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Trump last man standing in GOP race

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — His rivals out of the way, Donald Trump has become the Republican Party's presumptive presidential nominee.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich was to announce the end of his underdog White House bid on Wednesday, according to three campaign officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the candidate's plans. The decision comes a day after Trump's only other rival, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, left the 2016 contest.

With no GOP opponents left, Trump has an open path to represent the party in the November general election — presumably against Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton.

Even before news of Kasich's decision surfaced, Trump signaled a new phase of his outsider campaign that includes a search for a running mate with experience governing and outreach to one-time competitors in an effort to heal the frac-

tured Republican Party.

"I am confident I can unite much of" the GOP, Trump said Wednesday on NBC's "Today Show," as several prominent Republicans said they'd prefer Democrat Clinton over the New York billionaire.

In a shot at his critics, Trump added: "Those people can go away and maybe come back in eight years after we served two terms. Honestly, there are some people I really don't want."

On the Democratic side, former Secretary of State Clinton suffered a defeat Tuesday in Indiana to Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, but she still holds a definitive lead among delegates who will decide the Democratic nomination.

The Republican competition changed dramatically with Trump's Indiana victory and Cruz's abrupt decision to quit the race. Trump won the Indiana contest with 53.3 percent of the vote, to Cruz's 36.6 percent and Kasich's 7.6 percent, according to unofficial results.

Some Republican leaders remain acutely wary of Trump

and have insisted they could never support him, even in a faceoff against Clinton.

What's their plan moving forward?

"Prayer," responded Republican strategist Tim Miller, a leader of one of the GOP's anti-Trump groups. "Donald Trump is just going to have an impossible time bringing together the Republican coalition."

Some conservative leaders were planning a Wednesday meeting to assess the viability of launching a third-party candidacy to compete with him in the fall. Such Republicans worry about Trump's views on immigration and foreign policy, as well as his over-the-top persona.

Hours before clinching victory in Indiana, Trump was floating an unsubstantiated claim that Cruz's father appeared in a 1963 photograph with President John F. Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald — citing a report first published by the National Enquirer.

Trump defended his reference to the Enquirer article on

Wednesday morning as "not such a bad thing," but the line of attack was the final straw for some Republican critics.

"The GOP is going to nominate for president a guy who reads the National Enquirer and thinks it's on the level," Mark Salter, a top campaign aide to 2008 Republican nominee John McCain, wrote on Twitter.

On finding a running mate, Trump told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" that he'll "probably go the political route," saying he's inclined to pick someone who can "help me get legislation passed." Trump didn't identify any of the names under consideration.

While Trump signaled he would not seek assistance from super PACs, an allied super PAC held a conference call on Wednesday led by Ed Rollins, Ronald Reagan's 1984 campaign manager. Rollins acknowledged he was "a cynic at first" about Trump. But he said he grew to respect him as a master politician who "came in and conquered this game."

Clinton courts Republicans who reject Trump

Associated Press

ATHENS, Ohio — With Donald Trump all but clinching the Republican nomination for president, Hillary Clinton is beginning to explore ways to woo Republicans turned off by the brash billionaire.

The Democratic front-runner's campaign believes Trump's historically high unfavorable ratings and penchant for controversy may be enough to persuade a slice of GOP voters to get behind her bid, in much the same way so-called Reagan Democrats sided with

the Republican president in the 1980s.

Even before Trump was declared the winner Indiana's GOP primary, there were some early signs that a sliver of the party might see Clinton as the only option.

"I'm with her," Mark Salter, a top campaign aide to 2008 Republican nominee John McCain, tweeted on Tuesday.

Democrats caution their effort to win over Clinton Republicans — or Hill-cans, perhaps — is in its earliest stages, but could grow to include ads and other outreach targeted in par-

ticular at suburban women in battleground states. Already, aides say, a number of Republicans have privately told Clinton and her team they plan to break party ranks and support her as soon as Trump formally captures his party's nomination.

"We have an informed understanding that we could have the potential to expect support from not just Democrats and independents, but Republicans, too," said Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon. "There's a time and place for that support to make itself known."

