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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Defense nominee would arm Ukrainians

BY JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The nominee to be the next secretary of defense favors arming Ukrainian troops fighting Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

The Obama administration is debating whether to take that step and escalate the conflict that has been raging for nearly a year. Moscow has provided arms, troops and other assistance to the pro-Russia rebels, who have inflicted significant casualties on Ukrainian government forces. Thus far, the U.S. has only provided nonlethal assistance to the Ukrainian military. Ashton Carter, President Barack Obama's nominee to be the next Pentagon chief, told lawmakers during his Wednesday confirmation hearing that he supports providing lethal aid.

"The nature of those arms I can't say right now because ... I haven't conferred with our military leaders or Ukraine leaders," Carter said. "But I incline in the direction of providing them with arms."

The U.S. signed the multinational 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, which promised Ukraine that its territorial integrity would be respected if it gave up the nuclear weapons that it inherited from the Soviet Union. Carter suggested that the U.S. needs to live up to its promises.

"That agreement provided for Russia to respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which it has obviously not done," he noted.

"The United States took on a commitment in the very same agreement to [assure] the ability of Ukraine to find its own way as an independent country," Carter said. "That is at stake

today, and that's why I think we need to provide support to the Ukrainian government."

In response to a lawmaker's question, Carter made clear that he was not advocating sending U.S. combat troops to Ukraine to join the fight.

Carter addressed other key topics, including:

■ **Afghanistan.** There are about 10,000 U.S. troops remaining in Afghanistan. Obama plans to withdraw nearly all of them by the end of 2016. Carter said he might ask Obama to keep more troops there if the situation on the ground requires it. "The president has a plan. I support that plan. At the same time, it's a plan. And if I'm confirmed and I ascertain as the years go by that we need to change that plan, I will recommend those changes to the president."

■ **Asia-Pacific rebalance.** "The world needs to know the

United States can do more than one thing at once, and we can keep our commitments [in the Asia-Pacific]," he said. "We're buying new capabilities that won't necessarily have a role in the Middle East or in NATO but are principally designed for that theater, and I think we need to keep those investments going."

■ **Sequestration.** Carter said it was "risky to our defense, it introduces turbulence and uncertainty that are wasteful, and it conveys a misleadingly diminished picture of our power in the eyes of friends and foes alike."

Prior to being the Pentagon's No. 2 official, Carter served as undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics. He is expected to be easily confirmed by the Senate.

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Navy all-hands addresses hair, possible retirement changes

BY JENNIFER HLAD
Stars and Stripes

Sailors stationed all over the world peppered the chief of naval personnel with questions Tuesday in a live all-hands call on topics ranging from hairstyles and uniforms to retirement benefits and the length of deployments.

Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran told sailors that while there is no plan to reinstitute imminent danger pay for the 5th Fleet and no move to incentivize back-to-back deployments, the Navy is working to decrease the length of deployments to seven months.

"We are on a path right now ... to gradually reduce the length of deployments around the globe," he said, but doing so will take time because of the

maintenance backlog.

Still, he said, Navy leaders are committed to reducing carrier strike group and expeditionary strike group deployments to seven months by 2017.

Moran also tried to tamp down concerns about the recent release of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission report.

Navy officials have another month to analyze the report and will communicate with sailors as they do so, he said, but the recommendations from the commission are just that — recommendations. The report won't change current benefits, and even if the retirement system does change down the road, active-duty servicemembers will be able to keep the current plan or opt into the new

plan, depending on their preference, Moran said.

Other questions concerned issues such as uniforms, physical readiness tests and hair. A chief on the USS America asked why the updated Navy hair regulations allow twists but not dreadlocks.

Master Chief April Beldo, fleet master chief for manpower, personnel, training and education, said she had taken on the job of researching dreadlocks, and spoke to several beauticians about the style.

The issue, she said, is that dreadlocks are harder to maintain.

"If I have a twist hairstyle and it's not in regulation, I can fix it immediately. That's not the case with dreadlocks," she said. With dreadlocks, the hair fuses together and the only so-

lution would be to cut it, she said.

