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VA secretary apologizes for misspeaking

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Reactions from veteran groups and Capitol Hill ran the gamut Tuesday from outrage to acceptance following an apology by VA Secretary Bob McDonald for claiming he served with U.S. special operations forces.

The American Legion called the secretary's claim a disappointing "lie" while the Veterans of Foreign Wars said it accepted McDonald's apology for a "misspeak." Still others said it was part of a troubling pattern of misleading statements after McDonald was called out last week for inflating the number of Department of Veterans Affairs employees fired after its wait-time scandal.

McDonald, who was picked last summer specifically to clean up dysfunction and wrongdoing at the massive agency, issued an apology Monday for a recent "CBS Evening News" segment in which he told a homeless veteran, "I was in special forces." According to his VA bio, he graduated West Point in 1975, became an Army Ranger and then served in an Army unit that is not part of special operations forces.

"He did complete Ranger training and served honorably with the Army's 82nd Air-

borne Division. But a lie is a lie," American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm said in a prepared statement. "I can't believe people do this. What a disappointment from the leader of a department whose No. 1 issue right now is the restoration of trust."

In his apology, McDonald said his comment about special operations forces was an "inaccurate" statement and that he has "great respect" for those who have served in those units.

The group Concerned Veterans For America hammered McDonald on again damaging public trust in the VA.

"CVA is not surprised that Secretary McDonald was caught exaggerating his military service when he was just found by multiple fact checkers to have misrepresented the number of people fired by the VA as a result of the wait list scandal — on national television nonetheless," CEO Pete Hegseth said in a written statement.

The secretary said during a Feb. 15 interview on NBC's "Meet the Press" that he had fired 900 employees, including 60 connected to the widespread manipulation of veteran appointment records to hide long and sometimes dangerous waits for care at VA hospitals and clinics across the country.

But the website PolitiFact

rated the claim as "false" and The Washington Post's Fact Checker column gave it four Pinocchios, its most untruthful rating. Previously, McDonald and the VA had been harshly criticized by Congress for not firing employees responsible for the wrongdoing.

Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, said Tuesday he is disappointed with the secretary's recent comments.

"After a rough couple of weeks that also included inflated claims of accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs, I hope Secretary McDonald will redouble his efforts to ensure his statements — and those of all VA officials — are completely accurate," Miller said in a written statement.

But the secretary's claim of being in special operations forces and his subsequent apology did not rankle everybody.

VFW National Commander John W. Stroud said McDonald had misspoken, saying he was in "special forces" when in fact he was "special forces-qualified," in an attempt to connect with the homeless vet.

"The secretary has since apologized for his misspeak, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States accepts it," Stroud said in a statement to Stars and Stripes.

Paul Rieckhoff, CEO of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, said McDonald has an "extremely tough job" reforming the VA, and his group still backs him.

"He called me personally today to apologize for that mistake and we at IAVA accept his apology," Rieckhoff wrote in a statement. "We know Secretary McDonald is a man of exceptional commitment who served honorably and cares deeply about our veterans. All of America has witnessed his deep dedication to our community in his first few months on the job."

When contacted for comment, Sen. John McCain's office brushed off the flap over McDonald's comments, saying the VA has larger concerns. The Arizona Republican was an architect of the massive VA overhaul law passed in August and since has pressed the agency to hold more employees accountable for the records manipulation last year.

"His comments were unfortunate, but Senator McCain is far more concerned by Secretary McDonald's performance as VA Secretary," McCain's communication director, Brian Rogers, wrote in an email.

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Commuter train, truck crash in Calif., injuring dozens

The Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — A Southern California commuter train crashed into a truck and derailed early Tuesday, injuring dozens of people.

Three cars of the Metrolink train tumbled onto their sides in agricultural country 65

miles northwest of Los Angeles. Metrolink spokesman Scott Johnson told the Los Angeles Times that at least 30 people were injured.

Television news helicopters showed several firetrucks surrounding the tracks, running parallel to a road and a field. Tarps were lying on the street

and firefighters were treating victims.

One toppled car laid with one end on the tracks and another on the street. Another passenger car derailed but didn't topple, and the locomotive also remained upright.

Little was left of the truck but scorched and mangled

wreckage.

Oxnard police Sgt. Denise Shadinger said the crash was reported at 5:44 a.m. and said only that there was an unspecified number of injuries.

Metrolink's website said the train was on a run from Ventura County to Los Angeles.