While such bipartisan sup-

port would expand Clinton's base of potential voters, a series of high-profile endorsements from Republican officials could also raise questions about her liberal credentials and threaten to dampen enthusiasm among some in her own party.

For months, primary rival Bernie Sanders has criticized Clinton's record from the left, highlighting her 2002 vote in favor of the war in Iraq and support from Wall Street. The Vermont senator won the Indiana primary Tuesday, demonstrating Clinton's lingering weaknesses within her party.

Marines to keep fewer Ospreys in Spain

BY MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

Back-to-back years of budget cuts are forcing the Marine Corps to slash in half its fleet of crisis response Ospreys in Spain, a move that comes as the force struggles to maintain its overall state of readiness, according to senior Defense Department officials.

During a Senate appropriations hearing last week, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, confirmed the relocation of six of 12 Ospreys belonging to Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa.

Established in 2013 in response to the attack on American diplomats in Benghazi,

Libya, the Marine force is tasked with responding quickly to crises in U.S. Africa Command's area of responsibility. From its base of operations in Moron, Spain, the unit has responded to a number of emergencies, including a 2014 evacuation of the American Embassy in Libya.

The six aircraft, along with their crews, are to be moved back to the U.S., in part to provide a better home-to-deployment ratio for the Marines, said Capt. Sarah Burns, Marine Corps spokeswoman.

"In the past 15 years, the time deployed compared to the time at home is 1:2. That means that for every one day deployed, theoretically, a servicemember is allocated two days back home," Burns added. "It used

to be 1:3. Transferring the six Ospreys from Spain to the U.S. gives Osprey squadrons more time at home and helps the Marine Corps' overall plan to restore readiness to its aviation."

Dunford added that while there would be enough air support for the Marines' mission in AFRICOM, the decision to remove six Ospreys from its arsenal was not taken lightly.

"No, I'm not happy that we had to reduce the number from 12 to six," Dunford said. "That does reduce the flexibility; it reduces the depth."

At the moment, the Marines on the ground aren't overly concerned by the move, said Maj. Richard Ulsh, communications director for U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa.

"The [task force] maintains

the capability to execute its primary crisis response mission with six aircraft," Ulsh said.

But readiness has long been a concern of the Marines as they continue to see their operation and maintenance funding slashed. Last year, Gen. Robert Neller, commandant of the Marine Corps, addressed the House appropriations defense subcommittee about how that budget shortfall was affecting the Corps' ability to respond to crisis.

"As resources have diminished, the Marine Corps has protected the near-term operational readiness of its deployed units in order to meet operational commitments," Neller said in a statement to Congress. "This has come at a risk."

Author now doubts dad was in Iwo Jima photo

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — The author of a best-selling book about his father and other men who raised a U.S. flag at Iwo Jima during World War II said Tuesday he no longer believes his father was in an iconic photograph of the event.

James Bradley, who wrote the book "Flags of Our Fathers," said in a telephone interview that questions raised about the photo by two amateur historians, which have prompted a Marine Corps investigation, led him to think back on comments his father made about the 1945 flag-raising. Those comments by John Bradley, who died in 1994, now lead James Bradley to believe his father participated in an earlier flag-raising, not the one captured in the famous picture.

"My father raised a flag on Iwo Jima," Bradley told The Associated Press. "The Marines told him way after the fact, 'Here's a picture of you raising the flag.' He had a memory of

him raising a flag, and the two events came together."

AP photographer Joe Rosenthal shot the photo on Feb. 23, 1945, on Mount Suribachi, only days into a bloody battle with the Japanese that would stretch on for weeks. Since 1947, the Marines have identified the Iwo Jima flag-raisers as John Bradley, Rene Gagnon, Ira Hayes, Harlon Block, Michael Strank and Franklin Sousley. All were Marines except Bradley, who was a Navy corpsman.

On Monday, the Marine Corps announced it had begun investigating whether it mistakenly identified one of the men after history buffs Eric Krelle and Stephen Foley began raising doubts about the matter. They argued that the man believed to be Bradley actually was Sousley, and that the person thought to be Sousley was Harold Henry Schultz, who previously wasn't thought to have any connection to the flag-raising.

All of those involved in the flag-raising have died.

