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Cruz, Rubio back bill against drafting women

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Marco Rubio, R-Fla., are supporting legislation that could put the brakes on including women in the military draft, adding momentum to growing opposition on Capitol Hill.

The Republican presidential candidates confirmed Thursday that they will back Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and his upcoming bill barring the White House or the courts from changing the law, which requires only men to register with Selective Service System in case they need to be drafted into combat.

A bipartisan bill was introduced in the House on Thursday that would abolish the registration system.

The sudden groundswell of opposition comes after military brass and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., came out in favor of drafting women. The question of fairness in the all-male draft is pressing because the Pentagon decided in December to open all positions—including special operations—to female troops.

“We simply can’t trust this president or the courts to honor the law and protect our daughters,” Lee said in a statement released to Stars and Stripes. “We need new legislation making clear that if the United States is going to change this policy, Congress must be the one to do it.”

Staff for Cruz confirmed he will be a co-sponsor of the bill. Rubio supports keeping any decision on the future of the draft in lawmakers’ hands.

“Sen. Rubio agrees with Sen. Lee that Congress needs to determine the future of the Selective Service system and is working on legislation to codify that role and plans to support

it,” Rubio spokesman Alex Burgos wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes.

The Supreme Court upheld the all-male draft in 1981, finding that women could be excluded because they would not be called to fill critical combat positions during a war. But since the Pentagon began full integration of women, that rationale might no longer be valid.

Marine Commandant Gen. Robert Neller and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley testified to the Senate this month that they believe the exemption should be ended.

Lee’s staff said the bill essentially will preserve the current law and has already attracted a number of co-sponsors. The senator had planned to introduce his bill Thursday, but that has now been pushed back until later this month.

The House bill introduced Thursday proposes eliminating the Selective Service program, which requires all men between 18 and 25 years old to register

“Now that women are eligible to serve in combat roles and Congress debates how to proceed on the issue of draft inclusion, we should consider a full repeal of the draft and the abolition of the Selective Service,” said Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., the lead sponsor of the bill.

Coffman said keeping the system, which costs about \$23 million each year, makes no sense because the draft ended in 1973 after the Vietnam War and has not been considered since.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers have signed onto the bill, including Reps. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.; Jared Polis, D-Colo.; and Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif.

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NATO vessels to patrol Aegean over migrant smuggling

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

NATO ships under German command are moving into the Aegean Sea to crack down on human smugglers in an effort to stem the flow of migrants making the dangerous crossing from Turkey to Greece.

“Europe is facing the greatest refugee and migrant crisis since the end of the second World War,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday during a news conference at NATO headquarters in Brussels. The migrants are “driven by conflict and instability on our southern borders, as well as the criminal networks that traffic in human suffering.”

Stoltenberg said the objective isn’t “about stopping or pushing back refugee boats.”

“NATO will contribute critical information and surveillance to help counter human trafficking and criminal networks,” he said.

The decision to send three alliance ships was made in response to a request from Turkey, Greece and Germany, all countries that have been strained by a heavy influx of refugees. As part of the effort, NATO also will increase surveillance of the Turkish-Syrian border.

“We will start to act immediately,” said Stoltenberg on the second day of talks in Brussels among alliance defense ministers.

NATO’s Standing Maritime Group 2, now deployed in the

region, will lead the effort. More ships are expected soon to be joining the mission, which is tasked to conduct reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance of the illegal crossings.

“Several allies have announced that they are ready to reinforce this group, so I expect it to be increased in the near future.”

Also on Thursday, NATO said it will provide surveillance aircraft to take part in counter-Islamic State operations in Iraq and Syria. The decision was in response to a U.S. request for NATO Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft, a sophisticated reconnaissance plane that can survey hundreds of miles of territory.

“Our military planners are now working out the details,” Stoltenberg said.

“The decision will increase the ability of the coalition to degrade and destroy the terrorist group ISIL which is our common enemy,” he said, using an acronym for the Islamic State group.

