

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## ISIS claims bombing that killed 22 in UK

Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England — Investigators hunted Tuesday for possible accomplices of the suicide bomber who attacked an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, killing 22 people and sparking a stampede of young concertgoers, some still wearing the American pop star's trademark kitten ears and holding pink balloons.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Monday night carnage, but a top American intelligence official said the claim could not be verified. British police raided two sites in the northern English city, setting off a controlled explosion in one, and arrested a 23-year-old man in a third location there.

British Prime Minister Theresa May and police said the bomber died in the attack on Manchester Arena — something that went unmentioned in the ISIS claim, which also had discrepancies with the events described by British officials.

Manchester police Chief Ian Hopkins identified the bombing suspect as Salman Abedi, 22. British election rolls listed Abedi as living at a modest red brick semidetached house in a mixed suburb of Manchester where police performed a controlled explosion Tuesday afternoon.

Neighbor Natalie Daley said she was frightened by a loud bang, then police yelling “get in your houses — get away from the windows!”

“When it’s like two seconds from your house, when you walk past it every day, you do live in fear,” Daley said.

Manchester, 160 miles northwest of London, is one of Britain’s largest cities, and Manchester Arena is one of the world’s largest indoor concert venues.

The attack was the deadli-

### Strangers extend helping hand through social media

The Washington Post

MANCHESTER, England — They came offering rooms and rides, food and drink.

They came by Twitter, harnessing social media — so often a site of anonymous derision — as a tool of collective uplift. The hashtag #RoomForManchester announced that people in the latest British city to be struck by terrorism were prepared to lend a hand to strangers.

In the hours after a bomb detonated at an Ariana Grande concert, spreading chaos as large areas around the arena were cordoned off, residents took to Twitter to offer aid to those affected by the deadly blast. The attack, which left at least 22 people dead and dozens more injured, was the deadliest in Britain since 2005 and is being investigated as an act of terrorism.

The messages, some of which gained thousands of retweets, offered a small glimmer of hope in an otherwise ghastly night of carnage, confusion and loss. And as fear and uncertainty yet again gripped Western Europe, the response from those closest to the violence suggested an unwillingness to be cowed by such strikes.

est in Britain since four suicide bombers killed 52 London commuters on subway trains and a bus in July 2005. Campaigning for Britain’s June 8 national election was suspended.

Teenage screams filled the arena just after the explosion

Jack Slater tweeted: “When terrorism makes you question humanity, look to the heroes. In Manchester thousands are rushing to aid those in need. #RoomForManchester”

“I have a sofa, floor, blankets and tea, 5 minutes from Arena for anyone in need,” one user offered. “If you need a place to crash I live around the corner from Manchester Arena,” another wrote.

Others tweeted:

■ “If you need a bed, a cup of tea, a charged phone etc. — I’m 15 mins from Manchester Arena. DM me, they’re open! #RoomForManchester” — Rachel Ellis (@rachelkellis) May 22, 2017

■ “Anyone needing a lift/place to stay from the Manchester Arena, tweet #roomformanchester Retweet and get this trending to help.” — Cal (@Panayisalad) May 22, 2017

Adding to the chorus was a local Holiday Inn’s guest service manager, who wrote that the hotel had spare rooms for those needing a place to stay. Several hotels in Manchester sheltered children — who made up a large share of concertgoers — as frantic parents sought to locate them. And taxis in the city’s center offered free rides through the night.

Monday night, and members of the audience tumbled over guardrails and each other to escape.

The attack sparked a night-long search for loved ones — parents for the children they had accompanied or had been

waiting to pick up, and friends for each other after groups were scattered by the blast. Twitter and Facebook lit up with heartbreaking appeals for the missing.

An 8-year-old girl was among the dead — the youngest known victim — and her mother and sister were among 59 people wounded in what May called “a callous terrorist attack.” The wounded included 12 children under age 16, hospital officials said.

“We struggle to comprehend the warped and twisted mind that sees a room packed with young children not as a scene to cherish but as an opportunity for carnage,” May said.

The top U.S. intelligence official, Dan Coats, said the American government had not verified whether or how ISIS was responsible.

Some concertgoers said security was haphazard before the show, with some people being searched and others allowed inside unhindered. The bombing took place at the end of the concert, when the audience was streaming toward the city’s main train station.

Witnesses said the blast scattered bolts and other bits of metal, apparently intended to maximize injuries and deaths.

“There was this massive bang. And then everyone just went really quiet, and that’s when the screaming started,” said Ryan Molloy, 25. “As we came outside to Victoria Station, there were just people all over the floor covered in blood. My partner was helping to try to stem the blood from this one person. ... They were pouring blood from their leg. It was just awful.”

Grande, who was not injured in the blast, tweeted: “broken. from the bottom of my heart, i am so so sorry. i don’t have words.”

# Trump's budget arrives on Capitol Hill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Tuesday sent Congress a \$4.1 trillion spending plan that relies on faster economic growth and steep cuts to programs for the poor in a bid to balance the books over the next decade.

The proposed 2018 budget immediately came under attack by Democrats and even some GOP allies declared it dead on arrival. The proposal is laced with cuts to domestic agencies, food stamps, Medicaid, highway funding and medical research.

