

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Taliban leader killed in US drone strike

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Afghan government and a senior Taliban commander confirmed Sunday that the extremist group's leader, Mullah Mohammed Akhtar Mansour, has been killed in a U.S. drone strike.

Mullah Abdul Rauf, who recently reconciled with Mansour after initially rebelling against his ascension to the leadership, told The Associated Press that Mansour died in the strike late Friday "in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area."

Afghanistan's intelligence agency announced that Mansour had been killed in an air attack Saturday afternoon.

In a statement, the National Directorate of Security, as the secret service is known, said the attack took place in Baluchistan province, in southwestern Pakistan.

It is believed to have been the first drone strike on Baluchistan, which could explain why

Mansour was traveling in an unarmored car without a convoy, decoys or bodyguards.

Ahead of the official confirmation of Mansour's death, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking in Myanmar on Sunday, repeatedly referred to him in the past tense.

Mansour, he said "posed a continuing imminent threat to U.S. personnel in Afghanistan, Afghan civilians, Afghan security forces" and members of the U.S./NATO coalition. He said the airstrike on Mansour "sends a clear message to the world that we will continue to stand with our Afghan partners."

"Peace is what we want, Mansour was a threat to that effort," Kerry said. "He also was directly opposed to peace negotiations and to the reconciliation process. It is time for Afghans to stop fighting and to start building a real future together."

Mansour formally led the Taliban after the death of Mullah Mohammad Omar, the movement's founder, was an-

nounced last summer. Mansour, Mullah Omar's deputy, concealed the Taliban founder's death for more than two years, and ran the Taliban in his name until the death was revealed by the Afghan government.

The revelation caused wide fissures in the movement that Mansour worked hard to mend.

Mullah Rauf was an early defector of Mansour's but decided earlier this year to declare loyalty to him in the interest of unifying the movement.

Speaking live on television as he chaired a Cabinet meeting, Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah said Mansour's death would have a positive impact on attempts to bring peace to Afghanistan, where the Taliban have been waging an insurgency for 15 years.

Mansour was "the main figure preventing the Taliban joining the peace process," Abdullah said. "From the day he took over the Taliban following the death of Mullah Omar, he intensified violence against

ordinary citizens, especially in Afghanistan."

The drone strike targeted Mansour's vehicle, which was carrying Mansour and one other person at the time, a U.S. military source said.

Another Taliban source identified the driver as Muhammad Azam Hasanai, and said the vehicle the two men were traveling in was destroyed. Photographs showed the twisted, burned wreckage of the vehicle alongside deep holes in the road.

Mansour's death has raised questions about the direction the Taliban will take after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani last month sharply changed course from pursuing peace to blaming Islamabad for using the Taliban to wage war on Afghanistan.

A four-country process with Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States appears to have floundered, with Kabul refusing to send a delegation to the most recent round of talks, sending only the ambassador to Islamabad.

## CENTCOM's Votel makes secret trip into Syria

Associated Press

NORTHERN SYRIA — On a secret trip to Syria, the new commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East said Saturday he felt a moral obligation to enter a war zone to check on his troops and to make his own assessment of progress in organizing local Arab and Kurd fighters for what has been a slow campaign to push the Islamic State group out of Syria.

"I have responsibility for this mission, and I have responsibility for the people that we put here," Army Gen. Joseph Votel said in an interview as dusk fell on the remote outpost where he had arrived 11 hours earlier. "So it's imperative for me to come and see what they're dealing with — to share the risk they are dealing with."

Votel, who has headed U.S. Central Command for just seven weeks, became the

highest-ranking U.S. military officer known to have entered Syria since the U.S. began its campaign to counter the Islamic State group in 2014. The circumstance was exceptional because the U.S. has no combat units in Syria, no diplomatic relations with Syria, and for much of the past two years has enveloped much of its Syria military mission in secrecy.

Votel said he brought reporters with him because "we don't have anything to hide. I don't want people guessing about what we're doing here. The American people should have the right to see what we're doing here."

Votel flew into northern Syria from Iraq, where he had conferred on Friday with U.S. and Iraqi military commanders. In Syria he met with U.S. military advisers working with Syrian Arab fighters and consulted

with leaders of the Syrian Democratic Forces, an umbrella group of Kurdish and Arab fighters supported by the U.S.