Meanwhile, U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter commended allies for stepping forward to assist on the effort to curb illegal migration out of Syria, which has been a destabilizing force for countries in the broader region. NATO military leaders will continue to assess and adapt the mission as needed, Carter said.

Stars and Stripes reporter Andrew Yurkovsky contributed to this report.
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VA eyes end to executives' outside appeals

BY DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs bosses have come up with a new idea on how to punish top executives at the agency — one that would keep control in the hands of VA leadership and would exclude involvement of an outside appeals board, VA Secretary Bob McDonald said Wednesday.

The idea was floated by Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson after suffering a bruising blow from the mandated appeals board that overturned three VA punishments in a row in the past few weeks.

The actions by the Merit Systems Protection Board embarrassed the agency and frustrated Gibson, who said the board had taken away his ability to hold senior executives accountable.

McDonald, appearing Wednesday before the House Committee on Veterans'

Affairs to discuss the proposed VA budget for 2017, said Gibson's idea was to put all senior executives under the regulatory Title 38 statute, the same one used for VA medical professionals, which would allow the agency to fire executives at will.

"It gives us the ability to pay them more competitively and gives us more flexibility in punishing them," McDonald said.

He said Gibson introduced the idea during a meeting Tuesday between the VA leadership and the House and Senate oversight committee leaders.

The announcement marked the first time that the lawmakers and VA officials appeared to agree on accountability issues at an agency that has been plagued by scandal. For nearly two years, lawmakers on the oversight committees have been critical of VA leadership for failing to take executives to task after details emerged of appointment and benefits wait times and of

cover-ups. Some veterans died while languishing on wait lists.

Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, has pressed VA leaders to agree to legislative reform of the civil service system that would allow for greater accountability. McDonald and Gibson have said they had the tools they needed.

Miller reiterated his concerns Tuesday, saying he would be remiss if he didn't mention the frustrations he and other members of the panel felt following the Merit Systems Protection Board reversals.

"We've got to have an honest conversation about what's happening in the civil service system," he said.

Gibson's proposal will be incorporated into negotiations between the House and Senate oversight committees over a package of veteran's legislation that will go up for a vote later this year.

Ripples predicted by Einstein detected

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In an announcement that electrified the world of astronomy, scientists said Thursday that they have finally detected gravitational waves, the ripples in the fabric of space-time that Albert Einstein predicted a century ago.

Scientists likened the breakthrough to the moment Galileo took up a telescope to look at the planets.

The discovery of these waves, created by violent collisions in the universe, excites astronomers because it allows a new way of observing the cosmos.

A team of astrophysicists used a newly upgraded, \$1.1 billion instrument known as the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, or LIGO, to detect a gravitational wave from the distant crash of two black holes, one of the ways these ripples are created.

Kurds take military base in Syria

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Kurdish fighters and their allies captured a military air base in northern Syria under the cover of airstrikes as Russia announced Thursday that its air force carried out more than 500 combat missions in Syria during the past week.

Syrian troops launched a wide offensive in northern Syria earlier in February under the cover of Russian airstrikes during which they were able to capture areas from opposition fighters and now are trying to regain rebel-held neighborhoods in Aleppo.

Syria's Kurds have been among the most effective forces battling the Islamic State

group, but have remained largely neutral in the conflict between President Bashar Assad and the rebels fighting to overthrow him.

On Wednesday, the main Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, launched an attack along with some Arab allies against the Mannagh military air base and captured it later in the day, according to a rebel commander and an opposition activist group. The Kurds appeared to be exploiting the chaos to expand their nearby enclave, known as Afrin.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the offensive came as warplanes believed to be Russian

carried out 30 airstrikes in the area. It said the YPG and allied forces also captured a nearby village, also called Mannagh.

In Moscow, Ministry of Defense spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said that since Feb. 4, Russian warplanes carried out 510 combat missions and destroyed 888 "terrorist facilities" in several Syrian provinces including Aleppo, Daraa and Latakia.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said the fighting has displaced about 50,000 people, mostly in the northern parts of Aleppo province. The ICRC said some supply routes used for bringing in aid have been cut.

