

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Sea defense strategy updated

BY JON HARPER

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's new sea defense strategy recognizes the challenges of a rising Chinese military even as the Defense Department faces massive budget cuts in the coming fiscal year.

The Navy, Marines and Coast Guard on Friday rolled out the latest version of "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower," which describes how they will shape and employ their forces for the future.

Updated for the first time since 2007, the document echoes many of the themes of previous editions, but it also lays out how the sea services intend to deal with recent changes in the geopolitical, fiscal and technological landscape.

Unlike at the height of the Iraq War in 2007, when the Pentagon was flush with money, the U.S. military can't spend as freely these days, and massive budget cuts are slated to take effect in fiscal 2016.

To deal with these tighter budgets "in an era of constrained resources," the sea services plan to:

- Increase forward-basing of forces overseas to reduce costly rotations and deployments.

- Use "non-kinetic" means, such as cyberspace and electromagnetic capabilities, when possible to attack adversaries to avoid using expensive munitions.

- "Prioritize affordability" when buying new weapons systems and managing their life cycle.

The document warns that additional budget cuts, known as sequestration, would decrease forward presence, limit warfighting advantages and leave an insufficient reserve force to respond to crises.

The Navy and the Marines want a fleet of more than 300

ships, with 120 of them forward-deployed — mostly in the Pacific — at any given time, by 2020.

"We have a plan to get there [and] a strategy that says this is where we need to be," Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Kevin Killea said during a briefing about the new strategy document. But "it's only going to happen ... if we get the [political and budget] support that we need to do that. If we don't, then we're going to have to review our commitments."

The updated strategy highlights the threat posed by China's military modernization, which was not specifically referenced in the 2007 version.

In the past two years, Beijing has been more aggressive on the sea and in the air, fueling territorial disputes with many of its neighbors, including U.S. allies such as Japan and the Philippines.

"This behavior, along with a lack of transparency in its military intentions, contributes to tension and instability, potentially leading to miscalculation or even escalation," the document states.

In response, the Navy and the Marine Corps plan to send more assets and the most sophisticated military platforms to the Pacific region to "discourage aggression." Those assets would include the Marines' most advanced aircraft, the F-35B Joint Strike Fighter and the MV-22 Osprey troop transport. The moves would be part of the U.S. military's "Pacific pivot," an ongoing rebalancing of forces to the region as the war in Afghanistan winds down.

By 2020, 60 percent of Navy ships and aircraft will be based in that part of the globe, according to service plans.

The strategy also calls for

increased cooperation with the Air Force and the Army in developing concepts to counter anti-access weapons, such as long-range missiles and advanced fighter aircraft, which China and other nations have been developing. The authors specifically mention Air Force intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities and the Army's missile defense systems as assets that complement those of the sea services.

"We cannot go it alone," the new strategy document states.

On the technology front, advances in cyberspace and electronic warfare systems in the U.S. and around the world have led the services to place a new emphasis on offensive and defensive capabilities in this realm.

"New challenges in cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum mean we can no longer presume to hold the information 'high ground,'" the strategy's authors wrote.

The Navy has established U.S. Cyber Fleet Command and has developed a new "Electromagnetic Maneuver Warfare" strategy, which blends operations in space, cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum: "As an example, we may more effectively defeat anti-ship ballistic and cruise missile threats by making use of superior battlespace awareness to employ cyber and EMW capabilities ... that defeats the threat before it has ever been launched."

Navy Rear Adm. William McQuilkin, who briefed reporters about the new strategy, said the cyberspace and electromagnetic domains are now "on par" with the traditional sea, air and land domains in terms of importance when it comes to warfighting.

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## Salvage barge at helo crash site in Fla.

*The Associated Press*

PENSACOLA, Fla. — The salvage of a Black Hawk helicopter that crashed into the waters off Florida in dense fog, killing 11 Marines and soldiers on board, was set to begin Friday afternoon, the military said.

Four Louisiana National Guard soldiers and seven Marines were killed when the aircraft slammed into the water during a routine training mission early Tuesday.

The Air Force said in a news release that a salvage barge was expected to arrive at the crash site by early Friday afternoon. The work to haul the shattered helicopter core from about 25 feet of water could take up to eight hours.

A Coast Guard dive team was expected to help with the operation.

