

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## White House halts Syrian rebel training

US to instead focus on supplying weapons, equipment to groups already fighting Islamic State

BY HEATH DRUZIN AND TARA COPP  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The United States is suspending a faltering program to train Syrian rebels, instead focusing on sending weapons and equipment to fighters battling Islamic State forces in the country.

“Given the complexities of the situation, we’re going to take an operational pause,” Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Christine Wormuth told reporters Friday.

The change reflects the failure of the current approach, which has produced only a handful of combat-ready moderate rebels and has drawn widespread criticism in Congress.

More so, officials said the change only applied to the Pentagon’s program and did not comment Friday on the status of a separate CIA training program. The CIA’s program began in 2013 to arm, fund and train a moderate opposition to Syrian President Bashar Assad. U.S. officials say the effort is having more success with its goals than the one run by the military, which only trained militants willing to promise to take on the Islamic State group exclusively.

Changes to the DOD’s program come

as rebels in Syria face mounting pressure from stepped-up Russian airstrikes aimed to buoy the Assad regime in the country’s almost five-year civil war.

The revised effort to assist rebel forces will move away from identifying and providing basic training to thousands of infantry fighters. Instead, U.S. forces will focus on sending weapons, communications equipment and ammunition to identified leaders of vetted Syrian groups, according to two senior defense officials who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

White House officials would not specify what types of weapons would be included in the program.

“I remain convinced that a lasting defeat of the (Islamic State) in Syria will depend in part on the success of local, motivated, and capable ground forces,” Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said in a statement.

The new approach to equip Syrian rebels will begin in the next few days, relying more on strategies used with Kurdish forces in the northern part of the country, said Carter, who was in London to meet with British Defense Minister Michael Fallon.

“The work we’ve done with the Kurds in northern Syria is an example of an effective approach — we have a group that is capable and motivated on the ground,” he said.

Carter is now directing the Department of Defense to provide equipment packages and weapons to a selected groups to make a push into territory controlled by Islamic State forces, Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a prepared statement.

“We will monitor the progress these groups make and provide them with air support as they take the fight to [the Islamic State],” he said.

White House officials said Friday that support will not include a no-fly zone that some lawmakers have suggested.

The abandoned training program in Syria was part of a \$500-million initiative requested by the White House in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act to train 5,400 Syrian rebel forces for three years. The program was aimed at growing an indigenous force to fight against the Islamic State and complement the more than year-long air campaign by U.S. and coalition forces.

## Navy may send warships near China’s disputed islands

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — For the first time in more than three years, the United States could soon sail a warship within 12 miles of the man-made islands that China claims in the South China Sea, a U.S. defense official said Thursday.

The official, who was not authorized to discuss the issue and spoke on condition of anonymity, said the decision to conduct a “freedom-of-navigation operation” into the water surrounding the disputed Spratly Islands has not been made and would require White House approval. Accord-

ing to international maritime law, a nation can claim water extending 12 nautical miles from its coasts as sovereign territory.

Sailing a U.S. Navy ship into those waters would signal that the U.S. does not recognize China’s claims of the islands and considers the area international waters.

“U.S. forces are present and active in and around the South China Sea and East China Sea on a daily basis,” said Navy Cmdr. Bill Urban, a Department of Defense spokesman. “In addition, we have one of the most robust — if not the most robust — freedom-of-navigation programs in the world. Beyond

that, I can’t comment on current or future operations.”

The U.S. 7th Fleet has seven combat ships — four destroyers, a dock landing ship, a littoral ship and a minesweeper — deployed in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, Navy spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins said.

One destroyer is conducting “presence operations” in the South China Sea, designed to reinforce the U.S. ship’s right to be there, Hawkins said.

“We have been clear that our forces will fly, sail and operate in the Asia-Pacific region wherever international law allows, just as we do elsewhere,” he said. “The South China Sea is

international waterspace where the U.S. Navy ships and aircraft operate routinely, and they will continue to do so. Our presence in the region has been pivotal in helping maintain peace and stability for decades.”

China claims most of the South China Sea, in which about \$5 trillion of shipborne trade passes each year, as its territory, including the Spratly Islands.

The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also claim territory in the disputed region.

