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New tactics against Islamic State in Iraq

By TARA COPP

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The United States will adjust its tactics and risk more civilian casualties when launching airstrikes against high-value targets in Syria and Iraq as part of an effort to increase pressure on the Islamic State group.

The tactical adjustments reflect an intensified effort to cut off Islamic State militants from their ability to fund attacks or move fighters across the battlefield, Gen. Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told lawmakers on Tuesday.

“Our threshold for collateral damage increases with the value of the target,” he said.

Since the United States launched Operation Inherent

Resolve against the Islamic State group in August 2014, U.S. and coalition forces have conducted more than 8,200 airstrikes against Islamic State targets, according to Department of Defense data.

But the air campaign has been criticized for being too constricted in its rules of engagement. Critics have said it has allowed Islamic State militants to continue to hold ground and launch attacks, due to U.S. and coalition guidelines to avoid targets where there could be civilian casualties.

During testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday, Dunford was asked by Rep. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., a former A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot who flew missions in Afghanistan from 2005-06,

whether changes to the tactics would “unleash and unshackle American airpower and not just be in this limited, impotent mindset?”

McSally asked why, in recent airstrikes against Islamic State fuel trucks, did C-130 gunships and A-10 attack aircraft provide warnings by flying low over the trucks and dropping leaflets alerting the drivers to run away before firing at them.

Dunford said the United States did not see the drivers as combatants. But he said the restrictions now will loosen, depending on the target.

On Tuesday, a senior defense official who spoke on the condition of anonymity told Stars and Stripes that shifting to a posture in which civilian casualties might be tolerated when

firing at a high-value target is a change in tactics in the campaign against the Islamic State group. However, he said it is not a change in their rules of engagement, which continue to be driven by the principle to minimize civilian casualties.

If the United States does not further expand its target set, or loosen its rules of engagement, even intensified airstrikes will be ineffective, said retired Navy Cmdr. Chris Harmer, an analyst at the Institute for the Study of War.

U.S. and coalition pilots “are operating under the restrictions placed on them by policymakers,” Harmer said. The campaign “either needs to expand the target sets or significantly relax the [rules of engagement] so we can hit these targets.”

Marine forced out over Afghan warning

By DAN LAMOTHE

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A senior Navy Department official decided Monday to force a Marine Corps officer out of the service for his handling of classified information, three years after he was first investigated for sending a warning to deployed colleagues about an Afghan police chief whose servant later killed three Marines.

Maj. Jason Brezler will be separated from the Marine Corps following a decision by Assistant Navy Secretary Juan M. Garcia, said Michael Bowe, Brezler’s attorney.

The case grabbed attention in Congress and among highly decorated senior officers in the military, some of whom advocated on Brezler’s behalf to let him stay in the Marines. Other service officials maintained that retired Gen. James F. Amos, the Marine Corps’ top officer when the investigation began, and other generals involved handled the case well.

“We will now proceed to a real court and prove that Commandant Amos and his

generals illegally retaliated against Major Brezler because they were more concerned with politics and their careers than the lives of their Marines and the service of a good Marine who did the right thing,” Bowe said in an emailed statement. “I look forward to their cross-examination.”

The decision comes as a related lawsuit filed by the family of one of the Marines killed remains pending against the service in federal court. It alleges that the service ignored Brezler’s warning that the police chief, Sarwar Jan, was corrupt and sexually abusing children, allowing for the Aug. 10, 2012, ambush in which Lance Cpl. Gregory Buckley, 21; Staff Sgt. Scott Dickinson, 29; and Cpl. Richard Rivera Jr., 20; were killed at Forward Operating Delhi, a Marine Corps outpost in Helmand province’s Garmsir district. A fourth Marine sustained five gunshot wounds but survived.

The suit was filed last year by the Buckley family, which also is represented by Bowe. In court filings, they have repeatedly expressed frustration with the amount of information the Marine Corps has pro-

vided them about the case. It alleges that the shooter, identified by the Marine Corps as Ainnuddin Khudairaham, was among the boys the police chief assaulted.