Army on fatal crash: GIs lost way, drove over cliff

Associated Press

DENVER — An Army Stryker driver took the wrong road in the dark and was making a U-turn when the vehicle tumbled 250 feet off a cliff at a Colorado training range last year, killing one soldier and injuring five, according to a recently released investigative report.

The soldier who died had an unspecified medical condition at the time of the February 2015 crash at Fort Carson, and a physician assistant had recommended that he not go on the training exercise, investigators said.

It wasn't clear from the report whether Staff Sgt. Justin Holt's condition was a factor in his death or in the crash of the Stryker. He was the commander of the vehicle but wasn't driving, the report said.

The Army provided the report to The Associated Press on Monday, more than a year after the AP requested it under the Freedom of Information

Act. Previously, the Army had released few details other than Holt's identity.

Holt, of Bogata, Texas, had not been sleeping well because of shoulder pain, the report said, but investigators didn't say if that was related to his medical condition. He suffered multiple blunt force trauma to his head, chest and torso in the crash, investigators said.

The report said an unidentified Army captain had allowed Holt to participate in the exercise against the advice of the physician assistant and a squadron commander.

The Army hasn't released the names of the five survivors, who all held the rank of specialist. One suffered multiple fractures in his upper spine and was permanently disabled, the report said. The driver had a broken leg, and three soldiers suffered cuts and bruises.

One soldier told investigators Holt accidentally released his seat belt as the Stryker began to roll.

Life, death of Pat Tillman inspires when naming kids

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Doctors told Jeff Okrepkie and Stephanie Ottolini not to expect children. Though her cervical cancer had been in remission since 2012, the odds of conception were minimal.

So when Stephanie became pregnant, the couple wanted a special name for what they considered a miracle baby.

Girls' names came quickly: Quinn, Arabella and Olivia.

Boys' names sparked tension, with one suggesting a name and the other quickly vetoing it.

During one contentious round of name swapping, Stephanie became irritated and suggested, in jest, to her fiancé that they name him Sparky, after Arizona State's mascot.

"If that's the case, we could name him Patrick Tillman Okrepkie," Jeff responded.

Stephanie instantly scoffed at the idea, then paused. She did like the name Tillman.

Jeff went to Arizona State, watched Tillman play football from the student section and attended a memorial for him at Sun Devil Stadium after his death. Stephanie was the daughter of an Army sergeant, so she had strong military ties.

A nephew was already named after her father, so Tillman seemed like the perfect fit.

"It was kind of a serendipitous thing," said Okrepkie, a commercial insurance agent in Santa Rosa, Calif. "It was a special birth and kind of inspired by strong personality, by sacrifice."

Tillman Bruce Okrepkie was born Nov. 10, 2015 — 11 years to the day after Stephanie's father, Michael, was killed in Iraq.

Pat Tillman lived his life with an exuberating gusto, attacking every aspect with a do-it-great-or-not-at-all passion.

He was a fan favorite at Arizona State and with the Arizona Cardinals, an underdog morphed into a star behind a relentless work ethic.

Tillman became a hero to many when he walked away from a lucrative NFL contract and a newlywed bride to join the Army after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

His death in the mountains of Afghanistan in 2004 — later revealed to be by friendly fire — struck even more of a chord.

Some parents became so inspired they named their children after Tillman; many as a first name, others as the middle name.

"There's such a connection to him here that if you've got a little dude and you want a different name, that guy is the kind of guy you want to name your son to be like," said Arizona State media relations director Doug Tammaro, who remained friends with Tillman after his graduation in 1997.

Many had ties to Arizona State. Hearing Tillman's story was enough for others.

Debra Cummings was six months' pregnant when Tillman died. Not long after that, her husband, Jack, told her the baby's name would be Tillman. No debate. Tillman was the name.

Debra was OK with the name though concerned about the gravity of it.

"She said, 'That's kind of a big name for a little kid,'" said Cummings, a real estate agent from Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Cummings had no ties to Arizona State and was not a Cardinals fan yet felt a connection with Tillman.

His father was a colonel in the Air Force

and as he followed Tillman's story, from the time he left the NFL to his funeral, Cummings came to admire the unflinching way Tillman lived his life.

