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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Asian ministers scrap accord on S. China Sea

BY TARA COPP

Stars and Stripes

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — South-east Asian defense ministers decided Wednesday to scrap the joint statement that traditionally ends their annual summit amid sharp divisions over China's aggressive buildup in the South China Sea and concerns that the U.S. response could escalate into conflict.

U.S. officials said China successfully pressured some of the ministers to remain silent on its moves to build up disputed reefs and islets that now have runways and fortifications capable of military use and declare the surrounding waters as its territory.

Following the meeting, U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter alluded to the behind-the-scenes strong-arming the U.S. says China placed on the ministers to strip any language about the South China Sea from the joint statement.

Without directly mentioning China, Carter said he hoped future dialogues will operate differently. "It should respect rights, not might," he said.

It was also announced that Carter will visit the USS Theodore Roosevelt on Thursday as it transits the South China Sea in what seems to be a symbolic show that the U.S. isn't going to back down.

The patrol comes about a week after the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Lassen made a "freedom-of-navigation cruise" last week

within China's declared 12-mile territorial zone around Subi Reef in the Spratly Islands. Washington has vowed to continue to exercise that right for the foreseeable future, despite China's warning that it has a limit to what it will tolerate. Close U.S. ally Australia has said it may make similar cruises.

The Association of South East Asian Nations works under a policy of consensus in writing the final declaration, which often leads to a watered-down document, so scrapping it entirely reflects how split the 10-nation group is over China's actions.

Analysts are also divided — wondering whether pragmatism will lead China and the U.S. to find a way to back off or if the standoff could end up in a military clash.

Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein told a news conference that the disagreement between the U.S. and China is a real concern for the group, for while it may be a diplomatic fight between the two powers, the smaller ASEAN nations face the potential consequences.

An estimated 30 percent of global trade transits the South China Sea, and several ASEAN members, including the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam, have territorial claims that conflict with China's.

"Our considerations are real. Not thoughts on paper," Hishammuddin said. "What is signed in the joint declaration is not going to resolve the issue of duplicating claims nor is it going to wish the vessels that are in the South China Sea away. Unin-

tended accidents can spiral into something worse."

He said ASEAN was setting up a hotline as a conduit to defuse a potential crisis.

The U.S. and China do not belong to ASEAN but are invited to participate, given their influence in the region, and their dispute hijacked the meeting's agenda.

"To be clear, this was an ASEAN decision, but in our view, no statement is better than one that avoids the important issue of China's reclamation and militarization in the South China Sea," a senior U.S. defense official said.

"The Chinese lobbied to keep any reference to the South China Sea out of the final joint declaration. Understandably, a number of ASEAN countries felt that was inappropriate."

The U.S. had clearly hoped that ASEAN would provide some pronouncement that could be seen as even a weak endorsement of the Lassen's cruise, which has raised the stakes in the region.

China wasn't happy with the outcome, with the Xinhua news agency saying Beijing regretted there would be no joint declaration because it had reached a consensus with Malaysia and other ASEAN countries on the contents.

In a clear reference to the U.S., Xinhua said "some individual countries outside the region ignored the existing consensus and attempted to forcefully add into the declaration contents not discussed during the meeting."

Congress reaches deal to cut \$5B from defense budget

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—The House and Senate on Tuesday finalized a plan to squeeze \$5 billion from defense spending as part of a broader budget deal that heads off possible pay freezes and furloughs.

The savings comes from lower-than-expected military fuel costs, a delay in the Pentagon's new long-range strategic bomber contract, cuts in staff and contractors, and smaller

increases to Army and Air National Guard operations and maintenance spending, according to the House and Senate armed services committees.

The \$5 billion in reductions will be rolled into an amended \$607 billion National Defense Authorization Act for 2016, which the House plans to vote on this week. President Barack Obama vetoed an earlier version of the annual policy bill last month in a fight with Republicans over federal spending that had threatened

military pay and benefits.

The lion's share of the cost savings, about \$1 billion, will come from falling oil prices. Energy and fuel is a top expense for the Defense Department.

