

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Women worldwide join in Trump pushback

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Wearing pink, pointy-eared “pussyhats” to mock the new president, hundreds of thousands of women massed in the nation’s capital and cities around the globe Saturday to send Donald Trump an emphatic message that they won’t let his agenda go unchallenged over the next four years.

“We march today for the moral core of this nation, against which our new president is waging a war,” actress America Ferrera told the Washington crowd. “Our dignity, our character, our rights have all been under attack and a platform of hate and division assumed power yesterday. But the president is not America. ... We are America, and we are here to stay.”

The women brandished signs with messages such as “Women won’t back down” and “Less

fear more love,” and they decried Trump’s stand on such issues as abortion, health care, diversity and climate change. The message reverberated at demonstrations around the globe, from Paris and Berlin to Sydney and beyond.

There were early signs that the crowds in Washington could top those that gathered for Trump’s inauguration on Friday. City officials said organizers of the Women’s March on Washington more than doubled their turnout estimate to 500,000 as crowds began swelling and subways into the city became clogged with participants.

It wasn’t just a Washington phenomenon and it wasn’t just women: More than 600 “sister marches” were planned across the country and around the world, and plenty of men were part of the tableau, too. Organiz-

ers estimated 3 million would march worldwide.

As the rally alongside the National Mall took shape, Trump opened his first full day as president by attending a prayer service at the Washington National Cathedral, a tradition for the day after inauguration.

Outside on the streets of Washington, feminist leader Gloria Steinem described the worldwide mobilization as “the upside of the downside. This is an outpouring of energy and democracy like I have never seen in my very long life.

“Sometimes we must put our bodies where our beliefs are,” she told the Washington crowd, labeling Trump an “impossible president.”

In Paris, thousands marched in the Eiffel Tower neighborhood in a joyful atmosphere, singing and carrying posters

reading: “We have our eyes on you Mr. Trump” and “With our sisters in Washington.”

At a rally in Concord, N.H., author Jodi Picoult said: “We in New Hampshire are not in the habit of going in reverse. We have the backs of those who are less fortunate — who may be struggling for health care, for environmental rights, for racial equality, for a fair wage, for justice.”

Hillary Clinton, who lost to Trump, took to Twitter to thank the participants for “standing, speaking and marching for our values.”

Retired teacher Linda Lastella, 69, who came to Washington from Metuchen, N.J., said she had never marched before but felt the need to speak out when “many nations are experiencing this same kind of pullback and hateful, hateful attitudes.”

## On first day, Trump signs order on health care

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump quickly assumed the mantle of the White House on Friday, making his first executive order one aimed at his predecessor’s signature health care law and swearing-in members of his national security team to his Cabinet.

Hours after delivering a stinging rebuke of the political status quo in his inaugural address, Trump sat at the president’s formal desk in the Oval Office as he signed the order that White House chief of staff Reince Priebus said was aimed at “minimizing the economic burden” of the “Obamacare” law.

The order notes that Trump intends to seek the “prompt repeal” of the law. But in the

meantime, it allows the Health and Human Services Department and other federal agencies to delay implementing any piece of the law that might impose a “fiscal burden” on states, health care providers, families or individuals.

Moments later, Vice President Mike Pence administered the oath of office to Defense Secretary James Mattis and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, the first members of Trump’s Cabinet to clear Senate confirmation.

The swearing-in ceremonies came amid a hectic set of activity late Friday, before Trump was to attend three inaugural balls. As Trump signed the paperwork, the White House announced Priebus had sent a memorandum to agencies and departments outlining guide-

lines for slowing regulations.

Asked about his first day as president, Trump said, “It was busy but good — a beautiful day.”

Although Trump campaigned on a detailed, 18-point plan of things to do on Day One, he has since backed off some of his promised speed, downplaying the importance of a rapid-fire approach to complex issues that may involve negotiations with Congress or foreign leaders. Trump has said that he expects Monday to be the first big workday, his effective Day One.

Priebus’ memo says that agencies shouldn’t submit any regulations to be published in the Federal Register unless a Trump-selected agency head approves it. That appears to mean that some regulations

that had been approved by President Barack Obama’s administration would be halted. It also freezes any regulations that are already in the pipeline to be published and allows time for other pending regulations to be reviewed by Trump’s administration.

The memo is similar to one that Obama’s chief of staff issued the day Obama was inaugurated in 2009.

There were other signs his new government was up and running. Federal websites and agencies immediately began reflecting the transfer of power, and WhiteHouse.gov was revamped for Trump’s policy priorities as pages about LGBT rights and the Obama administration’s climate change plan were eliminated.

# Bergdahl case dismissal sought

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Attorneys representing accused Army deserter Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl filed a motion to dismiss his court-martial over statements made by President Donald Trump on the campaign trail within an hour of his taking office Friday.

Bergdahl's attorneys noted the new commander in chief made repeated mentions on the campaign trail of the soldier who was held captive by the Taliban for five years after walking off his base in eastern Afghanistan. In their motion, they list more than 25 instances of Trump disparaging Bergdahl during campaign rallies and nationally televised interviews.