Tillman Jackson Cummings was born on July 24, 2004. He prefers to be called Tillman.

The decision to name a child after a historical figure such as Pat Tillman comes with an inherent responsibility.

Okrepkie and Ottolini, who will marry next April, can't tell their infant son that he is a namesake just yet but will when the time is right.

Jack and Debra Cummings began explaining who their son was named after when Tillman was 6 and started piecing it together as he talked to an Army Ranger friend of Jack's. Now Tillman Cummings tells people he will be either a pro football player or an Army Ranger when he grows up.

Tillman Cunningham has already embraced the legacy of his name.

His father, Scott, began attending Sun Devils games when he was 8 and once was taught by Tillman at a football camp. He admired the way Tillman carried himself, his dedication and sacrifice, and he attended the Sun Devil Stadium memorial after his death.

When it came time to name their son, Cunningham figured his wife, Jessica, might take some convincing. She was all-in, as long as they could use her father's name with it.

Tillman James Cunningham was born Oct. 3, 2006.

"I've heard a lot about him, like how he joined the Army with his brother and all the stuff he's done," Tillman Cunningham said. "It's pretty cool to be named after such an American hero."

Heat edge Raptors in overtime

Associated Press

TORONTO — It only counts as one win, though the Miami Heat had to work twice as hard to get it.

Goran Dragic scored 26 points, Dwyane Wade had seven of his 24 in overtime after Kyle Lowry's halfcourt shot tied it at the buzzer, and the Heat beat the Toronto Raptors 102-96 on Tuesday night in Game 1 of their Eastern Conference semifinal series.

"We had to win the game twice tonight," Wade said.

Joe Johnson scored 16 points and Josh Richardson had 11. Hassan Whiteside had 17 rebounds for the Heat.

Game 2 is Thursday night in Toronto.

Lowry's improbable three-pointer from his own side of the halfcourt line capped Toronto's six-point comeback in the final 20 seconds of regulation, but the Raptors couldn't deliver in the extra session. Toronto went scoreless for the first 3:46 of overtime before DeMar DeRozan hit a jumper.

Dunks by DeMarre Carroll and Jonas Valanciunas made it 99-96 with just over 10 seconds to play. Toronto got the ball back after a Miami turnover on the inbounds play, but Wade stripped the ball from DeRozan and sealed it with a three-point play.

Wade (3,638) moved into 16th place on the NBA's playoff scoring list, passing Elgin Baylor (3,623). Scottie Pippen (3,642) is in 15th place.

Valanciunas had 24 points and 14 rebounds, and DeRozan added 22 points for the Raptors, who dropped to 1-9 in the opening game of a postseason series. Five of those defeats have come at home.

Warriors 110, Trail Blazers 99: The defending champions mounted a remarkable comeback without MVP Stephen Curry.

Next game, they might have him back and really get rolling.

Klay Thompson scored 27 points and gave host Golden State its first lead of the game on a three-pointer with 5:33 left, and the Warriors rallied to beat Portland for a 2-0 lead in their Western Conference semifinal series.

"It started with how focused we were in that fourth," Thompson said. "We've been down and out before. ... We were just locked in on both sides of the ball. We can build on this game. That effort there in the fourth quarter is what it's going to take to beat this team."

Draymond Green added 17 points, 14 rebounds, seven assists and four blocked shots in another win without Curry, sidelined with a sprained MCL in his right knee and relegated to coaching to help any way he could.

Game 3 is Saturday in Portland, and Curry could be in uniform.

Thompson's three with 6:44 remaining tied it, igniting the sellout crowd inside deafening Oracle Arena as the defending champions erased an early 17-point deficit.

Puerto Rico likely losing MLB series

Associated Press

MIAMI — There's a very good chance the Miami Marlins' two-game series against the Pittsburgh Pirates in Puerto Rico will not be held there because of concerns about the Zika virus, a person familiar with the situation said Tuesday.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the teams said no decision had been made.

Marlins players attended a seminar on Zika that heightened concerns about playing the games in San Juan on May 30-31, team player representative Tom Koehler said. An announcement is expected by the end of the week regarding whether the games will be played as

scheduled or moved, Koehler said.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave a presentation on the disease to the Marlins and representatives of Major League Baseball and the players' union.

