

STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, February 7, 2015

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Family of US hostage is hopeful she's alive

The Associated Press

PRESCOTT, Ariz. — The parents of a 26-year-old American who Islamic State extremists say was killed in an airstrike in Syria said in a statement addressed to group leaders that the claim of their daughter's death concerned them but they were still hopeful she was alive.

The Islamic State group said on Friday that Kayla Jean Mueller, of Prescott, Ariz., died in a Jordanian airstrike, but the government of Jordan dismissed the statement as “criminal propaganda,” and the U.S. said it had not seen any evidence to corroborate the report.

Mueller is the only known remaining U.S. hostage held by the Islamic State group.

If the death is confirmed, she would be the fourth American to die while being held by Islamic State militants. Three others — journalists James Foley and

Steven Sotloff and aid worker Peter Kassig — were beheaded by the group.

“You told us that you treated Kayla as your guest, as your guest her safety and well-being remains your responsibility,” Mueller's family said in a short statement released Friday.

The road leading to her family's home in Prescott remained blocked off Saturday by Yavapai County Sheriff's vehicles. Sheriff's spokesman Dwight D'Evelyn said the FBI was with the family and deputies would have a presence there indefinitely. He did not know if anyone from the U.S. State Department had visited with them.

Mueller is an aid worker who previously volunteered with organizations in India, Israel and the Palestinian territories. Her identity had not been disclosed until now out of fears for her safety. Her family said

she was taken hostage by the Islamic State group on Aug. 4, 2013, while leaving a hospital in Syria.

Jordan has been launching airstrikes against the extremist group in response to a video released this week that shows captive Jordanian pilot Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh being burned to death in a cage.

Al-Kaseasbeh, whose F-16 came down in December while conducting airstrikes as part of a campaign against the militants by a U.S.-led coalition, was believed to have been killed in early January.

The Islamic State group said in a statement that Mueller was killed in the militants' stronghold of Raqqa in northern Syria during midday prayers in airstrikes that targeted “the same location for more than an hour.”

It published photos purportedly of the bombed site, showing a severely damaged three-story building, but offered no proof or images of Mueller.

The statement said no Islamic State militants were killed in the airstrikes, raising further questions about the veracity of the claim.

Jordanian government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani said it was investigating.

“But as a first reaction, we think it's illogical and we are highly skeptical about it. How could they identify a Jordanian warplane ... in the sky? What was the American lady doing in a weapons warehouse?” al-Momani said.

American officials said they also were looking into the report.

Refugees see al-Qaida-linked militants as Syria's best option

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

ZAATARI CAMP, Jordan — With the world's attention focused on the Islamic State, Syrian refugees say rival al-Qaida-affiliated rebels are gaining support inside Syria, even among moderate factions battling Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime.

And in some parts of Syria, including the so-called southern front just north of the Jordanian border, Jabhat al-Nusra — also known as the Nusra Front and listed by the State Department as a terrorist group — appears to be working so closely with American-backed groups that the two have become virtually indistinguishable operationally.

Such fusing between moderates and religious extremists could undermine the Obama

administration's effort to expand training for moderate Syrian insurgents to fight the Islamic State group.

The U.S. military plans to send about 400 instructors to Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia to train a vetted force of 5,000 fighters to take on the Islamic State. Congressional critics have complained that weapons sent to “moderates” such as the U.S.-backed Free Syrian Army could end up in extremist hands — a possibility that appears more likely if those supposed pro-U.S. troops are working closely with al-Qaida-linked fighters.

Even if the U.S.-led campaign of airstrikes and training manages to help degrade the Islamic State, it could also lead to the ouster of Assad and his replacement with a leadership that includes members or supporters of an al-Qaida-linked

group.

Analysts say that much of Nusra's appeal stems from its humanitarian work and good governance in areas under its control.

The Nusra Front's leadership decided to break with the Islamic State when al-Baghdadi insisted in 2013 that the “brothers in jihad” merge under his leadership.

Last October, Nusra fighters routed U.S.-backed militias in the northwestern province of Idlib near the Turkish border, and reportedly seized large quantities of U.S. and other Western-supplied weapons and ammunition.

