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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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McCain: Don't let carrier visit China

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — As the Pentagon considers whether to allow a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier to make a historic port visit to China, the idea is drawing flak from Capitol Hill.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., the new chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, urged the Defense Department to scuttle the proposal in a letter dated Monday to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work. Calling the Navy's Nimitz-class carriers "one of the most sophisticated and lethal military tools in world history," McCain said it would be a political and symbolic mistake for the Navy to accept a Chinese invitation for one of its massive flattop vessels to swing by for a visit.

"Sending such a platform to China would

be seen as an international display of respect to China and it's Navy, despite Beijing's recent record of aggressive behavior in the East and South China Seas," McCain wrote. "I believe it would also send the wrong signal to allies and partners throughout the region, including Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam, who are looking to the United States for leadership in the face of China's continued use of coercion to pursue its territorial claims."

On Friday, Army Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, said defense officials have decided to shelve the idea of a carrier visit to China, at least for now. "We have no plans for a carrier visit to mainland China this year," he said.

The announcement came a day after U.S. and Chinese military officials met at

the Pentagon to discuss various forms of military exchanges for the remainder of the year.

The Pentagon has been seeking closer military ties with China — such as more frequent military exchanges, multilateral exercises and visits by senior leaders — even as both countries have sought to project more force in Asia. Relations have gradually improved since January 2010, when Beijing suspended military visits and exchanges with Washington to protest U.S. arm sales to Taiwan. But turbulent moments have arisen, such as an increasing number of dangerous midair encounters between U.S. and Chinese aircraft. As a result, some lawmakers have questioned whether the Pentagon is too eager to become friendly with the People's Liberation Army.

Greenert says cuts could cause longer deployments

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — The Navy's chief of naval operations had some positive news for sailors during an all-hands call Friday about shortened sea deployments — but cautioned later that budget cuts this coming year could jeopardize them.

The USS Carl Vinson is currently in the Arabian Gulf on a 9½-month deployment, Adm. Jonathan Greenert told about 1,500 sailors seated in a basketball arena. Its eventual replacement, the USS Theodore Roosevelt, will deploy for more than a month less than that.

"The carrier after that should be on a seven-month deployment," Greenert said, adding that amphibious groups, submarines and maritime patrols with aircraft are all now down to deployments of seven months or less.

Greenert said the extended deployments resulted from mandatory budget caps enacted by Congress several years ago

after lawmakers came to an impasse on spending and taxes.

Those so-called sequestration cuts call for a mandatory reduction of about \$1.1 trillion in discretionary spending — which includes defense — from 2013 to 2021.

Lawmakers eventually agreed on a deal allowing higher defense spending for the past two budget cycles, but further cuts are slated for the budget year that begins Oct. 1 unless another deal is hammered out.

That would "probably" lead to more extended deployments, Greenert told reporters during a news conference after the all-hands call, after which he planned to travel to Australia and New Zealand.

"Some would say that's because we're going to try to get all this done with less force," he said. "But really, it's because we wouldn't get maintenance done on time. We wouldn't have enough people in the public shipyards at Pearl Harbor. That work would take longer to do. You may not have overtime

authorized."

That delay in work has a "cascading, downward effect," which means deployed ships would have to stay at sea longer.

He compared the work of modernizing and maintaining ships to a conveyor belt, and said: "I can't crank up the speed on this thing. I don't have the money to do it."

Greenert was adamant, however, that the sequestration cuts won't affect the Pacific rebalance.

"Presence in the Pacific won't change much, because I will invest in that, very much."

He said his top priorities are the strategic deterrent of ballistic missile-armed submarines and providing forward presence "where it matters, when it matters, in that distribution."

He said the 50 ships now forward-deployed in the Pacific will increase to 60 by 2020.

"That will pretty much remain on track regardless of sequester," he said.

The effects of sequestration cuts will come in shore opera-

tions, maintenance, training and modernization, he said.

"So if you're not on deployment and you come back, you'll probably shut down, stop flying," he said. "I'm sure you'll be delayed going into maintenance, a smaller maintenance package because of what we can afford. That will affect Hawaii from the perspective of these modernization packages that we bring in. We bring a destroyer in and take it to the next level in ballistic missile defense. We'll be pushing those out."

