

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Obama selects 37-year Navy officer as SOUTHCOM chief

Miami Herald

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVY BASE, Cuba — President Barack Obama has chosen a 37-year U.S. Navy officer whose career has focused on diplomacy and counterterrorism as the next commander of U.S. Southern Command, the *Miami Herald* has learned.

Vice Adm. Kurt W. Tidd currently travels with Secretary of State John Kerry as the assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In August, he joined Kerry's historic trip to Cuba for the flag-raising over the U.S. Embassy in Havana. He is also the designated U.S. roadmap monitor of the Middle East Peace Process.

If confirmed by Congress, he replaces Gen. John F. Kelly, who joined the Marines during the Vietnam War and has run the Pentagon subsidiary responsible for U.S. military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean for nearly three years. Kelly, with no onward assign-

ment, is retiring from service.

He recently made a farewell trip to Washington for a reception hosted by the ambassador from Colombia and for a talk at a think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Two defense officials confirmed the choice but could not say when the White House would formally announce the nomination. It will be up to the Senate Armed Services Committee to set a timetable for a confirmation hearing.

The president's choice for the next head of SOUTHCOM comes from a Navy family. His brother, Rear Adm. Mark Tidd, retired last year after 32 years of service as the chief of the Navy chaplains corps. His father, Vice Adm. Emmett H. Tidd, was commander of Navy Surface Forces in the Pacific in 1976.

Tidd knows the region. For 10 months in 2011 and 2012, he ran SOUTHCOM's 4th Fleet out of Jacksonville, Fla., responsible for U.S. Navy activities in Cen-

tral and South America and the Caribbean Basin. That job typically focuses on regional cooperation and countertrafficking operations.

Tidd graduated from the Naval Academy in 1978. His classmates included the Pacific Command and U.S. Strategic Command commanders, Adms. Harry B. Harris Jr. and Cecil D. Haney. Tidd's focus at Annapolis was "Foreign Area Studies," according to his resume. He is the most senior U.S. naval surface warfare officer on continuous active duty, known as an "Old Salt," a title he received in June with the retirement of Adm. Samuel J. Locklear.

The position, based at the SOUTHCOM headquarters in Doral, Fla., has oversight of an anti-trafficking center in Key West, Fla., troops at a forward operating base in Soto Cano, Honduras, and the detention center currently holding 114 captives at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, set up after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Soldier wins Marine Corps Marathon

BY C.J. LIN
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON—It was Army 2nd Lt. Trevor Lafontaine's first time ever competing in a marathon, but he needed no beginner's luck.

Even though he wasn't quite sure what to expect, the 22-year-old recent West Point graduate breezed through the finish line of the 40th Marine Corps Marathon on Sunday, winning the race with a time of 2:24:24.

"I did not come in expecting to win, so it feels really good," Lafontaine said.

Lafontaine, who was invited to run the race as part of the Army team, played it safe and stuck with the pack toward the start of the race, but started making his move on a downhill. He came in nearly two minutes ahead of Oscar Mateo Santos, of Mexico, who finished with a time of 2:26:07. Third-place runner Brian Flynn of Rockingham, Va., finished at 2:26:53.

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Video purportedly shows US-Kurdish Iraq prison raid

Associated Press

IRBIL, Iraq — The Kurdish regional government in northern Iraq released a video on Sunday purportedly showing the joint raid of a prison by U.S. and Kurdish peshmerga forces in which they released 70 hostages held by the Islamic State group.

The helmet-camera footage allegedly shows the Thursday raid of the prison, which was controlled by Islamic State militants in the town of Hawijah, 9

miles west of of Kirkuk.

A line of panicked men in traditional ankle-length garments are seen running past the camera, some with their hands up, as Arabic-speaking men scream at them, "Let's go! Let's go!"

Gunfire rings out nonstop in the background. The soldiers are seen walking through a dark room with the Islamic State group's trademark black flag draped on the wall. The rescued hostages are then frisked for weapons and led away.

Officials later said about 20 of the rescued hostages were members of Iraqi security forces.

Army Master Sgt. Joshua L. Wheeler, 39, of Roland, Okla., was killed during the raid, officials said. He was the first American to die in combat since the U.S. launched Operation Inherent Resolve last year.

The raid marked the first time U.S. troops were involved in direct ground combat in Iraq since the war against the Islamic State group was launched in

August 2014.

U.S. officials said the plan for the rescue mission had called for the U.S. troops, who are members of the elite and secretive Delta Force, to stay back from the prison compound and let the Kurds do the fighting.

The Americans transported the Kurds to the scene aboard five U.S. helicopters. However, the U.S. troops were drawn into the fight to help the Kurdish soldiers.

Blair: War contributed to Islamic State's rise

Associated Press

LONDON — Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has said the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq was partly responsible for the emergence of the Islamic State militant group in the Middle East. But he insisted that toppling dictator Saddam Hussein had been the right thing to do.

