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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Navy NCO guilty of sex assault in Japan

BY ERIK SLAVIN

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A senior chief petty officer was sentenced to 179 days in the brig after a military jury convicted him Friday of sexually assaulting a woman in an off-base residence.

Khoi Pham, a culinary specialist assigned to Naval Supply Fleet Logistics Center Yokosuka, also received a dishonorable discharge and a reduction in grade to E-3 following his conviction for sexual assault and making false official statements.

The assault took place in February 2015, Timothy Bilecki,

Pham's civilian defense counsel, said during a phone interview Monday.

The victim is a proprietor in an area known as the Honch, a collection of bars and clubs across the street from Yokosuka Naval Base.

Pham and the victim had been drinking that night when they saw each other in The Honch, and Pham walked the woman to her nearby home, Bilecki said.

Navy prosecutors argued during the trial last week that Pham, who is married, had sexual intercourse with the woman while she was too drunk to consent, according to Bilecki.

The defense argued that the

accuser had only three or four beers and consented to sex acts, but that intercourse never took place.

The government submitted physical evidence that found Pham's sperm on a vaginal swab. However, Bilecki disputed U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka's handling of the DNA evidence, arguing that the hospital used broken equipment that could have resulted in contaminated swabs.

Bilecki said the defense was surprised by the verdict, and that it intends to appeal.

"We don't believe the evidence showed that [she] was too intoxicated to provide consent," Bilecki said.

Navy officials stood by the verdict on Monday.

"A jury of military members heard the arguments, saw the evidence and found him guilty of the charges," Naval Forces Japan spokesman Cmdr. Ron Flanders said.

A dishonorable discharge is now an automatic consequence of a conviction under Article 120, which guides Uniform Code of Military Justice procedures for rape and other sex crimes, Bilecki added.

As part of the discharge, Pham would be reduced in grade to E-1 after serving his sentence if further appeals fail.

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US, S. Korea, Japan to hold 1st joint exercise

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S., South Korea and Japan will hold their first joint anti-missile exercises next month to better counter the threat from North Korea, the Defense Ministry here said Monday.

It was the latest sign that worries over the North's nuclear weapons program are pushing the allies closer together. China urged restraint, calling on all parties to remain calm.

Tensions spiked this year since the North staged its fourth nuclear test and fired a long-range rocket, moves that prompted a new round of tougher U.N. economic sanctions. Despite the punishing measures, Pyongyang attempted several other missile launches, including one from a submarine.

The trilateral defensive drills

will take place about June 28 on the sidelines of Rim of the Pacific, or RIMPAC, international naval exercises in Hawaii, said South Korea's Ministry of National Defense. The exercises will focus on detecting and tracking missiles, not interception, although ships equipped with the Aegis ballistic missile defense system will be involved, said a ministry official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

U.S. Forces Korea did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The planned drills stem from a 2014 intelligence-sharing pact among the three countries, the official said. The U.S., South Korea and Japan also agreed last month during trilateral talks in Seoul to strengthen cooperation on implementing sanctions against the North.

China: Afghanistan backs stance on dispute over sea

Associated Press

BEIJING — China on Monday said landlocked Afghanistan has expressed support for Beijing's stance on the South China Sea dispute, the latest country from outside the region to line up behind China's calls for bilateral talks on the issue.

The Foreign Ministry said Afghanistan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah made the statement in a meeting with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing that also touched on security cooperation along their border in China's volatile western region of Xinjiang.

"Our Afghan counterparts expressed their gratitude for China's long-term support over the years, and also said they support China's position on the South China Sea issue and support China's efforts to resolve the South China Sea issue through bilateral channels and

through peaceful means such as negotiation and consultation," the deputy director general of the ministry's department of Asian Affairs, Hou Yanqi, told reporters following the talks.

Hou said Li also expressed China's willingness to help with Afghanistan's national reconciliation process, to provide assistance for projects including the construction of low-cost housing and to boost imports of Afghan agricultural projects.