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## Carter confirms Russian missiles crashed in Iran

Associated Press

LONDON — The U.S. has indications that four Russian cruise missiles crashed in Iran rather than Syria, suggesting there were malfunctions, Defense Secretary Ash Carter confirmed Friday.

Carter spoke at a news conference in London with British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon. It was the first public comment by a U.S. official on the cruise missile failures. The British are part of the coalition striking Islamic State fighters in Iraq but are not doing strikes in Syria.

Russia fired a total of 26 of the long-range missiles at Syr-

ian targets. The officials said it's unclear whether the errant missiles, launched from Russian ships in the Caspian Sea, caused any significant damage in Iran. Both the Russian government and state-run Iranian media accused the United States of inaccurate or deliberately deceptive statements.

The cruise missile attack in Syria was part of an expanding Russian military campaign that began with airstrikes on Sept. 30. U.S. and NATO leaders condemned the attacks as an effort to prop up the Syrian government of Bashar Assad, rather than to target Islamic State fighters.

## Airman Stone expected to make a full recovery

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Spencer Stone, the U.S. airman who helped thwart a gunman's attack on a Paris-bound train, is expected to make a full recovery from injuries suffered Thursday in a fight outside a Sacramento, Calif., bar, an Air Force spokesman said Friday.

Stone, 23, an airman first class stationed at Travis Air Force Base near Sacramento, likely will spend several days in the UC David Medical Center after undergoing surgery for three stab wounds to his torso, according to a statement from the hospital. He was recovering Friday in the hospital's intensive care unit.

In August, Stone and two of his childhood friends — Army Spc. Alek Skarlatos and college student Anthony Sadler — were vacationing in Europe when they took down a gunman and stopped a terrorist attack on a French train. Stone suffered a cut thumb and other injuries in the melee.

On Thursday, Stone was

stabbed multiple times in the upper body during a fight about 12:45 a.m. near 21st and K streets, an area popular for its bars and nightclubs, said Ken Bernard, deputy chief for the Sacramento Police Department.

Bernard said the incident was not related to terrorism and that Stone was not targeted for his role in subduing a heavily armed gunman with ties to radical Islam aboard the train.

Grainy surveillance video of Thursday's fight posted to YouTube appears to show Stone fighting off a handful of attackers on an intersection sidewalk. The video shows a man in a white shirt, identified as Stone, land several punches against his attackers before they encircle him and swing their arms. Though the video does not clearly show any weapons, a large, dark stain suddenly appears on Stone's shirt during the fight.

Despite his wounds, Stone remains standing and throws punches until the other men run away.

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## Afghans struggle to secure Kunduz

By JOSH SMITH  
Stars and Stripes

KUNDUZ, Afghanistan — More than 10 days after Taliban fighters routed government forces from Kunduz, soldiers and police are struggling to secure roads and to clear insurgents from this provincial capital, the first major city to fall to the insurgents since the U.S. entered Afghanistan in 2001.

Government troops, backed by U.S. advisers and air power, have retaken most of the center of the city of 300,000 people, officials said. It is clear, however, that claims by President Ashraf Ghani and other Afghan officials that the city had been secured were overly optimistic. Taliban gunmen still operate in outlying neighborhoods, sometimes making small raids deeper into the city.

On Friday, sporadic small-arms fire and explosions echoed through the outer neighborhoods as police and soldiers pushed painstakingly through the leafy suburbs. Troops called in rocket strikes from Afghan Air Force Mi-17 helicopters outfitted as gunships.

"The Taliban are mostly in the outskirts, not in the city," said Brig. Gen. Ahmad Habibi, commander of the army's 2nd Brigade, 209th Corps, as he directed a small clearing operation south of the city center. "They operate in small groups that attack and then run away."

Their goal now is not to take the city, but to make people afraid."

Even if the government ultimately prevails throughout the city and its environs, the political and military damage to the Afghan government by last month's rout in Kunduz has been enormous, shaking public confidence.

Ominously, the attack on Kunduz was part of a broader Taliban offensive in the north, far from its traditional southern base. Insurgents are now threatening Maymana, capital of Faryab province to the west.

In the wake of the Taliban offensive, the top U.S. and NATO commander, Gen. John Campbell, has acknowledged to Congress that the Afghan forces cannot secure the country and that the U.S. should suspend plans to remove most of the 9,800 American troops still in Afghanistan by the end of next year.