"It'll face a tough sled here," said veteran Rep. Harold Rogers, R-Ky. Asked about the impact on his constituents from reductions in such programs as food stamps, Rogers said, "These cuts that are being proposed are draconian. They're not mere shavings, they're deep, deep cuts."

The proposal projects that this year's deficit will rise to \$603 billion, up from the actual deficit of \$585 billion last year. But the document says if Trump's initiatives are adopted the deficit will start declining and actually reach a small surplus of \$16 billion in 2027.

However, that goal depends on growth projections that most economists view as overly optimistic and a variety of accounting gimmicks, including an almost \$600 billion peace dividend from winding down overseas military operations.

According to budget tables released by the administration, Trump's plan cuts almost \$3.6 trillion from an array of benefit programs, domestic agencies and war spending over the coming decade including repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act, cutting Medicaid, eliminating student loan sub-

sidies, sharply slashing food stamps and cutting \$95 billion in highway formula funding for the states. Cuts to a popular crop insurance program have already landed with a thud.

A program designed to move people receiving Social Security disability payments back into the workforce is politically toxic as well.

Food stamp cuts would drive millions from the program, while a wave of Medicaid cuts could deny nursing home care to millions of elderly poor people.

The budget does feature a handful of domestic initiatives, including a six-week paid parental leave program championed by Trump's daughter, Ivanka. Another \$200 billion in federal infrastructure investments is promised to leverage another \$800 billion in private investment.

Trump would keep campaign

pledges to leave core Medicare and Social Security benefits for the elderly alone but that translated into even deeper cuts in programs for the poor such as Medicaid and food stamps.

Medicaid, the government insurance program for the poor and many disabled Americans, would be cut by more than \$600 billion over 10 years by capping payments to states and giving governors more flexibility to manage their rosters of Medicaid recipients. Those cuts go on top of the repeal of the ACA's expansion of the program to 14 million people and amount to, by decade's end, an almost 25 percent cut from present projections.

Likewise, a 10-year, \$191 billion reduction in food stamps — almost 30 percent — far exceeds prior proposals by Capitol Hill Republicans. The program serves about 42 million people.

## Trump pushes for Mideast peace but avoids details

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — President Donald Trump on Tuesday pushed for elusive peace between Israel and the Palestinians, calling on both sides to put aside the "pain and disagreements of the past."

Trump met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during his stop in the region. Speaking at the Israel Museum, he declared both sides ready to move forward, though there were no tangible signs of the dormant peace process being revived.

"Palestinians are ready to reach for peace," Trump said. Turning to the prime minister, who joined him for the speech, Trump said, "Benjamin Netanyahu wants peace."

A longtime businessman, Trump has cast Middle East peace as the "ultimate deal"

and has tasked his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and former real estate lawyer Jason Greenblatt with charting a course forward. Still, White House officials had downplayed the prospects for a breakthrough on this trip, saying it was important to manage their ambitions as they waded into terrain that has tripped up more experienced diplomats.

The president notably avoided all of the thorny issues that have stymied peace efforts for decades. He did not weigh in on Israeli settlements, the status of Jerusalem or even whether the U.S. would continue to insist on a two-state solution giving the Palestinians sovereign territory.

From Israel, Trump was heading to Italy for an audience with Pope Francis. He'll close his ambitious first foreign trip at a pair of summits in Brussels and Sicily.

## Ex-CIA chief: Russians warned not to interfere

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former CIA Director John Brennan said Tuesday he personally warned Russia last summer against interfering in the U.S. presidential campaign, telling the Russians that continued meddling would backfire and prevent any warming of relations after the election.

The former CIA chief also told the House Intelligence Committee that he had become so concerned about Russian interference — and contacts between Americans "involved" with the Trump campaign and the Russians — that he convened a group of officials from the CIA, FBI and National Security Agency in late July to focus exclusively on the issue.

Republicans on the committee pushed Brennan about

whether there was evidence of collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign, a point President Donald Trump has tried to enlist allies to quash. Brennan said the CIA focuses on intelligence, not "evidence," and he was not able to answer that question.

Brennan's statements about the number of contacts between associates of the Trump campaign and the Russians again put details about the campaign's contacts with the Kremlin into the spotlight as reports emerged that Trump had asked his national intelligence director and NSA chief to state publicly there was no evidence of collusion before investigations into the matter were complete.



## Explosion in Syria's Homs kills at least 4

Associated Press

BEIRUT — An explosion in the central Syrian city of Homs on Tuesday killed at least four people and wounded more than two dozen, while government forces “destroyed” a truck bomb near the Damascus airport, Syria’s state media reported.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the explosions.

Homs police commander Lt. Gen. Khaled Hilal told state TV that two suicide attackers detonated their explosives-laden car as they were being surrounded by troops. Along with the four killed, 30 people were wounded in the explosion, Syrian state TV said.

The blast in Homs came two days after opposition fighters left al-Waer, the city’s last rebel-held neighborhood, bringing the entire city back under government control for the first time in more than five years.

Most major Syrian cities have at this point reverted to government control. Syria’s civil war, now in its seventh year, has left about 400,000 people dead and millions displaced from their homes.

