

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Former detainee reported slain

BY CARLO MUNOZ

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The former Guantanamo detainee allegedly responsible for trying to bring the Islamic State into southern Afghanistan was killed Monday in Helmand province, Afghan intelligence officials and police said.

A convoy carrying Mullah Abdul Rauf and several other Afghan Taliban fighters was hit by an airstrike while traveling in the Kajaki district in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province, officials said.

Other media outlets have reported that the attack was a drone strike, but that has not been confirmed by the NATO-led coalition.

Armando Perez, spokesman for the Resolute Support mission, confirmed that coalition

forces conducted a "precision strike in Helmand province. The strike resulted "in the death of eight individuals threatening the force," he said. He did not identify Rauf as a target.

Rauf, a former high-ranking Taliban commander, began recruiting recently for the Islamic State in southern Afghanistan, according to media reports. Rauf "was one of the major targets of [Afghanistan's] security forces for over the past month" because of his reported ties to the Islamic State, Afghanistan's intelligence agency said Monday in a statement.

"And fortunately he was eliminated in this operation," the National Directorate of Security said.

"It is a great achievement that he was targeted before he

was able to start attacks" in southern Afghanistan, Farid Obaid, provincial spokesman for the Afghan National Police in Helmand, said.

A former corps commander responsible for Taliban fighters in Kabul and Herat during the group's reign in Afghanistan in the 1990s, Rauf was a U.S. detainee at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, until his release back to Afghanistan in 2007.

Another former Guantanamo detainee, Abdul Rahim Muslim Dost, had been identified by Pakistani intelligence as the Islamic State's so-called emir in eastern Afghanistan. Dost has publicly renounced such claims but has expressed his solidarity with the Iraq- and Syria-based terrorist group.

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GI's death in Kosovo is ruled a suicide

BY JON HARPER

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Nine months after Army Staff Sgt. Heidi Ruh died at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command has ruled her death a suicide.

Ruh died May 9 from a "non-combat related incident," officials said when her death was announced. They said the exact cause was under investigation. The Army investigation was completed Jan. 20.

"Based on the totality of the investigation, to include the evaluation of evidence, death scene examination, interviews, and the final autopsy and toxicology reports conducted by the Armed Forces Medical Examiner, as well as the legal opinion, our investigation determined that SGT Ruh's manner of death was suicide and the cause was an intraoral gunshot wound," Army CID spokesman Christopher Grey said in an email.

Ruh joined the military in January 2003 as a biomedical equipment specialist. Assigned to 1st Medical Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas, she deployed to Kosovo in January 2014 and was attached to Kosovo Force's Multinational Battle Group-East.

Ruh was 32. Her home of record was listed as Barrington, Ill.

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Marine on trial years after vanishing from Iraq

The Associated Press

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — The trial was set to begin Monday at Camp Lejeune, N.C., for a Marine who vanished in Iraq a decade ago and then wound up in Lebanon.

Defense attorneys maintain Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun was kidnapped in 2004 by insurgents and later became tangled up in Lebanese courts. Prosecutors allege Hassoun fled his post because he was unhappy with his deployment and how U.S. troops treated Iraqis.

A September report from the military equivalent of a grand jury hearing acknowledges prosecutors could have a hard time tracking down witnesses from a decade ago.

The case began when Hassoun disappeared from a base in Fallujah in June 2004. Days

later, he appeared blindfolded and with a sword poised above his head in a photo purportedly taken by insurgents. An extremist group claimed to be holding him captive.

Not long after that, Hassoun turned up unharmed at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, saying he'd been kidnapped. But officials were suspicious, and he was brought back to Camp Lejeune while the military considered charging him with desertion and counts related to a pistol and a Humvee he's accused of taking.

Hassoun's case occupies some of the same murky territory as that of Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, a soldier who left his post in Afghanistan and was held by the Taliban for five years. The Army is considering what, if any, charges or punishment Bergdahl should face.

A lawyer for Hassoun, Haytham Faraj, questioned why his client's case is heading to trial when many unauthorized absences are handled administratively.

"To me, it doesn't seem very fair," Faraj said in a recent telephone interview.

