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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Mabus to retire as Navy secretary

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Ray Mabus told a congressional panel this week that he'll retire next year as secretary of the Navy, a post he's held for nearly eight years.

In testimony Tuesday before a subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, Mabus, former governor of Mississippi, told lawmakers the budget-related hearing would be his last encounter with the panel. He did not give a date when his retirement would take effect.

The 75th Navy secretary, Mabus, 67, was appointed by President Barack Obama in May 2009 and went on to become the longest-tenured leader of the Navy and the

Marine Corps since World War I.

A native of Ackerman, Miss., Mabus, a Democrat, became the state's youngest governor in more than 150 years, defeating Jack Reed and serving from 1988 to 1992. He was appointed U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia by President Bill Clinton, a position he held from 1994 to 1996.

Under Mabus, the Navy went from building fewer than five ships per year to placing an average of 14 ships under contract each year. The ramped-up production, amid constant budgetary constraints, will boost the Navy fleet to more than 300 ships by 2020.

Mabus also has been a controversial advocate for integrating women into military

positions that historically have been held by men.

Last month, Mabus came under scrutiny from members of the Senate Armed Services Committee for allowing men and women to continue to train separately at Marine boot camp just one month after he ordered Marine leadership to develop a plan for coed training. Mabus said that Marine leaders convinced him that men and women have a better chance for success if their training remained separate.

Mabus served two years in the Navy aboard a guided-missile cruiser and worked as a law clerk in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

US conducts submarine drill in the Arctic

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy's submarine force is setting up a temporary command center on a sheet of Arctic ice, where U.S. underwater capabilities will be put to the test in the increasingly strategic High North.

The five-week submarine drill coincides with separate war games in Norway called Cold Response involving 16,000 U.S. and NATO forces. Marines have been launching Stinger missiles and maneuvering tanks, and the Air Force has dispatched three B-52 Stratofortress bombers.

Together, the exercises underscore the emergence of the Arctic as an area of concern as melting ice caps raise the prospects for competition over vital undersea natural resources. The area could become a flashpoint between the U.S. and Russia.

"The Arctic environment plays a key role in national defense," said U.S. Submarine Forces commander Vice Adm.

Joseph E. Tofalo in a statement announcing the launch of Ice Exercise 2016. "With over a thousand miles of Arctic coastline, the U.S. has strong national security and homeland defense interests in the region."

The ICEX drill, which is being conducted in the Arctic Ocean, aims to evaluate the terrain and to assess the readiness of U.S. submarines operating under ice. It does not explicitly address concerns of a growing Russian military presence.

Still, Russian activity in the High North has grabbed the attention of top U.S. military commanders.

"We are facing a very challenging situation in the Arctic," European Command Gen. Philip Breedlove told lawmakers last week. "Many of our NATO allies, Canada and the U.S. are concerned about what we see as the militarization of the Arctic now by Russia."

Since 2008, Russia has been steadily upgrading its forces in the Arctic: reopening air bases, restoring air-defense radar stations and building new sub-

marines. The moves are all in response to new security challenges brought on by melting ice and the prospect of new shipping lanes.

Moscow's actions reflect a focus on "goals beyond the Arctic region," the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said in a recent report examining Russian military capabilities and intentions in the region.

"Thus, the significant rise in Russia's military activities in the Arctic in 2014-15 should not be seen as reflecting Russia's ambitions for the region as such; instead it is, to a much larger extent, a manifestation of the long-term policy of modernization and restructuring of the Russian armed forces as a whole," stated the February study.

Yet, while deteriorating relations between Russia and the West have resulted in "forceful security rhetoric on the Arctic" by Russian officials, there is little sign that Moscow intends to spur conflict in the region. Russia also has sought

out ways to cooperate, such as search-and-rescue operations, SIPRI said.

On Wednesday, a Navy team began work on a temporary camp that will include a command post and housing for more than 70 personnel.

In all, the exercise will involve some 200 participants.