A Marine official said Monday that the service had no immediate comment on the new decision about Brezler, citing its administrative nature and the pending lawsuit. The official spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the case. An administrative board of Marine officers moved to remove Brezler from the service in December 2013.

A spokesman for Navy Secretary Ray Mabus could not be reached for comment.

The shooter was convicted last year in the killings. He was tried as a teen and sentenced to 7½ years in confinement, infuriating the Buckley family, which expected a longer sentence.

Brezler has served in the Marine Corps since graduating from the Naval Academy in 2000, and is now a member of the Marine Corps Reserve. He works full-time as a member of the New York Fire Department, and has deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Israel set to honor GI who defied Nazis

Associated Press

The Nazi soldiers made their orders very clear: Jewish American prisoners of war were to be separated from their fellow brothers in arms and sent to an uncertain fate.

But Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds would have none of that. As the highest-ranking noncommissioned officer held in the POW camp, he ordered more than 1,000 American captives to step forward with him and brazenly pronounced, "We are all Jews here."

He would not waver, even with a pistol to his head, and his captors eventually backed down.

Seventy years later, the Knoxville, Tenn., native is being posthumously recognized with Israel's highest honor for non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during World War II. He's the first American serviceman to earn the honor.

It's a story that his son, the Rev. Chris Edmonds, discovered long after his father's death in 1985. Edmonds was captured with thousands of others in the Battle of the Bulge in 1944 and spent 100 days in captivity. The Wehrmacht had a strict anti-Jew policy and segregated Jewish POWs from non-Jews. U.S. soldiers had been warned that Jewish fighters would be in danger if captured and were told to destroy evidence identifying them as Jewish.

So when the German camp commander, speaking in English, ordered the Jews to identify themselves on Jan. 27, 1945, at the Stalag IXA POW camp near Ziegenhain, Germany, Edmonds knew what was at stake.

Turning to the rest of the POWs, he said, "We are not doing that; we are all falling out," recalled Chris Edmonds. With all the camp's inmates defiantly standing in front of their barracks, the German commander turned to Edmonds and said, "They cannot all be Jews." To which Edmonds replied, "We are all Jews here."

A ceremony for Roddie Edmonds is planned next year.

Congress targets promotions

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Days after passing a retirement overhaul, Congress is already pressing ahead with another round of potentially historic military personnel reforms for 2016, taking aim this week at promotions and the health care system.

The Senate opened the debate Wednesday by criticizing the military promotion system —

especially among officers — as outdated and overly focused on schedules compared to merit. A House panel was scheduled Thursday to open a series of hearings on reforming the Tri-care health care system.

President Barack Obama signed an overhaul of 20-year military pensions into law last month, which is the most substantial change to personnel benefits in years. But Congress is again searching for ways to trim ballooning troop costs and

to modernize the services.

"Promotions are handed out according to predictable schedules with only secondary consideration of merit," said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Armed Services Committee. "That's why even after more than a decade of service, there is essentially no difference in rank among officers of the same age. Is it really because they all perform the same or deserve the same rank?"

Pakistan hangs 4 over school attack

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan hanged four convicted militants Wednesday who were sentenced to death over a Taliban attack on an army-run school last year that killed more than 150 people, mostly children, officials said.

The two officials said the men were executed at a high-security prison in the northwestern city of Kohat. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media. The

four are the first convicted militants to be executed in connection with the school massacre.

The Dec. 16 attack, which was claimed by the Pakistani Taliban, horrified the country and led the government to lift a 2008 moratorium on the death penalty. However, most of the nearly 300 people hanged since then have been convicted criminals, not militants.

Parents of children killed in the assault welcomed the executions and demanded that all those connected to the attack be given the same punishment.

"Today's executions cannot return my son to us, but I am happy to know that at least four terrorists have been hanged for their role in the killing of our children," said a woman who identified herself only as the wife of Arshad Zafar, in keeping with local custom.

Last month, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif asked Pakistan's president to reject clemency petitions from the four prisoners. Army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif ordered the hangings a few days ago.

Ex-academy leader pleads for his legacy

The (Annapolis, Md.) Capital

The model ship was worth at least \$870; the Navy officer paid \$500.

