

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

All OK after military-chartered jet crash

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A chartered jet carrying 143 people from the U.S. military base in Cuba tried to land in a thunderstorm and ended up in the river at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. Authorities said everyone on board emerged without critical injuries, lining up on the wings and waiting to be rescued.

The Boeing 737 arriving in north Florida from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with 136 passengers and seven crew members came to a stop in shallow water in the St. Johns River. Everyone on board was alive and accounted for, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office said, with 21 adults transported to local hospitals in good condition.

The Florida Times-Union of Jacksonville reported that 20 of the 21 people taken to emergency rooms were released.

One child was admitted for further treatment.

Marine units from the sheriff's department and Jacksonville Fire Rescue joined first responders from the naval air station, helping passengers and crew to safety.

Capt. Michael Connor, the commanding officer of NAS Jacksonville, said during a news conference that those on board were a mix of civilian and military personnel and that while some were staying in the area, others planned to fly on to other parts of the country.

"I think it is a miracle," Connor said. "We could be talking about a different story this evening."

The base's fire chief, Mark Bruce, said passengers were lined up on the plane's wings when first-responders started rescuing them.

Several pets were on the

plane as well, and their status wasn't immediately clear. A navy statement early Saturday offering "hearts and prayers" to their owners said safety issues prevented rescuers from immediately retrieving the animals.

It wasn't immediately clear what went wrong. Boeing said in a tweet Friday night that it was investigating: "We are aware of an incident in Jacksonville, Fla., and are gathering information." The Federal Aviation Administration was referring media inquiries to NAS Jacksonville. The National Transportation Safety Board dispatched a team of 16 investigators to determine what happened.

Connor said he didn't know what impact the weather had on the flight. "I was at home when this happened and there were thunderstorms and lightning," he said.

A photo posted by deputies shows a Miami Air International logo on the plane.

It wasn't known how long it would take to remove the plane from the river, but Connor said the landing gear appeared to be resting on the river bed, making it unlikely for the aircraft to float away. He said crews began working to contain any jet fuel leaks almost immediately after securing the passengers' safety.

Liz Torres told the Florida Times-Union that she heard what sounded like a gunshot Friday night from her home in Orange Park, about 5 miles south of NAS Jacksonville. She then drove down to a Target parking lot where police and firefighters were staging to find out more.

"I've never seen anything like this," she said.

North Korea fires projectiles, raises tensions

By **KIM GAMEL**
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired several short-range projectiles into the sea off its east coast on Saturday, South Korea's military said, dealing a new challenge to the U.S. over stalled nuclear talks.

President Donald Trump has cited the North's decision to suspend nuclear and long-range missile tests as evidence of diplomatic progress despite growing signs of frustration by the communist state over the deadlock.

Trump maintained confidence the adversaries could reach a deal in a tweet after Saturday's launch.

"Anything in this very interesting world is possible, but I believe that Kim Jong Un fully realizes the great economic potential of North Korea, & will do nothing to inter-

fere or end it," he wrote. "He also knows that I am with him & does not want to break his promise to me. Deal will happen!"

The last major missile test was in November 2017, when North Korea sent an intercontinental ballistic missile flying toward Japan.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul initially said a single, short-range missile had been launched Saturday but later changed that to "several unidentified short-range projectiles."

They flew up to 125 miles for some 20 minutes before splashing into the sea, according to the military.

The 35th Fighter Wing at Misawa Air Base in Japan also tweeted an incoming missile alert Saturday morning but quickly issued an all-clear.

"We reacted to a potential threat, which is no longer a threat at this time. Enjoy your

Saturday," wing commander Col. Kristopher Struve was quoted as saying.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the projectiles weren't a security threat and didn't reach anywhere near the country's coast, The Associated Press reported.

Experts said it may have been a test of a multiple launch rocket system, which would suggest a low-level provocation aimed at warning the U.S. that the North's patience is wearing thin.

South Korea said it was working with longtime ally, the U.S., to analyze the details and type of projectiles that were fired. It also vowed to strengthen reconnaissance measures.

Following an emergency meeting, the presidential office expressed concern that the launch ran counter to the spirit of an inter-Korean military agreement reached in September.

USNS Comfort to help Venezuelan refugees

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon planned Friday to send a U.S. Navy hospital ship to help alleviate a humanitarian crisis in Venezuela as senior national security officials convened at the Pentagon to discuss military options for pressuring the country's president to step down.

Officials said the Comfort, a 1,000-bed vessel, probably would be sent off the coast of northern Colombia, near enough to treat refugees who have fled Venezuela. An announcement is expected this week.

President Donald Trump seemed to play down potential U.S. military action to push out Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro after Trump spent an hour on the phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin "is not looking at all to get involved in Venezuela other than he'd like to see something positive happen for Venezuela," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. Trump said he feels "the same way. We want to get some humanitarian aid."

Some members of Congress appeared

to urge more muscular action. "Where is our aircraft carrier," tweeted Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

National security adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan and other officials met with senior military commanders at the Pentagon in what officials said was a session to review options for potential military action.