A small group of reporters accompanied Votel under ground rules that, for security reasons, prohibited disclosing his visit until after he had left Syria. After landing at a remote camp where American military advisers are training Syrian Arab troops in basic soldiering skills, Votel split off from the reporters who flew in with him; he then visited several other undisclosed locations in Syria before returning to the camp.

Aides said Votel's flight into Syria was the first made in daylight by U.S. forces, who have about 200 advisers on the ground. Military ground rules for the trip prohibited reporting the kind of aircraft Votel used or the exact location of where he landed.

# Large protest on Okinawa after slaying

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
AND CHIYOMI SUMIDA  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — About 2,000 people attended a protest rally in front of the main gate of the Marine Corps headquarters on Camp Foster, Okinawa, armed with signs that read, “Never forgive Marine’s rape,” “You Killer Go Home” and “Withdraw all the U.S. forces from Okinawa.”

The protesters — who were made up of members of 36 women’s human rights advocacy groups from the island, including the Okinawa Woman Act Against Military Violence

— chanted anti-American slogans and sang songs in response to the brutal slaying of Rina Shimabukuro, 20.

An American civilian working on the island, Kenneth Franklin Gadson — a former Marine who goes by his Japanese wife’s name of Shinzato — has admitted to killing Shimabukuro and dumping her body, his attorney said.

Police have referred charges to the prosecutor’s office of illegal disposal of a body. Shinzato’s attorney, Toshimitsu Takaesu, told Stars and Stripes on Friday that his client had confessed to strangling Shimabukuro. How-

ever, Takaesu said his client may have been under the influence of sleeping pills at the time of the confession.

Rallies such as the one Sunday are expected to intensify in the coming days while Japan awaits the visit this week by President Barack Obama for the G7 Summit. The murder of Shimabukuro threatens to strain relations between the two allies.

“I am so sad and just cannot take it anymore,” said Yoko Zamami, 63, of Naha, Japan, her eyes blinking with emotion. “We Okinawan people’s human rights have been taken so lightly in the past and still today.

“How many times is enough to voice our protest? Wasn’t it only March that the top leader of the military here offered an apology to our governor?”

Zamami was referring to an alleged rape that occurred in March in a Naha hotel. A U.S. sailor stands accused in the incident.

Protesters had pictures of butterflies on the backs of their signs. In Okinawa, it is believed that butterflies usher the dead to heaven.

Police and Shinzato’s attorney released no new details on Sunday.

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## Kerry: Navy ship to join Aegean mission

BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — A U.S. naval vessel will join a NATO deployment targeting smugglers in the Aegean Sea, Secretary of State John Kerry told reporters Thursday.

The move would mark the first major American contribution to a mission aimed at halting illegal migration into Europe. Nearly 200,000 migrants have entered Europe so far in 2016, the vast majority of them by sea.

NATO deployed one of its standing maritime groups to the sea in February after Greece and Turkey requested help with the deluge of migrants moving from Turkey to Greece in hopes of traveling on to wealthier countries in Europe. Many rely on smugglers to get them across. The five ships are tasked with providing intelligence and surveillance to the two countries’ coast guards, as opposed to intercepting the small migrant boats.

Migrant arrivals in Greece

have plummeted in recent weeks following a March deal struck by Turkey and Germany that returns migrants unlikely to be granted refugee status to Turkey in exchange for those likely to be granted the status.

Kerry said Thursday in Brussels that the U.S. is “finalizing plans” for the deployment. A spokeswoman for U.S. 6th Fleet in Naples said the command had yet to receive a formal tasking to deploy any assets to the Aegean.

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## Top-ranking female to head Naples command

BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy’s highest-ranking female officer has been tapped to command naval forces in Europe and Africa.

Adm. Michelle Howard was nominated by President Barack Obama to lead U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, the Naples-based command that oversees the warships, aircraft and sailors operating across the Atlantic and Mediterranean, the Defense Department announced Thursday.

If approved by Congress, the nomination would mark another milestone in Howard’s trailblazing career. She became the highest-ranking female officer in Navy history in 2014 after pinning her fourth star to become vice chief of naval operations. Howard was the first black female officer to command a ship, the amphibious warship USS Rushmore, in 1999.

A U.S. Naval Academy graduate, Howard has worked across the Navy’s surface fleet.