Ultimately, if the sequestration caps become the new norm, Greenert said he and the other service chiefs would recommend a new national defense strategy, one that matches the budget rather than some other greater goal.

He said continued sequestration would deprive the Navy of its ability to simultaneously "defeat an enemy and deny an enemy in another area of the world."

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Williams takes leave amid NBC probe

By PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — “NBC Nightly News” anchor Brian Williams, facing withering criticism for “misremembering” events in Iraq in 2003, is voluntarily taking a leave of absence while the network investigates his reporting.

On Friday, NBC Universal sent out a news release in which the news division’s president, Deborah Turness, said in part: “We have a team dedicated to gathering the facts to help us make sense of all that has transpired. We’re working on what the best next steps are.”

On Saturday, Williams sent a note to the NBC News staff, which said in part: “[It] has become painfully apparent to me that I am presently too much a part of the news, due to my actions.

“As Managing Editor of NBC Nightly News, I have decided to take myself off of my daily broadcast for the next several days, and Lester Holt has kindly agreed to sit in for me to allow us to adequately deal with this

issue.”

The Iraq issue erupted online when Iraq veterans took umbrage at a news report in which Williams used a ceremony honoring a retired command sergeant major at a New York Rangers hockey game to repeat the story that his aircraft was forced down in Iraq.

Days later, Williams admitted the claim was false after Stars and Stripes reporter Travis Tritten contacted NBC News to ask for comment on statements by some servicemembers challenging the veteran anchor’s version.

Williams’ apology, delivered on “NBC Nightly News,” failed to stem the criticism. He admitted his helicopter was not hit, but claimed he “was instead in a following aircraft” and said he had bungled the tribute to a veteran.

The apology was met with scorn and derision, particularly online, and deeper scrutiny followed.

Some media outlets have questioned Williams’ description of what he saw while reporting on Hurricane Katrina. In an

interview a year after the storm, he described seeing a body floating down the street from his hotel window in the French Quarter of New Orleans, which was not severely flooded.

Early Friday, news organizations reported that NBC News had launched an internal investigation into Williams’ reporting. The New York Times reported that NBC executives canceled meetings and said that the issue was absorbing all of their focus.

Williams did not mention in his reports from Iraq in 2003 that his Chinook had been hit by ground fire. By 2013, he told Alec Baldwin on his public radio show that “I had no business being in Iraq with rounds coming into the airframe.”

When Baldwin asks if Williams thought he would die, he replies, “Briefly, sure.”

Weeks later he told David Letterman on air that “two of the four helicopters were hit, by ground fire, including the one I was in, [by] uh, RPG and AK-47.”

When the hockey game report hit the air, some soldiers called

him on it.

The claims bothered several soldiers aboard the formation of 159th Aviation Regiment Chinooks that were flying far ahead and did come under attack on March 24, 2003, Tritten wrote.

One of the helicopters was hit by two rocket-propelled grenades — one did not detonate but passed through the airframe and rotor blades — as well as small-arms fire.

“It was something personal for us that was kind of life-changing for me,” said Lance Reynolds, who was the flight engineer. “I know how lucky I was to survive it. It felt like a personal experience that someone else wanted to participate in and didn’t deserve to participate in.”

Reynolds said Williams and the NBC cameramen arrived in a helicopter 30 to 60 minutes after his damaged Chinook made an emergency landing at an Iraqi airfield near Objective Rams, a temporary base being hastily set up near Najaf in southern Iraq.

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Many Americans unemployed in spite of industries’ job gains

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The job market remains a frustrating place for America’s 9 million unemployed — perhaps more so as hiring has accelerated along with job postings.

The pace of job growth over the past three months was the fastest in 17 years. The gains spanned nearly every industry, and some employers have finally had to dangle higher pay to attract or retain top talent.

Yet millions of job seekers still can’t find work. Some businesses remain slow to fill their openings, awaiting the ideal candidates. Many job seekers lack the skills employers require.

The plight of the unemployed also reflects an economic reality: Even in the best times, the number of job seekers is typically twice the number of job openings.

The January jobs report that the government issued Friday pointed to another factor, too: As hiring strengthens, more people typically start looking for jobs. As the number of job seekers grows, so does competition for work.