Beldo also told sailors that there are no new initiatives for uniforms, though the service dress uniform has been updated for men and women, and that will be phased in over time.

Moran said the Navy has gotten a lot of negative feedback on the fire-resistant coveralls sailors are required to wear at sea. Many sailors have said the uniform is very heavy, does not breathe, and discolors when washed.

"We've taken all that feedback ... and we've now redesigned that uniform, and we're on the process of going out on bids" to update the uniform, Moran said.

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Jordan executes 2 after pilot video posted

The Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — Jordan executed two al-Qaida prisoners Wednesday, just hours after an online video purported to show Islamic State group militants burning a captured Jordanian pilot to death in a cage.

The gruesome death of Lt. Muath Al-Kaseasbeh, 26, captured while participating in airstrikes by a U.S.-led coalition targeting the militants, sparked outrage across the Middle East and anti-Islamic State protests in Jordan.

King Abdullah II, a staunch Western ally, rushed back to Jordan, cutting short a Washington trip to try to persuade his people to support an even tough-

er line against the militants. Rallying such backing is pivotal for Jordan's continued role in the coalition. Public opinion has been ambiguous — growing demands for revenge against the militants have been mixed with misgivings about Jordan's role in a bombing campaign seen as serving Western interests.

The extremists, meanwhile, appeared to be goading Jordan. In Raqqa, the Islamic State group's de facto capital, the militants gleefully played al-Kaseasbeh's slaying on outdoor projectors, with some chanting "God is great," according to militant video posted online Wednesday that conformed to Associated Press reporting

of the event. In the 20-minute video, the pilot displayed signs of having been beaten, including a black eye. Toward the end of the clip, he is shown wearing an orange jumpsuit. He stands in an outdoor cage as a masked militant ignites a line of fuel leading to it.

The video of his purported killing was released on militant websites and bore the logo of the extremist group's al-Furqan media service. The clip could not immediately be confirmed independently by the AP.

A wave of condemnation washed across the Middle East on Wednesday, signaling that the Islamic State militants might have overplayed their hand by

putting their brutality toward a fellow Muslim on display.

Following the pilot's death, Jordan launched what it said would be a tough campaign against the Islamic State group. In a first response, Jordan executed Sajida al-Rishawi and Ziad al-Karbouly, two Iraqis linked to al-Qaida, government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani said. Another official said they were executed by hanging.

Islamic State group militants purportedly had demanded Jordan release al-Rishawi in exchange for the pilot. Over the past week, Jordan had offered to trade her, but froze any swap after failing to receive any proof that the pilot was still alive.

At least 25 killed as plane crashes in Taiwan capital

The Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Rescuers used a crane to hoist a wrecked TransAsia Airways plane from a shallow river in Taiwan's capital late Wednesday as they searched into the night for 18 people missing in a crash that killed at least 25 others.

Flight 235 with 58 people aboard — most of them travelers from China — banked sharply on its side shortly after takeoff from Taipei, clipped a highway bridge and careened into the Keelung River.

Rescuers in rubber rafts pulled 15 injured people from the wreckage during daylight. After dark, they brought in the crane. The death toll was expected to rise once crews were able to search through previously submerged portions of the fuselage, which came to rest a few dozen yards from the shore.

Video clips apparently taken from cars and posted online showed the ATR 72 propjet as it pivoted onto its side while zooming toward a traffic bridge over the river. In one of them, the plane rapidly fills the frame as

its now-vertical wing scrapes over the road, hitting a vehicle.

Speculation cited in local media said the pilot may have turned sharply to follow the line of the river to avoid crashing into a high-rise residential area, but Taiwan's aviation authority said it had no evidence of that.

Taiwanese broadcasters repeatedly played a recording of the plane's final contact with the control tower in which the pilot called out "Mayday" three times. The recording offered no direct clues as to why the plane was in distress.

It was the airline's second French-Italian-built ATR 72 to crash in the past year.

Wednesday's flight had taken off at 11:53 a.m. from Taipei's downtown Sungshan Airport en route to the outlying Taiwanese-controlled Kinmen islands. The pilot issued the mayday call shortly after takeoff.