Furthermore, last week's U.S. airstrike on a Doctors Without Borders hospital, which killed 22 staff and patients, has strained relations with the international aid community.

Afghans are continuing to carry out airstrikes in Kunduz, but American forces have not conducted any here since the hospital attack. Outgoing artillery fire from government positions continued regularly Friday night.

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## Tunisia coalition wins Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, Norway — A Tunisian coalition of workers, employers, human rights activists and lawyers won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for pulling the country that sparked the Arab Spring back onto a path toward democracy and preventing it from descending into civil war.

The Norwegian Nobel Com-

mittee cited the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet "for its decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy" in the North African country following its 2011 revolution.

"It established an alternative, peaceful political process at a time when the country was on the brink of civil war," the committee said in its citation.

From The Associated Press



# Rangers win ALDS opener

Associated Press

TORONTO — A big day by the bottom of Texas' batting order helped the Rangers overcome an injury to slugger Adrian Beltre in the start of their postseason run.

Robinson Chirinos hit a two-run homer against David Price, Rougned Odor added a solo shot and the Rangers beat the Blue Jays 5-3 Thursday in their AL Division Series opener as postseason baseball returned to Toronto for the first time in 22 years.

"It means a lot to the team to come to Toronto and win that first game against a great pitcher," Chirinos said.

Both starting third basemen left with injuries: Beltre came in the third with a strained muscle in his lower back and Toronto's Josh Donaldson in the fifth after he was kneed in the head while sliding in an attempt to

break up a double play. Rangers manager Jeff Banister said he wasn't sure whether Beltre would be available for Game 2 on Friday. In an effort to remain in the series, Beltre had a cortisone shot.

"Obviously we want Adrian in there," Banister said. "He's the heart and soul of this ballclub."

After going for tests at a hospital, Beltre returned to the clubhouse about an hour after the game and walked gingerly. An MRI confirmed Beltre had a strained back but no structural damage, general manager Jon Daniels said.

"We haven't ruled him out of (Friday's) game," Daniels said.

Texas will have Joey Gallo and Ed Lucas travel from its Arizona Fall League team in case Beltre needs to be removed from the roster, a decision that also would rule Beltre out of the AL Championship Series.

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons said Donaldson felt light-headed while playing defense in the top of the fifth, forcing the AL MVP candidate to come out of the game.

"They check for concussions, and apparently he passed all the tests. So that's good news," Gibbons said.

Yovani Gallardo (1-0) allowed two runs and four hits in five innings.

"That's what we really needed from him," Banister said. "I think he did a great job."

Gallardo is 4-0 with a 1.78 ERA in four career starts against Toronto.

"We got in some good hitter's counts and he wouldn't give in," Blue Jays catcher Russell Martin said. "He didn't make those mistakes that we capitalize on."

Keone Kela, Jake Diekman and Sam Dyson finished, with Dyson getting a save.

Pitching on 11 days' rest, Price (0-1) allowed five runs and five hits in seven innings. He dropped to 1-6 with a 4.79 ERA in 11 postseason games, and is 0-6 in six playoff starts.

"I expect to have better results," a subdued Price said.

Gibbons said Price was the victim of timely hits by the Rangers.

"He wasn't getting hit around. It was just a couple of key hits at some key times that made the difference," Gibbons said.

Blue Jays slugger Jose Bautista hit a solo homer in the sixth, then left with a

sore right hamstring after popping out in the eighth and was replaced in right by Dalton Pompey. The Blue Jays said Bautista expected to play Friday.

Delino DeShields and Beltre hit RBI singles to give Texas a 2-0 lead in the third. Beltre, injured when sliding into second base as Prince Fielder hit into an inning-ending double play in the first, had difficulty running and was replaced by rookie Hanser Alberto in the bottom of third.

Edwin Encarnacion's run-scoring infield single cut the deficit in half in the fourth — the first run Toronto scored off Gallardo in three meetings this season.

Price hit Odor with a pitch for the second straight at-bat, and Chirinos homered for a 4-1 lead.

"I think he relaxed a little bit with the people at the bottom of the lineup," Chirinos said.