Hilal said the Homs attack was a “new crime in response to the victories of the Syrian Arab army.”

# US ground raid in Yemen kills 7 suspected militants

The Washington Post

American forces conducted a new ground raid against al-Qaida’s Yemen branch, killing seven suspected militants, U.S. Central Command said.

The operation, which took place Tuesday local time, targeted a compound believed to be affiliated with al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen’s Marib governorate, CENTCOM said in a statement. The suspected militants were killed “through a combination of small arms fire and precision airstrikes,” the statement said.

The raid takes place as the Trump administration intensifies counterterrorism operations in Yemen, where al-Qaida’s most virulent offshoot is believed to be plotting attacks against the West. Shortly after taking office, President Donald Trump approved another raid that resulted in the death of a Navy SEAL and a number of civilians.

In recent months, U.S. Special Operations forces have partnered with troops from the United Arab Emirates to try to track down AQAP fighters arrayed across different areas of south and central Yemen. The United States also has dramatically expanded the pace of airstrikes against the extremist group.

The stepped-up campaign reflects the urgency that military leaders have felt in addressing the group’s ambitions to plan external attacks, and also the White House’s desire to delegate decision-making for overseas operations to the military.

The Trump administration has been considering providing expanded support to UAE troops in a separate conflict against Houthi rebels in Yemen. UAE and Saudi forces have been waging a war against Houthi elements — who the Gulf nations believe are a proxy for regional rival Iran — in Yemen since 2015.

## Trump to arrive at NATO meeting armed with demands

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

When President Donald Trump arrives at NATO headquarters on Thursday, allies will be under intense pressure to live up to demands from an American administration that has threatened to make the thorny issue of increased allied defense spending a condition for guaranteeing U.S. commitment to the 68-year-old military pact.

During the one-day meeting of 28 heads of state, the first such gathering since the election of NATO-skeptic Trump, members are likely to hear demands for concrete plans for boosting investment in their respective militaries. Trump also is expected to seek greater commitments from allies for the ongoing mission in Afghanistan, as well as a larger NATO role in the battle against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

The question is whether allies can summon the will to meet such demands, which are a source of political tension in many of Europe’s capitals, or push back against Trump’s tough talk and risk a rift with the U.S. administration.

“He (Trump) is at a place where he would like to stay in NATO, but if there isn’t progress much quicker, then he would rather not stay in NATO,” a senior Trump administration official told reporters last week. “We’ll

either see real changes towards NATO or we’ll try to form a different way of going about things.”

The election of the unconventional Trump has caused anxiety among Europe’s political establishment, which has struggled to make sense of his conflicting views. Yet Trump’s harsh words about NATO’s relevance and mixed signals about American commitment to the alliance could also spur needed reform, some experts say.

“The reality — counterintuitive as it may sound — is that the Trump administration could be the catalyst for long overdue changes for the alliance,” wrote former NATO officials Fabrice Pothier and Alexander Vershbow in a new Atlantic Council report issued Tuesday.

Since Dwight D. Eisenhower was president, virtually every U.S. administration has complained about NATO members’ underinvesting in defense while enjoying the protection that comes with U.S. treaty obligations to safeguard the continent. Despite the complaints, the disparity in spending has only increased.

During the Cold War, the U.S. accounted for 50 percent of defense expenditures among allies, compared with today’s 68 percent, according to the Atlantic Council report, dubbed “NATO and Trump, the case for a new Transatlantic Bargain.” That

relative increase is due to the downsizing of Europe’s armed forces after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the past two years, the trend has begun to reverse, with many NATO states increasing defense investment in response to a more assertive Russia. In 2016, defense spending increased by \$10 billion, or 4 percent, across the alliance.

Still, the Atlantic Council report argues that allies should pledge to close at least half the defense spending gap by 2020, with all members hitting the target of investing 2 percent of gross domestic product in their respective militaries by 2024.

Leaders of some NATO states, however, argue that too much attention has been paid to the issue of defense spending and the alliance’s 2 percent benchmark. Some critics have noted that the benchmark, which first surfaced in the late 1990s, was an arbitrary figure picked for political reasons and not directly linked to capabilities, readiness or other specific military requirements.

Instead, the focus should be on how capable militaries are and whether members are willing to take part in operations in places such as Afghanistan, some members argue. Also, Germany wants expenditures such as development aid to be counted as investment in security.

# Policy change gives sailors less notice on move plans

BY TYLER HLAVAC  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Sailors should expect less notice — just two months — when it's time for them to move to a new duty station, the Navy announced Monday.

In a message to the fleet, Navy leaders asked sailors to be patient while waiting for permanent change-of-station orders, even as lead times to conduct such moves dwindle.

Navy families were getting, on average, less than 2½ months' notice ahead of moves, service officials told Stars and Stripes last month.

The latest announcement says they will have even less time.

"We recognize the impact this has on sailors and their families preparing to move, and we're working hard to remedy this situation," personnel chief Vice Adm. Robert Burke said.

"Leadership is engaged at all levels to develop and implement solutions to minimize the impact to our sailors. Our focus and priority remains on manning the fleet, and taking care of sailors and their families," he said.