TransAsia director Peter Chen said contact with the plane was lost four minutes after takeoff. He said weather conditions were suitable for flying and the cause of the accident was unknown.

6 dead after commuter train hits Jeep on tracks near NYC

The Associated Press

VALHALLA, N.Y. — A crowded commuter train slammed into a sport utility vehicle on the tracks at a suburban New York crossing and burst into flames, killing six people, seriously injuring more than a dozen others and sending hundreds of passengers scrambling for safety, authorities said.

The collision involved a Metro-North Railroad train and a Jeep Cherokee on Tuesday evening in Valhalla, about 20 miles north of New York City. Authorities said the impact was so forceful the electrified third rail came up and pierced the train.

The SUV's driver and five people aboard the train were killed, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. He said 15 people were injured, seven of them seriously.

Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino said the front part of the train was "completely charred and burned."

"I am amazed anyone got off that train alive. ... It must have been pure panic, with the flames, the third rail and the smoke," he said.

Authorities said the SUV's driver had gotten out of her vehicle momentarily after the crossing's safety gates came down around her. She then got back in and was trying to drive forward when she was hit, they said.

The northbound Metro-North Railroad train left Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan around 5:45 p.m. and struck the SUV about 45 minutes later.

It was unclear how fast the train was going, but the maximum would be 60 mph, a railroad official said.

The train shoved the SUV about 10 train car lengths. Smoke poured out of the scorched front rail car, its windows blackened.

"This is a truly ugly and brutal site," Cuomo said.

Witnesses said they saw the flames shooting from where the crash occurred, in a wooded area near a cemetery.

Around 650 passengers likely were aboard the train. Most were moved to the rear of the train so they could get off. Buses picked them up and took them to other stations.

Wild climb back into race behind Dubnyk

The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Shot after shot, Devan Dubnyk has been effectively defending the Minnesota net since arriving in a trade less than three weeks ago.

He might have saved the Wild's season, too.

Dubnyk has a 6-1 record with a 1.48 goals-against average and three shut-outs while starting all eight games since the Wild acquired him from Arizona for a third-round draft pick.

"You wait and see how he's going to play, but you know what? I feel like any time you bring in a new player you have that initial inject of life in the room right

away," left wing Zach Parise said.

Then on top of that, Dubnyk has made an immediate impact on a team stuck in a six-game losing streak at the time of the deal. The 28-year-old made 35 saves in a 4-2 victory at Vancouver on Sunday to help the Wild complete a three-game sweep of their western trip to Canada and revive their postseason chase. Dubnyk beat Calgary 1-0 on Thursday.

On Tuesday, Dubnyk stopped 24 shots in the Wild's 3-0 shutout of Chicago.

"He deserves an awful lot of credit for the way that he's played," coach Mike Yeo said on Monday. "I think we have a much better focus in front of him right now."

The Wild's victory over Chicago on

Tuesday was their first home game in 15 days. They've pulled within five points of the final playoff spot in the Western Conference, and only one team is between them and eighth place.

"Obviously we need every win that we can get, especially the Calgary and Vancouver games. Those were huge games," Dubnyk said. "But if you approach the game and think, 'Oh my gosh, we have to beat these guys in regulation,' it's just not a good way to be successful."

The Wild last won three straight games in regulation from Nov. 1-5, 2013. They had a four-game winning streak earlier this season, but one of those came in overtime.

Goalies Darcy Kuemper and Niklas Backstrom struggled badly between the pipes while the Wild went 2-8-4 from mid-December until mid-January, prompting general manager Chuck Fletcher to call the Coyotes about Dubnyk. The former first-round draft pick, coming off a rough year with Edmonton, was limited in action behind Mike Smith in Arizona. So he welcomed the move, his confidence buoyed by work with Coyotes goaltending coach Sean Burke.

"To go from a place where there obviously wasn't an opportunity to start long-term and to come to a place and have an opportunity to play games right away is exactly what I wanted," Dubnyk said.

Ex-UFC champ Silva fails test for steroids

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Former UFC middleweight champion Anderson Silva has tested positive for steroid use, the promotion announced Tuesday night.