Price hit just three batters all season, none after Toronto obtained him from Detroit on July 30th.

Kevin Pillar doubled home Russell Martin in the bottom half, but Toronto left a runner at third when pinch-hitter Ezequiel Carrera, batting in Donaldson's spot, hit an inning-ending groundout. Cliff Pennington took over defensively in the sixth.

Bautista's leadoff homer off Kela cut it to 4-3 in the sixth — the first run off the pitcher since July 30. Odor homered in the seventh.

**For starters:** Cito Gaston, who managed the Blue Jays to back-to-back World Series titles in 1992 and 1993, threw out the ceremonial first pitch to veteran left-hander Mark Buehrle, who is not on Toronto's playoff roster.

# Mickelson admits to blunder

Associated Press

INCHEON, South Korea — Phil Mickelson has played 49 matches in the 21 years since the Presidents Cup began.

And he learned something new Friday. For starters, Mickelson was not aware of the one-ball rule in fourballs and singles matches, meaning that players can't change the model of their golf ball during the match. He also didn't realize that a match could go from all square to 2 up in just one hole.

"That's the first time I've ever heard of that happening," he said.

It turned out to be a costly mistake when Mickelson and Zach Johnson halved their fourballs match with Jason Day and Adam Scott, and that allowed the International team to pull within one point of the Americans going into Saturday.

There's rarely a dull moment around Mickelson, and that was the case Friday at the Jack Nicklaus Golf Club Korea. For the second straight day, he holed a bunker shot that helped to turn his match around. For the second straight day, tensions were high coming to the final green.

All that was overlooked because Mickelson didn't know the rules — and in this case, neither did the rules committee.

It was a double blunder, and it started when Mickelson reached into his bag for a golf ball with a slightly harder cover that he thought would help him reach the green in two on the par-5 seventh hole. Mickelson found the fairway and was sauntering to his ball when he noticed U.S. captain Jay Haas following them.

"I was talking with Jay and I just thought, 'Gosh, I'm going to ask. I'm sure it's not an issue,'" Mickelson said. "And it turns out that there was a one-ball rule and it was an issue. As a player, you need to know that. You need to know the rules, and if you have a question, you do it beforehand."

No one knew the ramifications. The penalty for violating the one-ball rule is called a one-hole adjustment, meaning the one hole is awarded to the other team.

But the rules committee erred when it told Mickelson that he was out of the hole, and Mickelson picked up his ball. Because the one-hole adjustment already had been assessed, Mickelson should have been able to finish the hole. He was in the fairway just over 290 yards from the hole, which he could have reached with a good shot.

But he never got that chance. Day made birdie and won the hole, so the International team went 2 up heading to the eighth hole.

"The weird thing was I've never heard of a match adjustment penalty," he said. "I just thought, 'OK, if I hit the wrong ball, no big deal. Zach will cover me on this hole.' But obviously, that's not what happened."

# Houston jumps on Kansas City early

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Houston Astros manager A.J. Hinch has a "soft rule" when it comes to a rain delay during a game: If it lasts about an hour, he'll usually remove his starting pitcher.

Good thing it's not a hard rule. Hinch opted to keep Collin McHugh on the mound after a 49-minute stoppage Thursday night, and the soft-spoken righty responded with a resounding performance. He shut down the Kansas City Royals over six innings for a 5-2 victory in the opener of their AL Division Series.

"We checked in with him a couple times, but he was never really coming out of that game," Hinch said of McHugh, a surprise 19-game winner this season. "That wasn't even his best tonight, and he got through a pretty good lineup and battled."

Three relievers took over and got the game to Luke Gregerson, part of Oakland's wild-card collapse in Kansas City last year. He handled the ninth for a save.

George Springer and Colby Rasmus went deep for the homer-happy Astros, but they also scored via the same sort of small ball the Royals used in reaching the

World Series last season.

"Winning the first game was key," Astros outfielder Carlos Gomez said. "We did that."

Yordano Ventura (0-1) yielded three runs on four hits and a walk in two innings for Kansas City, but did not come back following the delay. Chris Young served up Springer's home run with one out in the fifth, but tossed four otherwise solid innings of relief.

"It's a five-game series," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "It's not a death sentence to lose Game 1."