Nigerian soldiers accused of arming Boko Haram

ABUJA, Nigeria — Nigeria's army has arrested two soldiers allegedly caught trying to ferry a large quantity of arms and ammunition to Boko Haram Islamic extremists, a spokesman said Wednesday.

Col. Sani Kukasheka Usman said the two were sappers, or combat engineers, who worked in an explosive ordnance unit in the northeast, where Boko Haram commits most attacks, and may have trained insurgents in bomb-making.

Some soldiers have told The Associated Press that Boko Haram has infiltrated Nigeria's

security forces and some fight with the army by day and with the extremists by night.

Usman spoke at a news conference where he also reported that in recent days the military has killed 35 extremists and has rescued about 300 civilians held by Boko Haram.

From The Associated Press

NBA All-Star Game makes 1st trip to Canada

Associated Press

Hockey and Toronto are synonymous, with the sport's Hall of Fame being housed there and the Maple Leafs being one of the NHL's "Original Six" franchises. And sports like baseball, rugby, yachting and curling all have history in the city going back to the 19th century.

But this weekend, basketball takes over the Queen City.

For the first time, the NBA All-Star Weekend is heading outside the United States. Toronto was announced as the site for these festivities back in September 2013, and the city has been gearing up ever since.

Here's some of what to watch during the league's midseason showcase weekend:

The game

Let's start this list with the final event on the weekend agenda: That whole East vs. West matchup on Sunday.

It will be the 18th and final All-Star game for retiring Los Angeles Lakers star Kobe Bryant, a chance for Toronto standouts Kyle Lowry and DeMar DeRozan to show

off for their home fans (and the crowds at Raptors games are nothing if not passionate already), Miami forward Chris Bosh's return to his old home arena, LeBron James playing in the game for the 12th time and, of course, the reigning champion Golden State Warriors.

Don't expect a blowout: Only two of the last 13 All-Star Games have seen a winning margin of more than 10 points.

Don't expect 2015 All-Star MVP Russell Westbrook to win it again: Bob Pettit was the only back-to-back MVP, and that was in 1958 and 1959.

Don't expect anyone to foul out: No one has since Hakeem Olajuwon did in 1987.

Do expect a bunch of three-point attempts: The teams combined for 133 tries from long range last season.

The three-point contest

Why it's one of the major highlights of the weekend: Stephen Curry will take part. (So are seven other players, who quite possibly are all vying for second place.)

There have been 10 instances in NBA history where someone has made at least 232 three-pointers in a season. Four of them belong to Curry, who is on pace to smash the record of 286 threes he made last season.

Curry is averaging close to 15 points per game this season just off three-pointers. His competition in this one: His Golden State teammate Klay Thompson, Bosh, Houston's James Harden, Lowry, Phoenix's Devin Booker, Milwaukee's Khris Middleton and the Los Angeles Clippers' J.J. Redick.

Celebrities

So it's forecast to be downright frigid and windy in Toronto next weekend. The celebrities will show up anyway.

Raptors superfan (and in his spare time, a Grammy winner) Drake will be there, as will actor Kevin Hart, Blue Jays star Jose Bautista and Nick Cannon, among others.

There's a celebrity game on Friday night, and expect a star-studded lineup around the court for all the All-Star Saturday festivities such as the dunk contest, skills competition and the three-point contest.

The commissioner

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver gives his annual All-Star address on Saturday night, and topics likely to come up are the status of the league's labor agreement and his feelings on the Hack-a-Somebody tactic that tends to turn games into free-throw contests starring players who are terrible at shooting free throws.

If the league has big news to make over the weekend, then this will likely be where it drops.

The next wave

Two things certainly worth noting would be the Rising Stars game on Friday night — pitting some of the top young stars from the U.S. against the best young international talent in the league — and the NBA Development League All-Star Game on Saturday afternoon.

Among those expected to compete in the D-League contest: Jimmer Fredette, the No. 10 pick in the 2011 draft out of BYU.