He underpaid for luxury dinners in Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur.

The former Naval Academy superintendent has apologized and admitted he paid too little for the gifts.

Still, retired Vice Adm. Michael Miller has asked that his legacy not be marred by incidents a decade ago, before he led the academy.

"I accept responsibility for my actions but ask that my career be judged not based on these

isolated incidents, but rather on my honorable service over the span of 40 years," Miller wrote to the secretary of the Navy.

His letter was released last week to The Capital under a Freedom of Information Act request. The letter responds to the formal reprimand Miller received in January, after investigators found he benefited from a cozy relationship with a Singapore businessman at the center of a bribery scandal sweeping the Navy.

Four years before becoming superintendent, Miller was a rear admiral commanding an aircraft carrier and escort ships

in the Pacific Ocean. He was commanding Carrier Strike Group 7 on the USS Ronald Reagan when he paid discounted prices for gifts and dinners from February to June 2006, according to investigators.

In August 2010, he became the 61st superintendent of the Naval Academy. Miller graduated from the academy in 1974.

His tenure as superintendent ended in July 2014, when he was succeeded by Vice Adm. Walter E. "Ted" Carter Jr. Superintendents routinely serve four years. Miller has since retired.

Miller could not be reached Friday for additional comment.

Source: BoSox, Price have record deal

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Red Sox and AL Cy Young runner-up David Price have agreed to terms on a seven-year free-agent deal worth \$217 million, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Tuesday night because the deal — the largest ever for a pitcher — is pending a physical. It is expected to be announced on Friday, the person told the AP.

A left-hander who was the AL's top pitcher in 2012 and the runner-up twice in seven full major league seasons, Price has a 3.09 ERA with 1,372 strikeouts and 104 wins. He went 18-5 with a 2.45 ERA in 2015, striking out 225.

Choosing the Red Sox reunites Price with president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, who until this August was the Detroit Tigers' general manager. Dombrowski has had a hand in all three of Price's moves the past two years.

After spending his entire career in Tampa Bay, Price was acquired by Detroit at the 2014 trade deadline. A year later, the Tigers traded him to the Blue Jays at the July 31 non-waiver deadline and Price helped Toronto reach the playoffs for the first time since 1993.

Now he will try to help turn around a team that has finished last in the AL East in three of the past four seasons. (The Red Sox won the World Series in 2013.) On its way to a 78-84, last-place finish in 2015, Boston brought in Dombrowski and he quickly went to work rebuilding the

once-proud ballclub.

Dombrowski traded a package of prospects to San Diego for closer Craig Kimbrel last month.

Price bolsters a rotation that has lacked an ace since the Red Sox balked at the asking price for Jon Lester, who signed a six-year, \$155 million deal with the Chicago Cubs. Twelve pitchers started at least one game for the Red Sox in 2015.

Price joins a rotation that, barring injuries and trades, is expected to include Wade Miley, Rick Porcello, Eduardo Rodriguez and Clay Buchholz. Joe Kelly, Steven Wright and Henry Owens could bolster the bullpen, fill in as starters or serve as trade bait.

Don't expect any more blockbusters from Boston this offseason, new baseball boss Dave Dombrowski said after announcing a deal with outfielder Chris Young on Wednesday.

The \$13 million contract, two-year contract to make Young a fourth outfielder came a day after the Price deal.

"I feel good about the roster as it is. I think we've been able to address really our biggest needs," Dombrowski said Wednesday during a conference call. "I think our major moves are done. But when you go into the winter meetings, you never know what happens."

Young, 32, had been with the New York Yankees since August 2014, batting .252 with 14 homers and 42 RBIs in 318 at-bats. He hit .327 against left-handers this season; with its 37-foot high Green Monster just 310 feet from the plate in left field, Fenway Park seems ideal for his swing.

"One of my major strengths is pulling the ball. I think that Fenway can be advantageous to that," Young said. "Hopefully, my just-misses, I can get rewarded for that."

A 2010 All-Star with Arizona, Young has a career .235 average with 169 homers and 528 RBIs over 10 seasons. He will receive \$6.5 million in each of the next two years.