"President Trump has made it impossible for Sgt. Bergdahl

to obtain a fair trial," the motion states. "He used the opportunity presented by his campaign rallies and fired-up crowds of supporters to condemn Sgt. Bergdahl by name time after time. Thousands of people were in attendance and thousands more viewed the rallies live or via television or the popular YouTube video service."

Bergdahl, 30, faces an April court-martial on charges of "misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place" and "desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty." The more serious misbehavior charge carries a potential life sentence.

The soldier has admitted to Army investigators that he intentionally left Observation Post Mest, but he said he did

not intend to desert his unit. Instead, he said, he aimed to cause a commotion that would land him in front of military brass to express concerns that he perceived about his commanders.

On the campaign trail, Trump repeatedly called Bergdahl a "traitor" and "the worst." The then-candidate said several times Bergdahl "should be shot" and claimed five or six soldiers were killed searching for him. Top military officials, including those who investigated Bergdahl's disappearance, have said there is no evidence that anyone was killed searching for him. Prosecutors indicated last month that they intend to include evidence at the trial that only two servicemembers were injured while attempting to rescue Bergdahl.

# Kelly OK'd to lead homeland security

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — John Kelly will serve as President Donald Trump's homeland security secretary after the Senate voted Friday to confirm the recently retired Marine general to the post.

The Senate voted 88-11 to confirm Kelly, who will oversee the nation's third largest Cabinet department less than a year after he left the military. He retired in February 2016 as the chief of U.S. Southern Command after 45 years in uniform.

The former general, highly respected among servicemembers and lawmakers, is known for speaking his mind even when his views did not directly reflect his chain-of-command. During his confirmation hearing Jan. 10 before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Kelly pledged he would continue "speaking truth to power" if confirmed to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

In his new role, Kelly will lead an organization of 240,000 employees tasked with protecting the American homeland and securing its borders.

Kelly, 66, commanded troops in Iraq, served as the Marines' liaison to Congress, and as the senior military adviser to former defense secretaries Robert Gates and Leon Panetta. He also lost his 29-year-old son to the war in Afghanistan.

In 2010, Marine 1st Lt. Robert Kelly was killed in Sangin, Afghanistan, when he stepped on a roadside bomb leading a platoon on a patrol.

During his confirmation hearing, Kelly appeared to disagree with Trump on some issues, including the usefulness of a wall along the border with Mexico.

# Mattis confirmed to lead DOD

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Senate easily confirmed former Marine Gen. James Mattis' appointment to serve as President Donald Trump's defense secretary, just hours after the billionaire businessman was sworn in as the United States' 45th commander in chief on Friday.

Senators voted 98-1 to confirm the former U.S. Central Command and NATO commander to lead the Pentagon under Trump, who has promised to pour money into strengthening the military. Mattis, who retired from the military in 2013, becomes only the second career military officer to take the Pentagon's top civilian job since the 1950s. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., was the lone "no" vote.

Through more than 40 years in the Marines, Mattis, 66, won the admiration of rank-and-file troops who revered his "warrior monk" intellect and his

often colorful and quotable language. He led special operators in Afghanistan following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and later commanded the 1st Marine Division during the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003.

He will enter the Pentagon widely popular with troops, Defense Department civilians, veterans and the lawmakers on Capitol Hill who confirmed him.

"I think it is really a testimony to the man because so many members of the committee had known him when he was [commander of U.S.] Central Command and they know of his reputation," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said last week after the Senate Armed Services Committee, of which he is chairman, approved Mattis' nomination. "You know he's a very unique individual."

The former general will inherit a Pentagon that has been strapped by budget cuts in recent years even as it has remained in non-stop war for more than 15 years. Some

15,000 U.S. servicemembers are deployed to war zones in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, where they are largely focused on enabling local forces to combat insurgent and terrorist threats such as the Taliban, al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Thousands more are deployed to Eastern Europe where they have been tasked with training alongside NATO partner nations to deter Russian aggression in the region.

During his Jan. 12 confirmation hearing, Mattis pledged to make increasing across-the-board military readiness his top priority.

Mattis largely cruised through that hearing, but he expressed some apparent policy differences with Trump, especially on his views of Russia and the NATO alliance.

While Trump has continued to criticize NATO, calling it "obsolete" last weekend, Mattis strongly endorsed the military alliance, calling it "the most successful" such coalition in modern history.

# Tornado hits Miss. city; at least 4 killed

Associated Press

HATTIESBURG, Miss. — Four people were killed and scores of homes were flattened early Saturday when a tornado hit in the dark of night, ripping through a city in southern Mississippi, officials said.

The city of Hattiesburg said via its Twitter account that four people had died after the twister blew through the city and surrounding area. The twister was part of a wall of stormy weather traveling across the

region, bringing with it rain and unstable conditions.

Mayor Johnny DuPree has signed an emergency declaration for the city, which reported “significant injuries” and structural damage.

The city also said via Twitter that Hattiesburg firefighters and police are going door to door to try to rescue victims.

Greg Flynn, of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, said rescuers are still searching the stricken area for more possible victims.

Flynn said “massive damage” was reported in a three-county area that was struck by a tornado at about 4 a.m.

Photos and television images showed the intensity of the damage. Cars were flipped over, sometimes piled on top of each other, while parts of houses were ripped into shards of wood and debris. Tall trees were ripped from their roots and thrown across roads.