"The information was more shocking to both sides," Koehler said. "Maybe shocking isn't the correct word, but there was a lot more information and data and numbers thrown our way that we didn't have."

Marlins players voted on whether to play the games as scheduled, said Koehler. He declined to share the result but said there's a lot of concern within the clubhouse about playing in Puerto Rico.

If moved, the games would likely be played in Miami, because the Marlins are

designated as the home team. Games against the Pirates are scheduled in Miami on June 1-2.

Discussions between MLB and the union are ongoing.

MLB officials, the Marlins and Pirates said last month they expected the games to be played as scheduled, but union head Tony Clark described the health and safety concerns as serious. U.S. health officials say Puerto Rico is the front lines of the nation's battle with Zika.

The CDC has said Zika can cause a birth defect called microcephaly, where infants are born with unusually small heads. The virus is most often spread by mosquito bites, but it also can be spread through sexual intercourse.



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Cubs beat Pirates; Arrieta is now 6-0

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Seven months later, the Pittsburgh Pirates still can't hit Jake Arrieta.

Then again, they're hardly the only ones.

The Chicago Cubs ace scattered two hits in seven shutout innings in a 7-1 victory that looked more than a little like Arrieta's dominant performance in an NL wild-card playoff win at PNC Park last October.

Arrieta (6-0) allowed only singles to Sean Rodriguez in the second and Francisco Cervelli in the seventh, striking out five and walking two while lowering his ERA to 0.84. He became the second six-game winner in the major leagues after Chris Sale of the Chicago White Sox.

"He struggled early, then once he finds out where the ball is going, everything takes off for him," Chicago manager Joe Maddon said. "He's going to keep going down this path with his skill and the way he works."

Kris Bryant had three hits for the Cubs, who have won seven of eight and moved five games ahead of Pittsburgh in the NL Central.

"We had some good at-bats right out of the shoot," Maddon said. "We did some good things early. We put them a bit on their heels and that's always important in a game like tonight."

Jon Niese (3-1) gave up six runs and nine hits over five innings while losing for the first time since the Pirates acquired him from the New York Mets in an offseason trade.

Two starts removed from his second career no-hitter, Arrieta kept on going. His only real trouble spot came in the first, when he issued consecutive walks to John Jaso and Andrew McCutchen. A strikeout, a fielder's choice and a harmless grounder back to the mound later, Arrieta had his bearings.

The Pirates could do little to stop him even with manager Clint Hurdle using an unorthodox lineup that included Matt Joyce in right field thanks in large part to his career .500 batting average (7-for-14) against Arrieta. Yet, the last time

Joyce faced Arrieta was in 2013, when Arrieta was struggling in Baltimore. Not anymore.

"He's facing a different guy now," Arrieta said.

Joyce went 0-for-3 with Arrieta in the game and Pittsburgh didn't get a runner over his final six innings.

"He doesn't get out of his zone," Joyce said. "I read after the game that this was the first time in his career he walked the first two hitters in a game but it didn't faze him one bit. He wasn't upset with himself. He wasn't frustrated. It's pretty amazing stuff."

The Cubs have won each of Arrieta's last 19 starts. He became the first Chicago pitcher to win each of his first six starts in a season since Mordecai Brown won his first 11 starts in 1908, which is also the last time the Cubs won the World Series.

Arrieta is doing his best not to get caught up in his own hype even as his numbers become ever more impressive.

"You try to enjoy it, but it's short-lived because of the goals we have here," he said. "We play so many games, it's smart to get on to the next page."

Pittsburgh wants to be in the mix with Chicago and St. Louis, but the first series of what is becoming a hotly contested rivalry has been decidedly one-sided. The Cubs have outscored the Pirates 14-3 in the first two games.

This one lacked the vitriol that accompanied Chicago's 7-2 romp on Monday night. Maddon traded words with several Pirates. Maybe because Chicago was too busy getting to Niese, obtained for popular second baseman Neil Walker.