Critics say the U.S. military is not preparing fast enough for the situation created by the melting ice, especially as other nations — including Russia, Norway and Canada — establish regional commands or send more warships to train in the Arctic. Few, if any, surface Navy ships are hardened for the region. Still, U.S. nuclear submarines — the world's most advanced — have operated under Arctic ice for decades and have significant combat capability.

Meanwhile, U.S. land forces have been busy working on their combat tactics in icy conditions. Marines and other troops are working in Norway with allies in a large-scale exercise designed to test warfighting skills.

Pentagon recruiting hackers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is looking for a few good computer hackers.

Screened high-tech specialists will be brought in to try to breach the Defense Department's public Internet pages in a pilot program aimed at finding and fixing cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

According to the Pentagon, it is the first time the federal government has undertaken a program with outsiders attempting to breach the networks. Large companies have done similar things.

Defense officials laid out the broad outlines of the plan Wednesday, but had few details on how it will work, what Pentagon systems would be tested and how the hackers would be compensated.

Called "Hack the Pentagon,"

the program will begin next month. Department officials and lawyers still must work through a number of legal issues involving the authorization of so-called "white-hat hackers" to breach active Pentagon websites.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter said he will be "inviting responsible hackers to test our cybersecurity," adding that he believes the program will "strengthen our digital defenses and ultimately enhance our national security."

Speaking at a tech industry event in San Francisco, Carter said the idea came from Silicon Valley, where tech companies offer financial rewards or bounties for finding vulnerabilities.

"We're trying to adopt what is a best practice," he said. "It's a way of crowdsourcing the expertise and having access to good people. ... You'd much

rather find the vulnerabilities in your networks in that way" — rather than wait for malicious hackers to steal information or compromise a system.

Defense Department systems get probed and attacked millions of times a day, officials say.

The new program is being led by the Defense Digital Service, which was created by Carter last November.

Officials said the pilot program will involve public networks or websites that do not have any sensitive information or personal employee data on them.

It is being called a "bounty" program and Carter said the hackers would get some kind of reward, beyond the distinction of having beached the world's greatest military's systems. But he didn't provide details.

Mozambique debris on path of lost jetliner

Associated Press

SYDNEY — Debris that washed ashore in Mozambique that may be from missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 turned up in a spot that matches investigators' theories about where wreckage from the plane would have ended up, Australian officials said Thursday.

Photos of the debris discovered during the weekend appear to show the fixed leading edge of the right-hand tail section of a Boeing 777, said a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly. Flight 370, which disappeared two years ago with 239 people aboard, is the only known missing 777.

The plane is believed to have crashed somewhere in a remote stretch of the southern Indian Ocean far off Australia's west coast and about 3,700 miles to the east of Mozambique. But authorities have long predicted that any debris from the plane that isn't on the ocean floor eventually would be carried by currents to the east coast of Africa.

Australian Transport Minister Darren Chester reiterated that opinion Thursday, saying the location of the debris in Mozambique matches investigators' drift modeling and therefore would confirm that search crews are looking in the right part of the Indian Ocean for the main underwater wreckage. Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai also said the location of the debris lined up with investigators' predictions.

People who have handled the part, called a horizontal stabilizer, say it appears to be made of fiberglass composite on the outside, with aluminum honeycombing on the inside, the U.S. official said.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau said the part was expected to be transported to Australia for examination.

Romney urges GOP to shun Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's nomination as the Republican presidential candidate would "greatly diminish" prospects for a safe and prosperous future for the United States, former Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney said in a stinging speech on Thursday.

Romney said the other Republican candidates would be better alternatives to the billionaire businessman, whom he called "a phony, a fraud."

The race for the GOP nomination, dominated by insults and name-calling, has seen Trump's once-unlikely candidacy morph into an increasingly strong bid for his party's nomination for the November election.

"The only serious policy proposals that deal with the broad range of national challenges we confront today come from Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and John Kasich," Romney said of Trump's rivals. "One of these

men should be our nominee."

Romney was relentless in his criticism, saying Trump "is not the temperament of a stable, thoughtful leader. His imagination must not be married to real power."

Earlier Thursday, Trump dismissed Romney as "a stiff" who "didn't know what he was doing" as the party's candidate in 2012. "People are energized by what I'm saying" and turning out in remarkable numbers to vote, Trump told NBC.