As dawn rose over the city, rescue workers and residents walked down streets strewn

with debris and still wet from the storm.

The three counties affected are Forrest, Lamar and Perry counties. Flash flood warnings were also in effect for northern Forrest and Lamar counties, as well as southeastern Jones and Marion counties.

The National Weather Service said 3 to 5 inches of rain have already fallen, raising the risk of flooding. More rain — 1 to 2 inches — is possible.

## Calif. flood sweeps cabins, cars down coastal canyon

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — More than 20 people escaped injury when a flood swept cabins and vehicles down a coastal canyon as the second in a trio of storms drenched California with heavy rain and brought more snow to the mountains.

The dramatic scene about 115 miles northwest of Los Angeles came during a day of pounding rain in Southern California that caused flooding, rockslides and an avalanche warning. Trees were toppled, cars were stranded in surging water and five homeless people were rescued by helicopter Friday when their encampment was swamped.

The storm disrupted the first post-presidential vacation of Barack Obama and his family. Their plane had to be diverted from the Palm Springs airport to March Air Force Base 60 miles away.

After years of dry weather, California has been buffeted by rain and snow this winter. Northern California has gotten the lion's share and most of that region has now emerged from drought.

Another storm is expected during the weekend, and it's forecast to be fiercer than the previous two. A flash flood warning starting late Saturday has been issued for the San Francisco area.

Friday's storm was stronger than expected in Southern California.

A swollen creek lifted five cabins off their foundations at midmorning and swept 22 vehicles down El Capitan Canyon in Santa Barbara County, fire Capt. Dave

Zaniboni said.

About 20 people stuck in the canyon were rescued from the private campground above a state beach, officials said.

“The water kept getting higher, and higher and higher, and then all the debris kept backing up and took out all the bridges, overflowed the bank, took out a bunch of cabins, took out a bunch of cars,” Todd Martin, who works at El Capitan campground, told the Santa Maria Times.

Five of the vehicles and part of a cabin were found on the beach, officials said.

By early afternoon, more than 5 inches of rain had fallen in Refugio Pass in the Santa Ynez Mountains just to the northwest of El Capitan Canyon.

A sheriff's helicopter returning to an airport after the canyon incident spotted a car swamped by water. A woman screaming for help from higher ground nearby was hoisted to safety, Zaniboni said.

In downtown Los Angeles, five people were rescued from a homeless encampment that was flooded. And in the San Diego area, four students had minor injuries after they were hit by a toppled tree near Chula Vista Middle School.

Inland mountains were blanketed with snow, and the LA County Sheriff's Department warned of avalanche danger in Wrightwood.

Runoff and rockslides in the Santa Monica Mountains west of Los Angeles forced the California Highway Patrol to close all canyon roads in the Malibu area.

## Mars Inc. probes highway spill of Skittles in Wis.

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A mysterious Skittles spill on a rural highway in Wisconsin is taking another twist, with Mars Inc. saying it doesn't know why the discarded candy might have been headed to become cattle feed.

The case began when a Wisconsin sheriff posted on Facebook last week that “hundreds of thousands of Skittles” had been found spilled on a highway. Later, he updated the post to say the candy had fallen off a truck on its way to be cattle feed.

Only red Skittles had spilled out, and Dodge County Sheriff Dale Schmidt joked in the post that it would be difficult to “taste the rainbow” in its entirety. The incident gained attention after CNN wrote about it, citing a report from a local affiliate.

A variety of food byproducts are commonly used for animal feed, and McLean, Va.-based Mars said it has procedures for discarding foods for that purpose. However, the company said the Skittles in question came from a factory that doesn't sell unused products for feed.

“We don't know how it ended up as it did, and we are investigating,” Mars said.

Schmidt said one of his deputies came across the spill and sent him photos, which he posted on Facebook. He said the Skittles spilled from a box that started to disintegrate in the rain, and about half of them got out. The Skittles on the ground did not have the standard letter “S” on them, he said.

# 4 more survivors pulled from rubble of crushed Italian hotel

Associated Press

FARINDOLA, Italy — Emergency crews pulled out four more survivors from the rubble of a hotel crushed by an avalanche, and they were searching Saturday for more who may still be alive as family members awaited word if their relatives were among the lucky ones.

The overnight operations raised to at least nine the number of people found alive in the rubble of Wednesday's avalanche, which demolished the Hotel Rigopiano in the Gran Sasso mountain area when tons of snow rushed down the mountainside, slamming into the resort.

Dozens of family members and friends kept a tense vigil overnight, and four were rewarded with the arrival of

their loved ones at the hospital early Saturday. But one father who has been waiting since Wednesday evening for word of his son's fate erupted in front of television cameras, pointing angrily at the sedans of local officials.

"What are they doing? They aren't doing anything. Why didn't they go get the kids out the night before the disaster?" the man yelled, referring to his son, Stefano Feniello, and his son's fiancée, Francesca Bronzi, who was among those hospitalized.

The father, who did not give his name, said he had been told Feniello had survived, but officials had supplied no clear information by midday Saturday, nearly three days after the tragedy.

"Why are they here, taking all the credit. They are dis-

gusting. It is an outrage. I am waiting for three days for my son. They said that my son had been recovered, but he hasn't arrived."