The announcement came a day after the Red Sox agreed to terms with Price to become the ace of a pitching staff that lacked one in 2015, when the once-proud ballclub went 78-84 for its third last-place finish in four years. Red Sox spokesman Kevin Gregg said at the beginning of the conference call that the team would not be discussing Price.

But Young said the news was encouraging as his new team tries to bounce back.

"It's a great feeling to be on a team that's trying to make those moves and go all the way," he said. "I think that sends a message to your team, I think that sends a message to your fans of what the goal is."

Dombrowski said at the end of the season that his goals were to add a pitcher for the front of the rotation and a fourth outfielder to shore up a lineup that is expected to include youngsters Rusney Castillo, Jackie Bradley Jr. and Mookie Betts. Manager John Farrell said Young could play himself into the lineup as more than just a reserve.

"He was at the top of our list," Dombrowski said. "He fits really what we were looking for as a player."

Right-hander Roman Mendez was designated for assignment to clear a roster spot.

Oklahoma safely ranked No. 3

Associated Press

Oklahoma is No. 3 in the College Football Playoff selection committee rankings, putting the Sooners safely in position to be in the final four with their season completed.

The Sooners locked up the Big 12 championship with a blowout victory at Oklahoma State last week.

Committee chairman Jeff Long refused to speculate Tuesday night whether the Sooners could be moved out of the top four by Saturday's results when the final rankings come out Sunday. But it's plain to see Oklahoma should be OK. Of the four teams directly behind Oklahoma, two are playing each other (No. 4 Iowa and No. 5 Michigan State in the Big Ten title game for a spot in the playoff), one isn't playing and can't win a conference (No. 6 Ohio State) and another has two losses (No. 7 Stanford).

No worries of a repeat of last year for the Big 12, when it was the Power Five conference left out of the playoff.

"The fact that I think that most of the discussion and debate was above them and below them would indicate that their position at three was pretty solid with the committee" this week, Long said of the Sooners.

Clemson is still No. 1 and Alabama remained No. 2. Both the Tigers (12-0) and Crimson Tide (11-1) head into their conference championship games Saturday needing a win to lock up a playoff spot.

"The committee debated long and hard about the No. 1 and No. 2 teams," said Long, who is the Arkansas athletic director.

The top seed gets to play closest to home, so for Clemson a semifinal game at the Orange Bowl in Miami is also on the line against No. 10 North Carolina (11-1) in the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game.

Alabama at No. 2 and Oklahoma at No. 3 would give the Sooners a short trip to the Cotton Bowl in North Texas for the other New Year's Eve semifinal.

Hoping for an upset by the Tar Heels against Clemson or Florida against Alabama in the Southeastern Conference title game are No. 6 Ohio State (11-1) and No. 7 Stanford (10-2).

The Cardinal can win the Pac-12 championship by beating Southern California.

What happens if ...
■ Clemson loses to North Carolina and Stanford wins?

The most intriguing possible debate for the selection committee. It would put Ohio State back in play. The committee would have to slice and dice the résumés of the Tar Heels, trying to make a huge jump after winning a conference, the Cardinal, a two-loss conference champion with a top-10 win against Notre Dame, and the defending national champion Buckeyes.

The committee protocol calls for it to emphasize conference championships when teams are comparable. Basically, it's a tiebreaker. That puts the Buckeyes in a tough spot.

A win over No. 1 and a conference championship would drastically alter the Tar Heels' résumé, but they have a lot of ground to make up. Long said the Tar Heels, with two games against FCS competition, no wins against teams currently ranked and a loss to 3-9 South Carolina,

have a strength of schedule issue compared to even Ohio State.

"There's multiple things in there that have held North Carolina back, their overall strength of schedule is not strong, again, depending on the metrics we look at, they're very high in their strength of schedule, which is not a positive for them," Long said.

The guess here is Stanford makes the playoff in this scenario.

■ Alabama loses to Florida?