The back-and-forth comes as Republican candidates prepared for the first post-Super Tuesday debate, scheduled for Thursday night. Trump is coming under increasing pressure from his party as he fights for the majority of the party's delegates.

Romney said a Trump nomination at the party's convention in July would enable Democrat Hillary Clinton to win. Romney also criticized Clinton, accusing her and her husband, former President Bill Clinton, of per-

sonally profiting from their positions of power.

Arizona Sen. John McCain, the Republican nominee in 2008, issued a statement endorsing Romney's remarks. Trump had dismissed McCain's war-hero status for his imprisonment by the enemy during the Vietnam War.

Panicked Republican leaders say they still have options for preventing Trump from winning the nomination, just not many good ones. They include a contested convention and even a third party option.

Also Thursday, dozens of conservative national security experts warned that Trump is unfit to be commander in chief.

Former Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and more than 70 others called Trump's "embrace of the expansive use of torture" inexcusable. They also object to what they say is Trump's "hateful, anti-Muslim rhetoric" and his advocacy for waging trade wars.

Terps stumble toward finish

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Maryland is struggling at a time when it should be nearing its peak.

Coach Mark Turgeon apparently is not at all worried, given his response Wednesday when reminded that the 14th-ranked Terrapins have lost three of four.

"We've won one out of two, haven't we?" Turgeon said with a grin.

True enough, yet Maryland fell out of contention for the Big Ten title with a loss at Purdue on Saturday. The defeat also blunted the momentum created by a win over Michigan.

So, the Terrapins (23-6, 11-5) have indeed won one of two heading into Thursday night's home finale against Illinois. Prior to that, though, Maryland lost at home to Wisconsin and on the road against lowly Minnesota.

Senior forward Jake Layman, who was to be among those honored Thursday before his final home game, said, "It's time for us to take the next step forward and just start playing."

Turgeon believes there's time for Maryland to catch fire before March Madness gets under way.

"I feel good about our team," he said. "Hopefully what we went through is going to make us a better team in March. That's all you can hope for."

The schedule of late has been kind to the Terrapins, who have played only once since Feb. 21. That means plenty of time in the gym, working out the kinks in lengthy practice sessions.

"We've got to be where we're playing our best basketball, and we're making some pretty good strides toward that," Turgeon said. "I know it doesn't look that way, maybe, if you look at what we've done. But we've had some time to practice and I feel like we're getting ready to really start playing well, whether it's going to be this week, next week or the week after."

Turgeon hopes the time off will be helpful to guard Melo Trimble, who's 11-for-37 from the field in his last four games. The sophomore guard logged 146 of 160 possible minutes over that span and was really in need of a break.

"This week in practice he shot it well. I think he's getting his legs back underneath him," Turgeon said. "He was playing a lot of minutes."

The Terrapins are also looking for a bounce-back performance from junior forward Robert Carter, who has reached double figures in only one of his last five games.

"We need him," Turgeon said. "When he plays well, we win."

Trimble and Carter are important contributors, but it's going to take a collective effort for the Terrapins to make something good happen in March and overcome the disappointment of being eliminated from contention in the Big Ten title chase.

"That's fine. We still have some things we know we can be better at and we still have some goals we can achieve this year," senior Rasheed Sulaimon said. "We're just going to try to finish the best we can."

Falcons release WR White

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Falcons have released Roddy White, who holds the franchise career records for most catches, receiving yards and touchdown catches.

White's role in the offense declined in 2015 under first-year coach Dan Quinn and offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan. The Falcons announced the release of the 34-year-old White on Wednesday in a statement which included glowing compliments from team owner Arthur Blank, general manager Thomas Dimitroff and Quinn.

White was only fourth on the team with 43 catches last season, his lowest total since 2006, his second season.

In other NFL news:

■ Arian Foster's time with the Houston Texans has ended after seven seasons.

The four-time Pro Bowler, who was scheduled to make \$6.5 million this season, was released Thursday after a season where he missed 12 games with groin and Achilles tendon injuries.