Lawmakers also plan to save \$230 million by a later start to the procurement contract for the long-range bomber. Last week, the DOD announced Northrop Grumman will receive the initial \$35.3 billion contract for the first 21 of the classified aircraft, which is expected to begin flying in the 2020s.

The spending fight in Washington pushed past the start of the new budget year at the end of September, and the bomber savings is expected to come from money that would not be spent because of the lost time.

The Army will get \$250 million less and the Air National Guard will receive \$192.6 million less in operations and maintenance money — a key area of spending that keeps them combat-ready — than what was proposed in the earlier version of the NDAA.

US-backed Syrian forces gain ground

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A newly formed group of U.S.-backed Syrian rebels has driven Islamic State militants out of an expansive region in northeast Syria, a U.S. spokesman in Baghdad said Wednesday.

The Syrian Arab Coalition led an offensive that pushed “several hundred” Islamic State fighters out of the Syrian town of Al-Hawl near the Iraq border, reclaiming about 255 square kilometers of ground from the militants, said Army Col. Steve Warren, a spokesman for the U.S.-led Operation Inherent Resolve.

“The Syrian Arab Coalition really fought with valor,” Warren told reporters Wednesday during a video conference at the Pentagon. “They really showed us something here, and we’re pleased by that.”

The offensive, planned and executed by U.S.-vetted leaders of the Syrian Arab Coalition, was part of the efforts that the White House announced Friday to ramp up anti-Islamic State missions in Syria, Warren said. He added that the success of the operation to capture Al-Hawl validated, in part, the U.S. commitment to arm the Syrian Arab Coalition as an alternative to its now mostly shuttered train-and-equip mission, which ultimately produced only a few dozen fighters.

DOD suspends JLENS exercise

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has suspended indefinitely an “operational exercise” of the troubled missile defense system called JLENS, whose giant, radar-carrying blimps were intended to help safeguard the skies over Washington.

Any decision over whether to resume the exercise will wait until after the Army’s Combat Readiness Center completes an investigation into how one of the pilotless blimps broke away from its mooring station last week at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., military officials said Tuesday.

“It’s going to be a complete

and thorough investigation, and it takes time,” said Army spokesman Dov Schwartz.

Army Maj. Beth R. Smith, speaking on behalf of the North American Air Defense Command, said, “Future actions regarding the JLENS exercise will be made following the conclusion of the investigation.”

The operational exercise — featuring two JLENS blimps, floating up to 10,000 feet high and scanning for cruise missiles or other low-flying enemy threats — was to begin as of January 2015. But problems, notably with computer software for the system, delayed the launch of a required second blimp until mid-August.

The breaking away of the JLENS blimp Oct. 28 became fodder for national media coverage, provoking fresh questions about the worth of the program, which has cost taxpayers more than \$2.7 billion. The blimp rode the winds for about four hours over Maryland and Pennsylvania, dragging a 6,700-foot-long cable behind it. The cable clipped power lines, leaving thousands of people without electricity and disrupting civil aviation. Two F-16 fighter jets were scrambled to track the blimp before it came to rest on the outskirts of Moreland Township, Pa., more than 120 miles from its base.

Bicyclist killed in Colo. was Iraq War vet

Associated Press

DENVER — A bicyclist who begged for his life as a gunman killed him during a rampage on the streets of Colorado Springs was an Army veteran who survived three deployments in Iraq, his former wife said.

Tina Myers on Tuesday recalled her former husband, Andrew Alan Myers, 35, as a decorated military veteran and a caring father to their two young sons.

He was the first of three victims. A gunman shot him in broad daylight Saturday and then calmly walked less than a mile to a sober living home

where he killed two women on the porch. The shooter, Noah Harpham, 33, died in a gun-battle with police.

Tina Myers said police told her that the shooting was apparently random and that neither Andrew Myers nor the other two victims knew their killer.

Neighbors watched in horror as the shooter gunned down Myers while he cycled down the quiet street. They said he pleaded with Harpham not to shoot.

“He spent three tours of duty in Iraq and came out of that all right, and then came home only to be shot by someone he

didn’t even know,” said Myers’ paternal grandfather, Samuel Myers.