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## Ceremony remembers the ‘second Pearl Harbor’

BY WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The rusty hulk of LST 480 still juts out of Pearl Harbor’s West Loch 72 years after it sank in Hawaii’s second-worst disaster during World War II.

The relic is the only visible reminder of a chain reaction of explosions that killed scores of men and wounded almost 400, an event some have dubbed the “second Pearl Harbor,” coming three years after the Dec. 7, 1941, surprise attack by Japan.

The 1944 disaster never truly entered the American psyche because of the wartime secrecy that surrounded the entire mission: the invasion of the Mariana Islands.

In recent years, the military and other civic groups have sought to memorialize the fallen and forgotten in the catastrophe, many of whom belonged to a segregated African-American unit. On Friday, the Army amphibious ship LTG William B. Bunker left port at Joint Base

Pearl Harbor-Hickam for the short trip to the harbor’s West Loch for a wreath-laying ceremony that included a 21-gun salute, taps and a moment of silence within view of LST 480.

Sponsored by the Army’s 8th Theater Sustainment Command and the African-American Diversity Cultural Center Hawaii, the shipboard ceremony was held for the first time last year on May 21, the date of the disaster.

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# Exaggerator claims sloppy Preakness

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Exaggerator has finally beaten Nyquist, and it came in the Preakness on Saturday to end any chance of another Triple Crown.

Seizing the lead at the top of the straight, Exaggerator splashed past the tiring Kentucky Derby winner and went on for a 3½-length victory over Cherry Wine on a rain-drenched Pimlico Race Course.

Exaggerator's elusive victory over his nemesis came after four tough losses, including a runner-up finish to Nyquist in the Derby. Nyquist finished third.

"I had a dream trip today," jockey Kent Desormeaux said after his third Preakness win. "It was an amazing race and Exaggerator is an amazing horse."

The day began on a somber note. Two horses died and a jockey was injured in the first four races, one of the horses bred and owned by the owners of the ill-fated Barbaro.

Sent off as the 3-5 favorite in the 11-horse field, Nyquist dueled with Uncle Lino for the lead through the first mile of the second leg of the Triple Crown.

And then it was all Exaggerator. The 3-year-old son of two-time Horse of the Year Curlin trailed by 13 lengths at one point but kept gaining ground along the rail. Desormeaux saw an opening around the final turn, angled outside and Exaggerator took over.

"To me it looked like Nyquist was trying to establish an outward position, maybe in the four path," Desormeaux said. "He was jockeying for position all the way down the

back side. And Exaggerator just kind of slid up the fence to the far turn where I actually got to slow him down and say 'whenever I'm ready.'"

Exaggerator, the second favorite, returned \$7.20, \$3.20 and \$2.40. Cherry Wine returned \$9.80 and \$4.20, and Nyquist paid \$2.20 for third. Winning time for the race was 1:58.31.

"Hats off to Exaggerator and Team Desormeaux. What a great run," Nyquist's trainer Doug O'Neill said. "I didn't think we could get beat, to be honest with you."

Last year, American Pharoah became the first Triple Crown winner in 37 years, and there were many who thought Nyquist would make it two in a row and become the 13th horse to sweep the Derby, Preakness and Belmont.

In the two weeks since he won the Kentucky Derby, O'Neill rattled off the virtues of his unbeaten star. The public bought into it: Not only was Nyquist the 3-5 betting favorite, but a record crowd of 135,256 showed up in miserable weather.

O'Neill insisted on Friday that rain wouldn't be a factor, and perhaps it wasn't. But for the first time in nine career races, Nyquist ran on a sloppy track.

And for the first time, he lost.

"We'll kind of figure this all out, watch some replays," O'Neill said.

Four times previously, Nyquist beat Exaggerator. Someone asked Exaggerator trainer Keith Desormeaux if his horse finally wore down Nyquist.

"I always felt we had an exceptional talent in

Exaggerator," Desormeaux said. "It's not someone who needs to grind down his opponent."

O'Neill, Nyquist jockey Mario Gutierrez and owner Paul Reddam teamed in 2012 to win the Kentucky Derby and Preakness with I'll Have Another.

On this day, they had to settle for third.

"I really didn't get a chance to talk to Mario," O'Neill said. "But Nyquist still ran a huge race. Big effort."

