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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Guantanamo commander relieved of duty

The Miami Herald

The commander of the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay has been removed from the remote outpost and reassigned to headquarters, a Navy announcement said Wednesday, declining to elaborate because of an ongoing Naval Criminal Investigative Services probe.

The Associated Press reported that Capt. John R. Nettleton was relieved of duty Wednesday due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command. The AP cited U.S. officials as saying he was fired and is being investigated in connection with an alleged affair with a woman on the base and the recent death of her husband.

The Navy would not com-

ment on the details of the investigation. But U.S. officials said Nettleton is under investigation in connection with the death of Christopher Tur, who was found dead on Jan. 11. The officials spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation.

Officials told the AP the alleged affair between Nettleton and Tur's wife was discovered during the course of the NCIS investigation into his death. Officials did not provide any details on the cause of Tur's death.

The Navy statement said Navy Rear Adm. Mary M. Jackson, commander of Navy Region Southeast, reassigned Nettleton to her office in Jacksonville, Fla.

The announcement follows the mysterious death of Tur, 42, on the base that is being investigated by NCIS. Tur was found dead in the waters of Guantanamo Bay on Jan. 10 about 11:30 a.m., Mike Andrews, a Navy Region Southeast spokesman, told the Miami Herald on Jan. 15. He had been reported missing a day earlier.

At the base, spokeswoman Kelly Wirfel said on Jan. 16 in response to questions about the NCIS investigation that Tur had been working at the base commissary since he moved there with his family in June 2011. Wirfel confirmed that Tur's widow, Lara, is director of the Fleet and Family Services Center at the base but would not say whether she worked for

Nettleton.

The base commander has no role in the running of the war-on-terrorism prison camps at Guantánamo. That is the responsibility of a rear admiral who commands a separate Detention Center Zone within the 45-square-mile base in southeast Cuba — and answers to Marine Gen. John F. Kelly, the commander of the U.S. Southern Command in Miami.

The prison functions much like a tenant on the base, with its 2,000 or so staff members granted wide access to base facilities as well as the separate prison zone. Jackson sent her chief of staff, Navy Capt. Scott Gray, to run the base until Nettleton's replacement is chosen.

Navy opens submarines to enlisted women

BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy —The Navy is opening submarine billets to enlisted women, with plans for the USS Michigan to become the first boat integrated with female enlistees in 2016.

The service released three administrative messages Wednesday laying out guidelines for the change, along with the application process for the Michigan billets. The Navy is looking for chief petty officers in one of five ratings, or job specialties, and for junior enlisted in any rating, or without a rating. Under the rule change, all submarine job specialties — whether nuclear or non-nuclear — are now open to female sailors.

The announcement comes almost five years after the Navy decided to integrate women into submarines. Female of-

ficers came aboard the Navy's Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines in late 2011.

The Navy laid out its long-term integration plan last summer, calling for women to make up 20 percent of enlisted billets on those already integrated subs by 2020.

Under the instructions released Wednesday, enlisted women will come aboard submarines that already have female officers serving on board. Those are the larger Ohio-class ballistic- and guided-missile subs, which have two rotating crews each. The smaller, Virginia-class attack submarines began receiving female officers this month.

Chief petty officers will report to their crews before junior enlisted. The Navy says it will make changes aboard each submarine to accommodate women.

After integration of the Michigan next year, plans call for female enlistees to integrate 12 additional Ohio-class crews by 2021, with two to four crews integrating annually. Enlisted women will wait until 2020 to report to Virginia-class submarines. Those crews will man newly constructed subs in the class, which are designed to accommodate both sexes.

Applications for the Michigan billets are due by April 15, with the selection process beginning the next day. A panel will be convened to select the chief petty officers. The application process for other integrations will be announced in the future, according to the guidelines.