Foot-high piles of snow piled up in the central Italian area after days of snowfall earlier last week that blocked roads and left many of the guests unable to leave before the avalanche.

Firefighter spokesman Alberto Maiolo said a total of four bodies had been found in the rubble. Some 30 people, including guests and workers, were believed to have been inside the hotel when the avalanche struck.

In all, four children were safely brought out of the rubble and taken to Pescara hospital, where they were reported in good condition.

# 38 Mich. schools might be closed

Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan announced Friday that it plans to close up to 38 underperforming schools in Detroit and other urban communities, potentially affecting 18,000 students and marking the first time that the state could close traditional public schools explicitly for academic reasons.

Despite the announcement, some schools likely will remain open. State officials next will determine whether a closure would be an "unreasonable hardship" for children with no better schools to attend. Lawsuits challenging any closures also are likely.

The announcement came in conjunction with the release of Michigan's school rankings, which are based on standardized test results, students' improvement over time and the gap between the best and worst pupils. Michigan law says the state can close schools that have been in the bottom 5 percent for at least three consecutive years if other forms of state intervention have not worked.

Twenty-five of the schools targeted for closure are in Detroit, a predominantly black city with the worst academically performing school district of its size in the U.S. The rest are in cities such as Kalamazoo and Saginaw.

The plan drew sharp criticism from teachers' groups.

"Simply closing schools and upending the lives of students won't fix any problems if the root causes aren't adequately addressed," said Steven Cook, president of the Michigan Education Association, the state's largest teachers' union.

In deciding which schools will actually close, state officials in the coming weeks will look at whether there are nearby schools that rank higher academically and could handle additional enrollment.

# In northern Iraq, newborn named for Trump in admiration for new president

The Washington Post

IRBIL, Iraq — Hassan Jamil's love affair with Donald Trump began in the thick of the American presidential campaign, when he found himself glued to his television screen on the other side of the world each night, transfixed by the billionaire's "beautiful" hair, commanding presence and magnetic speaking style.

Jamil, who doesn't speak English, couldn't understand the Republican nominee's words but said it didn't matter. The candidate's forceful cadence told him everything he needed to know.

The night Trump clinched the presidency, Jamil made a decision that took his pregnant wife by surprise.

"I decided that if my wife gave birth to a boy, I would 100 percent name him Trump," he said.

Two weeks later, on Nov. 23,

Hassan's wife gave birth not only to a baby boy but also to what appears to be a burgeoning Kurdish legend.

His name: Trump Jamil Hassan — a.k.a. "Little Trump."

Jamil, 25, a father of three who is a Kurdish peshmerga fighter, said he was proud of his decision. "What I like most and admire about Donald Trump is that he's a confident man and a successful businessman. He became a leader because he has self-confidence, otherwise he wouldn't be president."

Kurdish peshmerga fighters such as Jamil hope the new American president will return the loyalty they have displayed in the fight against the Islamic State by supporting their long-standing quest for an independent state. Their autonomous region has flourished since Saddam Hussein was toppled by American forces nearly 14 years

ago, ushering in a new era of security, economic growth and autonomy.

Trump's stance on Kurdish independence is unclear, but Walid Phares, a Fox News contributor and one of Trump's foreign policy advisers, has made statements that seem to imply that U.S. policy toward the Kurds may be malleable.

While many Americans were shocked by Trump's election, Jamil was not. He said he saw a Trump victory months before it occurred. "When a person has that much self-confidence, that person can win," he said.

He hopes that same belief in self manifests in his son someday. For now, he said, the only quality his infant shares with the president is their unique skin tone.

What color is that exactly?

"Reddish-orange," Jamil said.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Study: City of Brotherly Love, not marriage

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia may be the City of Brotherly Love, but that apparently stops at the altar.

KYW-TV said new Pew Charitable Trust research shows the city has the largest proportion of never-married people of any major city in the United States.

In Philadelphia, nearly 52 percent of adults have never married. It was the only city to crack the 50 percent barrier. Chicago was second at 49.5 percent. Nationally, the percentage of never-married adults is 33.5 percent.

Temple University sociology professor Judith Levine said poverty could be driving those numbers, because larger numbers of poor people opt not to marry.

Others believe the city's night life and influx of younger people are driving the numbers, too.

## Alligator startles riders as it leaps into airboat

**FL** MIAMI — A Missouri couple vacationing in Florida filmed a close encounter with an alligator when it leapt into the airboat they were on and became wedged in the boat's railing.

Passengers screamed as Tylor Hindery, 30, of Springfield, Mo., captured the moment in a Facebook live video posted Tuesday.

The guide killed the engine and floated close to the bank so people could photograph the gator.

But Hindery said the boat got stuck. The guide didn't want to start the engine and scare the gator so he prepared to push off the bank.

Just as he warned passengers not to make any sudden movements, the gator jumped into the boat.

The gator eventually slid into the water. No one was hurt.

## Elementary's cafeteria closed due to bats

**MS** MAGEE — The cafeteria in a Mississippi elementary school is closed because bats have nested in the ceiling, and contractors are working to remove them.

Authorities said the vermin were discovered this month at Magee Elementary School south of Jackson. The Mississippi State Department of Health was notified immediately.