The number of openings has reached nearly 5 million, the most since 2001. Yet that’s barely more than half the number of people the government counts as unemployed.

Midshipman found dead in his Academy dorm room

The (Annapolis, Md.) Capital

A 22-year-old midshipman was found dead in his dorm room Thursday night at the U.S. Naval Academy, according to academy officials.

Midshipman 2nd Class Rinaldo Amador from Harpswell, Maine, was found dead in the Naval Academy dormitory, Bancroft Hall, about 9 p.m., according to a news release from the academy.

“The entire campus — midshipmen, faculty and staff, everybody — is obviously heartbroken over this,” said Naval Academy spokesman Cmdr. John Schofield.

All deaths at the academy are investigated by Navy Criminal

Investigative Service. An official close to the investigation said there is no indication of any criminal activity in Amador’s death.

Amador was a member of the 16th Company and a mechanical engineering major. He was the fourth midshipman to die in the past year.

A 25-year-old midshipman died last Feb. 15 when his sport utility vehicle plunged into College Creek. About a month later, a 19-year-old football player collapsed at a spring practice with bleeding in his head and died several days later. Also in March 2014, a 20-year-old midshipman died after a skateboarding accident while on liberty.

Legendary UNC coach Dean Smith dies

The Associated Press

Dean Smith, the coaching innovator who won two national championships at North Carolina, an Olympic gold medal in 1976 and induction into basketball's Hall of Fame more than a decade before he left the bench, has died. He was 83.

The retired coach died "peacefully" at his North Carolina home Saturday night, the school said in a statement Sunday from Smith's family. He was with his wife and five children.

Smith had health issues in recent years, with the family saying in 2010 he had a condition that was causing him to lose memory. He had kept a lower profile during that time. His wife, Linnea, accepted the Presidential Medal of Freedom on his behalf from President Barack Obama in November 2013.

Roy Williams, the current North Carolina coach who spent 10 years as Smith's assistant, said Smith "was the greatest there ever was on the court but far, far better off the court with people."

"I'd like to say on behalf of all our players and coaches, past and present, that Dean Smith was the perfect picture of what a college basketball coach should have been," Williams said in a statement. "We love him and we will miss him."

In a career that spanned more than 40 years, Smith coached the likes of Michael Jordan and James Worthy and influenced

the game and how it is played in ways that are unrivaled.

His "Four Corners" time-melting offense led to the creation of the shot clock to counter it. He was the first coach at North Carolina, and among the first in the segregated South, to offer a scholarship to a black athlete.

He was a direct coaching descendent of basketball's father, James Naismith, playing and later coaching at Kansas for the inventor of the game's most famous student, Jayhawks coach Phog Allen.

Smith would pass lessons learned in Kansas along at North Carolina, adding more than a few of his own. He tutored perhaps the game's greatest player, Jordan, who burst onto the national stage as a freshman on Smith's 1982 national title team, and two of basketball's most successful coaches, fellow Hall of Famers Larry Brown and Williams.

The numerical record of his accomplishments is staggering. His only losing season came in his first, and he left the game having surpassed Kentucky's Adolph Rupp as the winningest men's basketball coach in Division I history.

He led the Tar Heels to 13 Atlantic Coast Conference tournament championships, appearances in 11 Final Fours, five national title games, and NCAA championships in 1982 and 1993. North Carolina won at least 20 games in each of his final 27 seasons, and made 23 consecutive ap-

pearances in the NCAA tournament.

Along the way, more than 95 percent of Smith's lettermen graduated from one of the nation's premier public universities.

His devotion to a humble, team-first philosophy — the famed "Carolina Way" — bred a fierce loyalty among the Tar Heels. Williams was an enormous success at Kansas, able to resist returning to his alma mater in 2000. He could not do so three years later when Smith called, and Williams tearfully left the Jayhawks behind after 15 seasons and returned to Chapel Hill.

Smith remained in the background after his retirement, keeping an office at the Dean E. Smith Center — the arena that opened while he was still coaching in 1986. He often consulted North Carolina players as they considered whether to leave school early for the NBA, and would occasionally watch Williams direct practice and take notes.