Enlistees selected can convert their ratings to any submarine ratings, including nuclear. Those who choose to convert to non-nuclear job positions will need to go through the two-

month Basic Enlisted Submarine School and any necessary rating school. Those converting to nuclear positions will join new recruits, going back to boot camp before entering the nuclear pipeline.

The five ratings for chief petty officer are information systems technician, logistics specialist, culinary specialist, yeoman and independent duty corpsman.

The continued integration of submarines follows the broader military trend of opening once-restricted billets to women. The Pentagon removed the military-wide ban on women in combat units in 2013, three years after the Navy's decision to integrate subs, and required gender integration plans from each of the services.

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GOP aims at Obama's foreign policy

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Republicans on Wednesday delivered a swift and bold response to President Barack Obama's exuberant State of the Union address by taking direct aim at the administration's foreign policy authority.

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, invited Israel's prime minister to address Congress next month on Iran and the controversial role that U.S. sanctions should play in the difficult relationship with the Islamic government in Tehran.

The invitation was a strong signal by Boehner that he intends to challenge Obama on his handling of Iran and the

spread of Islamic extremism, where the president's support has been sometimes tenuous.

In a meeting with his House GOP colleagues, Boehner said that if the president "expects us to stand idly by and do nothing while he cuts a bad deal with Iran," he was going to be disappointed: "Two words: 'Hell no!'" Boehner said.

According to Republican aides, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has a strained relationship with Obama, has accepted the offer. He is expected to make the address in February.

The invitation follows Obama's threat to veto any new congressional sanctions on Iran while his team is negoti-

ating an agreement that would prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Such a move by lawmakers, Obama warned Tuesday, would "all but guarantee that diplomacy fails" and increase the potential for military action.

Obama has been battling with lawmakers, including some members of his own party, to forestall congressional action imposing sanctions before the negotiations are completed.

New Jersey Sen. Robert Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Sen. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., have a proposed bill that imposes sanctions if the talks were to fail.

Official: US troops could help Syria

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The new chairman of the House's military oversight committee said Thursday that the United States should consider putting some troops onto the battlefield in Syria to bolster the offensive against the Islamic State.

Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, said the Obama administration has locked the country into an ineffective military strategy by relying on an air campaign and unaccompanied foreign forces to roll back the extremist group. Front-line troops to guide airstrikes and to collect intelligence in Syria could be one way make the coalition war effort more effective, he said.

On Tuesday, President Barack Obama used his State of the Union address to tout his administration's strategy and said it has kept the nation out of another ground war in Iraq. But Thornberry took the reins this month of the House Armed Services Committee as part of an incoming Republican majority in both chambers of Congress that considers the president's assessment overly optimistic.

Chief of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey said last fall that the United States may need to deploy ground troops to Iraq, and Thornberry's comments show some key Republicans in Congress might still back such a move — even into Syria, where a complex civil war is raging.

"My point is we should not tie our hands and pretend there is a border there when there is not," Thornberry told reporters during a roundtable discussion. "You have to look at where in Syria [U.S. forces would operate] and the risk they would be under and could they be protected."

About 2,300 troops are deployed to Iraq to train and assist the country's military, with some dedicated to protecting those trainers. But so far, the military has limited Syria operations to the air.

Yemeni president, Cabinet resign

The Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — Yemeni officials say the president has resigned under pressure from Shiite rebels who seized the capital in September and have confined the embattled leader to his home for the past two days.

Presidential officials said Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi resigned after being pressured to make concessions to the rebels, known as Houthis. He earlier had pledged political concessions in return for the rebels withdrawing from his house and the nearby presidential palace, but Houthi fighters remained deployed around both buildings throughout the day.

Hadi's move came shortly after the Yemeni government submitted its resignation on Thursday.

Prime Minister Khaled Bahah's resignation came as the U.N. envoy to the Arab world's poorest country met with representatives from the rebels and other political factions to try to implement a deal reached Wednesday to end the crisis.