WAPT-TV reported cafeteria workers have been moved to other schools in Simpson County. Students are being taken by bus to have their lunch period at Magee Middle School and Magee High School.

Officials hope to have the removal completed by this weekend and everyone back and the cafeteria reopened by Monday.

## Flooding releases 1M gallons of wastewater

**TX** HOUSTON — Flooding in Houston that resulted from Wednesday's heavy rains has caused more than 1 million gallons of wastewater to be inadvertently released.

The city said in a statement that the release caused wastewater to be discharged in various locations, including some 500,000 gallons downtown near the University of Houston.

Officials notified the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and issued warnings about avoiding tainted water.

Cleanup efforts began Wednesday and continued through the night.

More than 5 inches of rain

fell in some areas, prompting flash flooding and the closure of many roadways overrun with water.

Fire officials said they received more than 65 calls for high-water rescues, primarily from stranded motorists.

## Snow didn't slow driver seeking new car stereo

**NH** CONCORD — New Hampshire State Police say a driver clocked at 91 mph during a snowstorm said she was late for an appointment to have a new car stereo installed.

Police said they stopped Anastacia Hocking, 21, of Laconia, on Interstate 93 in Concord on Wednesday morning. The highway was covered with snow and slush.

Speed limits in Concord range from 55 to 65 mph on I-93. But state police had reduced speeds to 45 mph because of the storm.

Hocking was arrested on a reckless driving charge and is scheduled to be arraigned March 3.

## Battlefield landmark acreage expanded

**VA** LEESBURG — The federal government has greatly expanded the acreage of a national historic landmark commemorating Ball's Bluff Battlefield in northern Virginia.

Loudoun County officials announced Jan. 13 that the U.S. Department of the Interior approved a request to expand the landmark from 76 acres near Leesburg to more than 3,300 acres on both sides of the Potomac River, encompassing land in Virginia and Maryland.

The Battle of Ball's Bluff in October 1861 was a significant Confederate victory and caused

alarm in Washington about the direction of the war.

## State sees flu cases double since January

**ND** BISMARCK — North Dakota health officials say widespread flu activity has doubled since the beginning of January and caused at least one death.

State Department of Health spokeswoman Jill Baber said flu cases are expected to peak in the next couple of weeks.

The Bismarck Tribune said of 455 reported flu cases, 24 people have been hospitalized and an elderly person has died. Baber said she's aware of a couple of other deaths and hospitalizations that haven't been officially reported.

She said the H3N2 strain is predominate this year.

## Mont. beekeeper's hives stolen in Calif.

**MT** GREAT FALLS — A Montana beekeeper says thieves got away with 488 beehives he had taken to California to pollinate almond trees.

Lloyd Cunniff told the Great Falls Tribune it appeared the thieves used semitrailers to steal about 190,000 bees between Monday night and Tuesday morning in Yuba City, Calif.

He said he was storing the bees on a fellow beekeeper's property before moving them to Fresno, where he had a contract to pollinate almond trees.

Cunniff said the theft will cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars in income. The hives were insured.

Cunniff said he learned other beekeepers have reported thefts, as well.

From wire reports

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# Falcons don't have history of Packers

Associated Press

ATLANTA—The NFC championship is quite a mismatch.

Not on the field, mind you.

The Atlanta Falcons are playing as well as they have all season. Ditto for the Green Bay Packers. It should be quite a shootout when they meet Sunday in the Georgia Dome's final game, with a trip to the Super Bowl on the line.

But when it comes to the tradition and history of the two franchises, the Packers have a decided edge.

It's a landslide, really.

Lambeau Field. Cheeseheads. Thirteen NFL championships. Four Super Bowl titles. The snow and the tundra. The green and the gold.

The Falcons?

Hmmm ... give us a minute.

In 51 seasons, they have played in only one Super Bowl and never won a championship. For much of their existence, the Falcons were burdened with cartoonish ownership, laughable draft picks and horrific personnel moves such as trading away a strong-armed young quarterback in the early 1990s.

Brett Favre went on to have a pretty good career with the

Packers.

Favre's successor understands the significance of playing with such a storied team.

"It's like no other place in our sport," said Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers, who has guided the Packers (12-6) to eight straight wins. "As a football historian and someone who's loved the game since a young age, you realize how special it is to be part of this team, but also know that this team has been around since 1919, and it's going to be around long after you're done."

The Falcons (12-5) don't have that sort of legacy to fall back on.

But they do have the highest-scoring team in the league, led by MVP candidate Matt Ryan, and a home-field edge that really paid off last week.

The Georgia Dome, which will be torn down after this season and replaced by \$1.5 billion Mercedes-Benz Stadium, was as loud as anyone could remember for a divisional-round victory over the Seattle Seahawks. Green Bay's dramatic upset of the top-seeded Dallas Cowboys ensured one more game would be played at the 70,000-seat stadium with the big top-like roof.

These Falcons are only looking forward. They don't care what happened before.

"The guys who played here in 1999 aren't here," defensive end Dwight Freeney said. "The guys who played in Green Bay in 1995 aren't there."

Here are some things to watch for Sunday:

**Julio's foot:** All-Pro receiver Julio Jones was limited in practice after being sidelined at the end of last week's victory because of a lingering left foot injury. That's nothing new for Jones, but the sprained toe still raised concerns about how effective he'll be in the biggest game of the season.

