

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

President-elect on Putin: 'Very smart'

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Moscow is hoping Donald Trump will reconsider the sanctions the U.S. is levying in response to its finding of election hacking, a wait-and-see strategy bolstered by the American president-elect's own approving words for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin has essentially put relations with the U.S. on hold until Trump replaces President Barack Obama on Jan. 20. Though his foreign minister encouraged him to slap back at Washington for the sanctions imposed by Obama, Putin decided that Russia wouldn't immediately retaliate.

"Great move on delay (by V. Putin)," Trump wrote Friday on Twitter. "I always knew he was very smart!"

Praise for a longtime ad-

versary at odds with a sitting American president is remarkable for a president-elect — and the latest signal that U.S.-Russia relations, among other policies, could be getting a makeover from Trump.

Whether he steers the U.S. toward or away from Russia is shaping up as the first major test of his foreign policy disposition and his willingness to buck fellow Republicans, who for years have argued Obama wasn't being tough enough on Russia.

In response to the election hacking he blames on Russia, Obama ordered sanctions on Russian spy agencies, closed two Russian compounds and expelled 35 diplomats the U.S. said were really spies. Brushing off Obama, Putin said Russia would plan steps to restore

U.S. ties "based on the policies that will be carried out by the administration of President D. Trump." Not only would Russia not kick Americans out, Putin said, he was inviting the kids of all U.S. diplomats to the Kremlin's holiday parties.

"At this point, they're trolling Obama," said Olga Oliker, who directs the Russia program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The Obama administration said it had seen Putin's remarks but had nothing more to say.

Russia denies the U.S. intelligence community's assessment that in an attempt to help Trump win the presidency, Moscow orchestrated cyber breaches in which tens of thousands of Democrats' emails were stolen and later made public. Trump, too, has refused to accept that

conclusion and insisted the country should just "move on," though he has agreed to meet next week with intelligence leaders to learn more.

After the U.S. on Thursday issued a report it said exposed Russia's cyber tactics, Putin's aides didn't offer any specific rebuttal. The report included detailed technical information like IP addresses and samples of malware code the U.S. said Russia uses.

There's little certainty about how Trump will actually act on Russia as president. Though he's praised Putin as a strong leader and said it would be ideal for the two countries to stop fighting, he suggested earlier this month the U.S. might mount a new nuclear arms race, triggering anxieties about a return to Cold War-style tensions.

2nd day of Syrian cease-fire marred by fighting

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Parts of Syria saw continued fighting Saturday, on the second day of a nationwide cease-fire intended to pave the way for peace talks between the government and the opposition in the new year.

Activists reported pro-government forces were pressing on several fronts against two strategically located opposition pockets around the capital, Damascus, while Russia's military deployment to Syria reported 12 cease-fire viola-

tions it blamed on rebels Friday. Russia is a key ally of the Syrian government.

Nevertheless, the Russian-and-Turkish-brokered truce held for the most part on a day marked by rain and overcast skies, preserving the possibility for peace talks in the Kazakhstan capital of Astana in the second half of January.

The U.N. Security Council was scheduled to meet Saturday to vote on a resolution to endorse the cease-fire and roadmap to peace beginning with a transitional government for the country.

The resolution also calls for the "rapid, safe and unhindered" access to deliver humanitarian aid throughout the country.

The developments signal the possibility of a diplomatic

breakthrough after nearly six years of conflict that has drawn in world powers, has displaced half the Syrian population, and has killed more than 400,000 people. The parties have defied previous peace initiatives.

It follows months of talks between Ankara and Moscow that culminated in a cease-fire agreement that went into effect Thursday at midnight.

Moscow, along with Iran, provides crucial military support to Syrian President Bashar Assad, while Turkey has long served as a rear base and a source of supplies for the opposition.

The three powers, Russia, Iran, and Turkey, have agreed to sponsor talks between the government and the opposition in Astana if the truce holds.

The Britain-based Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said at least two civilians and five militants have been killed in battles over opposition-held Eastern Ghouta and Barada Valley regions around Damascus since the truce came into effect Thursday at midnight.

The Barada Valley Media Center said Russian and Syrian government aircraft struck villages in the water-rich region for the 10th consecutive day Saturday. The raids have coincided with a severe water shortage in Damascus since Dec. 22. The valley is the region's primary source of water.

The Syrian military on Friday denied attacking the valley, saying it would not violate the truce brokered by Russia and Turkey.

Note to readers

Stripes Lite will not publish on Sunday, Jan 1.

More malware linked to Russia

Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Malware code linked to Russian hackers and found on a Vermont electric utility's computer is further evidence of "predatory" steps taken by that country against the U.S., a Vermont Democratic congressman said Saturday.

The Burlington Electric Department confirmed Friday it had found on one of its laptops the malware code used in Grizzly Steppe, the name Homeland Security has applied to a Russian campaign linked to recent hacks. The company said U.S. utilities were alerted by the Department of Homeland Security on Thursday of the code.

"This attack shows how rampant Russian hacking is. It's systemic, relentless, predatory," Rep. Peter Welch said in a statement. "They will hack everywhere, even Vermont, in pursuit of opportunities to disrupt our country."

Welch said the breach also underscores that sanctions President Barack Obama took against Russia this week were warranted. Russia, which has denied hacking U.S. systems,

has been accused of interference in the U.S. presidential election by hacking American political sites and email accounts.