Silva tested positive for Drostanolone metabolites in an out-of-competition test Jan. 9, according to the Nevada Athletic Commission. The UFC says the commission is doing further testing to confirm the results, but the surprising announcement casts a large shadow over the 39-year-old Silva's impressive comeback from a badly broken leg at UFC 183 last Saturday.

In a brief statement, the UFC said it was "disappointed to learn of these initial results."

"Anderson Silva has been an amazing champion and a true ambassador of the sport of mixed martial arts and the UFC, in Brazil as well as around the world," the UFC's statement added. "The UFC has a strict, consistent policy against the use of any illegal and/or performance-enhancing drugs, stimulants or masking agents by its athletes."

Silva (34-6) beat Nick Diaz by unanimous decision at UFC 183 last weekend in Las Vegas. The fight was the Brazilian star's return to the cage after badly breaking his lower left leg 13 months ago.

Silva is considered one of the greatest mixed martial artists in the sport's history, and UFC President Dana White is among those who have proclaimed him the best ever. He won 10 consecutive title defenses over seven years as the UFC's 185-pound champion until losing the belt to Chris Weidman in 2013.

Silva is likely to face a disciplinary hearing soon before the Nevada commission, and his license to fight likely will be suspended. Silva has never publicly failed a drug test in his MMA career, but could face a nine-month suspension for a first offense.

Yahoo Sports also reported that Diaz had high levels of marijuana metabolites in his system during the pre-fight testing. Diaz has tested positive for marijuana use twice already in his career, in 2007

and 2012.

Silva's manager, Ed Soares, didn't immediately return a request for comment. The Nevada commission also didn't immediately return a request for test results.

Armstrong cited after SUV hits parked cars

DENVER — Disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong hit two parked cars with an SUV after a night of partying in Aspen, Colo., but agreed to let his girlfriend take the blame to avoid national attention, police reports show.

Police cited Armstrong with failing to report an accident and speeding weeks after the Dec. 28 accident, but only after his girlfriend, Anna Hansen, acknowledged lying for him.

Armstrong is scheduled to appear in court March 17.

Russian team pays Taurasi to rest

Diana Taurasi is getting paid not to play.

The Phoenix Mercury star announced Tuesday that she will skip the 2015 WNBA season this summer after accepting an offer from her Russian club to rest. Taurasi was slated to make just more than \$108,000 this year playing for the Mercury — the third-highest amount on the team. She makes roughly \$1.5 million playing in Russia.

"They offered to pay me to rest and I've decided to take them up on it. I want to be able to take care of myself and my family when I am done playing," Taurasi said in a letter to Mercury fans.

Taurasi said she will play in the WNBA in 2016.

Sabres top Habs, end 14-game skid

The Associated Press

MONTREAL — The long drought is over for the struggling Sabres.

Buffalo scored three times in the first period and Jonas Enroth made 32 saves in a 3-2 victory over the Montreal Canadiens that ended a franchise-record, 14-game losing streak Tuesday night.

Players raised their arms in triumph as they gathered around Enroth after the team's first victory since a shootout win Dec. 27 against the New York Islanders. It was Buffalo's first victory in regulation in 21 games since beating Calgary 4-3 on Dec. 11.

"I hope it allows us to relax a bit," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. "Just go out and play. Not think about all the bad things that could happen. Just go out there and play the game, have some fun doing it and, hopefully, get some confidence back."

Former Canadiens captain Brian Gionta, who signed with Buffalo last summer, got the game-winner late in a three-goal first period for the Sabres (15-33-3), who remain last overall in the NHL. Drew Stafford and Matt Moulson also scored.

Brandon Prust and David Desharnais had the goals for the Canadiens (32-15-3), who have lost two in a row at home.

"It's been a frustrating couple of weeks, no doubt," Gorges said. "We've had games where we play well in spurts, but then we'd always find a way to beat ourselves."

"We had mental lapses that cost us. And when you get in those situations you become a bit of a fragile team, especially as young as we are. Any time adversity hit during a game we seemed to crumble. So to get this win takes a bit of weight off us."

Predators 4, Maple Leafs 3: Mike Fisher had a goal and two assists, and host Nashville handed Toronto its franchise record-tying 10th straight loss.