Niese has benefited from the second-best run support in the NL, one of the reasons he came in undefeated. The Cubs, however, wasted little time taking control. Chicago jumped in front 2-0 in the second on a run-scoring groundout by Javier Baez and an RBI single by Arrieta. The Cubs tagged Niese for four more runs in the fourth as Niese struggled with his command. Addison Russell scored on a wild pitch, Jorge Soler and Bryant followed with RBI singles and Rizzo smacked a run-scoring double as Niese's ERA rose to 5.84.

That was more than enough offense for Arrieta, who left after 99 pitches and his winning streak firmly intact.

Rodriguez scored Pittsburgh's only run in the eighth on Jaso's single.

Royals 7, Nationals 6: Lorenzo Cain capped a three-run ninth inning with a two-out single to left, bringing home Mike Moustakas and giving host Kansas City a victory.

Braves 3, Mets 0: Matt Wisler wiped out host New York with eight innings of one-hit ball and Mallex Smith hit a rare Atlanta homer off a scuffling Matt Harvey.

Phillies 1, Cardinals 0: Aaron Nola threw seven innings and Ryan Howard homered to lead visiting Philadelphia to a victory.

Philadelphia has won seven of eight while St. Louis has lost five of six.

Jeanmar Gomez recorded his ninth save in as many opportunities after Hector Neris struck out the side in the eighth inning.

Astros 6, Twins 4: Jason Castro and George Springer hit homers and host Houston held on for a victory.

Castro hit his first homer of the year to lead off the three-run third inning, and Springer hit a shot that bounced off the railroad tracks in left field and out of the stadium to cap the three-run fourth.

Orioles 4, Yankees 1: Mark Trumbo hit two home runs, Chris Tillman scattered five hits over seven innings and host Baltimore extended New York's losing streak to six games.

Blue Jays 3, Rangers 1 (10): Justin Smoak's first two home runs of the season, a tying drive in the ninth inning and two-run shot in the 10th, led host Toronto over Texas.

Indians 7, Tigers 3: Francisco Lindor hit a three-run homer, scored three times and fell a triple short of the cycle, leading host Cleveland to a victory.

Dodgers 10, Rays 5: Trayce Thompson, Joc Pederson and Yasiel Puig homered as visiting Los Angeles pulled out of an offensive funk with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Giants 3, Reds 1: Jeff Samardzija went

eight innings to win his third straight start — a career first — and visiting San Francisco rallied for two runs in the eighth inning against Cincinnati's historically bad bullpen.

Cincinnati's bullpen gave up at least one run for the 21st consecutive game, surpassing the 2013 Colorado Rockies for the major league record, according to information provided by the Reds from the Elias Sports Bureau.

Marlins 7, Diamondbacks 4: Ichiro Suzuki's two-run pinch-hit single put Miami ahead in the sixth inning to rally past visiting Arizona.

Brewers 5, Angels 4: Chris Carter hit two long home runs and drove in three, Junior Guerra won his first career major league start, and host Milwaukee rallied from an early four-run deficit to beat Los Angeles.

Mariners 8, Athletics 2: Robinson Cano, Kyle Seager and Leonys Martin hit home runs and Hisashi Iwakuma pitched seven solid innings for visiting Seattle.

Padres 6, Rockies 3: Matt Kemp and Brett Wallace hit back-to-back home runs and Andrew Cashner recovered from a shaky first inning to lead host San Diego.

Kemp's homer in the fourth was the first hit of the game against Rockies starter Eddie Butler, who retired the first 11 batters.

White Sox 4, Red Sox 1: Jose Quintana pitched eight crisp innings for his third straight win, and AL-leading Chicago cooled off visiting Boston.

Jose Abreu had two hits and three RBIs as Chicago ran its record to 19-8 with its third straight win. It has won nine of 11 overall to keep up with the major league-leading Cubs, revving up the anticipation for an intriguing summer in the Windy City.

Hanley Ramirez's one-out homer in the fifth halted Quintana's scoreless streak at 20 1/3 innings, but the left-hander bounced back by retiring Travis Shaw and Chris Young on a pair of grounders.

Quintana (4-1) allowed four hits, struck out five and walked none while lowering his ERA to 1.40. David Robertson finished for his ninth save in 10 chances.