US women romp to win in qualifying opener

Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — The U.S. women's opening set piece finally paid off.

Alex Morgan scored off it 12 seconds in and added another goal in the 62nd minute and the U.S. opened CONCACAF qualifying for the Rio Olympics with a 5-0 victory over Costa Rica on Wednesday night.

Morgan's goal was the fastest in CONCACAF Olympic qualifying history, and the team said it is believed to be the fastest in U.S. history. It came on a designed play that the team uses off most opening kickoffs.

"We always see it coming," Morgan said. "It always starts off right, then something goes wrong. This time, nothing went wrong."

The match was the Americans' first competitive game since winning the World Cup. They have won three straight Olympic titles and four of the five in women's soccer.

The U.S. roster features only 13 of the 20 players who were on the World Cup team. Christie Rampone and Megan Rapinoe are injured, and Amy Rodriguez and Sydney Leroux are pregnant and will miss the Olympics.

Carli Lloyd and Crystal Dunn also scored first-half goals, and substitute Christen Press scored in the 83rd minute.

"For me, it's almost a perfect start," U.S. coach Jill Ellis said. "We were able to check off a lot of boxes."

In Wednesday's other Group A opener at Toyota Stadium, Maribel Dominguez

scored a hat trick as Mexico routed Puerto Rico 6-0.

Morgan's first goal was a right-footed volley to the left of goalkeeper Dinnia Diaz from about 13 yards out while being tightly marked on her left side. Lloyd assisted with a jumping header after collecting a long cross lofted in by Lindsey Horan from beyond midfield seconds after the opening kickoff.

Costa Rica coach Amelia Valverde said through an interpreter that her team was prepared for a U.S. attack right off the opening kick yet couldn't prevent the early goal. That disrupted not only the defense, Valverde said, but the whole team.

Morgan's second-half goal, her 59th career score, was a header just inside the 6-yard box off a chipped cross from Lloyd.

Lloyd's goal came on a penalty kick after Dunn was tripped just inside the 18-yard box. It was her 83rd career score and 20th in her last 15 matches. She nearly scored again in the 59th minute on a point-blank header right at Diaz.

Dunn scored her fifth career goal in the 15th minute, standing at the goal line as she followed her own saved shot.

U.S. goalkeeper Hope Solo was never seriously challenged. She made two saves during the first half on long free kicks.

The United States has never lost a qualifying match and is 13-0 against Costa Rica.

The U.S. team will face Mexico on Saturday and close group play against Puerto Rico on Monday night.

Vickers may replace Stewart at Daytona

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Brian Vickers is expected to replace injured driver Tony Stewart for the NASCAR season opener at Daytona International Speedway, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press.

Stewart-Haas Racing has scheduled a Friday news conference to discuss its plans for the No. 14 Chevrolet. The person spoke on condition of anonymity Wednesday because the team is awaiting word from NASCAR on whether Vickers is medically cleared to race.

Vickers ran only two races last season before having a recurrence of blood clots. He can't compete when being treated for the clots because the blood thinners increase his risk of serious internal bleeding if he crashes.

Stewart is sidelined for the start of his final NASCAR season with a fractured vertebra. He was hurt riding an all-terrain vehicle in the desert in California last week. He's retiring at the end of the season.

Vickers is only expected to run at Daytona, which opens Friday ahead of the Feb. 21 season-opening Daytona 500. SHR is still looking at all of its options for beyond Daytona. Stewart is expected to race at some point this year.

Vickers has been sidelined four times for health issues since 2010.

He missed the final five races of the 2013 season because he was placed on blood

thinners to treat a blood clot in his right calf. He also missed 25 races during the 2010 season when clots were discovered in his legs and lungs.

During his 2010 absence, he underwent a pair of procedures, one to close a hole in his heart and another to insert a stent into a vein in his left leg. He was private about the heart surgery and didn't address it until a month after the procedure.

He was looking forward to last season, but surgery in December 2014 to repair a hole in his heart sidelined him for the first two races. He needed the surgery because his body was rejecting the artificial patch he received five years prior.