Trump's lack of concern about Russian assistance to Maduro appeared at odds with Bolton, who has repeatedly warned that Russia and Cuba must stop propping up Maduro with military aid and advisers.

"The United States will not tolerate foreign military interference in the Western Hemisphere," Bolton tweeted Friday after the Pentagon meeting. "President Trump has made it clear that there will be costs for those who further Maduro's usurpation and repression."

The mixed messages suggested divisions between Trump and some of his top advisers over what to do in the wake of a failed

attempt Tuesday by the U.S.-backed opposition in Caracas to overthrow Maduro.

Trump has appeared ambivalent about taking military action in Venezuela since throwing his support behind Juan Guaido, a Venezuelan opposition leader, as the country's legitimate leader in January.

U.S. military officials have argued against direct intervention, but under orders from the White House, they have devised an array of options for raising the pressure on Maduro, officials said, along with less aggressive moves aimed at alleviating humanitarian suffering.

Adm. Craig Faller, the commander of U.S. Southern Command, which oversees military operations in Latin America, briefed the other officials on "a wide range of military options, as the command continues to monitor activities on the ground in Venezuela," his headquarters said in a statement.

"We have a comprehensive set of options tailored to certain conditions, and I'm just going to leave it at that," Shanahan told reporters. "All options are on the table."

Taliban say gap narrowing in negotiations with US diplomat

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban on Saturday said the gap is narrowing in talks with Washington's special peace envoy over a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The two sides are continuing to meet in Qatar, where the insurgents maintain a political office.

In a voice message to The Associated Press, the Taliban spokesman in Doha, Suhail Shaheen, said both sides have offered new proposals for drawing down U.S. and NATO forces. This would be a significant initial step toward a deal to end nearly 18 years of war.

"There are proposals to lower the gap between the two sides, but (it) still needs negotiation to reach a final agreement," he said in an English language statement.

Other Taliban officials familiar with the negotiations had earlier told AP that the U.S. was seeking a year and a half to withdraw its estimated 14,000 troops from Afghanistan, while the Taliban wanted it done in six months.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized

to speak to the media.

Talks between the U.S. and Taliban, which began last year with the appointment of Washington's peace envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, have focused on a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal as well as Taliban guarantees that Afghanistan will not be used as a staging arena for global terrorist attacks. The U.S. also wants guarantees that the Taliban won't harbor terrorists and that the insurgent group will help in the fight against an Islamic State affiliate that has taken root mostly in eastern Afghanistan.

The Taliban have publicly assailed the ISIS affiliate, known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, and have waged bitter battles against the group's followers.

In a tweet at the outset of the latest round of talks with the Taliban earlier this week, Khalilzad said the U.S. and the Taliban need to find common ground. He laid out four "inter-connected issues: troop withdrawal, counter-terrorism assurances, intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations and reduction in violence leading to a comprehensive cease-fire."

Until they do, Khalilzad said, "nothing will be final."

Army special agent dies during run at West Point

WEST POINT, N.Y. — A special agent in the U.S. Army's Criminal Investigation Command has died after collapsing during a run at West Point.

The Army reported Friday that 51-year-old Chief Warrant Officer 3 Liqueat A. Khan was discovered on a road during a physical fitness test Tuesday morning at the U.S. Military Academy. He was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Khan had been special agent in charge of the Criminal Investigation Command's West Point office since June. The Army said the death is under investigation but foul play isn't suspected.

Soldier who fell at Hawaii volcano in stable condition

HONOLULU — A U.S. Army soldier has been upgraded to stable condition after a fall onto a ledge in a volcano crater in Hawaii. Park officials said another visitor reported seeing the 32-year-old soldier, who was not named, fall from a 300-foot cliff on Wednesday evening.

Officials said he had climbed over a metal railing at Steaming Bluff overlook to get a better view and the ground beneath him gave way.

From The Associated Press

Democrats find mutual enemy in AG Barr

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats are splintered by calls to impeach President Donald Trump. But they have found another common enemy and an alternate political foil in Attorney General William Barr.

Calls for Barr's resignation erupted across the Democratic Party last week after he testified before the Senate and rebuffed the House twice, first by denying Democrats a full, unredacted version of special counsel Robert Mueller's report, and then by skipping a hearing to review it. In response, Democrats threatened to hold Barr in criminal contempt of Congress — a lengthy legal process that could go on for months.

The feud with Barr has animated Democrats and temporarily shifted attention away from impeachment — and, by

extension, the party's divisions over whether to pursue it. But with Trump resisting other congressional investigations and testimony from Mueller likely on the horizon, the impeachment question seems unlikely to subside for long.

For now, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, who would lead impeachment proceedings, are putting their emphasis on investigating Trump, his business dealings and his administration. If Democrats do decide to impeach the president, they will have already made part of the case through oversight. Trump's refusal to comply with their requests — with Barr just the latest example — will only strengthen the case.

Pelosi hasn't held back in her criticism of Barr, accusing him of committing a crime by lying

to Congress about his communications with Mueller. Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec called Pelosi's accusation "reckless, irresponsible and false."

