

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## General urges more 'pressure' on Taliban

*The Washington Post*

The former commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan pressed civilian leaders in the months before he left Kabul to expand the American role there, shedding light on what he called a slow and inefficient decision-making process as he prepares to retire.

Gen. John F. Campbell declined to detail the recommendations he had made to senior leaders before he stepped down this month, but he suggested that the United States may need to expand advisory missions with Afghan ground troops and take additional action against the Taliban, which is seeking to expand attacks against local forces.

"If you want to have pressure, if you want to drive [the Taliban] toward reconciliation ... I would believe they need to have more pressure put on them," Campbell said. "One way to do

it would be potentially striking.

"Now, I'm not advocating for 'Let's go back and be committed to a total war against the Taliban' ... but that is one way to go after them," he said. He declined to provide additional details about the nature of his proposed actions against the group.

Campbell, who spoke to reporters at the Pentagon about his nearly 37 years in the U.S. Army and his tenure as the top U.S. general in Afghanistan, hangs up his uniform as the U.S. military grapples with a sharp deterioration in security across Afghanistan, where Taliban and other militants are seeking to expand gains against local forces.

The modest U.S. force of 9,800 troops is now assigned to a dual mission, advising local forces and conducting counterterrorism operations against al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Under a plan announced

by President Barack Obama in 2014, that force is due to be reduced to 5,500 servicemembers by early next year.

Campbell expressed satisfaction at a series of White House decisions over the past 1½ years that allowed him to adjust the U.S. mission to reflect both the ongoing weaknesses of Afghanistan's military and the continued strength of the Taliban. He cited a series of steps approved by Obama since the fall of 2014, including the authorization of certain combat activities, permission to strike the Islamic State cell in Afghanistan as well as several moves to retain a larger U.S. force for a longer period.

But the general also voiced frustration at what he characterized as a painfully slow process chaired by the White House, which he said would often review potential actions over the course of repeated meetings. Campbell said he sat

in on sub-Cabinet, Cabinet and National Security Council meetings, often late into the night as he tuned in from Afghanistan.

"There were many times I would say, 'Why are we going over this again? I've already laid it out,'" he said. But, Campbell added, "Every time I got to President Obama, I got the decision I was really looking for.

"The frustration was just the process we have but ... it was kind of good and bad at the same time," he said.

Campbell suggested that his successor, Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr., might take up the case for his pending military recommendations.

"I think sort of the same things I asked for ... again, I don't want to speak for him, but I think he'd probably re-emphasize those," he said. "But I want to make sure we can get them done in a timely manner. Otherwise, it's not going to impact [2016]."

## US strikes Islamic State with artillery based in Jordan

*The Washington Post*

The Pentagon acknowledged Friday that ground-based rocket artillery fired from Jordan was used to strike targets in southern Syria recently, marking an expansion to U.S. ground operations in the war against the Islamic State group.

Col. Steven Warren, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition in the region, said a small detachment of U.S. High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, had fired a small salvo of rockets to support U.S.-backed Syrian forces fighting near the tri-border region of Syria, Iraq and Jordan.

Jordan has long supported U.S. and coalition operations in the region, allowing the U.S. to

use some bases to train Syrian rebels and providing their airfields for coalition air missions. The recent HIMARS strike, however, was the first time the Pentagon had acknowledged attacking the Islamic State group directly from within Jordan's borders.

According to U.S. strike assessments from that day, the rockets hit a series of Islamic State fighting positions south of the Syrian city of Palmyra.

Currently, HIMARS are also deployed in Iraq — specifically, at two U.S. bases in Anbar province along with a detachment of self-propelled artillery. The rockets, up until the recent strikes, had been used to support Iraqi troops fighting in and around Ramadi.

The rocket systems are manned by a crew of three and can fire three different type of rockets in pretty much any weather condition. There is a 203 mm unguided variant, a 203 mm guided variant, known as the GMLRS, and a 603 mm type called the ATACMS.

The strikes fired from Jordan used the GMLRS, the Pentagon said, which have a range of roughly 40 miles and are GPS-guided, allowing for precision strikes on stationary targets.

Warren noted that the HIMARS were used because for whatever reason it made more sense to employ a land-based system rather than an aircraft. This is likely due to the close proximity of the strike in relation to the Jordanian border.