Dozens of Syrian Christians are seized by Islamic State

The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Islamic State militants have abducted at least 70 Christians, including women and children, after overrunning a string of villages in northeastern Syria, activists and relatives said Tuesday.

The Sunni extremist group, which follows a radical interpretation of Islam, has repeatedly targeted religious and ethnic minorities in Syria and Iraq since seizing control of large swaths of both countries. Islamic State fighters have ransacked churches, demolished Shiite and Sunni Muslim shrines, and enslaved women of the Yazidi community, a tiny sect the Is-

lamic State considers heretical.

The latest assault began before dawn Monday, when the militants swept through the villages nestled along the banks of Khabur River near the town of Tal Tamr in Hassakeh province. The area is predominantly inhabited by Assyrians, an indigenous Christian people who trace their roots to the ancient Mesopotamians.

During the raids, the militants took between 70 and 100 Assyrians captive, said Nuri Kino, the head of the activist group A Demand For Action, which focuses on religious minorities in the Middle East. He said some 3,000 people managed to flee the onslaught and have sought

refuge in the cities of Hassakeh and Qamishli.

Kino said his organization based its information on conversations with villagers and relatives of those who fled the attack.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported the abductions, but put the number of Christians held by the Islamic State group at 90. The Observatory relies on a network of activists inside Syria.

Both groups said that most of the captives come from the village of Tal Shamiram, 50 miles southwest of the provincial capital of Qamishli.

Funding of DHS is still at impasse

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Divided Republicans are searching for a way out of an impasse over immigration that is threatening to shut down the Homeland Security Department within days.

With the agency's budget set to expire Friday at midnight without action by Congress, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced Monday he would remove language overturning President Barack Obama's contested immigration measures from the department's funding bill.

The move seemed aimed at pressuring Senate Democrats who have opposed the legislation because the immigration language is included. It also would allow Republicans who oppose Obama's executive actions on immigration to register their opposition with a stand-alone vote on a separate measure.

McConnell left unclear how he would get the funding bill passed ahead of Friday's midnight deadline to fund the department or see it shut down.

"This proposal doesn't bring us any closer to actually funding DHS, and Republicans still have no real plan to achieve that goal," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "It's a disgrace that ISIS and al-Shabab are fully funded, but thanks to Republican game-playing, the Department of Homeland Security might not be."

ISIS is one acronym for the Islamic State militant group that has taken over much of Iraq and Syria. Over the weekend, a video purported to be released by Somalia's al-Qaida-linked rebel group al-Shabab urged Muslims to attack shopping malls in Western countries.

After last week's federal court ruling putting Obama's immigration programs on hold, a growing number of Senate Republicans argued for letting the immigration fight play out in court, and passing a "clean" bill to fund Homeland Security.

Recreational pot now legal in Alaska

The Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — Alaska on Tuesday became the third U.S. state to legalize the recreational use of marijuana, but organizers don't expect any public celebrations since it remains illegal to smoke marijuana in public.

In the state's largest city, Anchorage, police officers are ready to start handing out \$100 fines to make sure taking a toke

remains something to be done behind closed doors.

Placing Alaska in the same category as Washington state and Colorado with legal marijuana was the goal of a coalition including libertarians, rugged individualists and small-government Republicans who prize the privacy rights enshrined in the Alaska state constitution.

When they voted 53-47 percent last November to legalize

marijuana use by adults in private places, they left many of the details to lawmakers and regulators to sort out.

That has left confusion on many matters.

The initiative bans smoking in public, but didn't define what that means, and lawmakers left the question to the alcohol regulatory board, which planned to meet early Tuesday to discuss an emergency response.

Brother: Taliban swap made things worse

The Associated Press

PRESCOTT, Ariz. — The brother of an American woman who was killed after spending months as a hostage of Islamic State militants said Kayla Mueller's situation worsened after the government traded five Taliban commanders for a captive U.S. soldier.

The militants increased their demands after the May swap for Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, Eric Mueller told NBC's "Today" in an interview that aired Monday.

"That made the whole situation worse because that's when the demands got greater," he said. "They got larger. They realized that they had

something."

Mueller's brother and parents spoke to "Today" host Savannah Guthrie. The family has declined repeated requests for an interview with The Associated Press.

Mueller's parents said in the interview that the U.S. government put policy ahead of American lives.

NFL combine allows teams to gauge players' trouble potential

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The questions were similar, and Doris Green-Beckham had virtually the same response for each one.

