

STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, December 3, 2015

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

DOD opens all combat jobs to women

Carter's landmark decision ends ban despite objections by Marine Corps

BY COREY DICKSTEIN, TARA COPP AND TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Thursday opened all military jobs to women, a historic step that removed the final barriers to women in combat and special operations positions despite opposition from the Marine Corps that sought to keep all-male units on the front lines.

"Everyone who is able and willing to serve their country, who can meet the standards, should have the full and equal opportunity to do so," Carter said during a news conference at the Pentagon. "The important factor in making my decision was to have access to every American who can add strength to the force. Now, more than ever, we cannot afford to have barriers limiting our access of talent."

The secretary's decision followed years of studies on the impact that integrating women into the traditionally all-male

units would have on the military following a 2011 congressional mandate that the Defense Department review its policies restricting women from those roles.

In 2013, then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta directed all combat positions be opened to women by Jan. 1, 2016, and he gave the services and the U.S. Special Operations Command three years to provide the department recommendations and data service on whether some front-line combat jobs should remain closed.

The recommendations were delivered Oct. 1 to Carter and Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the U.S. Special Operations Command recommended no job exceptions, Carter said.

"The Marine Corps asked for a partial exception in some areas such as infantry, machine-gunner, fire support reconnaissance and other"

specialties, Carter said. "We are a joint force. And I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force."

Dunford, who had recommended those Marine Corps specialties remain male-only, was notably absent from the announcement. Carter was asked repeatedly whether Dunford's absence indicated a fissure on the issue. Carter said Dunford was not at the podium with him because he was "announcing my decision, I was the one who took this decision."

The Marines in September released the executive summary of a controversial report that led to their recommendation to preclude women from serving in those positions.

The study, which took place while Dunford was still serving as commandant of the Marine Corps, examined 100 female Marines and 400 male Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Twentynine Palms, Calif., and found females were more injury-prone than their male counterparts. The studies

were criticized by researchers who reviewed them as flawed in their methodology, and to date, the data gathered in the study have not been released publicly.

Carter said he found the Marine Corps study "not definitive."

Calling the military a "joint force," he said he found "great value" in having all the services implement women into combat jobs at the same time.

"There will be no exceptions," Carter said. "This means that as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before. They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat."

Since 2013, more than 110,000 formerly male-only positions have opened to female troops. In recent months, women have begun serving on Navy submarines and in once-closed positions in the Army, including field artillery.

US-led coalition ups effort in Syria against militants

Associated Press

LONDON — British Tornado jets struck oilfields in eastern Syria on Thursday that help finance the Islamic State group, and Germany prepared to send reconnaissance aircraft to the Middle East as coalition forces stepped up efforts to fight the militants.

The strikes at the Omar oilfield came only hours after Britain's Parliament authorized military action in Syria against the Islamic State group. Although several of the oilfields already have been hit, Britain chose a target with low risk of collateral damage for its first strike in Syria.

"This strikes a very real blow at the oil and the revenue on which the Daesh terrorists depend," U.K. Defense Secretary Michael Fallon told the BBC, using the Arab acronym for the Islamic State group.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, again accused Turkey of profiting from an oil trade with the Islamic State group. "We know who in Turkey are filling their pockets and allowing terrorists to earn money by selling oil stolen from Syria," he said in his annual state of the nation address.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdo-

gan has denied the allegations.

Fallon confirmed eight more jets were on their way to Britain's base in Cyprus to join the attacks and warned that military action against the Islamic State group could continue for years.

Other allies also moved to get equipment into place as the buildup gained momentum. Germany's government said it planned to send up to six Tornado reconnaissance planes, tanker aircraft and a frigate to help protect the French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle in the eastern Mediterranean but won't actively engage in combat.

Officials seek motive in Calif. massacre

Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — The husband-and-wife attackers who slaughtered 14 people at an employee banquet fired as many as 75 rifle rounds in the assault, left behind three rigged-together pipe bombs with a remote-control device that apparently malfunctioned, and had more than 1,600 more bullets with them when they were gunned down in their SUV, authorities said Thursday.