Myers grew up in Thompson, Ohio. He enlisted in the Army in 2003 and served for 10 years. He rose to the rank of sergeant and was awarded two Army Commendation medals and three Good Conduct medals. In addition to three deployments to Iraq, he was stationed in Germany.

At the time of his administrative discharge in June 2013, he was stationed at Fort Carson outside Colorado Springs, assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team in the 4th Infantry Division.

Senators chastise DOD’s ‘paid patriotism’ at sporting events

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department’s use of “paid patriotism” at sporting events went far beyond a few NFL franchises, according to an investigative report released Wednesday by two senators.

In the past three years, the

department doled out money to dozens of professional sports teams to buy events and access aimed at honoring the military, Arizona Republicans John McCain and Jeff Flake found after examining defense contracts.

In all, 18 NFL teams, 10 MLB teams, eight NBA teams, six NHL teams and eight Major League Soccer teams were in-

involved, the senators said.

The military marketing contracts with the teams, worth a total of \$6.8 million, paid for troop tributes, military field ceremonies, player appearances and VIP passes. The lawmakers said the practice has been an embarrassment to the DOD, which relies on marketing to increase recruitments,

and misled viewers to believe franchise owners and teams were bankrolling tributes out of patriotism.

The DOD and sports teams have said they will stop the practice, and the NFL is conducting an audit to ensure no more payments are accepted for events and access to honor troops.

First playoff rankings released

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Clemson, LSU, Ohio State and Alabama are the top four teams in the first College Football Playoff selection committee rankings of the season. Notre Dame was fifth and Baylor was sixth on Tuesday night. Clemson, LSU and Ohio State are among 11 unbeaten teams in FBS, nearly quadruple the number there was last season when the committee started ranking teams. Alabama and Notre Dame each have one loss. Memphis was the highest ranked team from a Group of Five conference at No. 13. Last year the top four teams in the first playoff rankings were Mississippi State, Florida State, Auburn and Mississippi. Only the Seminoles reached the playoff. Ohio State, the eventual national champion, was 16th in the first rankings. Takeaways from the first playoff rankings: **Lovin' 'Bama.** The committee really warmed up to the Crimson Tide. Alabama lost to Mississippi in September and then Florida pounded Ole Miss in Gainesville. But the Tide landed in playoff position, while Florida was 10th and Ole Miss was 18th. "Alabama from our point of view had a stronger schedule in the games they have won," said selection committee chairman Jeff Long, the athletic director at Arkansas. "They have three wins against teams with better than .500 records. They're close even though they may be separated by a number of ranking spots." If you think Alabama is positioned to simply win out and get in the playoff, think again.

College Football Playoff rankings

Nov. 3, 2015

Team	Record
1. Clemson.....	8-0
2. LSU.....	7-0
3. Ohio St.....	8-0
4. Alabama.....	7-1
5. Notre Dame.....	7-1
6. Baylor.....	7-0
7. Michigan St.....	8-0
8. TCU.....	8-0
9. Iowa.....	8-0
10. Florida.....	7-1
11. Stanford.....	7-1
12. Utah.....	7-1
13. Memphis.....	8-0
14. Oklahoma St.....	8-0
15. Oklahoma.....	7-1
16. Florida St.....	7-1
17. Michigan.....	6-2
18. Mississippi.....	7-2
19. Texas A&M.....	6-2
20. Mississippi St.....	6-2
21. Northwestern.....	6-2
22. Temple.....	7-1
23. UCLA.....	6-2
24. Toledo.....	7-1
25. Houston.....	8-0

The College Football Playoff Selection Committee will issue weekly rankings each Tuesday, with the final rankings being announced Sunday, Dec. 6. The playoff semifinals will match the No. 1 seed vs. the No. 4 seed, and No. 2 will face No. 3. The semifinals will be hosted at the Orange Bowl and Cotton Bowl on Dec. 31, 2015. The championship game will be on Jan. 11, 2016 at Glendale, Ariz.

