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Contractor lobbies to win project it didn't bid on

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The much-anticipated contract was awarded just before Christmas. BAE Systems trumpeted its victory in a news release and got to work building the Army a new armored vehicle. Finally, one of the Pentagon's most intense — and bizarre — contracting wars was over.

Except that now maybe it isn't.

In yet another audacious display of lobbying force, General Dynamics, the giant defense contractor based in Falls Church, Va., is continuing its fight to win at least a portion of the contract, potentially worth more than \$12 billion, to build nearly 3,000 Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicles for the Army.

Contractors often wage fierce, bitter battles for lucrative contracts, especially when years of work and billions of dollars are at stake. But once the contracts are awarded, and any subsequent protests resolved, the loser usually moves on gracefully, not wanting to anger the customer: the federal government.

So General Dynamics' continued attempts to carve out even a partial victory — no matter that

the contract has already been awarded — has been seen as a curious, if not quixotic, effort, especially since it never submitted a bid to begin with. But the company, which spent more than \$10 million on lobbying last year, according to OpenSecrets.org, has been known as a savvy Washington operator as well as a leading manufacturer of weapons systems for the Pentagon.

Even before the contract was awarded, the company protested to the Army, saying the requirements for the program were rigged in BAE's favor. After the Army denied the protest, General Dynamics took to Capitol Hill, pushing legislative language that could have reopened the competition or forced the Army to buy the company's Stryker vehicles to use for combat medical evacuations.

Now it has taken to the Hill once again, congressional aides say, with an even more creative ploy. A spokeswoman for General Dynamics declined to comment.

The Stryker has wheels. But BAE's vehicle uses tracks, which the Army preferred because it wanted the vehicles to be able to handle the same kinds of terrain as Abrams tanks and

Bradley fighting vehicle tanks, both of which use tracks.

Still, last month, 31 members of Congress sent then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel a letter, urging him to look at wheeled vehicles for the mission, saying they could provide soldiers with traumatic brain injuries a more stable ride.

In the letter, which was first reported by Insidedefense.com, the members write that they "do not seek to encumber the AMPV program. We respectfully request your consideration of the benefits of wheeled medical evacuation vehicles."

The lead signatory is Rep. Thomas Rooney, R-Fla., who is also the co-chair of Congress' Brain Injury Task Force.

A spokesman did not respond to requests for comment.

The Army has forcefully defended its decision to develop a tracked vehicle, saying that straying from the current plan could cause significant delays and cost — and endanger soldiers' lives.

The medical evacuation variant of the vehicle must have "the same mobility, force protection and survivability" as the other vehicles, Brig. Gen. David Bassett, the program

executive officer of the Army's Ground Combat Systems, said in a statement.

Other options, including the Stryker, "would result in force protection and mobility shortfalls that would prevent rapid evacuation and protection of casualties from the point of injury to the next level of care, increasing the risk to our soldiers," he said.

Another Army official, not authorized to speak publicly, said that while brain injuries "remain a critical medical problem for our military," the Army "cannot focus on only one type of casualty at the expense of all others."

BAE Systems said it "is focused on meeting the challenging but essential requirements for the Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicles," Mark Signorelli, the company's vice president and general manager for combat vehicles, said in a statement. "Our team is now working to deliver the required survivability and mobility in a high quality, affordable vehicle. This is the effort that most directly impacts our warfighters, providing them with the vehicles they need and have asked for, on schedule and on budget."

Afghan troops deliver aid after deadly avalanches

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

PANJSHIR VALLEY, Afghanistan — Afghan security forces on Saturday continued a third day of operations to assist remote villages and police outposts cut off by heavy snow storms and deadly avalanches.

As many as 200 people were killed by avalanches after storms dumped several feet of snow Tuesday and Wednesday.

The avalanches and snow buried villages and roads, downed power lines running to Kabul, and left thousands of people strand-

ed. Panjshir province in the high mountains of central Afghanistan was among the hardest hit. Villages perched at the base of towering peaks were especially vulnerable to the avalanches that came roaring down all across the region.

From an Afghan Air Force Mi-17 helicopter, one could see large and small avalanches around nearly every corner of the high mountain valleys.

The helicopters transported troops to help with the recovery of bodies and evacuation of wounded. They also delivered emergency supplies and food. Ground troops from the army brought in heavy

equipment to try to help clear roads.