Other members of Pelosi's caucus are going after the attorney general in even stronger terms.

"This is serious misconduct, this is a serious effort by the administration to prevent Congress from doing its oversight and, in fact, could form the basis by itself of articles of impeachment," said Rhode Island Rep. David Cicilline, a member of the Judiciary panel, after Barr skipped the hearing Thursday.

Republicans say the Democrats are focusing on Barr as a substitute for impeachment, to avoid the political backlash that would come with official proceedings against Trump.

Nadler "can't try to pacify his liberal base by pretending to do impeachment without actually taking the plunge," said Georgia Rep. Doug Collins, the top Republican on the Judiciary panel.

The Barr saga appears destined to end up in court. Nadler threatened Friday to hold Barr in contempt if he did not comply with a final request to turn over the Mueller report and the relevant investigative materials. The Justice Department is unlikely to comply, likely prompting a vote of contempt in committee and then the full House.

While a contempt vote would send a message, it wouldn't force the Justice Department to hand over the report. Nor would it guarantee criminal charges against Barr.

Justice Clarence Thomas' moment may have arrived

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Clarence Thomas has been a Supreme Court justice for nearly three decades. It may finally be his moment.

Many Americans know Thomas largely from his bruising 1991 confirmation hearing, when he was accused of sexual harassment charges by former employee Anita Hill — charges he denied. People may know he's a conservative and has gone years without speaking during arguments at the court. But scholars say it would be wise to pay closer attention to Thomas.

Thomas is now the longest-serving member of a court that has recently gotten more conservative, putting him in a unique and potentially powerful position, and he's said he doesn't plan on retiring anytime soon. With President Donald Trump's nominees Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh

now on the court, conservatives are firmly in control as the justices take on divisive issues such as abortion, gun control and LGBT rights.

Thomas, for the first time, is on a court where there are at least four votes for some "pretty radical" decisions, said political science professor Corey Robin, the author of a Thomas book due out in September. Robin says the question will be whether the court's more conservative justices — Thomas, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh and Samuel Alito — can get Chief Justice John Roberts, a more moderate conservative, to go along.

Elizabeth Wydra, president of the liberal Constitutional Accountability Center, acknowledged that Thomas' views may now have more sway, something she described as "terrifying to many progressives."

Ohio congressional map ruled unconstitutional

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — A panel of federal judges ruled Friday that Ohio's congressional districts were unconstitutionally drawn by the Republicans for their political advantage and it ordered a new map for the 2020 elections.

The ruling, if it stands, could prove an important victory for the Democrats, who are hoping redrawn boundaries will not only help them pick up House seats but also energize voters and boost turnout in this longtime battleground state, helping them defeat President Donald Trump. Republican officials said they would appeal.

The panel unanimously declared the current map an "unconstitutional partisan gerrymander," saying the GOP-controlled Ohio Legislature put the Democrats at a disadvantage by packing lots of them into four districts and scattering the rest across the remaining 12.

"Democratic candidates must run a significantly longer distance to get to the same finish line," the judges wrote in a 301-page ruling.

The Republicans hold a 12-4 advantage in Ohio's congressional delegation under the current map, which went into effect for the 2012 elections.

The Supreme Court is already considering a gerrymandering case that could lead to a major decision on how far politicians can go in drawing districts. It involves challenges to congressional maps in North Carolina, drawn by Republicans, and in Maryland, created by Democrats.

Republican Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost said he will seek to stay the court order while appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court. He also pointed out in an emailed statement that Ohioans have already approved mapmaking reforms that will be in effect for redistricting after the 2020 U.S. census.

Midwest flooding kills at least 4 people

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The latest round of Midwestern flooding claimed at least four lives, closed hundreds of roads and forced residents of river towns to shore up threatened levees with sandbags as waters rose to record and near-record levels in some communities.

The National Weather Service issued flood warnings Friday along a large swath of the Mississippi River, as well as flash flood watches for parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas after recent rounds of heavy rain.

The body of a missing kayaker was found Friday afternoon

in a swollen southwest Missouri creek. Missouri State Highway Patrol Sgt. John Lueckenhoff identified the man as Scott M. Puckett, 35, of Forsyth, Mo. The body of his friend, Alex Ekern, 23, was found Thursday.

Puckett and Ekern were among three men who began paddling Wednesday afternoon in Bull Creek near the small town of Walnut Shade. The patrol said they were swept over a low-water bridge and caught in what is called a hydraulic, which creates a washing-machine effect that is hard to escape. One of the men survived.

Flooding also claimed the life of a camper found Wednesday

after he was caught in waters from an creek near the town of Ava, also in southwest Missouri. And in northern Indiana, a 2-year-old was killed when his mother drove onto a flooded road.

In Davenport, Iowa, concerns were that even after the Mississippi reached a record height, the worst was far from over.

The crest inched above the 1993 record on Thursday, and forecasters are calling for up to 4 inches of additional rain this week, meaning the high water will likely stick around and potentially get even higher.

Several blocks of downtown Davenport were flooded last

week when a flood barrier succumbed to the onslaught of water. The river at the Quad Cities has been at major flood stage or higher for 41 consecutive days.