The SEC is out. The Gators dropped to No. 18 after losing 27-2 to Florida State and an upset will almost certainly reflect poorly on the Crimson Tide, even though 'Bama nearly moved into the top spot this week. That would open the door for Stanford or Ohio State, and again the guess here is the conference championship tips the scales to the Pac-12 winner.

If Stanford loses, the Buckeyes get a shot to repeat as playoff champs.

Lose and in?
It's worth asking: Could Clemson get in with a loss?

Maybe, especially if Alabama loses, too, and Stanford loses. Now it becomes a North Carolina, Clemson, Ohio State debate. The Tar Heels conference title would give them a huge boost and then it becomes a resume test between the Tigers and Buckeyes.

Notable
■ Mississippi at No. 13 should be in good shape for a bid to the Sugar Bowl as the next best ranked SEC team if Alabama wins.

■ The Big Ten representative in the Rose Bowl will be either the loser of Michigan State-Iowa or Ohio State. The highest ranked team gets the spot.

Manziel won't start Sunday

Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — Browns coach Mike Pettine has picked quarterback Austin Davis over Johnny Manziel to start Sunday against the Cincinnati Bengals.

Davis came off the bench on Monday night and replaced Josh McCown, who will miss the remainder of the season with a broken collarbone. Davis threw a tying touchdown pass and had the Browns in position for a winning field goal, but Travis Coons' 51-yard attempt was blocked by Baltimore and returned 64 yards for a TD as time expired.

Davis completed 7 of 11 passes for 77 yards.

Pettine said Davis "took advantage of his opportunity on Monday night." He said Davis was prepared, played well and put the team in position to win.

Manziel was active for the game, serving as Cleveland's No. 3 quarterback after he was stripped of his starting job by Pettine for recent off-field behavior.

In other NFL news:

■ Rob Gronkowski suffered a bone bruise and sprain of his right knee during the New England Patriots' 30-24 overtime loss to the Denver Broncos on Sunday.

The tight end will be evaluated on a weekly basis and there is no timetable for his return.

■ Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger was removed from the NFL's concussion protocol and planned to practice Wednesday. Roethlisberger said he's been cleared to play Sunday.



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76ers get first victory in Kobe's homecoming

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Kobe Bryant breezed through the Philadelphia 76ers locker room and said to no one in particular, “keep it going, guys.”

His homecoming game spoiled, Bryant said one final goodbye to Philly, which is winless no more.

The 76ers said good riddance to the longest losing streak in major U.S. professional sports — winless in 28 games dating to last season and 0-for-18 to begin this one.

With the spotlight on Bryant during the final game of his career in his hometown, the Sixers stole the show and defeated the Los Angeles Lakers 103-91 on Tuesday night for their first victory of the season.

The Sixers remain tied for the worst start in NBA history with the 2009-10 New Jersey Nets, who also opened 0-18.

It was the first victory for the Sixers since March 25 at Denver.

Coach Brett Brown's team has long languished at the bottom of the NBA standings and reeled off two losing streaks of at least 26 games in his three seasons.

Hours earlier, Bryant felt the love as soon as he entered the arena. He took selfies with fans who might never see him play again, and his presence injected a playoff atmosphere into a city that has lost much of its passion for NBA basketball.

With a packed crowd standing and roaring in appreciation, Bryant was lauded like a hometown hero, not the “Hometown Zero” he was once labeled in Philadelphia's tabloids.

Bryant, who will end his 20-year career this season, opened the first leg of his farewell tour in his hometown and was feted with the kind of reverence and gratitude normally reserved for a Sixers great.

Playing with the shot selection of a pick-up artist, Bryant tried to deliver a special performance in his finale. He buried a step-back three-pointer off the opening tip. He hit another three on the next possession. Bryant made it 3-for-3 and had the crowd chanting “M-V-P!” as he turned back the clock to his championship form.

Bryant scored 20 points on 7-for-26 shooting and made four threes.

The Sixers stayed focused and finished

the job after taking an 80-75 lead into the fourth. They had led after three quarters three other times this season.

Robert Covington scored 23 points and Jerami Grant and Nerlens Noel had 14 for the Sixers.