Officials said the salvage and recovery would end if weather conditions deteriorated. Sporadic rain showers covered the crash site on Friday, but the heavy fog lifted after hampering recovery operations since Tuesday.

The Army said it has recovered the bodies of two of the four soldiers from the Louisiana Army National Guard helicopter. The search continued for the remains of others on the helicopter, which went down in thick fog Tuesday night during a routine training mission at Eglin Air Force Base in the Florida Panhandle.

The cause of the crash — described as "high impact" by Eglin Fire Chief Mark Giuliano — is being probed by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center out of Fort Rucker, Ala.

# Prosecutor: Illicit videos traded like cards

*The Associated Press*

MAYPORT NAVAL STATION, Fla. — A group of male submariners traded illicit videos of female officers in various stages of undress as if they were Pokemon cards, a U.S. Navy prosecutor said Thursday.

Navy prosecutors presented evidence against two of 12 male sailors accused of illegally making and trading videos of female officers aboard a nuclear submarine that was among the first to allow American women to serve alongside men.

The two men in court Thursday, both missile technicians aboard the USS Wyoming, were accused of trading the videos

with other sailors.

Another sailor aboard the Wyoming made the videos with his smartphone and then told others that he had a “gift for them,” Navy prosecuting attorney Lt. Cmdr. Lee Marsh said. The Wyoming is based at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base in Georgia.

Marsh said that once the sailor who took the videos arrived back on shore, he shared them with the others by “bumping” their smartphones together. The videos were not posted online.

“Videos were treated like Pokemon (cards). Something to be collected,” Marsh said during the preliminary hearing

in the case against two missile technicians charged with conspiracy to distribute recordings of private areas of female officers.

Navy Vice Adm. Michael Connor, commander of the nation’s submarine fleet, has characterized the case as a “serious sexual offense, with significant penalties.”

The case highlights issues the Navy has faced in switching to coed crews on ballistic-missile submarines. It began the practice in 2011.

More than 50 women now serve aboard submarines, and Connor has said while the change to coed crews has not

been without incident, overall, it has been a success.

Navy Lt. Paul Hochmuth, defense attorney for one of the accused missile technicians who was in court on Thursday, said his client didn’t know what the files were when he accepted the “gift” on his phone.

He argued that the government was unfairly describing the videos as graphic — he said they were of poor quality, were only ever viewed on smartphones and showed only partial nudity.

Marsh said the quality of the videos is irrelevant because they were made without consent and that they were plenty graphic.

## Navy to homeport USS Ford in Va.

*The Associated Press*

NORFOLK, Va. — The Navy plans to homeport its newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Virginia when it joins the fleet in 2016, according to members of Virginia’s congressional delegation.

The decision to base the USS Gerald R. Ford in Norfolk will provide a temporary boost to the region’s economy. The USS Abraham Lincoln isn’t expected to return to the West Coast following its midlife refueling

and overhaul in nearby Newport News until 2018, according to a joint statement from Virginia’s senators and the Hampton Roads congressional delegation.

That means for about two years, the crews of six of the Navy’s 11 aircraft carriers will be based in Virginia instead of the usual five. Other U.S. aircraft carriers are based in California, Washington and Japan. The Navy has said it wants 60 percent of its ships based in the

Pacific and sending the Lincoln to one of its homeports there would restore that balance.

Each aircraft carrier has a crew of several thousand sailors and contributes millions of dollars to the region’s economy.

“We are very glad to learn that the Navy’s newest aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford will be home ported in Norfolk, home of the U.S. Navy,” Norfolk Mayor Paul Fraim said in a statement issued by the region’s congressional delegation.

## AF lifts ban on ‘blessed day’ greeting

*The Macon (Ga.) Telegraph*

After widespread outcry, the Air Force reversed a decision to ban Robins Air Force Base security personnel from saying “Have a blessed day” to people entering the gates.

Earlier, the gate guards were told not to give the greeting after an airman complained to the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, according to the group’s website. The foundation complained to the base, and the base issued the ban.

News of the ban went viral Thursday. That, in turn, led to this statement from the Air Force later in the day:

“Defenders have been asked to use the standard phrase ‘Welcome to Team Robins’ in their greeting and can add various follow-on greetings as long as they remain courteous and professional,” the statement read.

“Upon further review and consultation, the Air Force determined use of the phrase ‘have a blessed day’ as a greeting is consistent with Air Force standards and is not in violation of Air Force Instructions.”