Sen. Patrick Leahy said the latest discovery of the malware "goes beyond hackers having electronic joy rides." It is the latest example that state-sponsored Russian hacking is a serious threat, the Vermont Democrat said in a statement Friday.

The Washington Post first reported on the Vermont utility's discovery of the malware. Burlington Electric, which is municipally owned, confirmed in an emailed statement to The Associated Press that it detected the malware in a laptop not connected to its grid systems. It said it took "immediate action to isolate the laptop and alerted federal officials."

"Our team is working with federal officials to trace this malware and prevent any other attempts to infiltrate utility systems," the company said.

It said it had briefed state officials and would fully support an investigation into the potential Russian hack. Democratic Gov. Peter Shumlin said his admin-

istration has been in touch with the federal government and the state's utilities.

"Vermonters and all Americans should be both alarmed and outraged that one of the world's leading thugs, (Russian President) Vladimir Putin, has been attempting to hack our electric grid, which we rely upon to support our quality-of-life, economy, health, and safety," the governor said in a statement.

He said the hacking episode should highlight the urgent need for the federal government to "vigorously pursue and put an end to this sort of Russian meddling."

Burlington Electric, which says it's "at the forefront of the green energy revolution," is one of the state's two largest electric utilities. The other, Colchester-based Green Mountain Power, said its systems were secure.

Green Mountain Power, which serves about 265,000 residential and business customers, said it was thoroughly reviewed recently for safety by Homeland Security. It said it would continue to rigorously monitor its systems and "remain vigilant."

2nd victim of Guard helo crash recovered

LA PORTE, Texas — Army officials say searchers have recovered the body of the second soldier killed when a Texas Army National Guard helicopter broke apart on a routine training mission and crashed into Galveston Bay about 25 miles southeast of Houston.

Witnesses said the Apache helicopter based at nearby Ellington Field broke up in the air Wednesday and plunged into the bay about 25 yards offshore near a vacant cruise ship terminal.

The Army identified the two crewmen killed as Chief Warrant Officer 3 Dustin Lee Mortenson, 32, of League City, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Lucas Maurice Lowe, 33, of Hardin.

An Army team from Fort Rucker, Ala., is investigating. Officials have said it will be at least a month before any details of the investigation are released.

Va. jury finds Marine reservist guilty of rape

STAFFORD, Va. — A Stafford County jury has found a Marine Corps reservist guilty of sexually assaulting a fellow reservist at his home.

The (Fredericksburg, Va.) Free Lance-Star reported the jury returned the verdict Friday against Michael Andrew Maldini, 37. He was convicted on charges of rape, attempted sodomy and aggravated sexual battery.

Maldini's accuser testified that he all but ordered her to drink alcohol and then forced her to have sex at his townhouse in February.

Maldini and his attorneys said the encounter was consensual.

According to the newspaper, Maldini was sentenced to 50 years on the rape charge, five years on the attempted sodomy charge, and 20 years for sexual battery. He also faces a \$100,000 fine.

From The Associated Press

Surge in Central Americans drives jump in border arrests

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Central Americans attempting to enter the United States illegally on the nation's border with Mexico helped drive a 23 percent increase in U.S. Border Patrol arrests during the 2016 fiscal year, according to figures released Friday.

Apprehensions surged to 415,816 during the 12-month period ended Sept. 30, from a 44-year low of 337,117 during the same period a year earlier, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said.

Still, the most recent num-

bers represent the Border Patrol's fifth-lowest arrest tally since 1972 and were far below numbers seen in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The number of Central Americans stopped during the 2016 fiscal year by the Border Patrol surpassed the number of Mexicans, as it did for the first time in 2014.

Many were families and unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras that DHS says are fleeing poverty and violence, a shift from earlier years when crossers were largely adult

men from Mexico.

DHS said in its year-end report that "a growing share" of people entering the country illegally surrender to authorities to seek humanitarian protection, instead of trying to evade capture. That trend has exacerbated backlogs in immigration courts, which determine whether to grant asylum.

DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson credited decades of spending on border security for the sharp decline in arrests over time. Border Patrol arrests peaked at 1.7 million in 2000 — quadruple the amount in 2016.

Agencies in hiring frenzy as Trump's inauguration nears

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Several federal agencies are accelerating hiring in the final days of President Barack Obama's administration to ensure that as many new employees as possible are in place before President-elect Donald Trump imposes a promised hiring freeze.

Leaders at these agencies are filling open positions with transfers and outside hires, and making internal promotions before Trump takes office Jan. 20, according to internal documents and interviews.

The hiring could increase tensions between the Trump transition team and the Obama administration — a relationship that has grown worse in recent days due to disagreements over how the United States should handle its relationship with Israel and the issuance of new sanctions against Russia over its role in hacking incidents tied to the election.

Sean Spicer, the incoming White House press secretary, said in an interview late Friday that an agreement was struck in November that no new hires would be made after Dec. 1.

Spicer said the offer to institute the freeze was made by Andrew Mayock, deputy director for management at the White House Office of Management and Budget.

The internal pressure to hire is so intense in some corners of the government that at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is bringing on hundreds of employees, human-resources officials were ordered to cancel their year-end holiday vacations to process paperwork and make offers to new hires.