13 killed in shelling of Ukrainian city bus

The Associated Press

DONETSK, Ukraine — A mortar shell hit a bus Thursday in the Ukrainian rebel stronghold of Donetsk, killing at least 13 people, the city's leader said. It was not immediately clear which side was responsible for the attack, but angry residents punched and kicked a captured soldier dragged to the scene by the rebels.

The mortar killed passengers instantly and blew out the windows of a nearby building. Separatist leader Alexander Zakharchenko blamed Ukrainian government troops for the attack, calling it a provocation.

The civilian death toll has been mounting in the conflict between Ukrainian troops and Russia-backed separatists that the United Nations says has killed more than 4,700 people since April.

Residential areas in eastern Ukraine have been frequently struck during artillery duels between the warring sides. The bus hit Thursday, however, was far from the front lines,

in Donetsk's central Lenin district.

The separatist-run Donetsk News Agency cited officials as saying the shell was fired from a portable 82-mm caliber mortar. That type of weapon used would seem to indicate the shell was fired from rebel-held territory.

Zakharchenko said a "raiding party" suspected in the attack had already been detained. He did not elaborate.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry said it believed the shells were fired from residential areas inside Donetsk and the incident occurred 9 miles from the nearest government positions. It said evidence so far indicated that the responsibility for the attack lay with "illegal armed formations."

The attack follows a surge of fighting last weekend for control over Donetsk's war-racked airport. Ukrainian forces have all but abandoned the airport after months of bitter battles against the rebels.

Deflated balls are latest in Belichick's reputation for guile

The Associated Press

Add underinflated footballs to the list of incidents giving Bill Belichick a reputation for guile and playing above the rules.

Softer footballs wouldn't explain all of a rout that earned the New England Patriots a spot in the Super Bowl but it's another example of Belichick's reputation of searching for edges and bending any rules until he gets caught.

Vague injury reports. Spygate. Signing players with intel on opponents. And now, an open NFL investigation into whether the team cheated during its AFC championship win.

"Because it's the Patriots and they have a history, that brings in a different issue," former All-Pro running back Jerome Bettis said on ESPN. "There's some type of culture there that's conducive to cheating, and that's a problem."

On Thursday, the Patriots coach said he doesn't know how footballs became deflated during the game that got his team to the Super Bowl.

"I had no knowledge of this situation

until Monday morning," said Belichick, who said he was "shocked" to learn the news.

The issue has drawn strong reaction from around the game and its fans as the Patriots prepare to play the Seattle Seahawks on Feb. 1 in Glendale, Arizona, for the NFL title.

Belichick no longer gets the benefit of the doubt among fans and those in football circles, even those who think he's the best coach in the league. Earlier this month, Hall of Fame coach Don Shula called him "Beli-cheat."

It all traces back to a reputation for gamesmanship that blossomed after the three-time Super Bowl winner's last title in 2004.

In 2007, Belichick was fined \$500,000 and the team was fined \$250,000 and stripped of its 2008 first-round draft choice by the NFL for videotaping New York Jets signals during a 2007 game. At the time, opponents wondered whether he taped practices, too.

Last year, Cleveland Browns coach Mike Pettine suggested Belichick might

have gotten a copy of the Jets playbook through Alabama coach Nick Saban, an accusation denied by Saban and then-Jets coach Rex Ryan.

Belichick has signed players days before the Patriots faced their former team, opening up new avenues of intel. He also likes to tweak the NFL on injury reports. For years, Belichick listed Tom Brady as "probable" even though he didn't miss practice and played the games. And he's been known to list close to 20 players on the report, most with minor ailments.

And one week before questions of air pressure, some people questioned whether Belichick was bending the rules in a playoff win against Baltimore by using a four-man offensive linemen formation for three plays on a touchdown drive that helped the Patriots rally from a 14-point deficit. The formation — a backup tight end lined up as a tackle-eligible and a running back lined up as an ineligible receiver split wide — wasn't illegal, only creative and intentionally deceptive.