Hussein al Jalam, a merchant from Daraa, who, with his wife and two small children, lives in one of the prefabricated metal containers that house many of

Zaatari's inhabitants, also condemned the U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Iraq and northern Syria, saying they were also hitting Nusra positions and killing innocent civilians.

While Nusra militants have been successful against Islamic State forces in the south, they have fared much worse in other parts of Syria. Its forces were beaten last year in fighting around the provincial capital of Deir ez-Zour, where the Islamic State is now in control.

Sitting under a plastic tent blown away on the side by desert winds and snow earlier this month, Daraa refugee Mohammad Radwan, 39, said he yearns to go back home to a post-Assad Syria.

“I envision a free Syria under Nusra's rule,” he sighed. “It is the best option for the future.”

Calif. storm disrupts travel

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A windy storm sweeping down the West Coast knocked down trees, ripped through freeway and street signs, delayed hundreds of flights and knocked out power for thousands of people in California and Nevada.

Up to 10 inches of rain was expected over the weekend in parts of the drought-stricken region, but the rainfall won't make a significant dent in California's historic drought.

Still, the storm is a welcome change after six dry weeks in the Bay Area. For the first time in recorded history, there was no measurable rainfall in downtown San Francisco in January, when winter rains usually come.

It would take 150 percent of the average rainfall for California to recover from the dry period, state water resource officials say. But snow is more important than rain because snowpack supplies about a third of the water needed by residents, agriculture and industry.

About 26 miles west of Seattle, an overflowing river inundated at least a half-dozen homes on the Olympic Peninsula. Rescuers went door to door in Brinnon to check homes on a road partially blocked by a mudslide, Jefferson County Emergency Management spokeswoman Keppie Keplinger said.

Rebels take control in Yemen

Los Angeles Times

SANAA, Yemen — Amid deepening political turmoil here, the United States has resumed drone strikes against al-Qaida's most feared franchise without seeking approval from the Shiite Muslim rebels who have tightened their control of a government once considered a close American ally.

The insurgents, known as Houthis, dissolved Yemen's parliament Friday and announced plans to set up interim bodies to run the government, a move that opponents said amounted to a coup. The capital was calm but tense Friday night as armed men loyal to the movement quickly filled the streets.

Saturday, Yemeni security officials said a device exploded in a street leading to the capital's presidential palace, wounding three people, according to The

Associated Press. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information otherwise.

The AP also reported thousands of people took to the streets of several Yemeni cities on Saturday to protest the takeover of the government.

In the capital, Sanaa, rebel gunmen fired in the air to disperse the protesters — beating them back with sticks and clubs. Protest marches were also held in the cities of Hodeida, Taiz and Ibb.

Yemen has been roiled by uncertainty since the Houthis seized the presidential palace and put U.S.-backed President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi under house arrest on Jan. 22, leading him and his Cabinet to tender their resignations.

During the past two years,

Hadi had strongly supported U.S. military and CIA drone strikes and special operations raids against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, known as AQAP. The Yemen-based group has repeatedly sought to bomb U.S. airliners and last month claimed responsibility for the massacre of 12 people at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris.

American officials in Yemen have been in indirect communication with the Houthis, but have not begun a working relationship, according to U.S. officials familiar with the diplomacy who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter. Instead, the Obama administration pressed ahead on its own and launched three drone strikes against AQAP targets in the last two weeks.

Bombs kill at least 40 in Baghdad

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Ahead of Baghdad ending a decade-old nightly curfew, bombs exploded across the Iraqi capital Saturday, killing at least 40 people in a stark warning of the dangers still ahead in this country torn by the Islamic State group.

The deadliest bombing happened in the capital's New Baghdad neighborhood, where a suicide bomber detonated his

explosives in a street filled with stores and a restaurant, killing 22 people, police said.

"The restaurant was full of young people, children and women when the suicide bomber blew himself up," witness Mohamed Saeed said. "Many got killed."

The Islamic State group later claimed the attack, saying their bomber targeted Shiites, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, a U.S.-based ter-

rorism monitor. The militants now hold a third of both Iraq and neighboring Syria in their self-declared caliphate.

A second attack happened in central Baghdad's popular Shorja market, where two bombs some 25 yards apart exploded, killing at least 11 people, police said. Another bombing at the Abu Cheer outdoor market in southwestern Baghdad killed at least four people, police said.