The Transportation Security Administration, the National Park Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and parts of the Agriculture and Labor departments are all rushing to add new hires.

The hiring highlights the anxiety that many federal employees, managers and high-ranking political appointees feel as they prepare to hand off their agencies to a president who has called many of their missions into question and pledged to halt future hiring.

Trump has promised that in his first 100 days in office, he will freeze hiring by not re-

placing employees who leave, regardless of their workload or workforce needs. The military and employees serving in public health and safety roles would be exempt, according to the president-elect's Contract with the American Voter.

A spokesman for the Office of Personnel Management, which sets hiring policy for the government, said agencies make their own decisions on when to hire and how many jobs to fill, provided they have enough money in their budget.

USAJobs, the largest federal job board, posted 8,410 more open positions in November and December than during the same period last year, according to the OPM. That represents an increase of more than 16 percent compared with 2015.

The OMB has told outgoing Obama officials to have new hires in place by the final pay period before Inauguration Day, according to multiple administration officials.

Such a move would make it harder for the next administration to rescind employment offers if it makes a freeze retroactive to Election Day, which is what President Ronald Reagan did after taking office in 1981.

Mass. court reinstates conviction in Skakel case

Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — Kennedy cousin Michael Skakel faces a possible return to prison after the state Supreme Court reinstated his murder conviction in the killing of Martha Moxley in 1975, when they were 15 years old and neighbors in a wealthy enclave.

The court issued a 4-3 decision Friday that rejected a lower court's ruling that Skakel's trial lawyer didn't adequately represent him. Justice Peter T. Zarella wrote that the majority of the court concluded Skakel's lawyer "rendered constitutionally adequate representation."

It was unclear if Skakel, now 56, will be sent back to prison or allowed to remain free if he appeals or asks the high court to reconsider.

Skakel, a nephew of Robert F. Kennedy's widow, Ethel Kennedy, was convicted of murder in 2002 and was sentenced to 20 years to life in prison in the killing of Moxley, who was bludgeoned with a golf club, in Greenwich.

Skakel was freed in 2013 on \$1.2 million bail after a judge granted him a new trial based on claims his trial lawyer, Michael Sherman, made a series of poor decisions in representing him.

'Turbocharged storm' clobbers New England

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — The most powerful nor'easter in nearly two years brought heavy snow, powerful winds and even thunder and lightning to northern New England, leaving tens of thousands of people in the dark Friday and burying some towns under 2 feet of snow.

More than 100,000 homes and businesses in Maine were without electricity at the storm's peak, and residents were warned that it could take days to restore service. The

National Weather Service received reports of snow falling at up to 6 inches per hour.

"It went from just a garden-variety, low-pressure system to a turbocharged storm," meteorologist Eric Schwibs said.

In Brunswick, resident Jason Weymouth went to bed with a sense of dread as powerful thunderclaps accompanied the falling snow.

"It hit over the house, and it was pretty loud and very strong and very unusual. That set me a little bit on edge," he said.

By Friday morning, he was among the thousands of Maine residents without power. Compounding his misery, his snowblower was unable to cope with the heavy snow and his wood-carving shop was knocked offline for the day.

The storm's fury walloped some places and skipped others as powerful bands of snow buried some communities while others just miles away received mostly rain.

Hundreds of cars slid off roads from the beginning of

the storm on Thursday through Friday morning, when the sun appeared. In Vermont, a 69-year-old man was killed in Cornwall when his car went off the road in slippery conditions Thursday and crashed into a tree, state police said.

In Maine, the storm was believed to have contributed to a fatal fire in the town of Pownal. The victim's power had gone out, and investigators suspect he was using an alternative heat source when he died early Friday.

Boko Haram fighters urged to kill, abduct

Associated Press

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Boko Haram's leader urges his fighters to "kill, slaughter and abduct ... and detonate bombs everywhere," in a new video that denies Nigerian government claims that his Islamic extremist group has been crushed.

President Muhammadu Buhari declared last week that soldiers had driven Boko Haram from its last forest enclave in the northeast, boasting "the terrorists are on the run, and no longer have a place to hide."

In a video posted on YouTube, Abubakar Shekau announces: "I am here, well and

alive" and that "the battle is just beginning."

Nigeria's military has claimed to have killed Shekau at least three times and earlier this year declared he had been fatally wounded. This week, the army said it seized Shekau's Quran in the Sambisa Forest assault — wanting to indicate he was on the run.

Each time such claims are made, the Boko Haram leader reappears in a video to mock them.

In the latest, posted on YouTube on Dec. 29, he reiterates that "our mission is to establish an Islamic caliphate" in Nigeria — whose 180 million people

are divided almost equally between mainly Muslims in the north and a predominantly Christian south.

"Kill all the infidels and detonate bombs everywhere," Shekau says in the video. "Yes! I want you to kill, slaughter and abduct."

He makes no mention of some 200 schoolgirls kidnapped from a school in Chibok town who were believed to be held in the Sambisa Forest.

Nigeria is unlikely to see an end soon to the deadly suicide bombings, village attacks and assaults on remote military outposts in northeastern Nigeria. The Islamic State group,

to which one faction of Boko Haram belongs, announced an attack on an army barracks "killed and wounded many" soldiers on Dec. 22 — the same day the army said it seized the forest hideout.

Already, there are reports that the insurgents have been regrouping south of their north-eastern stronghold.