Historic flooding was happening elsewhere along the river, too.

The National Weather Service is now projecting flood levels to reach the second- or third-highest ever at several Mississippi River towns in northeast Missouri — Hannibal, Louisiana, Clarksville and Winfield — and in western Illinois towns such as Quincy, Alton and Grafton.

Monster cyclone rampages across India, Bangladesh

Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh — At least 15 people have been killed in India and Bangladesh in Cyclone Fani, one of the Bay of Bengal's largest storms in decades, officials said Saturday.

The storm ripped through the Indian state of Odisha on Friday, uprooting trees and power lines and smashing traditional thatched-roof huts.

On Saturday, Fani crossed over India's West Bengal state and moved northeast toward Bangladesh, weakening from a severe cyclonic storm to a cyclonic storm.

At least a dozen people were killed in Bangladesh as the cyclone hovered over

the country's southwestern coast, delivering battering rainstorms.

Lighting killed at least six people, local newspapers and TV reported.

In India, where an unprecedented 1.2 million were evacuated from low-lying areas and placed in hundreds of shelters, India's National Disaster Response Force director S.N. Pradhan said three people were killed in the storm.

"The precautions that have been taken should be continued," he said, adding that downed phone lines mean that the extent of the destruction was yet to be known.

According to the Press Trust of India, one victim was a teenager killed by a falling tree in the district of Puri, a popular

tourist area in Odisha.

Another woman was killed while fetching water when she was struck by flying debris loosened from a concrete structure.

Widespread power outages, damaged water supplies and roads blocked by fallen trees and power lines have made transport around the affected area difficult, officials said.

According to Mohammad Heidarzadei, an expert on storms and cyclones at Brunel University of London, the cyclone packed sustained wind speeds of 155 miles per hour when it made landfall in Odisha, equivalent in strength to a Category 4 hurricane.

Ebola outbreak deaths in Congo exceed 1,000 patients

Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo — More than 1,000 people have died from Ebola in eastern Congo since August, the country's health minister said Friday as hostility toward health workers continues to hamper efforts to contain the second-deadliest outbreak of the virus.

Health Minister Oly Ilunga told The Associated Press that four deaths in the outbreak's epicenter of Katwa helped push the death toll to 1,008. Two

more deaths were reported in the city of Butembo.

The outbreak declared almost nine months ago already had caused the most deaths behind the 2014-2016 outbreak in West Africa's Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia that killed more than 11,000 people.

A volatile security situation and deep community mistrust have hampered efforts to control the epidemic in eastern Congo. Ebola treatment centers have come under repeated

attack, leaving government health officials to staff clinics in the hot spots of Butembo and Katwa.

Insecurity has become a "major impediment" to controlling the Ebola outbreak, Michael Ryan, WHO's health emergencies chief, told reporters in Geneva Friday.

He said 119 attacks have been recorded since January, 42 of them directed at health facilities, while 85 health workers have been wounded or

killed. Dozens of rebel groups operate in the region, and political rivalries in part drives community rejection of health personnel.

Many people fear going to Ebola treatment centers, choosing instead to stay at home and risk transmitting the disease to caretakers and neighbors.

Residents of highly volatile Butembo believe Ebola was brought to the city on purpose, said Vianney Musavuli, 24.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Mom threatens school over son's suspension

FL OCALA — A Florida mother is accused of threatening to shoot up an elementary school after her son was suspended from riding the bus for fighting.

Ocala police officials said Melissa Giddens, 29, was arrested after officials at College Park Elementary School alerted them to a threatening voice-mail she left.

The Ocala Star-Banner reported school officials told officers Giddens' son had been suspended from the bus three days for an April 29 fight.

State becomes first to ban foam containers

ME AUGUSTA, MAINE — Maine has become the first state to ban single-use food and drink containers made from polystyrene foam, commonly known as Styrofoam.

Democratic Gov. Janet Mills signed the bill into law Tuesday.

The Natural Resources Council of Maine said that Maine's the first state to enact such a ban.

Supporters have said the law will reduce litter in lakes, rivers and coastal waters. It takes effect in 2021.

Man sentenced in cacti smuggling

AZ PHOENIX — An Arizona man was sentenced to two years in federal prison for selling drugs, stealing government property and international smuggling of cacti.

Prosecutors said William Starr Schwartz, 54, of Meadview also was ordered by a judge to pay more than \$22,000

in restitution to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Authorities said Schwartz stole and directed others to steal for him in excess of 500 federally-protected cactus plants from the Lake Mead National Recreation Area between October 2014 and last August.

They said Schwartz sold the stolen cacti online and illegally shipped the plants to more than 20 countries worldwide.

Students win \$10K for fuel-efficient invention

SD RAPID CITY — Students at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology won two awards totaling \$10,000 in prize money for an invention they said may improve vehicle fuel efficiency by up to 10%.

The Rapid City Journal reported that sophomores Mark Rotert and John Parker Chandler IV won a combined \$5,000 after pitching their vortex generator, TwisTech, in the governor's Giant Vision competition. They won another \$5,000 prize from the college earlier this month for the invention to reduce drag on vehicles.