Ole Miss is still in control of the SEC West race, so Alabama will need the Rebels to lose just to reach the SEC championship game. At 11-1 with no conference championship, Alabama is likely to get jumped by teams that do win conference titles, including whichever team wins the SEC. The committee is told to emphasize conference championships, especially when teams have similar résumés. Remember the committee showed last year it does not lock teams into positions. Florida State dropped while not losing and TCU was third going into the last weekend of the season and finished sixth, despite blowing out Iowa State. **Waiting on the big 12.** The Big 12 has four teams (Baylor, No. 8 TCU, No. 14 Oklahoma State and No. 15 Oklahoma) in the top 15 and they all play each other in November. Long said it was difficult to judge the strength of those teams because their big games are still to come. The good news for the Power Five conference that got left out of last season's final four is all of those teams are in good shape to get in the playoff if they win out. The bad news is one loss by the Big 12 champion might keep it out of the playoff. Baylor, again, played a terribly weak nonconference schedule, and Oklahoma State did the same. TCU's best nonconference opponent was Minnesota, which is struggling. If you're looking for this season's Ohio State, which went from 16th in the first poll to making the playoff, Oklahoma is a good pick. If the Sooners can sweep TCU, Baylor and Oklahoma State down the stretch, they would have a strong late statement.

Manziel gets nod vs. Cincy

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Johnny Manziel's getting another shot at the Bengals. With Josh McCown nursing injured ribs, the Browns will start Manziel at quarterback Thursday night when they visit the Cincinnati Bengals. Manziel made his first NFL start last season against Cincinnati, losing 30-0 while being chased, roughed up and taunted by the Bengals. Now, he's facing one of the league's four remaining unbeaten teams on short notice. McCown was unable to practice on Tuesday night because of his ribs and Browns coach Mike Pettine announced the decision to start Manziel on Wednesday before the team left for Cincinnati. "On the short week we realized that Josh just wasn't going to be able to get to the point where he could go," Pettine said. "Johnny has worked hard to prepare himself. He is excited about his opportunity and we are all looking forward to the challenge we face in a good Bengals football team." McCown played through severe pain in the second half of Sunday's loss to Arizona. The 36-year-old said Tuesday he was having difficulty breathing and sleeping because of his ribs. If he's not able to play at all, the Browns will have third-string QB Austin Davis active against the Bengals. This will be the second start this season for Manziel, who won against Tennessee in Week 2 when McCown was sidelined with a concussion. Manziel replaced McCown late in the second half the past two weeks. The 2012 Heisman Trophy winner, who is also being investigated by the NFL for a recent domestic dispute, will be able to show a prime-time TV audience his improvement since his rookie season. The Browns have been pleased with Manziel's dedication and progress following a rough first year, which was followed by a lengthy stay in a rehab facility. Manziel won his only start this season, completing 8 of 15 passes for 172 yards and two touchdowns in a 28-14 win over the Titans. Manziel, though, fumbled twice on plays where he was under pressure. His starting debut against the Bengals last season couldn't have gone worse. He passed for just 80 yards, threw two interceptions and endured some taunts from Bengals defenders. Pettine said Manziel has come a long way since that performance. "He's a different player," Pettine said. "I just think we've all seen it from going back to the amount of work in the spring to training camp. "When the rush became live, I think that's where you saw that he made his biggest improvement with his demeanor in the pocket. That it wasn't as frenetic, that his feet were calm. "I just think he has a really good understanding of what we're doing."

Northern Illinois knocks off No. 20 Toledo

Associated Press

TOLEDO, Ohio — In one moment, Ryan Graham watched his best friend Drew Hare hobble off the field — likely for the last time this season — and found himself thrust into a starring role in a nationally televised game. Everything turned out just fine. The freshman quarterback led Northern Illinois on two fourth-quarter scoring drives, and the Huskies rallied to beat No. 20 Toledo 32-27 on Tuesday night. "I hate to see Drew go out like that, he's my best friend and we do everything together," Graham said. "I gave him a hug and he said 'You can do this. You got this.' And it really helped me get through it. I was doing it for him. I was doing it for his team and I was excited to do it." Joel Bouagnon's 2-yard touchdown with 1:59 remaining lifted the Huskies (6-3, 4-1 Mid-American Conference) to their sixth consecutive victory against the Rockets (7-1, 4-1). Bouagnon rushed for 87 yards on 26 carries. Graham entered midway through the second quarter after Hare suffered a leg injury. Coach Rod Carey said the ju-