Serena into Open's next round

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Top-ranked Serena Williams fended off three set points before going on a 10-game roll to beat Vera Zvonareva 7-5, 6-0 and move into the third round of the Australian Open.

Men's No. 1 Novak Djokovic had an easier run, spending a minute less than Williams on Rod Laver Arena in his 84-minute, 6-0, 6-1, 6-4 win over No. 88-ranked Andrey Kuznetsov on Thursday.

Defending champion Stan Wawrinka, who ended four-time champion Djokovic's 25-match winning streak at Melbourne Park in the quarterfinals last year, advanced to the third round for the seventh consecutive year with a 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4), 6-3 win over No. 194-ranked qualifier Marius Copil.

Williams, seeking a sixth Australian and 19th Grand Slam title, saved three set points in the ninth game before holding to swing the momentum of her match against Zvonareva, a two-time Grand Slam finalist who played only five tournaments in 2014.

After breaking Williams' serve twice in the first set, Zvonareva only won eight points in the second set and didn't get close to another break-point chance.

Unseeded Victoria Azarenka beat No. 8-seeded Caroline Wozniacki, the 2014 U.S. Open runner-up, 6-4, 6-2.

Azarenka's ranking slipped into the 40s this month because of a series of injuries that restricted her to nine tournaments in 2014 — only the top 32 players get seedings at the majors.

Williams will next play No. 26 Elina Svitolina, who beat Nicole Gibbs 7-6 (3), 7-6 (6).

Venus Williams had a 6-2, 6-3 win against fellow American Lauren Davis. The elder of the Williams sisters, a seven-time major winner, hasn't been beyond the third round at a major since reaching the fourth round at Wimbledon on 2011.

Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova, seeded No. 4, beat Mona Barthel 6-2, 6-4 to move into a third-round match against Madison Keys, who rallied to beat No. 29 Casey Dellacqua 2-6, 6-1, 6-1.

Sixth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska needed only 44 minutes to race through her 6-0, 6-1 win over Johanna Larsson, continuing her run of reaching the third round or better at every Australian Open since 2010.

No. 11 Dominika Cibulkova, the 2014 finalist, No. 19 Alize Cornet and No. 24 Garbine Muguruza also advanced.

On the men's side, U.S. Open finalist Kei Nishikori beat Ivan Dodig 4-6, 7-5, 6-2, 7-6 (0), getting a crucial service break in the 10th game of the fourth set when Dodig was serving for the set and then dominating in the tiebreaker. He will next face Steve Johnson, who beat No. 30 Santiago Giraldo 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

No. 12 Feliciano Lopez was leading 4-6, 4-6, 7-6 (3), 4-0 when Adrian Mannarino retired from their second-round match and No. 19 John Isner beat Andreas Haider-Maurer 6-4, 7-6 (4), 4-6, 6-4.

NFL undecided on open roof for Super Bowl

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Super Bowl stadium in sunny Arizona will present a dilemma for NFL officials as they grapple with a question that is faced by many pro sports teams in an era of retractable roofs: Whether to play the game with the roof open or closed.

The NFL says it plans to keep the retractable roof open at University of Phoenix Stadium for the Feb. 1 game between the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots, but if there is a sign of inclement

weather, the roof will be shut.

The fact that the question is even up for debate may seem strange given the location. The game will be played in a place where tens of thousands of visitors flock each winter for the sole purpose of basking in the warm sun.

But the occupants of the stadium and the other three NFL teams with retractable roof stadiums actually play many more games indoors than with the roof open, even as their counterparts in cold-weather cities like Buffalo, Green Bay and Chicago get by in open-air facilities.

The roof dilemma for the Arizona stadium is complicated by the vast swings in weather the Phoenix area sees over the course of a season. For the preseason and first month of the season, temperatures are in the unbearable range of 100 to 110 degrees, making it an easy call to close the roof. By season's end, the temperature can dip into the low teens. In the middle of the season, the temperature is fabulous but fans on one side of the arena complain that the setting sun is too bright.