The seven-year-old Islamic uprising has killed more than 20,000 people, spread across Nigeria's borders, driven 2.6 million from their homes and created a humanitarian disaster with some 5 million people facing starvation.

'Dadbod,' 'fleek,' 'bigly' among words on university's ban list

Associated Press

DETROIT — You, sir, (or ma'am): Focus, if you will, on a historic, on fleek listicle containing words nominated for bigly banishment. But don't convene a town hall meeting or get your dandruff up in the echo chamber over them.

Northern Michigan's Lake Superior State University on Saturday released its 42nd annual List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Misuse, Overuse and General Uselessness.

The tongue-in-cheek, non-binding list comes from suggestions to the Sault Ste. Marie school. It includes "you, sir," "focus," "town hall meeting," "historic," "echo chamber," "on fleek," "bigly," "listicle" and "get your dandruff up," an apparent substitute for "dander," its hair-and-skin kin.

The others were "Frankenfruit," "bete noire," "guesstimate," "ghost," "dadbod," "selfie drone," "manicured," "post-truth," "disruption" and "831" — a texting encryption of "I love you" (eight letters, three words, one meaning).

The divisive 2016 election influenced nominations, and was reflected in the inclusion of

"bigly" and "post-truth."

"Bigly" also made Merriam-Webster's Top 10 for 2016. President-elect Donald Trump was fond this year of saying "big league" but making it sound like "bigly," an archaic adverb or adjective dating to around 1400.

"Post-truth," a term sometimes used to describe the current political climate, is Oxford Dictionaries' word of the year.

John Shibley, Lake Superior State spokesman and list-compiler in chief, said "lots of political vitriol" came in this year, with people wanting to ban "President Trump," "Crooked Hillary" and "Electoral College." Shibley said he "made an editorial decision not to wade into that swamp," — drained or otherwise.

He said all words that made the final list garnered 200-300 votes apiece, and the top vote-getter was "echo chamber," with more than 500 submissions.

Another Michigan school takes the opposite approach: Detroit's Wayne State University attempts through its Word Warriors campaign to exhume worthy words that have fallen out of favor. This year's list included "absquatulate," which means to discreetly and abruptly leave a place, such as a party.

21 rescued after being stranded 100 feet in air

Associated Press

BUENA PARK, Calif. — Firefighters using ropes and harnesses safely lowered 21 people from an amusement park ride stuck 100 feet in the air for more than six hours at Southern California's Knott's Berry Farm, officials said.

The riders, both children and adults, were harnessed to firefighters and hugging them tightly as they were lowered one by one from the Sky Cabin Friday night.

One girl who appeared to be about 10 years old could be seen smiling as she descended, her turquoise Converse sneakers dangling high above the crowd of onlookers.

Firefighters briefly pulled a large, cherry-picker crane up to the ride but decided not to use it and returned to using the ropes.

The tourists and fun-seekers on the slow-moving ride are most likely hungry, claustrophobic and badly in need of a bathroom, but Orange County Fire authorities and park officials have both said they are not in danger.

"We're visiting from Oregon," rider Gave Javage told KNBC-

TV via cellphone. "There's nine in our group. "My son and his cousin are down below. They elected not to go on the ride. Good choice for them, huh?"

All three of Eddie Kim's daughters were stuck on the ride while he waited below for them to be rescued.

He told KTTV-TV that all three were fine, but "my little girl, 8-year-old girl, she came down, and she's crying."

The Sky Cabin is a slow-moving attraction where riders in a circular tram travel up a large cylinder, which firefighters had to climb to begin saving the passengers. The ride is fully enclosed and is more like being in a room than on a ride. The Knott's website calls it "mild" and says it's meant to give "a 360 degree panoramic view of Orange County, Catalina Island, and the LA basin."

It was 100 feet high when it stopped at about 2 p.m., Knott's said in a statement. Park mechanics made several attempts to bring it down before calling the fire department. An operator was among the 21 on the ride and was in constant contact with the ground.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Probe finds pet dogs killed pet wallabies

WA SPOKANE — A veterinarian's report shows three pet wallabies killed in their Spokane yard were mauled by their owner's two dogs.

The Spokesman-Review reported that the owner had alerted police after she discovered the dead wallabies earlier this month and said a person was to blame. But an investigation by the Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service determined her mastiff and pit bull-Dalmatian mix were responsible.

The two dogs have been declared potentially dangerous.

The report said the wallabies were covered in canine bite marks and died of asphyxiation due to "crushing holds" to their necks.

Man drives drunk, hits several cars with plow

MA HOLLISTON — Authorities said a Massachusetts man drove drunk and hit several vehicles with a plow on his pickup truck on his way home, injuring one person.

The MetroWest Daily News reported that Christopher Pope, 35, of Holliston, was arraigned Tuesday on charges of operating a vehicle under the influence of liquor, reckless driving and other offenses. He was released without bail.

Police said Pope hit several cars Tuesday in Holliston, a town located about 30 miles southwest of Boston. Prosecutors said most were empty, but one car had two occupants. They say one person had to go to the hospital to be treated for an injury.

Police say they arrested Pope at his home after the crashes.

Son flips UTV in snow, pins dad underneath

AZ HEBER-OVER-GAARD — Authorities said an 82-year-old man was pinned under a vehicle after his 51-year-old son tried to spin an off-roading vehicle on ice and ended up flipping it instead.