Wizards 97, Cavaliers 85: John Wall scored a season-high 35 points as Washington handed Cleveland its first home loss of the season.

Mavericks 115, Trail Blazers 112 (OT): Deron Williams had a season-high 30 points for Dallas in Wesley Matthews' first trip back to Portland since signing with the Mavs as a free agent.

Grizzlies 113, Pelicans 104: Marc Gasol scored a career-high 38 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as visiting Memphis defeated New Orleans.

Magic 96, Timberwolves 93: Nikola Vucevic had 18 points and 12 rebounds as Orlando topped host Minnesota.

Nets 94, Suns 91: Brook Lopez scored 23 points as Brooklyn beat Phoenix for its fourth consecutive victory at home.

Penguins end San Jose drought

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — All it took for the Pittsburgh Penguins to end an 18-year drought in San Jose was a couple of fortuitous bounces.

Evgeni Malkin had a goal and two assists and Phil Kessel scored twice to help the Penguins get their first win in San Jose since 1997, 5-1 over the Sharks on Tuesday night.

“They're dangerous at home as everybody knows,” Penguins coach Mike Johnston said. “It's a long time. It's a tough building to win in.”

David Perron added a goal and an assist and Matt Cullen also scored for the Penguins, who had lost 10 straight at the Shark Tank. Pittsburgh had gone winless in 12 games here since beating San Jose 5-2 on Oct. 22, 1997, garnering only one tie during the skid.

Marc-Andre Fleury made 33 saves to help Pittsburgh get off to a strong start on a four-game road trip.

Patrick Marleau scored for the Sharks, who have lost two of three at home following a perfect six-game road trip. Martin Jones made 24 saves.

“It's frustrating when you think you play well and you don't think it's a 5-1 game,” defenseman Paul Martin said. “There were some rebounds, some second-chance opportunities but it seemed like they were always there to slap it into the corner and make us start all over again.”

After years of struggles in San Jose, the Penguins built a 2-0 lead with some help from some fortunate deflections. The only goal in an action-packed first period came when Kessel skated out from behind the net and attempted a centering pass that deflected off Martin's skate and sneaked past Jones on the short side.

“That was puck luck for sure,” said

Kessel, who had just one goal in the previous nine games. “It hit off a guy twice. That was puck luck there.”

Pittsburgh added to the lead early in the second period when Cullen banked a rebound from behind the net off Jones' pad and into the goal for his second of the season.

Kings 2, Canucks 1 (OT): Anze Kopitar scored off a pass from Jeff Carter 2:02 into overtime as host Los Angeles rallied for the victory.

Drew Doughty scored the tying power-play goal early in the third period for the first-place Kings, who won for the sixth time in nine games. Los Angeles won its fourth straight home game on a beautiful finish by Kopitar, who scored his eighth goal of the season.

Flames 4, Stars 3 (SO): Sean Monahan had the clinching goal in the shootout and two assists in regulation, helping host Calgary to the win.

Monahan's shootout goal was the last of three on Antti Niemi, with Joe Colborne and Johnny Gaudreau also finding the net.

The Flames trailed 3-0 after two periods.

Wild 2, Blackhawks 1: Defenseman Ryan Suter drove to the net and poked in a rebound with 7:56 left in the third period, lifting Minnesota over host Chicago.

After Chicago's Corey Crawford made an acrobatic right pad save on Mikael Granlund on a breakaway, Granlund missed on a rebound attempt. Suter then cruised to the net and buried a loose puck that was dangling near the goal line.

Predators 5, Coyotes 2: Filip Forsberg had two goals and an assist, helping host Nashville rally.

Calle Jarnkrok, Mike Ribeiro, and James Neal also scored for the Predators, who

stopped a two-game losing streak. Shea Weber had three assists.

Panthers 3, Blues 1: Derek MacKenzie scored twice in visiting Florida's third straight win.

Brandon Pirri also scored for the Panthers, and Roberto Luongo made 29 saves.

Red Wings 5, Sabres 4 (SO): Brad Richards scored on Detroit's third attempt in a shootout, leading the hosts to the victory.