## Nonprofit bills \$1.1M for parties, retreats

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — The largest nonprofit contractor working for the U.S. Agency for International Development during the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan billed the government \$1.1 million for staff parties and pricey retreats — three of them held at one of the poshest destinations on the East Coast, Nemaquin Woodlands Resort in Pennsylvania.

International Relief and Development Inc., of Arlington, Va., collected hundreds of mil-

lions of dollars to work in the war zones and to help impoverished nations around the world. At the same time, its executives were using IRD’s government overhead account to fund the parties and retreats between 2007 and 2010, according to financial records provided by IRD.

The previously undisclosed retreats to Nemaquin were the fanciest by far. The five-star spa and resort, 180 miles northwest of Washington, is nestled high in the Allegheny Mountains. IRD spent \$484,338 on those

retreats at the height of U.S. war spending, billing the expenses to the government as “training” and “staff morale,” according to the records and current and former employees.

“It was scandalous,” said Andrea Clarke, IRD’s former media and communications officer who attended the 2008 retreat. “I remember thinking, ‘We’re dealing with issues where people are actually dying overseas, and here we were at this five-star resort and we are living it up.’”

# Injuries hitting pitchers hard

The Associated Press

CLEARWATER, Fla. — Cliff Lee's elbow. Marcus Stroman's knee. Lance Lynn's hip. Mike Minor's shoulder.

It's been a tough week for some of baseball's best starters and there's a long way to go before opening day.

Lee is trying to pitch for Philadelphia despite an injury that could eventually require season-ending surgery and possibly force the former AL Cy Young Award winner to retire.

"If I were to have the surgery, am I going to go through all that to try to pitch again, or am I going to shut it down? That's a decision that I'll have to make once that time comes, if that time comes," Lee said.

Stroman, Toronto's star right-hander, will miss the entire season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during fielding drills on Tuesday.

"It was just a freak accident," Stroman said. "It was a normal play, as routine as it comes. I was going after a ball and planted, and it just popped."

Lynn won't make his scheduled start Friday after the righty strained his left hip flexor in St. Louis' game on Sunday.

Minor had an injection in his left shoulder Monday after being diagnosed with

rotator cuff inflammation and will open the season on Atlanta's disabled list.

And, there's more.

The biggest injury news came earlier in spring training when Yu Darvish went down in his first start. Darvish and the Texas Rangers are waiting for a third opinion that they expect will confirm the ace pitcher needs season-ending elbow ligament-replacement surgery.

"Given the circumstances, I think he's in very good spirits, very clearheaded," Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said. "The best way to describe it is he understands the situation."

Meanwhile, several star pitchers are working their way back to the mound.

Mets right-hander Matt Harvey is returning from Tommy John surgery that ended his 2013 All-Star season in August.

Matt Cain made his spring debut Monday after ankle and elbow operations forced the three-time All-Star to miss San Francisco's World Series run.

Japanese ace Masahiro Tanaka made his first spring start Thursday night for the New York Yankees after missing 2½ months last season while rehabilitating a partially torn ligament in his right elbow.

Miami's Jose Fernandez, the 2013 NL Rookie of the Year, is hoping to pitch by

midseason after having Tommy John surgery last May.

What's causing all these injuries?

Hall of Fame third baseman Mike Schmidt, spending camp as a hitting coach with the Phillies, gave an interesting take.

"Guys are in so much better shape than in the old days or even 20-30 years ago, but guys back then could throw until they drop," Schmidt said, naming Robin Roberts, Tom Seaver and Nolan Ryan. "As time went by, new pitches started to come into vogue: the cutter, the splitter, crazy change-ups out of fastball arm speed. In the old days, pitchers basically just played catch with the catcher. The vulnerability to stress, arm stress, shoulder stress, elbow stress has gone up because of the multiple arm movements and arm speed and the tendons are getting stress on them that they didn't used to have."

Modern medicine and technology also detect more injuries such as the common flexor tendon tear that Lee has.

"Maybe Robin Roberts had that same thing and he figured his arm was tired," Schmidt said. "They had no such thing as MRI and \$100 million contracts so people are more body-aware right now."

# Ferrell surprises MLB fans

The Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — Will Ferrell has raked in box-office millions playing the earnest goofball in a string of sports movies. He took it to a new level on Thursday, when he played all nine baseball positions and coached for 10 teams in five Arizona ballparks in a spring-training blitz.