Luck, Romo are top Pro Bowl team picks

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Like sandlot players when they were kids, Hall of Famers Cris Carter and Michael Irvin chose sides on Wednesday night. This time, they were drafting some of the best football players in the NFL for Team Carter and Team Irvin, the Pro Bowl matchup on Sunday.

Quarterback Andrew Luck of Indianapolis went No. 1 to Team Carter. Irvin chose Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo as No. 2.

They were the only two quarterbacks left from the original Pro Bowl roster. The other six bowed out.

The NFL scrapped its AFC vs. NFC format

and went to the current system a year ago. The game is being played for one year in Glendale, Ariz., site of next week's Super Bowl, and will return to Hawaii next season.

Both teams went with wide receivers with their next two picks.

Cincinnati's A.J. Green was picked No. 3 by Carter. Odell Beckham Jr. of the New York Giants was No. 4 to Irvin. Kansas City running back Jamaal Charles was selected No. 5 by Team Carter. Team Irvin went with Dallas offensive tackle Tyron Smith at No. 6.

Wide receiver Antonio Brown of Pittsburgh and defensive end J.J. Watt of Houston already had been named co-

captains for Team Carter. Dallas running back DeMarco Murray and Cleveland cornerback Joe Haden are co-captains for Team Irvin.

The 2-hour draft was held on a brightly colored stage, with Carter in neon yellow and Irvin in bright orange. It was held in front of an enthusiastic crowd in the ballroom of the swanky Biltmore Resort.

Baltimore's John Harbaugh and his staff will coach Team Carter. Dallas' Jason Garrett and his staff will coach Team Irvin.

The teams work out at Luke Air Force Base west of Phoenix on Thursday, then have practices Friday and Saturday at Scottsdale Community College.



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Late shot lifts Thunder past Wiz

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Russell Westbrook drove for the winning layup with 0.8 seconds left in overtime, and Kevin Durant scored 34 points in Oklahoma City's fourth consecutive victory, a 105-103 win over Washington.

Durant and Westbrook scored all 13 of the Thunder's points in the extra period, including Durant's dunk over Marcin Gortat and Westbrook's uncontested layup off of an inbounds play after Oklahoma City had called timeout with 3.6 seconds remaining.

Westbrook finished with 32 points and led a third-quarter comeback that made up a 12-point halftime deficit. Durant, the D.C. native whose 2016 free agency is much anticipated in his hometown, added seven rebounds.

Nene scored 24 points for the Wizards, including nine of Washington's 11 points in overtime. John Wall had 28 points and 13 assists.

Warriors 126, Rockets 113: Stephen Curry got involved in a rare altercation before finishing with 22 points and 10 assists, and host Golden State held off Houston for their franchise-record 17th straight home win.

The typically mild-mannered Curry ran at Trevor Ariza after the Rockets forward bumped him on the way down court early in the third quarter. Curry had to be held back by teammates, and officials called a technical foul on Ariza following a video

review.

Hawks 110, Pacers 91: DeMarre Carroll and Jeff Teague each scored 17 points, Kyle Korver dunked for the first time in more than two years, and host Atlanta tied a franchise record with its 14th straight win.

With the victory, the Hawks improved to a stunning 35-8 and Mike Budenholzer clinched a spot as the Eastern Conference coach in next month's All-Star game in New York City.

Pistons 128, Magic 118: Brandon Jennings had 24 points and a career-high 21 assists, and host Detroit held on for the win.

Andre Drummond added 26 points and 16 rebounds for the Pistons, who have won 12 of 15.

Suns 118, Trail Blazers 113: Eric Bledsoe had a season-high 33 points, and host Phoenix managed to get the win after blowing a big first-half lead.

Isiah Thomas added a season-high 27 points for the Suns, who have won seven consecutive home games.

Grizzlies 92, Raptors 86: Marc Gasol scored 26 points for host Memphis, and Zach Randolph had 19 points and 13 rebounds.