At their home, they had 12 pipe bombs, tools for making more such explosives, and more than 3,000 more rounds of ammunition, Police Chief Jarrod Burguan said in a grim morn-

ing-after inventory that suggested Wednesday's bloodbath could have been far worse.

Wearing black tactical gear and wielding assault rifles, Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, a county restaurant inspector, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 27, opened fire at a social service center shortly after he slipped away from a banquet he was attending there.

"They came prepared to do what they did, as if they were on a mission," Burguan said.

Four hours later and a few miles away, the couple were shot to death in their rented vehicle in a furious gunbattle with police. During the shootout, the couple fired 76 rounds,

while law officers unleashed about 380, the police chief said.

Twenty-one people were injured before the day was out, including two police officers, authorities said. Two of the wounded were listed in critical condition Thursday.

It was the nation's deadliest mass shooting since the Newtown, Conn., school tragedy three years ago.

As the FBI took over the investigation, authorities were trying to learn why the couple left behind their 6-month-old daughter and went on the rampage in this Southern California city of 214,000.

"There was obviously a mission here. We know that," said

David Bowdich, assistant director of the FBI's Los Angeles office. "We do not know why. We don't know if this was the intended target or if there was something that triggered him to do this immediately."

At the White House, President Barack Obama said after meeting with his national security team that it was "possible this was terrorist-related" but that authorities were unsure. He raised the possibility that it was a workplace dispute or that mixed motives were at play.

Farook was born in the U.S. to a Pakistani family, was raised in Southern California and had been a San Bernardino County employee for five years.

Pentagon agency spent \$150M for villas

USA Today

WASHINGTON — A Pentagon business advocacy agency spent almost \$150 million renting private "villas" and security for a "handful" of staff and visitors in Afghanistan, bypassing government housing that could have saved taxpayers tens of millions of dollars, according to an inspector general's report released Thursday.

The Task Force Business and Stability Operations last month was blasted by members of Congress after the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction found that it had spent \$43 million for a gas station there that should have cost \$500,000.

In the housing case, Inspector General John Sopko, in a letter to Defense Secretary Ash Carter, questioned the need for the "western-style hotel accommodations," flat-screen TVs, private bodyguards and dining services of at least "three-star" quality for government workers and guests.

"If (task force) employees had instead lived at (Department of

Defense) facilities in Afghanistan, where housing, security, and food service are routinely provided at little or no extra charge to DOD organizations, it appears the taxpayers would have saved tens of millions of dollars," Sopko wrote.

Sopko's letter also calls on the Pentagon to divulge more information on who stayed at the villas and approved the expenditures.

The bill for accommodations — 20 percent of the task force's budget — provided housing and security for "no more than five to 10" staffers, former task force employees told investigators, the letter said. The inspector general estimates that housing a staff of 10 at the U.S. Embassy in 2014 would have cost \$1.8 million, and little, or nothing, if they had bunked with the troops at a military base.

Three contractors provided a level of luxury to villa residents in war-torn Afghanistan, which the CIA describes as "extremely poor, landlocked and highly dependent on foreign aid."

USS Missouri memorial will host Fox Sports show

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Traditional ceremonies marking the anniversary of Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor will share the spotlight this year with something much less solemn: sports.

As the National Park Service live-streams Monday's commemoration of the World War II attack's 74th anniversary, Fox Sports will broadcast segments of its weekend game coverage from the deck of the Battleship Missouri Memorial, culminating in the Navy vs. Oregon basketball matchup inside historic Bloch Arena at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Honolulu.

Baseball stars — including Kansas City Royals starting pitcher Jeremy Guthrie, Baltimore Orioles third baseman Manny Machado and Boston Red Sox outfielder and native Hawaiian Shane Victorino — will team with Fox analyst Harold Reynolds to host clinics for local schoolchildren on Friday and for servicemembers' children on Saturday.

Fox Sports 1 will use the Missouri's bow as home base for Saturday's programming, including college basketball and the Big Ten football championship in Indianapolis.

