

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Carter sworn in as new defense secretary

By JON HARPER  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Ashton Carter was sworn in Tuesday as President Barack Obama's fourth defense secretary, assuming the post at a time when the administration's policy against Islamic extremists is being widely criticized and military brass are raising the alarm over the effects of budget cuts on America's ability to cope with national security threats.

Vice President Joe Biden, who administered the oath of office at the White House, praised Carter as "a thinker and a doer" with a history of looking out for the troops and their families.

Carter previously served as deputy secretary of defense and the undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics. Biden noted Carter's key role in getting thousands of Mine Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles into the field to protect American servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan from improvised explosive devices, which were responsible for the majority of U.S. casualties.

"He worked like the devil to get our troops [MRAPs]. And they've saved lives and limbs in countless numbers," Biden said.

Biden also noted Carter's low-profile visits to meet with wounded troops and their families.

"Almost every Saturday, when no one was looking, Ash and [his wife] Stephanie were out at Walter Reed [with] no cameras, no publicity. ... They just became regulars," Biden said.

In a message sent out to all Defense De-

partment personnel, Carter laid out three priorities for his tenure:

■ **Helping the president make the best possible national security decisions for protecting the nation.** "I have pledged to provide the president my most candid strategic advice. ... I will also ensure the president receives candid professional military advice."

■ **Ensuring the strength and health of the force.** "I will do that by focusing on the well-being, safety, and dignity of each of you and your families. ... And I pledge to make decisions about sending you into harm's way with the greatest reflection and utmost care — because this is my highest responsibility as secretary of defense."

■ **Making wise budget decisions.** "We must steer through the turmoil of sequestration, which imposes wasteful uncertainty and risk to our nation's defense. We must balance all parts of our defense budget so that we continue to attract the best people — people like you; so that there are enough of you to defend our interests around the world; and so that you are always well-equipped and well-trained to execute your critical mission."

Analysts are skeptical that Carter will be able to have much of an impact on foreign policy or the long-term future of the Pentagon.

Obama's other secretaries of defense have complained about White House micro-management of military policy.

"I don't see how Ash Carter can fix what Chuck Hagel, Leon Panetta and Bob Gates couldn't," said Thomas Donnelly, a defense analyst at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

When it comes to getting the amount of money that Pentagon leaders believe they need to execute their missions and make needed investments for the future, analysts are skeptical that Carter will be able to deliver.

The Pentagon is asking for \$534 billion for fiscal 2016, but unless Congress changes the law, massive budget cuts known as sequestration will cap base defense spending at \$499 billion. Beyond fiscal 2016, tens of billions of dollars will also be taken out of the Pentagon's coffers each year through 2021.

"I am somewhat pessimistic" that there will be a budget deal that eliminates sequestration," Ryan Crotty, a defense budget expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told reporters during a media roundtable last month. House Republicans are "going to want to find money for defense in nondefense. And that is so clearly anathema to the president and what he sees as his priorities."

Another obstacle for Carter is that he won't have much time in the job to make lasting changes. At the swearing-in ceremony, Carter acknowledged that he is stepping into the position during the "fourth quarter" of Obama's presidency.

Experts say Carter has been dealt a bad hand.

"He doesn't have enough money to fund his programs or his department, and we're losing all the wars that were in. ... It's really a lousy situation to be in," Donnelly said. "Under these circumstances, the best he can do is keep things from getting worse than they would be otherwise."

## Ukrainian soldiers ambushed, captured in disputed city

*The Associated Press*

LUHANSKE, Ukraine — Several Ukrainian government soldiers have been ambushed and taken prisoners in Debaltseve, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday. The ministry denied rebel claims that they have seized control of the key transportation hub.

The ministry said street fighting continued in Debaltseve, which has been the epicenter of fighting in the past two weeks.

It did not say how many soldiers had been seized in the ambush.

The Ukrainian presidential office earlier Tuesday called on the European Union and NATO to condemn the Russia-backed rebels for violating the cease-fire brokered by European leaders last week.