NBC investigates anchor Williams' Iraq claims

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — NBC News has assigned the head of its investigative unit to look into statements anchor Brian Williams made about his reporting in Iraq a dozen years ago, an episode that's ballooned into a full-blown credibility crisis for the network.

NBC News President Debo-

rah Turness announced the probe in an internal memo on Friday. Williams has apologized for falsely saying on the air that he was in a helicopter hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq in 2003, and Turness said Friday he expressed his regrets to his colleagues for the impact the episode has had.

"As you would expect, we

have a team dedicated to gathering the facts to help us make sense of all that has transpired," Turness wrote. "We're working on what the best next steps are."

Richard Esposito, who has worked at the Daily News, Newsday and ABC and is now at NBC, is leading the investigation.

An NBC investigative re-

porter called Stars and Stripes reporter Travis Tritten on Friday. Tritten was first to report that there were questions about Williams' account of what happened in 2003.

Williams, who has been widely chastised, anchored "Nightly News" from New York on Friday, making no mention of the criticisms of his work.

Miami C Whiteside raises game, 2K15 rating

The Sun Sentinel

The desire from Hassan Whiteside has been relentless — to make his mark, to prove his worth, to show how he rates — on NBA 2K15.

OK, perhaps it hasn't reached that point. And it's safe to say that making points with Miami Heat coach Erik Spoelstra remains the priority over the video game.

But since he mentioned his passion for the game — and improving his rating — the emerging center has decided to ride the video wave beyond nights such as Wednesday in Minnesota, when he had 24 points and 20 rebounds.

That had him this week going back and forth with NBA 2K digital-marketing manager Ronnie Singh about the expanding diversity of his repertoire.

From Whiteside's Twitter account: "I hope you see this mid range jumpers and lobs I got that."

From Singh's, "I see you bro."

Already, Whiteside's rating has gone from the upper 50s to the high 70s, a formula that is updated through the web based on the center's nightly performances.

"He DM'd me. I kind of responded back. I thought it was funny," Whiteside said of the Twitter exchange, with the Heat now turning their attention to Friday night's game against the San Antonio Spurs at the AT&T Center, the final stop on this four-game trip that has gotten off to a shaky 1-2 start.

Whiteside said the social-media fallout regarding his 2K passion has been another element of his unexpected celebrity.

"It's funny to me. I'm enjoying it," he said. "I've been playing 2K since I was young. And we always joked around, saying if my player was ever in the game, if you make it to the NBA, you want your player to be as good as possible."

"So it's funny when you're playing as yourself on there, and you know you can do stuff, but you can't do it (in the game)."

That's why he requested a higher rating for his mid-range shooting, an unexpected aspect he has displayed in recent games. And he's not shy about taking them, with a jumper the only shot he missed during his 12 of 13 performance in the 102-101 loss to the Timberwolves.

Asked about the reply he received,

Whiteside said, "It's just kind of what you do on the court. I hit a couple of mid-range jumpers, so he might add a better rating."

But Whiteside also makes clear that for all the notoriety his numbers have created, the Heat's 21-28 record remains a sobering reminder of where he stands, currently with no guarantee that he'll be able to take his game to the playoffs for the first time.

"It's tough. It's tough that we lost like that," he said of the 102-101 loss to the league-worst Wolves. "I mean, having 20 and 20, it looks good, but if we lose, it really doesn't mean anything. It's records and all, but it's really nothing. It really doesn't mean nothing if you don't win."

That's where the video game enters the equation, as a bit of needed escapism.

For now, Whiteside said he has been unable to unlock or secure any cheat codes of his video version, even as he cozies up to the game's staff.

"Nah, I need some, though," he said with a smile.

Spoelstra said the video-game Whiteside is the least of his concerns.

"As long as it's not stopping him from

coming to work an hour and half before, an hour and a half after," he said. "As long as he's committing to the player-development program that we talked about when I met with him eyeball to eyeball, I don't care about that."

"Maybe if he was doing that instead of committing to the player development, then I'd be."

For all the advanced stats and metrics he deals with, Whiteside's NBA2K rating is not something Spoelstra has investigated. And, no, he has never played the game.