Winning jockey Kent Desormeaux wondered if Nyquist was done in by taking a difficult path to the finish line.

"I think Nyquist had company all the around the course," the jockey said. "They stayed really wide. These turns, you want to paint the fence. We did, they didn't and, not for nothing, but knowledge is power."

Gutierrez said, "I could feel Exaggerator coming. There was nothing we could do. We tried but just didn't get there."

Afterward, O'Neill was stunned to have lost but grateful to have gone this far with an undefeated horse.

"It's a bummer, of course," he said. "I can't wait to see him in a little bit, give him a big kiss and pat him on the head because he's still a winner in our book."

"They're not machines. Being 8 for 8, we kept thinking that this horse is never going to lose. But they all lose one time or another. We'll be OK."

If all goes as planned, the Nyquist and Exaggerator will meet again at the Belmont on June 11.

"It looked like he came back to be unsaddled in good shape," O'Neill said. "So maybe we'll try again."

## Kvitova avoids first-round upset at Roland Garros

Associated Press

PARIS — Screaming in anger and hitting her racket on the red clay of Court Philippe Chatrier, Petra Kvitova came close to an early exit at the French Open on the first day of the Grand Slam tournament.

On a rainy Sunday, the two-time Wimbledon champion was pushed to a suspenseful three-set battle by 59th-ranked Danka Kovinic of Montenegro, who served for the match before Kvitova raised her game and eventually prevailed 6-2, 4-6, 7-5, taking the last three games.

In the men's draw, 17th-seeded Nick Kyrgios lost his temper and received a warning for shouting at a ball kid, but the 21-year-old Australian had no problem advancing to the second round with a 7-6 (6), 7-6 (6), 6-4 win over Marco Cecchinato. Also advancing before rain halted play early in the afternoon was No. 19 Benoît Paire.

Fifth-seeded Kei Nishikori of Japan led Simone Bolelli of Italy 6-1, 5-4 and No. 23 Jack Sock of the United States was up 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 2-1 against Robin Haase of the Netherlands when covers were brought on all courts.

Facing a player who never got beyond the second round at any major, Kvitova looked set for a comfortable start to her campaign in the French capital after breaking Kovinic twice to seal the first set 6-2 and opening a 3-1 lead in the second.

Kovinic then changed her approach and destabilized Kvitova with her deep groundstrokes.

"I saw in the first set that my balls were very short and she controlled every point," the 21-year-old Kovinic said. "I tried to play longer points and with more spins in the second set, and it seemed good."

Kovinic produced a superb lob to even the match at one set apiece and continued to apply pressure on Kvitova with her powerful tennis.

Showing her frustration, Kvitova smacked her racket on the ground after hitting a double fault and fluffing a backhand in the ninth game of the decider. The Czech hit two more double faults in that game to drop her serve. But with her back against the wall, Kvitova recovered with a series of winners including a backhand down the line to break back.

She then won eight of the next 10 points.

"It was a big fight again. I'm happy that I won it," Kvitova said. "I played a lot of three-set matches, but it's not my plan when I'm stepping on the court. I think that from the experience which I have already, I still can believe that I still can win it. Even if she's serving for the match."

Earlier, 24th-seeded Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova became the first player to advance to the second round with a 6-2, 6-0 win over qualifier Sara Sorribes Tormo.

About six months after the deadly attacks in Paris, heightened security at Roland Garros was noticeable Sunday, including extra bag checks and pat-downs that led to longer-than-usual waits at the entrance gates.

## Raptors top Cavaliers

Associated Press

TORONTO — Cleveland's perfect playoff run went south in the north.

DeMar DeRozan scored 32 points, Bismack Biyombo set a Toronto playoff record with 26 rebounds and the Raptors beat Cleveland 99-84 in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference Finals on Saturday night, handing the Cavaliers their first loss this postseason.

Kyle Lowry scored 20 points, Cory Joseph added 14, and Patrick Patterson and DeMarre Carroll each had 10 for the Raptors. They rebounded after losing the first two games in Cleveland by a combined 50 points.

In Toronto, where "We The North" is a rallying cry, a sell-out crowd dressed in red and white T-shirts cheered the Raptors to their seventh victory in nine home playoff games. Game 4 is Monday night at Air Canada Centre.