■ The Baltimore Ravens and Joe Flacco have agreed on a contract extension that will keep the quarterback with the team through the 2021 season.

Terms of the new deal were not immediately available.

■ The Carolina Panthers have released longtime defensive end Charles Johnson, a move that will save the team \$11 million under the 2016 NFL salary cap.

■ Kirk Cousins' agent, Mike McCartney, said the quarterback has accepted the Washington Redskins' franchise tender, giving him a one-year contract for next season.

■ New England announced Wednesday it has released tight end Scott Chandler and wide receiver Brandon LaFell.

Chandler, 30, signed with the Patriots last March, while the 29-year-old LaFell signed with the Patriots as a free agent from Carolina in 2014.

■ A person familiar with the decision said Browns Pro Bowl center Alex Mack is voiding the final three years of his contract and will become a free agent.

Mack was set to make \$24 million over the next three years, but chose to opt out of the deal, said the person who spoke Wednesday to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks.

■ NFL union lawyers who want New England quarterback Tom Brady to put "Deflategate" behind him for good were ready to make their pitch to three New York federal appeals judges.

NFL lawyers were asking the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan on Thursday to reinstate a four-game suspension the league handed Brady.

If the league wins, Brady may have to sit out the start of the upcoming season. If the union wins, it is likely he will play.

Neither NFL commissioner Roger Goodell nor Brady were to be in court Thursday. It is unlikely the court will rule for weeks.

Indians optimistic about rotation

Associated Press

GOODYEAR, Ariz. — They throw hard, they throw strikes and could be together for quite some time.

The Cleveland Indians have one of the deepest starting rotations in the major leagues, a potent and still young group whose top four include the 2014 AL Cy Young Award winner, a pair of power pitchers who both won 14 games last season and a former first-round draft pick.

As a group last season, Corey Kluber, Danny Salazar, Carlos Carrasco and Trevor Bauer made the Indians only the third team since 1920 to have four pitchers with at least 170 strikeouts.

"There's been times, we've all seen it with some of our younger pitchers, where they've made youthful mistakes," manager Terry Francona said. "But they also look really healthy and are throwing the ball good, and they work hard. Besides Kluber winning a Cy Young, hard to outdo that, but we all think there's room for all of them to grow."

Kluber is the only of that quartet of right-handers who will be 30 or older this season — his birthday is on the day of Cleveland's scheduled sixth game and possibly his second start. Each of the four has a contract that could keep him with the Indians through at least 2020.

"We're young, and we have so much energy, like the whole team," Salazar said.

"I guess it just kind of puts the pressure on me to not mess this up," catcher Yan Gomes said with a grin. "It's great, because we're all fairly young and we've

all come up together. ... Just seeing how much they've grown already, the sky's the limit right now. They're going to keep going."

While Cleveland didn't live up to its huge expectations last year, finishing only one game over .500 and third in the AL Central, all those blossoming pitchers were part of a staff with an AL-high 1,407 strikeouts.

Now Cleveland needs to find some offense to support all of that good pitching. The Indians ranked 11th in the AL in runs scored, averaging 4.15 per game last season. Kluber paid for the lack of help more than anyone as the Indians averaged 3.3 runs for him and scored two or fewer runs in 21 of his 32 starts.

After going 18-9 with a 2.44 ERA in 2014, Kluber got a \$38.5 million contract through 2019 that includes two additional team options. In the first year of that deal, he went 9-16, missed three weeks last September with a strained right hamstring and then lost three starts before striking out nine and allowing three hits over eight innings in a 2-0 win over Boston in his season finale.

"Obviously, there's nobody on our pitching staff that's got 10 years of service or anything like that, but that doesn't mean that I don't think we have guys that have gained experience," said Kluber, who has 514 strikeouts in 457²/₃ innings in 66 starts the past two seasons. "We're going to try to help each other. It doesn't have to be just one person giving advice to everybody else, it can be a group effort to

try as a whole to become better."

Carrasco, who turns 29 on March 21, went to Cleveland in the July 2009 deal that sent Cliff Lee to Philadelphia. He also got a new contract early last season — \$22 million through 2018 and team options for an additional two seasons. He went 14-12 with a 3.63 ERA in 30 starts.