"I'm disappointed in myself for all those things I did at Missouri," said the wide receiver, who spent last season on the sideline in large part because of legal troubles, including allegations that he pushed a woman down a flight of stairs.

Green-Beckham repeated some version of that nine times during the 10 minutes he spent with reporters at the NFL scouting combine last week. He could have said it 100 times, and it wouldn't have answered — or ended — the questions.

Because of the domestic violence scandals involving Ray Rice, Adrian Peterson and others that came to light last season, the scrutiny for the receiver with first-round talent but all those character questions is only beginning.

Now more than ever, teams are using the combine not so much to find out what sort of player they're getting — they can watch the tapes for that — as what kind of person they're getting. The 15-minute interviews the teams get with the players, along with tests that evaluate their psychological profile, have never been more important.

"It changes with the times," Giants coach Tom Coughlin said of the vetting process. "We are a microcosm of society. We have our problems just like everyone else, and hopefully we will be able to help educate our people about what is not acceptable."

Placing the issue into even sharper focus is the fact that arguably the most talented player in the upcoming draft, quarterback Jameis Winston, has been a fixture in police blotters during an athletically stellar but personally challenging three years at Florida State.

Sexual assault accusations against him while in college didn't result in charges,

but his past puts him at more risk under the NFL's new personal-conduct policy, beefed up in the aftermath of the Rice case.

The policy, which calls for a six-game suspension after a first offense, makes clear that a criminal conviction isn't needed for the league to determine players took part in prohibited conduct. The NFL will have its own investigative arm, and the commissioner can use his discretion based, in part, on a player's previous behavior.

"I understand there are some things in college that a lot of people do that they wish they hadn't later on," said Lovie Smith, coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who hold the top pick. "I understand there are a lot of things on his record. We take all the information we can possibly get at this point. It's still early. Right now, we haven't taken him off our list."

Winston's travails have been widely documented, and with the growth of the Internet over the past decade, a few keystrokes are all it takes to discover a player's police record. The teams work with law enforcement and hire their own people to do some detective work — talking to friends, family, high school coaches and others to uncover details about a player's off-the-field behavior.

"I know I made mistakes and I know I have a past, but right now it's about me moving forward and earning the trust of all these 32 teams out there," Winston said.

Can he really move forward? The teams also hire psychologists to analyze tests that help build a psychological profile of all their prospective draft picks.

"I never felt that, as football people, we were qualified to judge whether a person was psychologically prepared to play in the National Football League," said Bill Polian, the former NFL executive who will be inducted into the Hall of Fame this year. "We left that to the psychologist and left

it to the professionals. We were guided by their opinions, which were terrific. Then, we added that to our football judgment to get a full profile."

Among those who design the psychological tests are Dr. Mike Sanders of Human Resource Tactics. He said his tests measure mental toughness, respect for authority and work ethic, among other hard-to-quantify aspects. The HRT test given to Aaron Hernandez, the former Patriots tight end now on trial for murder, had plenty of red flags: For instance, he scored a 1 on a 1-10 scale in the category of "social maturity."

"We point out which players may disrupt team activity," Sanders said in a recent interview with Men's Journal. "We use algorithms that take into account past behavior and compare scores with guys who have had problems in the past. We give teams a heads-up."

Draft guru Mike Mayock, a former player who is now an analyst for NFL Network, thinks the decision on Green-Beckham will make for the most "polarizing conversation" of the draft. He was once considered among the top high school recruits in the nation. Based solely on his athletic ability, there's little debate that he'd be a first-round pick. But he's been arrested twice for marijuana possession and once for pushing a woman down the stairs. No charges were ever filed in that case, but the combination of all the problems led to the receiver's dismissal from Missouri.

Given that record, and the current climate in the NFL, Green-Beckham is the truest definition of a high-risk, high-reward draft prospect.

"How do you not mess up? That's your question," Mayock said. "I'm not sure there is a right answer other than being a little more conservative. And I think we all get overwhelmed with talent and you want to buy into the fact that your building or your organization can change people when most of the time, statistically, it can't."

Kansas St. topples Kansas

The Associated Press

MANHATTAN, Kan. — As the final seconds ticked away on the massive new video board hanging from the rafters, an ocean of purple-clad Kansas State students began to spill onto the floor.

In a season full of failures, the Wildcats finally had reason to celebrate.

Nigel Johnson scored a career-high 20 points, Nino Williams hit a clinching jumper in the final minute and Kansas State rallied to beat eighth-ranked Kansas 70-63 on Monday night.