The son, identified as John Galavis, was believed to be driving under the influence of alcohol and was booked into Navajo County Jail on drunk-driving charges.

The Navajo County Sheriff's Office said the incident happened Tuesday near Black Canyon Lake and that two boys, ages 8 and 9, were also in the utility task vehicle, which are similar to all-terrain vehicles.

Deputies had to use tow straps to lift the UTV off the elderly man, who was hospitalized.

DUI conviction tossed for man in wheelchair

OR PORTLAND — The Oregon Court of Appeals has reversed the conviction of a wheelchair user who had been found guilty of driving under the influence of intoxicants.

James Greene, of Waldport, was arrested in November 2012 after entering a crosswalk in a motorized wheelchair and striking the side of a moving pickup. Police determined he was impaired by alcohol and drugs, and a jury convicted him of drunken driving.

In his appeal, Greene argued that he should have been considered a pedestrian, not subject to the DUI law.

Grandma's surprising find in spare room

SC BEAUFORT — A South Carolina grand-

mother made a surprising discovery when she found a stolen camera and drug paraphernalia in a detached spare room on her property.

The Beaufort Gazette reported that the woman went into the room on her Lady's Island property last week and found a blue pipe and the lingering smell of marijuana. The camera had another family's photos on it.

She told the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office three young men had been in her driveway the night before. She called out to ask if her grandson was with them, and they said no.

She told deputies one of them was a boy who she sometimes lets onto her property in hopes of keeping him out of trouble.

Neighbors told deputies he had been hiding in the spare room, but ran when authorities arrived.

Suspect sought in case of safe thefts

NY NEW YORK — Police are looking for a suspect who stole two safes containing cash and personal documents from a New York City apartment.

The NYPD said the suspect entered the Bronx apartment on Wednesday after ringing the tenant's door buzzer and telling her to come downstairs to sign for a package.

When the woman didn't find anyone in the lobby, she returned to the apartment, where she was confronted by the suspect.

Police said the man displayed a gun and dragged her by the hair into the bedroom. He then struck her on the head with the butt of the gun and removed a small safe.

The suspect then dragged the woman to another room, where he removed another small safe. He then fled.

G is for guilty: Graffiti vandal gets jail time

MA PITTSFIELD — A Pittsfield man authorities said spray-painted the letter "G" on about 100 properties around the city has been sentenced to three months in jail.

The Berkshire Eagle reported that George O'Neil, 39, was sentenced Wednesday after pleading guilty to nine counts of vandalism.

Even though there were only nine formal complaints made to authorities, prosecutors say he vandalized about 100 properties, including one new building.

The letter "G" appeared in several different colors.

Police estimate the acts occurred between Sept. 1 and Oct. 20. He was apprehended last month.

Wild coyote unwanted by some in major park

GA ATLANTA — Wildlife officials said they're hoping a coyote roaming a major park in Atlanta's bustling midtown district will move on, but they note the animal might be sticking around because people are giving it food.

Spokeswoman Robin Hill, with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, said a biologist spotted the coyote in Piedmont Park on Saturday and saw people leaving it food.

In video shot by WSB-TV, the coyote seemed undeterred by barking dogs and gawkers coming near it. Jeff Porubsky told the station he has dogs and children and feared coyotes could pose a danger to them.

From wire reports

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Rousey's title shot ends in first round

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Ronda Rousey's UFC comeback didn't even last a minute.

Rousey was stopped 48 seconds into her first fight in 13 months Friday night, losing to bantamweight champion Amanda Nunes at UFC 207.

Rousey (12-2) never managed to get her footing against Nunes (14-4), who rocked Rousey with her very first punches. Rousey showed little defensive acumen as she staggered and stumbled backward with Nunes relentlessly pursuing her and landing 27 punches in the brief bout.

"Forget about Ronda Rousey!" Nunes shouted to the sell-out crowd. "She's going to go do movies. Forget about her. She has a lot of money already."

Indeed, Rousey's future in the sport is clearly in question. The biggest star in the women's game, who left the arena without giving an interview, is likely considering retirement shortly before her 30th birthday.

"That's it for her," Nunes said. "For sure, she's going to retire."

Referee Herb Dean stopped the bout with Rousey still on

her feet, and Rousey briefly protested the stoppage before leaving the cage in her mother's arms. Nunes put her finger to her lips and circled the cage after the stoppage, pausing to taunt Rousey's much-maligned coach, Edmond Tarverdyan.

"Her coach put some crazy things in her head, and her career started going down," Nunes said. "I'm the real striker here."

Cody Garbrandt won the men's bantamweight title in the penultimate bout at UFC 207, battering champion Dominick Cruz to earn a surprising decision victory at T-Mobile Arena in the promotion's traditional end-of-the-year show in its hometown.

But the sellout crowd left shocked when Rousey couldn't compete in her first fight since losing her belt to Holly Holm 13 months ago in her first career defeat.

Rousey became arguably the world's most famous female athlete and a combat sports trailblazer while she rocketed atop the UFC, but a year away from the sport apparently did little to heal the holes in her game. She made a guaranteed

\$3 million for her comeback bout, while Nunes' guaranteed payday was just \$200,000.

"I knew I was going to beat (Rousey)," Nunes said. "I'm the best on the planet."