The Astros, who struggled so mightily on the road this season, have apparently solved their woes just in time. They beat the Yankees 3-0 in New York in Tuesday night's wild-card game, then took care of a Royals club built specifically for spacious Kauffman Stadium.

Houston also made it the first time since 1970 that visiting teams won baseball's first four postseason games, STATS said. The other two times it happened were 1906 and 1923.

"Everyone knows we haven't been playing the best on the road," reliever Tony Sipp said. "To take one in New York and come here, it shows we're a different kind

of team."

The Astros wasted no time getting Ventura in trouble, loading the bases with nobody out in the first inning. The hard-throwing ace settled down to retire the next three batters, but Rasmus and Evan Gattis provided RBI groundouts to give Houston a 2-0 lead.

The Royals answered in the bottom half when Kendrys Morales ripped McHugh's 89 mph fastball down the right-field line. But a steady rain soon became a downpour as the inning progressed, and lightning sent fans scurrying for the concourse as the tarp was pulled onto the field.

When the game resumed, the Royals sent Young to the mound rather than Ventura.

"It was pushing 60 minutes there," said Yost, who hopes to bring back Ventura in Game 4.

Hinch stuck with McHugh, even though he hadn't thrown a pitch for nearly an hour.

Morales got the better of him again in the fourth, driving a 1-1 pitch over the wall in right to become the first Royals player with two homers in a postseason game since George Brett against Toronto in the 1985 AL Championship Series.



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# No Luck, no problem for Colts

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Indianapolis coach Chuck Pagano isn't sure when Andrew Luck can play again.

Not to worry though. He's got the ageless Matt Hasselbeck to fill in.

Andre Johnson caught two touchdown passes from the 40-year-old Hasselbeck, the second for 2 yards in the fourth quarter, to help the Colts beat the Houston Texans 27-20 on Thursday night.

"Got the best backup in the league right now," Pagano said. "We could argue that."

Released by Houston in March after 12 seasons with the team, Johnson had six catches for 77 yards.

Hasselbeck won his second straight game filling in for Luck, who was out with a shoulder injury.

Hasselbeck's performance was even more impressive given the fact that he was battling a bacterial infection that hospitalized him this week. He started feeling ill just before halftime Sunday in a victory over Jacksonville and didn't start feeling better until Thursday night.

"I honestly feel like this isn't even real right now," Hasselbeck said.

Pagano raved about Hasselbeck.

"He was literally on his deathbed Monday/Tuesday and mustered up enough to come in Wednesday and practice," Pagano said. "He was getting IVs

and fighting a virus and the grittiest performance I've seen in a long, long time."

Brian Hoyer, who replaced Ryan Mallett for Houston (1-4) in the second quarter, threw a pass up for grabs that was intercepted by Mike Adams with less than 2 minutes left to help the Colts (3-2) seal the victory.

Some things to know about the Colts' win over the Texans.

**Mixed reception:** Johnson, who is Houston's career receiving leader, drew boos from the home crowd when he grabbed a 23-yard reception late in the first quarter. Two plays later, he scored his first touchdown of the season when he was wide open in the back of the end zone for 4-yard reception that made it 10-0. Johnson laughed about the early boos and said the crowd warmed up to him later. "When I would be on the sidelines a lot of the fans were screaming, 'Andre we still love you! Come back to Houston! Welcome home!'" Johnson said. "So that was probably the most special thing."

**QB carousel:** Mallett got the wind knocked out of him on an illegal hit midway through the second quarter and was replaced by Hoyer. Mallett was OK soon after that, but coach Bill O'Brien stuck with Hoyer, who finished with 312 yards passing with two touchdowns. Hoyer won the starting job out of camp but was benched after Week 1. He came in late in last week's loss to Atlanta, but O'Brien started Mallett again Thursday. After the

game he wouldn't say who will direct the offense going forward.

"We'll review (the film) tomorrow and see where we are at that position," O'Brien said.

**A Strong game:** Houston rookie Jaelen Strong had his first two NFL receptions and they were both for touchdowns. Hoyer's desperation throw on the last play of the first half that Strong pulled down in a sea of Indianapolis defenders for a 42-yard touchdown strike cut the lead to 13-10. Strong boxed out two defenders and outjumped the others to reel in his first NFL catch. Strong's second catch and touchdown came on an 11-yard pass by Hoyer to get Houston to 20-17 in the third quarter.