Salazar, signed out of the Dominican Republic a decade ago, also made 30 starts and was 14-10 with a 3.45 ERA, and his first free agency year isn't until 2021, like Bauer. The third overall pick by Arizona in 2011, the 25-year-old Bauer went 11-12 with 170 strikeouts in 176 innings after his call-up last May.

The fifth starter will likely be Cody Anderson or Josh Tomlin, who at 31 is the elder statesman among the starting group. After recovering from shoulder surgery and making his season debut in mid-August, Tomlin was 7-2 with a 3.02 ERA and two complete games in 10 starts. Anderson was 7-3 with a 3.05 ERA in 15 starts.

Pitching coach Mickey Callaway believes his entire group is consistent because they are so routine-driving and routine-oriented while in spring training and during the season. Callaway said coaches have certain expectations for the pitchers, who hold each other accountable.

"It takes the right people," Callaway said. "And we've got the right guys that can do it."



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Spurs lock up playoff berth

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — A month away from home did little to slow the San Antonio Spurs.

Kawhi Leonard scored 27 points and LaMarcus Aldridge added 23 points and 10 rebounds as the Spurs beat the Detroit Pistons 97-81 on Wednesday night to clinch their 19th straight playoff berth.

"[Kawhi] and LaMarcus were really offensive juggernauts for us," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "They did a great job."

San Antonio won its 29th straight home game to open the season in its first game following a month-long road trip brought on by the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo.

The Spurs (51-9) joined the Golden State Warriors (54-5) as the only teams to clinch spots in the postseason.

The Spurs did not know and did not care about making the playoffs.

"Not really," Aldridge said. "It's not about that. This is my first year here, but even for me it's not about that. I think we have a bigger picture in mind."

Leonard and Aldridge excelled against a Detroit team thinned by injuries to forwards Anthony Tolliver and Stanley Johnson. They combined to shoot 23-for-38 from the field with Leonard scoring 17 points in the first half and Aldridge putting up 15 in the final two quarters.

"They were playing well, so we kept giving them the ball," Spurs point guard Tony Parker said.

Marcus Morris and Tobias Harris had

16 points each for the Pistons (31-30), who had a four-game winning streak snapped.

Aldridge and Tim Duncan held Detroit center Andre Drummond to nine points and 14 rebounds, ending his career-high and the league's season-high run of consecutive double-doubles at 13.

Drummond had six points in the first half as Detroit had 14 assists on its 22 baskets. That ball movement ended at halftime as the Pistons had just five assists in a 30-point second half.

"The ball just stuck," said Detroit point guard Reggie Jackson, who had 11 points and three assists. "The ball stuck and they're the best defensive team in the league, so they made us pay for not really making them work. They got out in transition and they just played ball."

Aldridge, Duncan and Parker knocked down a series of mid-range jumpers in scoring four points each in a 12-2 run beginning early in the third quarter. Aldridge had 13 points in the quarter, coming within a point of matching Detroit's total in the period as San Antonio built a double-digit lead for the first time in the game.

Duncan had 12 points and eight rebounds and Parker finished with 10 points and four assists.

"We just quit moving the ball in the second half," Detroit coach Stan Van Gundy said. "We weren't ready to play to start the third quarter. They came out with a lot more energy."

Marcus Morris and Tobias Harris had 16 points each for the Pistons (31-30).

Clippers 103, Thunder 98: Oklahoma

City took the court hours after the death of part-owner Aubrey McClendon and squandered a 22-point lead in a loss to the Los Angeles Clippers.

Rockets 100, Pelicans 95: James Harden had 39 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists to help Houston overcome miserable shooting in a victory over visiting New Orleans.

Nuggets 117, Lakers 107: D.J. Augustin scored 22 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter to lead Denver past visiting Los Angeles.

Raptors 104, Jazz 94: Kyle Lowry scored 32 points as Toronto beat Utah for a club-record 11th straight home win.

Magic 102, Bulls 89: Nikola Vucevic scored 24 points and rookie Mario Hezonja added a career-high 21 as host Orlando beat Chicago.