The network is heavily touting Sunday's two-hour live sunrise edition from the Missouri, where Gen. Douglas MacArthur formally accepted the unconditional surrender of Japan on Sept. 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay. Hosts Curt Menefee, Terry Bradshaw, Jimmy Johnson, Howie Long and Michael Strahan will discuss the Dec. 7, 1941, attack and the roles of the USS Arizona and the Missouri, followed by NFL game coverage that includes the defending Super Bowl champion New England Patriots vs. the Philadelphia Eagles.

The Pearl Harbor-based coverage culminates Monday with two college basketball games — Oklahoma vs. Villanova and Navy vs. Oregon — from Bloch Arena, which served as the venue for a Navy band competition the night before the attack.

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Clemson looks to slow Heels

Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Clemson defensive coordinator Brent Venables has spent a lot of time watching No. 8 North Carolina score quickly. And he's sharing them all with players in film sessions that get quite repetitive.

"It's 'How you like this play? How about this play? How about that score?'" Venables said Tuesday. "First play of the Duke game, it's all jacked up, in-state rivalry, then they run the flea flicker. Touchdown, 80 yards."

Venables knows the difficult challenge ahead for No. 1 Clemson (12-0) in slowing down the Tar Heels (11-1) in the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game Saturday night.

North Carolina is 16th nationally in yards gained at better than 494 a game. More impressive, in Venables' view, is how fast the Tar Heels can strike.

"There's a lot of explosive play-makers"

on UNC's offense, Venables said.

But Venables without options; Clemson has a few play-makers on defense, too. Defensive end Shaq Lawson leads the country in tackles for loss. Linebacker B.J. Goodson and Ben Boulware have combined for 234 tackles, 22 of those behind the line of scrimmage.

No one at Clemson was completely sure how long it would take this year's defense to come together. The Tigers lost eight starters off last season's No. 1 ranked defense in the country, including first-round NFL draft picks in defensive end Vic Beasley and linebacker Stephon Anthony.

If that wasn't enough, linebacker Korrin Wiggins hurt his knee in camp and starting defensive tackle D.J. Reader took an extended leave of absence from the team for personal reasons in late August.

Through it all, Clemson ended the regular-season seventh nationally in the Football Bowl Subdivision, allowing 288 yards a game.

"I thought we had a chance to be solid,"

Venables said. "But probably not to the same level" as 2014.

They'll need that to corral the Tar Heels, who've scored 38 points or more in eight of their 12 games this season. They scored 66 points in that Duke contest, then had 59 a week later against Miami on the way to the ACC's Coastal Division crown.

Venables called North Carolina the best offense Clemson's faced all season, including Notre Dame and Florida State. If the Tigers don't bring their best effort, the perfect season and trip to the College Football Playoff could easily slip away Saturday night.

"The margin for error is less because of the opponent," Venables said.

North Carolina coach Larry Fedora is equally awed by Clemson's defense.

"This is best football team we've faced," he said. "I mean, they're the number one team in the country. And they've been that way for how many weeks? So they're really good."

Big Ten matches blue-collar teams

Associated Press

Over the past few seasons under coach Mark Dantonio, Michigan State has become one of the Big Ten's top programs, while embracing seemingly every opportunity to use perceived slights as motivation.

Now the Spartans are in the Big Ten championship game — and they're favored by a few points over an undefeated Iowa team.

Maybe it's the Hawkeyes who should be clamoring about disrespect.

"They're undefeated. They're 12-0," Michigan State quarterback Connor Cook said. "They've beaten some really good opponents, pretty good teams, this year. I don't know what's going on in their locker room. I don't know what they're talking about. But I'm sure they have similar thoughts that go through their head that we've had."

When the fifth-ranked Spartans face the fourth-ranked Hawkeyes in Saturday's showdown, a berth in college football's playoff will almost certainly be at stake. Yet this isn't what many fans have in mind when they think about the glamor teams of the Big Ten. Ohio State, the defending national champion, lost to Michigan State this year. So did Jim Harbaugh and Michigan. Iowa beat Wisconsin and Nebraska, the brand names of the West Division.

Michigan State-Iowa is a blue collar matchup between programs that still have to fight a bit for recognition and respect.