"I've talked all season about not dwelling on the past, not thinking about the future, focus on today," Kansas State coach Bruce Weber said, "and I think they did that."

Williams finished with 15 points and Thomas Gipson added 12 points as the Wildcats (14-15, 7-9 Big 12) overcame an eight-point, second-half deficit.

The Jayhawks (22-6, 11-4) trudged off the court as students poured from the stands into a mad pile, celebrating the biggest highlight of what has been a dreary season in Manhattan.

No. 17 Louisville 52, Georgia Tech 51:

Terry Rozier scored 22 points and darted into the lane to hit the go-ahead basket with 20 seconds remaining, helping Louisville rally from a 13-point deficit with under 10 minutes remaining to beat host Georgia Tech.

Wayne Blackshear hit two free throws with 4.8 seconds left to clinch the victory for the Cardinals, who had lost three of their previous five games.

St. John's 58, Xavier 57: At New York, D'Angelo Harrison scored 20 points, Sir'Dominic Pointer added 19 and St. John's beat Xavier for its second win over the Musketeers in 10 days.

St. John's (19-9, 8-7 Big East) is in fifth place in the conference standings, a half-game ahead of Xavier (18-11, 8-8).

A-Rod makes early start at training camp

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Alex Rodriguez reported to the New York Yankees three days ahead of schedule. He spoke for 8½ minutes about the drug suspension which cost him the entire 2014 Major League Baseball season.

But on his first day back with the team since September 2013, he never said why he resumed doping, never explained what he did, and avoided getting into any specifics.

"I cringe when I look at some of the things I did," Rodriguez said, surrounded by about 40 reporters on the footpath outside the Yankees minor league complex.

"No mistake that I made has any good answer, no justification. It's unexplainable, and that's on me. I've dug a big hole for myself. Paid a price."

New York asked him to hold a pre-spring training news conference at Yankee Stadium, but Rodriguez declined. The Yankees told them they didn't want him holding one at Steinbrenner Field, where they felt it would be a distraction.

So Rodriguez improvised. He arrived at Steinbrenner Field early Monday for his physical, three days before the first workout for Yankees position players. Shortly before 1 p.m., he showed up at the minor league complex, a little less than a mile away.

Rodriguez worked out for about an hour.

He hit six home runs in 71 swings and took grounders at shortstop.

Yankees manager Joe Girardi and general manager Brian Cashman say Chase Headley will be their starting third baseman, and Rodriguez will compete for at-bats at designated hitter. Rodriguez called Headley an "excellent addition" to the team.

"When Joe needs me, I'm going to be ready," he said. "I'm here early, trying to get a jump-start. It's a process. It's going to take time."

Rodriguez, who turns 40 in July, has not played a full season since 2007 because of the suspension, operations on both hips and other injuries.

He admitted in 2009 that he used per-

formance-enhancing drugs from 2001-03 while with Texas. He was suspended for 211 games in August 2013, citing conduct from 2010-12 uncovered during MLB's investigation of the Biogenesis of America clinic, which was based not far from Rodriguez's Florida home.

An arbitrator reduced the penalty to the 2014 season, finding "clear and convincing evidence" Rodriguez used three banned substances and twice tried to obstruct MLB's drug investigation. The suspension cost Rodriguez just over \$22 million of his \$25 million salary last year.

He is owed \$61 million in the final three seasons of his \$275 million, 10-year contract.



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2022 Cup moving to cooler start

The Associated Press

Long seen as inevitable, a 2022 World Cup in November and December is now practically a done deal.

A FIFA task force on Tuesday recommended playing the tournament in Qatar at the end of the year in 2022 to avoid the summer heat. Temperatures in the Gulf emirate routinely top 104 degrees when the World Cup traditionally kicks off in June.

A Dec. 23 final in Doha is possible as FIFA aims to shorten the tournament from the current 32-day schedule to ease disruption for players, clubs and leagues worldwide.

The plan should be approved by the FIFA executive committee, chaired by President Sepp Blatter, at a March 19-20 meeting in Zurich.

Blatter, who is an IOC member, has long favored November-December to avoid clashing with the Winter Olympics, scheduled for February 2022.

FIFA said its task force chose the "most viable period" over other proposals to play in January, April or May, dates favored mostly by European soccer officials.