However, it is unclear where the targeting data for the rocket strike came from. Artillery systems, rockets or otherwise, usually rely on observers on the ground to accurately attack targets. In the case of a GMLRS strike, the GPS data could have been transmitted by drone or by advanced targeting software that provides precise coordinates based off satellite imagery.

HIMARS were often used in Iraqi cities when U.S. troops were deployed there in earlier years. The ability to fire GPS-guided rockets into buildings with an accuracy similar to that of a precision-guided bomb dropped from aircraft was invaluable as air support wasn't always available.

# US relying on Iraq to hold detainees

By TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Iraq will provide long-term detention of captured Islamic State militants as U.S. special operations forces target leaders of the terrorist group in that country, the Pentagon said Friday.

“We’re confident [Iraq] can hold them,” said Col. Steve Warren, Baghdad-based spokesman for Operation Inherent Resolve. “And if some escape, you know, we’ll just go catch them again or kill them.”

But despite increased efforts to hunt Islamic State fighters, the United States will not build a long-term detention facility, Warren said. The focus is short-term detention and transfer to

other governments.

“We’re not equipped for long-term detention, we’re not set up here for that, and so we’re not in that business,” he said.

In December, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced he was sending about 200 U.S. special operations forces to Iraq as an “expeditionary targeting force” to free hostages and to capture or kill Islamic State fighters.

The force in February captured the leader of the Islamic State’s chemical weapons program, Sulayman Dawud al-Bakkar, also known as Abu Dawud.

They detained and interrogated him for several weeks, and information he provided led to an U.S. airstrike of two chemical weapons manufactur-

ing facilities near Mosul, U.S. officials said last week.

On Thursday, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook announced Abu Dawud had been transferred to the Iraqi government. He said the U.S. practice of holding prisoners for a short time before releasing them to another government likely will continue.

“I think that’s the best template right now for how this would be handled going forward,” Cook said.

Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., earlier had questioned whether the United States is losing valuable information by transferring terrorists after holding them for only a short time. More so, several Republican senators introduced a resolution Thursday

to send captured Islamic State fighters to the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

But President Barack Obama wants to close the Guantanamo prison, where captured militants from Iraq and Afghanistan had been housed.

Warren said Friday that U.S. forces can still question terrorists transferred to the Iraqi government, and that they have confidence in Iraq’s ability to hold the captured fighters.

“This is not a catch-and-release program,” he said. “We just give them to the Iraqis to hold. You know, if we’ve got to go back and talk to them, we’ll go back and talk to them.”

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## Iraq: Militant chemical attacks kill child

*Associated Press*

BAGHDAD — The Islamic State group has launched two chemical attacks near the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, killing a 3-year-old girl, wounding some 600 people and causing hundreds more to flee, Iraqi officials said Saturday.

Security and hospital officials said the latest attack took place early Saturday in the small town of Taza, which also was

struck by a barrage of rockets carrying chemicals three days earlier.

“There is fear and panic among the women and children,” said Adel Hussein, a local official in Taza. “They’re calling for the central government to save them.” Hussein said a German and an American forensics team arrived in the area to test for the presence of chemical agents.

The wounded are suffering from infected burns, suffocation and dehydration, said Helmi Hamdi, a nurse at the Taza hospital. He said eight people were transferred to Baghdad for treatment.

U.S. and Iraqi officials said that in a raid last month in northern Iraq, U.S. special operations forces captured the head of the Islamic State unit trying to develop chemical weapons.

## Miss., La. residents assess flood damage

COVINGTON, La. — Residents in Louisiana and Mississippi are taking stock of damage Saturday after a massive deluge submerged roads and cars, washed out bridges and forced residents to flee homes.

The rain and flooding is part of a weather system that has affected Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Alabama. At least three people have died in Louisiana alone.

In Mississippi, officials said as many as 1,000 residents could see their homes flooded by the rising Leaf River in Hattiesburg, Petal and surrounding areas.

In Louisiana’s St. Tammany Parish, officials late Friday asked people living near two rivers to consider evacuating because the rivers were rising to “historical proportions” because of heavy rains north of the area.

In southwest Louisiana, a band of rain dumped 10 to 15 inches of rain across some areas late Thursday and into Friday, sparking vicious flash flooding.

From The Associated Press

## Trump’s Chicago rally canceled; protesters cheer

*Associated Press*

CHICAGO — Hundreds of jubilant protesters chanted victory cries and jeered at glum Donald Trump supporters as they filed out of an auditorium where the Republican presidential candidate abruptly canceled a campaign rally Friday night.

Outside, the tenor of hours-long protests shifted when one protester passed on word of the cancellation through a megaphone on the campus of the ethnically diverse University of

Illinois at Chicago. The crowd roared in delight and began chanting: “We stopped Trump! We stopped Trump!”

The protesters closed in on the building, obstructing most of the exits just as Trump supporters began filing out. The Trump supporters had little choice but to push through the anti-Trump crowds that parted only slightly, yelling, “Racists go home!”

“I think it’s a great thing that happened,” Sierria Coleman, 28, a graduate student, said

about the cancellation. “To have (the Trump rally) at this school, for what this school stands for, is disrespectful.”

Trump supporter Bill Vail said he walked through a gantlet of protesters who cursed at him as he pushed through holding his 9-year-old daughter’s hand. She cried, he said.

“They scream about tolerance, but are being intolerant, themselves,” said Vail, 43, of the Chicago suburb of Oaklawn.

# Coaches plead for NCAA bid

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The campaigning. The stump speeches. The last-ditch pitches from the contenders, insisting they aren't paying attention to the pundits and prognosticators.

No, not presidential hopefuls. At this time of year, some college basketball coaches sound like political candidates searching for votes as they tout their teams' NCAA Tournament worthiness.

The selection committee is hard at work putting the bracket together in New York this weekend. The big reveal is Sunday, and it is not as if a coach's plea will sway the panel.

From the ACC to the WCC, coaches get asked: Do you think you're in? Have you done enough? And often they answer as if — maybe, just maybe — somebody important is listening.

"I think that at the end of the day, we're a team that not only can be in the NCAA Tournament, but win games in the NCAA Tournament," Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall said after his Shockers were eliminated from the Missouri Valley Conference Tournament last weekend.

Wichita State was one of several regular-season champions from mid-major conferences that didn't win league tournaments to lock up automatic NCAA bids. Monmouth (27-7) and St. Mary's (27-5) are in similar situations.

"We have one of the top five records in the country. The only thing we didn't do was beat Gonzaga three times. We beat them twice," St. Mary's coach Randy Bennett said after losing the West Coast Conference final to Gonzaga.

Wichita State (24-8) has been an NCAA

regular in recent years, but this season's team lost most of its marquee nonconference games and the MVC was not deep enough to give the Shockers a boost. The Shockers also played a chunk of their season without star point guard Fred VanVleet.

"I don't know what (our nonconference schedule is) ranked, somewhere between five to 15 in the country," Marshall said. "In the end, if you see teams that are better and had to deal with what we had to deal with, maybe they select them."

Syracuse (19-13) started the season with coach Jim Boeheim serving a nine-game NCAA suspension and lost a couple without him. After the Orange were bounced from the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament by Pittsburgh, Boeheim said he hoped the committee would not punish his team for his absence.

"The chairman of the committee said a coach not being there can be taken like a player not being there," Boeheim said. "How much is that important? I don't know. How much is that taken into consideration? I don't know. I know we've beaten four teams in the (RPI) top 30 or 35 in the country. We've beaten eight teams in the top 100. If there's teams better than that, so be it. We'll see what happens."

The Atlantic 10 Tournament featured a few teams that came into the weekend at Barclays Center needing to shore up at-large resumes.

George Washington coach Mike Lonergan knew his team was teetering on the edge, but said a victory Friday against St. Joseph's should have been good enough to get the Colonials into the NCAA Tournament.

After GW (23-10) lost to St. Joe's,

Lonergan seemed resigned to the Colonials being NIT-bound. Still, he restated his case and hoped that maybe GW's best victories would look even better by Sunday.

"I'm not going to lie to you: I'll be cheering for Seton Hall and Virginia and even Tennessee," Lonergan said.

Seton Hall and Virginia won Friday. The Volunteers lost to LSU, another team hoping to squeeze in. The Tigers (19-13) on Saturday face Texas A&M, the Southeastern Conference's top seed.

"We feel that we're in a very powerful league. We hope that that stands for something, and it will certainly carry some weight," LSU coach Johnny Jones said.

Georgia (19-12) advanced in the SEC by beating South Carolina and will face Kentucky in the semifinals.

"There's a lot of teams that didn't challenge themselves with the schedule. We could've played a bunch of cupcakes, but we didn't," Georgia coach Mark Fox said.

St. Joe's (25-7) is probably safe now, having avoided a three-game losing streak to end the season.

Hawks coach Phil Martelli said he can't shield his players from all the speculation and bracketology, but he avoids it — despite the fact that ESPN bracket forecaster Joe Lunardi works at St. Joe's.

"I'm honest with you; I don't know where we were," Martelli said. "Look, would I have wanted to go through the next 48 hours with a three-game losing streak? No. No, I wouldn't."

"But campaigning wouldn't do anything."

True, but that does not stop it from happening.

# Chances limited for teams

Associated Press

Spring training had barely started for the Toronto Blue Jays and manager John Gibbons was already facing questions about next offseason when sluggers Jose Bautista and Edwin Encarnacion could become free agents.

"You're happy for them, but it also kind of magnifies the importance of this year for us, because nobody knows what the future holds," Gibbons said. "So let's take advantage of this year while they're here and then hopefully they hang around for a long time, but nobody knows."

It was just last season that the Blue Jays won the AL East and returned to the playoffs for the first time since 1993, and already there's a sense that the clock is ticking.

Success in baseball can be harshly cyclical. A perennial contender can become an aging also-ran almost overnight. For some teams, the word "window" represents a foreboding reminder that the time to win a World Series is now — and the opportunity won't be there forever.

The Blue Jays want to build on last year's success, while the Detroit Tigers and Washington Nationals hope 2015 was an aberration. All three teams are trying to keep their championship windows open, and it isn't easy.

"At some point, some teams get into an all-win-now mode because they're right there," Tigers general manager Al Avila said. "It's very hard to get into the playoffs. It's very hard to get into the World Series, much more even to win it. When you feel you have that chance, you've got to go for it."

The Tigers have spent most of the past decade going for it, handing out expensive contracts to both their own players and incoming free agents — and aggressively trading prospects for stars. Detroit won American League pennants in 2006 and 2012 and AL Central titles every year from 2011-2014, but the Tigers are still without a World Series championship since 1984.

Last year, Detroit fell all the way to the bottom of the division, and with Miguel Cabrera and Justin Verlander both in their 30s and signed to massive long-term deals, it looked like the Tigers might turn into the AL's version of the Phillies. Philadelphia finished atop the NL East every year from 2007-2011 — and won the World Series in '08 — but the decline afterward was swift as its core of stars aged.

Detroit tried to avoid that by spending tens of millions of dollars this offseason. After signing Justin Upton and Jordan Zimmermann, the Tigers and owner Mike Ilitch are expected to begin the season with a payroll around \$200 million.

While the Tigers were spending big, the Blue Jays were gearing up for another run at a division title, albeit without David Price, who went from Detroit to Toronto in a trade deadline deal last year before leaving in the offseason for Boston.

# IndyCar's Dixon already an all-time great

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Scott Dixon is fifth on IndyCar's wins list, with the likes of Foyt, Andretti, and Unser the only drivers ahead of him.

A mediocre season by Dixon's standards should move him to at least fourth, probably third. Then the best open-wheel driver of this generation in America — Dixon has 38 career wins in 15 seasons — can set his sights on second place and Mario Andretti's mark of 52 victories.

Asked this week if he can get to the top of the list and pass A.J. Foyt's record of 67 wins, Dixon just laughed.

"A.J. is probably safe," the New Zealander said.

But catching Foyt isn't completely out of the realm of possibility for Dixon, who goes into Sunday's season opener on the streets of St. Petersburg, Fla., with the same goals he starts with every year. He wants to win at St. Pete, where he has finished second three times. He wants to win the Indianapolis 500, which he won in 2008. And he wants to win another IndyCar title.

Dixon pulled off a slight upset last season when he won the finale at Sonoma,

Calif., to jump from third in the standings to a tie for first in points. Dixon was crowned champion based on a tiebreaker with Juan Pablo Montoya, and that fourth title tied him with Mario Andretti, Sebastien Bourdais, and longtime teammate Dario Franchitti for second on the all-time IndyCar list. Only Dixon and Bourdais are still active, and they trail Foyt's record seven titles.

For Dixon, who won his first championship in 2003, the fourth title was "the sweetest yet."

His Chip Ganassi Racing team lagged behind Team Penske for most of the season, and Dixon really only hit his stride in the second part of the schedule. Montoya led the standings from the season opener, and appeared to be in a two-man battle for the title with Graham Rahal.

At third in the standings, Dixon was an afterthought headed into the finale. Like the entire IndyCar Series, he was in the throes of an emotionally draining week following the death of English driver Justin Wilson six days before the finale. When Dixon attended a title contender news conference at the start of the weekend, his mind appeared to be a million miles away.

Getting back into the race car was cathartic for Dixon, who stayed in Pennsylvania to support Wilson's family after Wilson was struck in the head by a piece of debris during the previous week's race at Pocono. He was at the hospital when Wilson succumbed to his injuries a day later, and it was all too familiar for Dixon, who was also intensely involved in the healing process following Dan Wheldon's death in 2011.

After Wheldon died, Dixon uprooted his wife and two daughters and temporarily relocated to St. Petersburg to support Wheldon's widow and her two sons.

But Dixon is the Ice Man of IndyCar, and when it's time to go to work, nobody does it with more focus and determination. A subpar qualifying effort at Sonoma put him ninth on the starting grid, but he tuned out the long odds of snatching the title from Montoya and put his grieving of Wilson on temporary hold to lead a race-high 34 laps and steal his fourth crown.

"You know, until you are mathematically out of it, you don't stop believing you can win," Dixon said. "You go to every race expecting to win. I know a lot of things had to fall in our favor that day, and they did."



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# Dallas wallops Blackhawks to take over lead in West

Associated Press

DALLAS — Jason Spezza has been carrying some extra weight recently while Dallas Stars teammates Tyler Seguin and Jamie Benn went through uncharacteristic goal droughts — six games for Seguin and seven for Benn.

All three helped the Stars move atop the Western Conference standings Friday night.

Spezza scored in his fifth straight game, Seguin and Benn ended their scoring slumps and the Stars beat the Chicago Blackhawks 5-2.

"Everything he shoots goes in," Stars coach Lindy Ruff said of Spezza. "He's had some around the net front, he's had some great shots."

Dallas improved to 41-20-8 with 90 points, one more than St. Louis and two more than Chicago. Each team has 13 games remaining.

Kari Lehtonen made 21 saves for the Stars, who are 3-0-1 in their last four games. Antoine Roussel and Ales Hemsky also scored.

Teuvo Teravainen and Tomas Fleischmann scored for Chicago.

The conditions were right for Spezza to open the scoring at 11:08 of the first period with a wrist shot from just inside the blue line. It was his fourth power-play goal in five games, and six of his eight

goals in the last nine games have come on the power play.

Spezza also has 15 points (4 goals, 11 assists) in 14 career games against Chicago, and the Blackhawks have allowed 16 power-play goals in their last 13 games.

"Right off the bat they score, right away," Chicago coach Joel Quenneville said. "You don't even get a chance to get your feet under you to see how it's going to look. That one was on a platter and the next one was on a platter."

The next power-play goal was by Benn at 10:42 of the second for a 4-0 lead. Patrick Eaves deflected Seguin's shot, which landed at Benn's feet to the right of the net for a tap-in goal.

Benn and Seguin each have 33 goals this season.

"It was nice," Benn said. "I think I was more excited when (Seguin) scored and when the other guys scored than when I did. They're not pretty all the time, and I'll take what I can get. Even if it's kicking it in, I'll take it."

**Blues 5, Ducks 2:** Vladimir Tarasenko had two goals and an assist, Jake Allen got his fifth straight win and host St. Louis beat Anaheim.

Jori Lehtera and Patrik Berglund sparked St. Louis with third-period goals 64 seconds apart for a 3-1 lead. Paul Stastny also scored for the Blues.

Ryan Getzlaf and Rickard Rakell scored

for the Ducks, and Frederik Andersen made 18 saves.

**Penguins 3, Blue Jackets 2:** Marc-Andre Fleury became the 20th NHL goalie with 350 victories and visiting Pittsburgh beat Columbus.

Kris Letang, Chris Kunitz and Carl Hagelin scored for Pittsburgh, and Evgeni Malkin and Phil Kessel each had two assists. The Penguins jumped ahead of Detroit for the first wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

Gregory Campbell had a goal and an assist for the Blue Jackets, who came into the game with points in 12 of their last 15.

**Flyers 3, Lightning 1:** Steve Mason made 18 saves, Sam Gagner and Matt Read both scored power-play goals and visiting Philadelphia beat Tampa Bay.

Brayden Schenn also scored for the Flyers. Philadelphia had been off since beating the Lightning 4-2 Monday night in Philadelphia to end Tampa Bay's franchise-record nine-game winning streak.

**Coyotes 4, Flames 1:** Brad Richardson scored twice after Antoine Vermette put his team ahead early in the third period and visiting Arizona beat Calgary to snap a 10-game road winless streak.

Boyd Gordon also scored for Arizona, and Louis Domingue made 24 saves. Shane Doan had two assists and has 41 points this season, giving him his 14th season with at least 40.

# Warriors avenge loss to Blazers

Associated Press

OAKLAND, California — Stephen Curry scored 34 points, Klay Thompson had 37 and the Golden State Warriors avenged their worst defeat of the season by beating the Portland Trail Blazers 128-112 on Friday night, extending their record regular-season home winning streak to 47 games.

The Splash Brothers combined to shoot 15-for-25 on three-pointers and went 26-for-55 overall, with Thompson joining Curry as the only players with 200 threes in four straight seasons. They scored 30 or more points in the same game for the sixth time in their careers.

CJ McCollum scored 18 points and Portland topped the defending champions with 19 threes to Golden State's 18 as the teams combined for the most threes in NBA history — on 37-for-76 shooting.

The Trail Blazers beat the Warriors 137-105 in Portland in Feb. 19.

**Heat 118, Bulls 96:** Goran Dragic scored a season-high 26 points, Josh Richardson added a career-high 22 and Miami used a big fourth quarter to beat short-handed host Chicago.

Luol Deng had 19 points for the Heat. They outscored the Bulls 34-15 in the final period on the way to their sixth win in seven games.

**Hornets 118, Pistons 103:** Marvin Williams tied a career high with five three-pointers and scored 22 points, and Charlotte beat visiting Detroit for its sixth straight win.

Nicolas Batum added 17 points and 11 assists, and Kemba Walker had 16 points and eight assists after scoring at 30 points in four straight games. The Hornets have won 12 of their last 14 games.

**Timberwolves 99, Thunder 96:** Ricky Rubio made a three-pointer with 0.2 seconds left to lift Minnesota past host Oklahoma City.

Rubio finished with 13 points and 12 assists for his eighth double-double of the season, and the Timberwolves snapped a 10-game losing streak against the Thunder.

**Grizzlies 121, Pelicans 114 (OT):** Lance Stephenson scored a career-high 33 points, and Matt Barnes had a triple-double with 26 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in Memphis' victory over visiting New Orleans.

JaMychal Green added a career-high 21 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to help Memphis win for fifth time in its last seven. Rookie point guard Briante Weber, signed to a 10-day contract earlier in the day, added 10 points and seven assists.

**Rockets 102, Celtics 98:** James Harden scored 32 points, including his team's final eight, and Houston snapped Boston's home winning streak at 14 games.

**Clippers 101, Knicks 94:** Chris Paul had 24 points and 15 assists and J.J. Redick added 20 points in Los Angeles' victory over visiting New York.

**76ers 95, Nets 89:** Carl Landry scored 16 points, and Nerlens Noel had 13 points and 11 rebounds to help host Philadelphia snap a 13-game losing streak with a victory over Brooklyn.

**Magic 107, Kings 100:** Aaron Gordon had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and Victor Oladipo scored six of his 18 points during a 40-second stretch in the fourth quarter to lead Orlando past host Sacramento.

**Jazz 114, Wizards 93:** Shelvin Mack scored a career-high 27 points in Utah's victory over slumping Washington.

# No. 1 Kansas holds off Baylor

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Perry Ellis had 20 points, Devonte Graham added 14 points and eight assists, and top-ranked Kansas held on through a shaky finish to beat No. 22 Baylor 70-66 in the Big 12 Tournament semifinals Friday night.

Wayne Selden Jr. dunked his way to 11 points for the Jayhawks (29-4), who muddled through an ugly first half before eventually avenging their loss to the Bears (22-11) in last year's semifinals.

Kansas plays No. 9 West Virginia for the title Saturday night.

The Jayhawks were in control when coach Bill Self put in his reserves late, but a series of missed free throws and turnovers allowed the Bears to make a run. After Baylor got within 68-64 with 20 seconds left, Self had no choice but to send his starters back in.

Jonathan Motley's putback got the Bears within three with five seconds to go, but Graham calmly made the second of two free throws at the other end to put the game away.

**No. 2 Michigan State 81, Ohio State 54:** Big Ten player of the year Denzel Valentine scored 19 points and Eron Harris added 13 to help the Spartans blow out the Buckeyes in the Big Ten Tournament quarterfinals in Indianapolis.

JaQuan Lyle had 10 points to lead Ohio State (20-13), which has lost three of five and must wait until Sunday to see if it'll get in the NCAA Tournament.

**No. 3 Villanova 76, Providence 68:** Kris Jenkins scored 21 points and the Wildcats smothered Friars stars Ben Bentil and Kris Dunn on defense, advanc-

ing to the Big East title game with a win at Madison Square Garden.

**No. 4 Virginia 73, No. 11 Miami 68:** At Washington, Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year Malcolm Brogdon scored 24 points and the Cavaliers beat the Hurricanes to make it to the conference title game.

**Seton Hall 87, No. 5 Xavier 83:** At New York, Khadeen Carrington had 23 points and seven rebounds to lead Seton Hall to an 87-83 win over fifth-ranked Xavier for the Pirates' first Big East Tournament title game appearance since 1993, 2 1/2 years before he was born.

Fellow sophomore Isaiah Whitehead added 20 points and eight assists in Friday's semifinal as third-seeded Seton Hall beat the Musketeers for the second time in less than two weeks.

**No. 9 West Virginia 69, No. 6 Oklahoma 67:** At Kansas City, Mo., the Mountaineers escaped with a win over the Sooners when Buddy Hield's half-court shot was ruled a fraction of a second late in the Big 12 Tournament semifinals.

**No. 7 North Carolina 78, Notre Dame 47:** With Marcus Paige leading the way, the Tar Heels scored 24 consecutive points over a 9½-minute span bridging halftime and easily beat the Fighting Irish for a spot in the ACC Tournament final.

**No. 8 Oregon 95, No. 15 Arizona 89 (OT):** At Las Vegas, Elgin Cook scored 22 points and the Ducks survived a wild closing sequence in regulation to beat the Wildcats in overtime in the Pac-12 semifinals.

**Michigan 72, No. 10 Indiana 69:** At Indianapolis, Kameron Chatman made a three-pointer with 0.2 seconds left to give Michigan a 72-69 upset over No. 10

Indiana in the Big Ten Tournament quarterfinals on Friday.

Indiana couldn't get a final shot off after the referees put time back on the clock following a replay review.

It was only the second field goal Chatman made and it came right in front of the Wolverines' bench. It sent Michigan (22-11) into Saturday's semifinals against either No. 13 Purdue or surprising Illinois.

**No. 12 Utah 82, No. 24 California 78:** At Las Vegas, Jakob Poeltl scored 29 points and Lorenzo Bonam dribbled the length of the court to score at the buzzer in regulation, helping the Utes outlast the Golden Bears in overtime in the Pac-12 semifinals.

**No. 13 Purdue 89, Illinois 58:** At Indianapolis, reserve center Isaac Haas scored 16 points on 8-for-9 shooting and the Boilermakers crushed the Illini in the Big Ten Tournament quarterfinals.

**No. 16 Kentucky 85, Alabama 59:** At Nashville, Tenn., Jamal Murray scored 23 points, Alex Poythress made a career-best four three-pointers and the Wildcats had an easy time in a rout of the Crimson Tide in the Southeastern Conference Tournament.

**No. 17 Texas A&M 72, Florida 66:** At Nashville, Tenn., Jalen Jones made a go-ahead layup with 2:08 remaining and Alex Caruso followed with a steal and layup 13 seconds later to key a late 7-0 run that pushed the Aggies past the Gators in the Southeastern Conference Tournament.

**No. 18 Maryland 97, Nebraska 86:** At Indianapolis, Jake Layman scored a season-high 26 points, freshman Diamond Stone had 23 and the Terrapins beat the Cornhuskers in the Big Ten Tournament quarterfinals.