"The Ministry of Defense is completely ready and has enough resources to rescue and support the locals that are hit by avalanches in Panjsher" Dawlat Waziri, deputy spokesman for the ministry told Stars and Stripes. "We can provide as much assistance as is needed and we are ready for it."

Abdul Rahman Kabiri, the acting governor of Panjshir province, said that about 30 bodies had been recovered but many more people were missing.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.

Iraq relic destruction by militants staged?

Los Angeles Times

The Islamic State group wants the global community to know that there's a new sheriff in town. So it wrecked a museum full of precious sculptures and on Thursday posted video of the vandalism on the Internet.

At least, that's what their video wants you to think. The video quickly went viral, but there is reason for some skepticism.

Militants inside the Mosul Museum in northern Iraq are shown calmly going about the business of smashing 3,000-year-old statues from the ancient Assyrian empire and other historical dynasties. An on-camera narrator, citing verses from the Quran, confidently explains

the destructive iconoclasm against pre-Muslim works of art as a necessary fulfillment of Muhammad's dictum against the worship of false idols.

The question is: Does it really? Or is the video, instead, a grotesque perversion of performance art, cynically designed to inflate the image of Islamic State power?

However genuine their belief system, the chilling, five-minute video incorporates extensive fabrication. It may well be a carefully staged, falsified dramatic event performed to create an effective propaganda tool to achieve important Islamic State goals.

Look closely, and most of the toppling statues shatter in

clouds of dust. Apparently they are plaster replicas of ancient statues, not carvings in alabaster and other durable stone with which authentic imperial sculpture was made. Toppled stone would break in cleaner chunks.

Stone is an enduring material. Impressive examples of ancient Assyrian art are held in many major museums internationally.

Obliterating a revered stone edifice says — in no uncertain terms — that radical change has arrived.

Stone is obdurate. Video is not. However, in YouTube culture, digital art can be equally formidable. It spreads laterally and fast — then lingers in the electronic ether, available for endless replay.

Britain's Channel 4 television gave the video to archaeologists to examine. Mark Altaweel, an American scholar at the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, noted the modern iron rebar protruding from inside some of the smashed statues. It disproves their authenticity.

Nonetheless, the vandalism's cultural insult strikes deep. The Iraqi people, Altaweel said, "are taking the destruction of their cultural heritage — their identity, essentially — just as seriously as the beheadings."

And that is the point: The video is an incitement for its viewers, a blunt provocation.

After backlash, Google decides porn is OK

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Apparently Google bloggers like to post porn. A lot.

Just three days after saying sexually explicit material would be banned from public Blogger forum sites, Google is backing down. Faced with "a ton of feedback," Google said Friday that it instead will "step up enforcement" against commercial and illegal porn.

Google spokeswoman Katie Watson said the company does not disclose how many Blogger

users it has nor how many of them would have been affected by the policy change.

On Tuesday, Google warned Bloggers that effective March 23, any site hosting nude pictures would be switched to private mode — only available to the authors and invited viewers. That ban came the same day that social forum and news site Reddit said it would remove explicit photos, videos and links if the person pictured hadn't consented to the image being posted.

In an online post Friday, Google's Blogger said longtime users thought it was unfair to suddenly change the policy. The company also was swayed by users who say posting sexually explicit content is part of expressing their identities.

Sexually explicit content on Blogger will still be marked by an "adult content" warning. And Google's Blogger policy does not allow users to post nudes or sexually explicit images of someone else without that person's consent.

Lawmakers approve a week of DHS funding

WASHINGTON — A night of political brinkmanship ended late Friday when the House and the Senate approved a one-week temporary spending bill to avert the partial shutdown at midnight of the Department of Homeland Security.

Lawmakers in the House voted 357-60 to approve the one-week measure hours after an earlier effort led by the Republican leadership to finance the agency for three weeks suffered a stunning 203-224 defeat, with 52 Republicans joining Democrats to scuttle it.

The loss, a major embarrassment for House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, left the Republican-led chamber little choice but to accept the one-week measure or face questions about the GOP's ability to run Congress and to get things done.

The Senate, which earlier in the day passed a bill to fund DHS through September, approved a similar, one-week measure to ensure the agency would remain fully open for the time being.