At the urging of his pastor, he recruited blacks to his team, and in 1967 made Charlie Scott the first black scholarship athlete at North Carolina and one of the first in the South.

Smith went 8-9 in his first season. In January 1965, in his fourth season, the Tar Heels returned to campus from a loss at Wake Forest to find an effigy of Smith hanging from a tree outside Woollen Gymnasium.

But Smith never had a losing season

after his first. His breakthrough came in the 1966-67 season, when he led the Tar Heels to a 26-6 record. The season ended with the first of three straight ACC tournament titles and Final Four trips. His 1968 team lost in the final to Lew Alcindor and UCLA.

Smith won his final championship in 1993 with a balanced team that won 34 games. Once in the Final Four, the Tar Heels beat Williams' Jayhawks and Michigan's "Fab Five" to claim another title in the Big Easy.

Smith retired in October 1997 with a career record of 879-254, having surpassed Rupp's record of 876 victories during the NCAA tournament that March. When he left the game, he did so with more wins in the NCAA tournament than any other coach, though both records were surpassed in recent seasons.

More than 50 of Smith's players went on to play professionally in the NBA or the ABA, and more played overseas. Among them: Charlie Scott, Walter Davis, Sam Perkins, Brad Daugherty, J.R. Reid, Jerry Stackhouse, Rasheed Wallace, Vince Carter and Antawn Jamison. Along with Williams and Brown, the only coach to win both an NCAA and NBA title, former Tar Heels with successful coaching careers include George Karl and Eddie Fogler.

Ganong surprises with silver in downhill

The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Sometimes, even a downhiller needs to be reminded to go fast.

Patrick Kueng, of Switzerland, was told by a teammate before the race to just fly. He listened and won.

American Travis Ganong was instructed to "trust himself" on the hill. So he did and earned a breakthrough silver medal, lifting the U.S. spirits after Bode Miller wasn't able to race due to injury.

Kueng ruled the downhill at the world championships Saturday, winning the race with a consistent and concise run that was just enough to hold off Ganong. Kueng earned his first world title by completing the demanding course in 1 minute, 43.18 seconds.

Ganong finished 0.24 seconds behind Kueng, while Beat Feuz, of Switzerland, picked up bronze.

"I just turned my brain off, put a smile on my face and had some fun," Ganong said as he raced in front of a packed venue on home snow and with the sun shining.

This was a banner day for the Swiss and the Americans, each placing three racers in the top 10. A forgetful one for the Austrians as the first country of skiing didn't have anyone finish better than 12th (Sochi Olympics downhill gold medalist Matthias Mayer).

What's more, Austria hasn't had a men's downhiller on the podium at worlds since Michael Walchofer earned a bronze in

2005.

Coincidentally, that's the last time the American men had a skier on the downhill podium at worlds, when Miller and Daron Rahlves finished 1-2.

Miller didn't race Saturday after having surgery to fix a severed right hamstring tendon following a bad crash in the super-G.

"The great champion that everybody expected to do something unfortunately had a bad accident," U.S. men's coach Sasha Rearick said of Miller. "But the rest of the guys stepped up. They skied relaxed, free and sent it."

It was actually Feuz who provided some inspiration to Kueng, reminding him not to play it safe.

"I said, 'Why not try your best today?'" Feuz said. "Maybe I shouldn't tell him this in the future. But we share our joy as a team."

To think, Kueng almost didn't race. He had to qualify in a downhill training session the day before just to make the Swiss squad. He finished 13th to secure his spot.

Lukey No. 13 turned into No. 1 on race day.

Ganong was motivated by teammate Steven Nyman's course report. Nyman called up to the start house after his blistering run and told Ganong the hill was ripe for the carving. Ganong didn't hold anything back and attacked the course. He pumped his ski poles after seeing his time on the scoreboard.

Only, he knocked Nyman off the podium.

Sure, Nyman was pleased for Ganong, but disappointed he finished in fourth.

"He laid it down," Nyman said. "I'm happy with my run."

Ganong also got some pre-race advice from Rahlves, who's well-versed in the nuances of this course. The other night, Rahlves even showed Ganong the video of his 2003 World Cup win at Beaver Creek, when Rahlves flew down the course. Rahlves pointed out places where Ganong could gain speed. Ganong carefully listened.