"Given that the two bidding cities for the 2022 Winter Olympics — Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Beijing (China) — pledged recently to host the Winter Games from Feb. 4-20, 2022; that the month of Ramadan begins on April 2 in 2022; and that consistently hot conditions prevail from May to September in Qatar, the only remaining effective option is the November-December window," FIFA said in a statement.

European clubs and leagues oppose FIFA's proposal, which shuts them down for several weeks in midseason.

Compensation deals must now be agreed upon with the influential European Club Association and European Professional Football Leagues groups.

Still, UEFA — which organizes the lucrative Champions League — finally fell into line with FIFA on Tuesday.

UEFA accepted the apparently inevitable conclusion despite its longstanding preference for a January-February tournament, when the Champions League takes a break, some northern European leagues are in their off-season, and others have a midwinter break.

"UEFA sees no major issues in rescheduling its competitions for the 2022-23 season," the European soccer body said in a statement, adding that a World Cup "may be shortened and thus the release period of players be reduced."

The FIFA executive committee chose Qatar as host in December 2010, when the gas-rich emirate won a five-nation bid-

ding contest to host the tournament in the traditional June-July slot.

Tuesday's recommendation comes 17 months after the FIFA board — minus several members who have left since the hosting vote after being implicated in corruption — ordered a consultation on finding the best dates in Qatar.

The process was widely seen to have been pre-judged by Blatter, who insisted on November-December as the only realistic choice.

Blatter also reversed his position on the winter World Cup debate. After the December 2010 vote, he said the tournament would be played in the summer and the dates could only be changed at Qatar's request.

Heat say Bosh will leave hospital soon

MIAMI — All-Star forward Chris Bosh of the Miami Heat is expected to leave a South Florida hospital in the coming days, another positive development as he continues to recover from blood clots making their way to one of his lungs.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said Monday that Bosh's release will be "soon," but did not offer a specific timetable.

"We don't know the exact date yet," Spoelstra said. "He's getting a little bit better."

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver was at Miami's home game against Philadelphia on Monday night, and sent Bosh his best wishes.

"I know it's devastating for him but the great news is this is very treatable, this condition," Silver said in an interview with Sun Sports, which broadcasts Heat games. "He's going to be on medication for a while that's going to dictate he can't play for a certain number of months, but he'll be back at full strength."

K-State apologizes for court-storming

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Kansas State athletic director John Currie promised to review the school's security procedures after an upset of eighth-ranked Kansas on Monday night turned into a chaotic scene as students and fans rushed the court.

Currie also apologized in a lengthy statement to Kansas counterpart Sheahon Zenger, Jayhawks coach Bill Self and his team Tuesday morning, and said the school would review video of the incident

along with law enforcement personnel to identify fans who became unruly.

"Although no one was hurt last night," Currie said, "we fell short of our expectations for securing the court and escorting KU to its locker room without incident."

NCAA spokesman David Worlock said there are no national rules against court-storming, but that conferences and individual schools are expected to provide sufficient security.

The Big 12 said in a statement that it was reviewing the postgame celebration, and that "in accordance with conference policy, home team game management is responsible for the implementation of protocols to provide for the safety of all game participants, officials and fans."

Americans earn world cross-country medals

FALUN, Sweden — No American woman had ever won a major championship medal in a long distance cross-country skiing race before Tuesday.

Minnesota natives Jessie Diggins and Caitlin Gregg made it two in one day.

Diggins and Gregg stunned the established favorites by taking silver and bronze in the 10-kilometer freestyle event at the Nordic skiing world championships behind winner Charlotte Kalla of Sweden.

Helped by early bib numbers and perfect skis on a day when heavy snow made things hard on the later starters, the duo upstaged the powerful Norwegian team to earn the first American medals of these worlds.

"The fact that we're making some history here with the first U.S. women to podium in a distance event in a championships is really crazy and still sinking in," said Diggins, of Afton, Minnesota.

Diggins paired with Kikkan Randall to win gold in the short-distance team sprint at the 2013 worlds — at a time when Randall was the top freestyle sprinter on the World Cup circuit — but Tuesday's medal was totally unexpected, even for herself.

"I was hoping for maybe top six if I had such an amazing day," Diggins said. "When it started snowing it was an opportunity, and I was able to take it and push so hard. When I crossed the finish line I thought, 'I'm going to die.' It was crazy out there and I was just having the race of my life."

Gregg's bronze was even more stunning: She's never even finished in the top 10 in a World Cup race.

Rockets get past T-wolves

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden had 31 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his second triple-double this season, leading the Houston Rockets to a 113-102 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Monday night.