He was able to run only two races before blood clots returned, and the need for blood thinners sidelined him the rest of the year.

This weekend the Sprint Unlimited will be run at Daytona Beach. Matt Kenseth won the wreck-filled exhibition race last year.

Fast facts about Sprint Unlimited: Ricky Stenhouse Jr. took Stewart's position in the 25-driver field based on the 2015 season standings. ... The field is made up of 2015 pole winners and Chase drivers, former Sprint Unlimited winners and Daytona 500 pole winners who competed full time last year, and the top remaining drivers in the standings. ... Daytona 500 practice is Saturday and front-row qualifying is Sunday



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Spurs rally to beat Magic

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — The San Antonio Spurs can do no wrong this season and the Orlando Magic can't seem to do much right.

The Spurs rallied from a 14-point fourth quarter deficit to beat Orlando 98-96 on Kawhi Leonard's jumper from the top of the key with 0.9 left to play Wednesday night.

Leonard led the San Antonio with 29 points. LaMarcus Aldridge had 21 points and Patty Mills added 17 points and seven assists for the Spurs, who won their fourth straight game.

"We always pride ourselves on playing the whole 48 minutes of the game," Leonard said. "We just kept pounding and fortunately everything broke for us."

Including the last 0.9 seconds.

That was enough time for Magic guard Elfrid Payton to run down a length-of-the-floor pass and miss an uncontested reverse layup as the buzzer sounded. The miss ended the Magic's two-game win streak and sent Orlando to the All-Star break with just four wins in their last 19 games.

"We got lucky," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "There was a pick down there and we didn't react very well."

Evan Fournier, whose three-pointer tied the game with 13.3 seconds left, led Orlando with 28 points. Nikola Vucevic had 20 points and 13 rebounds, Victor Oladipo scored 14. Payton had 13 points and seven assists.

"In key moments, we struggle to make a game-ending play or combination of plays," Magic coach Scott Skiles said. "We could feel the Spurs picking it up (in the fourth quarter) and we didn't react well. We started throwing them the ball and became casual."

Payton took the blame.

"I've got to make that shot," he said. "I tried to let the ball bounce, but it slipped out of my hands. Still, I make that shot all the time and at the end of the day, I've got to make it."

Cavaliers 120, Lakers 111: Kobe Bryant's final game in Cleveland was reduced to a sideshow when Cavaliers for-

ward Kevin Love re-injured his surgically repaired left shoulder.

Kyrie Irving scored a season-high 35 points and LeBron James 29 for the Cavs, who head into the All-Star break with one of their "Big 3" injured.

Love quickly left the floor late in the second quarter after he got hurt while working in the post against Bryant. He did not return in the second half, but said after the game that it was just a stinger.

Warriors 112, Suns 104: Stephen Curry nearly had a triple-double before sitting out the fourth quarter, and visiting Golden State stormed into the All-Star break on an 11-game winning streak with a victory over free-falling Phoenix.

Curry had 26 points, nine rebounds and nine assists for the defending NBA champions.

Archie Goodwin scored 20 and Markieff Morris 19 for the Suns, who have lost nine straight and 24 of 26. Goodwin and Morris emerged the team's leading scorers after scuffling on the bench during a first-quarter timeout.

Trail Blazers 116, Rockets 103: Damian Lillard sparked a second-quarter outburst for host Portland and finished with 31 points and nine assists in a win over Houston.

James Harden had 34 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds for the Rockets, who have dropped three straight and six of eight to fall out of playoff position.

Kings 114, 76ers 110: DeMarcus Cousins had 28 points and 12 rebounds, and Darren Collison scored 21 of his 25 points after halftime to lead visiting Sacramento to a comeback victory.

Hawks 113, Bulls 90: Jeff Teague had 17 points and eight assists, Al Horford scored 16 and visiting Atlanta routed struggling Chicago.

Dennis Schroder had 18 points and hit three of his team's 13 three-pointers. Paul Millsap scored 15, and the Southeast Division leaders headed into the All-Star break on a winning note after back-to-back losses to last-place Orlando.