The Navy blames the short notice on a lack of funds caused by Congress' failure to pass a full budget. A short-term spending bill, the 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act, is funding the military below levels requested

by service chiefs.

The spending bill does not provide sufficient funds to allow the Navy to issue orders sooner, the message said.

Sailors sent to deploying units, overseas duty stations and those moving due to safety or serious family issues will be among the first to receive orders.

Navy Personnel Command will continue to issue letters of intent for overseas moves to families. These letters are not official orders but allow families to start the process of moving overseas, such as being issued government passports or receiving medical screenings, the message said.

## NAVCENT maritime exercise concludes

BY CHRIS CHURCH  
*Stars and Stripes*

MANAMA, Bahrain — U.S. Naval Forces Central Command has completed International Maritime Exercise 2017, which included simulations of threat scenarios that have occurred in the 5th Fleet area of operations, NAVCENT said Monday.

More than 20 partner nations participated in the exercise, which began May 2 and ended Thursday.

"Having a significant number of international partners working alongside the civilian shipping industry builds a critical understanding to enhance security and cooperation in the region," said Royal Canadian Navy Lt. Cmdr. Ralph Underhill, the exercise's lead planner. "We tried to ensure [the exercise] trained against situations that are entirely possible in the region."

Those situations included a simulated missile attack, mine threats, a mine strike on a naval vessel and a fast-attack craft threat.

The 5th Fleet operates in a region that encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water, with critical choke-points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb. About 20 percent of the world's oil supply transits through the Strait of Hormuz.

In January, Iranian-backed Houthi rebels attacked a Saudi frigate in the Red Sea with an unmanned craft filled with explosives. Last year, the Houthis targeted U.S. warships after using missiles to attack a United Arab Emirates ship.

The U.S. Navy also saw an increased number of "unprofessional" and "unsafe" interactions by Iranian vessels in 2016.

# Fort Bliss soldier is among 5 charged in slaying of veteran

*El Paso (Texas) Times*

An Afghanistan War veteran's throat was cut after he begged for his life as he was killed during a drug robbery earlier this month, according to court documents.

El Paso police have arrested five people — including a Fort Bliss soldier and two former soldiers — in connection with the slaying of Tyler Kaden Croke on May 7 in an apartment on the East Side.

A Fort Bliss spokesman confirmed Monday that Brandon Olsen, 27, is stationed at the Army post and that Zachary Johnston, 20, and Adam Acosta, 19, were former soldiers stationed at Fort Bliss more than a month ago.

Police also arrested Tristan Hunter Chilton, 21, and Stephanie Fernandez, 28, both of Socorro. All five have been arrested on capital murder charges.

According to a complaint

affidavit filed by a homicide detective, Croke was killed during a drug robbery at the Cantera Apartments. Croke, 23, had served in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan.

The complaint states Chilton told detectives that Acosta entered the apartment with a shotgun and was followed inside by three other suspects.

Chilton allegedly told detectives that Olsen and Johnston wrestled Croke to the floor and that Chilton held his legs down, the complaint states. A neighbor later told police that she had heard loud footsteps and a man pleading for his life.

During the confrontation, Johnston allegedly stabbed Croke and cut his throat with a knife, Chilton told detectives, according to documents. Olsen then allegedly "finished killing the victim by cutting his throat with a knife while the victim was attempting to crawl away," the complaint states.

Drugs were then allegedly taken from Croke's home. Fernandez is accused of driving a black Nissan Xterra used as the getaway vehicle, according to documents. The types of drugs that were stolen and how Croke might have known his alleged killers were not disclosed in the complaint document.

During the investigation, detectives spotted the Nissan and followed it to an apartment. The Nissan was later pulled over for traffic violations.

The driver, Chilton, was interviewed at police headquarters, where he allegedly told detectives what happened to Croke, documents state.

Fernandez, who was a passenger in the Nissan when it was stopped, was arrested on charges of possession of methamphetamine and cocaine and traffic warrants, police officials said. Olsen was arrested later. Johnston and Acosta were arrested in Las Cruces, N.M.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Students charged after water balloon fight

**ND** MINOT — A water balloon fight landed three Minot high school students in hot water.

The Minot Daily News reported that an 18-year-old man and two 17-year-old boys were charged with misdemeanor disorderly conduct after the water balloon fight last week in the lunch room at Magic City Campus. Police said the teens “caused disruption in the school environment” because of the “yelling and screaming connected to the water balloons being thrown.” Assistant Superintendent Kim Slotsve said the water on the floor also caused a hazard.

## Marijuana among donated used clothing

**MN** MAPLEWOOD — Someone apparently inadvertently donated more than 100 grams of marijuana when they dropped off some used children’s clothes at a Minneapolis shop.

The Maplewood Police Department posted a photo on Facebook of the surprise donation to the Once Upon a Child store with an invitation to the owner to come in and claim it. No one has come forward.

Police Chief Paul Schnell said because the pot was packaged for distribution or sale, its owner could face a felony charge.

## Toddler found outside at night back with family

**KY** LEXINGTON — A toddler found wandering a street in the middle of the night in Lexington has been reunited with his family.

The Lexington Herald-Leader reported motorist James Crisp was driving about 2 a.m. Saturday when he found the

boy, who looked to be about 2 years old, walking in the street. Crisp said he stopped and opened the door to talk to the boy, who climbed in and said “Go bye-bye.”