Bear scales fence, kills 5 goats at farm

CT BURLINGTON — Environmental officials in Connecticut are trying to trap a bear that killed five goats at a farm.

A spokesman for the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection confirmed that a bear killed the goats and the agency is working with the farm to "deter further incidents."

Grazin' Goats Farm in Burlington posted on its Facebook page that a bear scaled a six-foot fence to get to the Nigerian dwarf goats.

Police dog, 2 deputies receive valor award

IL WAUKEGAN — A police dog in Lake County just fetched himself a pretty big award.

The Chicago Tribune reported that a dog named Dax joined two human members of the Lake County Sheriff's Department to be given the valor award by the 100 Club of Chicago. A department spokesman said it is believed to be the first time the group has presented the award to a K-9.

The group that provides financial help to families of fallen officers decided on Dax, Deputy John Forlenza and Deputy Ray Gilbert for their quick actions in 2018 when they were confronted by a gunman.

Hackers deceive church, steal \$1.75M

OH BRUNSWICK — A church in Ohio said hackers tricked it into handing them \$1.75 million.

St. Ambrose Catholic Parish near Cleveland told its parishioners that the FBI determined the hackers deceived the church into wiring the money to a fraudulent bank account.

The church said an email led it to believe that a construction firm doing a restoration project at St. Ambrose in Brunswick had changed its bank account.

Baby giraffe, Ali, has surgery for injured leg

TN MEMPHIS — A baby giraffe at the Memphis Zoo in Tennessee had surgery for a fractured leg and is now recovering at home.

The Commercial Appeal reported Memphis Zoo officials said zookeepers noticed the female giraffe named Ali limping

early last month. Veterinarians diagnosed her with a fractured right leg.

She underwent a two-hour surgery in Lexington to outfit her leg with stainless steel plates and 21 bone screws.

Man on parole drove drunk, hid with kids

PA EASTON — Police said a Pennsylvania man on parole for leading police on a high-speed chase is now back in prison for driving drunk with children in his car and then making them hide from authorities.

Lehighvalleylive.com reported Martin Stofanak, 30, faces charges of fleeing police, driving under the influence and child endangerment.

Upper Nazareth Police said officers attempted to stop Stofanak for speeding but he sped up instead. Officials eventually found his car empty and found the man, an 8-year-old girl and an 11-year-old boy lying in a nearby field.

Winner guesses date of structural demise

MI NEGAUNEE — Someone who must know something about Upper Peninsula weather won \$1,508 for guessing when old mining equipment would break completely through melting ice.

The Teal Lake Melt-Down came to an official close Friday when the metal structure was completely submerged on the lake in Negaunee. Contestants had up to March 31 to buy a \$5 ticket and guess when the headframe would sink.

Half of the ticket revenue goes to the winner.

From wire reports

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Hurricanes finish off sweep of Islanders

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The formerly last-place Carolina Hurricanes stormed back to knock out their division's best team in seven games. Then they swept the second-best team.

Maybe it's time to rethink the significance of those Metropolitan Division standings.

The Hurricanes advanced to another Eastern Conference final after polishing off a sweep of the New York Islanders on Friday night with a 5-2 victory in Game 4.

And for a team that played its way into the postseason with a hot second half, they've done absolutely nothing to play itself out of it. Carolina enters the conference finals having won six straight games and eight of nine since dropping the first two of its first-round series with Washington.

"To sit here and say I expected to be here, our goal wasn't to be one of the four teams remaining," first-year coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Our goal was to keep playing and be the best team. That's our goal. Not too many people expected us to

be sitting here, but we did. ... We're super excited, but there's more. We have to do more."

A little over five months ago, the Hurricanes were tied for last in the division and one point out of the basement in the Eastern Conference.

"We weren't even trying to envision" this kind of run, defenseman Justin Faulk said. "We were in a pretty big hole there. We couldn't get ahead of ourselves."

But starting on Dec. 31, they went 31-12-2 to earn 64 points — the third-most in the league, and two behind Tampa Bay — and sneaked into the playoffs as the first wild card.

"The guys believed that the style of play that we were trying to establish was working, and would work," Brind'Amour said. "Now, we're still here."

They beat the Capitals — who had a division-best 104 points — in seven games, advancing on Brock McGinn's double-overtime winner in Game 7. They had no trouble with the Islanders (103 points), locking down defensively on them in two games in Brooklyn before

winning two more in Raleigh by identical 5-2 scores.

Now they're halfway to the second Stanley Cup in club history.

It's a familiar position for the franchise and its fans, even if it's still new territory for so many of the players themselves.

The Hurricanes don't make the playoffs every year — this was their first appearance since 2009 — but when they do, they make them count. Each of the last four times they've made the postseason, they've advanced at least to the conference finals, and have won 11 of their last 13 series. The only losses in that stretch came to teams that went on to win it all — Detroit in the 2002 Cup Final, and Pittsburgh in the '09 conference finals.

And now, with the Boston-Columbus series tied at 2, Carolina can savor some extended rest time and get some key players healthy.