China has been seeking support from friendly nations for its bilateral approach to settling South China Sea territorial disputes, largely to counter efforts by the U.S., the Philippines and others to challenge China's claim to virtually the entire sea and its creation of new islands out of coral reefs. Russia so far has been the most prominent nation to publicly endorse China's position.

New Zealand port calls could resume this year

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy appears close to resolving a three-decade dispute with New Zealand over a ban on port calls by ships carrying nuclear weapons.

The Royal New Zealand Navy has invited the U.S. to send a ship to its anniversary celebrations in November, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said in a statement Monday.

The Navy hasn't visited New Zealand since a left-wing government refused a port call request by the guided-missile destroyer USS Buchanan in 1985 on grounds that the U.S. would neither confirm nor deny whether its vessels carried nuclear weapons.

Mabus, on his third visit to the Antipodes to meet with military and civilian officials,

said the U.S. is considering the offer but gave no timetable for a decision.

"Our bilateral military cooperation with New Zealand is strong, and we continue to partner in humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and peacekeeping support operations," he said.

The rift between the allies has been long-lasting — New Zealand was left out of a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Australia in 2004 — but in recent years there have been signs of rapprochement.

New Zealand law requires the prime minister to be satisfied visiting ships aren't carrying nuclear arms.

The Navy removed nuclear weapons from its surface ships after the Cold War, but continues a policy of neither confirming nor denying its vessels' nuclear capabilities.

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, a neighbor and golf-partner of President Barack Obama in Hawaii, told the New Zealand Herald newspaper last week he could be satisfied, depending on the type of vessel the U.S. opted to send if it accepted the invitation.

New Zealand is part of the "Five Eyes" signals intelligence-sharing group with the U.S., Britain, Australia and Canada, and hosts U.S. Air Force planes en route to Antarctica. The New Zealand Defence Force has sent troops to Afghanistan, and Kiwi soldiers are in Iraq training locals to take on the Islamic State.

Marines restarted training in New Zealand after a ban on joint exercises was lifted by the U.S. in 2010, and Kiwi ships have docked in Hawaii during the past two Rim of the Pacific exercises.

In first for US, penis transplant at Mass. hospital

Associated Press

BOSTON — A cancer patient has received the first penis transplant in the United States, a Boston hospital said Monday.

Massachusetts General Hospital has confirmed that Thomas Manning, of Halifax, Mass., received the transplanted penis in a 15-hour procedure last week. The organ was transplanted from a deceased donor.

The New York Times first reported the transplant Monday.

Dr. Curtis Cetrulo, who helped lead the surgical team, told the newspaper that normal urination should be possible for Manning, 64, in a few weeks, with sexual function possible in weeks to months.

"We're cautiously optimistic," said Cetrulo, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon, adding, "It's uncharted waters for us."

The Times reported that most of Manning's penis was removed amid a battle with an aggressive and potentially fatal penile cancer.

Capital locked down for Afghan rally

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Tens of thousands of Afghanistan's ethnic Hazaras marched on Monday through downtown Kabul, demanding the government reroute a planned power line through their poverty-stricken province so they can get more access to electricity.

The massive protest reflected widespread dismay with the administration of President Ashraf Ghani.

Concerns that the protest could turn violent prompted

the police to block off roads leading into the city's central commercial district. Stacked shipping containers prevented the marchers from reaching the presidential palace. A November rally by Hazaras protesting the beheadings of members of their minority by militants had turned violent.

Most of Kabul's shops were shuttered as armed police fanned out. Authorities restricted the protest organizers to a specific route that would bypass the palace.

The rally passed without major incidents but the protest underscored the political crisis facing Afghanistan as Ghani becomes increasingly isolated amid a stalled economy, rising unemployment, and an escalating Taliban insurgency, now in its 15th year.

The U.S. Embassy closed its consular section and warned Americans to limit their movement within Kabul. Other embassies, the U.N. compounds and nongovernmental organizations also were locked down.

US, other powers ready to arm Libya

Associated Press

VIENNA — The United States and other world powers say they are ready to supply Libya's internationally recognized government with weapons to counter the Islamic State and other militant groups gaining footholds in its lawless regions.