"I have just heard from my nephew that the coach of the Miami Heat doesn't look like me," Spoelstra said. "He's eight."

Spoelstra explained that when it was his turn to have his image digitized for the game, the special equipment broke.

Until this return to the league and breakthrough, Whiteside said he had to create his own Hassan Whiteside video version. He did not go as far, though, as to scan his image into the game, as is possible.

"Nah," he said, "I never did that. It was just another guy. I was a point guard, 6-7."

Hawks win battle of conference leaders

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Hawks climbed back to the top of the NBA standings by leaning on their depth.

Jeff Teague scored 23 points and the Atlanta Hawks overcame Golden State's one-two backcourt punch with balance, beating the Warriors 124-116 on Friday night in a showdown between the NBA's two conference leaders. Seven Hawks scored in double figures.

"I think we share the ball more than they do," said Atlanta's Dennis Schroder, who had nine points and seven assists off the bench. "I think that's why we won the game tonight."

The anticipated matchup did not disappoint. It was tied 52-all at halftime and Atlanta led by four entering the final period.

Back-to-back three-pointers by Mike Scott and Kyle Korver, who each had 17 points, helped stretch the lead.

The Hawks (42-9, .824) passed the Warriors (39-9, .813) for the league's best record.

It was tempting for all — with the possible exception of Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer — to view the game as a possible NBA Finals preview.

"I don't think one bit about that," Budenholzer said without a smile after the game.

The Warriors leaned on their one-two punch of Klay Thompson, who had 29 points, and Stephen Curry, who had 26 with nine assists. Golden State had only two other scorers in double figures.

Al Horford had 12 points and 14 rebounds, despite playing only eight minutes in the second half due to foul trouble, and Paul Millsap had 21.

Nine of the 11 points Teague scored in

the final frame came on free throws.

"They were good," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr. "They were better than us. We broke down defensively. They had a lot to do with that because of the way they stretch you out."

Pelicans 116, Thunder 113: Pelicans coach Monty Williams isn't afraid to say what a lot of people are thinking by now: Anthony Davis might be turning into one of the best clutch players in the NBA.

He certainly made one of the biggest shots of his career Friday night.

Davis' first three-pointer of the season — a double-clutch attempt with Kevin Durant and another defender coming at him — beat the buzzer and capped a 41-point performance that lifted visiting New Orleans over Oklahoma City in a thrilling game between Western Conference rivals fighting to reach the playoffs.

"If you don't want to be great, step aside and let somebody else be great," Davis said. "Everybody just wanted to be great tonight. I know I had to be great. I want to be great, so you have to be able to accept the challenges."

Davis also grabbed 10 rebounds and outdueled Thunder guard Russell Westbrook, who scored a career-high 48 points to go with 11 assists and nine rebounds. Westbrook, who had 45 points Wednesday in a win at New Orleans, made three free throws with 1.2 seconds left to tie the game.

Davis took the ensuing inbound pass from Tyreke Evans and silenced a raucous sellout crowd.

"We've been in so many close games over the last four years. Guys continue to step up and do the best they can and

tonight you saw greatness in a guy that doesn't run from it," Williams said.

"Obviously, you don't get a lot of time to celebrate in the NBA. We've got to play tomorrow, but I'm sure he feels and has felt that he's not just one of the better players in the league, he might be the best when it comes to being a young guy who's not afraid of the moment."

It was a huge moment for the Pelicans. In the competitive Western Conference, ninth-place New Orleans moved to 27-23 and took a two-game lead over Oklahoma City (25-25). Both teams are chasing the Phoenix Suns (29-23) for the final playoff spot in the West.

New Orleans also won the season series 3-1 over Oklahoma City, a tiebreaker that would be applied if both teams finish with the same record.

Durant scored 27 points, including a pair of threes in the fourth quarter, but went 9-for-26 from the field.

Timberwolves 90, Grizzlies 89: Ricky Rubio shook off an ankle injury in the fourth quarter to score eight points in the final 1:47 and host Minnesota snapped Memphis' winning streak at eight.

Rubio appeared to re-injure the ankle that kept him out for 42 games earlier in the season on a driving layup with 6 minutes to play. He came back a minute later, hit two big three-pointers and then knocked down a pair of free throws with 10.2 seconds to play.