From McClatchy Washington Bureau

Russian opposition leader killed near Kremlin

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — A few hours after going on the radio to denounce President Vladimir Putin's policies as mad, charismatic opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was gunned down early Saturday as he walked near the Kremlin.

Colleagues in Russia's beleaguered and marginalized opposition pointed fingers at the state or at assailants fired up by fervent nationalist sentiment

in state-controlled news media. But Putin and other Russian politicians suggested the brazen attack was a provocation against the state.

Nemtsov, 55, was shot while walking with a female companion on a bridge over the Moscow River about 400 yards from the Kremlin. Russia's Investigative Committee said at least seven shots were fired.

Nemtsov was to have been a prominent participant in a

march planned for Sunday in a Moscow to protest Russia's policies in Ukraine, where the West alleges the Kremlin has provided troops and equipment to separatist rebels, and the economic crisis sparked by Western sanctions over Ukraine and the plunge in oil prices.

Organizers canceled the march and said they would seek permission to hold a mourning rally for Nemtsov on Sunday.

Wilder dreams of unifying title

The Associated Press

NORTHPORT, Ala. — Deontay Wilder is driving around in a Hummer and sports cars, leaving his beer delivery truck days far behind. He watched the Super Bowl from the stands instead of his couch and made his rounds at the NBA All-Star game, too.

His decade-long journey from community college dropout to keg hauler to boxing celebrity was cemented with his unanimous decision over Bermane Stiverne on Jan. 17. He became the first American to capture a piece of the heavyweight title since Shannon Briggs in 2006. It moved him to 33-0 after winning the previous 32 fights via knockouts within the first four rounds. And he says he's far from done.

The Tuscaloosa, Alabama, native's next goal is to try to knock off Wladimir Klitschko as the world's top heavyweight and ultimately restore boxing's once-pre-eminent division to its American heyday, most recently with Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield on top.

"I'm not going nowhere no time soon," he said in a recent interview. "I'm not losing no time soon, or ever till I retire. That (Klitschko) fight's going to definitely happen, and I'm looking forward to it. That's something I'm super excited about and very confident in it when it happens."

Wilder is letting his broken hand heal, a casualty of the Stiverne bout, so his next opponent and timing of the fight are uncertain. He thinks he broke it in the fourth or fifth round but was still able to go the distance in the 12-round bout.

The journey to the top came in leaps for the 6-foot-7 Wilder.

He dropped out of Shelton State Community College with the birth of his daughter Naieya, who has spina bifida.

He wandered into the gym near his house and went on to win the National Golden Gloves and a bronze medal in the 2008 Olympics less than three years after taking up the sport.

But to pay the bills and support his family, he delivered beer before finally quitting a few years ago. A half-dozen of his former co-workers and bosses were at the Stiverne fight in Las Vegas, including Spencer Burchfield, president and co-owner of Greene Beverage Co.

Burchfield recalled Wilder's physical prowess — he'd carry a keg in each arm — and compliments from customers for his manners and demeanor long before a sledgehammer right hand became Wilder's calling card.

"You could just tell his whole work ethic and just his ability to get along with everybody," Burchfield said. "Everybody liked him."

Wilder still trains at the no-frills Skyy Boxing in suburban Tuscaloosa where he got his start.

The gym is decorated with wall-to-wall magazine covers featuring boxers but not much else. From the outside it looks more like self-storage units than a training ground for a 29-year-old who aspires to boxing superstardom. The inside is a ring, a couple of weight machines and some heavy bags tucked into the back corner.

A woman and a teenager worked out in the back on a recent afternoon and a middle-aged woman popped in for Wilder's autograph and a chat. It's that kind of place.

Wilder, who successfully helped lobby for a state boxing commission in Alabama, plans to stick around. Other Alabama natives like Joe Louis (Lafayette) and Holyfield (Atmore) left the state.

Wilder wants to build a similar legacy from an Alabama base and isn't shy about

stating his goal of unifying the titles — or anything else, for that matter.

"I want to put my name in history. I love history," Wilder said. "I always picture my grandkids looking at their grandfather and saying, 'My grandfather was the last or the first to do something.' There's nothing like setting goals and watching yourself get there, accomplishing that goal and putting your name to a part of history."

The Stiverne win was a statement for Wilder. He had not needed to go deep into a fight before. Clearly he pays attention to the doubters since afterward, he was in the ring shouting: "Who can't box? Who can't box?"