"We're two programs that like to play physical football," Iowa offensive lineman Austin Blythe said. "They're going to play the full 60, and they'll take it into overtime if they have to. Just two really good programs that respect each other and understand what they bring to the table and understand that it's going to be a 60-minute fight."

The Spartans are making their third appearance in the Big Ten title game in five years, but they rarely make major news on national signing day. Iowa's 2015 recruiting class was ranked 51st in the nation by Scout.com, right between Syracuse and Rutgers. Maybe this year's run will help the Hawkeyes attract more top prospects, but it's hard to envision them recruiting the kinds of classes that routinely end up at Ohio State or Alabama.

The Spartans (11-1) have reached 11 wins for the fifth time in the past six years, and coach Mark Dantonio says in some ways, he tried to pattern Michigan State's system after Iowa's.

"They come to play every game," Dantonio said. "Iowa, they always had a workmanlike attitude. They always went to work, they always played people tough, they always seemed to win consistently. They were very well coached, their players played very firm up front on both sides of the ball. That's who we wanted to be."

Top defenses face off for SEC crown

Associated Press

The defensive stars will be all over the field, and even on the sidelines, during the Southeastern Conference championship game.

No. 2 Alabama's Jonathan Allen, Reggie Ragland and others will be in the NFL next season. By then, defensive coordinator Kirby Smart could be head coach at his alma mater, Georgia.

The 18th-ranked Gators have NFL-caliber talent on defense, too, entering Saturday's game at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, starting with cornerback Vernon Hargreaves III and defensive lineman Jonathan Bullard. They have the confidence to go with that elite talent.

"I expect a dominant performance from our defense," Florida cornerback Jalen

Tabor said. "We've got talent at every position and we're coached well at every position, so I expect a lot out of our defense this week."

"Just like any other week, we go into Saturday with the best defense in the nation. We truly believe that."

Alabama shares that belief about its own defense, powered by a loaded front seven. They're the only two defenses ranked in the Top 5 in total defense, scoring defense and sacks.

What's hard to dispute: They're the two best defenses in the SEC, even if Alabama seems to get most of the attention. It could make points hard to come by in the game, and Florida certainly would favor a low-scoring one to support the Gators' sputtering offense.

LSU's Leonard Fournette finished with

180 yards and two touchdowns. Last week, Florida State's Dalvin Cook gained 183 yards with a late surge that included two fourth-quarter touchdowns.

Both defenses are aggressive and opportunistic. Led by Cyrus Jones and Eddie Jackson, Alabama's secondary has returned four interceptions for touchdowns, while Florida has done it twice. The Gators have forced a league-high 24 turnovers, one more than the Tide.

They're also the SEC's top two teams in sacks.

Several Tide defenders are projected as potential first-round draft picks including Ragland, junior defensive tackle A'Shawn Robinson, defensive tackle Jarran Reed and defensive end Allen.

Hogan leads Stanford into Pac-12 final

Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — Ever since taking over as Stanford's starting quarterback the year after Andrew Luck left for the NFL, all Kevin Hogan has done is win games.

One more victory for the seventh-ranked Cardinal (10-2) in the Pac-12 championship game and Hogan will either be the starting quarterback for his team in the Rose Bowl for the third time or leading Stanford into the College Football Playoffs.

While Hogan may lack the high-end, professional potential of former Stanford greats such as Luck, John Elway and Jim Plunkett who went on to be No. 1 overall draft picks after their college careers, his production and winning stands up to any of his predecessors.

Hogan has the most wins of any Stanford

starting quarterback with 34, and ranks fourth in yards passing (9,018), second in completion percentage (66 percent), second in rating (153.4) and fourth in TD passes (71).

But with a conference title game Saturday against No. 24 Southern California followed by a bowl game or playoff berth, Hogan is not ready to reflect on his career.

"There's so much going on in the next week and whatever the chips may fall after that, you can't really pause and think back yet," he said.

Hogan is coming off perhaps his signature performance in his final home game. He went 17-for-21 for 269 yards and four touchdown passes in a 38-36 win over Notre Dame. Hogan also threw the 27-yard pass to Devon Cajuste that helped Stanford rally after allowing the go-ahead score with 30 seconds to win it on Conrad Ukropina's 45-yard field goal

on the final play.