Capitals 4, Kings 0: Troy

Brouwer scored two goals, Braden Holtby stopped 27 shots and host Washington beat Los Angeles for its second win in eight games.

Blues 2, Lightning 1 (OT): Vladimir Tarasenko tied the game late in the third period and then Jaden Schwartz scored in overtime to give streaking host St. Louis a victory.

Wild 3, Blackhawks 0: Devan Dubnyk stopped 24 shots in his third shut-out since joining his new team in mid-January, leading host Minnesota past Chicago for its fourth straight win.

Devils 2, Senators 1: Mike Cammalleri scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period and host New Jersey extended its best run of the season.

Panthers 4, Islanders 2: Jimmy Hayes' second goal of the game 2:10 into the third period lifted slumping Florida over host New York.

Coyotes 4, Blue Jackets 1: Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Shane Doan scored power-play goals in the second period, and Mike Smith made 30 saves to lead visiting Arizona over Columbus.

Avalanche 3, Stars 2 (SO): Maxime Talbot scored the winner for Colorado in the 11th round of a shootout after Tyson Barrie tied the game in the final minute of regulation against host Dallas.

Ducks 5, Hurricanes 4 (OT): Ryan Getzlaf scored 45 seconds into overtime, Corey Perry scored two goals and host Anaheim rallied from a two-goal deficit.

Canucks 3, Jets 2 (OT): Luca Sbisa scored 36 seconds into overtime to lift host Vancouver.



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Kentucky keeps wins coming

The Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Andrew Harrison scored a season-high 23 points and combined with Karl-Anthony Towns for key baskets down the stretch that helped top-ranked Kentucky stop pesky Georgia 69-58 on Tuesday night.

Twice on the verge of running away from a Georgia squad playing its second straight game without leading scorer and rebounder Marcus Thornton (concussion), the Wildcats (22-0, 9-0 Southeastern Conference) saw their margin dwindle near the end.

Harrison's layup with 3:58 remaining provided a 62-54 lead before baskets by Yante Maten and Nemanja Djuricic pulled the Bulldogs to 63-58 with 2:06 left. Towns' short jumper with 1:33 left got the lead to seven, and Tyler Ulis and Harrison each added two free throws in the final minute for the Wildcats.

Towns finished with 15 with a career-high 13 rebounds.

Djuricic's 17 points led Georgia (14-7, 5-4), which outrebounded Kentucky 36-24. Maten added 13 points and nine rebounds for the Bulldogs, whose nine offensive boards helped them stay nearly even in the paint against the taller Wildcats.

But Georgia couldn't get the rebounds it needed in the final minutes while Kentucky did. Willie Cauley-Stein came up with one leading to Harrison's clinching foul shot, and Towns sealed the game with a block and rebound at the end.

No. 5 Wisconsin 92, Indiana 78: Frank Kaminsky scored 23 points and No. 5 Wisconsin's athletic frontcourt overwhelmed visiting Indiana.

Kaminsky was 9-for-12 from the field for the Badgers (20-2, 8-1 Big Ten). Nigel Hayes

added 16 points on 5-for-5 shooting.

Guard Bronson Koenig provided balance from the outside with 15 points, going 3 of 4 from three-point range.

No. 9 Louisville 63, Miami 55: Terry Rozier scored 22 points and visiting Louisville overcame second-half shooting woes to beat the slumping Miami Hurricanes.

The Cardinals built an early 13-point lead and shot 68 percent in the first half. They made only 31 percent in the second half, which allowed Miami to cut the margin to three points before Louisville dug in.

No. 14 Northern Iowa 61, Indiana State 51: Seth Tuttle had 15 points and eight rebounds and Jeremy Morgan added 12 points as Northern Iowa ran away from host Indiana State.

The Panthers (21-2, 10-1 Missouri Valley) won their 10th in a row and got their first season sweep of the Sycamores in five seasons.

No. 21 Oklahoma 71, No. 15 West Virginia 52: Buddy Hield scored 21 points and host Oklahoma defeated West Virginia.