Lexington police Lt. Andrew Daugherty said officers canvassed the neighborhood trying to find the boy’s home, but were unsuccessful. Daugherty said the child’s mother called Saturday morning to report the youngster missing after the family awoke to find him gone.

## 1 killed, 7 are injured after vehicle hits bull

**KS** DODGE CITY — The Kansas Highway Patrol said one person was killed and seven others were injured in a two-vehicle crash caused by a bull standing in the highway.

The patrol said Alma Bencomo, 66, of Dodge City, died after her vehicle hit the bull on U.S. 400 Saturday about 26 miles east of Dodge City. The collision forced Bencomo’s vehicle across the center line, where it hit a vehicle driven by Phouthavone Tony Thirakul, 41, of Wichita.

Five people in Bencomo’s vehicle were injured. Thirakul and a passenger in his car also were injured.

## Woman trying to buy card trapped inside CVS

**FL** TITUSVILLE — A woman buying a birthday card was accidentally barricaded inside a central Florida CVS and had to call police.

Lillian Rimmel stopped at a Titusville CVS at 9:50 p.m. Friday to make a purchase, unaware the store was about to close. As she walked toward the checkout, just minutes after the 10 p.m. closing, she triggered a motion sensor alarm and found herself barricaded inside. A metal security gate blocked the

entrance as sirens blared.

Rimmel called police and they contacted the manager to let her out.

## 4th blast to take down bridge may be enough

**OH** LEBANON — Ohio’s transportation agency said a fourth attempt to bring down an old interstate bridge in southwest Ohio didn’t go quite as planned, but it may have been enough to finish the job.

The bridge that once carried Interstate 71 over the Little Miami River in Warren County has been tough to take down.

Three earlier implosions failed to get it done so a fourth blast took place Sunday.

Department of Transportation spokesman Matt Bruning said the implosion Sunday didn’t lower the last half of the final remaining section as much as expected. But Bruning said the blast may have lowered the section enough so that other options for removal can be looked at.

## Man tries to explain how car ended up in pool

**NC** WINSTON-SALEM — A North Carolina man is trying to explain how his car ended up in a swimming pool.

Local news outlets reported someone noticed the empty car submerged in the swimming pool at a Winston-Salem apartment complex. Police think it plunged in early Friday morning.

Owner James Poe told police the car rolled into the pool after he got out, thinking it was in park. Police said Poe has given conflicting accounts about what happened. He’s been cited for leaving the scene and for not having car insurance.

## Woman worried thermos of semen might explode

**FL** NEW PORT RICHEY — A Florida woman trying to get pregnant via artificial insemination called police because she feared the thermos she was using to store sperm and dry ice might explode.

Felicia Nevins sought help from the Pasco County Sheriff’s Office after she forgot to remove a rubber O-ring from the container.

The next thing Nevins knew, the incident was all over social media. That’s because the sheriff’s office posted details on Facebook.

Nevins was not identified by name but she said she was mortified that enough information was posted for her to be identified.

The sheriff’s office defended its action, saying it was important to provide the type of safety information contained in the post.

## Accused robber gives clerk her phone number

**OH** AKRON — Police said they identified a woman who robbed a northeast Ohio video store because she first gave a clerk her real phone number.

Akron police issued a warrant for aggravated robbery after tracing the phone number to the 41-year-old woman.

A store employee said the woman walked into the store last week and shopped for a DVD. She then approached the checkout counter and gave her number to the employee to look up her account.

The employee said the woman put a note on the counter stating she had a gun.

Reports said the employee gave the woman an undisclosed amount of money.

From wire reports

On a mission to provide objective reporting  
to America’s military, wherever they serve.  
Read us online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

# Preds earn berth in Stanley Cup Final

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Nashville Predators, the final team into the NHL playoffs, are headed to the first Stanley Cup Final in franchise history.

Coach Peter Laviolette insists they won't just be happy to be there, either.

"Our guys know the big picture," Laviolette said. "They understand what it is that we're trying to do here. And when that time comes, we'll be ready."

Colton Sissons scored a hat trick, with his third being goal the game-winner with 6:00 left, and goalie Pekka Rinne made 38 saves as the Predators beat the Anaheim Ducks 6-3 on Monday night in Game 6 of the Western Conference finals.

Now the team no one outside of Nashville expected to be here is waiting to face either defending champion Pittsburgh or Ottawa for the Stanley Cup. Game 1 is Monday.

No matter what happens next, the Predators already have turned in a thrilling run this postseason as just the third franchise seeded last in its

conference to reach the Final since the NHL went to the current conference-based playoff format in 1994. The Edmonton Oilers lost to Laviolette's Carolina Hurricanes in 2006, while the Kings beat New Jersey in six in 2012.

They also are the eighth team in the past 15 seasons to reach the Stanley Cup Final after finishing the regular season outside the top 10 in the final standings.

Nashville's magical run started by sweeping the West's No. 1 seed in Chicago. The Predators downed St. Louis in six to reach their first conference finals, and now they've knocked off the Pacific Division champ in Anaheim, which lost for the second time in three years in the Western finals.