Russian news agencies quoted Valery Chaly, chief of the Ukrainian presidential administration, as saying that Kiev wants

the EU and NATO to "resolutely condemn" the separatists for violating the deals.

The government troops and rebels faced a deadline Tuesday to start pulling back heavy weapons from the front line.

Rebel commander Vladimir Kononov said on Russian television most of Debaltseve was under the rebels' control and urged the Ukrainian troops to surrender. "Their only choice

is to leave behind weaponry, lay down arms and surrender," he said.

The announcement by the rebels came after fierce fighting that appeared to be focused on Debaltseve. Both sides in the conflict claim the town is on their side of the cease-fire line.

Also Tuesday, a deadline passed under the agreement for both sides to begin pulling back weaponry from the front line.

# Jailer warned Denmark about reputed gunman

*The Associated Press*

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Denmark's domestic intelligence service acknowledged Tuesday that prison officials alerted the agency last year to the suspected gunman in last weekend's shooting attacks that killed two people and wounded five in Copenhagen.

The Danish Security and Intelligence Service, known by its Danish acronym PET, said the report in September didn't give any reason to believe that the 22-year-old man was planning an attack.

PET also said it didn't have any intelligence before the gunman's shooting sprees at a cultural center and synagogue that an attack was imminent.

A Danish documentary film-

maker and a Jewish security guard died and five police officers were wounded in the shootings before the gunman was killed early Sunday in a firefight with a SWAT team.

Two sources close to the case identified the gunman to The Associated Press as Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein.

One said he was released from jail about two weeks before the attacks after serving time for a stabbing in November 2013.

A Denmark native with Palestinian parents, El-Hussein had been in and out of prison since 2011 after being convicted of weapons, violence and other offenses, court documents showed.

While he was awaiting trial for the random stabbing attack

on a train passenger, a change in his behavior last summer set off enough "alarm bells" for jail authorities to alert PET, Denmark's counterterrorism agency, a source close to the investigation told the AP.

Such warnings usually set in motion counter-radicalization efforts, such as counseling in jail. It wasn't immediately clear how aware the court was of this issue; court documents have no mention of it. Sentenced to the time he had already served, El-Hussein was released about two weeks ago, the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because police haven't officially identified the gunman.

On Monday, a judge ordered 10 days of pre-trial detention for two people accused of helping

El-Hussein get rid of a weapon while evading authorities. Both men deny the charges, said Michael Juul Eriksen, a defense lawyer for one of the two.

Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt said there was no indication that the gunman was part of a wider cell, but gave no evidence for that claim. She joined Danish Crown Prince Frederik, foreign dignitaries and some 30,000 people Monday night to honor the victims outside the Krudttoenden cultural center. The center, which was hosting a panel discussion with a Swedish artist who had caricatured the Prophet Muhammad, was the gunman's first target Saturday.

## Judge stalls Obama's immigration action

*The Associated Press*

HOUSTON — A federal judge in Texas on Monday temporarily blocked President Barack Obama's executive action on immigration, giving a coalition of 26 states time to pursue a lawsuit that aims to permanently stop the orders.

U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen's decision puts on hold Obama's orders that could

spare as many as 5 million people who are in the U.S. illegally from deportation.

The decision does not judge the merits of the case, but it is a blow to a key Obama initiative that infuriated Republicans. The Justice Department planned to appeal the ruling.

Obama took the measures in November, saying he had to act because comprehensive, bilat-

eral to reform the country's immigration system was stalled in the Republican-controlled House. Republican leaders said Obama's unilateral move would only make it more difficult to get bipartisan legislation through Congress. Congressional Republicans are vowing to block Obama's actions by cutting off Homeland Security Department spending.

## Mid-Atlantic, South dig out

*The Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The season's first major snowstorm to blast large parts of the South struck early Tuesday at the nation's capital, poised to head up the winter-weary East Coast.

After weeks of snow in the Northeast, the mid-February storm raked several Southern states Monday, when many schools and business were closed for Presidents Day. By Tuesday morning, it was moving into the Mid-Atlantic states, prompting the federal government to close Washington-area offices to most workers.