"It's a long series," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. "It's not over with yet, but everybody thought we were going to get swept. I think that fuels us and if that's what it takes, so be it."

LeBron James scored 24 points, and J.R. Smith had 22 for the Cavaliers. They won their first 10 playoff games and were trying to match the Los Angeles Lakers' record of 11 straight victories to begin a postseason. The Lakers did it in 1989 and again in 2001.

"We didn't play our game and they made us pay for it," James said. "We didn't start the game as physical as we should have at the point of attack."

Biyombo had four blocks, helping Toronto limit the Cavaliers to 20 points in

the paint. The Cavs had 106 points in the paint in the first two games.

"It was amazing, honestly," DeRozan said about Biyombo's performance. "He was big time tonight. Without him, we probably wouldn't get this win."

Kyrie Irving scored 13 points, and Channing Frye had 11 for Cleveland. The Cavaliers were held below 100 points for the first time in these playoffs.

"They came out and they beat us," Cleveland coach Tyrone Lue said. "They were more aggressive. They were more physical. They were more active. They were faster. They beat us to the ball."

James had five assists, moving past Jason Kidd and into third place on the NBA's career playoff list.

It was a rough night for Cavaliers forward Kevin Love, who scored three points and made just one of nine field goal attempts. Irving also struggled with his shooting, missing 16 of 19.

"Those guys will be better," James pledged.

Irving checked out at 1:38 of the fourth quarter and had to be helped to the locker room following a collision with Joseph.

"I just got the wind knocked out of me," Irving said.

With his team ahead by eight, Biyombo scored six straight points in the fourth to put the Raptors up 91-77 at 3:38.

"He was huge," Casey said. "I thought he played a big-time game in the paint."

DeRozan scored 12 points in the first but saw a buzzer-beating three waved off after video review. Lowry scored eight points despite picking up his second foul at 5:40 as Toronto led 30-24 after one. It was the first time this series that the Raptors outscored the Cavaliers.



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# Giants' Cain wins, snaps streak

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — In the age of sabermetrics, pitcher wins aren't supposed to matter.

Don't tell that to Matt Cain — he savored every minute of his first victory in 10 months.

"When you haven't had one in a year, it's pretty nice to have," Cain said.

Cain pitched six strong innings and helped himself with the bat, Buster Posey added a two-run homer and the San Francisco Giants beat the Chicago Cubs 5-3 on Saturday.

Cain (1-5) got his first victory since July 22, 2015, snapping a streak of 15 consecutive winless starts. The Giants were 3-12 in those games.

"You want to go out there and give your team a chance to win," Cain said. "When your team wins, it's great, but it's also nice to have one when you haven't had one in a long time."

The Giants won for the ninth time in 10 games and the Cubs fell to 2-3 on their nine-game road trip.

Cain had surgery to remove bone chips in his elbow in 2014, and then did stints on the disabled list in 2015 for a flexor tendon strain and elbow nerve irritation.

He has thrown three straight quality starts for the first time since 2014 (June 28 to July 9).

"I know it's got to be a weight off his shoulders because it's been talked about quite a bit," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said.

Cain's resurgence coincided with Jon Lester's worst start of the season. Lester (4-3) allowed five runs on six hits and three walks.

"It's unusual," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "Jonny had a tough day. It just didn't go his way. The bullpen was fantastic and gave us a chance to win. We had a couple of opportunities to score."

Cain entered with the worst run support in the majors (1.96 runs per game) and took matters into his own hands, crushing a 3-2 fastball over center fielder Dexter Fowler's head for a two-out, two-run double in the bottom of the second.

"I think I probably just got lucky and ran into one there, but it was definitely

nice to go out there and give the guys a good chance to get a win, especially going against a good guy like Lester," Cain said.

**Padres 3, Dodgers 2 (11):** Yangervis Solarte, fresh off the disabled list, drew a bases-loaded walk with two outs in the 11th inning to give host San Diego its second straight walkoff victory against Los Angeles.

Solarte drew four straight balls from Chin-Hui Tsao (0-1) to bring in Wil Myers for the winning run. Solarte was activated earlier Saturday after being out since April 10 with a hamstring injury.

**Marlins 3, Washington 2:** Jose Fernandez pitched six innings and then led the dugout celebration as Miami made him a winner again at Marlins Park.