Timberwolves 117, Raptors 112: Karl-Anthony Towns had 35 points and 11 rebounds, and host Minnesota came back

from 18 points down to stun Toronto.

Canadian star Andrew Wiggins scored 13 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, including a jumper with under 2 minutes to go that gave Minnesota a 112-109 lead.

Pelicans 100, Jazz 96: Anthony Davis capped a 19-point night with a running left-handed hook and three-pointer in the final minute, and host New Orleans beat Utah to snap the Jazz's seven-game winning streak.

Jrue Holiday scored 21 points for the Pelicans, who won their second straight.

Grizzlies 109, Nets 90: Mike Conley scored 20 points, Jeff Green had 12 of his 18 in the third quarter, and visiting Memphis beat Brooklyn in its first game since losing Marc Gasol to a broken right foot.

The Grizzlies unleashed a strong perimeter attack in the absence of their franchise center, making seven three-pointers in a 39-point third quarter that blew open the game.

Nuggets 103, Pistons 92: Will Barton scored 15 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter, and visiting Denver held off depleted Detroit, which was without three starters.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope has been out with a core muscle strain, and the team announced before the game that Reggie Jackson and Ersan Ilyasova had been ill and would be sidelined as well.

Hornets 117, Pacers 95: Kemba Walker scored 25 points and Jeremy Lamb had 16 as suddenly surging Charlotte rolled to a victory over host Indiana.

Six players scored in double figures for the Hornets (27-26), who won their third straight — and their first at Indiana since November 2008.

Celtics 139, Clippers 134 (OT): Isaiah Thomas had 36 points and 11 assists, including a fade-away jumper that sent the game to an extra period, to help host Boston overtake Los Angeles in overtime.

Jared Sullinger added 21 points and 11 rebounds. Jae Crowder finished with 19 points, and Avery Bradley added 18 points as the Celtics won their eighth straight at home.

Raiders knock off Cyclones

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — Texas Tech coach Tubby Smith knew how big a three-point-er he got from sophomore guard Keenan Evans.

It helped lift the Red Raiders to an 85-82 overtime win over No. 14 Iowa State on Wednesday night.

"Knowing it was just 2 seconds (on the shot clock), a heck of a play to put us up by three," Smith said. "We needed something like that to happen. It's happened against us a bit this year. Glad it was our turn."

Zach Smith made two free throws with 18 seconds remaining in overtime to seal the win.

It was the second straight year the Red Raiders beat the Cyclones in Lubbock. Last season, Iowa State was ranked ninth.

Deonte Burton scored a season-high 20 points and Abdel added 19 points to lead Iowa State (17-7, 6-5). Fans stormed the court after the victory.

Aaron Ross scored 20 points and Devauntah Williams added 19 to lead Texas Tech (14-9, 4-7).

Iowa State built leads several times — in each half — only to watch the Red Raiders claw their way back. Two free throws by Smith in two separate trips to the free-throw line tied it at 78 at the end of regulation.

"We didn't finish," Cyclones coach Steve Prohm said. "We just didn't finish in crucial times."

Alabama 63, No. 15 Texas A&M 62: Retin Obasohan scored 16 points and the Crimson Tide (14-9, 5-6 SEC) held off a big rally to hand the visiting Aggies (18-6, 7-4) their third straight loss.

Tulsa 82, No. 16 SMU 77: Shaquille Harrison had 21 points, Pat Birt hit a crucial three-pointer and scored 12 of his 17 points after halftime and the visiting Golden Hurricane (16-8, 8-4 AAC) rallied to beat the Mustangs (20-3, 9-3).

Marquette 96, No. 20 Providence 91 (2OT): Jajuan Johnson scored 16 points and hit a key three-pointer with 1:16 left in double overtime, and the host Golden Eagles (16-9, 5-7 Big East) outlasted the Friars (18-7, 6-6).