The Grizzlies broke open a close game with a 13-3 run midway through the fourth quarter. There were 14 ties and six lead changes for the night.

Cavaliers 106, Jazz 92: LeBron

James scored 26 points, Kevin Love added 19 and rejuvenated host Cleveland earned its fourth consecutive victory.

Pelicans 96, Lakers 80: Anthony Davis scored 29 points and blocked four shots in his return from a sprained toe, leading host New Orleans to the win.

Los Angeles shot 37 percent from the field in its season-long sixth consecutive loss.

Nets 103, Kings 100: Brook Lopez scored 22 points and blocked six shots, leading visiting Brooklyn to its second win in the last 10 games.

Sacramento lost its fifth straight game. DeMarcus Cousins had 28 points and 14 rebounds, and Rudy Gay scored 25 points.

Mavericks 98, Timberwolves 75: Chandler Parsons scored 22 points, and Dallas hit 11 three-pointers.

Parsons made 9 of 13 shots and Dirk Nowitzki added 16 points and nine rebounds in 26 minutes for the visiting Mavericks (30-13).

Hornets 78, Heat 76: Kemba Walker scored 15 points, Bismack Biyombo had 12 points and 12 rebounds, and surging Charlotte held on for the win at home.

Knicks 98, 76ers 91: Carmelo Anthony had 27 points and 11 rebounds, powering New York to the road win.

No. 12 Utah cruises past Washington

The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Brandon Taylor had 18 points and seven assists, and Delon Wright added 17 points and eight assists to help No. 12 Utah beat Washington State 86-64 on Wednesday night.

After losing to then-No. 10 Arizona 69-51 last Saturday, the Utes (15-3, 5-1 Pac-12) rebounded by returning to their winning ways at home, where Utah has defeated 31 straight unranked opponents.

Jordan Loveridge scored 14 points for Utah, which played without Jakob Poeltl (ankle) but exploited a 20-1 edge in points off turnovers to turn the game into a blowout.

No. 14 Wichita State 76, Missouri State 53: Ron Baker made five three-pointers and finished with 15 points to lead Wichita State over host Missouri State.

Tekele Cotton and Fred Van-Vleet also scored 15 apiece for the Shockers (17-2, 7-0 Missouri Valley Conference), who have won 25 consecutive conference games dating to last year.

No. 15 North Carolina 87, Wake Forest 71: Kennedy Meeks scored 12 of his 16 points after halftime to help host North Carolina pull away.

Brice Johnson added 19 points for the Tar Heels (15-4, 5-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) who scored 50 points in the paint on the way to their fourth straight league win.

No. 20 Northern Iowa 66, Indiana State 60: Matt Bohannon scored 17 points, Seth Tuttle had 16 and Northern Iowa held off visiting Indiana State for its sixth straight victory.

Jeremy Morgan had 11 points for the Panthers (17-2, 6-1 Missouri Valley Conference), who blew a 10-point lead before rallying for their 13th consecutive home win.

No. 21 Baylor 81, Huston-Tillotson 61: At Waco, Texas, Rico Gathers set career highs with 25 points and a Big 12-record 28 rebounds, and Baylor finally pulled away in the second half against NIAA school Huston-Tillotson.

Army 65, Colgate 64: Tanner Plomb hit four three-pointers and finished with 18 points to lead host Army past Colgate.

Colgate's Matt McMullen converted the three-point play for a 61-60 advantage with 25 seconds left. Plomb buried a three on the ensuing possession to regain the lead at 63-61 with 18 seconds to go. Ethan Jacobs then turned the ball over, which led to the game-sealing free throws from Kyle Wilson with just six seconds to go. McMullen hit a three-pointer at the buzzer for the final margin.

Lehigh 61, Navy 47: Brandon Alston had three three-pointers with 14 points, Austin Price scored 11 and Lehigh pulled away early in the second half to beat Navy.

