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House lawmakers blast VA for \$1.73B hospital

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — House lawmakers said Thursday that a botched \$1.73 billion veterans hospital project in Colorado was so badly handled that the Department of Veterans Affairs may lose authority to build health care facilities at all.

Members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee floated that possibility as it blasted the agency for “complete incompetence” and considered a bill that would turn construction of the Aurora hospital over to the Army Corps of Engineers.

The VA angered many in Congress on Wednesday when it requested authorization to spend an additional \$930 million to keep the 11-year-old hospital project going. The VA now says it might be completed by mid-2017.

“You’re no longer going to get to decide whether you build hospitals or not,” Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., said. “That is where this is headed.”

Rep. Ann McLane Kuster, D-N.H., also questioned whether the VA is “up to the task” of building modern hospital facilities.

“I can’t imagine this kind of money in the private sector,” Kuster said. “I know what hospitals cost in New Hampshire — it’s not a billion dollars.”

The chairman and ranking member on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on Wednesday called the VA request “appalling” and said Secretary Bob McDonald should provide

detailed answers on what is being done.

The original estimate on the cost of the Aurora veterans hospital was \$328 million when the project began in 2004.

The VA has admitted it made mistakes during the project. Deputy VA Secretary Sloan Gibson said in a letter Wednesday to congressional leadership that it is “unacceptable” and that the department is taking steps to correct the project, including a request that the Army Corps review it and make recommendations.

A key mistake was contracting construction work before the hospital design was completed, and that led to the long delays and cost overruns on the hospital, said Dennis Milsten, associate executive director in the VA Office of Operations and the Office of Construction and Facilities Management.

“That design continued to evolve and now we find ourselves at this crossroads,” Milsten told House lawmakers.

The VA told Congress that progress will be lost if it does not get the green light to spend the additional \$930 million by mid-May.

“Let me use a Marine Corps phrase: ‘You couldn’t lead starving troops to a chow hall,’” said Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., who sponsored the bill to take the project away from the VA.

The 242-bed, 1.1-million-square-foot facility is designed to serve about 80,000 VA beneficiaries in the Denver area and includes a medical center, spinal cord treatment center

and nursing home, according to construction contractor Kiewit-Turner.

Hospital projects often rack up huge construction costs but if completed at the VA’s estimate, it would be among the most expensive in the country. Here are the costs of other similar projects:

■ In February, the University of California San Francisco opened a \$1.5 billion Mission Bay Medical Center. That 289-bed complex includes “advanced imaging suites, a helipad, and a fleet of robotic couriers to deliver supplies, meals, and medications,” according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.

■ For \$1.1 billion, Johns Hopkins University opened a new 560-room, 1.6-million-square-foot hospital in 2012 that promised “Xboxes and a basketball court for kids, sleeper-sofas for families, single rooms for all patients, an improved dining menu and extensive soundproofing,” The Baltimore Sun newspaper reported.

■ The new Fargo Medical Center in North Dakota, with 384 beds and 1.2 million square feet, is projected to cost \$500 million and will open in 2017.

Coffman, saying the new price estimate would make the hospital the most expensive in VA history, called for the officials responsible to be removed from the project and fired.

“Perhaps we could use VA bonuses to provide funding for this grossly mismanaged project,” Coffman said.

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Navy’s use of war funding is criticized

Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Navy has been spending funds that are supposed to be dedicated to war-fighting to repair and overhaul submarine propellers since 2010.

While the average of \$6 million a year spent on submarine propeller work is a thousandth of the Navy’s war spending for ship operations and maintenance, which totals \$6.25 billion this year, it adds to a continuing debate in Congress over the use — and potential misuse — of the Overseas Contingency Operations spending that’s separate from the Defense Department’s regular budget.

“This is a totally inappropriate use,” said Gordon Adams, a former defense director for the White House Office of Management Budget. A Dec. 15 report from the Navy to Congress on propeller repairs “does not even try to apply a fig leaf of war justification for this use,” Adams, a fellow at the Stimson Center in Washington, said in an email.