Rubio finished with 17 points and five assists, and Andrew Wiggins had 18 points.

Pacers 103, Cavaliers 99: C.J. Miles had 26 points, George Hill converted a key four-point play and host Indiana ended Cleveland's winning streak

at 12 games.

Spurs 98, Heat 85: Kawhi Leonard had 24 points and his team beat visiting Miami in their first meeting since San Antonio's victory in the NBA Finals.

Nets 92, Knicks 88: Brook Lopez had 22 points and nine rebounds, and Jarrett Jack made a clutch three-pointer with 13.8 seconds left to help Brooklyn beat visiting New York.

Rockets 117, Bucks 111: NBA scoring leader James Harden had 33 points and hit three of his team's 15 three-pointers in Houston's victory over visiting Milwaukee.

Raptors 123, Clippers 107: DeMar DeRozan scored 24 points, Kyle Lowry had 21 and host Toronto overcame a 20-point deficit to hand Los Angeles its fourth loss in five games.

Suns 100, Jazz 93: Marcus Morris scored 24 of his career-high 34 points in the first half and had a career-best 12 rebounds in host Phoenix's victory over Utah.

Magic 103, Lakers 97 (OT): Tobias Harris had a career-high 34 points and host Orlando snapped a 10-game losing streak with the victory over Los Angeles.

Celtics 107, 76ers 96: Jared Sullinger had 22 points, eight rebounds and seven assists to help Boston beat visiting Philadelphia for its third straight win.

Pistons 98, Nuggets 88: Greg Monroe had 21 points and a career-high 21 rebounds and host Detroit cruised past slumping Denver.



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Blue Jackets snap Blues' point streak

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In a game matching teams going in different directions, everything got turned upside down.

Nick Foligno set a career high with his 19th and 20th goals of the season and also had an assist, and the Columbus Blue Jackets had their most productive game in a 7-1 victory over the St. Louis Blues on Friday night.

The defeat ended the Blues' seven-game winning streak and franchise-record 13-game point streak (12-0-1) — and the Blue Jackets' three-game skid.

"We're not in any position to relax," Foligno said of the Blue Jackets, who began the night closer to the worst record in the NHL than the last playoff spot. "That's honestly the momentum now. We don't have the room to take a shift off, a period off. We need to continue to work and to try and win."

Ryan Johansen scored his first NHL short-handed goal, Corey Tropp tallied for the first time in 66 games and Cam Atkinson, Matt Calvert and Scott Hartnell also scored for Columbus. Curtis McElhinney had 32 saves and Brandon Dubinsky had two assists. Johansen also had two assists and Tropp and Hartnell added helpers.

"We capitalized on our opportunities and didn't give them too much," Johansen said. "I'm really happy with the effort."

St. Louis started the night just two points behind Anaheim for the best record in the league.

"We knew it was going to be a tall task," Dubinsky said. "We came out and played the way we're capable."

Riddled by injuries, the Blue Jackets had been stumbling for the last month. They

had lost four of their last five at home. The seven goals were a season-high.

"I don't know if we needed necessarily a 7-1 game, but we needed a win," coach Todd Richards said. "They're a very, very good hockey team. Obviously, to win 7-1 leaves you with a good feeling."

Blues coach Ken Hitchcock had a decidedly bad feeling.

"That was a rested team. They outplayed us. We looked unfocused at times," he said. "We've kind of trended this way for the last three games. It caught up to us. This team finished us off."

The Blue Jackets, who hadn't scored more than once in their last two games, notched two goals in the opening period. Both required baseball swings on high pucks.

At the 10:44 mark, Dubinsky squeezed off a shot from the top of the right circle. Foligno, whose previous season high was 18 goals in 70 games last season, crashed the net and, when the rebound off Elliott came out waist high, batted it into the net. It was his first goal in 10 games.

Atkinson then duplicated what Foligno did. Johansen's pass glanced off the stick of a Blues player and then off the helmet of Hartnell and took a weird, quirky bounce. It ricocheted off the back bar at the top of the net and to the crease where Atkinson bunted it past a surprised Elliott.

Artem Anisimov intercepted David Backes' pass in the defensive zone and fed Johansen, who was almost knocked off his skates by a defender's stick. But he regained his balance and the puck and swooped in for his 20th goal on a breakaway.

Elliott's night was done soon after. He was replaced by Jake Allen after the Blue Jackets' fourth goal on 14 shots — a redirection by Tropp for his first goal since

December 2013.

The Blues finally got on the board midway through the second on Stastny's power-play goal from a sharp angle. But by then it was already 4-0.

"That was one of those games where nothing really went our way," St. Louis forward Alexander Steen said. "We didn't play hard enough or smart enough. There's not much more to say about tonight. We weren't good enough."

Devils 4, Maple Leafs 1: Patrik Elias scored his 400th career goal and host New Jersey sent Toronto to a franchise-record 11th straight loss.

Cory Schneider had 33 saves, giving up a third-period power-play goal to Tyler Bozak. Tuomo Ruutu, Steve Bernier and Jaromir Jagr also scored as the streaking Devils won their third straight for the first time since the start of the season and improved to 8-2-2 in the last dozen games.

The Maple Leafs' skid breaks the old mark set by the 1966-67 team. That group rebounded with a 10-game unbeaten streak (eight wins, two ties) and won the Stanley Cup, the last time Toronto was in a Cup final.

The Maple Leafs will have a chance to end the streak Saturday against Edmonton, the NHL's second-worst team.

Capitals 3, Ducks 2 (SO): Evgeny Kuznetsov and Nicklas Backstrom scored shootout goals, Philipp Grubauer stopped 23 shots in his first NHL action of the season and host Washington defeated Anaheim.

After Alex Ovechkin, Washington's third shooter, failed to score, Anaheim had a chance to extend the game. But Grubauer stopped Ryan Kesler. Jakob Silfverberg scored the Ducks' lone shootout goal.

Jason Chimera had a goal and an as-

sist in regulation for Washington, and Kuznetsov added two assists.

Kesler had a goal and an assist for Anaheim, the NHL points leader, which had won eight of 10.

Blackhawks 2, Jets 1 (OT): Brandon Saad scored in overtime to lift visiting Chicago.

Patrick Kane also scored for the Blackhawks, while Corey Crawford made 20 saves.

Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets, who entered on an 0-4-1 skid since the All-Star break and were outscored 23-11 during that span.

Winnipeg announced before the game that Evander Kane, a healthy scratch in Vancouver on Tuesday night, will undergo left shoulder surgery and be out of the lineup for four to six months.

With Kane out and options limited at forward, coach Paul Maurice moved All-Star defenseman Dustin Byfuglien back to the wing, where he started the season.

Penguins 4, Flames 0: Marc-Andre Fleury got his NHL-leading eighth shutout of the season and Sidney Crosby contributed two goals and an assist for visiting Pittsburgh.

David Perron and Brandon Sutter also scored for Pittsburgh, which moved past the Islanders atop the Metropolitan Division.

Mired in a mini-slump with two assists in his last six games, Crosby was the best player on the ice — along with Fleury, of course. Crosby moved into fourth place in NHL scoring with 56 points.

The Penguins outplayed the Flames, who entered having won eight of their last 10, and Fleury made 21 saves to surpass Tom Barrasso's club record for shutouts in a season.

Mickelson misses Farmers cut

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Tiger Woods is gone from Torrey Pines, and Phil Mickelson joined him Friday by missing the cut.

In a tournament that quickly lost a big chunk of its star power, Harris English played another bogey-free round for a 6-under 66 on the North Course to build a two-shot lead Friday in the Farmers Insurance Open.

Mickelson, who worked hard to get into shape in the offseason and was as optimistic as ever, was done in by his short game. The best he could managed was a 72 on the North Course, and he missed the cut by two shots. It was the first time since 2002 that Mickelson missed the cut in back-to-back weeks on the PGA Tour.

Woods withdrew after 11 holes Thursday, citing tightness in his lower back. For the first time, Woods and Mickelson failed to make the cut in the same tournament in consecutive weeks on the PGA Tour.

"My putting is beyond pathetic," Mickelson said. "And if I can't get back to the levels of 2013, I'm not sure what I'm going to do. Because this is very frustrating."