Rousey hadn't fought since November 2015, when Holly Holm stopped her with a head kick in one of the biggest upsets in MMA history. Rousey had never lost or been in much trouble while the former Olympic judo medalist earned a series of one-sided victories, but Holm's veteran striking made Rousey look unprepared.

Rousey's return fight was similar, but even quicker.

Nunes claimed the belt at UFC 200 in July with a violent stoppage of Miesha Tate, who had beaten Holm in March. Nunes made an impressive ascent after losing three fights earlier in her career to opponents beaten easily by Rousey.

Rousey nearly vanished from public view after her first loss, taking time away from the gym and attending to her acting career. The UFC also was sold during her absence to WME-IMG, the entertainment conglomerate that also represents Rousey's career.

But Rousey refused to promote this pay-per-view show, leaving Cruz, Garbrandt and Nunes to do most of the work. While Rousey's media blackout will hurt her cut of the pay-per-view revenue, it didn't affect her guaranteed payday, which matched Conor McGregor for the biggest disclosed check in UFC history.

Earlier, Garbrandt (11-0) remained unbeaten with a virtuoso performance to claim the belt held for the past 11 months by Cruz (22-2), who ended up with a gaping cut over his left eye.

Garbrandt used precise striking, multiple takedowns and remarkable charisma to win over the judges, who all favored him by scores of 48-46, 48-46 and 48-47.

Garbrandt's first title defense could be against T.J. Dillashaw, who dominated John Lineker in a unanimous-decision victory moments earlier at UFC 207, winning 30-26 on all three cards. Dillashaw (15-3) showed off precise striking and a superior ground game to trounce the Brazilian brawler.

Air Force takes to air beat S. Alabama in Arizona Bowl

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Air Force could not get its usually reliable triple option rolling. South Alabama's defenders clogged the inside lanes and used their speed to keep the Falcons from getting to the edge.

Air Force countered by going to the air, something it rarely does.

Arion Worthman threw for 207 yards to balance out Air Force's run-heavy offense, Jacobi Owens scored two touchdowns and the Falcons overcame a sluggish start to beat South Alabama 45-21 in Arizona Bowl on Friday.

"They really were committed to the run and force us to throw," said Worthman, who also had 71 yards on 21 car-

ries. "We were able to hit some passes early and throughout the entire game."

Air Force (10-3) struggled to get its triple-option going, falling into an 18-point first-half hole. Once the Falcons got rolling, they couldn't be stopped, scoring 42 straight points to turn it into a rout.

Worthman was the trigger, jump-starting Air Force's option while completing 7 of 10 passes, including a 75-yard touchdown to Jalen Robinette to open the second half.

The surprise contribution from Worthman — he had 339 total yards entering Friday — caught the Jaguars off-guard and opened up the run game a little more for the Falcons.

"They did some things in the passing game that we didn't see

coming into the game," South Alabama linebacker Darrell Songy said. "We just needed to adjust better during the game."

South Alabama (6-7) appeared to be headed toward its first bowl win after jumping on the Falcons early, starting with Dallas Davis' 75-yard touchdown pass to Josh Magee on the game's first play.

The Jaguars couldn't sustain their early offensive success or stop the Falcons to lose a bowl game for the second time in three seasons.

Davis threw for 245 yards and a touchdown, but also had an interception and lost a fumble. Magee had five catches for 154 yards.

"I told the kids in the locker room that we've been a Divi-

sion I program for four years and we're not where you want to be yet," South Alabama coach Joey Jones said "But they pushed the cart way up the hill today."

South Alabama landed the first blows by hitting a few long passes.

Davis followed his opening TD throwing by hitting Chris Lewis on a 51-yard pass to set up Dami Ayoola's 2-yard TD run. Davis next found Magee on a 37-yard pass, then scored himself on a 4-yard run that put the Jaguars up 21-3.

South Alabama also seemed to have the combination for stopping Air Force's tricky triple-option, the Falcons to a pair of field goals into the second quarter.

FSU holds off Michigan in Orange Bowl

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Deondre Francois threw a 12-yard touchdown pass to Nyquan Murray with 36 seconds remaining, and No. 10 Florida State beat No. 6 Michigan 33-32 in a wild Orange Bowl on Friday night.

Francois threw for two scores — both to Murray — and ran for another for the Seminoles (10-3). They got 145 yards rushing from Dalvin Cook and recovered after wasting a 12-point lead midway through the fourth.

Chris Evans had a 30-yard touchdown run and Khalid Hill an 8-yard scoring catch in the final minutes for Michigan (10-3), which also got a defensive conversion when Josh Metellus ran a blocked extra point back after the second Francois-Murray TD.

But Michigan turned the ball over on its final possession, and the Seminoles held on to win a game where the teams combined for 23 points and two lead changes in the final 5:22.

Evans' scoring run put the Wolverines up 30-27, but Florida State's Keith Gavin swung momentum back to the Seminoles with a 66-yard kickoff return right up the middle — setting up the drive where his team would take the lead for good.

Michigan played without injured star linebacker Jabrill Peppers, and lost tight end Jake Butt to what appeared to be a knee injury early in the second quarter.

Sun Bowl

No. 16 Stanford 25, North Carolina 23: At El Paso, Texas, Bryce Love took over for the absent Christian McCaffrey in the Cardinal backfield, running for 119 yards and catching a 49-yard touchdown pass to help Stanford beat the Tar Heels.