Goaltender Pekka Rinne, the Predators' longest tenured player at 34, called the victory an amazing feeling.

"It's a funny thing, though," Rinne said. "Everything that is happening around us, you still feel hungry and now we have a chance to play for the

Cup. It's a pretty amazing feeling and you're working for that for a long, long time. I feel like the last number of years, we've been going in that direction, building this team and having more depth."

That depth has paid off, particularly the last two games after losing top center Ryan Johansen after Game 4 to emergency surgery on his left thigh. Captain Mike Fisher, the only player on the roster who has played in the Stanley Cup Final with Ottawa in 2007, also missed those two games with an upper-body injury.

Forward Kevin Fiala broke his left leg in the second round.

Laviolette simply tapped Nashville's pipeline and has tied the NHL's all-time mark using 18 forwards this postseason. Sissons is the latest to respond. The 23-year-old center was scoreless in the 2016 playoffs and had 10 points in 58 games during the regular season. Now he has 10 points this postseason.

"I don't think I even dreamt of this moment, scoring a hat

trick in the Western Conference clinching game, but I can't speak enough for just our whole group," Sissons said. "We've been through some challenges together and we stuck together no matter what, just always believed and here we are."

Now Laviolette is the first coach since 1994 and the fourth overall to take three different teams to the Stanley Cup Final, joining Scotty Bowman, Dick Irvin and Mike Keenan.

"Probably means that I got fired a lot," Laviolette said with a chuckle. "I'm fortunate to be here working and fortunate (general manager) David Poile gave me a job. And when you do that, you're not thinking about things like that, you're just thinking about coming to work."

Now Music City stands ready to show the NHL how to chase hockey's ultimate trophy in star-studded fashion.

Fans filled the plaza outside the arena and the park across the street during the game before pouring onto the street to celebrate.

## KU's Jackson diversion requires apology, anger classes

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Former Kansas basketball player Josh Jackson must attend anger management classes, write a letter of apology and refrain from using alcohol or recreational drugs for a year as part of a diversion agreement arising from his confrontation with a Jayhawks women's basketball player last year.

Jackson, who is leaving Kansas after one season and is expected to be a top pick in next month's NBA Draft, had pleaded not guilty to a misdemeanor count of criminal property damage after he argued with McKenzie Calvert on Dec. 9 outside a bar in Lawrence.

Jackson signed the diversion agreement on April 26, according to Douglas County Court records obtained by The

Kansas City Star. If he successfully completes the program, the case against him will be dismissed.

He is required to complete the anger management class and community service by Oct. 31 and write the apology letter and obtain a substance abuse evaluation by June 30. If the evaluation doesn't make any treatment recommendations, Jackson must complete alcohol information classes by Oct. 31.

Jackson also signed a "stipulation of facts" that said he followed Calvert out of the bar after she threw a drink at fellow Kansas player Lagerald Vick. He said he yelled at Calvert and called her names before she got into her car and locked the doors.

"I kicked her vehicle, breaking the left rear taillight and

denting the driver's door," Jackson said in the document.

A damage estimate of Calvert's car for \$2,991 was given to police in December, according to a Douglas County District Court affidavit. The total repair bill was \$3,150, which included \$1,127 for the driver's door and left tail lamp. Jackson was not charged with felony criminal damage in excess of \$1,000 because prosecutors couldn't prove that he caused all the damage to the car "due to other unidentifiable individuals damaging the vehicle," according to county District Attorney Charles Branson.

He was ordered to pay \$158 in court costs, \$150 in a diversion fee and \$250 in restitution to Timothy Calvert, McKenzie's father. If Jackson violates his 12-month diversion, he

would pay restitution of \$3,150 to Calvert.

The 6-foot-8 swingman was the nation's No. 1 recruit when he signed with the Jayhawks out of Prolific Prep Academy in California. He immediately earned a spot in the starting lineup, teaming with national player of the year Frank Mason III and Devonte Graham to form one of the nation's top backcourts.

Jackson was the Big 12 newcomer of the year after averaging 16.3 points and 7.4 rebounds. He helped the Jayhawks to a 31-5 record and a 13th straight regular-season Big 12 title before a loss to Oregon in the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament. He has signed with former NBA player B.J. Armstrong of Wasserman Media Group.



# Warriors ready for 3rd straight Finals

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Kevin Durant does not need to be told that Golden State should have a muted celebration after winning the Western Conference finals.

Durant is fully aware a tough challenge waits for them. It's why Durant signed with the Warriors and why Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green embraced him at the expense of their own stats.

"We have a bigger goal in mind," Durant said.

Golden State has a chance to earn its second championship in three years after sweeping the San Antonio Spurs with a 129-115 victory Monday night.

San Antonio's only lead came on the opening possession when Manu Ginobili tossed in a left-handed scoop shot. The Spurs started Ginobili in what could be his final game with the team. The 39-year-old had maintained he will not ponder whether to retire or return until after the season.

Curry led the Warriors with 36 points as the team led by as many as 22 points.

Kyle Anderson scored 20 points to lead the Spurs, who were without Kawhi Leonard, Tony Parker and David Lee.

The Warriors became the first team in league history to

open the playoffs 12-0, which provides them with a week of rest prior to their third straight Finals appearance.