Wizards 104, Timberwolves 98: Bradley Beal scored 26 points to lead visiting Washington to a fourth straight victory.

Celtics 116, Trail Blazers 93: Isaiah Thomas had 30 points to lead host Boston to a fourth straight win.

Grizzlies 104, Kings 98: Mike Conley scored 24 points to lead Memphis to a victory over visiting Sacramento.

Pacers 104, Bucks 99: Jordan Hill had 19 points and Indiana survived a last-minute rally to defeat host Milwaukee and end a three-game losing streak.

Hornets 119, 76ers 99: Kemba Walker scored 30 points and Cody Zeller had 15 to lead Charlotte to a victory over host Philadelphia.

Spartans roll over Rutgers

Associated Press

PISCATAWAY, N.J. — Bryn Forbes scored a career-high 33 points, hitting a conference record 11 three-pointers, and No. 2 Michigan State woke up in the second half to rout Rutgers 97-66 on Wednesday night, handing the Scarlet Knights their 17th straight loss.

Eron Harris added 15 points, Denzel Valentine 14 for the Spartans (25-5, 12-5 Big Ten), who made 16 three-pointers in winning their fifth straight game and ninth in 10. Matt Costello had 10 points and matched his career-best with 15 rebounds.

Forbes' 11th three-pointer broke the single-game record of 10 set by John Diebler of Ohio State against Penn State in 2011.

If Michigan State beats Ohio State on Saturday in its regular-season finale it will earn a double bye in the conference's upcoming tournament and the No. 2 seed.

Corey Sanders, who was returning from a four-game suspension, had 19 points for Rutgers (6-23, 0-17).

No. 7 Miami 68, Notre Dame 50: Angel Rodriguez matched his season high with 19 points, Sheldon McClellan added 17 and the visiting Hurricanes jumped to an early 18-point lead and beat the Fighting Irish to move back into a tie with North Carolina for first-place in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Miami (24-5, 13-4) held Notre Dame (19-10, 10-7) to a season-low 34 percent shooting as the Fighting Irish struggled offensively for the fourth straight game, losing three of those. The Hurricanes also had a 39-16 advantage in rebounds and a 32-24 edge in points in the paint.

Zach Auguste led the Irish with 18 points and 11 rebounds and Bonzie Colson add 11 points. The Hurricanes jumped to a 21-3 lead early and never let the Irish get any closer than seven points.

No. 9 Oregon 76, UCLA 68: Tyler Dorsey scored 20 points and the visiting Ducks rallied in the second half to beat the Bruins and earn at least a share of the Pac-12 title for the first time since 2002.

Dillon Brooks added 15 points, and Elgin Cook had 14 points, making all six of his free throws for Oregon (24-6, 13-4 Pac-12), which won its fourth in a row and 10th in 12 games. Dorsey had a team-high nine rebounds, helping the Ducks control the boards, 40-28.

Isaac Hamilton scored 19 points, Tony Parker added 18, and Bryce Alford 16 points for UCLA (15-15, 6-11). The Bruins have lost three straight and six of eight with one game remaining in the regular season.

No. 10 West Virginia 90, Texas Tech 68: Senior Jaysean Paige and Daxter Miles Jr. each scored 15 points and the Mountaineers closed out their home regular season on senior night by trouncing the Red Raiders.

Paige was honored pregame with fellow seniors Jonathan Holton and Richard Romeo III. He connected on 7 of 15 field goals, grabbed five rebounds and had five assists.

A sixth man, Paige was averaging a team-leading 14.3 points per game heading into this Big 12 conference game. No reserve has ever led the Mountaineers in scoring.

The victory for the Mountaineers (23-7, 12-5) keeps them in sole possession of second place in the Big 12 with a game to go at No. 19 Baylor Saturday.

Ducks move into tie for division lead

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Jamie McGinn knew he was jumping into the middle of something special when he joined the Anaheim Ducks this week.

The team that hit the Christmas break in last place in the Pacific Division is now tied for first, and McGinn immediately played a role in the Ducks' latest surge up the standings.