Members of the House defense appropriations panel expressed concern in September that war funding was being used to “backfill budgetary shortfalls in acquisition programs that have only tenuous links to the fight in Afghanistan and other current operations.” President Barack Obama has requested \$50.9 billion in such funds for fiscal 2016.

The Navy says that the use of war funding is justified because expanding counterterrorism operations have required more spending to overhaul and repair propellers.

Motive sought in Ariz. rampage that killed 1

The Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. — Authorities are trying to determine a motive for an ex-convict's rampage that left one person dead and five others wounded in suburban Phoenix.

Mesa police said the rampage included a motel shooting, a carjacking and a home invasion and ended with the suspect's arrest Wednesday at an apartment.

The suspect was taken into custody after officers spotted him on an apartment balcony and used a stun gun on him.

Police later identified the man as Ryan Giroux, 41, an ex-convict who has served three stints in state prison since 1994. A mug shot from the Arizona Department of Corrections shows him with several face and neck tattoos, including the word "skinhead" where his eyebrows normally would be.

Police said the motive for the initial shooting at the motel was unclear, but the other three shootings appeared motivated by robbery and the suspect's attempt to flee.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office says Giroux was booked Thursday on suspicion of murder and numerous other crimes, including armed robbery, auto theft, kidnapping and aggravated assault.

The shootings started with an argument inside a motel room

that spilled outside, leaving one man dead and two women wounded, Mesa police Detective Esteban Flores said.

The gunman then shot a man working at a nearby restaurant. The man, an adult student at the nearby East Valley Institute of Technology, was able to run across the street to emergency responders already at the motel, Flores said. The school said in a statement that the victim was one of seven students and an instructor working at Bistro 13 restaurant. The student was treated at a hospital and was released.

The gunman got away by carjacking the instructor's car.

Police said the man then went to an apartment complex about 2 miles away, where he entered an apartment and shot a man. That victim will survive, police said.

A police officer found another man in a neighboring apartment building with multiple gunshot wounds. Flores said that victim was hospitalized in critical condition.

The shootings prompted an intense hunt for the gunman as Mesa police searched the trunks of cars, interviewed witnesses and brought in SWAT and canine units from other agencies. Flores warned people in the neighborhood to remain indoors.

lice said there were known gang members inside the restaurant.

"Our assessment is that this incident has to do with ongoing gang conflicts in Goteborg," regional police chief Klas Friberg said. Police had earlier estimated the total number of injured at 10 to 15, but Friberg said the estimates were uncertain.

Police said the victims were two men in their 20s, but didn't identify them. Eight wounded people were taken to the hospital, one of them with life-threatening injuries, Friberg said.

From The Associated Press

Deadly Swedish shooting is blamed on gangs

STOCKHOLM — Gunmen with automatic weapons stormed into a restaurant in Sweden's second-largest city, killing two people and wounding about a dozen in a shooting that police said was likely gang-related.

Police said the eatery in suburban Goteborg was full when the gunmen opened fire in one of Sweden's most serious shooting incidents in recent years. It wasn't clear who the attackers were targeting or why, but po-

9 taken to hospital in chemical spill on sub

The Associated Press

GROTON, Conn. — Officials say nine people were taken to a hospital as a precaution after a chemical spill during routine maintenance aboard a submarine at Connecticut's Navy base.

The Groton base commander, Capt. Carl Lahti, said the potassium hydroxide spill Wednesday was contained to the submarine. He said no injuries were reported.

Atlantic fleet spokesman Cmdr. Tommy Crosby said

about a gallon of the chemical spilled aboard the USS Annapolis. He said eight sailors and a fireman were taken to a hospital as a precaution.

Lawrence & Memorial Hospital spokesman Michael O'Farrell in New London said the patients were released after being evaluated for respiratory and skin irritation.

Local fire departments and a team from nearby Electric Boat shipyard responded.

The base is the primary East Coast homeport for the Navy's attack submarines.