In addressing the crowd at his final stop in Peoria, the comedian said, "Ruth, Musial, Mantle, Will Ferrell. Who would have thought that one day those names would be synonymous? Show of hands — scratch that, never mind."

Ferrell started at noon in an Oakland Athletics uniform at shortstop, and ended eight and a half hours later playing right field for the San Diego Padres in the ninth inning.

"When I embarked on this journey way back at breakfast," Ferrell said, "I thought to myself, 'Could I do it?' The answer is yes."

Memorabilia from his journey, filmed for an HBO special, is to be sold at auction on MLB.com with proceeds going to Cancer for College and Stand Up to Cancer.

He hugged a guy in an elf suit as he left Mesa, held up a sign saying "Remember These Games Don't Count" as impromptu third base coach for the Chicago Cubs, struck out twice on three pitches each, watched two home runs sail over his head, and chased the ball around the outfield during a challenging stint in left field for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Ferrell wore No. 19 for every team except his last one. He didn't want to wear the late Tony Gwynn's number, so donned No. 20 for the Padres.

When it was over, the star of "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy" and "Elf" took the public address microphone to the infield and recounted his day.

"There's no doubt I turned some heads today, even if it was just for a moment," Ferrell said. "I brought passion to the field, dedication, ability, and a lot of ignorance. The ball moves fast out there, a lot faster than it looks on television. It's like a speeding bullet. It's horrible, terrifying."

In his final stop, he also took the mound for the Los Angeles Dodgers and got San Diego's Rico Noel, the only batter he faced, to bounce out to the pitcher.

"Is there life in this 47-year-old arm?" he said.

As he walked off the field, Ferrell waved his cap and gave a security guard a high five.

"They say there's nothing more American than grabbing a hot dog, heading to the ballpark, and watching nine guys from the Dominican Republic," he said. "... But you know what, today I learned that was wrong. They had eight Dominicans, and one guy from Irvine, California."

"Was I the best player on the field today?" Ferrell said. "Maybe, maybe."

Then he led the crowd in a chant — "May-be, may-be, may-be."

# RB Murray leaves Cowboys for Eagles

The Associated Press

Look who's running to paydirt: DeMarco Murray, Justin Forsett and Ryan Mathews.

Running backs took their place at the head of the free agency class Thursday, the third day of the NFL's business year. Two of them, 2014 Offensive Player of the Year Murray, the league's leading rusher, and Mathews wound up in Philadelphia. Forsett is staying right where he made his breakthrough last season, in Baltimore.

Murray, 27, helped the Cowboys win the NFC East while rushing for a franchise-record 1,845 yards, breaking NFL career rushing leader Emmitt Smith's team mark. He also set a league record with eight straight 100-yard games to start the season.

The contract is for five years and \$42 million, with \$21 million guaranteed.

"It wasn't about financial security," Murray said. "I felt this was a great opportunity for us to win a Super Bowl. Obviously, you want something that you deserve and that's respectful. I felt that those two things were important to me and I was able to accomplish that here."

He'll combine with Mathews to replace two-time All-Pro LeSean McCoy, the NFL's rushing leader in 2013 who was dealt to Buffalo by coach Chip Kelly.

The Cowboys responded to losing Murray by signing former fourth overall pick Darren McFadden from the Raiders Thursday night after seven injury-marred seasons in Oakland.

The 27-year-old McFadden has 4,247 career yards, with career highs of 1,157 yards and seven touchdowns in 2010.

The deal is reportedly for two years and worth up to \$5.9 million.

Mathews, 27, leaves San Diego after an injury-plagued five seasons. A first-round draft pick in 2010, he played in all 16 regular-season games only in 2013, his best season with 1,255 yards rushing and seven total touchdowns.

Forsett, 29, agreed to a three-year contract with the Ravens. He comes off the finest season of his seven-year career, replacing Ray Rice and rushing 1,266 yards and eight touchdowns.

Two-time Super Bowl champion cornerback Brandon Browner heads to New Orleans for a three-year deal worth about \$18 million. Browner won a ring with Seattle in 2013, then with New England last season.

The Patriots lost their other starting cornerback, Darrelle Revis, to the Jets in free agency.