The federal government's closure, the first of the winter, was expected to keep tens of thousands of commuters off the roads and rails Tuesday morning and afternoon. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management said nonemergency personnel in the Washington area had excused absences while emergency employees and telework-ready employees were to follow their agencies' policies.

## Derailed oil train threatens W.Va. town's water

*The Associated Press*

MOUNT CARBON, W.Va. — Fires burned for hours after a train carrying more than 100 tankers of crude oil derailed in a snowstorm in West Virginia, sending a fireball into the sky and threatening the water supply of nearby residents, authorities and residents said Tuesday.

Officials evacuated hundreds of families and shut down two water treatment plants following the Monday afternoon derailment. The West Virginia

National Guard was taking water samples to determine whether the oil had seeped into a tributary of the Kanawha River, state public safety division spokesman Larry Messina said.

On Tuesday, black smoke could be seen rising from some of the tanker cars in a photo posted by WSAZ-TV on Twitter.

Messina said fire crews decided to let the tanks burn themselves out.

Federal railroad and hazardous materials officials are

investigating the accident, in which part of the train formation hit a house. The office of Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, which has issued a state of emergency, said the tanker cars were loaded with Bakken crude from North Dakota and headed to Yorktown, Va.

All but two of the 109 cars being hauled were tanker cars, officials said. One person was treated for potential inhalation issues, but no other injuries were reported, according to a statement from CSX, the train company.

# Wildcats leave little doubt who is best, but several contend for No. 2

The Associated Press

There's no argument about who is No. 1. The second-best team in the nation behind Kentucky, however, is up for debate.

This week, Virginia is the No. 2 in the Top 25. But Gonzaga keeps winning out West. Duke is led by a freshman who is probably the nation's best big man. Wisconsin has experienced talent. And Villanova, coming in at No. 6 this week, can be a tough matchup with its ability to shoot the three-pointer.

It would have been an easier choice before Virginia lost guard Justin Anderson to a finger injury. As long as he's out, the Cavaliers are in flux.

And that opens the door for Wisconsin.

The Badgers aren't the most explosive team, but they can go on efficient runs that turn close games into blowouts. Beyond the obvious stats, they protect the ball (No. 21 nationally in turnover margin), rebound (No. 21 in rebounding margin) and avoid mistakes (third in assist-to-turnover margin).

If senior floor leader Traevon Jackson, who is out as he recovers from a January foot injury, can get all the way back, the tournament-tested Badgers have the look of a team to trust.

Here's a closer look at the candidates in the race for No. 2 behind the undefeated Wildcats:

## No. 2 Virginia

The Cavaliers (24-1) are miserable to play against. They control tempo and play defense that makes opponents work for everything. The reigning Atlantic Coast Conference champions also have experience and complete trust in coach Tony Bennett's formula.

But losing Anderson for several weeks makes things tougher. He's a physical guard averaging about 13 points and shooting an ACC-best 48 percent from three-point range, and the Cavs won their

first two games without him by a combined five points before Monday's 61-49 win against Pittsburgh.

"They miss [Anderson], but they've still got a really, really good team that understands Tony's system and they play very well together," said Wake Forest coach Danny Manning, whose team lost 61-60 to the Cavaliers on Saturday.

## No. 3 Gonzaga

Gonzaga's offense is humming. The Zags (26-1) entered the week shooting a national-best 52.7 percent and leading the country in points per 100 possessions (127.7) in a show of efficiency, according to STATS. Kentucky transfer Kyle Wiltjer gives the Zags an inside-outside scorer alongside a strong backcourt. And their only loss came at now-No. 7 Arizona in overtime.

"We're as balanced as probably we've ever been up here," coach Mark Few after last week's win against Loyola Marymount.

But Gonzaga remains an annual mystery in one respect: Trying to measure its West Coast Conference dominance against power-conference teams. The Zags have played just two ranked opponents this year and haven't survived the tournament's opening weekend since 2009.

## No. 4 Duke

Freshman big man Jahlil Okafor has been as good as advertised, averaging 18.2 points and 9.3 rebounds while shooting 67 percent. He's also a solid passer against steady double teams to create openings for Quinn Cook, Tyus Jones and Justise Winslow. Wins at both Virginia and Wisconsin say plenty about this team's upside.