Islamic State group claims Tunisia attack

The Associated Press

TUNIS, Tunisia — The radical Islamic State group claimed responsibility Thursday for the attack on a famed Tunis museum that left 23 people dead and scores of tourists wounded and upended the country's struggling tourism industry.

Tunisian security forces, meanwhile, arrested nine people Thursday, the president's office said in a statement, adding that five of them were directly connected to Wednesday's attack on the National Bardo Museum by two gunmen who were later slain by police. The other four suspects who were arrested in central Tunisia were part of a cell supporting those involved in the attack, the statement said.

Prime Minister Habib Essid told France's RTL radio that Tunisia was working with other countries to learn more about the slain attackers, identified as Yassine Laabidi and Hatem Khachnaoui. He said Laabidi had been flagged to the intelligence agency, although not for "anything special."

Wednesday's attack was the

worst at a tourist site in Tunisia in more than a decade and prompted a leading Italian cruise ship line to announce it was canceling all stops in Tunisia indefinitely.

The deaths of tourists will create oceans of trouble for the country's tourism industry, which brings throngs of foreigners every year to Tunisia's Mediterranean beaches, desert oases and ancient Roman ruins — and which had just started to recover after years of slump.

Two major cruise ships whose passengers had been among the victims left the port of Tunis early Thursday.

Razor wire ringed the museum entrance Thursday and security forces guarded major thoroughfares in Tunis, the capital.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack in an audio and written statement on jihadi forums. It described the museum housing Roman artifacts as a "den of infidels and vice" and celebrated the two slain attackers as "knights" armed with assault rifles and grenades.

NCAA could deliver enticing matchups in later rounds

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall might finally get his wish.

Marshall has been trying for years to schedule a game against Kansas, the basketball powerhouse just a couple hours' drive from the Shockers' campus. The Jayhawks have balked, insisting they have nothing to gain from a series against the Missouri Valley school.

However, if the seventh-seeded Shockers take care of Indiana, and the second-seeded Jayhawks beat New Mexico State, the schools will meet in the third round of the NCAA tournament.

"You get ready to play Indiana," Marshall said, when asked for his reaction to the road ahead. "If we're fortunate enough to play in the third round, if it's Kansas or New Mexico State, we get ready to play them. We take it one round at a time."

Kansas coach Bill Self follows the same approach. That doesn't mean he was oblivious to the potential matchup when the bracket flashed on the screen Selection Sunday night.

"How in the world they're a seven seed blows my mind," he said, pointing to the Shockers' 28-4 record and regular-season conference championship. "I thought the Missouri Valley, to be honest, deserved a little more credit than what they got. I thought they'd be a higher seed."

Depending on how things shake out, the tantalizing matchup between Wichita State and Kansas isn't the only possible third-round game sure to spark some interest.

Steve Fisher vs. Coach K

If top-seeded Duke handles its opening game against the winner of North Florida-Robert Morris, and No. 8 seed San Diego State beats St. John's, it would set up a rematch of the coaches involved in the 1992 national championship game.

Mike Krzyzewski is still in charge of the Blue Devils, and Steve Fisher is with the Aztecs after he coached Michigan in that title matchup. Duke won that game at the Metrodome, and the Wolverines later had to vacate their runner-up finish following a series of NCAA violations.

Fisher was fired as a result of the scandal. Two years later, he took over San Diego State, and has led the program to six consecutive NCAA tournament appearances.

Notre Dame vs. Butler

Sure, the Hoosiers are in the tournament, too. But all eyes in the Hoosier State would be on this matchup between the Fighting Irish, the ACC tournament champions from South Bend, and the Bulldogs, who call Hinkle Fieldhouse in Indianapolis home.

Despite playing numerous times, the schools have never met in the NCAA tournament.

Notre Dame would merely have to take care of Northeastern to reach the next round, but the Bulldogs face a taller task in Texas — and its imposing front line of Myles Turner, Cameron Ridley and Prince Ibeh. But hey, the Bulldogs have chopped down plenty of giants this time of year.