Physical forward Micheal Ferland hasn't played since Game 3 of the Washington series on April 15. Another winger, Saku Maenalanen,

missed the final two games of the series with an upper body injury. And starting goalie Petr Mrazek, day to day with a lower-body injury that forced him from Game 2 of this series early, could benefit from the break.

"I think we need a break," Brind'Amour said. "Our group, just so proud of these guys. ... They just grinded. Wasn't pretty. A break is what they need more, almost mentally. ... We need it."

Teuvo Teravainen and Greg McKegg scored 66 seconds apart in the second period for Carolina.

Teravainen and linemate Sebastian Aho each finished with a goal and an assist, captain Justin Williams and rookie star Andrei Svechnikov each added insurance goals and goalie Curtis McElhinney made 26 saves in his second career playoff start.

The Hurricanes earned the first four-game sweep in franchise history. They're also unbeaten in five home playoff games.

Dallas pushes St. Louis to brink of elimination

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Ben Bishop looked the part of a Vezina Trophy finalist, except for one play.

Jason Spezza scored and Bishop made 38 saves as the Dallas Stars beat the St. Louis Blues 2-1 Friday night to take a 3-2 lead in their Western Conference semifinal series.

Esa Lindell also scored for the Stars, who can advance with a win in Game 6 at home on Sunday.

While Bishop turned away a number of Blues chances throughout, his miscue with the puck led to the Blues' lone goal.

"It was a little satisfying the fact that I made that error and was able to still close it out,"

Bishop said. "That's probably the only satisfying thing. Other than that it's a good win and there's one more which is the hardest one to win. We'll try to get some rest here and get ready for the next game."

Bishop made a couple of saves during a Blues power play in the second and stopped quality chances from Brayden Schenn and Robert Thomas in the first.

But Bishop's giveaway at 8:26 of the third put the puck right on Schwartz's stick, setting him up for a one-timer that pulled the Blues within one.

"I think I was trying to fake it maybe and just touched it a little bit," Bishop said. "Playing the puck as much as you do, you know that's going to happen. So it's not like it's one

of those things when it does happen, you're super upset because you're surprised it doesn't happen any more often. It's one of those things where I wasn't bothered by it. You just really want to close it out after it happens."

Bishop redeemed himself late in the third, stretching to get his pad on a point-blank chance for Oskar Sundqvist.

"Ben Bishop was the best player in the game tonight," Stars coach Jim Montgomery said. "I thought the Blues were a better team than we were tonight, but Ben Bishop was the difference."

Bishop's teammates never lost trust in him.

"He's been the best goalie in the league all year for a reason, and he's playing that way," Spe-

zza said. "We feel calm when he's back there. Even when a little mishap happens we have full confidence he's going to be there for us."

Jaden Schwartz scored and Jordan Binnington made 25 saves for the Blues, including stops on three breakaways in the first 4:08 of the second period to keep it a one-goal game at the time.

"We had a lot of good looks and there were rebounds there," Blues coach Craig Berube said. "They did a good job of boxing out and being hard around their net, but we definitely had our looks."

Spezza gave the Stars a 1-0 lead at 2:42 of the first, burying a one-timer from Tyler Seguin. The goal extended Spezza's points streak to three games.

Trail Blazers outlast Nuggets in 4th OT

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Rodney Hood checked back into the game, a fresh body among the weary ones all over the court.

Eager for postseason redemption after struggling in the playoffs last year, Hood got his chance Friday night.

All he had to do was wait until an NBA postseason record-tying fourth overtime.

Hood hit the key three-pointer with 18.6 seconds left and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Denver Nuggets 140-137 to take a 2-1 lead in the Western Conference semifinals.

Hood was a starter for Cleveland last season when the playoffs opened, but fell out of favor and refused to check into the final minutes of a blowout win over Toronto in the second round. He was acquired by the Blazers in a February trade.

"I didn't give up. I didn't give up on myself, just kept playing, kept working," he said. "I had no idea that I'd end up in Portland in this type of situa-

tion. But to be here, to have my family in the crowd when I saw a lot of sad faces last go-round, to be here is very emotional for me, to be quite frank.

"A lot more basketball to go, though. A lot more basketball."

The Blazers and Nuggets played a lot already.

It was just the second quadruple-overtime playoff game in NBA history, joining a 1953 game between the Boston Celtics and the Syracuse Nationals.

CJ McCollum matched his career playoff high with 41 points and Damian Lillard added 28 for Portland, which stretched its winning streak at home to 12 games dating back to the regular season.

Nikola Jokic had his third triple-double of the playoffs with 33 points, 18 rebounds and 14 assists, but missed a crucial free throw with 5.6 seconds to go. The 7-foot center played 65 minutes, two shy of the post-season record.

Jamal Murray had a playoff-high 34 points for the Nuggets.

Game 4 is Sunday.

"We fought, we fought, we fought. That's all you can ask for. Too many second-chance points, too many turnovers, that was the difference in the game," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "But that was a hell of a basketball game by two very good basketball teams."