"There's not one key when you're playing Duke," North Carolina coach Roy Williams said. "You've got to play a total game."

But the Blue Devils (22-3) struggled defensively in losses to North Carolina State

and Miami, particularly against dribble penetration. Kicking Rasheed Sulaimon off the team this month didn't help on that front, either, leaving the Blue Devils vulnerable to foul trouble with only eight scholarship players — though all were McDonald's All-Americans in high school.

## No. 5 Wisconsin

Preseason All-American 7-footer Frank Kaminsky can score (17.3), rebound (8.3) and shoot from outside, while Sam Dekker and Nigel Hayes are strong frontcourt sidekicks on a veteran team coming off a Final Four run.

Wisconsin (23-2) is also one of the nation's most efficient offensive teams, ranking second to Gonzaga in points per 100 possessions, according to STATS.

The Badgers miss Jackson running the show for them, though sophomore Bronson Koenig has filled in well. And the defense isn't exactly of the lockdown variety.

"I'd still like to see more production from the eight guys that hit the floor," coach Bo Ryan said. "And that includes the starters, in some ways: rebounding, defense. So I'll always find things."

## No. 6 Villanova

When Villanova (24-2) is playing well — as during its first-half domination of Georgetown — the Wildcats are a scary matchup with their ability to spread the floor. They also have tremendous balance with six guys averaging at least 9.2 points led by Darrun Hilliard, who hit a game-winner at Butler on Saturday.

But they rely heavily on the three (eight made per game), so what happens if the it isn't falling? And Villanova has had a recent history of late-season fades, last reaching the round of 16 in 2009.

"We've been good enough to win," coach Jay Wright said earlier this month, "but I really think we're a work in progress."

# WVA upsets Kansas on late shot

The Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Leg cramps weren't going to keep Juwan Staten from getting West Virginia to 20 wins for the first time in four seasons.

Staten scored 20 points, including a layup with 4 seconds left to lift No. 23 West Virginia to a 62-61 victory over No. 8 Kansas on Monday night.

It was a resume-building victory for the Mountaineers (20-6, 8-5 Big 12), who had lost three of their previous four games and four straight against ranked opponents. They're looking for their first NCAA tournament bid in three seasons.

"This was definitely a must-win game at home," Staten said. "We had the crowd behind us and we fought to the end."

With the game on the line, coach Bob Huggins knew who he wanted to give the ball to: Staten, West Virginia's leading scorer and the Big 12 preseason player of the year.

Staten took an inbounds pass and went the length of the court, made a spin move around Frank Mason III and hit a left-handed layup over the outstretched arms of two other Kansas defenders.

It was Staten's first field goal over the final eight minutes after he had gone to the bench with cramps.

Perry Ellis finished with 19 points, Mason had 18 and Kelly Oubre Jr. added 14 points for first-place Kansas (21-5, 10-3), whose lead was trimmed to 1.5 games over No. 14 Iowa State.

Jevon Carter, who also played through leg cramps, added 13 points for West Virginia, including back-to-back three-pointers to put the Mountaineers ahead 60-59 with 2:31 remaining.

## No. 2 Virginia 61, Pittsburgh

**49:** Malcolm Brogdon scored 18 points and host Virginia used a late 8-0 scoring run to beat Pittsburgh.

The Cavaliers (24-1, 12-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) three times held Pittsburgh scoreless for more than 5 minutes, and they needed all three to overcome their own problems putting points on the board.

## No. 6 Villanova 80, Seton

**Hall 54:** Darrun Hilliard scored 18 points, Daniel Ochefu had 11 points and 12 rebounds, and host Villanova (24-2, 11-2 Big East) cruised to its seventh straight victory.

Isaiah Whitehead scored led the way with 15 points for Seton Hall (15-11, 5-9).

## No. 19 Butler 58, Creighton

**56:** At Omaha, Neb., Roosevelt Jones made the winning layup with 1.9 seconds to keep the Bulldogs from getting upset by the Big East's last-place team.