It hasn't always been easy for Hogan, who won the starting job from Josh Nunes midway through his redshirt freshman season in 2012. After taking the Cardinal to the Rose Bowl that season and the next, Hogan endured a difficult junior campaign.

With his father, Jerry, dying of colon cancer, Hogan had his least productive season as the Cardinal lost five games and he played particularly poorly in losses to Notre Dame, Arizona State and Utah.

But after a late-season trip home to visit his father before he died last December, Hogan finished the season with three strong performances and has carried it over to his final season with the Cardinal.

Coach David Shaw credited Hogan's maturity for much of his success this season. He said the difficulties on and off the field in 2014 have added even more depth to Hogan's personality.



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Warriors improve to 20-0

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Stephen Curry scored 40 points in three quarters and the Golden State Warriors defeated the Charlotte Hornets 116-99 on Wednesday night to extend the best start in NBA history to 20-0.

On a night when the Hornets honored Curry's father, Dell, the franchise's career scoring leader, it was his oldest son who stole the spotlight by hitting 14 of 18 shots from the field and going 8-for-11 from three-point range.

Stephen Curry, who grew up in Charlotte and starred at nearby Davidson College, scored 28 points in the pivotal third quarter, including his team's final 24. He hit 10 of 11 shots from the field, including all five threes, to help the Warriors build a 21-point cushion.

The reigning MVP sat out the entire fourth quarter due to the big lead.

Klay Thompson had 15 of his 21 points in the first quarter as the Warriors bolted to an early 15-point lead.

Nicolas Batum led Charlotte with 17 points and eight rebounds.

Lakers 108, Wizards 104: Kobe Bryant scored 12 of his season-high 31 points in the fourth quarter of his final game in Washington to help visiting Los Angeles win.

Julius Randle had 15 points and a career-best 19 rebounds for the Lakers (3-15), who snapped a seven-game losing

streak. Jordan Clarkson added 18 points as Los Angeles finished a stretch of four games in five days.

Bryant played 36 minutes in his second game since announcing his plans to retire after this season, his 20th in the NBA. He left the Verizon Center floor to thunderous applause from what remained from a crowd of 20,356, Washington's third sell-out of the season.

Hawks 96, Raptors 86: Kyle Lowry scored 22 of his season-high 31 points in the fourth quarter, DeMar DeRozan added 17 and Toronto rallied from 17 down in the third to beat host Atlanta.

Lowry overcame flu-like symptoms that forced him from the game in the second period. He returned to begin the third, but didn't build momentum until the fourth when Toronto outscored the Hawks 39-20.

Pacers 103, Clippers 91: Paul George had 31 points and 10 rebounds, and streaking Indiana broke open a close game early in the fourth quarter to beat injury-depleted host Los Angeles for its sixth consecutive victory.

Rodney Stuckey scored 18 points and Jordan Hill had 13 points and eight rebounds for the Pacers, who have won 12 of 14 after opening the season with three straight defeats. Their only losses during that stretch were by four points at Cleveland and one at Chicago.

Spurs 95, Bucks 70: Tim Duncan had 16 points and 10 rebounds in 19 minutes,

and San Antonio remained undefeated at home by beating Milwaukee.

The Bucks set season lows for points and field-goal percentage (33.8) in falling to 2-8 on the road.

Rockets 108, Pelicans 101: James Harden scored 24 points and host Houston overcame a double-digit deficit against New Orleans.

Bulls 99, Nuggets 90: Pau Gasol had 26 points and 19 rebounds to lead host Chicago over struggling Denver.

Gasol shot 12-for-19 from the field and had his fifth consecutive double-double for the Bulls.

Pistons 127, Suns 122 (OT): Reggie Jackson scored 24 of his 34 points after halftime, and host Detroit rallied from 16 down in the fourth quarter to beat Phoenix.