Harden got off to a slow start, missing his first seven shots. He got going late in the first quarter, had 13 points at halftime and was a rebound away from wrapping up his fourth career triple-double entering the fourth.

Houston led by nine at the start of the final period, but Andrew Wiggins led a charge that cut the lead to one point with less than 4 minutes left.

The Rockets took over after that, using a 14-2 run, with five points from Harden, to make it 111-98 with less than a minute to go.

Wiggins scored 30 for the Timberwolves, who lost for the third time in four games.

It was the 25th 30-point game this season for Harden, the league's leading scorer. He also helped out on defense, finishing with four blocks to tie a career high.

Grizzlies 90, Clippers 87: Mike Conley scored 18 points and Jeff Green added 16 as visiting Memphis hung on to end the Clippers' four-game winning streak.

Marc Gasol added 14 points and Zach Randolph had 10 rebounds as the Grizzlies improved to 15-3 since Green joined the team on Jan. 12.

Heat 119, 76ers 108: Luol Deng made 11 of 14 shots and scored 29 points, and Goran Dragic added 23 points and 10 assists as host Miami set a season high for scoring.

Bulls 87, Bucks 71: Tony Snell scored 20 points, and Nikola Mirotic had 16 points and a career-high 14 rebounds as surging Chicago pounded visiting Milwaukee on the boards.

Pelicans 100, Raptors 97: Alexis Ajinca capped a 16-point performance with a go-ahead layup in the final minute as host New Orleans erased an 18-point deficit to beat Toronto.

Jazz 90, Spurs 81: Trey Burke scored 23 points as Utah handed visiting San Antonio its third straight loss since returning from the All-Star break.

Celtics 115, Suns 110: Avery Bradley scored 23 points, Isaiah Thomas burned his former team with eight critical points in the last two minutes as Boston held off host Phoenix.

Thomas, just four days removed from his deadline-day trade to Boston, scored 21 points in his return.

Nets 110, Nuggets 82: Brook Lopez led seven Nets players in double figures with 19 points as Brooklyn won its second consecutive road game.

Thaddeus Young scored 15 in another solid outing for the Nets since his acquisition last week from Minnesota in exchange for Kevin Garnett.

Ducks rally against Datsyuk, Detroit

The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Until a third-period scoring burst, the Anaheim Ducks had no answers for Pavel Datsyuk's domination.

Datsyuk controlled the stat sheet for the Detroit Red Wings until the Ducks' line of Ryan Kesler, Jakob Silfverberg and Andrew Cogliano finally got Anaheim going Monday night.

The Ducks rallied by scoring three goals in the third period after falling behind 2-0. They came away with a 4-3 shootout win over the Red Wings despite two goals from Datsyuk.

Cogliano ignited a furious surge with his goal midway through the period, setting the stage for Corey Perry and Silfverberg to score in the shootout for a third consecutive Anaheim win.

John Gibson made 35 saves for the Ducks, then stopped Tomas Tatar's shot in his first-ever shootout appearance to secure the extra point.

"We hung in," said Ducks coach Bruce Boudreau, who won his 350th career game. "We stayed within striking distance of a team that was outplaying us pretty good in the first two periods. We got lucky and won it."

It seemed as if the Ducks would never get that chance after Datsyuk scored twice in the second period, leaving the sizable

and boisterous contingent of Red Wings fans giddy.

With Henrik Zetterberg sidelined (possible head injury), Datsyuk picked up the slack on offense by picking off Clayton Stoner's attempt to clear the puck and scoring 3:54 into the period. He added his sixth goal in his last five games and 21st of the season three minutes later on the power play.

"Datsyuk is such a good player, and when you can control him... I know it sounds weird considering he got two goals, but when Kesler was out there he was controlling him. And that's a tough job to do," Boudreau said.

"Kesler's line was great all night. There was only one shift they didn't play against Datsyuk, and Datsyuk scored, and then he scored on the power play goal. Everything else, I thought the Kesler-Silfverberg-Cogliano line was really good."

Devils 3, Coyotes 0: Cory Schneider had 38 saves for his third shutout of the season and New Jersey posted its first four-game winning streak in two years with a decision over fading Arizona.

Scott Gomez tallied on a first-period breakaway and Mike Cammalleri had breakaway and empty-net goals in the third period for New Jersey, which had not won four in a row since February 2013. The win moved the Devils within eight points of a wild-card spot in their long shot bid to make the playoffs.