Butler (19-7, 9-4 Big East) wouldn't have been in position for Jones' game-winner if Alex Barlow hadn't scrambled to rebound Kellen Dunham's missed shot a few seconds earlier. Devin Brooks missed Creighton's last-second three-pointer.

Dunham scored 19 points, Jones added 18 and Kameron Woods 10 for the Bulldogs, who were playing without the injured Andrew Chrabascz.

# Bosch sentenced to 4 years in steroid scandal

The Associated Press

MIAMI — The former owner of the South Florida clinic that supplied performance-enhancing substances to Major League Baseball players and other athletes has been sentenced to four years in federal prison.

U.S. District Judge Darrin Gayles imposed the sentence Tuesday on Anthony Bosch, who was seeking a more lenient term because of his cooperation in the investigation. Prosecutors said Bosch could still get his sentence reduced through further cooperation.

Bosch pleaded guilty in October to conspiracy to distribute testosterone to athletes from the now-closed Biogenesis of America clinic in Coral Gables. One customer was New York Yankees star Alex Rodriguez.

Bosch and Rodriguez are expected to testify if Rodriguez cousin Yuri Sucart and ex-University of Miami pitching coach Lazaro Collazo go to trial as scheduled in April.

## Giambi announces retirement from MLB

CLEVELAND — Jason Giambi is retiring after 20 seasons in the majors.

The 2000 AL MVP announced his decision Monday in a statement that was first sent to the New York Daily News. He ends his career as one of 20 players in history with at least 400 home runs, 1,400 RBIs, 1,200 runs and 1,300 walks. The 44-year-old played for Oakland, the New York Yankees, Colorado and Cleveland.

## Reports: Love back as Ryder Cup captain

LOS ANGELES — Davis Love III is getting another chance as captain of the U.S. Ryder Cup team.

Two people familiar with the decision told The Associated Press on Monday night that the PGA of America has selected Love as captain for the 2016 matches at Hazeltine. They spoke on condition of anonymity because it has not been announced.

Love led the Americans to a 10-6 lead at Medinah in 2012 until Ian Poulter and Europe staged an improbable rally and matched the greatest comeback in Ryder Cup history of his contract that was set to expire after this season.



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# Brooks has Thunder back in mix

The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Scott Brooks has heard noise from the doubters before.

In 1987, there were questions about whether the 5-foot-11 sharpshooter from Cal-Irvine could make it in the NBA. Turns out, after a few detours, the undrafted guard had a long NBA career and won a title with the Houston Rockets.

Now, as coach of the Oklahoma City Thunder, the doubters are out in force again.

Some say that despite injuries that have kept reigning MVP Kevin Durant and All-Star MVP Russell Westbrook out for significant stretches, Brooks' team should be higher than ninth in the Western Conference. Some question whether he's the man to coach a team that hasn't won an NBA title despite three trips to the Western Conference finals in the past four years.

"I understand a lot of people out there are criticizing," he said right before the All-Star break. "It's not something I worry about. My mother gave me a lot of great lessons, and one of the biggest lessons —

don't listen to 'They.' 'They' never should impact how you think, how you prepare, and what are the things that you want to accomplish. 'They' said I couldn't play in the NBA, and I played over a decade."

With his team taking an us-against-the-world approach, Brooks has led Oklahoma City back from a 3-12 start. The Thunder won five of six before the break to pull within a half game of the eighth spot.

Durant, outspoken in defending Brooks during All-Star Weekend, said the only thing that has changed is injuries. The team is 28-25, but 17-9 with Durant and Westbrook in the lineup.

"Last year, we struggled, too," Durant said. "We had times when we struggled, ups and downs. It's an NBA season. So we're always normal. It's a matter of our guys being healthy."

Oklahoma City's last game before the All-Star break was a 105-89 victory over Memphis. Grizzlies coach Dave Joerger said the Thunder look as dangerous as ever.

"When they're healthy and fully loaded, and San Antonio is healthy and fully loaded, those are the best two teams in

the NBA," he said. "Some of the rest of us have good records and we're looking forward to seeing what we can all do in the playoffs this year. But those two teams will always be the favorites going into the playoffs as long as they're healthy and ready to go."