"They assumed he couldn't take a punch, they assumed he couldn't box, they assumed he couldn't go the distance," said Jay Deas, Wilder's manager and trainer. "They assumed he couldn't overcome adversity. That was all completely ridiculous."

Wilder has the supersized, swaggering personality to be a boxing attraction. He also has a knack for one-liners including the pre-Stiverne fight proclamation: "I'm about to send this Haitian on permanent vacation." Describing himself as "naturally silly," Wilder said he's serious when he trash-talks other fighters.

"Some guys may play around and say a couple of things but if I say it I mean it," he said. "I may laugh, it may be funny, but if I say I'm going to get you I'm going to get you."

Meanwhile, Wilder feels confident he has passed Alabama football coach Nick Saban as the most famous man in Tuscaloosa.

"Definitely. There's nothing like a heavyweight champion of the world, because there's nothing like a world champion," he said. "I think I'm definitely the biggest. Sorry, Nick."

Browns agree to terms with QB Josh McCown

The Browns have agreed to terms with veteran quarterback Josh McCown on a contract.

McCown, who went 1-10 as Tampa Bay's starter last season, reached agreement with Cleveland on Friday. The 35-year-old had also been in contract talks with the Buffalo Bills.

McCown's signing likely means the Browns will not re-sign Brian Hoyer, who won 10 games for them the past two seasons and is poised to become a free agent next month. Hoyer made 13 starts last season before he was benched in favor of rookie Johnny Manziel. It's not clear if the Browns view McCown as their starter for next season or as a mentor for a young quarterback like Manziel or any QB they may select in the NFL Draft.

Manziel entered a rehab facility last month.

McCown previously worked with new Browns offensive coordinator John DeFilippo in Oakland.

Joey Logano follows Daytona win with pole

HAMPTON, Ga. — Daytona 500 winner Joey Logano won the pole for Sunday's NASCAR Sprint Cup race at Atlanta Motor Speedway after a qualifying session in which 13 drivers didn't get on the track after failing to pass inspection.

Among those who didn't get to take a lap Friday evening: Jeff Gordon, Matt Kenseth, Jimmie Johnson and Tony Stewart.

At least they'll be in the race. That wasn't the case for Mike Wallace, Matt DiBenedetto, Michael Annett and Reed Sorenson, who were bumped out of the 43-car field without even getting a chance to qualify.

Logano led the final session of qualifying with a blistering lap of 194.683 mph, taking advantage of temperatures in the 40s as the sun set on the 1.54-mile trioval.

Kevin Harvick (193.782) will start alongside Logano on the front row.

Sharapova withdraws due to stomach virus

ACAPULCO, Mexico — Top-seeded Maria Sharapova of Russia withdrew Friday before her Mexico Open semifinal against Caroline Garcia of France because of a stomach virus.

The third-seeded Garcia will face fifth-seeded Timea Bacsinszky of Switzerland in the hard-court final at The Fairmont Acapulco Princess. Bacsinszky beat Bulgaria's Sesil Karatantcheva 6-2, 6-4.

In the men's semifinals, top-seeded Kei Nishikori of Japan beat fourth-seeded Kevin Anderson of South Africa 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, and second-seeded David Ferrer of Spain topped Ryan Harrison of the United States 4-6, 6-0, 6-0.

Also:

■ Rafael Nadal cruised to a 6-1, 6-1 victory over Federico Delbonis on Friday, advancing to the semifinals of the Argentina Open.

Nadal will next face Carlos Berlocq, who beat Blaz Rola of Slovenia 6-1, 6-3.

Former Knick Mason dies at 48

The Associated Press

Anthony Mason, the rugged power forward who was a defensive force in the NBA from the 1990s into the early 21st century, has died. He was 48.

The Knicks confirmed Mason's death, which was first reported Saturday by the New York Daily News. He had been battling heart problems.

"We would like to thank everyone for their heartfelt thoughts and strong prayers. Anthony felt each and every one. He fought like a warrior to the very end," the Mason family said in a statement provided by the Knicks.

Mason won a Sixth Man Award with the Knicks and later made an All-Star team, but it was the toughness he provided alongside Charles Oakley while surrounding franchise center Patrick Ewing that made him beloved in New York.

"MY MAN MY MAN A. MASON R.I.P. WE GONNA MISS U BROTHER," Oakley wrote on Twitter.