Lightning tie it late in regulation, win in overtime

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Brian Boyle delivered a hard hit and then took advantage of a lucky carom to get the Tampa Bay Lightning a big playoff win.

Boyle scored at 2:48 of overtime to lift the Lightning to a 5-4 victory over the New York Islanders on Tuesday night for a 2-1 lead in their second-round series.

Seconds before the Lightning's rush on their winning goal, Boyle delivered a hard shoulder hit to the head of Thomas Hickey on the left side after the Islanders defenseman had sent the puck forward. No penalty was called on the play.

The Lightning got the puck and were on an odd-man rush as Victor Hedman fired a shot from the left side that was wide. The rebound came off the boards and right to Boyle in front at the right side of the goal and he tapped it in for the win.

"I thought I had it, but I just missed it," Hedman said, "and Boyle was there and prepared for the rebound and stuck it in."

Boyle added: "It was a fortunate bounce."

Nikita Kucherov tied it in the final minute of regulation, and Ryan Callahan,

Hedman and Vladislav Namestnikov also scored for the Lightning. Ben Bishop stopped 35 shots.

Islanders coach Jack Capuano couldn't believe there wasn't a penalty called on Boyle's hit on Hickey.

"It's a direct shot to the head. I mean (he's) probably going to get suspended a game," Capuano said. "Those are the type of hits we're trying to eliminate from our game. ... It's frustrating because the play is right there. (The official) is looking right at it."

Lightning coach Jon Cooper disagreed with his counterpart's assessment.

"How many hits were in that game, 70, 80 hits?" Cooper said. "I would say there were 15 harder than the one Boyle was involved in. ... To me, that was a mild hit compared to some of the banging that went on in that hockey game."

Josh Bailey, back after missing the first two games of this series with an upper-body injury, had two goals, and Nick Leddy and Cal Clutterbuck also scored for the Islanders. Thomas Greiss finished with 36 saves.

Game 4 of the best-of-seven series is Friday night.

With Bishop pulled for an extra skater,

Kucherov's NHL-leading seventh goal of the playoffs evened it with 38.4 seconds remaining. Jonathan Drouin, who returned earlier in the period after taking a hard hit from Hickey in the second, was skating toward the goal line and sent a centering pass back to Kucherov, who fired it past Greiss for the fourth tie in the seesaw game.

"It's kind of apropos the way the whole thing worked out," Cooper said. "(Drouin) gets hit the way he did, that was a thunderous hit. ... It was pretty cool that he was the guy that set up the (tying goal)."

Clutterbuck had given the Islanders a 4-3 lead with 8:37 remaining as he got the puck on a deflection of an outlet pass by the Lightning off the skate of the Islanders' Casey Cizikas, and beat Bishop on the blocker side high and in off the crossbar.

Bailey put the Islanders ahead 3-2 with his second goal early in the third period. The Lightning tied it nearly a minute later when Valtteri Filppula found Namestnikov in front and he snapped it past Greiss.

Predators 4, Sharks 1: Shea Weber scored the go-ahead goal and had an assist and host Nashville beat San Jose to pull within 2-1 in their Western Conference

second-round series.

James Neal and Filip Forsberg each scored on the power-play, Colin Wilson had a goal, and Pekka Rinne made 26 saves for Nashville.

Patrick Marleau scored for the Sharks, who lost for the first time away from San Jose this postseason and first since a loss at Arizona on March 17.

Game 4 is Thursday night.

The Predators not only lost the first two in San Jose, but were facing the NHL's best regular-season road team. The Sharks also went 4-2 in Nashville in winning first-round series in both 2006 and 2007.

Stars 6, Blues 1: Alexander Steen and David Backes had two goals apiece and host St. Louis' defense put the clamps on Dallas in a victory that put it up 2-1 in the second-round series.

Vladimir Tarasenko had a goal and two assists, Troy Brouwer had a goal and assist and Brian Elliott was strong when he needed to be for the Blues in their first lopsided triumph of the postseason. Their other five wins were decided by one goal.

The Blues scored six unanswered goals after Colton Sceviour gave Dallas the early advantage, three coming in a break-away second period.