Justin Abdelkader's second goal with 6:29 to go in regulation pulled the Red Wings into a 4-all tie after they blew a pair of two-goal leads and a one-goal advantage in the third.

Flyers 4, Senators 2: Sean Couturier had an empty-net goal and two assists, leading visiting Philadelphia to its third straight win.

Wayne Simmonds, Shayne Gostisbehere and Evgeny Medvedev also scored for the Flyers, and Steve Mason had 23 saves.

Canadiens 2, Blue Jackets 1: Max Pacioretty scored a power-play goal in the third period, helping host Montreal get the win.

Mike Condon got the start in place of Montreal star Carey Price, who is expected to miss at least six weeks with a lower-body injury. He stopped 22 shots for his ninth win.

Avalanche 2, Devils 1: Matt Duchene scored again for visiting Colorado, and Reto Berra made 27 saves.

Duchene had a franchise-record 11 November goals, and picked up right where he left off on the first day of December. He opened the scoring at 2:10 of the second period with a shot from the right circle that hit Devils goalie Cory Schneider in the left arm and trickled into the net.

Paige, UNC top Maryland

Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Marcus Paige spent the first six games watching from the sideline as his North Carolina teammates had to figure out how to play without their injured floor leader.

His debut Tuesday night made the ninth-ranked Tar Heels look more like the team everyone expected to see.

The senior scored 20 points to help UNC beat No. 2 Maryland 89-81 in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge, showing no ill effects from the broken bone in his right hand nor rust from the layoff.

Paige finished with a 7-for-12 shooting performance and made 4 of 5 three-pointers to go with five assists and one turnover in 34 minutes. Brice Johnson added 16 points for the Tar Heels, who shot 53 percent to hold off Melo Trimble and the Terrapins (6-1).

Trimble finished with 23 points and 12 assists to lead Maryland, which shot 51 percent but committed 22 turnovers that UNC converted into 21 points.

No. 4 Kansas 94, Loyola 61: Wayne Selden Jr. scored 18 points, Perry Ellis added 15 and Kansas used a big second-half run to rout Loyola in Cheick Diallo's much-anticipated debut with the host Jayhawks (5-1).

Diallo, a five-star prospect from Mali, was the subject of an exhaustive investigation by the NCAA into his eligibility. He finally was approved to begin playing this week and had three highlight-worthy dunks, finishing with 13 points, six rebounds and three blocks in 16 minutes.

No. 5 Iowa State 84, North Dakota State 64: Abdel Nader scored 21 points, Jameel McKay had 15 to go with a career-high 19 rebounds for host Iowa State.

Monte Morris had 18 points and six assists for the Cyclones (6-0), who overcame a sluggish outing to post their fifth straight win by double digits.

Georges Niang, a preseason first-team All-American, had 15 for the Cyclones.

No. 8 Villanova 86, Saint Joseph's 72: Kris Jenkins and Josh Hart each scored 18 points and Villanova made 11 three-pointers to beat Saint Joseph's.

Ryan Arcidiacono added 17 points for Villanova (7-0). The Wildcats have won four in a row against the Hawks in the Philadelphia Big Five series.

No. 10 Virginia 64, Ohio State 58: Malcolm Brodgon scored 22 points for his third straight game with at least 20 points to lead Virginia over host Ohio State.

The Cavaliers (6-1) won their fifth straight, but it was the first time in the streak they did not score at least 80.

No. 11 Purdue 72, Pittsburgh 59: A.J. Hammons scored a season-high 24 points off the bench and Ryan Cline made four three-pointers in the second half to lead Purdue past host Pittsburgh.

The Boilermakers improved to 7-0 even with center Isaac Haas limited to just six points and two rebounds due to foul trouble.

No. 21 Miami 77, Nebraska 72 (OT): After winning its first five games by an average of 21 points, Miami has been tested in two straight.

The visiting Hurricanes pulled out an overtime win over Nebraska in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge, bouncing back after a one-point loss to Northeastern on a buzzer-beater last Friday.

Davon Reed's three-pointer gave Miami the lead in overtime and the Hurricanes made three free throws in the last 15 seconds.