The world powers aim to push for exemptions to a U.N. arms embargo imposed on Libya to keep lethal arms away

from Islamic extremists and rival militias vying for power. In a communique obtained by The Associated Press, the U.S., four other permanent U.N. Security Council members and the more than 15 other nations participating at the talks say they are "ready to respond to the Libyan government's requests for training and equipping" government forces.

"The Government of National Accord has voiced its inten-

tion to submit appropriate arms embargo exemption requests to the UN Libya Sanctions Committee to procure necessary lethal arms and materiel to counter UN-designated terrorist groups and to combat Da'esh throughout the country," said the communique, using an alternate name for the Islamic State. "We will fully support these efforts while continuing to reinforce the UN arms embargo."

Bautista, Jays fall to Rangers

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Jose Bautista slid hard into second base, stood up and found himself face-to-face with Texas' Rougned Odor.

Next thing the Toronto slugger knew, he was rattled by a punch to the jaw that sent his batting helmet and sunglasses flying.

A feud simmering since Bautista's bat flip in last year's AL Division Series boiled over into a wild brawl that ultimately triggered six of the eight ejections in the Blue Jays' 7-6 loss on Sunday.

"I was pretty surprised," Bautista said. "I mean, obviously, that's the only reason that he got me and he got me pretty good, so I have to give him that. It takes a little bit bigger man to knock me down."

Perhaps it's a good thing the Rangers and Blue Jays have played for the final time this season. As for the playoffs, well, that would be interesting.

Texas is headed to Oakland, and the Blue Jays back home to Toronto, the site of last year's emotional meeting in the playoffs. That's when Bautista capped a wild seventh inning with a clutch three-run homer and the monumental bat flip

that angered Texas.

This time, Bautista was upset by getting hit by an eighth-inning pitch from 30-year-old Texas rookie Matt Bush (1-0), who got his first major league win two days after his debut — and 12 years after he was the No. 1 overall pick in the draft.

Toronto manager John Gibbons, who was ejected in the third inning over an argument about balls and strikes, came back to the field for the brawl.

Crew chief Dale Scott told a pool reporter that Gibbons' return "will be in the report and Major League Baseball will take care of it."

Bautista, who was kept out of most of the melee by a bear hug from Texas veteran Adrian Beltre, was ejected as a result of the brawl. Same for Odor — who shoved Bautista before punching him — along with Toronto's Josh Donaldson and Texas bench coach Steve Buechele.

After the field was finally cleared, Blue Jays reliever Jesse Chavez hit Prince Fielder with the next pitch when the game resumed. He was ejected automatically because of the warning issued after Bush hit Bautista.

Blue Jays bench coach Demarlo Hale also was tossed because of Chavez's pitch be-

cause he was filling in for Gibbons.

Toronto first base coach Tim Leper was ejected in the third inning in a separate dispute before Gibbons was tossed.

"I think it was just two hard-nosed baseball teams that play the game hard," said Texas manager Jeff Banister, who exchanged words with Gibbons as the field was being cleared. "They like their club. We like our club. I take offense to everybody that thinks this is a game that shouldn't be played hard, that it shouldn't be played with emotion and intensity."

Odor wasn't available to reporters after the game.

Ian Desmond greeted Chavez (0-1) with a three-run homer with two outs in the seventh, giving Texas a 7-6 lead with a drive to the seats above the tall wall in left field.

Bautista's brawl-triggering slide forced Odor to throw wildly to first on an attempted double play on a grounder by Justin Smoak, but Texas was awarded an inning-ending double play on the Chase Utley rule.

Sam Dyson, who gave up Bautista's memorable homer in last year's playoffs, pitched a perfect ninth for his second save.

Wire-to-wire win for Day at Players

Associated Press

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Jason Day wanted to win The Players Championship so badly that he wasn't going to let anything stop him.

Not the super-slick greens that nearly derailed him Saturday. Not the three muffed chips that turned potential birdie into a unsettling bogey as he made the turn Sunday. And certainly not the best field in golf.