Fernandez (6-2) allowed one run, struck out nine and improved to 21-1 in 31 starts at home.

**Royals 2, White Sox 1:** Lorenzo Cain hit a solo home run and five Kansas City pitchers combined to allow seven hits in the Royals' victory over slumping host Chicago.

**Rangers 2, Astros 1:** Elvis Andrus hit his first home run of the season, Cesar Ramos pitched six solid innings and Texas edged host Houston.

**Red Sox 9, Indians 1:** Joe Kelly pitched no-hit ball for 6<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings, Mookie Betts had a grand slam and a solo homer, and Boston beat host Cleveland.

**Yankees 5, Athletics 1:** Starlin Castro broke out of a slump with three hits, Carlos Beltran singled twice to keep up his recent tear and visiting New York won its season-high fourth straight game.

Masahiro Tanaka pitched seven innings to win Joe Girardi's 1,500th game as a manager. Tanaka (2-0) allowed one run on five hits and had four strikeouts for his first victory since April 12.

**Mets 5, Brewers 4:** David Wright singled home the winning run on a 3-0 pitch with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth inning, and host New York rallied.

Curtis Granderson hit his latest leadoff homer for the Mets, and Yoenis Cespedes tied the score in the sixth with a two-run shot that chased rookie starter Zach Davies.

**Tigers 5, Rays 4:** Michael Fulmer

struck out 11 over seven sparkling innings and Cameron Maybin, James McCann and J.D. Martinez all homered to lift host Detroit over Tampa Bay.

**Cardinals 6, Diamondbacks 2:** Jedd Gyorko, Matt Adams and Yadier Molina homered and Mike Leake pitched seven scoreless innings for host St. Louis.

**Rockies 5, Pirates 1:** Cristhian Adames' first career homer capped a four-run ninth inning as visiting Colorado rallied to beat closer Mark Melancon and Pittsburgh, ending an eight-game losing streak against the Pirates.

**Twins 5, Blue Jays 3:** Eduardo Nunez homered to cap a five-run rally in the eighth inning as host Minnesota suddenly broke loose.

The Twins had been shut out on just one hit — a double by Nunez — by J.A. Happ and trailed 2-0 going into the eighth. They came back to win for only the fourth time in 21 games.

**Mariners 4, Reds 0:** Franklin Gutierrez hit a three-run homer that landed high in the upper deck, and Felix Hernandez allowed only four singles in six innings, leading Seattle over host Cincinnati on a day when they honored their shared star.

The Reds gave away Ken Griffey Jr. bobbleheads depicting him in both uniforms, and they played a message from him on the videoboard. Junior became a star in Seattle and was later traded to his hometown team. The Reds had him in mind when they designed Great American Ball Park with a short distance in right field.

**Braves 2, Phillies 0:** Williams Perez took a two-hitter into the seventh, helping Atlanta beat host Philadelphia for just its second series win this season.

On a cold, rainy afternoon, Perez (2-1) celebrated his 25th birthday with another dominant performance against the Phillies. He gave up two hits, walked one and struck out in 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings.

**Orioles 3, Angels 1:** Matt Wieters hit a three-run homer with two outs in the top of the ninth inning to lift visiting Baltimore.

Wieters, who ended Matt Shoemaker's perfect game bid with a double in the fifth, lifted a 1-0 sinker from Joe Smith (1-3) over the wall in put the Orioles ahead after they were down to their final out.

# Blues roll in Game 4, tie series

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Changing goaltenders gave the St. Louis Blues a spark. Changing their style of play helped them even up the Western Conference final at two games apiece.

Troy Brouwer and Kyle Brodziak each scored twice, Jake Allen stopped 31 shots in his first start of the postseason and the Blues bounced back from consecutive shutout losses to beat the San Jose Sharks 6-3 in Game 4 on Saturday night.

Coach Ken Hitchcock hoped the change in goalie from Brian Elliott would help his dormant offense and the move paid off as the Blues controlled the play from the start of Game 4.

Brouwer and Jori Lehtera scored in the first period and the Blues rolled after getting dominated the previous two games when they were outscored 7-0. Alex Pietrangolo added an empty-netter to seal it.

"He gave us exactly what we needed," Hitchcock said about Allen. "He's a competitive son of a gun. We needed a battler in there. We needed somebody to really help us play better defense. We played with more passion in front of him in our own zone because I made the goalie change. I had to make that decision."