"We really didn't focus on what our seed

was going to be," said the Irish's Jerian Grant. "It was all about just seeing our name there, and especially last year not being there, we wanted to hear our name and we didn't care who we matched up."

Virginia vs. Michigan State

Once again, the Cavaliers did enough in the regular season to earn a top-two seed. Once again, their road to the Final Four could include Michigan State.

The Spartans were a No. 4 seed when they knocked off top-seeded Virginia in the regional semifinals last season. This time, Michigan State is a No. 7 seed and will have to beat Georgia in its opening game for the chance to play the second-seeded Cavaliers.

Virginia would have to beat Belmont to set up the rematch.

Eastern Washington vs. Stephen F. Austin

Both will be underdogs in their openers, but the potential for a high-scoring, up-and-down clash in the South Region is alluring.

The No. 13 seed Eagles, who play Georgetown in the second round, are third nationally in scoring at more than 80 points per game. They're led by Tyler Harvey, a sophomore guard who led the nation in scoring, and Venky Jois, a 6-foot-8 forward who is just as effective.

The 12th-seeded Lumberjacks, meanwhile, were ninth nationally in scoring behind the potent duo of Thomas Walkup and Jacob Parker. Stephen F. Austin opens against Utah.

Big second half lifts Colonials

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Even down by six points at half and by 13 early in the second half, Robert Morris never forgot that the NCAA tournament was supposed to be fun.

Lucky Jones scored 21 points, including a key free throw, Rodney Pryor had 20 and Marcquise Reed 19 to lead the Colonials to an 81-77 victory over North Florida on Wednesday night in the First Four.

"We made sure coming into halftime that we remembered this is a blessing to be out here, to enjoy the moment," Pryor said with a wide grin. "Guys had their heads down and things like that, but we reiterated going out and having fun and enjoying it."

Part of the reason they had so much fun was a second half without a turnover, plus completely stifling the high-scoring, perimeter-minded Ospreys down the stretch.

"At halftime we let [the players] be for about 5 or 6 minutes, and I think they figured it out," said coach Andy Toole, avoiding a fire-and-brimstone speech. "As we came in as coaches in the locker room, you know they looked like they understood what they needed to do."

The Colonials (20-14), who won the Northeast Conference tournament to get into the field as a 16 seed, now meet top-seeded Duke in the second round on Friday in Charlotte.

They failed to score for 4:31 of the first half, putting themselves in a hole. Down by 13 early in the second half after a pair of Beau Beech threes, they turned the tables by shutting out North Florida for 4:44 to get back in the game.

"We were in a drought, which is unlike us," said coach Matthew Driscoll. "Giving up 52 points in a half is unlike us, not close to what we've been doing. You've got to give Robert Morris a ton of credit."

With the teams tied, Reed — a freshman — drove the lane and spun in a left-handed layup and was fouled with 3:49 left. He missed the free throw, but Jones was there to tip in the miss for a 70-66 lead.

Pryor then added a 15-foot jumper and Kavon Stewart hit a free throw to push the lead to seven with 2 minutes left.

The Ospreys got within 78-76 with 10 seconds left, but Stewart made two more foul shots. With the lead at three and less than a second left, Jones — the Colonials' third-leading scorer who comes off the bench — made a free throw to clinch it.

As the final seconds ticked off, jubilant BobbyMo fans chanted, "We want Duke! We want Duke!"

Now they've got them. What'll they do with them though?

"I like our chances," said Jones. "It's a team game, no matter who they have on their team, no matter how many TV games they have. I love Robert Morris. We just gotta go out there and believe in ourselves, have confidence, have fun and see what happens."

Dayton squeezes past Boise State

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Trailing most of the game, Dayton squeezed every last little bit out of its home-court advantage to get an NCAA tournament win.

Kendall Pollard scored 17 points on Wednesday night, and Dayton — cheered on by the deafening home crowd — went on a closing run for a 56-55 win over Boise State in the First Four.

The Flyers (26-8) will play sixth-seeded Providence on Friday in Columbus, Ohio. And they recognized that their 80-mile trip to the middle of the state had a lot to do with the place they were leaving.