Durant had missed just 16 games in seven years before this season, but he broke a bone in his right foot before this season started and missed the first month. He also has sat out with a sprained right ankle and a sprained left big toe. In all, he has played in just 26 of 53 games. He has been dominant when he plays, averaging 25.9 points, 6.6 rebounds and 4.0 assists while playing just 33.7 minutes.

Westbrook broke a bone in his left hand two games into the season and was out for a month. He is ranked third in the league in scoring (25.8 points), sixth in assists (7.6) and second in steals (2.16).

Durant said the team is trying to focus on the small things.

"We can't look at the standings," he said. "They'll be out there every game. We've just got to play and play good basketball, and that will take care of itself."

# At break, Blazers same as last year

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — The Trail Blazers are 36-17, the same record they had at last year's All-Star break. But the feeling this time is more of relief than congratulation.

After a fast start, with just four losses in the first 21 games, Portland was hit by injuries. Its starters have missed a combined 35 games.

Still, the Blazers lead the Northwest Division and are tied for third in the Western Conference.

"I like what we've done. We've had more adversity this year than last year and we've done a good job of fighting through it," coach Terry Stotts said. "We still have a lot of games to go and by no means is it over, but at this point last year we stayed healthy and were the surprise team. This has a different feel to it."

Last season, the Blazers had the same starting lineup in every game going into the All-Star break. Portland went on to win 54 games and advanced to the Western Conference semifinals for the first time since 2000. This season they've played 13 different starting lineups.

Center Robin Lopez was out for 23 games after he fractured his right hand Dec. 15 against San Antonio. The 7-footer's absence was felt; the Blazers went 13-10 without him.

But more than his rebounding and defense, Lopez is a steady force. LaMarcus Aldridge is more creative on the floor when Lopez takes the pressure off him. Aldridge, who started in Sunday's All-Star game, is averaging 23.6 points and 10.3 rebounds. He has 27 double-doubles this season, ninth in the league.

There was injury drama surrounding Aldridge, too. In a span of just 48 hours late in January, Aldridge resigned himself to thumb surgery that would sideline him for up to six weeks. Then he reversed himself and decided to play through the pain.

Aldridge hurt his thumb when his hand came down on the knee of Sacramento's DeMarcus Cousins in the second quarter of a victory over the Kings on Jan. 19. Aldridge said the injury to his non-shooting hand still causes him discomfort.

Portland's stability has been its backcourt. Although Damian Lillard has struggled at times with uncharacteristic inconsistency, especially from three-point range, he's averaging 21.5 points and 6.3 assists.

Wesley Matthews has 161 three-pointers this season, tying him with Golden State's Steph Curry and Atlanta's Kyle Korver for the most in the league. Matthews is riding a career-best streak of 13 games with multiple three-pointers.

Matthews said Portland's ability to overcome injuries is a "testament to us getting better."

Meanwhile, talk persists that the Blazers will make a move before Thursday's trade deadline. Wilson Chandler and Arron Afflalo are some of the names connected to Portland. The Blazers don't return to the court until Friday at Utah.

"It's nice to have this break just to relax, take care of our bodies and to do something else," Nicolas Batum said. "And come back stronger."

# Rangers rally past Islanders

The Associated Press

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — Kevin Klein scored with 4:32 left, and the New York Rangers overcame a pair of two-goal deficits and netted three third-period goals to stun the New York Islanders 6-5 on Monday night.

After falling behind 11 seconds in, the Rangers completed their game-long, uphill fight and beat the Islanders for the first time in four tries this season. They trail the Metropolitan Division-leading Islanders by two points and have two games in hand.

Defenseman Ryan McDonagh had the first two-goal game of his career, and Chris Kreider, Derek Stepan and Martin St. Louis also scored for the Rangers, who completed a 4-0 road trip.

Stepan and St. Louis scored 1:37 apart in the third to tie it. Cam Talbot made 38 saves and improved to 5-1-1 while filling in for injured goalie Henrik Lundqvist.

The Islanders appeared headed for their fifth straight win, but they couldn't hold a 3-1 lead in the second period or a 5-3 edge

in the third.