**Streaking:** The Colts extended their AFC South winning streak to an NFL-record 16 games. It's the longest such streak since the 1972-73 Dolphins won 15 in a row. It began with a win over Houston to end the 2012 season, a game that marked the return of Pagano to the sideline after he missed 12 games while he battled leukemia. "We gave everybody a game ball from this one," Pagano said. "We could have given out some individual ones but to surpass the only team in the NFL that had a perfect season ... and hold that record now that is something that every man on this football team and everybody in our organization can share."

# No. 17 USC upset by Washington

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Nearly every Washington upperclassman insisted they took no personal pleasure in beating the coach who left them for Southern California two years ago.

A gritty defensive victory over a ranked team on the Coliseum's national stage was more than enough reason for these Huskies to celebrate.

Myles Gaskin ran for 134 yards and a fourth-quarter touchdown, and Washington shut down No. 17 USC's high-powered offense throughout a 17-12 victory Thursday night.

Receiver Marvin Hall threw a 27-yard touchdown pass to Joshua Perkins early in the second half as the Huskies (3-2, 1-1 Pac-12) beat Steve Sarkisian and the coaches who recruited many of them to Seattle. The Huskies all celebrated with their strong cheering section after running out the clock on Washington's first win at the Coliseum since 2010.

"A win like this really puts us on the right step as a program," said senior linebacker Travis Feeney, who had 2½ sacks. "We're only going up from here. It's definitely a stepping stone for our confidence, for any young guys who doubted themselves. It's something we can take pride in and gain confidence from."

Washington beat a ranked team for the first time under second-year coach Chris Petersen, who appeared to pull a trick play out of his Boise State cache. The Huskies weren't looking for vindication against Sarkisian, but a win in Los Angeles still was particularly sweet for the numerous Washington players from the area.

"It's like playing in my backyard," said linebacker Keishawn Bierria, from nearby Carson. "It's just playing at home for me, for a lot of us. That's the way we look at it: There's nothing special about this park."

Cody Kessler had two interceptions while passing for just 156 yards on a disastrous night for the Trojans (3-2, 1-2), the popular preseason pick to win the conference and a healthy double-digit favorite against Washington. Instead, USC couldn't score a touchdown until Ronald Jones II's short run with 12:02 to play.

Washington's defense then came up with two late stops, and the Trojans missed a field goal with 3:44 left. Jaydon Mickens caught a key third-down pass from Washington freshman Jake Browning with 2:10 to play, allowing the Huskies to run out the clock against the frustrated USC defense, which was solid after giving up 41 points to Stanford last month.

"It's never fun to lose a game, so yeah, it's a little shocking," USC linebacker Cameron Smith said. "But give them credit. They played well. Their defense played awesome."

Sarkisian faced the Huskies for the first time since he left Washington to take over the Trojans last season, taking five Huskies assistant coaches with him. Sarkisian spent five years in Seattle, restoring a moribund program to competence, but never breaking through to the Pac-12's elite.

Instead, the Huskies took a major step toward the future at the expense of Sarkisian, who could be on a hot seat before reaching the midway point of his second season.

"Not at all," Sarkisian said when asked if he is coaching for his job now.

# Blues rookie mars McDavid's debut

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Robby Fabbri came through in his first NHL game and helped the St. Louis Blues spoil Edmonton rookie Connor McDavid's debut.

Fabbri scored the tiebreaking goal midway through the third period to help the Blues beat the Oilers 3-1 Thursday night.

"I guess I've got some bragging rights," Fabbri said of his childhood friend. "We'll see how long that lasts."

Vladimir Tarasenko had the tying goal for the Blues on a breakaway near the midpoint of the second period, and Troy Brouwer added an empty-netter with 18 seconds remaining in the third. Brian Elliott finished with 23 saves.

"I thought where we turned the game around a little bit was in the second half of the second period," Blues coach Ken Hitchcock said. "We started to really check and create turnovers and really got after them a little bit and started to put a bunch of shots up. ... That kind of turned the momentum for us a little bit."