Stanford (10-3) held on after North Carolina (8-5) pulled within two with 25 seconds left on Mitch Trubisky's 2-yard pass to Bug Howard, sacking Trubisky on the 2-point conversion try.

McCaffrey skipped the bowl game to focus on his NFL career.

Stanford took a 25-17 lead on Conrad Ukropina's 27-yard field goal with 3:23 left. North Carolina was forced to punt on its next series, but used two timeouts to get the ball back.

After taking over at their own 3, the Tar Heels drove 97 yards in 10 plays and 1:11. After competing passes of 44 and 27 yards, Trubisky capped the drive with the 2-yard scoring pass to Howard.

Stanford then sacked Trubisky on the 2-point try, a rush led by Solomon Thomas forcing the quarterback to retreat before being taken down. Thomas was selected the game's MVP.

Stanford safety Dallas Lloyd intercepted two of Trubisky's passes, returning the second 19 yards for a touchdown to give Stanford a 22-17 lead early in the fourth quarter.

Music City Bowl

Tennessee 38, No. 24 Ne-

braska 24: At Nashville, Tenn., Joshua Dobbs ran for three touchdowns and 118 yards and threw for 291 yards and another score in the Volunteers' victory over the Cornhuskers.

Tennessee (9-4) beat a Big Ten team in a bowl for the third straight year and notched their first win in three tries against Nebraska. It's the first time the Volunteers have won three straight bowls since 1994-1996 when Peyton Manning was quarterback for the Vols.

Nebraska (9-4) ended the season with two straight losses. The Cornhuskers lost four of their final six after rising as high as No. 7 in the rankings.

Liberty Bowl

Georgia 31, TCU 23: At Memphis, Tenn., Nick Chubb ran for 142 yards and a touchdown, sending Georgia past TCU for the Bulldogs' third bowl victory in three years.

Georgia (8-5) sent TCU (6-7) to its third losing year in Gary Patterson's 16 full seasons as coach.

No. 2 UCLA bounces back from loss, beats Oregon St.

Associated Press

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Lonzo Ball had 23 points, including four three-pointers, and No. 2 UCLA rebounded from a loss to Oregon earlier in the week with a 76-63 victory over Oregon State on Friday night.

T.J. Leaf added 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Aaron Holiday had 14 points for the Bruins (14-2, 1-1 Pac-12), who led by as many as 14 points.

Stephen Thompson Jr. had 25 points for the Beavers (4-11, 0-2).

No. 3 Kansas 86, TCU 80: Frank Mason III scored 22 points and the visiting Jayhawks won their 12th consecutive game and 26th straight conference opener, beating the Horned frogs to start Big 12 play.

No. 4 Baylor 76, Oklahoma 50: At Norman, Okla., Johna-

than Motley had 19 points and 13 rebounds as the undefeated Bears prevailed in the Big 12 opener for both teams.

No. 11 West Virginia 92, Oklahoma St. 75: Daxter Miles Jr. scored 22 points and Jevon Carter had 15 points and six assists to lead the visiting Mountaineers in the Big 12 opener for both teams.

No. 18 Arizona 67, California 62: Dusan Ristic scored 16 points and the visiting Wildcats overcame a sluggish and sloppy first half in the Pac-12 opener for both teams.

No. 21 Oregon 84, No. 21 Southern Cal 61: Dillon Brooks scored a season-high 28 points and Dylan Ennis added 21 as the host Ducks handed the Trojans' their first loss of the season.

Brooks, a preseason All-America, shot 9-for-10 from the

field, including 4-for-4 on three-pointers, and 6-for-6 from the free-throw line two nights after his last-second three knocked off No. 2 UCLA.

Service academies

Lehigh 66, Army 59: At West Point, N.Y., Tim Kempton scored 20 points and grabbed 14 rebounds as the Mountain Hawks won their fourth straight and kicked off the Patriot League season with a win over the Black Knights.

Coming off a run of three straight games scoring 90 or more points, the Mountain Hawks limited Army to 35.5 percent shooting from the field, but the Black Knights hit 11 of 32 from three-point range to stay close.

Meanwhile Lehigh struggled shooting from behind lines, hitting just 3 of 15 shots from be-

hind the three-point stripe and 13 of 25 from the free-throw line.

Bucknell 59, Navy 55: Kimbal Mackenzie had 22 points and five steals and the visiting Bison rallied in the second half to beat the Midshipmen in the Patriot League opener for both teams.

Bucknell (9-5) trailed 36-23 after Bryce Dulin's layup with a little more than a minute gone by in the second half. The score remained 36-27 for more than four minutes and Mackenzie scored the final six points in a 7-0 run that pulled the Bison within one, 46-45, with 5:50 left.

Zach Thomas made it 53-all on a layup with 1:44 to go and Stephen Brown's layup 31 seconds later put Bucknell up for good.

Rookie Dell gets shutout in Sharks' win

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Rookie Aaron Dell was more impressed with his teammates congratulating him than he was about his own performance. He even thanked the opposing coach, with whom he worked with in the past.

Dell stopped 21 shots to get his first career shutout and the San Jose Sharks beat the Philadelphia Flyers 2-0 on Friday night.

"It still feels the same to me," Dell said. "I try to play every game the same way. I think I had an easy night. There was a chance every once in a while. It was big for me to get that congratulations from the guy."

