los Angeles beat Portland for its third straight victory.

Kings 112, Mavericks 98: DeMarcus Cousins returned to the lineup from a back injury and scored 16 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter, leading host Sacramento past struggling Dallas.

Kentucky outthrustled early but outlasts Illinois State

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Kentucky coach John Calipari took heart in his young Wildcats absorbing Illinois State's best shots before getting off the deck to inflict some aggression of their own.

He expected some struggles with point guard Tyler Ulis sidelined by injury but was glad the top-ranked Wildcats eventually figured things out.

Isaiah Briscoe scored 18 points, Jamal Murray added 16 and No. 1 Kentucky overcame a sluggish first half to pull away from Illinois State 75-63 on Monday night.

Outthrustled on both ends of the court by the athletic Redbirds through 20 minutes while adjusting to Ulis' absence because of a right elbow injury, the Wildcats (7-0) emerged from halftime more physical and used that energy to gain some breathing room. The effort wasn't always smooth or consistent, just effective when Kentucky needed it most.

The Wildcats ended up learning what life was like without Ulis and hope they won't have to do it much longer.

"It was a big difference," Briscoe said of playing with Ulis. "We missed him out there. He's our leader and floor general."

It took a collective effort between Briscoe, Murray and Charles Matthews to fill the void, ending with a combined six assists and 12 turnovers. Only three of the turnovers came after halftime, and that helped Kentucky become more assertive.

Outrebounded 20-12 in the first half, Kentucky beat Illinois State (3-5) 27-17 on the boards and held the Redbirds to 29 percent shooting in the second half.

Marcus Lee had something to do with that, adding 13 points and 12 rebounds for his second double-double in five games. Alex Poythress had 11 points for Kentucky, which shot 43 percent.

"After having a couple of bad games, you have to either figure it out or stand

back," said Lee, who did not start after combining for just 13 points and eight rebounds the past two games. "That's not something I do. So, I got the message."

Of Lee, Calipari said, "he was great today. If Marcus Lee doesn't play, we lose."

The Wildcats face UCLA on Thursday in a matchup of programs with 19 combined NCAA championships.

DeVaughn Akoon-Purcell scored 22 points for the Redbirds, while Roland Griffin and Mikyle McIntosh both had 14 points.

No. 15 Oregon 78, Fresno St. 73: If bad things tend to happen in threes as many believe, Oregon coach Dana Altman can only hope his team has gotten letting big leads nearly slip away out of its system.

Dillon Brooks had 21 points and 10 rebounds and the 15th-ranked Ducks staved off a late rally by visiting Fresno State for a victory.

"That's the third time we've had a double-digit lead and we let them back in, not finishing the game," Altman said, pointing to similar wins over Baylor and Valparaiso. "I'd like to finish games stronger."

Chris Boucher and Elgin Cook added 14 points each for the Ducks (6-0), who led 70-52 with 6:35 to play before Marvelle Harris scored 13 points in a 16-2 run by the Bulldogs (5-1) that cut the deficit to four.

A driving layup by Brooks put Oregon up 74-68 with 1:20 left, and the Ducks held on by making four of six free throws in the final 45 seconds.

It was the second double-double of the season and fourth of his career for Brooks, a sophomore who had 13 points and six rebounds in the second half.

"He did make some big plays there," Altman said. "You have to have somebody make some plays, and he definitely did that down the stretch."

Freshman Tyler Dorsey, Oregon's leading scorer at 15.2 points per game, finished with 12.

Leafs' Sharp earns shutout in NHL debut

Associated Press

TORONTO — A year ago, goaltender Garret Sparks was in the midst of a 13-game trip with the ECHL's Orlando Solar Bears. A night after allowing four goals to the Fort Wayne Komets, he was on the bench in Kalamazoo, Mich., awaiting the next bus ride and his next start.

"You have a duffel bag and you don't get to go home," Sparks said.

Now, Sparks is in the NHL, making a big first impression.

The 22-year-old became the first Maple Leafs goalie with a shutout in his NHL debut, lifting Toronto over the Edmonton Oilers 3-0 on Monday night.

"They've been playing hockey here a long time so I think that's pretty cool," said Sparks, who was visibly emotional after being named the game's first star with his parents watching from the crowd.

Sparks made 24 saves in the Leafs' first shutout since Jonathan Bernier blanked the Dallas Stars on Dec. 23, 2014.

"Good for the kid," Leafs coach Mike Babcock said. "Life's about opportunity and how you respond to that opportunity, obviously he must have some swagger about him, some confidence. He played well, we got a win."

Sparks was summoned from the American Hockey League's Toronto Marlies earlier in the week to replace injured James Reimer and was given the chance to start over a struggling Bernier, who is 0-8-1 this season.

With Reimer not expected to be ready to play before Toronto's next game on Wednesday night against Winnipeg, he'll get a chance for his second straight start.

"I assume he's starting in Winnipeg unless [Reimer] is ready to go," Babcock said.

Leo Komarov scored twice and Nazem Kadri also had a goal to help Toronto snap

a three-game skid. James van Riemsdyk added three assists.

Ducks 4, Canucks 0: John Gibson made 25 saves for his third career shutout to lead host Anaheim over Vancouver.

Shawn Horcoff, Rickard Rakell, Jakob Silfverberg and Corey Perry scored and Anaheim won for only the second time in its last five games. Ten different Anaheim players had a point in its biggest rout of the season. Ryan Miller stopped 25 shots while Vancouver was shut out for the first time this season.

Gibson made his NHL debut against Vancouver in the 2014 playoffs, stopping all 18 shots to eliminate the Canucks. Gibson nearly had another shutout last Friday against the Chicago Blackhawks, the other team he has blanked during his brief career, but blew a 2-0 lead in that one.

Rangers 4, Hurricanes 3: Mats Zuccarello and Oscar Lindberg scored first-period power-play goals as New York kept up its mastery of Carolina.

Chris Kreider and Derick Brassard also scored and New York improved to 18-1-0 in its last 19 meetings with Carolina. The Rangers have won 11 straight against the Hurricanes at Madison Square Garden.

Henrik Lundqvist made 33 saves and the Rangers ended a three-game losing streak.

Islanders 5, Avalanche 3: Cal Clutterbuck broke a deadlock 1:52 into the third period as host New York beat Colorado.

Kyle Okposo, Mikhail Grabovski, Casey Cizikas and Ryan Strome also scored and the Islanders won for the third time in four games. Thomas Greiss stopped 25 shots.

Jarome Iginla, Nick Holden and former Islander Blake Comeau each scored for Colorado, but the Avalanche fell for the fifth time in their last seven games.