Now it will be up to San Jose to reverse the momentum in Game 5 on Monday night in St. Louis.

Martin Jones, who became the first Sharks goalie with consecutive playoff shutouts, was pulled midway through the second period after allowing four goals on 19 shots. James Reimer allowed one goal on seven shots in his first action of the playoffs.

Joe Pavelski set a San Jose franchise record with his 10th goal of the postseason. Chris Tierney and Melker Karlsson also scored in the third for the Sharks, but it wasn't enough as San Jose went 0-for-5 on the power play and allowed a short-handed goal.

St. Louis took control early in the second period after it seemed like San Jose had gained momentum from killing a two-man advantage and then drawing a penalty from the Blues.

The power play that looked so lethal for most of the playoffs was not clicking this game. The Sharks struggled to set up in the offensive zone and gave up a pair of two-on-one chances the other way. The second of those came after an errant pass from Joe Thornton and St. Louis capitalized when Brodziak took a pass from Jaden Schwartz and beat Jones to make it 3-0.

Brodziak struck again a few minutes later off a pass from Dmitriy Jaskin to end Jones' night.

The Blues then cruised to the win that has them the closest they have been to the Stanley Cup final since losing a seven-game conference final to Calgary in 1986.

Along with giving Allen the start, Hitchcock put the struggling Robby Fabbri and Vladimir Tarasenko on the same line with Lehtera and put defenseman Joel Edmundson back in the lineup after benching him in Game 3.

The changes paid dividends as the Blues got off to a fast start. They hemmed the Sharks in their own zone with a strong forecheck and took a 2-0 lead after one, ending a scoreless drought of 156:59 dating back to the second period of Game 1.

# Logano wins odd All-Star race

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.C. — A new format to NASCAR's annual All-Star race left half the field confused to almost comical levels but did produce an aggressive race that ended with a thrilling victory for Joey Logano on Saturday.

Logano snatched the lead away from Kyle Larson with two laps remaining to win the \$1 million exhibition event.

Although he didn't win, Larson was the star of the day. He had to race his way into the main event earlier Saturday, and earned his spot in the 20-driver field by beating Chase Elliott in a stirring last-lap door-to-door battle to the checkered flag.

"Larson is a hard racer. I watched him in the Showdown earlier today and I knew what I was up against, I knew he was going to run hard," Logano said. "What a crazy battle for a million dollars at the end."

Larson was competitive during the 113-lap main event and won the second segment. He had to pit for four tires, re-started in third for the final 13-lap dash-for-cash and rocketed his way to the lead. He seemed to have it in control until

Logano eventually caught him. Larson tried several times to hold him off, but as the two raced side-by-side, Larson smacked the wall and the damage took him out of contention.

"I'm super disappointed. I hate that I keep letting my team down," Larson said. "They did everything right. They worked their tails off after I got all the damage in the Showdown. I'm having fun but this will be hard to get over."

Once Logano cleared Larson, he cruised to the win ahead of Team Penske teammate Brad Keselowski, who suggested much of the race format.

Keselowski defended the format, which cut the race into three segments and included a blind draw before the final shoot-out that ordered a random number of cars to make a mandatory four-tire pit stop. But it also created some apparent sandbagging and a lot of confusion among the drivers.

"There was a next to last lap pass for the lead. There were several passes for the lead," Keselowski said. "The last four (All-Star) races, there hasn't been a pass for the lead in the last 20 or 30 laps. Our

fans deserve a better format than that, and they got that.

"I don't know how you can get much more compelling racing than what we saw today, so they need to get unconfused and enjoy the racing."

Third-place finisher Dale Earnhardt Jr. admitted to being confused until the final segment.

"The intent was really positive and the ideas were great, but the simpler we make it, the easier it would be to follow," Earnhardt said. "I was pretty confused right until it was 13 to go and it was all the normal rules. Gimmicks and all that stuff is going down the wrong path."

The format came in part from the driver council, which Keselowski was elected to this season. He was largely credited for the finished product, and panel members Denny Hamlin and Kyle Busch were not fans of it after the race.

"It didn't work, did it?" Busch asked.

On Twitter, Hamlin distanced the driver council from the format.

"It came from 1 (driver)," Hamlin posted. "Nobody liked it."