Mickelson is not playing the last two weeks of the West Coast Swing because his kids are on spring break.

He was in good company leaving early.

Justin Rose, at No. 5 the highest-ranked player at Torrey Pines, also shot 70 on the North and missed the cut. So did Hideki Matsuyama, who three-putted for par on the closing hole on the South Course to miss by one shot; Jordan Spieth, who needed an eagle on the 18th on the South

to make the cut and hit it in the water; and Dustin Johnson, playing for the first time since a six-month break to get professional help for "personal challenges."

"The last two days, I think normally I probably would be at least 5 or 6 under right now instead of even par," Johnson said. "But I'm happy with where it's at. Just a little rusty, that's all."

English was at 10-under 134, two shots ahead of Nick Watney (65), Jhonattan Vegas (69) and Martin Laird, who had another 68. Laird was tied for the lead with two holes to play in Phoenix last week until a bogey-double bogey finish.

Jimmy Walker (66), Jason Day (65) and Ian Poulter (71) led a large group at 6-under 138. The cut was at 1-under 143.

PGA European Tour: Bernd Wiesberger is well positioned to cap a superb month of golf with victory in the Malaysian Open after shooting a 9-under 63 on Saturday, taking a two-shot lead going into the final round.

He moved to 17-under 199 overall at Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club, two strokes ahead of Spain's Alejandro Canizares, who finished his roller-coaster round eagle-birdie-bogey to card a 68.

Defending champion Lee Westwood struggled for much of the round before picking up birdies on his final two holes to sit three off the pace following a 69.

The Englishman is in a tie for third on 14-under alongside compatriot Paul Waring, who carded a 65 featuring two eagles, six birdies and three bogeys.

LPGA Tour: Brittany Lincicome and Sun Young Yoo topped the leaderboard in

the wind-swept Bahamas LPGA Classic when second-round play was suspended because of darkness.

In wind gusting to 35-40 mph, Yoo completed a first-round 70 and shot 69 in the second to match Lincicome at 7 under on Atlantis Resort's Ocean Club course.

Lincicome was 2 under in the second round with 13 holes left. She shot a 68 on Thursday.

After rain delayed play Thursday, only half of the players were able to finish the second round Friday. In May 2013, the inaugural event was reduced to three 12-hole rounds because of flooding.

Second-ranked Inbee Park, Dori Carter, Jenny Shin, Kelly Shon were 6 under. Shin and Shon shot 71, Carter had a 72, and Park was 1 under for the round with 13 holes left.

Lydia Ko, playing her first event since taking the No. 1 spot in the world ranking, was 3 under after rounds of 72 and 71. The 17-year-old New Zealander tied for second last week in the season-opening event in Florida, to break Tiger Woods' record as the youngest player to reach No. 1.

Champions Tour: Tom Pernice Jr. closed with a double bogey for a 6-under 66 and a share of the first-round lead with Paul Goydos and Bart Bryant at the Allianz Championship in Boca Raton, Fla.

Pernice, second behind Rocco Mediate two years ago at Broken Sound, hooked his drive into the water on the difficult par-4 ninth. After a drop, he hit a 3-wood short of the green and missed a 9-foot putt.

Vonn fifth in downhill

The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Two races, one medal for Lindsey Vonn. Not gold, either, but bronze.

This wasn't exactly the start the skier from nearby Vail was hoping for at the world championships in front of a home crowd.

But there are still events left for Vonn. She announced after her fifth-place finish in the downhill Friday that she was going to compete in the giant slalom and the Alpine combined, an even that combines the times of one run of downhill and one of slalom. Never mind she hasn't been in a slalom race in years, she's going to give it a go.

Nothing to lose. "Although my chances of doing something there are slim, I will definitely be giving 110 percent effort," the 30-year-old Vonn said. "Hopefully, make a miracle happen."

So far, these worlds have been dominated by Slovenia's Tina Maze and Austria's Anna Fenninger. Maze won the downhill race by 0.02 seconds over Fenninger.

Three days earlier in the super-G, Fenninger held off Maze by 0.03 seconds. Maze has a chance to medal in every event at worlds. Should she do that, she will join some elite company.

At the 1999 worlds in Beaver Creek, Lasse Kjus of Norway captured five medals (two golds, three silvers).