With another command performance, Day put his stamp on No. 1 in the world by never letting anyone closer than two shots in the final round, playing bogey-free on the back nine of the TPC Sawgrass for the fourth straight day and closing with a 1-under 71 for a wire-to-wire victory.

It was his seventh title in the last 10 months.

And the 28-year-old Australian wants to win a lot more.

"I want to be to be able to be looked back on and know that 'he was one of the greats in the game.' If I have the opportunity to do that, I'm going to try my best," Day said after his four-shot victory. "And I have the opportunity to do that right now, try and work as hard as I can to really leave my footprint in this game."

"I'm very motivated to win as much as I can right now."

He stomped his way all over everyone at The Players Championship, even though he had a few nervous moments.

Day made bogey on No. 6, had to make a 15-foot par putt on the next hole and really looked out of sorts from just 40 feet right of the green on the par-5 ninth. He muffed three straight chips and had to make a 6-foot putt just to escape with bogey, dropping his lead to two shots.

"If I walk away with a double bogey there, I let everyone (back) in the field," he said. "I was right there next to the green in two and felt like an amateur chopping my way to the pin. That putt was probably the most crucial putt of this tournament for me."

Two 15-foot birdies over the next three holes restored his margin and sent him on his way. The last hurdle was finding land on the island-green 17th, and he cleared the water with about 10 feet to spare.

Day's seven victories dating to the Canadian Open include the PGA Championship, The Players, a World Golf Championship and a pair of FedEx Cup events, all some of the strongest fields in golf. He became the first wire-to-wire winner in 16 years at Sawgrass, and he joined Tiger Woods, Johnny Miller and Tom Watson as the only players to go wire-to-wire twice in the same season dating to 1970.

Day finished at 15-under 273 and earned \$1.89 million, the richest payoff in golf.

Kevin Chappell, who finished one shot behind Day at Bay Hill, was 5 under over his final 10 holes for a 69. He picked up a consolation check of \$1,134,000 and moves just outside the top 30 in the world, giving him a spot in the next two majors.

Beltran hits home run No. 400

Associated Press

NEW YORK — More than a week after they wobbled back to the Bronx in last place, Chase Headley, Carlos Beltran and their New York teammates whooshed out of Yankee Stadium looking way more potent.

Headley lined a pinch-hit double to break a seventh-inning tie, Beltran launched his 400th career home run and the Yankees wrapped up a successful homestand by beating the Chicago White Sox 7-5 Sunday.

After reliever Dellin Betances recovered to escape his own jam, Andrew Miller pitched a perfect eighth and Aroldis Chapman closed for his third save.

"Obviously, it's a big homestand for the whole team," Headley said. "I think we're playing the way we're capable of."

The White Sox have dropped four of five overall, and lost for the 13th time in their last 15 games at Yankee Stadium.

A day after striking out all four batters he faced, Betances (1-2) was shaky. He took over in the seventh with a 5-4 lead, but Jose Abreu and Todd Frazier greeted him with singles and Melky Cabrera hit a tying double. Betances recovered to retire the next three batters.

Matt Albers (1-2) set down the first two batters in the New York seventh. Didi Gregorius then walked and Headley, batting for Ronald Torreyes, doubled to center.

Athletics 7, Rays 5: Danny Valencia's third home run of the day lifted visiting Oakland over Tampa Bay. Valencia's final homer — his fifth of the season, with each of them coming in the weekend series — came on the first pitch from Steve Geltz (0-2).

John Axford (3-1) pitched an inning for the win and Ryan Madson got three outs on four pitches for his 10th save.

Brandon Guyer went deep twice for the Rays in a game that featured seven home runs. Tampa Bay third baseman Evan Longoria also connected for his seventh homer.

Red Sox 10, Astros 9: Xander Bogaerts hit a three-run homer and Ryan Hanigan had three singles and drove in four to lead host Boston.

It was the seventh win in eight games for the Red Sox, and completed a 6-1 homestand in which they score 73 runs.