Dell, undrafted, played with the Allen Americans in the Philadelphia organization before signing with the Sharks as a free agent in March of 2015.

"It was nice to get that against guys I know," Dell said. "He (Dave Hakstol) was a big part of my career. He did a lot to get me where I am."

Patrick Marleau scored on a power play late in the first period, and the Sharks won their fourth straight and eighth of nine. Justin Braun added a late goal.

"It's always nice to get that first point," Marleau said. "Pickles made a good shot and it was just lying there."

Marleau has now scored a game-winning goal against every NHL team. He has 95 career game-winners, ninth all-time.

"That's insane," Dell said. "That's quite

an achievement. I need to congratulate him."

Flyers goalie Steve Mason left following the first period. He was hit by Joe Thornton's stick on an exposed part of his hand. Thornton was skating through the crease and collided with Mason, who saved 11 of 12 shots.

"I didn't think it was deliberate by any means," Philadelphia's Wayne Simmonds said. "He's going to the crease and going through the goalie."

Anthony Stolarz was excellent in relief, keeping the Flyers in the game with 21 saves in 22 chances.

"Stoli did a great job," Philadelphia's Andrew MacDonald said. "He had some challenging saves, a few odd-man rushes, a couple of 2-on-1's and stood tall on a couple of point-blank shots."

Hurricanes 3, Blackhawks 2: Jay McClement scored the key goal 2:54 into the third period and host Carolina beat Chicago.

Elias Lindholm and Lee Stempniak scored early goals 1:05 apart to give the Hurricanes a 2-1 lead, and they held on to earn a point in their 11th straight home game. They're 10-0-1 at PNC Arena since Nov. 12.

Michal Kempny had a goal and an assist, and Vinnie Hinostroza added a deflected goal 5:49 into the third for the Western Conference-leading Blackhawks, who had their four-game road winning streak snapped.

Cam Ward made 27 saves for Carolina

while improving to 8-0-1 during the Hurricanes' home-ice roll.

Predators 4, Blues 0: Juuse Saros made 25 saves for his first career shutout, Filip Forsberg got a goal and an assist and visiting Nashville beat St. Louis.

Yannick Weber, Viktor Arvidsson and Colin Wilson also scored, and Saros won his second career road game. The Predators have won three of their four meetings against the Blues this season and snapped a five-game losing streak on the road against St. Louis.

Mike Ribeiro had a pair of assists to run his points streak against the Blues to five games.

Jake Allen allowed three goals on 14 shots before giving way to Carter Hutton to start the third as the Blues fell to 14-3-4 at home. They entered the game with points in 16 of their last 17 at the Scottrade Center.

Canucks 3, Ducks 2 (OT): Henrik Sedin scored 4:01 into overtime and host Vancouver beat Anaheim.

The Canucks captain roofed his ninth of the season on a 2-on-1 rush after Ryan Getzlaf missed the net on a 2-on-1 at the other end.

Loui Eriksson and Jack Skille also scored in regulation for Vancouver, which got 24 saves from Ryan Miller.

Getzlaf and Rickard Rakell scored for Anaheim, and John Gibson stopped 23 shots.

Thomas scores 52 as Celtics top Heat

Associated Press

BOSTON — Isaiah Thomas scored 29 of his career-high 52 points in the fourth quarter, setting a club record for points in a period and leading Boston to a 117-114 victory over the Miami Heat on Friday night.

Thomas hit six three-pointers and converted a three-point play in the fourth quarter and broke the franchise record of 24 points in a quarter set by Larry Bird in 1983 and matched by Todd Day in 1995. Thomas also topped his career high of 44 points he scored on Dec. 20 at Memphis.

He entered the fourth period with 23 points and scored

the first 11 of the quarter for Boston.

James Johnson scored 22 points for Miami. The Heat have lost four straight and seven of eight.

Rockets 140, Clippers 116: James Harden had a triple-double with 30 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists and Houston routed visiting Los Angeles.

It's the seventh triple-double this season for Harden and his third straight 30-point game.

Warriors 108, Mavericks 99: Kevin Durant had his first triple-double for his new team with 19 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists and first in more than a year, leading host Golden State past Dallas.

Spurs 110, Trail Blazers 94: Danny Green and Tony Parker each had 18 points and host San Antonio overcame another listless first half to beat Portland.

76ers 124, Nuggets 122: Ersan Ilyasova had a career-high 23 points and 13 rebounds and visiting Philadelphia survived a flurry in the final seconds to beat Denver.

Pelicans 104, Knicks 92: Anthony Davis had 23 points and 18 rebounds, and host New Orleans beat New York for its fourth straight victory.

Timberwolves 116, Bucks 99: Andrew Wiggins scored 31 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 18 points and 16 rebounds to help Minnesota beat

visiting Milwaukee.

Wizards 119, Nets 95: Trey Burke scored a season-high 27 points, John Wall had another double-double and host Washington beat Brooklyn to win its third straight game and reach .500 for the first time this season.

Pacers 111, Bulls 101: Paul George scored 11 of his 32 points in the final 4½ minutes to help Indiana beat visiting Chicago to snap four-game losing streak.

Hawks 105, Pistons 98: Paul Millsap scored 26 points and Kyle Korver had a season-high 22 to lead host Atlanta past Detroit.