Andre Drummond, the worst free-throw shooter in NBA history, hit a pair from the line with 14.3 seconds left to tie the game at 112, and Eric Bledsoe missed an off-balance jumper at the buzzer.

Knicks 99, 76ers 87: Kristaps Porzingis had 17 points and 10 rebounds to lead host New York over Philadelphia, which played without suspended rookie Jahlil Okafor.

A night after winning their first game this season, the 76ers suspended their leading scorer after the release of a second video provided details of his fight in Boston he hadn't revealed to them.

Duke hammers Indiana

Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — Freshman Brandon Ingram scored a season-best 24 points and No. 7 Duke beat Indiana 94-74 on Wednesday night in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

Amile Jefferson flirted with a triple-double, finishing with 11 rebounds, eight points and eight assists for the Blue Devils (7-1).

Matt Jones added a career-high 23 points with five three-pointers and Grayson Allen had 16 points for Duke, which won its fifth straight by shooting 53 percent and holding Indiana without a field goal for the first 8½ minutes of the second half.

No. 3 Michigan State 71, No. 24 Louisville 67: Denzel Valentine had 25 points and Bryn Forbes scored a season-high 20 to help the host Spartans come back to beat the Cardinals in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

The Spartans (8-0) trailed by 13 in the first half and took their first lead with 6:47 left.

No. 13 Gonzaga 69, Washington State 60: At Pullman, Wash., Kyle Wiltjer scored 22 points and the Bulldogs beat the stubborn Cougars.

Josh Perkins added 16 points, and Silas Melson had 12 for Gonzaga (5-1).

Wisconsin 66, No. 14 Syracuse 58

(OT): Nigel Hayes had 15 points and 12 rebounds, converting a three-point play to break a tie in overtime, and the visiting Badgers beat the Orange in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge.

Syracuse (6-1) fell victim to a determined bunch that had been humbled over the weekend.

No. 16 Vanderbilt 102, Detroit 52: Wade Baldwin IV led seven Commodores in double figures with 20 points, and Vanderbilt routed the Titans in a quick stop at home.

Butler 78, No. 17 Cincinnati 76: Kellen Dunham scored 24 points while leading a second-half comeback, and Roosevelt Jones hit a bank shot with a tenth of a second left, rallying the visiting Bulldogs past the Bearcats.

The Bulldogs (5-1) trailed for most of the second half before Dunham hit consecutive threes that set up a back-and-forth ending.

No. 18 Texas A&M 75, Florida Gulf Coast 65:

Jalen Jones scored 22 points to help the Aggies beat the visiting Eagles.

Danuel House added 15 points for the Aggies (7-1).

No. 22 SMU 75, TCU 70: At Fort Worth, Texas, Nic Moore scored 26 points and Sterling Brown made a tiebreaking scoop shot with 1:37 left to lift the Mustangs over the Horned Frogs.

Moore, last season's American Athletic Conference Player of the Year, had 19 second half points.

No. 23 Providence 89, Hartford 66: Kris Dunn had 16 points, 14 assists and 10 rebounds for the second triple-double of his career, leading the host Friars past the Hawks.

Ben Bentil led the Friars (7-1) with 21 points on 9-for-12 shooting.

No. 25 Baylor 80, Prairie View 41: Johnathan Motley scored a season-high 23 points, Rico Gathers had his 27th career double-double with 15 points and 13 rebounds, and the host Bears routed the Panthers.

Islanders outlast Rangers in shootout

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Two months into the New York Islanders' first season in Brooklyn, a visit from the crosstown-rival New York Rangers provided the most raucous atmosphere in their new home.

Kyle Okposo scored the only goal in the shootout to lift the Islanders to a 2-1 victory Wednesday night.

John Tavares scored in regulation and Jaroslav Halak had 33 saves through overtime and then stopped all three Rangers attempts in the shootout to give the Islanders their fourth win in five games (4-0-1).

"The atmosphere of the game, that was the best we had all year," Halak said. "It's always fun to play against the Rangers. It's a big rivalry for both teams. Obviously I'm glad that we came out on top."

Viktor Stalberg scored the tying goal in the second period, and Henrik Lundqvist had 36 saves for the Rangers. Despite losing for the fourth time in five games (1-3-1), the Rangers left Barclays Center feeling positive about their performance.