No. 21 Baylor 82, Kansas State 72: Al Freeman scored 21 points, Taurean Prince had 18 and the visiting Bears (18-6, 7-4 Big 12) beat the cold-shooting Wildcats (14-10, 3-8) to remain a game back of the leaders in the Big 12 race.

Service academies

Navy 71, Loyola (Md.) 51: Tilman Dunbar had 20 points and six assists, Shawn Anderson added 18 points and the visiting Midshipmen (17-9, 8-5 Patriot) completed a second straight season sweep of the Greyhounds (8-16, 7-6).

Navy improved to 10-2 on the road to set a program record for most road wins in a season.

Will Kelly added 14 points, five rebounds, four assists and four blocks for Navy, which matched last season's conference win total with five games to go.

Nevada 72, Air Force 52: D.J. Fenner scored 18 points and grabbed eight rebounds as the host Wolf Pack (14-9, 6-5 MWC) downed the Falcons (12-13, 3-9).

Elijah Foster and Eric Cooper, Jr. added 11 points apiece from the field overall, 85 percent from the line and had a 41-28 rebounding edge over Air Force.

Lundqvist, Rangers shut out Penguins

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The New York Rangers are missing their captain and one of their leading scorers. They still have one of the best goaltenders in the league.

Henrik Lundqvist stopped 34 shots for his third shutout of the season and 58th of his career, guiding the New York Rangers past the Pittsburgh Penguins 3-0 on Wednesday night.

"I just liked the way we competed," Lundqvist said. "I felt like we were getting to loose pucks and rebounds. You need guys to step up when they get the opportunity to play more minutes and that's what we're having now."

None bigger than Lundqvist, who recorded his 27th win of the season and passed Martin Brodeur for most victories by a goaltender in his first 11 NHL seasons.

Lundqvist has won nine of his last 12 starts and allowed two goals or fewer in 13 of his last 18 appearances, helping the Rangers win again without captain Ryan McDonagh and eight-time 30-goal scorer Rick Nash.

"There's no doubt that our goaltending

was outstanding," Rangers coach Alain Vigneault said. "(Lundqvist) made some big saves at key times and we were able to get some timely goals."

Kevin Hayes, Dominic Moore and Jesper Fast scored for the Rangers, who won their fourth straight, and fifth in six games. The Rangers have at least one point in 14 of their last 20 games.

Penguins captain Sidney Crosby, who didn't record a shot on goal, failed to extend a career-high, seven-game goal-scoring streak and an 11-game run of 12 goals and 22 points during that span. Crosby, with seven goals and 12 points in the previous four games, also came in with a nine-game home goal-scoring streak, second in team history behind Mario Lemieux's 11 straight in 1995-96.

Marc-Andre Fleury made 19 saves for the Penguins, whose six-game home win streak ended. Pittsburgh, unbeaten in its last 10 at home, last lost a regulation home game against Carolina on Dec. 19. The Penguins previously won six of seven with points in 16 of their last 20 games.

It was the first time the teams played each other since the 2015 Eastern Conference quarterfinals, when Lundqvist

allowed just one goal in all four wins.

Red Wings 3, Senators 1: Danny DeKeyser and Henrik Zetterberg scored early in the first and third periods to help host Detroit beat Ottawa and spoil Dion Phaneuf's debut with his new team.

Petr Mrazek stopped 22 shots and his bid for a second straight shutout ended with 2:24 left when Zach Smith scored.

Darren Helm restored Detroit's two-goal lead with an empty-net goal about a minute later.

Phaneuf was acquired Tuesday in a nine-player trade with the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Canucks 2, Coyotes 1: Ryan Miller stopped 33 shots to end a five-game losing streak and extend his dominance over Arizona, lifting visiting Vancouver.

Jake Virtanen scored in the first period and Jannik Hansen had his 16th of the season on a double carom off two Coyotes players in the second.

Miller improved to 9-1 against Arizona, including 6-0 in Glendale.

Martin Hanzal scored a power-play goal and Louis Domingue stopped 24 shots for the Coyotes. They have lost five straight and nine of 11.