Pirates 2, Cubs 1: Starling Marte singled with one out in the seventh inning to end Jon Lester's no-hit bid, then scored on Jung Ho Kang's double to put Gerrit Cole and host Pittsburgh ahead to stay.

Cardinals 5, Dodgers 2: Matt Carpenter homered for the fifth time in eight games, Yadier Molina had a tie-breaking two-run double in the top of the seventh inning and St. Louis beat host Los Angeles to avoid being swept in the three-game series.

Marlins 5, Nationals 1: Jose Fernandez struck out 11 over seven innings and drove in two runs during a three-run sixth to help Miami defeat host Washington.

Giancarlo Stanton hit his 11th home run as Miami salvaged a four-game split.

Giants 2, Diamondbacks 1: Manager Bruce Bochy successfully challenged to get a game-ending double play after Brandon Crawford singled in a run in the ninth inning and visiting San Francisco completed a four-game sweep.

Rockies 4, Mets 3: Pinch-hitter Ryan Raburn came through with a go-ahead, two-run homer in the seventh inning that carried host Colorado past New York for a

three-game sweep.

Tigers 6, Orioles 5: J.D. Martinez and Miguel Cabrera homered on consecutive pitches in the eighth inning, and visiting Detroit ended Baltimore's seven-game winning streak.

The home runs came against Darren O'Day, who fanned the first two batters in the eighth with Baltimore up 5-4.

Angels 3, Mariners 0: Hector Santiago pitched eight innings of two-hit ball and Daniel Nava's two-run, two-out single in the eighth inning gave visiting Los Angeles the cushion it needed to complete a three-game sweep.

Reds 9, Phillies 4: Eugenio Suarez hit a three-run homer, Jay Bruce went 3-for-3 and visiting Cincinnati rebounded from a difficult loss.

Dan Straily (2-1) pitched five scoreless innings as last-place Cincinnati won for the third time in 16 road games this season.

Royals 4, Braves 2 (13): Kendrys Morales hit a walk-off two-run homer with two out in the 13th inning and host Kansas City overcame a rare blown save by Wade Davis to defeat Atlanta.

Brewers 3, Padres 2: Chris Carter hit a towering solo homer and a tiebreaking RBI double, breaking out of a long slump and leading host Milwaukee to a victory.

Carter was mired in an 0-for-23 slide before he belted a 443-foot homer off the scoreboard in center field in the third.

Twins 5, Indians 1: Tyler Duffey pitched seven scoreless innings, Eddie Rosario drove in three runs and Minnesota won its first road series of the season.

Duffey (1-2) allowed six hits and struck out six, giving the Twins back-to-back wins for only the third time this year.



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Raptors top Heat to advance

Associated Press

TORONTO — Toronto fans chanted ‘We Want Cleveland!’ in the final seconds. They got it.

Kyle Lowry scored 35 points, DeMar DeRozan had 28 and the Raptors beat the Miami Heat 116-89 in Game 7 on Sunday to advance to the conference finals for the first time in franchise history.

Bismack Biyombo added 17 points and 16 rebounds for the Raptors. They’ll open the Eastern Conference finals in Cleveland against LeBron James and the Cavaliers on Tuesday night.

“It’s great to hear the home crowd,” DeRozan said. “This organization deserves it, this country deserves it, to see them get to the next step, somewhere they haven’t been. But we’re not done yet.”

After struggling for much of the play-offs, Lowry and DeRozan were in top form for Game 7. Lowry made 11 of 20 shots, including five of seven from three-point range, and DeRozan connected on 12 of 29 attempts. Lowry had nine assists

and seven rebounds, DeRozan had eight rebounds.

“We never doubted Kyle and DeMar,” Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. “They’re our All Stars and they both played like it tonight. They both stepped up and carried us.”

DeMarre Carroll scored 14 points, and Patrick Patterson had 11 to help the Raptors become the 15th team in NBA history to win two Game 7s in one post-season. Toronto beat Indiana in the first round.

Now the Raptors get ready for the Cavaliers, who swept Detroit in the first round and have been resting since May 8, when they capped a second-round sweep of Atlanta.