"They were electrifying," senior guard Jordan Sibert said of the crowd. "I don't think we would have won that game without them."

It was the first time since 1987 that a school has played an NCAA tournament game on its home court, an anomaly resulting from Dayton hosting the opening

games.

The Flyers went 16-0 at home during the regular season and have won 22 straight at UD Arena, seventh-longest active streak in Division I.

They needed a big finish to keep it going.

The Flyers trailed by as many as 12 points in the first half and by seven with 3:43 to go. Encouraged by the crowd of 12,592 — the largest for a First Four game — Dayton closed with a 10-2 run.

Derrick Marks' leaning three-pointer at the buzzer was far off the mark, finishing it off. Marks had 23 points on 10-of-21 shooting.

The Broncos had already snapped San Diego State's 29-game home-court streak this season, and came up just short of another big road win. The Broncos missed seven of their last eight shots.

Sibert's two free throws tied it at 53-53 with 1:02 left, and his long three-pointer gave the Flyers a 56-55 lead with 34 sec-

onds to go.

After Montigo Alford missed a driving bank shot, Pollard got the rebound, was fouled and missed both free throws with 14 seconds left, giving the Broncos a final shot. Marks leaned into Kyle Davis to draw contact on the final attempt, which missed everything.

"I made a move and I missed the shot," he said. "The ref didn't call it."

Marks had a three-pointer and a pair of driving layups during a 14-0 run that put Boise State ahead 29-17 late in the first half. With Sibert on the bench with three fouls, the Flyers couldn't generate points.

The senior guard returned for the second half, and Dayton made seven of its first eight shots to take the lead. Scoochie Smith's back-to-back threes put the Flyers up 37-34.

The Broncos responded with a 13-1 run led by Marks. Also, Sibert picked up his fourth foul during the spurt, allowing Boise State to stay ahead until the end.



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DE Hardy reaches deal with Cowboys

The Associated Press

IRVING, Texas — The Dallas Cowboys made their big play in free agency with defensive end Greg Hardy. Now they wait to see how soon the former Carolina player will boost their mediocre pass rush.

With Hardy facing a league suspension for violating the NFL's domestic conduct policy, the team signed him Wednesday to a one-year deal valued at up to \$13.1 million if he meets incentives. A person with knowledge of the contract provided details on condition of anonymity because terms were not announced.

Hardy played just one game last season because he was placed on the commissioner's exempt list after a judge in North Carolina convicted him on domestic violence charges.

The case was thrown out on appeal when Hardy's accuser couldn't be located to testify, and the NFL filed a lawsuit Wednesday seeking evidence from the trial. League spokesman Greg Aiello said Hardy's status was still "being reviewed for potential discipline."

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said the contract was "heavily weighted toward his participation in games" after the team spent weeks researching Hardy's background.

"Obviously a great deal of our study was dedicated to the issue of domestic violence, and the recent events that associated Greg with that issue," Jones said. "Our organization understands the very serious nature of domestic violence in our society and in our league. We know that Greg has a firm understanding of those issues as well."

The league is seeking evidence from Hardy's case through North Carolina's open

records laws after prosecutors refused to release anything. His ex-girlfriend testified Hardy threw her in a bathroom and onto a futon filled with guns and threatened to kill her.

Hardy denied the allegations in his testimony, and prosecutors say he reached a civil suit agreement with the accuser.

Without evidence from the trial, it could be difficult for the NFL to enforce a tougher personal-conduct policy approved by owners after Hardy's conviction. First-time violations involving assault, sexual assault and domestic violence can result in six-game suspensions.

The 26-year-old Hardy tied a Carolina club record with 15 sacks in 2013, and made \$13.1 million on the franchise tag last season despite playing just one game.

NFL reviews replay

NEW YORK — Significant changes to the use of video replay in the NFL, including reviewing all fouls called by game officials, will be presented by the league's competition committee at next week's owners meetings.

In all, there are 13 proposals on the table to amend the NFL's instant replay rules.