Golden State will host Game 1 of the NBA Finals on June 1 against either Cleveland or Boston. The Cavaliers hold a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference finals, but Curry alluded the Warriors are expecting a rematch with LeBron James and company.

"We all know, obviously, who we're going to play," Curry said. "We'll be watching the Eastern Conference finals to see how that unfolds. But it will be easy to start this new chapter and really just lock in on what's in front of us."

Facing Cleveland will resurrect chatter of Golden State's collapse in last season's finals, which saw the Cavaliers rally from a 3-1 deficit to win the franchise's first championship.

"This year is a totally different year, different group, different journey," Curry said.

The biggest difference is the addition of Durant, who left Oklahoma City in the offseason to sign with Golden State.

His presence has given the Warriors a deep and talented roster headlined by four All-Stars in Durant, Curry, Thompson and Green. But Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said to credit talent as the sole reason behind

Golden State's current run is disrespectful.

"They're really talented, but that's not everything that describes them," Popovich said. "This is maybe the best defensive team in the league on top of everything. So, they don't just play with talent. They execute at the defensive end of the floor. On offense, no team is more unselfish finding the open man and that sort of thing."

The Warriors have shown their strength by blasting through the playoffs in the normally rugged West.

Golden State is shooting 50 percent from the field while averaging 118.3 points in 12 playoff games. As good as the offense has been, it's been the Warriors' defense that has been key to their playoff dominance. Golden State held San Antonio, Utah and Portland to 102 points and averaged 9.2 steals per game.

"I think our defensive intensity has been amazing," Green said. "Overall, I think we've done a great job locking in on the defensive side, scrambling around, trying to take away team's No. 1 option. That doesn't necessarily mean the player, just trying to make them go to a second or third option in the set and also trying to cover that. I think we've been doing a great job of that."

The addition of David West and Matt Barnes has given the Warriors two more defensive-minded players off the bench to go along with Andre Iguodala and JaVale McGee.

Still, Golden State coach Mike Brown knows better execution is critical in the Finals.

"We feel like we can play better," said Brown, who is filling in on the sideline for an injured Steve Kerr. "To get to our ultimate goal of winning the whole thing, we've got to be better on both ends of the floor."

As a 23-year-old playing with the Thunder, Durant learned a heightened effort is needed in the Finals. Oklahoma City celebrated advancing to the 2012 Finals only to be steamrolled by Miami in five games.

Experience has taught Durant that winning the West is no reason to relax or celebrate.

"Yea, it's a little different, definitely. I can't lie," Durant said. "I went when I was 23 years old, and it felt like the Western Conference Finals was almost like the championship. Just getting to that point, you know how hard it is and how much work you put in to start the season. So, it's a little different now, obviously."

"I feel like we could definitely be better."

## NFL relaxes rules on players' celebrations

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The NFL wants to bring back a little bit of Broadway back to an end zone near you next season.

After years of limiting how — and how much — players could celebrate following touchdowns, the league decided to loosen up its rules, allowing players to again use the football as a prop, celebrate as a group and roll around or flap their arms like snow angels on the ground again if they choose.

In an email from Commissioner Roger Goodell sent to fans in an effort to deliver "a more exciting game experience," the commissioner said the new guidelines came after conversations with more than

80 current and former players.

Asked whether he celebrated the new guidelines approved at Tuesday's spring meetings, Goodell laughed.

"I did," he said. "I can't tell you how."

Goodell said the moniker "No Fun League" had been thrown around since he was an intern in the league office. He welcomed the looser guidelines, also endorsed by Falcons President Rich McKay, who heads the NFL competition committee.

"The pendulum had swung a long way" in restricting players too much, McKay added.

The league, however, will continue to penalize any celebration deemed offensive or in bad taste, including those that embar-

ass opponents or mimic the use of weapons. If celebrations are deemed a violation by on-field officials, players could still be penalized under existing unsportsmanlike conduct and taunting violations, as well as fined.

"Everybody has a different idea where the line is," the commissioner said.

There is no set time limit on how long such celebrations can continue. But the league is placing an emphasis on speeding up the pace of games. The 40-second play clock will begin once an official signals a touchdown and teams will have to snap the ball for their extra-point play at the end of the clock.

# Greinke fans 12 in Diamondbacks' win

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Zack Greinke was dominant again, looking a lot like the pitcher who went 19-3 with a 1.66 ERA two years ago.

His reaction: "It's nice."

Greinke struck out a season-high 12 and came within one out of a complete game as the Arizona Diamondbacks beat the Chicago White Sox 5-1 on Monday night.

The ace right-hander gave up four hits and improved to 5-0 in his last six starts.

"It was another Zack moment for us," manager Torey Lovullo said.

The crowd booed loudly when Lovullo walked to the mound to pull Greinke (6-2) after Jose Abreu's two-out double in the ninth.

Lovullo understood.

"Sometimes you've got to sit in the seat and not make popular decisions," he said, "but I made a deal with Zack."

Basically, it was three up and three down or he was not finishing the game.

Greinke wasn't surprised to see Lovullo come to the mound.

"Torey told me I had to get everyone out and I didn't," he said.