nior likely will miss the remainder of the season. In his place, Graham was 9-for-12 for 132 yards and ran for 41 more yards. "When we put [Graham] out there in the first half, we weren't going to let him do a whole lot. We were just going to kind of get his blood flowing," Carey said. "We got him in at halftime, went through everything with him and then just let him go. He had great poise tonight." The Huskies closed to 27-25 when Graham found Kenny Golladay for a diving, one-handed, 7-yard touchdown reception with 9:27 left. Northern Illinois caught a big break on that scoring drive when Toledo's DeJuan Rogers was called for a personal foul on a field-goal attempt. "We were undisciplined tonight. That's the best way to put it," Toledo coach Matt Campbell said. "We had multiple opportunities to put them away and other times when we had a chance to execute better when we should have. When you don't do that against a good team, that's what gets you beat." The Tuesday night meeting was part of the MAC's 12th season of switching key games to mid-week dates in exchange

for major national television coverage. Both teams dressed for the occasion, with Toledo wearing gold jerseys over gold pants for the first time and Northern Illinois donning new all-white road uniforms. Northern Illinois is looking to represent the West Division in the Mid-American Championship game for the sixth consecutive season. For Toledo, its outside chance at a New Year's Day bowl game was dashed. The Rockets were ranked 24th in the first College Football Playoff rankings of the season released right before kickoff. Toledo's Kareem Hunt rushed for 140 yards and two touchdowns. His 1-yard score with 4:23 left in the third quarter gave the Rockets a 24-16 lead. But the Huskies rallied while playing without two players who provided much of their early offensive spark. One possession before Hare departed, wide receiver Tommylee Lewis was helped off the field and did not return. Hare and Lewis connected five times for 125 yards in the first quarter, including a 67-yard touchdown and a 50-yard completion that set up the first of four Christian Hagan field goals.



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Raptors off to best start

Associated Press

DALLAS — Kyle Lowry wasn't sure what kind of start Toronto would have with plenty of new faces.

How about the best one in franchise history?

Lowry scored 27 points, and the Raptors spoiled the home opener in Dallas, beating the Mavericks 102-91 on Tuesday night and opening the season 4-0 for the first time.

"I think it was the start that we needed," said Lowry, a former Dallas rival in Houston and now in his fourth season with Toronto. "Either we could have a real good start, or a tough start with pretty much 10 new guys. But I think we've done a good job of just staying focused with our principles."

The Raptors took the lead for good on a 12-0 run that started in the middle of the fourth quarter. Jonas Valanciunas had six of his 16 points during the decisive stretch.

The Mavericks went almost 4 minutes without a basket after Dirk Nowitzki hit a three-pointer for an 86-82 lead. Nowitzki finished with 18 points.

DeMar DeRozan scored 20 points, and Luis Scola had 19 points and 12 rebounds for the Raptors, who opened with three straight wins twice in their first 20 seasons.

Lowry had a game-high 10 assists, and Toronto held Dallas to 6-for-22 shooting in the fourth quarter and 38 percent for the game. It's the second time the Raptors have held their opponent under 40 percent.

"They made it more their type of game, physical, grinding and a lot of physical contact," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said. "They turned it into a boxing match, and we needed it to be a basketball game."

Dallas forward Dwight Powell, a Toronto native, had his first career double-double with 10 points, all in the first half, and 10 rebounds.

Valanciunas started the decisive run with a layup on an assist from Lowry and finished it with a tip-in and a pair of free throws after he was fouled getting a de-

fensive rebound.

"We are off to a great start, but we have to remember this is a marathon, not a sprint," Toronto coach Dwane Casey said.

Hawks 98, Heat 92: Jeff Teague had 26 points and nine assists, leading Atlanta to a road win.

Al Horford scored 17 points and Paul Millsap had 12 points and 10 rebounds for Atlanta, which has won four straight following a season-opening loss.