Jones, who had 83 receptions for 1,409 yards and six touchdowns during the regular season, said it won't be an issue.

"No effect at all," he said. "I'll be ready to go."

**Jordy's ribs:** The prognosis for Green Bay's top receiver was a bit murkier. Jordy Nelson returned to practice at midweek, but he's still recovering from broken ribs that forced him to miss the victory in Dallas.

While Nelson said he's still a long way from a full recovery, he didn't rule out a possible return against the Falcons.

The Packers sure could use him. Davante Adams (ankle) and Geronimo Allison (hamstring) were also dealing with injuries that forced them to miss practice time.

**Dream matchup:** Ryan and Rodgers are leading MVP candidates, along with New England quarterback Tom Brady and Dallas rookies Ezekiel Elliott and Dak Prescott.

It's easy to see why.

Ryan had the best season of his nine-year career, completing nearly 70 percent of his passes for 4,944 yards and 38 touchdowns with just seven interceptions. He didn't let up in his first game of the playoffs, lighting up the Seahawks for 338 yards and three TDs. Ryan has gone five straight games without throwing a pick.

Rodgers had an NFL-leading 40 touchdown passes during the regular season, and he's thrown for more than 300 yards in his first two playoff outings.

His most recent pass might have been his best. Rolling to his left, he hit Jared Cook on a 36-yard completion right along the sideline, setting up Mason Crosby's 51-yard field goal on the final play to stun the Cowboys 34-31.

## Friendship of Bell, Blount transcends Blount's exit

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The football player and friend in Le'Veon Bell understood why LeGarrette Blount walked off the job that cold night in Nashville more than two years ago, jogging to the locker room with the clock still running as Bell and the rest of the Pittsburgh Steelers reveled in a critical victory over Tennessee.

For the teammate in Bell, things were a bit more complicated. Here was a guy who was supposed to have his back instead pouting his way out of town while Bell was in the middle of a breakout season.

"It made me think a little more differently (about him),"

Bell said. "But LeGarrette's doing his thing."

Blount's just doing it for the Patriots, not the Steelers, who cut Blount two days after his hasty retreat. Blount was back with New England by the end of the week and three months later earned a Super Bowl ring while Bell sat at home recovering from a hyperextended left knee that forced him to miss Pittsburgh's playoff loss to Baltimore.

Yet Bell holds no grudges. The two remain in constant contact, though the texting may slow this week with the Steelers (13-5) headed to Foxborough to face Blount and the Patriots (15-2) in the AFC championship game.

It wasn't supposed to work out this way.

The Steelers signed Blount in the spring of 2014 believing the hulking Blount could be the bruising change of pace back they needed to complement the rapidly maturing Bell's decidedly pragmatic style. And if Blount happened to become a mentor of sorts along the way, even better.

Neither happened.

In August 2014 Bell and Blount were picked up by a police officer after he noticed the scent of marijuana smoke coming from a car Bell was driving, leading to a DUI charge for Bell, a drug charge for Blount and brief suspensions by the NFL for violating the league's

substance abuse policy.

The two split carries early that season, but as Bell's touches went up and Blount's productivity went down, the future became apparent to both. Blount's frustrations bubbled over as Bell finished off a 204-yard performance in a Monday night game. By lunchtime on Wednesday, he was released. The sting in the locker room was palpable.

"For him to walk out on his team, yeah it hurt," right tackle Marcus Gilbert said. "Whenever LeGarrette Blount was over here, it was hard for him to fit into the offense because Le'Veon was on such a roll. He wanted more touches. It was just hard."

# Nadal needs 5 sets to get to 4th round

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Rafael Nadal had a good, hard look at the future before pulling a few tricks from his past to hold it back — for now.

The 14-time Grand Slam winner, still recovering from a couple of months off with an injured left wrist, rallied for a 4-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-2 win over German teenager Alexander Zverev on Saturday to reach the fourth round of the Australian Open.

The 30-year-old Spaniard finished stronger in the 4-hour, 6-minute match at Rod Laver Arena as Zverev, widely touted as a Grand Slam champion of the future, tightened up with cramping and nerves.

“I enjoyed a lot this great battle. I was losing the last couple of times in the fifth set and I said to myself, ‘Today’s the day,’” said ninth-seeded Nadal, who had lost eight of the previous nine times he’d trailed 2-1 in a best-of-five-sets match.

Nadal attributed his superior finish to the experience of 236 previous matches in the majors.

“Well, fighting — and running a lot,” Nadal said, when asked to explain how he pulled off the win. “I think you know, everybody knows how good Alexander is. He’s the future of our sport and the present, too.”

It was 19-year-old Zverev’s 15th Grand Slam match, but he had been on a three-match winning streak against top 10 players.

“Now I’m disappointed, but I know that this was a great match,” he said. “That was a great fight.”

“He’s probably one of the fittest tennis players in the history of the game, so ... there are a lot of positives in this match.”

Nadal finished with 43 winners and 34 unforced errors, while Zverev — hitting harder, using a wider array of shots and trying more to find the lines — had 58 winners and 74 unforced errors.

Grigor Dimitrov and Richard Gasquet didn’t start their third-round match until 11:58 p.m. local time, most likely the latest start for a match at the Australian Open.