Butler 64, Creighton 61: Roosevelt Jones had 18 points and 10 rebounds, Andrew Chrabascz made a go-ahead layup with 55 seconds left and host Butler held off Creighton.

Michigan State 66, Penn State 60: Branden Dawson had his fourth double-double in five games with 12 points, 10 rebounds and three important blocked shots as host Michigan State got past Penn State.

Blackhawks outlast Penguins

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — With a couple of flicks of the wrist, the Chicago Blackhawks headed into the NHL All-Star break with momentum.

Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane beat Marc-Andre Fleury in a shootout to lift the Blackhawks to a 3-2 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Wednesday night.

Chicago improved to 8-2 in games decided after regulation when Toews beat Fleury between the legs, and Kane followed with a wrist shot the goalie watched sail by his blocker.

"We have great confidence," Toews said. "Our goaltender can make stops and we have shooters who like to be in that situation. We like our odds given the

circumstance."

Senators 4, Maple Leafs 3: Erik Karlsson scored two goals to lead host Ottawa over struggling Toronto.

Mike Hoffman and Mika Zibanejad also scored for the Senators (19-18-9), and Craig Anderson stopped 37 shots.

Ducks 6, Flames 3: Ben Lovejoy had a goal and an assist, Frederik Andersen made 30 saves, and host Anaheim headed into the All-Star break on a five-game winning streak with a victory over Calgary.

Avalanche 3, Bruins 2 (SO): Ryan O'Reilly tied the game with 1:45 left in regulation, and Nathan MacKinnon had the only goal in the shootout as host Colorado rallied to beat Boston.

Jarome Iginla also scored for Colorado, and Semyon Varlamov stopped all three

Boston shots in the tiebreaker.

Sharks 4, Kings 2: Patrick Marleau and Joe Pavelski scored power-play goals to send host San Jose into the NHL All-Star break on a winning note with a victory over Los Angeles.

Logan Couture scored twice for the Sharks, who had lost five of their previous six home games. Antti Niemi made 15 of his 26 saves in the third period.

Jets 4, Blue Jackets 0: Jets rookie Michael Hutchinson made 29 saves, and host Winnipeg stretched its winning streak to a season-high five games with a shutout victory over Columbus.

It was Hutchinson's second shutout of the season and the Jets' third as Winnipeg outshot Columbus 30-29 in the teams' last game before the NHL All-Star break.

Gordon to retire as full-time driver

The Associated Press

Jeff Gordon, the wildly popular four-time NASCAR champion, said Thursday he will retire as a full-time driver after the 2015 season.

The 43-year-old Gordon is coming off one of his best seasons in years. He won four times in 2014, including the Brickyard 400.

Gordon did not officially call his decision a retirement because there is "always the possibility I'll compete in selected events, although I currently have no plans to do that." He has spent his entire 23-year career in the No. 24 car with Hendrick Motorsports, and he delivered the news to his team at the shop.

"As a race car driver, much of what I've done throughout my life has been based on following my instincts and trying to make good decisions," Gordon said. "I thought long and hard about my future this past year and during the offseason, and I've decided 2015 will be the last time I compete for a championship."

Martinez to have BoSox cap, Smoltz Braves in Hall

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Pedro Martinez's Hall of Fame plaque will have the cap of the Boston Red Sox and John Smoltz's will have the Atlanta Braves.

The Hall of Fame made the announcement Thursday.

Vonn fastest again in Cup downhill training

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland — Lindsey Vonn was fastest in a downhill training run on Thursday as she pursues a record-extending 64th World Cup win.

The American racer timed 1 minute, 48.26 seconds on the Engiadina course, 0.64 seconds faster than Johanna Schnarf of Italy. Tina Weirather of Liechtenstein was third, trailing 0.75 behind Vonn. American Stacey Cook was fourth, 0.85 back.

Vonn is the favorite for the downhill on Saturday and a super-G on Sunday after winning both events at Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy.