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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Iran slams US presence in Persian Gulf

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's Supreme Leader criticized the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf region on Monday, saying American forces should go back to the Bay of Pigs, state media reported.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told a group of teachers Monday that American military drills in the region were proof of U.S. arrogance.

"They sit together, scheme and say that Iran must not hold war games in the Persian Gulf. What a foolish remark! They come here from the other side of the globe and stage war games. What are you doing

here? Go back to the Bay of Pigs. Go and hold exercises there. What are you doing in the Persian Gulf? The Persian Gulf is our home," Khamenei said.

State TV broadcast part of his speech. His remarks were an apparent reference to the 1961 failed invasion of Cuba by 1,500 CIA-trained exiles. Muslims also view pigs as unclean animals, as the Quran prohibits followers of Islam from eating pork.

Khamenei also urged education officials to add other languages to their foreign language programs, saying limiting the curricula to English was a mistake.

"The language of science is not English alone. Insisting on promotion of English

alone is unhealthy," said Khamenei. "Other languages like Spanish, French, German and Eastern languages are the languages of science, too."

Khamenei also reiterated his criticism about the conspicuous spending habits of Iran's increasingly prominent wealthy upper class, saying the government needed to regulate consumption patterns.

Khamenei has the final say on all state matters in Iran. Despite last summer's landmark deal between Iran and the world powers, he has remained publicly suspicious of Western intentions toward Iran.

Additional delays likely in Marines' move to Okinawa

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Japanese government is removing floats meant to block seaborne protesters from the construction area of a new runway into Oura Bay, a sign that further delays can be expected in Marine Corps Air Station Futenma's relocation to Camp Schwab.

The move, which began Saturday, is mostly symbolic because the area remains off-limits, a spokesman with the Ministry of Defense's Okinawa Defense Bureau told Stars and Stripes.

Both the Japanese and U.S. governments remain committed to the relocation plan. A small but enthusiastic protest movement remains equally committed to blocking the move.

Removing the buoys could take weeks, and they will likely need to be reinstalled if and when the work in Okinawa's remote north commences.

The restricted zone around the construction site was set up in June 2014, and the floats were installed that August. After an agreement to re-enter negotiations in March, a request was made by the prefectural government to remove the floats.

The relocation's fate now rests with ongoing talks between the Japanese government and anti-base Okinawa Gov. Takeshi Onaga. Those negotiations — which were suggested by an arbiter in March and are seen as a last chance before courts decide the outcome — are expected to wrap up by June.

From staff reports

Trump, Clinton eager to engage each other after Indiana contest

Associated Press

LA PORTE, Ind. — On the eve of Indiana's primary, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton are looking past their struggling rivals and directly at each other, previewing the caustic, one-on-one race that seems inevitable if they sew up the Republican and Democratic presidential nominations.

Trump made clear Monday that he will have more to say about his accusation that Clinton is playing gender politics: "We're making a list of the many, many times where it's all about her being a woman."

"I haven't started on Hillary yet," he told CNN, although actually he's been trashing her record for quite some time.

Clinton told thousands at an NAACP dinner in Detroit on Sunday that President Barack Obama's legacy can't be allowed to "fall into Donald Trump's hands" and be consumed by "these voices of hatred." She cited Trump's "insidious" part in the birther movement that questioned Obama's citizenship.

But if they're itching to engage in full measure, they still have party rivals to dispatch, and Trump's next challenge is to beat back Sen. Ted Cruz in Indiana on Tuesday. He's got further to go win the prize than does Clinton in her contest with Bernie Sanders.

Trump is exuding confidence, telling a

cheering crowd Sunday in Terre Haute: "If we win here, it's over, OK?"

Not quite, as the New York real estate mogul can't win enough delegates Tuesday to clinch the Republican nomination. After his wins in five states last week, though, Trump no longer needs to win a majority of the remaining delegates in coming races to lock up the GOP nomination.

Cruz has no such cushion. Already eliminated from reaching 1,237 delegates needed to win the nomination outright, he desperately needs a victory in Indiana to keep Trump from that number and to press ahead with his strategy of claiming the nomination at a contested convention.

"This whole long, wild ride of an election has all culminated with the entire country with its eyes fixed on the state of Indiana," Cruz said Sunday at a late-night rally. "The people of this great state, I believe the country is depending on you to pull us back from the brink."

Trump went after Cruz on Sunday, suggesting evangelical conservatives have "fallen out of love with him" and mocked his decision to announce former GOP presidential candidate Carly Fiorina as his running mate.

"They're like hanging by their fingertips," he said, mimicking Cruz and fellow underdog candidate John Kasich. "Don't let me fall! Don't let me fall!"

Schwarzenegger lauds troops in Kuwait

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

A television project on climate change brought Arnold Schwarzenegger to two of the hottest U.S. military posts on Earth, where the Terminator took some time out for the troops.

"I think it is really unbelievable and so fantastic that the military is now thinking about making some of the bases green," Schwarzenegger told troops during a two-day tour of bases in Kuwait. "But while I am filming, I also want to visit the troops. I want to say, 'Hi,' to them, I want to tell them, 'Thank you, thank you, thank you' for the great work they're doing protecting our country."

On Wednesday and Thursday,

the film star and former California governor visited Camp Buehring, a key staging area for U.S. troops in Kuwait, and U.S. Army Central's Camp Arifjan.

Green-energy efforts at the bases will be part of an episode of "Years of Living Dangerously," a National Geographic television series and Internet project focused on climate change.

Schwarzenegger is an executive producer of the series, along with "Titanic" director James Cameron. Movie stars such as Matt Damon and Jessica Alba also are part of the project, which explores different aspects of climate change.

During the film shoot in Kuwait, U.S. Army Central showcased a range of efforts to

become more energy-efficient in the Persian Gulf monarchy, where the blistering heat means heavy air-conditioning usage.

"The USARCENT operational energy program showcased initiatives to conserve energy and resources, including installing solar power light towers, implementing solar panels and modular energy efficient structures," Col. Wayne Marotto, a U.S. Army Central spokesman, said in a statement.

During his tour, Schwarzenegger spoke with officers and noncommissioned officers about leadership development, drawing on his experience as governor of California.

The film star also took part in one soldier's re-enlistment ceremony.

"I re-enlisted for two more years of active-duty service, and he was a part of the ceremony," said Spc. James Berg, a mechanic with 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, in an Army statement. "He helped hold the flag and congratulated me on making the choice to further serve my country."

Besides lauding troops, Schwarzenegger gave high marks to the chow halls.

"We're having a great time, I am trying out all of the different vehicles, driving around in these monster trucks, and having some food, delicious food, by the way, on the base," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

Afghan troops told to strongly repel invasions

By CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Security forces have been instructed to respond strongly to Pakistani incursions along the country's eastern border, an Afghan defense official said Monday in the wake of reports that Pakistan's military had fired dozens of rockets into eastern Nangarhar province last week.

"Our clear message is that Pakistan should not and must not interfere in Afghan affairs," Brig. Gen. Dawlat Waziri, a defense ministry spokesman, said at a press briefing in the Kabul headquarters of NATO's Resolute Support Mission.

Afghanistan has a long history of repelling invasion attempts and any new efforts would similarly fail, he said.

Last week's cross-border shelling killed an Afghan border guard, according to Pajhwok Afghan News. The news agency reported that on Sunday protesters in the provincial capital of Jalalabad called on the Afghan government and the United Nations to prevent future attacks.

The shelling comes amid Kabul's growing frustration with

Islamabad's counterterrorism efforts and suspicions that Pakistan is giving the Taliban support and safe haven.

The Afghan Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement that it had summoned Pakistan's ambassador to express concerns over the cross-border attack and call on Pakistan to end the incursions. The ministry also said the ambassador expressed grief over the incident.

Clashes along the two countries' shared 1,400-mile border, known as the Durand Line, have been reported for many years. In many cases, each country blames the other for instigating the violence.

Media in Pakistan have reported that last week's shelling came days after Afghanistan forces launched a mortar attack on a Pakistani security checkpoint.

Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland, chief of communications for the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan, said he was aware of the ongoing border disputes. He said the problem needs "regional solution" and stressed the need to end the disputes before they escalate.

"If it's not contained, it does

have the potential to become negative for all involved," he said.

Asked what role the NATO coalition would have in the matter, Cleveland said it was hard to say and would depend on a number of conditions.

"We never want tensions across the Durand Line," said Sediq Sediqqi, Interior Ministry spokesman, at Monday's press briefing. He called the attacks a "breach of international law."

Sediqqi also called on Pakistan to fight terrorism within its borders. He said the country has strong intelligence and knows the whereabouts of terrorist leaders.

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have grown increasingly strained since Pakistan failed to persuade the Taliban to join peace talks slated for March. Those four-party talks, aimed at ending the 15-year Afghanistan War, are being organized by Afghanistan, the United States, Pakistan and China.

A complex suicide bombing in Kabul last month that killed nearly 70 people and left hundreds wounded has further exacerbated tensions.

1st US cruise ship in decades docks in Cuba

HAVANA — The first U.S. cruise ship in nearly 40 years crossed the Florida Straits from Miami and docked in Havana on Monday, restarting commercial travel on waters that served as a stage for a half-century of Cold War hostility.

Carnival Cruise Line's gleaming white 704-passenger Adonia became the first U.S. cruise ship in Havana since President Jimmy Carter eliminated virtually all restrictions of U.S. travel to Cuba in the late 1970s. Travel limits were restored after Carter left office, and U.S. cruises to Cuba became possible again only after Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro declared detente on Dec. 17, 2014.

The Adonia's arrival is the first step toward a future in which thousands of ships a year could cross the Florida Straits. The straits were blocked by the U.S. during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and tens of thousands of Cubans have fled across them to Florida on homemade rafts — with untold thousands dying in the process.

From The Associated Press

Keselowski wins wreck-filled Talladega

Associated Press

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Two cars went airborne, 35 were involved in an accident of some kind, and Danica Patrick had the wind knocked out of her in a vicious crash into the wall.

Just another demolition derby at Talladega Superspeedway.

Brad Keselowski won the crash-fest Sunday that was dominated by multiple wrecks that caused millions of dollars in damage to race teams. It was Keselowski's fourth career win at Talladega and his second victory of the season, and ended Joe Gibbs Racing's streak of four consecutive victories.

"Crazy day. Somehow we managed to stay ahead of or out of all the chaos," Keselowski said. "That's how Talladega goes. Sometimes we run here and everybody kind of lines up against the wall, and sometimes we come here and it's crazy side by side, wreck 'em up, flip 'em."

"I think that's kind of the allure to coming here because you don't know what you're going to get."

That's not entirely true about Talladega, which more times than not turns into a mess of wrecked race cars.

Keselowski said that's just part of restrictor-plate racing at the 2.66-mile superspeedway.

"Racing has always been that balance of daredevils and chess players, this has always been more of a daredevil-type track," said Keselowski.

Chris Buescher's car flipped three times in an early crash, and Matt Kenseth was turned upside down in the waning laps. In Kenseth's accident, Patrick hit hard into an energy-absorbing wall that that seemed to buckle upon impact. She appeared shaken after the hit and hustled out of her burning car.

"I have a pretty decent bruise on my arm and my foot,

and my head feels like I hit a wall at 200," she said. "My chest hurts when I breathe."

There were 21- and 12-car accidents in the final 28 laps. And, as Keselowski crossed the finish line, another wreck in the back of the pack punctuated the sloppy day. NASCAR's box score showed 35 of the 40 cars were involved in some sort of accident.

Only 21 of the 40 cars finished on the lead lap, and 12 cars were ruled out of the race.

Second-place finisher Kyle Busch said he looked in his rearview mirror at one point and only saw four cars without some sort of damage.

"I hate it. I'd much rather be at home," said Busch, the reigning Sprint Cup Series champion. "I've got a win. I don't need to be here."

Austin Dillon finished third and said he enjoyed the race, even though it was nerve-racking. Dillon was in his own horrific crash at Daytona last July and said the style of racing at restrictor-plate tracks creates an atmosphere of danger.

"We all have to do it. I don't know how many really love it," Dillon said. "I know our mom's, wives and girlfriends don't like it. We don't like to be part of crashes. If people are cheering for crashes, man, it's not a good thing."

The pace of Sunday's race was up a tick because of potential rain that could have shortened the event from its scheduled 180 laps. Once the race hit the halfway point and was official, drivers began their charge to the front because they couldn't avoid waiting and rain suddenly ending the event.

Patrick, who was inside the top 10 when she was hit by another car and turned into Kenseth, who went airborne, said the potential rain intensified the racing.

"We all raced to the halfway, then we all raced to the rain that was coming, then we all raced to the end," she said. "It was like the whole race, you spent it racing like

it was the end. There was no moments to relax at all. I'm sure that kind of expanded people's comfort zones at the end of the race because we were already so used to running close.

"Some people took it over the edge."

Not every driver was alarmed at all the accidents.

Jamie McMurray, one of the better plate races in the series, thought Sunday was pretty typical.

"Everyone is pretty calm until we get to halfway because we all want to get to halfway, and then it got a little bit wild after that," he said. "But it's just plate racing. When you look back at all of these restrictor plate races, you have a lot of wrecks that just don't happen. And today we had a lot of wrecks, and they happened."

Defending race winner Dale Earnhardt Jr. brought his favorite car, named "Amelia" to Talladega in search of his first win of the season. But he wrecked on lap 50 and had to go to the garage. He eventually returned to the track, and his steering wheel mysteriously came off in his hand. He had to steer the car himself with his hand on the steering column as he put the wheel back on. Then he was collected in a wreck with Carl Edwards. He finished last.

"Hell, I'm going home. I'm done," he said. "I think we need to park the car for a while, too."

Edwards was seeking his third consecutive victory, but came up short when he suddenly crashed his Toyota.

"Something just let go there," he said. "We had something torn up there, drove down into turn one and I just felt the right front fall down and that was it. You're kind of just along for the ride."

Edwards scored back-to-back wins at Bristol and Richmond — where he bumped Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Kyle Busch out of his way on the last lap — and was hoping to make it three straight with a Talladega win.

He instead finished 39th.

Warriors top Trail Blazers

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — From the opening tip, Klay Thompson shot lights-out and even heaved one in from way out in Stephen Curry territory. Draymond Green began yapping from the start while doing his thing to make plays every which way, calling on his teammates to bring an edge on defense.

With Curry sidelined because of a sprained right knee, Green and Thompson took charge again. Their supporting cast came through in the clutch, too.

Thompson scored 37 points in another brilliant performance as his fellow "Splash Brother" watched injured, and the Golden State Warriors dominated once more without their MVP to beat the Portland Trail Blazers 118-106 Sunday in the opener of the Western Conference semifinals.

"Everything has to be ratcheted up," said Green, who posted his second career postseason triple-double with 23 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for the defending champions. "I just told the guys that we've got to come out with a defensive mindset."

The offense happened on its own, with all five starters scoring in double figures.

Thompson hit seven more 3-pointers to become the first player in NBA history to make at least seven threes in three straight playoff games.

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series is

Tuesday night at Oracle Arena.

Golden State reserve Anderson Varejao and Portland's Gerald Henderson were ejected late in the third quarter after receiving their second technical fouls. Both were hit with a technical at the 3:29 mark of the third when Varejao tripped Henderson after they collided and the Portland guard jumped up, pointing a finger at his opponent's face. They kept jawing a few minutes later and were tossed with 15.1 seconds left in the period.

Thompson hit a Curry-esque 30-foot three-pointer in the opening minutes followed by another jumper to put Golden State up 10-2, and the Warriors ran with it. Thompson scored 18 of his points in the first quarter on 7-for-10 shooting with four threes as Golden State built a 37-17 lead.

Damian Lillard had another slow start back home in the Bay Area, missing 11 of his first 13 shots before finishing with 30 points — 10 on free throws. Thompson had the tough chore of stopping him.

Shaun Livingston added 12 points and six assists after scoring 16 in each of his first-round starts in place of Curry.

The MVP injured his MCL when he slipped on a wet spot just before half-time of a Game 4 win at Houston in the first round last Sunday. He said Friday he hoped to do some shooting within a day or two, and that happened Saturday. He still will have to test the knee by putting pressure on it and planting on it when he shoots, then in some 5-on-5 scrimmages.

Raptors oust Hornets

Associated Press

TORONTO — DeMar DeRozan pushed the Toronto Raptors into the second round — finally.

DeRozan scored 30 points and Toronto beat the Indiana Pacers 89-84 on Sunday night in Game 7 to advance to face Miami in the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The Raptors won a best-of-seven series for the first time in franchise history.

"We got the monkey off our back, more than anything, from these past couple of years," DeRozan said. It just feels good to get that off."

The Raptors won their first postseason series since a five-game triumph over the New York Knicks in 2001, ending the NBA's longest active drought between series victories. Toronto lost in the first round the previous two seasons, including a Game 7 loss to Brooklyn in 2014 and a sweep to Washington last year.

Jonas Valanciunas had 15 rebounds and 10 points, Rookie Norman Powell added 13 points, and Kyle Lowry had 11 for Toronto, set to open at home against the Heat on Tuesday night.

DeRozan, who struggled with his shooting throughout the series, was 10 of 32 in Game 7.

"He was huge," coach Dwane Casey said. "I thought he got his swagger back, his rhythm back a little bit."

Paul George led Indiana with 26 points

and 12 rebounds, George Hill added 19 points, and Monta Ellis had 15.

George called DeRozan, a fellow All-Star and teammate with the U.S. national team, "a special player."

"Regardless of his struggling to shoot in this series, he's special," George said. "He's still probably one of the most poised and under-control players I've guarded."

George made just two of eight attempts in the second half and admitted afterward to being tired.

"I ran out of gas a little bit," he said. "I'm not going to try and sit here and be Superman. I definitely was winded late in the game."

Toronto nearly ran out of gas, too, scoring just 11 points in the final quarter and watching as the Pacers whittled a 16-point deficit down to three in the final few minutes.

"We stunk it up in the fourth quarter," Casey said. "It wasn't pretty, believe me, but our defense carried us down the stretch."

Heat 106, Hornets 73: Goran Dragic scored 25 points, Gerald Green added 16 and host Miami ended Charlotte's season in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference first-round series.

Luol Deng scored 15 points, Dwyane Wade added 12 and Hassan Whiteside had a 10 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks for the Heat.

Frank Kaminsky scored 12 for Charlotte.



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Bumgarner, Giants halt Mets' streak

Associated Press

NEW YORK — When Madison Bumgarner pitches at Citi Field, he gets World Series-type results.

Bumgarner pitched through rain to extend his scoreless streak at the Mets to 18 innings, Hunter Pence homered and drove in three runs, and the San Francisco Giants ran at will against Noah Syndergaard in a 6-1 victory Sunday that stopped New York's eight-game winning streak.

"It is a fun place to pitch in," said Bumgarner, the 2014 World Series MVP.

Bumgarner (3-2) is 4-0 with a 0.62 ERA at Citi Field and has the longest shutout streak by an opposing pitcher in the ballpark's eight-season history. After adjusting his mechanics, he gave up six hits in six innings, struck out seven and walked three, lowering his ERA from 3.64 to 3.03.

"It didn't feel like I was 100 percent where I'd like to be, but it was really close," he said.

He escaped a second-and-third, two-out jam in the third when Neil Walker popped out and threw a called third strike to his final batter, Asdrubal Cabrera, with the bases loaded in the sixth. His fastball had averaged 91 mph coming in, down from 93 mph last April, but he reached 92 mph at times against the Mets.

"You can't ask much more than six shut-out innings," catcher Buster Posey said.

One start after allowing five steals against Cincinnati, Syndergaard (2-1) gave up three more, and the stolen bases got him into trouble. Runners have swiped 12 bases in 13 attempts against Syndergaard this year, the most in the majors, according to STATS.

Dodgers 1, Padres 0: Clayton Kershaw pitched a three-hitter, struck out 14 and singled home the game's only run to lead

host Los Angeles over San Diego.

Kershaw (3-1) ended the Dodgers' six-game losing streak by pitching his 13th shutout and 22nd complete game in 248 career starts. The three-time NL Cy Young Award winner walked none and retired the first 14 batters.

Kershaw also hit an RBI single in the third off Drew Pomeranz (2-2), who gave up three hits in seven innings. Kershaw is 6-0 with a 0.98 ERA in his last nine starts against the Padres. The lefty threw seven innings of one-hit ball at San Diego on opening day in a 15-0 victory.

Red Sox 8, Yankees 7: Christian Vazquez hit a two-run homer over the Green Monster to break a seventh-inning tie, sending Boston to a three-game sweep of rival New York.

Dustin Pedroia and Xander Bogaerts each had three hits and Travis Shaw homered for the Red Sox, who have won seven of eight to move into first place in the AL East.

Alex Rodriguez homered for the third time in four games and added a two-run double for the Yankees, who have lost a season-high five in a row.

White Sox 7, Orioles 1: Chris Sale took a shutout into the sixth inning and Brett Lawrie homered for the third straight day as visiting Chicago beat Baltimore for a split of the four-game series.

Jerry Sands had two RBIs for the White Sox, who took control with a five-run fifth inning against Ubaldo Jimenez (1-3).

Rockies 6, Diamondbacks 3: Nolan Arenado hit his major league-leading 11th home run and Gerardo Parra also connected as Colorado beat host Arizona for a three-game sweep.

Chad Bettis (3-1) got the win after allowing three runs on nine hits in six innings. Jake McGee worked the ninth for his sixth save.

Brewers 14, Marlins 5: Chris Carter went 3-for-5 with two homers and three RBIs to lead Milwaukee's season-high 18-hit barrage as the Brewers beat visiting Miami to snap the Marlins' seven-game winning streak.

Jonathan Villar also went 3-for-5, with two doubles and two runs scores for the Brewers, who ended a four-game losing streak in a game that saw the teams combine for 34 hits.

Nationals 6, Cardinals 1: Max Scherzer pitched seven strong innings to beat his hometown team for the first time as Washington completed a three-game sweep of host St. Louis.

Clint Robinson and Danny Espinosa hit back-to-back home runs, providing the power for Washington on a day when NL MVP Bryce Harper struck out all four times up. It was Washington's first series win in St. Louis since May 2007 and the Nationals improved to 17-7 overall, the best start in club history through 24 games.

Blue Jays 5, Rays 1: Marcus Stroman allowed one run in eight innings on his 25th birthday while Troy Tulowitzki hit a three-run homer during a four-run ninth as visiting Toronto beat Tampa Bay.

Reds 6, Pirates 5 (11): Scott Schebler hit an RBI double in the 11th inning as Cincinnati snapped a six-game skid that also ended host Pittsburgh's six-game winning streak.

Eugenio Suarez led off the Reds 11th with a triple past diving left fielder Starling Marte and scored on Schebler's hit off Ryan Vogelsong (1-1).

Phillies 2, Indians 1: Vince Velasquez tossed two-hit ball over six innings as host Philadelphia beat Cleveland for its sixth straight win.

Freddy Galvis had an RBI single a day after driving in three runs in a 4-3 win,

helping the surprising Phillies win for the 15th time in 21 games since starting 0-4.

Astros 2, Athletics 1: Jose Altuve homered leading off a game for the fourth time this season — one of just two hits by Houston — as the Astros beat host Oakland to avoid a series sweep.

Doug Fister (2-3) gave up one run over 6²/₃ innings to end his three-game losing streak.

Tigers 6, Twins 5: Jarrod Saltalamacchia doubled home the go-ahead run in the eighth inning and Nick Castellanos hit a three-run homer as Detroit beat host Minnesota for its fifth straight victory.

Saltalamacchia's drive to left field off reliever Ryan Pressly (1-2) allowed Justin Upton to score from first.

Braves 4, Cubs 3 (10): Daniel Castro singled and scored on Nick Markakis' sacrifice fly in the 10th inning as short-handed Atlanta picked up a rare victory by beating major league-leading host Chicago.

Jason Grilli pitched a scoreless 10th for his second save and the Braves won for just the sixth time in 24 games despite blowing a 3-0 lead after Julio Teheran threw seven scoreless innings.

Angels 9, Rangers 6: Kole Calhoun got three hits and drove in two runs as visiting Los Angeles avoided a series sweep, beating Texas and ending the Rangers' four-game winning streak.

Shane Robinson got two hits, scored three times and drove in a run after being called up from the minors by the Angels earlier in the day.

Royals 4, Mariners 1: Eric Hosmer homered and Ian Kennedy took a shutout into the sixth inning as Kansas City ended a long scoreless streak and a five-game skid with a victory over host Seattle.

Blues' Backes ties series with OT tally

Associated Press

DALLAS — David Backes gave the St. Louis Blues a big gift on his 32nd birthday, with another overtime goal to go home even.

What a serenade of "Happy Birthday" for the Blues captain from his teammates after Backes scored off a rebound during a power play 10:58 into overtime of Game 2 on Sunday for a 4-3 victory over the Dallas Stars.

"I want to know what they did with the money their parents gave them for voice lessons," Backes said with a smile.

After blowing a two-goal lead while getting outshot 13-2 in the third period, the Blues took advantage of their second power-play chance in overtime. Backes followed up Alexander Steen's shot 17 seconds after Antoine Roussel was called for interference, his third penalty in the game.

"The thing that impressed me more than anything was the way we played in the overtime. Outstanding," coach Ken Hitchcock said. "We went into attack mode and stayed on it the whole time."

Instead of a 0-2 hole, the Blues go home 1-1 in the best-of-seven series matching the Western Conference's top two teams. Game 3 is Tuesday night, with Game 4 also in St. Louis on Thursday before the series

returns to Dallas for Game 5 on Saturday.

When Roussel was asked if the overtime penalty was the right call, he responded, "I don't know. They have a tough job. It's not easy to be a ref out there."

Roussel slammed his stick when exiting the penalty box after Backes scored to end the game.

"He was trying to stay onside," Stars coach Lindy Ruff said, referring to it as a tough penalty. "It doesn't matter whether I like the call or don't like the call. ... We looked like we were going to get an odd-numbered rush and they got a couple hooks on [Stars rookie Radek Faksa] him just before going through the middle of the ice, which I was frustrated with."

Antti Niemi had stopped 19 consecutive shots since relieving Kari Lehtonen after the first period until Backes scored.

Blues goalie Brian Elliott had 31 saves, including big shots by Jason Spezza and Stars captain Jamie Benn about a minute apart in overtime.

Backes is only the second player in Blues history with two overtime goals in the same postseason, having scored the OT winner in the opener of the Blues' first-round series against Chicago.

Pavelski's late goal lifts Sharks past Preds

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — The Nashville Predators frustrated Joe Pavelski and San Jose's top line for much of the night, forcing turnovers, blocking shots and limiting chances.

That all changed with one big shift late in the game that put the Sharks in control of their second-round series.

Pavelski scored the tiebreaking goal with 2:40 left in regulation and Martin Jones stopped 37 shots to lead San Jose to a 3-2 victory over the Predators on Sunday night and a 2-0 series lead.

"I don't think it was our line's best game, by any means," Pavelski said. "Our last shift, you take a look, there's three minutes left, it's tied, you hope for a chance."

He got one and San Jose's captain delivered just as he always seems to do in the biggest moments.

Joe Thornton started the sequence by sending a cross-ice pass to Matt Nieto, whose initial shot was stopped by Pekka Rinne. But Pavelski knocked the rebound in for his sixth goal of the playoffs to give the Sharks a lead they wouldn't relinquish.

Sharks forward Logan Couture added a power-play goal and Thornton scored an empty-net goal that proved crucial when Ryan Johansen scored with 3.6 seconds left for the Predators.

Mattias Ekholm tied the game earlier

in the third and Johansen scored late for Nashville, but the Predators head home from California in much worse shape than they did in the first round when they won the first two games in Anaheim on the way to taking the series in seven games. Pekka Rinne made 22 saves.

Game 3 is Tuesday night. San Jose won the most road games in the NHL this season and all three in Los Angeles in the first round. Rinne had helped keep Nashville in the game long enough to get the equalizer midway through the third. With San Jose leading 1-0, Rinne robbed Nick Spaling with a pad save on a 2-on-1 with San Jose short-handed.

A few minutes later, Ekholm got the equalizer when his shot from the high slot got past a screened Jones to make it 1-1.

The Sharks scored first following an odd penalty late in the second period. Nashville defenseman Roman Josi tried to rush off the ice after a bad line change to avoid a too many men penalty, but jumped into the Sharks bench because he couldn't reach his own in time.

That move shocked the San Jose players but didn't avoid the penalty and the Sharks made Nashville pay for the mistake. Early on the ensuing power play, Brent Burns fired a point shot on net that Rinne stopped with his pads. But Sharks forward Logan Couture jumped on the rebound and knocked it in with 1:24 left in the penalty for his third goal of the series.