Hield, the Big 12's leading scorer, made 8 of 13 shots, including 5 of 7 three-pointers.

Jordan Woodard had 12 points and Ryan Spangler and Isaiah Cousins each added 10 for the Sooners (15-7, 6-4 Big 12). Oklahoma shot a season-high 61 percent from the field to win their third straight.

Juwan Staten had 15 points and nine rebounds and Gary Browne added 12 points for West Virginia (18-4, 6-3), which had won three straight.

Devin Williams, the conference's No. 2 rebounder and Big 12 leader in field goal

percentage, was ill and did not play.

No. 22 Butler 85, St. John's 62: Kellen Dunham had 21 points and seven rebounds to lead Butler to a victory over visiting St. John's.

Alex Barlow scored 15 points and Andrew Chrabascz added 14 for the Bulldogs (17-6, 7-3 Big East), who have won four straight conference games.

Vanderbilt 67, Florida 61: James Siakam scored 12 points, grabbed 11 rebounds and blocked five shots as Vanderbilt snapped a seven-game skid in the Southeastern Conference by beating visiting Florida.

The Commodores (12-10, 2-7) scored the first 15 points and never trailed.

Syracuse 72, Virginia Tech 70: Michael Gbinije hit a spinning floater in the lane with less than a second left to give Syracuse a comeback victory over visiting Virginia Tech.

Gbinije got a chance for the winner after the Hokies committed a backcourt violation with 7.1 seconds left.

Illinois 66, Rutgers 54: Kendrick Nunn scored 21 points and Malcolm Hill added 15 to help host Illinois survive a late rally against struggling Rutgers.

Illinois led by as many as 17, but Rutgers closed to within eight with 2:36 to play on a three-pointer by Kadeem Jack.

Arkansas 75, South Carolina 55: Bobby Portis had 18 points and 13 rebounds as host Arkansas won for the fourth time in five games with a win over South Carolina.

It's the 17th straight game in double digits in points for Portis.

Warriors use 23-0 spurt to rout Kings

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Stephen Curry had 23 points and nine assists, and the Golden State Warriors rode a 23-0 spurt in the first half to beat the Sacramento Kings 121-96 on Tuesday night.

The Warriors shut down Sacramento for more than seven minutes at the end of the first quarter and start of the second quarter to take an 18-point lead. They went ahead by 20 at the half and 25 in the third quarter before holding off a brief Kings comeback.

Andre Iguodala added 17 points, and Marreese Speights finished with 17 points and eight rebounds to help the Warriors sweep the four-game series with Sacramento for the second straight season.

DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points and 11 rebounds, and Rudy Gay scored 20 for the Kings, who rallied within 11 late in the third quarter before the Warriors regrouped.

The Warriors had 33 assists and 11 turnovers, while the Kings had 17 assists and 18 turnovers. Golden State outshot Sacramento 50.5 percent to 44.3 percent and outscored Sacramento's bench 61-12.

Pistons 108, Heat 91: D.J. Augustin had 25 points and 13 assists and host Detroit closed the first quarter on a 25-1 run and went on to beat Miami.

Chris Bosh scored 34 points, including 21 in the third quarter, but nobody else provided much help offensively for Miami, which was still without injured star Dwyane Wade.

Andre Drummond had 14 points and 14 rebounds for the Pistons.

Trail Blazers 103, Jazz 102: Damian Lillard scored 25 points and host Portland, boosted by the return of center Robin Lopez, held off Utah.

LaMarcus Aldridge added 22 points and 11 rebounds as Portland snapped a three-game losing streak.

After wrestling for the lead to start the fourth quarter, Wesley Matthews hit two straight three-pointers and the Blazers went up 98-89 with 3:26 left.

Gordon Hayward's three closed the Jazz to within 99-96, but Lillard answered with a driving layup. Joe Ingles hit another three for the Jazz to pull within 101-99 with 9.9 seconds left.

Celtics 108, Knicks 97: At New York, Avery Bradley scored 26 points, Jared Sullinger added 22 and Boston snapped a three-game losing streak.