The 6-foot-7 Mason won the NBA's Sixth Man award in 1995 with a Knicks team that was eliminated in the second

round of the playoffs in one of its classic clashes with the Indiana Pacers. Mason also won all-defensive-team honors two years later with the Charlotte Hornets.

Knicks President Phil Jackson, who coached the Chicago Bulls teams against the '90s Knicks, said that "as a competitor, there was none fiercer than Anthony Mason."

"Standing on the opposite end of the playing field, coaching in those great Chicago/New York battles, No. 14 in the orange and blue always stood out," Jackson added.

Mason's career averages — 10.9 points, 8.3 rebounds — don't tell the full story of his game. A solid, muscular presence down low, Mason was there to play defense, and on coach Pat Riley's bruising teams, he could shine.

Mason played for New York from 1991-1996, and then for the Hornets until 2000. He made his only All-Star team in 2001 as a member of the Miami Heat, after reuniting with Riley.

Despite his plodding look, Mason was a nimble athlete and deft ballhandler who

often showed up for games with words or designs styled into his hair.

Mason was drafted in the third round out of Tennessee State in 1988 by Portland, but he never played for the Trail Blazers. After a brief stint overseas, he played sparingly in 21 games for the New Jersey Nets and Denver Nuggets before he finally caught on with Riley's defense-first Knicks in 1991. He was a force for them as they made a run to the 1994 NBA Finals, and clashed with other powerful Eastern Conference teams, including Michael Jordan's Bulls.

He was dealt to Charlotte in a July 1996 trade that brought Larry Johnson to New York. With the Hornets, Mason played three strong seasons in four years, missing 1998-99 due to injury, before Riley brought him to Miami, where he was coaching a Heat team that played with the same style as those Knicks teams with which Mason flourished.

At Tennessee State, Mason was dominant, and was the school's first All-Ohio Valley Conference selection. In the 1987-88 season, he took a school-record 247 free throws.



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Spooner's first NHL goal lifts Bruins

The Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Ryan Spooner scored his first NHL goal with 2:14 left in overtime and the Boston Bruins defeated the New Jersey Devils 3-2 on Friday night after blowing a two-goal third-period lead.

Daniel Paille and David Pastrnak scored for Boston, which won for only the second time in nine games (2-5-2). Niklas Svedberg had 29 saves starting for the ailing Tuukka Rask, who had played in the last 18 games for Boston.

Travis Zajac and Jordin Tootoo tallied for New Jersey. Cory Schneider made 31 saves as the Devils lost their second straight and fell nine points behind Boston in the race for the last wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

The Bruins, who swept the three-game season series, are four points ahead of idle Florida for the final wild-card position.

Spooner, playing in his eighth game this season, scored on a snap shot from the left boards on a counter attack. Pastrnak made the cross-ice pass and Spooner beat Schneider high. Spooner was playing his 35th NHL game.

Svedberg got the Bruins to overtime by stopping Martin Havlat with just over a minute to play and then making a pad save on Mike Cammalleri in the closing seconds. He also stopped Scott Gomez in the overtime from the left circle.

New Jersey rallied from a two-goal deficit by scoring twice in a 2:09 span in the third period.

Chris Kelly helped the Devils get started, picking up a hooking penalty. Less than a minute later, Jacob Josefson sent a pass to Adam Henrique near the crease and it hit off his stick. The puck went to Zajac, who broke a 15-game drought with a shot into an open net.

Then a turnover by defenseman Dougie Hamilton was intercepted by Cammalleri.

He carried into the Bruins' zone, cut across the crease and sent a back pass to Tootoo for a shot into an open net for his sixth goal.

The Devils seemed out of the game early in the third period when Pastrnak scored his seventh goal by putting in his own rebound at 1:40, shortly after a penalty to New Jersey defenseman Mark Fraser expired.

Schneider complained after the puck went into the net, insisting Kelly interfered with him. However, the officials felt the forward was pushed into the crease by a New Jersey player.

Boston had gotten on the scoreboard in the first period on a bang-bang play. Paille passed from center ice on the right boards into the left corner in the Devils' end. New Jersey defenseman Adam Larsson was pressured by Carl Soderberg and had his pass up the boards intercepted by Loui Eriksson. He passed to a wide-open Paille for a slam-dunk goal before Schneider could react.