Hood's jumper tied the game at 133 with just over a minute left in the final overtime. Will Barton missed the first of two free throws for Denver before Hood added a baseline jumper. Paul Millsap's hook shot with 27 seconds left gave the Nuggets the edge.

But Hood's 26-foot three-pointer gave Portland a 138-136 lead as time wound down. Jokic missed the first of two free throws for Denver and Seth Curry made free throws for the Blazers to close it out.

Hood finished with 19 points.

"Rodney Hood a huge impact on the game, and they went to him," Malone said.

In the first overtime, McCollum's layup tied it at 109 with 8.7 seconds left and Jokic missed an off-balance three-pointer at the buzzer.

With the game knotted at 118 in the second overtime, Jokic missed a three-pointer and a jump ball with 5.7 seconds left was grabbed by McCollum. Portland called a timeout with 4.1 seconds on the clock but Lillard missed a three-point attempt as time ran out.

Millsap's jumper with 32 seconds left gave the Nuggets a 129-125 lead in the third overtime, but Lillard's bank shot closed the gap and he added a layup that re-tied it again with 8.4 seconds left.

McCollum played 60 minutes.

The Blazers, in the conference semifinals for the first time since 2016, have won the last two games after second-seeded Denver's win in Game 1.

Aggressive Antetokounmpo leads Bucks past Celtics

Associated Press

BOSTON — Giannis Antetokounmpo kept attacking and the Boston Celtics kept fouling.

The fouls may have slowed the second half of Game 3, but nothing could stop Antetokounmpo from putting together a signature performance in TD Garden.

Antetokounmpo had 32 points and 13 rebounds, George Hill finished with 21 points and the Milwaukee Bucks beat Boston 123-116 on Friday night to take a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Khris Middleton added 20 points.

Antetokounmpo had only 13 field-goal attempts but had 16 points from the free-throw line in a game that featured 53 total fouls called — 39 in the second half. Including Milwaukee's two regular-season games in Boston, Antetokounmpo has

scored 30 or more points in each of his trips to TD Garden in 2018-19.

"I'm just gonna keep being aggressive. That's what my teammates want me to do," Antetokounmpo said. "If I have to take it all the way, I'll take it all the way."

Kyrie Irving scored 29 points and Jayson Tatum had 20 for the Celtics, who host Game 4 on Monday.

Boston led by a point at the half but was outscored 40-31 in the third quarter and trailed by as many as 17 points in the final period.

The Celtics were also outscored 52-24 in the paint and had 18 turnovers leading to 28 Milwaukee points.

Irving acknowledged the fouls did slow down the game and stunt Boston's efforts late.

"It's getting ridiculous at this point," Irving said, using an

expletive to describe the lulls the fouls created.

The Bucks threw the Celtics a tactical curveball in Game 2, inserting Nikola Mirotic into the starting lineup in place of Sterling Brown.

In Game 3 it was Celtics coach Brad Stevens who brought new wrinkles, notably going with a small lineup that featured 6-foot-7 Semi Ojeleye guarding the 6-11 Antetokounmpo when he returned to the game at the start of the second quarter and again in the third quarter.

Boston also kept going at Antetokounmpo throughout the game when it had the ball. It included a one-handed dunk by Jaylen Brown over the Bucks' star early in the third quarter that brought the Celtics fans inside TD Garden to their feet. It was reminiscent of a two-handed dunk he had over Antetokounmpo in Boston's Game 1 win.

Friday's version complemented several nice defensive plays by Brown, including blocking a Tony Snell layup attempt off the backboard.

Still, Milwaukee managed to keep racking up points in the paint. The Bucks led by as many as 12 in the third quarter and took a 95-87 lead into the fourth.

That was the score when Brown was called for his fifth foul with 10:53 left on what appeared to be a light touch of Eric Bledsoe near the baseline. It brought animated protests from both Brown and Stevens. A few trips later, Tatum received a technical for protesting his foul of Antetokounmpo.

Stevens said he didn't think his team was overly frustrated by the foul calls.

"I just think ultimately they made a lot of plays in that quarter and we didn't," he said.

Phillies rally past Nationals

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Rhys Hoskins is making pitchers think twice about pitching around Bryce Harper.

Hoskins hit a three-run homer, Jerad Eickhoff threw five crisp innings and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Washington Nationals 4-2 on Friday night.

After Kurt Suzuki went deep off Seranthony Dominguez (3-0) to give the Nats a 2-1 lead in the sixth, the Phillies rallied.

Jean Segura's infield single with one out chased Jeremy Hellickson. Lefty Dan Jennings (0-1) entered to face Harper, who drew a walk. Nationals manager Dave Martinez had a right-hander warming up in the bullpen but kept Jennings in to pitch to Hoskins. The cleanup hitter blasted a 1-1 pitch out to left to give Philadelphia a 4-2 lead.

"I was excited I was finally able to do damage against a lefty," said Hoskins, who was batting .240 (6-for-25) against lefties this season before smashing his 10th homer of the season.

It wasn't the first time Hoskins has followed a walk to Harper with a long ball.