McGinn scored in his Ducks debut, Jakob Silfverberg got the only goal in the shootout, and Anaheim beat the Montreal Canadiens 3-2 on Wednesday night for its ninth consecutive victory.

Corey Perry scored the tying power-play goal with 9:09 to play for the Ducks, who have won 18 of 21 to streak into a first-place tie with Los Angeles atop the Pacific. They overcame a slow start after getting a heady first goal from McGinn, who enjoyed his first taste of the Ducks' high-octane hockey.

"It's definitely good to get (the first goal) out of the way quick," McGinn said. "That's what hockey is all about, is getting a chance to play in the playoffs and play for the Cup. You can't ask for much more, so this is exactly what I want to do. This is where I want to be, and make a nice run."

McGinn made an immediate impact in his first game since Anaheim acquired him from Buffalo at the trade deadline. He scored his 15th goal of the season during the second period, setting up in front of Mike Condon and corralling a puck from Hampus Lindholm before popping it in.

The Ducks earned a point in their 11th straight game and moved one shy of the longest winning streak in club history, a 10-game run in December 2013. Anaheim hasn't lost since Feb. 11 and has just one regulation defeat since Jan. 17.

"We dug ourselves a hole early," Perry said. "It's nice to see where we've come. But at the end of the day, you still have 20 games left. You have to go out and keep pushing."

All-Star John Gibson stopped 25 shots and all three Montreal shootout attempts to remain unbeaten since Feb. 8.

Alex Galchenyuk scored two goals and Condon made 32 saves for the Canadiens, who largely played well in their second straight loss to open a West Coast road trip. Galchenyuk scored in the first period and again early in the third, giving him 19 goals this season and five in Montreal's last four games. The 22-year-old American was omitted from the early roster choices for the team of North American 23-and-under players headed to the World Cup of Hockey in Toronto later this year.

"I don't know," Galchenyuk said when asked if he was thinking about the snub. "Obviously, it was disappointing. You want to be out there and on that list, but that's how things go sometimes."

The Ducks improved to 9-2-2 in their last 13 meetings with Montreal, but had little of their regular spark early. Anaheim failed to score during four minutes of power-play time stemming from a prolonged scrum in the corner during the second period.

Montreal coach Michel Therrien got a bench minor for his comments to officials after defenseman Greg Pateryn needed 12 stitches following a hit from behind, but his team killed the entire disadvantage.

"It was a bad judgment call by the referee," Therrien said. "I can't be behind the bench and see one of our players get hit from behind and end up having 12 stitches and the referee don't make any call. I can't sit behind the bench and not let those guys know."

After Montreal defenseman Morgan

Ellis took a penalty late in his NHL debut, the Ducks scored a power-play goal in their ninth consecutive game when David Perron made a slick cross-ice pass to set up Perry for his 27th.

Perron has 17 points in 19 games with his new team — one more than he scored in 43 games with Pittsburgh before he was traded.

Capitals 3, Maple Leafs 2: Matt Niskanen and the NHL's top power play unit cashed in as host Washington outlasted youthful and overmatched Toronto.

The Capitals reached 98 points for the season and matched the 1995-96 Detroit Red Wings for the most victories through 63 games with 47. The Maple Leafs remained in last place in the league with 52 points.

Niskanen's winner came after Washington relinquished a 2-0 lead built on goals by Taylor Chorney and Alex Ovechkin. Nikita Soshnikov scored his first NHL goal, and Colin Greening scored his second of the season for the Maple Leafs.

Blackhawks 5, Red Wings 2: Patrick Kane had a goal and an assist 1:24 apart on power plays in the second period, and Artemi Panarin scored twice to help Chicago rout host Detroit.

Kane finished with three points, extending his NHL-leading total to 88 to match his career high set during the 2009-10 season.

Corey Crawford didn't give up a goal until midway through the third period when Brad Richards scored. Gustav Nyquist had Detroit's other goal.

Andrew Ladd restored the three-goal lead in the third period in his second game back with the Blackhawks. Panarin scored his second goal 35 seconds later. Brent Seabrook also scored for Chicago.