"What Daron always teaches me is to look for aerodynamics in specific places so you can take the turn deep to get into that aerodynamic position," said the 26-year-old Ganong, who's from Squaw Valley, Calif. "You can't stay aerodynamic if you get tossed around sometimes."

"I pushed hard today and it worked out."

Nyman had the fastest early run before being knocked out of the lead by Feuz. Andrew Weibrecht, racing back in the pack at No. 35, had an electric run going before slowing near the finish. He wound up tied for ninth.

Ganong is loaded with confidence these days after winning his first World Cup race on Dec. 28 in Italy. And now this, his first medal at world championships.

"All day long I was super relaxed and just having a good time," Ganong said. "It was unbelievable — skiing is the most fun thing you can do. When it works out well at a venue, on a stage like this, it's just so special."

Prolific PGA winner Casper dies at 83

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Billy Casper, one of the most prolific winners on the PGA Tour, died of a heart attack Saturday at his home in Utah. He was 83.

Bob Casper said his father died quickly and peacefully with wife Shirley at his bedside. They had been married 62 years.

Casper passed out in the clubhouse at the Masters last year, had work on his heart and recovered from a bout of pneumonia over Thanksgiving that kept him hospitalized for a month. His son said Casper was going to cardio rehab for the last four months and was doing well until he started to feel badly in the last week.

Casper won 51 times on the PGA Tour, putting him at No. 7 on the career list behind only Sam Snead, Tiger Woods, Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer and Byron Nelson. His three major championships include the 1966 U.S. Open, one of golf's most remarkable comebacks. He rallied from a seven-shot deficit on the back nine at Olympic Club to tie Palmer, and beat him in an 18-hole playoff.

Casper also won the 1959 U.S. Open at Winged Foot and the 1970 Masters. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1978.



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Kentucky holds off Florida

The Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Top-ranked Kentucky handled another tough test.

This one was on the road and against Southeastern Conference nemesis Florida.

Aaron Harrison scored 23 points, Karl-Anthony Towns added 19 and the Wildcats remained unbeaten with a 68-61 victory over the Gators on Saturday night.

Willie Cauley-Stein chipped in 13 points, highlighted by a thunderous dunk over freshman Devin Robinson in the second half, and the Wildcats (23-0, 10-0 Southeastern Conference) snapped a three-game losing streak against the Gators (12-11, 5-5).

No. 3 Virginia 52, No. 9 Louisville 47: Malcolm Brogdon scored 15 for Virginia, which held the Cardinals scoreless for a stretch of 12 minutes spanning halftime, then had to withstand a furious rally for a victory that left both head coaches frustrated with their teams.

No. 2 Gonzaga 81, San Francisco 70: Kyle Wiltjer scored 29 points and made a pair of three-pointers in a key second-half run that helped visiting Gonzaga win its 17th straight.

Kevin Pangos added 17 points and Byron Wesley had 12 for the Bulldogs (24-1, 11-0 West Coast Conference), who were locked in a close game for about 30 minutes before pulling away for another win.

No. 4 Duke 90, No. 10 Notre Dame 60: Justise Winslow had 19 points and 11 rebounds, and host Duke (20-3, 7-3 ACC) used a huge early run to rout Notre Dame.

No. 5 Wisconsin 65, Northwestern 50: Bronson Koenig scored a season-high 16 points, Sam

Dekker also had 16 and host Wisconsin (21-2, 9-1 Big Ten) won its sixth straight game.

Arizona State 81, No. 6 Arizona 78: Bo Barnes scored 18 points, including a key three-pointer late, and Arizona State (12-1, 4-6 Pac-12) pulled off a second straight home upset over Arizona.

No. 7 Villanova 69, No. 24 Georgetown 53: Darrun Hilliard scored 15 points and Josh Hart had 13 to help host Villanova avenge its worst game of the season.

Oklahoma State 67, No. 8 Kansas 62: Le'Bryan Nash scored 18 points to help host Oklahoma State upset Kansas.

Down by 11 at halftime, the Cowboys held the Jayhawks to 27 percent shooting in the second half.

No. 11 Iowa State 75, Texas Tech 38: Jameel McKay scored 17 points on 7-for-7 shooting in his first start and keyed a strong defensive effort for host Iowa State.