Jaroslav Halak stopped 36 shots but struggled in his attempt to tie the Islanders' record for wins in a season.

**Flames 4, Bruins 3 (OT):** TJ Brodie scored with 2 seconds left in overtime, and Calgary rallied from a three-goal deficit to beat visiting Boston.

As Brodie cut down the wing, he sent the puck toward the net. It deflected off a Bruins stick, fluttered high in the air and over goalie Tuukka Rask. The buzzer sounded and, after a brief period of uncertainty, video review confirmed the goal.

**Kings 3, Lightning 2:** Jordan Nolan scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period to help Los Angeles defeat visiting Tampa Bay for its fifth straight win.

Jeff Carter added a goal in the third, Anze Kopitar scored the tying goal in the second and Jonathan Quick stopped 21 shots for the Kings.

**Canadiens 2, Red Wings 0:** Tomas Plekanec snapped a scoreless tie with 2:30 remaining and Carey Price made

25 saves in his fifth shutout of the season, propelling Montreal past host Detroit.

**Avalanche 5, Coyotes 2:** Cody McLeod and Matt Duchene scored 9 seconds apart early in the first period, Jarome Iginla had two assists and host Colorado beat slumping Arizona.

**Hurricanes 6, Senators 3:** Andrej Nestrasil had a goal and two assists in Carolina's victory over host Ottawa.

Nathan Gerbe, Jeff Skinner, Jay McClement, Michal Jordan and Chris Terry also scored for the Hurricanes.

**Canucks 3, Wild 2:** Alex Biega scored the winning goal in his first NHL game to help Vancouver defeat visiting Minnesota.

**Jets 5, Oilers 4 (SO):** Blake Wheeler scored the only goal in a shootout to lift host Winnipeg over Edmonton.

Wheeler scored on the first shot of the tiebreaker, causing goalie Viktor Fasth to stretch out and injure himself. He left the ice and was replaced by Richard Bachman.

# NASCAR's Keselowski glad to wear black hat

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Brad Keselowski might as well sign up as the next celebrity target at a comedy roast.

His fellow NASCAR drivers already have plenty of practice hurling cutting barbs his way — just minus the rim shot.

Denny Hamlin on Keselowski's rep: "Nobody wants to be Brad."

Kyle Busch on who young drivers should emulate: "Don't come in like Brad."

For each blunt opinion Keselowski has about the state of NASCAR, drivers seem to have two or three zingers ready to fire right back at Brad. Not even winning the 2012 Sprint Cup championship earned Keselowski his proper place at the big boys' table. He's yet to earn as much respect in the garage as former champs Tony Stewart, Matt Kenseth, Jimmie

Johnson and Jeff Gordon.

Heck, Keselowski even took the rap for costing Gordon a shot at a fifth title when they tangled in an accident on a late restart at Texas.

Keselowski has accepted the black hat, better to stir reaction with an outspoken opinion or two than build a career as an irrelevant driver.

If he's failed to gain many best friends in the sport, it's a small price to pay for having the type of passion that energizes him to be among NASCAR's best drivers.

"I know that when I have had whatever run-ins I have had throughout my career, I have had them because I have done the things that I feel like I need to do to be the best, and that is why I am in this sport," Keselowski said. "That is what drives me."

Among his most outspoken moments: ■ A rant against NASCAR's move to electronic fuel injection, which led to a \$25,000

fine.

■ A diatribe about other teams poaching team owner Roger Penske employees. Penske later said "Brad had some misinformation" after rival team owner Rick Hendrick blasted the driver's claims.

■ A strong stance against NASCAR's requirement that all drivers undergo baseline concussion testing.

Even Keselowski's detractors can't deny his talent. He's coming off a career-best six wins with 17 top-fives driving the No. 2 Ford for Team Penske.

The 31-year-old Keselowski has a date with fatherhood, though he doesn't expect the arrival of a baby girl sometime around the All-Star race to dim his competitive fire — or muzzle his mouth.

Love him or boo him, Kes won't change his ways.

"I feel like the sport is coming to me," he said.