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored in the first period for Edmonton and Cam Talbot had 28 saves in his Oilers debut.

McDavid, the No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft, took 22 shifts, played 18:07 and was on the ice for Brouwer's goal. He had two shots on goal, and struggled on face-offs — winning only three of 13.

"I did some good stuff, did some bad stuff," McDavid said.

Oilers coach Todd McLellan described McDavid's debut as "fine."

"At times I thought he was very dangerous and at other times I didn't think that line had a lot going," McLellan said. "So it's a matter of timing and chemistry and trying to find the right combinations for him and his linemates."

Fabbri, a 19-year-old forward and the Blues' first-round pick in 2014, was one of three rookies in the St. Louis lineup — joining defensemen Colton Parayko and Joel Edmundson. Fabbri became the

youngest player in franchise history to score a goal in his debut, according to information provided by the Blues from the Elias Sports Bureau.

Jori Lehtera delivered a no-look, backhanded pass to Fabbri in the slot and the rookie beat Talbot top shelf with a wrist.

"I came off the bench and I saw the play there," Fabbri said. "I wasn't sure if he saw or heard me, so for him to make that play, it was an amazing pass."

**Wild 5, Avalanche 4:** Zach Parise scored three times, including the tiebreaker in the third period, and visiting Minnesota overcame a three-goal deficit to beat Colorado.

Trailing 4-1 in the final period, the Wild had four goals in a 5:07 span to stun the Avalanche. Parise scored twice, and Thomas Vanek and Nino Niederreiter added goals.

Parise beat Semyon Varlamov with a slap shot to put Minnesota up for good midway through the third. Colorado pulled Varlamov for an extra skater in the final minute but couldn't score on Devan Dubnyk.

**Jets 6, Bruins 2:** Chris Thorburn and Nicolas Petan scored in the third period after host Boston came within one goal, and Winnipeg opened the season with a victory.

It was the first victory for the former Atlanta Thrashers in Boston since 2007, before the franchise moved to Winnipeg. The Bruins had beaten the Thrashers and Jets 13 consecutive times in Boston.

Ondrej Pavelec made 29 saves for the Jets. Mark Scheifele, Blake Wheeler and Drew Stafford scored in the second period to give the Jets a 3-1 lead.

David Krejci also scored for Boston, and Rask made 26 saves.

**Lightning 3, Flyers 2 (OT):** Jason Garrison scored his second goal of the game in overtime to lift host Tampa Bay in Philadelphia coach Dave Hakstol's NHL debut.

Garrison scored on a breakaway at 2:17 of the extra session, the NHL's first 3-on-3 overtime in the regular season. The NHL moved overtime from 4-on-4 to the new setup this season.

Tampa Bay's Ben Bishop faced his second penalty shot 1:27 into overtime and made a pad save on Scott Laughton. The Lightning also got a goal from Ryan Callahan.

**Senators 3, Sabres 1:** Kyle Turris scored twice and visiting Ottawa won a coach's challenge to overturn a Buffalo goal.

The outcome was essentially decided with 9:26 remaining, when Buffalo's Evander Kane scored on a wraparound that would have tied it at 2. Senators coach Dave Cameron challenged the goal, and a video review showed Sabres forward Zemgus Girgensons was offside.

Kane's disallowed goal came 1:23 after Sabres 18-year-old rookie center Jack Eichel scored a power-play goal. Curtis Lazar sealed it with an empty-netter with 1:04 left. Craig Anderson made 26 saves for the victory.

**Stars 3, Penguins 0:** Antti Niemi made 37 saves for his 33rd shutout and assisted on two goals in his Dallas debut, leading his team past visiting Pittsburgh.

Ales Hemsky had a power-play goal and an assist, Matthias Janmark scored on his first shot on his first shift in an NHL game, and Jamie Benn also had a power-play goal.

Marc-Andre Fleury made 21 saves for Pittsburgh.

**Predators 2, Hurricanes 1:** Craig Smith had a power-play goal and host Nashville scored twice in the first period against Carolina.

Viktor Arvidsson scored the first NHL goal, and Seth Jones had two assists. Pekka Rinne made 25 saves, allowing only Eric Staal's goal with 1:40 left. The Hurricanes lost defenseman James Wisniewski early to a lower-body injury.