Greinke threw 104 pitches and everything was working for him. He was asked to compare the way he's pitching now to that masterful 2015 season with the Los Angeles Dodgers that helped earn him a \$206.5 million, six-year contract in Arizona.

The three-time All-Star and 2009 AL Cy Young Award winner went 13-7 with a 4.37 ERA in his abbreviated first season with the Diamondbacks.

"Right now I'm making really good pitches," Greinke said. "The pitches aren't quite as sharp maybe as that year, but the location's been just as good, maybe better."

Daniel Descalso hit a three-

run homer with two outs in the fourth inning to break a scoreless tie.

Greinke's final strikeout — of Yolmer Sanchez — was with a 65 mph curveball; the scoreboard called it an eephus pitch.

"We hadn't seen that all day," Chicago manager Rick Renteria said.

Greinke said he tried to throw the same pitch earlier but it was a little too hard and it wound up being hit for a home run by Leury Garcia.

Paul Goldschmidt added a solo shot for the Diamondbacks during their sixth victory in seven games.

After totaling 24 runs in their last two games at Seattle over the weekend, the White Sox managed only Garcia's solo homer against Greinke, who walked one in his third double-digit strikeout game this season.

Miguel Gonzalez (3-5) went five-plus innings, permitting five runs — four earned — and

seven hits.

"Those two pitches — a curveball, a three-run homer, and a fastball in (for Goldschmidt's homer)," Gonzalez said. "Those two pitches, if I take them back you never know. It is a different ballgame."

Jake Lamb, just selected NL player of the week, tripled to right-center and scored for Arizona.

Leading off the sixth, Goldschmidt jumped on Gonzalez's fastball and lined it into the left-field seats.

Lamb followed with a triple and Arizona went on to load the bases.

Rey Fuentes grounded sharply to shortstop Tim Anderson, who tried to force the runner at home. White Sox catcher Omar Narvaez couldn't quite come up with Anderson's low throw, the ball dropping out of his mitt. Anderson was charged with an error, and it was 5-1.

## Rockies turn to prospect Hoffman to turn away Phils

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Jeff Hoffman turned a spot start into a splendid audition for a more permanent role in Colorado's rotation.

Hoffman struck out seven and tossed three-hit ball over seven innings to lead the Rockies to an 8-1 win over the Philadelphia Phillies on Monday night.

Hoffman (2-0) also had his first big league hit and the National League-leading Rockies continued to cruise away from home. They are the best in the majors with a 16-7 road record and are 5-2 on this season-long 10-game road trip.

"That's two wins toward going to winning the West and winning, hopefully, the World Series," Hoffman said.

The 22-year-old Hoffman, rated Colorado's No. 2 prospect, made his second spot start of the season. He was needed because the Rockies played a

doubleheader last week and went with Hoffman rather than use a starter on short rest. He'll likely return to the minors but certainly impressed against the woeful Phillies.

**Giants 6, Cubs 4:** Joe Panik hit his first career leadoff homer and doubled twice to help visiting San Francisco.

Brandon Belt also connected while Ty Blach (2-2) pitched into the eighth inning in the first meeting between the teams since San Francisco was eliminated by Chicago in the NL Division Series last year. Panik, Belt and Justin Rugiano each had two RBIs as the Giants won for the eighth time in 10 games.

**Yankees 4, Royals 2:** Didi Gregorius, Brett Gardner and Chris Carter all homered as host New York beat Jason Vargas again in defeating Kansas City.

A reversed call in the seventh inning kept the Yankees ahead and enabled Michael Pineda

(5-2) to top Vargas for the second time in a week. The Royals have lost five of seven.

**Astros 1, Tigers 0:** Brad Peacock and three relievers combined on a one-hitter while Jose Altuve provided the offense with an RBI double as host Houston nipped Detroit.

Peacock was solid moving out of the bullpen to make a spot start for injured ace Dallas Keuchel.

**Twins 14, Orioles 7:** Max Kepler homered and drove in four runs while Miguel Sano and Jorge Polanco each had a career-high four hits as Minnesota roared back to beat host Baltimore.

The Twins trailed 5-0 in the second inning and 6-2 entering the fifth before cranking up the offense against Ubaldo Jimenez and an ineffective Orioles bullpen. Tyler Wilson (2-2) gave up six runs in 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings.

**Reds 5, Indians 1:** Scott Feldman struck out a season-high nine while ending host

Cincinnati's long stretch of ineffective starts while Scott Schebler homered for the third straight game.

The Reds took the opener of the annual intrastate series. The teams play two games in Cincinnati followed by two in Cleveland.

**Braves 5, Pirates 2:** Matt Adams hit a two-run homer in his second start since being traded and Ender Inciarte had a career-high five hits as host Atlanta beat Gerrit Cole and Pittsburgh.

**Angels 3, Rays 2:** Jeffry Marte scored the go-ahead run on a wild pitch in the seventh inning to help Los Angeles beat host Tampa Bay.

The Angels pushed across the decisive run without a hit against relievers Jumbo Diaz (0-3) and Ryne Stanek. After walking Mike Trout intentionally to load the bases with two outs, Stanek threw a ball in the dirt while facing Albert Pujols, allowing Marte to score easily.