Bradley shot 11-for-14 from the field for the Celtics, who rediscovered their offense after a lineup change that put rookie Marcus Smart in the backcourt with Bradley. Smart made consecutive three-pointers during the Celtics' 14-2 start, and they never trailed.

Carmelo Anthony scored 21 points for the Knicks, who had won five of seven during their best stretch of the season.

76ers 105, Nuggets 98: Hollis Thompson scored a career-high 23 points to lead host Philadelphia to a victory over slumping Denver.

Michael Carter-Williams had 15 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds and Robert Covington added 17 points for the improving 76ers, who won their third straight home game for the first time since March 2013.

Vonn earns bronze medal in super-G

The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Lindsey Vonn's first race in her backyard at the world championships wasn't so much a breeze.

No, it was a full-force gale that blew the American skier slightly off track early in the super-G on Tuesday before she recovered enough to earn a bronze medal.

The wind was so intense it whooshed her pony tail straight behind her while she waited in the starting gate. On the course, the blasts were so strong she stood up in the middle of her run, costing her valuable time.

Austria's Anna Fenninger was much more aerodynamic as she added a super-G world title to the Olympic gold medal she won in Sochi. Nearly as wind resistant was Slovenia's Tina Maze, who captured silver on a course that was shortened because of the blustery conditions.

This trio just may be the ones on the podium again in the downhill Friday. Vonn's already studying forecasts for the race, hoping for anything but blowing snow.

"I just want a fair race and another chance to get on the podium," said Vonn, who lives in nearby Vail.

That's the thing about ski racing: Conditions can't be the same for everyone. Not all the time, anyway.

"As an athlete you know that going in," Vonn said. "You know that in the start gate.

"You have to go with it and do the best you can."

With boyfriend Tiger Woods, her family and thousands of hometown fans cheering her on at the finish line, Vonn launched out of the gate and was instantly greeted

by a strong headwind. She made some headway halfway down the course and crossed the finish line in first place to the thunderous ovation of the crowd. The lead didn't last.

Maze was next and beat her time, stunning the fans.

Then, Fenninger found a fast line and grabbed the lead for good.

"I have to say that Anna skied exceptionally well," Vonn said. "But I would like another chance at the course with a little less wind."

Here are things to know as a snowstorm moves into the area and possibly impacts the men's super-G race Wednesday:

Men's race canceled. The men's super-G race scheduled for Wednesday was canceled because of too much snow on the course.

The event has not yet been rescheduled.

However, there are only downhill training runs set for Thursday, possibly making that an option. Race officials were supposed to make a determination on Wednesday night.

Workers tried to remove the snow from the course all morning. There was also inconsistent visibility most of the morning and the wind picked up.

American skier Ted Ligety is the defending champion in the event after winning in Austria two years ago. He won three gold medals at those championships.

Miller update. Six-time Olympic medalist Bode Miller was all over the course in a downhill training session Tuesday. But his surgically repaired back held up just fine and he's planning to race

in the super-G and the men's downhill on Saturday. He's yet to compete this season. "I have the speed to be a viable threat for the medals," said the 37-year-old Miller, who had a herniated disk fixed in his back in November. "That's why we're all here. I think everyone is on the same page."

Svindal report. When Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway tore his left Achilles in October, his chances of making it back in time for world were next to none. He had a solid training run Tuesday and is now going to give it a go in the super-G. Even he's a little surprised by his rapid recovery. "This whole speculation started because someone asked me the question: Will it be possible to be back for world championships?" Svindal recounted. "My answer was, 'Nothing is impossible.'" Does he see himself on the podium? "I don't think I'm a medal contender, but it will be fun," Svindal said.

Harrowing experience. Austria's Marcel Hirscher, the reigning overall World Cup champion, was a little intimidated by the demanding Birds of Prey downhill course. After his training run, Hirscher said: "I'm super happy I'm safe in the finish area. For a slalom guy, it's a big experience to jump down Golden Eagle and the Harrier jump, all those crazy parts on this course. It was just fun."

Back pain. The Swiss team announced that Sandro Viletta, the super-combined gold medalist at the 2014 Sochi Games, won't compete at worlds due to back pain. Viletta's only World Cup victory was at Beaver Creek in the super-G in 2011.