"The guy is pretty good. I'd probably pitch around him, too," he said. "The way this lineup is constructed, it's pick your poison."

Jennings has allowed more than double the number of homers to righties than lefties (17-8) in his career in almost the same number of at-bats (699-605) they've had against him. But Martinez liked his chances because of the analytics.

"We had reverse splits against Hoskins," Martinez said.

The NL East-leading Phillies have won five of six. The Nationals have lost seven of nine to fall a season-worst five games under .500.

Eickhoff fanned seven, allowing one run and three hits. He was pulled after 87 pitches.

Sanchez lifts Yanks over Twins

Associated Press

NEW YORK — For the New York Yankees so far this season, every ounce of pleasure comes with at least a little dose of pain.

Gary Sanchez homered twice and the Yankees overcame their latest injury Friday night, beating the Minnesota Twins 6-3 after starter James Paxton exited early with soreness in his left knee.

"It's just something that's nagging at me enough that I couldn't execute pitches," Paxton said. "I'm not real worried it's going to be something long-term. I'm hoping it's something that's just a quick fix."

Already with 13 players on the injured list, the Yankees said Paxton will have an MRI on Saturday.

"Obviously, can't afford to lose him for too long," reliever Adam Ottavino said. "At this point, we're kind of used to it."

Gleyber Torres and Luke Voit each hit an RBI single for New York (18-13), which won for the 10th time in 13 games and improved to 1-5 against teams that currently have a winning record.

Minnesota (19-11) entered with baseball's best mark for the first time since September 2010 but again fell flat in the Bronx with a sloppy performance. Nelson Cruz clocked

a two-run homer in the eighth inning, but by then the Twins were well on their way to their eighth straight regular-season loss at Yankee Stadium, and 13th in 14 games since August 2015.

They are 14-51 in the Bronx since 2002 — including the playoffs.

"I don't necessarily think it's anything that's a mental block for us right now. Over the past four years they've had some pretty good teams, obviously," Minnesota starter Kyle Gibson said. "It's a home-field advantage. I don't know what they're doing here — but it doesn't sound fair."

Roundup

Hendricks, Cubs shut out Cards

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Kyle Hendricks could sense he had his command as soon as he stepped on the mound. He walked off 81 pitches later with possibly his best performance to date.

Hendricks tossed a four-hitter, Anthony Rizzo homered in his third straight game and the Chicago Cubs beat the NL Central-leading St. Louis Cardinals 4-0 on Friday.

The second-place Cubs won their season-high fifth in a row while cutting St. Louis' division lead to 1½ games. The Cardinals have back-to-back losses after five consecutive victories.

Hendricks (2-4) threw the fewest pitches for the Cubs in a shutout since Jon Lieber's 78 against Cincinnati on May 24, 2001, and the fewest for a major leaguer in a nine-inning shutout since Boston's Aaron Cook needed 81 at Seattle on June 29, 2012.

Hendricks (2-4) pitched his third career shutout and fourth complete game, his first since he blanked Miami on Aug. 1, 2016 at Wrigley Field.

Braves 7, Marlins 2: Freddie Freeman and Brian McCann each homered to help

visiting Atlanta settle its score with Miami pitcher Jose Urena (1-5).

Giants 12, Reds 11 (11): Stephen Vogt hit a tying homer in the ninth inning, Evan Longoria connected in the 11th and visiting San Francisco rallied from an eight-run deficit for a victory over Cincinnati.

Diamondbacks 10, Rockies 9: Switch-hitting Ketel Marte homered from both sides of the plate for the third time this season and visiting Arizona fended off Colorado's late rally.

Red Sox 6, White Sox 1: Chris Sale (1-5) snapped out of his early season funk to earn his first win with an impressive performance against his former team, tossing six scoreless innings of three-hit ball in visiting Boston's victory over Chicago.

Indians 2, Mariners 1: Pinch-hitter Tyler Naquin's two-out single in the ninth inning drove in the winning run and host Cleveland defeated Seattle.

Brewers 3, Mets 1: Ryan Braun hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the fifth inning off Steven Matz (3-2), Brandon Woodruff pitched five solid innings and host Milwaukee beat

New York.

Athletics 14, Pirates 1: Josh Phegley drove in a career-high eight runs to set a franchise record for most RBIs in a game by a catcher and visiting Oakland snapped a six-game losing streak.

Rays 7, Orioles 0: Tyler Glasnow (6-0) pitched seven innings of three-hit ball to earn his major league-leading sixth win, and visiting Tampa Bay got a slump-breaking homer from Mike Zunino in a rout of Baltimore.

Tigers 4, Royals 3: Matthew Boyd (3-2) struck out nine in another solid outing, and host Detroit scored three runs in the first inning.

Blue Jays 1, Rangers 0 (12): Brandon Drury led off the 12th with a single and eventually scored the game's only run on pitcher Ariel Jurado's (0-1) throwing error as visiting Toronto edged Texas.

Dodgers 4, Padres 3: Austin Barnes hit a tying home run leading off the seventh and then scored the go-ahead run on Max Muncy's single with one out in the ninth to lift NL West-leading Los Angeles over San Diego.