New York also brought back another previous fixture in its secondary, Antonio Cromartie, to team with Revis on the corners. Cromartie, 30, gets a four-year contract worth \$32 million in base salary. Revis came back on a five-year, \$70 million contract.

The Jets also re-signed guard Willie Colon to a one-year deal Thursday, and brought back long snapper Tanner Purdum on a two-year contract.

Another defensive back on the move is safety Nate Allen, from Philadelphia to Oakland on a four-year contract. The Raiders have won just 11 games the past three seasons and have gone 11 straight years without a playoff berth or winning record.

Also Thursday:

■ Former Pro Bowl tight end Jordan Cameron signed a two-year contract with Miami, giving the Dolphins a possible replacement for Charles Clay. Cameron missed five games last year with the Cleveland Browns because of a concussion, his third in three seasons. He made the Pro Bowl in 2013, when he had 80 catches for 917 yards and seven touchdowns.

■ Three quarterbacks got contracts. Tyrod Taylor moved from Baltimore to Buffalo for a two-year deal; Blaine Gabbert re-upped with San Francisco for two seasons; and Thad Lewis took a one-year contract to return to Cleveland.

■ Houston signed safety Rahim Moore, who started all 16 games in 2014 for the Broncos, setting a career high with four interceptions.

■ Tampa Bay continued to boost its defense by adding tackle Henry Melton and safety Chris Conte. Both played for Bucs coach Lovie Smith in Chicago.

■ Atlanta also went the defense route, signing end Adrian Clayborn, cornerback Phillip Adams and linebacker O'Brien Schofield.

■ Jacksonville released DE Red Bryant, who was due a \$500,000 roster bonus on Sunday. Bryant was scheduled to count \$4.5 million against the salary cap.

■ Arizona released Lyle Sendlein, the team's starting center for the past six seasons.

■ The Tennessee Titans reportedly signed former Washington Redskins outside linebacker Brian Orakpo to a four-year deal worth up to \$35 million, with a base of \$31 million.



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# Irving's career-high 57 lifts Cavaliers over Spurs in OT

The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Cleveland Cavaliers All-Star Kyrie Irving left his superstar teammate LeBron James in awe. His spectacular play overwhelmed the San Antonio Spurs.

The guard collected a career-high and NBA season-high 57 points and his fade-away 3 sent the emotional game into overtime where Cleveland rallied for a 128-125 victory over the defending NBA champion San Antonio Spurs on Thursday night.

"The kid is special, we all know it, we all see it," James said. "For him to go out and put on a performance like he did tonight was incredible."

His 57 topped his own NBA-best 55-point game against Portland on Jan. 28. He scored nine points in the final minute of regulation to tie the game and added 11 more in overtime to snap San Antonio's six-game winning streak.

"A few of those shots, it just left my hands and I kind of threw them up at the rim and I was lucky enough and blessed enough that they went in," Irving said.

His point total was a Cavs record, too, topping James' 56 against the Raptors in 2005.

Irving hit a three-pointer in the face of heavy defense from Danny Green to pull Cleveland to 110-107 with 31 seconds remaining in regulation. After the Spurs' Kawhi Leonard missed two free throws with 4.3 seconds left, Irving made his three, falling to his right over Leonard to tie it at 110.

Irving made all seven of his three-point attempts, was 20 of 32 from the field overall, and made 10 free throws without a miss.

James added 31 in his first game at the AT&T Center since being blown out in five games by San Antonio in the NBA Finals in his last games with the Miami Heat.

He was 10 for 20 from the floor in a physical battle with Leonard, but his struggles were lessened by Irving's wild night.

**Knicks 101, Lakers 94:** Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 22 points and Andrea Bargnani added 16 as New York ended its five-game losing streak with just its fifth road victory of the season.

Alexey Shved had 14 points and 11 rebounds as the Knicks ended a seven-game road skid against the Lakers, winning for coach Derek Fisher in the former Los Angeles point guard's return to Staples Center.

The NBA's worst team (13-51) maintained the lead down the stretch, sweeping the season series with Los Angeles and picking up its first road win over a Western Conference team all season.

**Jazz 109, Rockets 91:** Rudy Gobert had 19 points, 22 rebounds and four blocks and Utah beat visiting Houston for its ninth victory in 11 games.

The Jazz used their size to dominate the paint and ran away in the second half.