The Detroit Lions have proposed reviewing all penalties called by game officials, including pass interference and holding calls, personal fouls, penalties against defenseless players, any foul that results in an automatic first down and clock issues.

New England suggested that everything except scoring plays or turnovers be challengeable. Washington, meanwhile, proposed increasing a coach's number of challenges from two to three.

Even stadium-produced video could be used to correct officiating errors if a suggestion by Tennessee is approved.

Currently, no penalties are reviewable. Detroit felt burned when a flag against the Dallas defense for pass interference was immediately rescinded during the Lions' playoff loss in January.

Also to be discussed in Phoenix will be a proposal by the Patriots to place fixed cameras on all boundary lines. That would guarantee coverage of the goal lines, end lines and sidelines regardless of where cameras are positioned.

Other proposals include moving the extra point attempt to the 15-yard line; guaranteeing both teams a possession in overtime even if one scores a touchdown on its first drive; and a scenario that gives teams that successfully convert a 2-point conversion the chance to immediately add another point from midfield with a "bonus field goal."

Indianapolis came up with the latter idea, which, if approved, would turn a nine-point deficit into a one-possession game.

The Colts also proposed allowing teams to open a retractable roof at halftime, weather permitting.

Vonn wins super-G

MERIBEL, France — Lindsey Vonn won the World Cup super-G title for the fifth time after winning the last race in the discipline on Thursday at the season-ending finals.

The day after clinching the downhill title, the 30-year-old American extended her record number of crystal globes in women's Alpine skiing to 19, equaling

Swedish great Ingemar Stenmark's total.

"I never imagined I'd have so many," said Vonn, who battled back this season from two career-threatening knee injuries. "To tie with Stenmark is pretty incredible."

With 67 race wins, also a women's record, Vonn is still some way behind Stenmark's 86 wins in men's skiing.

Vonn held a slender eight-point lead over rival Anna Fenninger heading into the race, and was under pressure after the world super-G champion posted the fastest time. Vonn was only .01 second ahead at the first time split but then pushed it to .41 ahead at the second.

Despite landing awkwardly after a jump, Vonn kept accelerating and finished .49 clear of Fenninger, who gained some ground on Tina Maze in the race for the overall title. Maze finished third.

Boeheim to appeal

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said Thursday he will appeal "unduly harsh" NCAA sanctions for violations that occurred over a decade and that 2018 is the "right time" to retire.

Boeheim said some of the NCAA's allegations laid out in a scathing report earlier this month are inaccurate.

"This is far from a program where student-athletes freely committed academic fraud," Boeheim said. "I believe the penalty is unduly harsh."

The NCAA punished Boeheim and Syracuse for academic, benefits and other violations that officials said showed the university had lost control of the athletic department.

The violations have blemished the final chapter of Boeheim's decorated career.

Blackhawks blank Rangers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Brad Richards has spent many nights on the ice at Madison Square Garden, playing with and against the New York Rangers. His latest appearance provided quite a lasting memory.

Richards broke a scoreless deadlock 7:19 into the third period, and young Chicago teammate Scott Darling made 25 saves in his first outing at the "World's Most Famous Arena" as the Blackhawks edged the Rangers 1-0 on Wednesday night for their fourth straight win.

Richards spent three seasons with the Rangers before having the final six years of his contract bought out after New York's trip to the Stanley Cup finals in 2014.

"Tonight was a little special," the veteran forward said. "It's a bonus to get one in this building against them, but not in a bad way. I have nothing bad to say about the organization or New York. Everyone knows how much I love playing here."

"It was pretty cool to score against them and win the game."

Right after Rangers defenseman Dan Boyle rang a shot off the crossbar behind Darling, Richards got the puck in front of the New York net, waited patiently and snapped a shot past Cam Talbot for his 11th goal.

"We hit the crossbar, and not even 20 seconds after we're losing the game," said Rangers forward Derick Brassard, who scored in overtime on March 8 at Chicago to give the Rangers a 1-0 win.