No. 12 North Carolina 79, Boston College 68: Isaiah Hicks scored 21 points, Brice Johnson had 20 points and 10 snapped a two-game losing streak.

No. 13 Utah 79, Colorado 51: Brandon Taylor scored 18 points on a career-best six three-pointers and visiting Utah routed cold-shooting Colorado.

No. 14 Northern Iowa 69, Drake 53: Seth Tuttle scored 16 points, Matt Bohannon added 14 and host Northern Iowa earned its 11th straight victory.

No. 19 Baylor 87, No. 15 West Virginia 69: Rico Gathers had 17 points and 17 rebounds for visiting Baylor.

No. 16 Wichita State 78, Missouri State 35: Fred VanVleet had 10 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds in just 24 minutes for host Wichita State's first triple-double in 43 years.

St. Bonaventure 73, No. 18 VCU 71: Marcus Posley scooped in a 6-footer off the backboard at the buzzer, lifting host St. Bonaventure over injury-depleted VCU.

No. 21 Oklahoma 68, TCU 56: Ryan Spangler scored 21 points in visiting Oklahoma's victory over TCU.

No. 22 Butler 83, DePaul 73: Kellen Dunham hit four three-pointers and scored 24 points for host Butler.

No. 23 SMU 68, Tulsa 57: Nic Moore and Cannen Cunningham led a 15-0 second-half run and Southern Methodist handed host Tulsa its first American Conference loss.

No. 25 Texas 61, Kansas State 57: Isaiah Taylor scored 23 points, including two free throws with a second left, in Texas' victory over host Kansas State.

Air Force 73, Wyoming 50: Zach Kocur did not miss a shot on his way to 14 points and host Air Force knocked off Mountain West Conference leader Wyoming.

Navy 67, Army 59: Zach Fong scored a career-high 23 points and Worth Smith hit three big baskets late to give host Navy a season sweep of Army for the first time since 2011.

Rask lifts Bruins past Islanders

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Loui Eriksson scored the go-ahead goal with 7:34 left in the third period and Tuukka Rask stopped 39 shots to lift the surging Boston Bruins to a 2-1 victory over the New York Islanders Saturday night for their ninth win in 12 games.

Patrice Bergeron added a first-period, power-play goal for the Bruins, who have collected points in 14 of their last 16 games (10-2-4).

John Tavares had a power-play goal for the Islanders, who have lost four of five. Former Bruin Chad Johnson made 34 saves.

In a pregame ceremony, Rob Gronkowski and other Patriots such as wide receiver Julian Edelman, linebacker Rob Ninkovich and defensive end Chandler Jones, were honored by the Bruins.

Gronkowski emphatically spiked the pregame ceremonial puck — as he does with the football when he scores a touchdown — to the delight of the sellout crowd at TD Garden.

The Patriots beat the Seattle Seahawks 28-24 in the Super Bowl last Sunday.

Kings 4, Lightning 2: Justin Williams had two goals and Los Angeles got a rare road win, beating the Lightning and snapping Tampa Bay's franchise-record 10-game home winning streak.

Tampa Bay got goals from Nikita Kucherov and Victor Hedman. It was the Lightning's first loss at home since losing 5-3 to Washington on Dec. 9.

Predators 3, Rangers 2: Mike Ribeiro scored with 7:14 left in the third period and host Nashville bounced back from a rare home loss to beat New York.

Wild 1, Avalanche 0: Charlie Coyle scored and Devan Dubnyk stopped 18 shots for his fourth shutout in nine starts with Minnesota, leading the Wild past visiting Colorado for their fifth straight win.

Red Wings 3, Coyotes 1: Petr Mrazek stopped 22 shots, including a third-period penalty shot, and Detroit moved into a first-place tie in the Eastern Conference with a victory over host Arizona.

Sabres 3, Stars 2: Jhonas Enroth made 38 saves and Chris Stewart assisted on all three goals for Buffalo in its first victory at home in more than a month.

Maple Leafs 5, Oilers 1: Interim coach Peter Horachek scratched David Clarkson and started James Reimer and host Toronto snapped an 11-game winless streak, beating Edmonton.