Gobert put on a show as the Rockets didn't have an answer for the 7-foot-1 Frenchman on either end of the floor. He had a double-double in the first quarter

and 18 rebounds at halftime.

Teammate Gordon Hayward finished with 29 points, seven assists and four rebounds. Rookie Rodney Hood put up a career high for the second consecutive game with 20 points.

**Wizards 107, Grizzlies:** John Wall had 21 points, seven rebounds and six assists to lead host Washington past short-handed Memphis.

The game got chippy late in the third quarter, when Washington's Kevin Seraphin was called for a flagrant foul and ejected for knocking Jon Leuer to the court as he dunked.

Earlier, Seraphin got tangled on the floor with Jarnell Stokes following another bit of grabbing between Stokes and Washington's Marcin Gortat.

Memphis sat three starters: the injured Mike Conley, and Marc Gasol and Zach Randolph, who were resting on the second night of a back-to-back. The Grizzlies also held out key reserve Tony Allen.

**Pacers 109, Bucks 103 (OT):** Rodney Stuckey scored 25 points and Luis Scola had 17 points and 15 rebounds to help Indiana beat visiting Milwaukee.

Stuckey also had six rebounds and six assists.

David West's jumper with 2:45 remaining in regulation gave Indiana a five-point lead at 96-91, but Milwaukee's Ersan Ilyasova scored five points in the final 2 minutes to send it to overtime.

Michael Carter-Williams led the Bucks with 28 points.

## Illini, Aggies fail to help tourney case

The Associated Press

Some teams — UCLA and Indiana, for example — took care of business.

Others — that's you, Illinois and Texas A&M — did not.

With conference tournaments in full swing Thursday, a few teams moved off the NCAA Tournament bubble in good and bad ways.

Illinois fell 73-55 to Michigan and Texas A&M lost 66-59 to Auburn — a pair of bad losses that could cost them spots when the selection committee releases the bracket come Sunday.

Meanwhile, UCLA beat Southern California 96-70 and Indiana topped Northwestern 71-56 to keep their runs in their conference tournaments going and make stronger cases to be in the 68-team field.

A look at how the bubble teams did Thursday:

**Illinois:** Now at 19-14 overall, 9-10 against the Big Ten, and with an RPI of 61, it's hard to see the Illini in. Their spot as a "Last Four In" team was predicated on them taking care of at least a bit of business against the lower half of the Big Ten. But the loss to the Wolverines (16-15) gives them five defeats in their last seven games. They don't have a real quality win since early February. Further, they lost their only matchup against Indiana, another bubble team that came into the postseason with an identical record and similar RPI.

**Texas A&M:** The Aggies (20-11) were also on a lot of those "Last Four In" lists. A loss to Auburn (14-19) is certainly not the way to stay there. They had an RPI of 57 heading into the SEC tournament — that's marginal — and will close their season losing three in a row and four of five. This was a team that gave Kentucky as big a scare as anyone before falling in overtime in January. A "quality loss," maybe. But where are the "quality wins?" It'll be a long weekend in College Station.

**Old Dominion:** As discussed in this space Wednesday, the Monarchs are intriguing — 24 wins, No. 38 RPI, quality wins over LSU and VCU — and could've ended the drama simply by winning the Conference USA tournament. But they didn't. Instead, they lost in the quarterfinals to Middle Tennessee. It's ODU's sixth loss in a not-very-good conference. The Monarchs are 17-0 at home and 7-7 away. Hard to close the book on them yet, but their second loss this season to Middle Tennessee (18-15) certainly made it more difficult for the selection committee to say 'yes.'

**Oh, Miss:** If the Rebels miss out — a much stronger possibility now than it was a month ago — their 60-58 loss to South Carolina will cost them sleep for weeks. Ole Miss went ahead by a point on a four-point play with 3.3 seconds remaining, only to foul Tyrone Johnson while he was trying a desperation three with 0.7 seconds left. Johnson made the free throws and the Rebels (20-12) have now lost four of five.

**Also moving back:** Miami (21-12) had Notre Dame on the ropes and a chance to wrap things up, but the Hurricanes let that get away in a 70-63 loss. Now, they have to see if that quality win at Duke in January and an RPI of 62 will be enough. Texas (20-13, 42 RPI) gave up the last 12 points in a 69-67 loss to Iowa State, a not-so-bad loss that would've been so much better had the Longhorns rocked this game to sleep.