After grinding through four games in 24 minutes, No. 15

Dimitrov picked up pace and finished off 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 at 2 a.m. — well short of the Grand Slam record 4:34 a.m. finish for the match between Lleyton Hewitt and Marcos Baghdatis in 2008.

Serena Williams has had time on her side, reaching the fourth round without dropping a set to stay on course in her bid for a record 23rd Grand Slam title. Williams beat fellow American Nicole Gibbs 6-1, 6-3 and didn’t face a break point until she was serving for the match.

Dropping serve in that game was her only lapse in a match that then extended just beyond the hour — to 63 minutes, to be precise. The six-time Australian Open champion next faces No. 16 Barbora Strycova.

“I don’t have anything to prove in this tournament here. Just doing the best I can,” Williams said. “Obviously, I’m here for one reason.”

In one of two matches that finished just before midnight, U.S. Open runner-up Karolina Pliskova rallied from 5-1 down in the third set to beat Jelena Ostapenko 4-6, 6-0, 10-8.

Ostapenko twice served for

the match and twice she was broken, winning only one point in each game.

In the other, No. 22 Daria Gavrilova beat 12th-seed Timea Bacsinszky 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 on Rod Laver Arena, delaying the start of the last match of the day.

Earlier, Wimbledon finalist Milos Raonic reached the fourth round with a 6-2, 7-6 (5), 3-6, 6-3 win over No. 25 Gilles Simon and will next play No. 13 Roberto Bautista Agut, who beat David Ferrer 7-5, 6-7 (6), 7-6 (3), 6-4.

Nadal will get another veteran next after U.S. Open semifinalist Gael Monfils beat Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 7-6 (1), 6-4.

In another gripping five-setter, but on an outside court, wild-card entry Denis Istomin followed his upset win over defending champion Novak Djokovic with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 victory over Pablo Carreno Busta.

No. 8 Dominic Thiem beat Benoit Paire 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 to set up a fourth-round match against No. 11 David Goffin, who ended Ivo Karlovic’s run 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

## Red Wings’ postseason streak is running on fumes

Associated Press

DETROIT — NHL standings used to be displayed in the Detroit Red Wings’ dressing room, filling much of a wall between the players’ lounge and showers.

Detroit doesn’t display the ever-changing glance at the league’s lineup of teams anymore.

Perhaps that’s a good thing.

Detroit is in danger of not making the playoffs for the first time since 1990, a streak that started when it could outspend the competition and may end because the salary cap caught up to the storied franchise. The Red Wings woke up Saturday in sixth place in the eight-team Atlantic, but just five points away from the division’s third

guaranteed spot in the postseason with a little less than half of the regular season remaining.

“You don’t want to be on that team that doesn’t make it,” captain Henrik Zetterberg acknowledged. “We still have a chance, but we have to play the right way.”

Just when it looked like Detroit’s chances were doomed with a fourth losing streak of three games or more, it showed signs of life by rallying from a two-goal deficit to beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 6-3 last Saturday night and shutting out the Atlantic-leading Montreal Canadiens 1-0 on Monday afternoon.

“I understand, from the outside, the criticism where you look at this team and say it’s not a playoff team,” winger Thom-

as Vanek said. “At times, we’re probably not. The good thing here is we have great leadership and we do believe in each other. When we do things right, we can win games against the best of them.”

The Red Wings are the only team to make the playoffs in every year of the salary cap era, which began with the 2005-06 season. But in recent years, they’ve barely extended the NHL’s longest active postseason streak, which is tied for the third-longest in league history, and have been knocked out of the first round three years in a row.

“The Red Wings are the last team the cap has caught up to,” said former Detroit goaltender Chris Osgood, who works as an analyst on Fox Sports Detroit.

Detroit doesn’t have a superstar it can lean on as it has for the last two-plus decades, helping it win four Stanley Cups.

Steve Yzerman led the Red Wings the last time an NHL team won consecutive Stanley Cups in 1997 and 1998. Detroit’s 2002 championship team had nine future Hall of Fame players and Hall of Fame coach Scotty Bowman. And the last time the Red Wings hoisted the Cup in 2008, defenseman Nicklas Lidstrom won his third straight Norris Trophy while Zetterberg and Pavel Datsyuk were skating in their prime.

Datsyuk left the team last summer with a year left on his deal to return to Russia to play and be with his family. That left the 36-year-old Zetterberg to lead a lackluster lineup.

# Kevin Durant, Warriors roll over Rockets

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Kevin Durant scored 32 points and the Golden State Warriors used a big third quarter to build a huge lead and coast to their sixth straight victory, 125-108 over the Houston Rockets on Friday night.

In a matchup of two of the best teams in the Western Conference and All-Star starting guards Stephen Curry and James Harden, the Rockets fell short. Houston, which entered the game leading the NBA with 667 three-pointers, was just 7-for-35 behind the arc. Harden went 0-for-5 and Eric Gordon, who entered the game leading the NBA with 160 threes, missed all seven attempts.

Clint Capela had 22 points

and Harden added 17 points with 11 assists for the Rockets, who are third in the West behind Golden State and San Antonio.

Curry finished with 24 points and made five three-pointers, including one with about 3½ minutes remaining that left the Warriors up 117-93. Both teams cleared their benches after that.