An expert on military law agreed that most servicemen accused of leaving their posts receive administrative punishment. But Philip Cave, a retired Navy lawyer now in private practice, said Hassoun's multiple absences — including one shortly before he faced a court hearing — may explain why his case is being handled with a trial.

Hassoun, a native of Lebanon who is a naturalized American citizen, enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 2002 and served as an Arabic translator.

S. Korea makes overtures to North of reunification

BY ASHLEY ROWLAND
AND YOO KYONG CHANG

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Even as the U.S. and South Korea prepare for their annual spring war games, a diplomatic offensive is taking place as Seoul presses for talks with the North and outlines steps it hopes will lead to reunification.

Last week, South Korea announced a series of measures it plans to undertake this year to increase cooperation with the North and lay the groundwork for the two Koreas to reunite — even if the two sides will likely never agree to the other's terms to make it so.

The measures include events to mark the 70th anniversary of the Korean peninsula's liberation from Japanese rule, increased class time on "unification education" and trial runs of an inter-Korean and trans-continental railway.

President Park Geun-hye also has urged the North to agree to reunions around the Feb. 19 Lunar New Year's holiday for family members separated since the 1950-53 Korean War.

While reunification is one of Park's signature policy initiatives, some experts question whether her call for the first inter-Korean summit since 2007 is aimed more at Pyongyang or at South Korean voters.

Kim Joon Hyung, a professor of international politics at Handong Global University in Pohang, said Park's focus on reunification as she enters her third year in office may be designed to counteract her declining approval rating and growing lame-duck status. South Korean presidents serve a single five-year term.

"People here are very interested in reunification, so her appeals for reunification may be welcomed," he said, adding that he expects Park's calls for dialogue to go nowhere.

There are big questions about how a peaceful reunification could occur without major concessions by both sides. The two countries have drifted apart for the last 60 years, and their political and economic systems are almost polar opposites.

Asked if the North's vision for reunification is the same as the South's, a Ministry of Unification spokesperson said, "We can't grasp what North Korea wants."

Stalemate

Yang Mu-jin, a political science professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, believes Pyongyang is considering dialogue with Seoul not to leverage aid or gain official recognition as a nuclear power, as some have speculated,

but in hopes of using talks as a stepping stone to improved relations with other players in the region — including China and the U.S. — which would help stabilize Kim's rule.

Ultimately, Yang doesn't expect inter-Korean talks to take place because neither side — a North Korea that claims to want unity under its own brand of communism, and a South Korea that wants to reunify under a liberal democratic system — can budge from its position.

Meanwhile, the joint Foal Eagle and Key Resolve exercises are scheduled to begin in early March. The U.S. and South Korea call them defensive in nature, but the North blasts them as acts of war and typically levies a barrage of threats at the two countries during that period.

During last year's exercises, the North conducted several rocket and ballistic missile launches, and the two Koreas fired hundreds of shells across their disputed maritime border.

In 2013, a series of North Korean threats during the spring exercises heightened tensions to the point that the U.S. flew nuclear-capable B-52s over the peninsula on a practice mission. The U.S. beefed up its missile defense systems and conducted other shows of force that included F-22 fighters and a nuclear attack sub, while South Korea warned it would respond with force to even a small provocation.

Earlier this month, the North offered to halt its nuclear testing in exchange for cancellation of the drills, an offer that analysts say the allies almost certainly will reject and which Washington called a veiled threat.

Still, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who succeeded his father and grandfather, has left the door open for a possible summit, floating the idea in his annual New Year's address.

"I think the North is pretty serious, but they don't want to look like they're being taken to the cleaners or pushed there," said David Garretson, a professor of international relations at the University of Maryland University College in Seoul, who said back-channel discussions on a summit may be taking place.

He noted that the South Korean government has pushed activist groups to stop launches of balloons carrying anti-North Korean materials, including DVDs, over the border, a particular irritant to Pyongyang.

Pyongyang's apparent willingness to consider talks may be tied to the third anniversary last month of Kim Jong Il's death, a symbolic marker that may have freed his son to create his own policy agenda rather than follow in his footsteps.

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What Williams told Stars and Stripes

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — "NBC Nightly News" anchor Brian Williams on Sunday scuttled what would have been his first public appearance to explain his situation when he canceled a planned appearance on the "Late Show with David Letterman."

Williams has answered questions about the Iraq incident — how he came to tell a war story he now admits was false — only during an interview with Stars and Stripes. The embattled anchor published a Facebook apology to troops after claiming he was in a Chinook forced down by rocket-propelled grenade fire in 2003, addressed the issue on air Wednesday, and issued a brief statement over the weekend saying he will temporarily leave the news desk while NBC investigates.

Questions have also arisen around statements he made about reporting on Hurricane Katrina from New Orleans in 2005 and Israel's war with the militant group Hezbollah in 2006.

As NBC investigates and Williams keeps out of the public eye while his place as one of the most watched and trusted television news reporters in the country remains uncertain, Stars and Stripes is publishing on its website a full transcript of the Feb. 4 interview in which the anchor admits he was never on the attacked helicopter and claims he was unaware his flight was not directly behind but actually far from the company that was hit.

Here is a partial transcript of Stars and Stripes' interview, edited for space.

Stars and Stripes: Speaking to these veterans today, all of them told me they couldn't understand how you could misremember what aircraft you were on or whether your aircraft was hit, so I'm just wondering how that could happen?

Williams: Same reasoning in reverse. It was my first engagement of the war and, remember, I was and we were all, I think, scared. I have yet to meet the veteran who doesn't admit to cinching up a little bit when it starts, and it all became a fog of getting down on the ground. What do we do now? ... So, a professional will look at this differently. They go into a kind of hyper-drive. I did what a civilian, an untrained civilian, would do in that instance and it was being scared. I think anyone in my shoes would admit that. It could not have been a more foreign environment. All we knew is we had been fired upon. All we knew was he had set down, and then with the arrival of the sandstorm. How do

we defend our little desert bivouac area?

I had multiple guys tell me that they remember immediately after this the news coverage — this was within days of the incident. They said you and NBC had reported in those first broadcasts that you were on the aircraft that came under attack. So is that not true?

No, I think I correctly reported, as I did in my blog in '08, that I was on the aircraft behind the one that was hit. Because I knew we had all come under fire, I guess I had assumed that all of the airframes took some damage because we all went down. Also, remember, adding to the fear of the moment was the fact that our load master let loose our cargo, so you go through this over-torque where you rise in the air before you settle despite what was some dandy piloting by the crews of all three aircraft. It was like landing on the surface of the moon, and I'm going to have a far different recollection than that of the professionals.

I was told by one of the crew members who was actually on your Chinook that you were an hour behind this grouping of three Chinooks that were out in the front, and that those three Chinooks out in the front came under fire and the middle one was hit.

And that's the first I've heard of that. I did not think we were in trail by that far. I think that's probably a good question for Tim [Terpak, a retired soldier featured in the NBC broadcast where Williams claimed he was on the attacked Chinook], who I now learn witnessed the overflight. But I could not see in front of us. But I thought we were just in one flotilla, for lack of a better word. That's the first time I've heard that.

Is NBC going to do anything on the air to kind of correct the record?

I don't know. I'll talk to my boss. I am certainly willing. Again, it's very basic — I would not have chosen to make this mistake. I don't know what screw-up in my mind that caused me to conflate one aircraft from the other. The fact is, I remember three aircraft going down. I was on one of them. An additional aircraft aside from ours took an RPG through the rear housing above the ramp, and it was our first engagement of the war, a trip that eventually brought me to downtown Baghdad. This is what I said to you earlier; my war experience in no way matches that of the professional soldiers who we were traveling with.

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US-Thai exercise begins amid row over coup comments

BY ERIK SLAVIN

Stars and Stripes

Some 3,600 U.S. servicemembers are participating in Cobra Gold 2015 amid a diplomatic row that could have long-term repercussions on the security picture in Southeast Asia.

The long-running annual exercise, which had its ceremonial kickoff Monday, never seemed to be in doubt despite U.S.

concerns over host nation Thailand's military coup last May.

The U.S. values Thailand's location and well-equipped bases as strategically critical, while Thailand values access to U.S. tactics and procedures.

This year's exercise will feature less live-fire and more humanitarian operations, but that won't bother most of the roughly two dozen participant and observer nations, who value Cobra Gold largely for the relationships they can

forge with each other.

Despite the apparent triumph of pragmatism at Cobra Gold, the strident Thai objections over Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel's critical remarks of the military junta during a visit to Bangkok last month shouldn't be dismissed as political theater.

Thailand, like many other nations in the region, is determining how to balance its interests between the United States and China. The recent perceived slight by

Russel could slowly push Thailand closer to China's camp, said Anthony Davis, a Bangkok-based analyst with IHS-Jane's Military and Security Assessments.

"In a decade or 15 years, this may be seen as a watershed moment in a mutual recalibration of the (U.S.-Thai) relationship, which will entail a downgrading," Davis said.

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Previous CWS finalists among favorites

The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Vanderbilt is the defending national champion and unanimous preseason No. 1 team in college baseball. Virginia was national runner-up and enters the season well-stocked with starting pitching and one of the nation's best recruiting classes.

No one would be surprised if the Commodores and Cavaliers were to meet again in late June in the College World Series finals.

First, Vanderbilt must go through the grind of a Southeastern Conference schedule stocked with national title contenders like LSU, Florida and South Carolina. And Virginia will face the usual challenges in the Atlantic Coast Conference from Florida State, North Carolina, Louisville and Clemson — none of them strangers to Omaha.

Vanderbilt coach Tim Corbin isn't interested in talk about repeating.

"Whether we were 54-21 or 21-54 (last year), it's a new team and a new group," he said. "They'll go on their own path and author their book. Their experiences can certainly help, but beyond that, they don't have much to do with our identity this season."

Virginia was in its third CWS in six years and in the finals for the first time, and coach Brian O'Connor said losing a three-game finals provides motivation.

"I think they can draw a lot from it, not only the journey to get there, but knowing they are playing in a program that can put itself in a position to have a chance to win it all," O'Connor said.

Four schools have made it to the CWS finals since the NCAA went to a best-of-three championship round in 2003. South Carolina did it three years in a row (2010-12) and Texas did it in consecutive years (2004-05), but only

Oregon State and North Carolina have played a rematch (2006-07).

Vanderbilt returns CWS Most Outstanding Player Dansby Swanson, who'll move from second base to shortstop, and most of its other everyday players. Carson Fulmer (7-1, 1.98), Walker Buehler (12-2, 2.64) and Tyler Ferguson (8-4, 2.69) are as good as any weekend rotation in the country, and Hayden Stone is back to anchor the bullpen.

Virginia isn't expected to drop off even though it lost five starting position players and four top relievers. The Cavaliers will be carried by starting pitchers Nathan Kirby (9-3, 1.06) and Brandon Waddell (10-3, 2.45). O'Connor said he hadn't decided on a third starter to replace Josh Sborz (6-4, 2.92), who is moving to the closer's role.

"We're going to rely a lot on freshmen from a position-player standpoint and in our bullpen," O'Connor said. "A lot of it will come down to how quickly they mature."

Hirscher, Ligety surprise medalists

The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — The snow conditions were a sticky subject for everyone other than Marcel Hirscher and Ted Ligety.

Sticky, because the sun and soaring temperatures turned the slalom course into a groove-filled track that made attacking downright difficult for everyone else. Going first, Hirscher tore up the hill. Racing next, Ligety did, too. Two improbable medals from way, way back in the pack.

Hirscher, of Austria, made up a staggering 3.16 seconds in the slalom portion of the Alpine combined to win the gold medal at the world championships Sunday, with downhill leader Kjetil Jansrud of Norway hanging on for silver. Hirscher finished in a combined time of 2 minutes, 36.10 seconds. Jansrud was 0.19 seconds back. Ligety, the defending champion, earned bronze after going right after Hirscher, when the course was still holding up.

"We got lucky with the start numbers and how it deteriorated so fast," said Ligety. "This is definitely a surprise for sure."

The race had a scary moment when Ondrej Bank of the Czech Republic lost his balance on the final jump of the downhill and crashed hard on the snow, sliding across the finish line on his side. He suffered a concussion, bruised leg and facial cuts.

Bank was disqualified for straddling a gate. That bumped Hirscher up from 31st to 30th, and the skier in 30th goes first in the slalom. A big advantage because had he started No. 31, well, "I wouldn't have won," Hirscher conceded.

No one could catch Hirscher after his nearly flawless slalom run.

"It's unbelievable," Hirscher said. "My plans for this championships was, in the best case, to catch one medal, doesn't matter which color. I reached my goals. Everything that happens now is super good."

Jansrud jumped out to a big lead on the tech specialists with his downhill run. As the 30th racer down the hill in the slalom, he had a "queasy" feeling in the start gate, knowing the conditions weren't ideal for him. He charged ahead and turned in an impressive final run on deteriorating conditions to earn his first medal at worlds.

He was expected to win a medal in the super-G or the downhill, maybe even two, but he didn't. To pick up a medal in this event was a surprise, even to him.

"It's a great feeling to leave the champs with a medal," said Jansrud, who's skipping the giant slalom. "Coming in, everyone expected me to fight for golds and grab one. So, winning a silver in a discipline where I'm an outsider means a lot. It's way better getting on an airplane with a medal."

After a self-described "horrible" downhill run, Ligety didn't think he had a shot at a medal.

"I just skied with reckless abandon in the slalom run and made some mistakes, somehow lucky enough to hold on for a medal," said Ligety, who won three gold medals two years ago at worlds. "Pretty bizarre race, when you can go from 29th to the podium."

Charges dropped for Hardy

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Prosecutors dismissed domestic violence charges against Panthers defensive end and soon-to-be free agent Greg Hardy on Monday after they said the accuser in the case couldn't be found.

The dismissal happened just as Hardy's appeal in the case was set to begin. Mecklenburg County district attorney Andrew Murray told the judge that officials attempted many times to contact the woman, but failed. Murray said the woman had reached a civil suit agreement with Hardy.

Hardy, whose NFL future is uncertain, left with his attorney and did not answer questions. Moments before court convened, Hardy appeared calm, tweeting that he was would be giving away a pair of his game cleats to a fan who could name his favorite color, his favorite president and his favorite NBA player.

Hardy was convicted last summer on assault on a female and communicating threats in a case involving a former girlfriend. The Associated Press generally does not name victims of abuse.

Murray told Superior Court Judge Robert T. Sumner that law enforcement had taken "extraordinary" measures to find the accuser so that she could testify during the appeal. He said they took surveillance of her new address, attempted to find her at work and tried to contact relatives but couldn't locate her.

The woman's attorney also would not share information about her location, he said.

The accuser had testified on July 15 that she was scared of Hardy and worried about her safety if she went to police.

She also testified that Hardy threw her in the bathroom and later on to a futon filled with guns. She also said he placed his hands on her throat and threatened to kill her.

"He looked me in my eyes and he told me he was going to kill me," the woman testified on July 15. "I was so scared I wanted to die. When he loosened his grip slightly, I said just, 'Do it. Kill me.'"

Hardy testified that he never hit nor threw the accuser, and didn't threaten her. He said the woman became angry when he wouldn't have sex with her and he left the room to sleep in the living room.

Panthers general manager Dave Gettleman did not immediately return phone calls seeking comment on the dismissal. Team spokesman Steve Drummond said it's possible the team could have a statement at a later time.

Hardy's scheduled to become an unrestricted free

agent in March and it's uncertain if the Panthers will try to re-sign him.

It's also unclear if the NFL will hand down any punishment against Hardy based on his original conviction. Hardy had faced a possible six-game suspension under NFL commissioner Roger Goodell's toughened stance on domestic violence following the Ray Rice ordeal.

RHP Shields, Padres reach deal

SAN DIEGO — Right-hander James Shields, who helped Kansas City reach the World Series last season, has agreed to a four-year contract with the San Diego Padres.

Shields is the latest addition by first-year general manager A.J. Preller, who in December added slugger Matt Kemp, Justin Upton and Wil Myers, as well as Derek Norris and Will Middlebrooks.

Shields was traded from Tampa Bay to Kansas City two years ago in a deal in which Myers, then the Royals' top prospect, was acquired by the Rays.

Shields was 14-8 with a 3.21 ERA last season and declined a \$15.3 million qualifying offer from the Royals. He lost both of his World Series starts, outdueling each time by Madison Bumgarner.

An All-Star in 2011, Shields is 114-90 with a 3.72 ERA in nine seasons.

Dozens die in Egypt soccer riot

CAIRO — A riot broke out Sunday night outside of a major soccer game in Egypt, with a stampede and fighting between police and fans killing at least 25 people, authorities said.

The riot, only three years after similar violence killed 74 people, began ahead of a match between Egyptian Premier League clubs Zamalek and ENPPI at Air Defense Stadium east of Cairo. Such attacks in the past have sparked days of violent protests pitting the country's hard-core fans against police officers in a nation already on edge after years of revolt.

Two security officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the violence killed at least 25 people.

Egypt's public prosecutor issued a statement ordering an investigation. After convening an emergency meeting to discuss the violence, the Cabinet announced that it was postponing upcoming soccer matches until further notice, Egypt's state television said.

What caused the violence wasn't immediately clear.



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Love nets 32 in Cavaliers' win

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — LeBron James sent a cryptic message to Kevin Love off the floor, then connected with him directly on the court.

Love scored a season-high 32 points, James flirted with a triple-double and the Cleveland Cavaliers bounced back quickly from a road loss with a 120-105 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Sunday.

The Cavs had their 12-game winning streak snapped at Indiana on Friday, a run that started when they beat the Lakers on Jan. 15. Love helped get them back on track, making five three-pointers in the second quarter and two in the third as Cleveland opened a 26-point lead.

James scored 22 with 10 rebounds and eight assists — two on three-pointers by Love in a 30-second span — in three quarters. All-Star guard Kyrie Irving added 28 points and 10 assists.

It was the type of performance the Cavs have wanted more regularly from Love, who scored just five points and took only eight shots in Cleveland's loss to the Pacers. He also spent much of the fourth quarter that night on the bench. A few days earlier, Love scored five in a win over Philadelphia and went onto the floor afterward to work on his touch.

On Saturday, James sent out a tweet that many suspected was for Love. It said: "Stop trying to find a way to FIT-OUT and just FIT-IN. Be a part of something special! Just my thoughts."

James was asked if the tweet was for someone in particular.

"It was more about people in general," James told a large media group. "It was a general thought I had. Obviously, whatever thought I have people try to encrypt it and Da Vinci code it. People are always

trying to fit out instead of fit in and be part of something special. That's what it's all about."

In October, Love said he was trying "not to fit in so much" with the Cavs, adding new teammates had encouraged him to "fit out. Just be myself."

Later, to a smaller group of reporters, James indicated the tweet was aimed at Love.

"It's not a coincidence, man," he said.

Raptors 87, Spurs 82: San Antonio's worst shooting performance of the season kept Spurs coach Gregg Popovich waiting for his 1,000th career win.

James Johnson scored a season-high 20 points in his return to the starting lineup, DeMar DeRozan had 18 and host Toronto beat San Antonio.

Thunder 131, Clippers 108: Kevin Durant scored 29 points to lead host Oklahoma City past Los Angeles, who were without All-Star Blake Griffin.

The Clippers announced before the game that Griffin will be out indefinitely because of a staph infection in his right elbow.

Grizzlies 94, Hawks 88: Mike Conley had 21 points and six assists, Marc Gasol finished with 16 points and 10 rebounds and Memphis beat visiting Atlanta.

The game was tied at 86 after Mike Scott's three-pointer with 3:24 left before Memphis scored the next eight points to put away the game.

Trail Blazers 109, Rockets 98: LaMarcus Aldridge scored 24 points and Damian Lillard added 23 to help Portland fight off a late charge from host Houston.

James Harden tied a season high with 45 points for the Rockets, who are playing without star center Dwight Howard, out indefinitely with knee swelling.

Bulls 98, Magic 97: Pau Gasol dunked in the rebound of Derrick Rose's missed layup with 9.4 seconds left, and visiting Chicago rallied to beat Orlando.

Jimmy Butler led the Bulls with 27 points, and Gasol finished with 25 points and 15 rebounds.

Pacers 103, Hornets 102: George Hill's baseline layup with 4.9 seconds left lifted Indiana to a come-from-behind victory over host Charlotte.

C.J. Watson had 22 points and David West, Luis Scola and Rodney Stuckey each had 15 as the Pacers battled back from a 21-point, third-quarter deficit for their third straight win.

Timberwolves 112, Pistons 101: Nikola Pekovic scored 29 points and Kevin Martin added 24 to lift visiting Minnesota to its third straight victory.

Minnesota had not even won back-to-back games this season until this modest streak. The Timberwolves led throughout against the Pistons despite the absence of guard Ricky Rubio, who is still recovering from a left ankle injury.

Kings 85, Suns 83: DeMarcus Cousins made a jumper as time expired and finished with 28 points and 12 rebounds as Sacramento beat visiting Phoenix at the buzzer.

Cousins launched a 19-footer from the key that hit the rim several times before settling into the basket, setting of a huge celebration at midcourt by the struggling Kings.

Canadiens cap rare sweep

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Four games, four wins and rare season sweep for the Montreal Canadiens over the Boston Bruins.

Carey Price made 34 saves to lift the Canadiens to a 3-1 victory Sunday night, giving Montreal wins in all four meetings this season.

"There's been a lot of matchups between those two teams in the past here, in the playoffs also," Canadiens coach Michel Therrien said. "But who knows what's going to happen? We don't know, but definitely, it brings some confidence. But honestly, there's still a lot of hockey to be played, and we're still a long way from the playoffs."

Dale Weise and Max Pacioretty each had a goal and an assist for the Canadiens, who completed their first regular-season sweep of Boston since taking all eight meetings in 2007-08.

Islanders 3, Sabres 2: Mikhail Grabovski's snap shot from the slot midway through the second period stood up as the winner for the New York Islanders, who hung on against Buffalo.

Rookie Anders Lee and Colin McDonald also scored for the Islanders, who nearly squandered a 3-0 lead.

Lightning 5, Ducks 3: Brian Boyle scored the first of his two goals during host Tampa Bay's three-goal first period.

Valtteri Filppula, Nikita Kucherov and Ryan Callahan also scored for the Atlantic Division-leading Lightning, who had a franchise-record 10-game home winning streak end Saturday.

Stars 3, Rangers 2 (OT): Ales Hemsky scored 1:02 into overtime as visiting Dallas overcame a late tying goal by Chris Kreider to snap a three-game skid.

Kreider tied it with his 12th of the season, on the power play at 18:40 of the third.

Jason Spezza and Erik Cole each scored second-period goals for Dallas. Spezza opened the scoring on a 5-on-3 power-play for the Stars at 2:53 of the second period with his 10th goal of the season. Tyler Seguin and John Klingberg assisted.

Flyers 3 Capitals 1: Wayne Simmonds scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period as visiting Philadelphia beat Washington despite losing starting goalie Steve Mason to an injury.

Jakub Voracek added an empty-netter for his 18th of the season, and Mark Streit also scored for the Flyers, who have won five of six.

Mason left the ice at 11:18 of the second period and had to be helped to the locker room.

Predators 3, Panthers 2 (SO): Filip Forsberg tied it on a power play with 4:43 left in regulation and scored the shootout winner in the visiting Predators' victory.

Forsberg poked the puck past Roberto Luongo in the fifth round of the shootout.

Blackhawks 4, Blues 2: Marian Hossa's power-play goal broke a third-period tie and he clinched it with an empty-netter for the visiting Blackhawks.

Bryan Bickell had a goal and assisted on the go-ahead tally for Chicago, who also got a goal from Marcus Kruger.

Jets 5, Avalanche 3: Mathieu Perreault and Dustin Byfuglien each had a goal and two assists as host Winnipeg ended a six-game slide by beating Colorado.

Iowa throttles No. 17 Maryland

The Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Aaron White scored 17 points, Adam Woodbury matched a career high with 16 and Iowa throttled 17th-ranked Maryland 71-55 on Sunday.

Peter Jok also matched a career high with 15 points for the Hawkeyes (15-8, 6-4 Big Ten). They opened the game on a 22-3 run and handed the Terrapins their third straight road loss — all by double digits.

The Terrapins (19-5, 7-4) scored just 17 points on 6-for-25 shooting in the first half as Iowa raced out to a 23-point lead. Maryland got within 15 before a technical foul on coach Mark Turgeon with 10 minutes left slowed much of its momentum.

Melo Trimble had 20 points to lead Maryland, which was outrebounded 30-19.

Maryland had been awful in its past two road games, losing at Indiana and Ohio State by 43 combined points.

The Terrapins looked just as bad against the Hawkeyes.

Maryland had as many turnovers, eight, as shots in the first 10 minutes. Its defense was even worse, allowing Iowa — which entered play 12th in the Big Ten in field goal percentage — to hit 10 of its first 15 shots.

The Terrapins got a little bit of traction behind Trimble and some full court pressure, but their horrid start was simply too much to overcome. White's dunk made it 34-13 Iowa with 2:03 left before halftime.

Dez Wells had 12 points for Maryland, which had 16 turnovers.

Mike Gesell had nine assists for the Hawkeyes, who could be primed for a

run in the next month. Four of Iowa's last eight league games are against the Big Ten's three worst teams; Penn State, Rutgers and Northwestern.

No. 20 Ohio State 79, Rutgers 60: Freshman D'Angelo Russell had 23 points, 11 assists and 11 rebounds for his first college triple-double and No. 20 Ohio State took command early and rolled over host Rutgers, sending the Scarlet Knights to their eighth straight loss.

Jae'San Tate added 20 points and Keita Bates-Diop had 14 to help the Buckeyes (18-6, 7-4 Big Ten) bounce back from a loss at Purdue for their fourth time in five games.

Bishop Daniels had a season-high 17 points for the Scarlet Knights (10-15, 2-10), and Junior Etou added 12 points and 11 rebounds.

Ohio State never trailed, built a 21-point lead in the first half and extended it to 25 early in the second with Russell, Tate and Bates-Diop doing most of the damage.

Even when Rutgers made a late run and got to 69-57, Russell fed Tate for a layup and hit a jumper to ice the game. He left with 2:47 to go to polite applause from the big crowd, which was bolstered by almost two dozen NBA scouts.

Stanford 70, USC 62: Chasson Randle scored 17 points, Stefan Nastic added 15 and host Stanford overcame a halftime deficit to beat USC.

Anthony Brown and Rosco Allen added 11 points apiece for the Cardinal (16-7, 7-4 in the Pac-12), who ended a two-game losing streak. Marcus Allen scored 10

points with 11 rebounds.

Katin Reinhardt scored 19 points and Jordan McLaughlin added 18 for the Trojans (9-14, 1-10), who lost their ninth straight.

Boise State 61, San Diego State 46: Derrick Marks scored 19 points, and Boise State hit 10 three-point goals to down visiting San Diego State.

The Broncos (17-6, 7-3 Mountain West) won their seventh consecutive game and beat the Aztecs (18-6, 8-3) for just the second time in history.

Rhode Island 79, Richmond 74: E.C. Matthews scored 26 points and Hassan Martin had 16 points and a career-high 16 rebounds, leading visiting Rhode Island past Richmond.

The Rams (16-5, 8-2 Atlantic 10) never trailed in winning their fifth in a row. They outrebounded Richmond 44-29 and withstood several rallies by the Spiders in the closing minutes.

Indiana 70, Michigan 67: Troy Williams had 20 points and eight rebounds to lead host Indiana past Michigan.

Yogi Ferrell had 18 points and six assists, and James Blackmon, Jr. added 13 for the Hoosiers (17-7, 7-4 Big Ten), who have won two of three games.

Zak Irvin had 23 points and Ricky Doyle finished with 15 points and six rebounds for the Wolverines (13-11, 6-6), who have lost three straight.