## Bruins' mastery of Lightning continues

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Patrice Bergeron and Brad Marchand scored shootout goals to lift the Boston Bruins to a 3-2 victory over the Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday night.

Boston beat Tampa Bay for the 10th straight time, the longest active slide for a Bruins opponent. Since joining the NHL in 1992, the Lightning have won only five times in 48 games at Boston.

The Lightning have also never beaten the Bruins after regulation in 18 tries, going 0-9-9. Tampa Bay failed to capitalize on a power play in overtime.

Tuukka Rask made 35 saves for Boston, which is 6-0-1 in its last seven games, including four straight wins.

**Senators 5, Canadiens 2:** Erik Karlsson scored twice, and goalie Andrew Hammond remained unbeaten in regulation time as visiting Ottawa topped Montreal.

Eric Condra, Mark Stone and Marc Methot also scored for Ottawa, which has won nine of 11 as it chases a playoff spot. Hammond made 27 saves to improve to 8-0-1 during that stretch.

**Blues 1, Flyers 0 (SO):** Brian Elliott and Steve Mason both earned shutouts, but Elliott picked up the win in a shootout as host St. Louis edged Philadelphia.

Elliott made 28 saves through overtime, and Mason stopped 35 shots. T.J. Oshie and Vladimir Tarasenko both scored in the shootout for the Blues, and Elliott stopped Jakub Voracek and Wayne Simmonds in the tiebreaker.

**Penguins 6, Oilers 4:** Steve

Downie and Patric Hornqvist scored just over a minute apart late in the third period, and host Pittsburgh avoided an embarrassing collapse by beating Edmonton.

Downie's 12th goal of the season on a rebound 14:38 into the third gave Pittsburgh the lead after the Penguins let a four-goal lead slip away. Hornqvist doubled it 1:06 later to help the Penguins win for the seventh time in nine games.

**Blackhawks 2, Coyotes 1:** Brad Richards scored a tiebreaking power-play goal with 7:11 left in the third period to give visiting Chicago a win against Arizona.

Richards put in a rebound of Kris Versteeg's blocked shot. It was the 900th NHL point for Richards, who entered in ninth place among active players.

**Kings 4, Canucks 0:** Jonathan Quick made 19 saves for his fifth shutout of the season, and visiting Los Angeles beat Vancouver.

Justin Williams and Anze Kopitar each had a goal and an assist, and Tyler Toffoli and Marian Gaborik also scored for Los Angeles, which has won four of five and 12 of 16.

**Sharks 2, Predators 0:** Antti Niemi made 35 saves and Tomas Hertl scored a power-play goal late in the second period as host San Jose shut out Nashville for the second time this season.

Niemi followed a 29-save performance in December with another strong game against Nashville to lead the Sharks to their fourth win in five games. Just as in that 2-0 win on Dec. 13, it was Hertl who delivered the winning goal against Pekka Rinne. Tommy Wingels added an empty-netter.

**Blue Jackets 3, Red Wings 1:**

Scott Hartnell scored the go-ahead goal, and Sergei Bobrovsky made 41 saves to help visiting Columbus down Detroit.

Fedor Tyutin and Cam Atkinson added goals, and five players had assists as the Blue Jackets won at Detroit for the second time in two tries and won the season series 2-1.

**Avalanche 2, Devils 1 (SO):**

Jarome Iginla scored in the second period and netted the decisive goal in the shootout, Semyon Varlamov stopped 23 shots, and host Colorado edged New Jersey.

The Avalanche are 1-1 on a pivotal three-game homestand as they try to remain in the Western Conference playoff picture.

**Panthers 4, Jets 2:** Aleksander Barkov scored the go-ahead goal late in the third period, lifting host Florida over Winnipeg.

Brad Boyes and Derek Mackenzie also scored for Florida, and Nick Bjugstad added an empty-net goal with 46 seconds left. Dan Ellis made 18 saves for the Panthers in his third consecutive start in place of the injured Roberto Luongo.

**Stars 5, Hurricanes 3:** Alex Goligoski, Cody Eakin and Patrick Eaves each had a goal and an assist, sparking visiting Dallas to a victory over Carolina.

Kari Lehtonen needed to make only 16 saves to earn the win in his 500th NHL game. Curtis McKenzie and Jason Demers also scored for Dallas, which led 3-1 after the first period.