Hassan Whiteside finished with 23 points and 14 rebounds for Miami, doing so on 11-for-12 shooting. According to STATS, Whiteside was the third Heat center to shoot at least 11-for-12 and block four shots in a game, joining Alonzo Mourning and Shaquille O'Neal.

Dwyane Wade scored 21 points despite spending a long stretch of the second half back in the Heat locker room after feeling a migraine start coming on. He took some medicine and returned in the fourth quarter.

Nuggets 120, Lakers 109: Kenneth Faried had 28 points and 15 rebounds, and Danilo Gallinari got 14 of his 21 points in the second half of visiting Denver's victory over winless Los Angeles.

J.J. Hickson scored 17 points in the Nuggets' fifth consecutive win over the Lakers at Staples Center since November 2012.

Jordan Clarkson matched his career high with 30 points, and Lou Williams added 14 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter for the Lakers, who started 0-4 for the second straight year.

Kobe Bryant had 11 points on 4-for-11 shooting, doing little to end his slump.

Grizzlies 103, Kings 89: Zach Randolph had 20 points and 11 rebounds as visiting Memphis bounced back from an embarrassing loss.

The Grizzlies were eager to rebound after a franchise-worst, 50-point loss Monday to the defending NBA champion Golden State Warriors.

Mike Conley had 14 points and six assists for Memphis, and Courtney Lee also scored 14. Marc Gasol developed a neck

spasm and didn't play in the second half.

Hornets 130, Bulls 105: Jeremy Lamb scored 20 points on 9-for-10 shooting and Nicolas Batum added 18 as host Charlotte cruised to its first victory of the season.

Jeremy Lin added 15 points, and Al Jefferson had 14. The hot-shooting Hornets shot 14 of 22 from beyond the arc and made 22 of 23 free throws.

Charlotte (1-3) led by as many as 27 in the second quarter after starting the game by hitting 13 of 18 shots from the field and all 11 foul shots in the first quarter. The Bulls never mounted a serious challenge.

Jimmy Butler led the Bulls (3-2) with a season-high 26 points on 10-of-16 shooting, while Doug McDermott added 17 points.

Magic 103, Pelicans 94: Evan Fournier capped a career-high, 30-point performance with a pair of three-pointers in the final 1:13 as visiting Orlando won for the first time this season.

Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and 13 rebounds, and Victor Oladipo added 12 points for the Magic, who, like the Pelicans, entered the contest at 0-3.

Eric Gordon had 21 points for New Orleans, which trimmed an 18-point, first-half deficit to 95-90 with 2:46 to go. Then Fournier helped Orlando put it away.

Anthony Davis, Jrue Holiday and Ryan Anderson each scored 14 for the injury-plagued Pelicans, who have yielded more than 100 points in all four losses under new coach Alvin Gentry.

Pacers 94, Pistons 82: Rodney Stuckey scored 23 points against his former team, and Paul George added 16 points and nine rebounds as Indiana beat host Detroit for its first victory.

Andre Drummond had 25 points and a career-high 29 rebounds, becoming the first Piston with back-to-back 20/20 games since at least 1985, according to STATS. Reggie Jackson added 20 points.

Kenseth appeals 2-race suspension

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Matt Kenseth and Joe Gibbs Racing will have their appeal of NASCAR's two-race suspension heard on Thursday.

NASCAR said the National Motorsports Appeals Panel scheduled the appeal for Thursday morning at the NASCAR R&D Center in Concord, N.C.

Kenseth was suspended for intentionally wrecking Joey Logano in Sunday's race at Martinsville. He was retaliating after being wrecked by Logano a few weeks ago at Kansas.

The penalty levied against Kenseth is fairly unprecedented. Drivers have been suspended before for on-track actions, but typically only for one race and the policy has not been uniform.

NASCAR said it punished Kenseth because he had no chance at winning and intentionally altered the outcome of Sunday's race. NASCAR also said it factored aspects of safety in penalizing Kenseth as well as "the fact that the new Chase elimination format puts a premium on each and every race. These actions have no place in NASCAR."

In addition, Danica Patrick was fined \$50,000 and docked 25 points for intentionally wrecking David Gilliland earlier in the race.