The Blackhawks stretched their winning streak to four and snapped the Eastern

Conference-leading Rangers' run at five wins.

Richards has five career goals against New York. His latest was enough to make a winner of Darling, who played for just the third time since Dec. 13. He improved to 7-3 and earned his first NHL shutout in 10 career games.

Talbot, who stopped 30 shots, had been 5-0-1 with a 1.00 goals-against average in his previous six games. He hasn't allowed more than two goals in a game in his last seven appearances.

"I felt really good again," Talbot said. "I felt like I was seeing the puck well and controlling the puck. It's tough when a guy like Richie gets that much time in the slot. You almost have to try to wait him out, but it was a tough situation and he made a nice play."

Ducks 3, Kings 2 (OT): Ryan Kesler scored 45 seconds into overtime, and host Anaheim rallied from another third-period deficit in the final Freeway Faceoff meeting of the regular season.

Patrick Maroon and Jakob Silfverberg scored third-period goals for the Ducks, who took four of five in this lively rivalry. John Gibson made 29 saves as Anaheim took sole possession of the overall NHL lead with 97 points after rallying for its NHL-best 12th comeback victory when trailing after two periods this season.

Blue Jackets 4, Oilers 3 (SO): Alexander Wennberg scored the shootout winner for visiting Columbus.

David Savard, Ryan Johansen and Mark Letestu scored in regulation for the Blue Jackets (31-35-4), who have won four of their last five.

NBA-best Warriors cruise past Hawks

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Golden State Warriors whipped perfect passes through the lane that led to pretty shots and plenty of high-flying dunks.

Once unselfish Golden State got it going on both ends, the Hawks had a hard time keeping up in a matchup of the NBA's top two teams.

Harrison Barnes scored 25 points, Andre Iguodala added 21 points and six assists, and the Warriors cruised past Atlanta 114-95 on Wednesday night to maintain the league's best record.

"We obviously wanted to beat them tonight because they gave us a whooping in Atlanta," Stephen Curry said. "It was a fun night."

Curry had 16 points and 12 assists, Draymond Green contributed 18 points and Andrew Bogut grabbed 14 rebounds as balanced Golden State maintained the best record in the league (54-13) with its 10th straight win at home.

The Hawks were denied again in a chance to clinch their first division title since the 1993-94 season as Washington won at Utah.

Cavaliers 117, Nets 92: J.R. Smith and Timofey Mozgov scored 17 points apiece, Kyrie Irving had 10 assists and Cleveland shook off a slow start to beat Brooklyn for its 14th straight win at home.

Heat 108, Trail Blazers 104: Dwyane Wade scored 15 of his 32 points in the

fourth quarter, including a jumper with 13.6 seconds left to break a tie and help Miami beat visiting Portland.

Thunder 122, Celtics 118: Russell Westbrook scored 36 points to help host Oklahoma City snap Boston's five-game winning streak.

Raptors 105, Timberwolves 100: Jonas Valanciunas had 15 points and 15 rebounds, DeMar DeRozan scored 21 and Toronto won its 11th straight home game over short-handed Minnesota.

Spurs 114, Bucks 103: Danny Green scored 20 points and Tim Duncan added 19 points and seven assists as San Antonio beat host Milwaukee.

Bulls 103, Pacers 86: Rookie forward Nikola Mirotic scored 20 of his 25 points in the second half, Mike Dunleavy added 21 points and Pau Gasol had 19 points and 12 rebounds to lead short-handed Chicago over visiting Indiana.

Mavericks 107, Magic 102: Dirk Nowitzki scored 25 points and host Dallas withstood a fourth-quarter meltdown, beating lowly Orlando for its third straight win.

Clippers 116, Kings 105: Chris Paul had 30 points and 11 assists as visiting Los Angeles defeated slumping Sacramento.

Wizards 88, Jazz 84: John Wall scored 24 points and Washington extended its winning streak to five games with a victory over host Utah.

76ers 94, Pistons 83: Ish Smith scored 15 points to pace a balanced offense, and host Philadelphia snapped a four-game skid.