“I think this group is hungry,” Casey said about his team. “Never say never.”

Casey declined to say whether center Jonas Valanciunas, who sprained his right ankle in Game 3 against the Heat, would be available against Cleveland.

“He’s still limping around but he’s doing therapy 24-7 so we’ll see,” Casey said.

Scouting booklets for the Cleveland

series were sitting on the chair of each Raptors player inside their locker room less than an hour after the game.

“We know we’ve got a tough task ahead,” Lowry said. “It’s always a challenge going against those guys.”

Dwyane Wade and Goran Dragic each scored 16 points for the Heat. Miami was denied the opportunity to renew acquaintances with former teammate James in the conference finals.

“We fought tooth and nail to try to get to that goal of getting to the Eastern Conference finals,” Wade said. “We came up obviously one game short of that. For myself and a lot of guys on this team, there’s not always another season, so you want to take advantage of the opportunities.”

Miami hadn’t lost a Game 7 since the first round at Atlanta in 2009. They won their past four Game 7s, all at home. Miami was seeking to join the Los Angeles Lakers and Boston Celtics as the only teams to win five straight Game 7s.

Pacers name McMillan head coach

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Pacers have promoted assistant Nate McMillan to head coach, ending the search for Frank Vogel’s replacement after less than two weeks.

McMillan spent 12 seasons as the head coach in Seattle and Portland, going 478-452 in the regular season and 14-20 in the playoffs.

He was hired by Vogel in 2013 and spent the past three seasons with the Pacers, where he developed relationships with the players and president of basketball operations Larry Bird.

Bird announced May 5 that Vogel would not be retained after his contract expired and that he believed the Pacers needed to hear a different voice in the locker room.

The Associated Press

Towns wins rookie of year

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns is the unanimous winner of the NBA Rookie of the Year award.

The league made the announcement Monday, giving the Wolves back-to-back honorees after forward Andrew Wiggins won the Eddie Gottlieb Trophy last season. The 7-foot Towns received all 130 first-place votes from a panel of sports writers and broadcasters in the United States and Canada, joining Damian Lillard (2013), Blake Griffin (2011), David Robinson (1990) and Ralph Sampson (1984) as recent unanimous winners.

New York’s Kristaps Porzingis finished second, and Denver’s Nikola Jokic was third.

The first pick out of Kentucky in the 2015 draft, Towns ranked eighth in the NBA in rebounds and field-goal percentage and produced the best debut for a big man since Tim Duncan in 1998. The

20-year-old Towns averaged 18.1 points, 10.7 rebounds and 1.7 blocks, helping the Timberwolves win 13 more games than the season before.

The Wolves became the first team with back-to-back winners of the award since Bob McAdoo and Ernie DiGregorio with the Buffalo Braves in 1973 and 1974.

Towns was the only rookie to start all 82 games. He was named Western Conference rookie of the month in all six months the award was handed out.

Towns showed an elite ability to pass, rebound and score from both the paint and the three-point line, making him the quintessential big man for the modern era and giving the Timberwolves hope they’ve finally found the star needed to carry them out of the cellar. With Towns, Wiggins, Zach LaVine, Ricky Rubio, Gorgui Dieng and Shabazz Muhammad to be coached next season by Tom Thibodeau, the Wolves believe they have the ingredients to finally end a 12-season playoff drought.

Elliott, Blues hold off Sharks

Associtaed Press

ST. LOUIS — Once again, Brian Elliott was the star of the show. His latest performance gave his St. Louis Blues teammates plenty of comfort knowing he had their back.

“When your goalie is your best player, it gives you a great chance of winning, and that was the case,” captain David Backes said after the Blues opened their first Western Conference final in 15 years with a tense 2-1 victory over San Jose on Sunday night.

“It was that way for the first two rounds,” Backes added, “and nothing’s changed in Game 1 of the third round.”

Backes opened the scoring and Jori Lehtera had the go-ahead goal in the second period on a spinning shot that Martin Jones could not handle.

“I just got the puck and closed my eyes

and shot it, that’s about it,” Lehtera said. “Just keep it simple.”