Kenseth was nine laps down at Martinsville Speedway when he deliberately drove Logano into the wall. The crash was payback for Logano wrecking Kenseth three races ago in an incident that ultimately led to Kenseth's elimination from NASCAR's playoffs.

Kenseth fumed about the Kansas Speedway incident for two weeks and exacted his revenge as Logano was dominating at Martinsville. A victory would have earned Logano a spot in the Nov. 22 title-deciding finale, but he is now last in the eight-driver field with two races remaining as he tries to advance.

Rangers top Capitals in playoff rematch

Associated Press

NEW YORK — If this was a statement game against the Washington Capitals, the New York Rangers showed that being opportunistic and having Henrik Lundqvist in goal is good enough to win.

Lundqvist made 32 saves, Kevin Hayes snapped a tie late in the first period, and the Rangers capitalized on every Washington mistake to beat the Capitals 5-2 on Tuesday night in their first game since New York defeated Washington in seven games in the Eastern Conference semifinals last spring.

"It's good to know we can win without playing our best," Lundqvist said after the Rangers extended their points streak to seven games (5-0-2). "We're still, I think, improving as a team, which is great. I talked about it last week: It's more important now to win games than to play perfect."

This was certainly not a perfect game for the Rangers. They were outshot 34-21, including 14-2 in the second period. However, both New York shots found the

net.

Hayes, rookie Oscar Lindberg and Kevin Klein also each had a goal and an assist for the Rangers, who have won five straight at home. Jarret Stoll closed out the scoring with his first for New York.

Alexander Ovechkin and Marcus Johansson scored for the Capitals, who lost for the first time in five road games.

Unlike the tight-checking playoffs, this game was wide open and New York made the most of its chances, scoring on four of its first 11 shots.

Washington didn't help goalie Braden Holtby, turning the puck over on three of the first four goals. Holtby finished with 16 saves.

Oilers 4, Flyers 2: Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored two goals and Taylor Hall had a goal and two assists as host Edmonton beat Philadelphia after top draft pick Connor McDavid was injured.

With the Flyers leading 2-1 and 1:44 remaining in the second period, McDavid had a partial, short-handed breakaway but fell awkwardly and was ridden hard into the boards by Philadelphia defen-

semen Michael Del Zotto and Brandon Manning, who also lost their balance on the play.

Coach Todd McLellan described the upper-body injury as "long term."

Stars 5, Bruins 3: Tyler Seguin scored three goals against his former team as Dallas beat host Boston.

Jyrki Jokipakka got his first NHL goal and Alex Goligoski had his first of the season for the Stars, who ended the Bruins' four-game winning streak despite being outshot 39-19.

Red Wings 2, Lightning 1: Detroit rookie Dylan Larkin scored to break a third-period tie against visiting Tampa Bay.

The 19-year-old Larkin skated up the right boards and passed the puck to line-mate Justin Abdelkader, who quickly returned it to Larkin. He knocked it under the arm of goalie Ben Bishop at 5:54.

Kings 3, Blues 0: Jhonas Enroth posted his sixth career shutout as Los Angeles defeated host St. Louis.

Jeff Carter, Tanner Pearson and Trevor Lewis scored for the Kings, who won for

the eighth time in nine games.

Blue Jackets 5, Sharks 2: Boone Jenner and Ryan Murray scored 29 seconds apart late in the second period as visiting Columbus beat San Jose.

Islanders 2, Devils 1: Casey Cizikas scored the tiebreaking goal with 2:12 left in the third period to lift New York over visiting New Jersey.

Brock Nelson also scored and Jaroslav Halak stopped 23 shots for the Islanders.

Senators 2, Canadiens 1 (OT): Kyle Turris scored 34 seconds into overtime to lift Ottawa over host Montreal.

Turris finished a 2-on-1 with Mike Hoffman after a turnover in the Montreal end. It was the Canadiens' first experience with the new 3-on-3 overtime format.

Avalanche 6, Flames 3: Nathan MacKinnon and Matt Duchene scored 1:28 apart late in the third period of Colorado's victory over visiting Calgary.

Semyon Varlamov made 22 saves for the Avalanche, who finished with 42 shots.