It was Paille's second goal in as many games since returning after being benched for two games following a 36-game goal drought.

Svedberg, who shut the Devils out 3-0 on Jan. 8 when he faced only 14 shots, was at his best in the latter half of the second period when the Devils' offense woke up. His best save was a point-blank stop on Cammalleri on a shot set up by big hit behind the net by Tootoo.

Islanders 2, Flames 1: Jaroslav Halak set a new franchise record with his 33rd win of the season, and Ryan Strome scored a power-play goal in the first period to lift host New York over Calgary.

Halak stopped 26 shots, but lost his shutout bid with 20.9 seconds left on Josh Jooris' goal that cut Calgary's deficit in half. The Islanders made it 2-0 with 41.3 seconds remaining on Cal Clutterbuck's empty-net goal.

New York moved two points ahead of the rival Rangers for first place in the Metropolitan Division.

Karri Ramo stopped 37 shots for the Flames, who without injured leading scorer Mark Giordano missed a chance to move into a wild-card position in the Western Conference playoff race.

Calgary dropped to 1-2 on its seven-game road trip.

Hurricanes 3, Capitals 0: Anton Khudobin stopped 28 shots to earn his first shutout of the season in host Carolina's victory over Washington.

Brett Bellemore and Jeff Skinner scored, and Nathan Gerbe added an empty-netter with 10.4 seconds left as the Hurricanes won for the fourth time in six games.

Carolina, last in the Metropolitan Division, moved three points behind seventh-place Columbus in the division.

Braden Holtby stopped 35 shots for the Capitals, who have lost three straight since winning four in a row.

Khudobin had 10 saves in the third period to complete his fourth career shutout. It was just the second of the season for the Hurricanes and their first since Nov. 1, when Cam Ward blanked Arizona 3-0.

Avalanche 5, Stars 4 (SO): Ryan O'Reilly scored on the first shot of a shootout. Semyon Varlamov stopped all three shots in the shootout after O'Reilly lifted the puck over Kari Lehtonen and in off the crossbar to lift Colorado over host Dallas.

The teams began the night tied for sixth place in the Central Division with 63 points each, but out of playoff position. Colorado won all five games between the teams.

Nate Guenin had a career-high three points with a goal and two assists for the Avalanche. They rallied from deficits of 3-1 and 4-3 in the third period.

Cody Eakin had two goals and an as-

sist, but the Stars lost their fifth straight game (0-3-2) They also were 0-3-2 against Colorado this season.

For Colorado, Tyson Barrie also had a goal and two assists. Gabriel Landeskog had one of each, Matt Duchene assisted twice and Jarome Iginla scored a goal.

Lightning 4, Blackhawks 0: Ben Bishop made 28 saves for his second shutout, while Steven Stamkos scored two goals in host Tampa Bay's shutout of Chicago.

Brian Boyle and Ryan Callahan also scored for the Lightning, who returned home after a 3-2 road trip against Western Conference teams.

Stamkos has 11 goals and 17 points in nine games against Chicago.

Chicago backup goalie Scott Darling stopped 25 shots.

The Blackhawks beat Florida 3-0 Thursday in their first game since losing leading scorer Patrick Kane, placed on long-term injured reserve Wednesday with a broken left collarbone suffered in Tuesday's 3-2 shootout win over the Panthers.

Ducks 4, Kings 2: Corey Perry scored the tiebreaking goal with 8:39 to play, and host Anaheim furiously rallied from a two-goal deficit in the third period.

Ryan Kesler and Emerson Etem scored 90 seconds apart early in the third period for the Ducks, who beat the defending Stanley Cup champions for the third time in four lively meetings this season.

Perry secured the seventh 25-goal season of his NHL career when he slipped past two Kings to put home a bouncing puck in the slot. He then added an empty-net goal with 23.6 seconds left on a high-arching shot.

Trevor Lewis and Brayden McNabb scored for the Kings, who have lost two straight after an eight-game surge.

Thunder lose despite Westbrook's triple-double

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Oregon — LaMarcus Aldridge had 29 points and 16 rebounds, and the Portland Trail Blazers rallied to beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 115-112 Friday night, spoiling Russell Westbrook's third straight triple-double.

Westbrook, who fell and hit his face on teammate Andre Roberson's knee in the final seconds, had 40 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists. He became the first player to string together three triple-doubles since LeBron James in 2009.