"It was a game we needed for ourselves. A nice, good rivalry in a new building. A lot of hostility, good fans here — half and half — and it was good atmosphere for us to be in to get our game going," the Rangers' Dan Girardi said. "We were doing all the little things right. We didn't get the two points but I think we're pretty happy with our effort tonight."

Tavares gave the Islanders the lead with a 5-on-3 power-play goal with 7:38 to go in the second period. As Rangers defensemen Keith Yandle (hooking) and Girardi (delay of game) sat in the penalty box, Tavares cut toward to the slot and snapped his 12th goal of the season past Lundqvist. It was also his 12th score in 32 career games against the Rangers.

The Islanders improved to 11-3-1 in

games in which Tavares recorded a point, and 8-1-1 in games in which the first overall pick in the 2009 draft scored a goal.

Stalberg cut to the front of the net and redirected Marc Staal's shot past Halak to tie it with 1:23 remaining in the period.

The Rangers outshot the Islanders 13-6 in the scoreless first period and were also credited with 11 blocked shots. The Islanders had a 28-15 advantage on shots over the final two periods and overtime.

The Islanders were also 1-for-2 on the power play, while the Rangers finished 0-for-3. The Rangers' power play struggles were highlighted by a failed 4-on-3 in overtime.

"The PK's been great," Islanders coach Jack Capuano said. "The PK not only in overtime but throughout the game, especially the couple (power plays) that they had, I thought we did an excellent job."

Rangers coach Alain Vigneault pointed to the failed 4-on-3 as being the difference.

"We had some real good looks," Vigneault said. "We had some good puck movement, good movement by our three forwards that were on the ice and (Dan Boyle). They got some good saves and some good blocked shots. For us that's probably the game right there, as far as getting two points."

Oilers 3, Bruins 2 (SO): Jordan Eberle scored in the shootout as host Edmonton snapped Boston's five-game winning streak.

Mark Letestu and Matt Hendricks scored in regulation for the Oilers, who improved to 2-3-1 in their last six — with both wins coming in shootouts.

Anders Nilsson had 38 saves through overtime and stopped all three Boston attempts in the tiebreaker.

Torey Krug and Zdeno Chara scored for the Bruins, and Tuukka Rask finished with 34 saves.

Letestu's short-handed goal on a 2-on-1

give-and-go with Hendricks put the Oilers ahead 1-0 with about 9 1/2 minutes to go in the second. Krug's point shot caromed in off Edmonton defenseman Andrej Sekera to tie it with 1:33 left in the period.

Hendricks tipped Letestu's shot past Rask at 9:22 of the third, and Chara tied it again a little more than 7 minutes later.

Lightning 2, Ducks 1: Jonathan Drouin had a goal and an assist in his return from a six-game injury absence, and Ben Bishop made 32 saves to lead visiting Tampa Bay past Anaheim.

Jonathan Marchessault scored the tie-breaking power-play goal late in the second period for the Lightning, who opened a three-game California road trip with their fourth win in six games.

Bishop was solid throughout a defense-dominated game, and the Lightning beat the Ducks for the fourth straight time and the second time in two weeks, following a 5-0 win in Tampa.

Corey Perry scored and John Gibson stopped 20 shots for the Ducks, who have lost three of four. Anaheim lost in regulation at home for just the second time in 11 games.

Jets 6, Maple Leafs 1: Drew Stafford scored twice and Connor Hellebuyck stopped 32 shots to lead host Winnipeg to past Toronto.

Mark Scheifele had a goal and two assists, and Andrew Ladd, Bryan Little and Anthony Peluso also scored for the Jets. Mathieu Perrault also had two assists.

Hellebuyck, playing in his second NHL game, had a strong follow-up to a 3-1 victory against Minnesota on last Friday in his debut.

Michael Grabner scored his first goal of the season for Toronto, and rookie Garret Sparks — also playing his second pro game — finished with 29 saves. He led Toronto to a 3-0 win over Edmonton in his NHL debut Monday.