**76ers 93, Trail Blazers 92:** Robert Covington scored 22 points and made two three-pointers in the final 40 seconds to lead streaking Philadelphia over visiting Portland.

Ersan Ilyasova scored 24 points and Joel Embiid added 18 points, 10 rebounds and five assists for the Sixers, who have

won four straight and eight of their last 10.

**Hornets 113, Raptors 78:** Kemba Walker scored 32 points on 11-for-16 shooting, and host Charlotte routed Toronto.

**Hawks 102, Bulls 93:** Dennis Schroder scored 23 points, Paul Millsap added 14 and host Atlanta held off Chicago.

**Grizzlies 107, Kings 91:** Marc Gasol had 28 points and nine rebounds, Mike Conley added 16 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and host Memphis coasted past Sacramento.

**Magic 112, Bucks 96:** Elfrid Payton scored 20 points, Jeff Green added 18 points and seven rebounds off the bench, and Orlando snapped a three-game losing streak by beating

visiting Milwaukee.

**Nets 143, Pelicans 114:** Brook Lopez and Bojan Bogdanovic scored 23 points apiece and Brooklyn ended an 11-game losing streak by routing host New Orleans.

**Jazz 112, Mavericks 107 (OT):** Rudy Gobert had career highs with 27 points and 25 rebounds, including one on his missed free throw in overtime that led to the tying three-pointer by Joe Johnson, and Utah beat visiting Dallas.

**Lakers 108, Pacers 96:** Lou Williams scored 27 points, Nick Young hit five three-pointers and host Los Angeles snapped its five-game losing streak with a victory over Indiana.

## Four-goal second period powers Pens past Hurricanes

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Pittsburgh Penguins have been beatable away from home this season. Good thing for them this felt nothing like a road game.

Phil Kessel had a goal and an assist during Pittsburgh's four-goal second period, and the Penguins routed the Carolina Hurricanes 7-1 on Friday night.

Conor Sheary scored twice, and Evgeni Malkin had a late goal and an assist. Carl Hagelin and Chris Kunitz joined Sheary in scoring during the second for Pittsburgh.

"In a win like that, I think it was a really complete effort from all the guys," said Sheary, who has four goals in three games. "It's fun to win on the road."

Trevor Daley scored early and Matt Murray finished with 27 saves while earning his 16th victory — most among NHL rookies.

The defending Stanley Cup champions led 6-0 in winning their third straight overall and earning their first consecutive road victories since early

December. It was their second high-scoring game of the week, after beating Washington 8-7 in overtime at home on Monday night.

Viktor Stalberg scored and Cam Ward — making his 21st straight start — had 34 saves for Carolina, which has lost two straight.

Ward allowed seven goals for the third time in his career. He's given up at least four goals in three straight games.

"You can call that embarrassment," Carolina alternate captain Jordan Staal said. "It was a team that made us look like a high school team."

The Penguins entered just 9-9-3 on the road — only 17th-best in the league — and hadn't won back-to-back road games since Dec. 8-10.

But playing in an arena packed with Penguins fans — some of whom twirled Terrible Towels and chanted "Here we go, Steelers" — it turned Raleigh into Pittsburgh South and helped them feel right at home while continuing their mastery of a Carolina team that had been the NHL's best on home ice since Nov. 14.

Carolina entered with a 14-1-

1 home record since then. But Pittsburgh won its fifth in a row against the Hurricanes, including both meetings this season.

"We'd made our players well aware of how well they're playing at home, and how good this team can be," Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan said. "Our penalty kill gets a big kill, we get a couple timely saves and then our guys started to skate, and then I thought we took the game over. ... We had to have our best game."

The Penguins took command of this one with that big second period. Hagelin got it started when he pushed in the rebound of Cameron Gaunce's shot to make it 2-0, a scoring chance created by a giveaway by Teuvo Teravainen in his defensive zone.

**Blackhawks 1, Bruins 0:** Marian Hossa scored with 1:26 left to lift visiting Chicago over Boston.

Scott Darling stopped 30 shots for his second shutout of the season.

**Canucks 2, Panthers 1:** Henrik Sedin had a goal for his 1,000th career point before Luca Sbisa scored the winner early in the third period to help

host Vancouver beat Florida.

Ryan Miller stopped 34 shots for the Canucks, who improved to 8-1-3 in their last 12 games.

**Sabres 3, Red Wings 2 (OT):** Kyle Okposo scored a power-play goal 4:34 into overtime and host Buffalo rallied to beat Detroit.

Ryan O'Reilly had a goal and an assist, and Sam Reinhart also scored to help the Sabres overcome a pair of one-goal deficits.

**Canadiens 3, Devils 1:** Shea Weber and Max Pacioretty each scored a power-play goal during a major penalty early in the third period, and visiting Montreal snapped a two-game skid with a victory over New Jersey.

Alex Galchenyuk added a goal and two assists, and Alexander Radulov had three assists as Montreal ended the Devils' three-game winning streak.

**Predators 3, Oilers 2 (SO):** Ryan Ellis scored in the third period and added the shootout winner as visiting Nashville snapped Edmonton's four-game winning streak.

Viktor Arvidsson also scored in regulation for the Predators, who have won five of six.