Canadiens 6, Devils 2: Tomas Plekanec and Dale Weise each scored twice and P.K. Subban assisted on three power-play goals as host Montreal beat New Jersey.

Andrei Markov and Lars Eller also scored for the Canadiens, who topped two goals for the first time in five games.

Blue Jackets 4, Senators 1: Curtis McElhinney stopped 34 shots and Columbus scored four goals in the third period to beat host Ottawa.

Canucks 5, Penguins 0: Ryan Miller made 31 saves for his sixth shutout of the season and 35th of his career, leading host Vancouver past Pittsburgh.

Hurricanes 5, Sharks 4: Andrej Sekera and Victor Rask scored 3:41 apart late in the third period and Carolina beat host San Jose.

Mavericks top Blazers in OT

The Associated Press

DALLAS — Dirk Nowitzki gave Dallas a shot at a rare win over a Western Conference playoff contender by capping a late rally with a three-pointer that forced overtime.

Chandler Parsons took over from there. Nowitzki's 25 points included a high-arching three-pointer that wiped out the last of an 11-point deficit in the final 2 minutes, Parsons scored 10 of his 20 in the extra period and the Mavericks beat the Portland Trail Blazers 111-101 Saturday night.

Damian Lillard ended a shooting slump to finish with 26 points and LaMarcus Aldridge had 25, but the Blazers were outscored 22-2 in a stretch that included the fourth quarter and overtime to drop their seventh straight road game.

The Mavericks gave themselves a chance with three-pointers from Devin Harris and Parsons just 12 seconds apart to pull within five with 1:43 to go in regulation. Harris then knocked the ball away from Lillard, took a pass from Monta Ellis and hit a layup.

After Lillard missed a long three, Harris rebounded a missed three-pointer from Ellis to set up Nowitzki's tying shot to a huge roar from what was left of a crowd that started filtering out not long after Wesley Matthews opened the fourth quarter with a three-pointer that put Portland up by 16.

The Mavericks scored the first nine points of overtime, starting with two free throws by Parsons after he was fouled getting an offensive rebound, one of nine overall. He pumped his fist after a fade-way jumper that put Dallas ahead by 10.

Bulls 107, Pelicans 72: After New Orleans All-Star Anthony Davis hurt his right shoulder on a hard, awkward fall on an alley-oop dunk, Pau Gasol and visiting Chicago pulled away for a victory.

Gasol had 20 points and 15 rebounds for Chicago, which snapped a three-game skid. Derrick Rose added 20 points for the Bulls, who went on a 40-11 run after Davis went out.

The dunk that drove Davis from the game was a two-handed jam of Tyreke Evans' lob. Davis' body swung like a pendulum as he held the rim, then the 6-foot-10, 240-pound forward fell horizontally as he lost his grip. Davis stayed in briefly before taking himself out with 4:16 left in the first half and the game tied at 35.

Warriors 106, Knicks 92: Draymond Green had 20 points and 13 rebounds, and visiting Golden State beat New York to give Steve Kerr a win in his first game coaching in the arena he nearly called home.

Kerr picked the Warriors over the Knicks during the offseason, and the difference is 30 victories as the teams near the All-Star break.

Stephen Curry scored 22 points and

Klay Thompson had 16 on a night neither shot well.

Wizards 114, Nets 77: John Wall scored 17 points, Rasual Butler had 15 and host Washington beat Brooklyn to break a five-game skid.

Playing without starting guard Bradley Beal, who sat out with an injured right big toe, Washington led throughout. The 37-point margin of victory was its largest of the season.

Jazz 102, Kings 90: Gordon Hayward scored 30 points in Utah's victory over visiting Sacramento.

Derrick Favors finished with 20 points for the Jazz and Enes Kanter had 17 points and 13 rebounds. The Jazz had lost five of six and were playing their fourth game in five days.

Bucks 96, Celtics 93: Brandon Knight scored 26 points and Giannis Antetokounmpo added 14 points and 11 rebounds to help Milwaukee beat visiting Boston for its sixth win in seven games.

76ers 89, Hornets 81: Robert Covington scored 11 of his 22 points in a pivotal third quarter, leading host Philadelphia past Charlotte.

It was Philadelphia's fourth straight home victory after opening the season 3-18 on its home floor.