The Blazers overcame a 15-point, third-quarter deficit and tied it on a tip shot by Aldridge with 4:33 to go.

Rookie Mitch McGary came off the bench for a season-high 20 points — 12 in the third quarter — for the Thunder.

Pacers 93, Cavaliers 86: With LeBron James and Kyrie Irving sidelined, Rodney Stuckey scored 19 points and George Hill had his first career triple-double in host Indiana's victory over Cleveland.

Hill had 15 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists as Indiana won for the seventh time in nine games— including twice over the Cavaliers in the past three weeks. James sat out with soreness in his lower back, while Irving stayed home after hurting his left shoulder. J.R. Smith had 21 points and Kevin Love finished with 17 points and 10 rebounds

Bulls 96, Timberwolves 89: Jimmy Butler had 28 points and 12 rebounds and host Chicago beat Minnesota for its seventh victory in its last nine games.

Mike Dunleavy made five three-pointers on his way to 21 points, and Joakim Noah finished with 11 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists. The Bulls trailed 85-84 before Kirk Hinrich drove inside for a layup with 4:29 remaining, and then Tony Snell made a smart pass to Dunleavy for an open three that made it 89-85.

Warriors 113, Raptors 89: Klay Thompson scored 25 points, Stephen Curry had 22 and visiting Golden State never trailed against Toronto.

Draymond Green had 17 points and nine rebounds for the Warriors. They bounced back from a loss Thursday night in Cleveland to improve to 10-2 in the second game of back-to-backs.

Hawks 95, Magic 88: Paul Millsap scored 14 of his 20 points in the first quarter and host Atlanta recovered after losing an early 16-point lead to beat Orlando.

Led by Millsap's three-point shooting, the Hawks sprinted to a 19-3 lead. The Hawks hit their first eight shots before Orlando rallied to finish the half up 45-42. Atlanta regained the lead with a strong third quarter and stretched the advantage to 10 points in the final.

Pelicans 104, Heat 102: Alexis Ajinca made the go-ahead layup with 26 seconds left and scored a career-high 24 points to help host New Orleans win its fourth straight.

The Spurs avoided their first five-game skid since late in the 2010-11 season with an efficient and aggressive performance. They had just six turnovers and made 29 of 32 free throws, offsetting a night they shot below 40 percent from the floor.

Rockets 102, Nets 98: Terrence Jones scored a season-high 26 points, James Harden made the tiebreaking free throw with 43 seconds left and followed that with a jumper in Houston's victory over visiting Brooklyn.

Clippers 97, Grizzlies 79: Chris Paul had 19 points and 13 assists, and DeAndre Jordan added 15 points and 22 rebounds to lead Los Angeles past host Memphis.

Spurs 107, Kings 96: Tony Parker scored 19 points, Kawhi Leonard had 17 points and seven boards, and visiting San Antonio snapped a four-game losing streak.

Lakers 101, Bucks 93: Wayne Ellington scored 11 straight points in the final 6 minutes, helping host Los Angeles beat Milwaukee for its season high-tying third straight victory.

Jordan Clarkson led the Lakers with 16 points. Ellington finished with 14 — all

in the final period — and Jordan Hill and Jeremy Lin added 14 points apiece.

Knicks 121, Pistons 115 (2 OT): Shane Larkin's three-point play in the final minute of the second overtime helped visiting New York snap an eight-game skid.

Larkin put the Knicks ahead by four with 28 seconds remaining, and they held on to win a game that Detroit appeared to have control of after two quarters.

Jazz 104, Nuggets 82: Derrick Favors had 21 points, 10 rebounds and three blocks, Trey Burke came off the bench to score 19 points and visiting Utah beat struggling Denver.

Gordon Hayward added 15 points for the Jazz. Utah has won five of its last seven.

76ers 89, Wizards 81: Nerlens Noel had 14 points and 13 rebounds for host Philadelphia.

Robert Covington added 13 points and Jason Richardson had 12 to help Philadelphia snap a five-game winning streak and win for the first time since trading Michael Carter-Williams.

Celtics 106, Hornets 98: Isaiah Thomas scored 28 points and host Boston overcame a 16-point third-quarter deficit to beat Charlotte for its third straight victory.

Thomas scored 21 points in the second half. Fellow newcomer Jonas Jerebko had 16 points and 10 rebounds.