Said Jones: “Not much to it, just found a hole. I’ll make that save next time.”

Tomas Hertl scored on a first-period deflection for the Sharks, who outshot St. Louis 32-23 but couldn’t quite solve Elliott.

Among those he frustrated was captain Joe Pavelski, who had seven shots and had perhaps the best chance in the third period on a one-timer near the midway mark. Pavelski and Elliott were roommates at Wisconsin.

“I’m going to blame that one on the stick,” Pavelski said. “No, I have to find a way to put that in regardless of what goes on. I thought it was going in.”

Blues coach Ken Hitchcock thought his team was fortunate to survive the last 2:29 after the Sharks pulled Jones.

“I thought we did a great job. We kept it

in the zone,” Hitchcock said sarcastically. “Are you kidding me? We couldn’t get it out.”

The Sharks were the best road team in the NHL in the regular season at 28-10-3, but have dropped four in a row on the road in these playoffs, including all three in the second round against Nashville. They had seven goals in three road losses to the Predators and were 0-for-3 on the power play, which had been a major plus. San Jose had been converting on 33 percent of its power plays in the postseason.

“They were hot in the last series,” Blues defenseman Alex Pietrangelo said. “We stepped up to the challenge.”

The Blues made good on their first chance with home-ice advantage in the playoffs, although they’re just 4-4 at the Scottrade Center heading into Game 2 on Tuesday night.

Kenseth edges Larson at Dover

Associated Press

DOVER, Del. — Matt Kenseth used some of his veteran experience to edge Kyle Larson and surge to victory Sunday in the accident-strewn NASCAR race at Dover International Speedway.

“He was all over me,” Kenseth said. “If he would have snuck inside, it would have been over,” Kenseth said of Larson, 21 years his junior.

Kenseth snapped a 17-race winless streak skid with his 37th career victory — and denied Larson his first Sprint Cup victory.

Larson made Kenseth work for the victory that secured him a spot in the Chase.

But it was third-place finisher Chase Elliott that may have cost Larson as much as Kenseth’s late-race maneuvering. Elliott, the second-generation rookie who replaced Jeff Gordon in the No. 24, made an aggressive run and briefly passed Larson for second. Their battle took enough steam out of Larson’s push that Kenseth was able to create a needed gap and become the fourth Joe Gibbs Racing driver to win in 2016.

Larson matched his career-best finish for owner Chip Ganassi. Elliott had the top finish of his first season at Hendrick Motorsports.

Larson refused to bump Kenseth out of his path over the final thrilling laps and wanted a clean pass in the No. 42 to earn the win.

“It doesn’t even seem right that he hasn’t won yet,” Kenseth said. “He’s got a bunch of victories in front of him, for sure. He’s a really, really clean, hard racer, and a fast learner.”

The 2003 Cup champion, Kenseth led the Daytona 500 headed into the final lap before JGR teammate Denny Hamlin took the checkered flag, setting the stage for an 0-for-11 start.

“That is probably the longest streak I can remember being on without having any real good finishes,” Kenseth said.

Kenseth, Larson and Elliott avoided the fate of many as Jimmie Johnson triggered a late-race crash that eliminated several contenders.

He started a pileup straight out of the Talladega Superspeedway highlight reel that knocked out a slew of drivers who raced up front all race and brought it to a halt with less than 50 laps left.

Johnson, a 10-time winner at Dover, failed to jump off the restart because of a faulty transmission in the No. 48. The six-time champion could not shift the Chevy into third gear and 18 cars — stacked and off at full speed — were collected in the melee.

Truex, Kevin Harvick, Dale Earnhardt Jr., and Kyle Busch were among the drivers that had their cars piled up on the concrete.

The race was stopped for 11 minutes, 22 seconds — and quickly had another caution shortly after it resumed. Carl Edwards suffered a brutal blow when the No. 19 slammed nose first into an inside wall. Larson made contact with Edwards and shot the JGR driver into the wall.

Kasey Kahne was fourth and Kurt Busch fifth. The race ended with only 14 drivers on the lead lap.