Blair told CNN that “there are elements of truth” in the assertion that the war caused the rise of the Islamic State.

“Of course you can’t say those of us who removed Saddam in 2003 bear no responsibility for the situation in 2015,” he said in the interview to be broadcast Sunday.

Blair added that the Arab Spring revolutions, which began in 2011, had also played a part by allowing the Islamic fundamentalist militant group to flourish in civil war-torn Syria and then Iraq. And he said the “sectarian policy” of Iraq’s Shiite-led government was also a factor in destabilizing the country.

Blair’s decision to take Britain into the Iraq War — based on what turned out to be false claims about Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction — remains hugely divisive at home and contributed to his Labour Party’s loss of power in 2010.

Blair insisted that removing Saddam was the right thing to do but apologized, as he has before, for failures in postwar planning.

Admiral: Patrols would back laws

Associated Press

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii — The U.S. Navy’s top commander in the Pacific says it’s up to policymakers in Washington whether his sailors patrol within 12 nautical miles of newly constructed islands claimed by China in the South China Sea.

Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Scott Swift spoke during an interview Thursday amid tensions over Beijing’s territorial claims in the South China Sea and reports the U.S. will

sail near the disputed islands to challenge those claims.

Swift told The Associated Press his sailors have the capacity and capability to enter the waters, but he emphasized that the patrols would reinforce international laws and wouldn’t be directed at a specific country.

“We’re ready,” Swift said at his Pearl Harbor office. “We have the resources to support whatever those policy decisions are and whatever policymakers may ask us to do to demonstrate the U.S. resolve with respect to the operations that we conduct

in the South China Sea.”

Swift said that under international law, building on an island that’s only exposed at low tide but not at higher tide doesn’t bolster a territorial claim to the place.

He reiterated the U.S. doesn’t support land reclamation efforts, regardless of their scale.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter said this month that the U.S. will fly, sail and operate wherever international law permits, including in the South China Sea.

USAREUR expanding into Hungary

MICHAEL S. DARNELL

Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — U.S. Army Europe plans to move units into Hungary on Monday as it expands its presence in eastern Europe beyond the Baltics and Poland.

The 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, based at Fort Stewart, Ga., is deploying with USAREUR as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, the effort to show a beefed-up presence in Eastern Europe since Russia’s intervention last year in Ukraine. USAREUR has relied heavily on forces rotating in from the States to maintain its heightened presence in the region.

U.S. troops have had a near-constant presence in the Baltic states and Poland and have participated in periodic exercises in Bulgaria and Romania to the south.

“It just reaffirms our commitment to our NATO partners,” said Col. Phil Brooks, the 1st Brigade commander. “Now, Hungary is part of that continued expansion with our NATO partners to provide assurance to our allies here.”

Elements of the 1st Brigade will replace the Vicenza, Italy-based, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland.

Subordinate units, including the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor, will augment that deployment, bringing along Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. The 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, will be bringing Bradleys, but no tanks, to Hungary.

The 1st Brigade’s heavy vehicles have been drawn from the European Activity Set, heavy equipment the U.S. has

positioned in eastern Europe for forces rotating in from the States.

“It makes my life logistically much easier,” Brooks said. “I have the opportunity to fly my soldiers over here with minimal additional equipment.”

As the regionally allocated force for U.S. Army Europe, the 1st Brigade serves both as the NATO response force in the region, as well as the European rotational force. Elements of the 1st Brigade are currently engaged in operations ranging from Spain to the Baltics.

The brigade has served as USAREUR’s regionally allocated force previously, having left Europe in June. They will remain until December, when they will be temporarily relieved by the 2nd Cavalry Regiment out of Vilseck, Germany, before returning in spring 2016.

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Russia says Syria’s Assad favors vote, but only after victory

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — President Bashar Assad is willing to run in an early presidential election, to hold parliamentary elections and to discuss constitutional changes, but only after the defeat of “terrorist” groups,

Russian lawmakers said after meeting with the Syrian leader Sunday.

The meeting came as Russia, the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Turkey were discussing new ideas for a political transition in Syria to end the nearly five-year war,

which has killed 250,000 people and has displaced half the country’s population.

The Western-backed Syrian opposition and other insurgent groups have refused to back any plan that does not include Assad’s exit from power, and

were unlikely to view any elections held by his government as legitimate. The Syrian government views the entire armed opposition as “terrorists” and has been waging an offensive on several fronts in recent weeks backed by Russian airstrikes.

Jaguars rally for 34-31 win over Bills

Associated Press

LONDON — Wembley Stadium finally felt like home for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Blake Bortles threw a touchdown pass to Allen Hurns with 2:16 remaining and the Jaguars rallied for a 34-31 win over Buffalo Bills on Sunday at Jacksonville's home away from home.

Bortles' second TD pass of the game came right after Buffalo safety Corey Graham intercepted a pass and returned it 44 yards to put the Bills ahead.

The Jaguars (2-5) won their first game in London after losing in each of the past two seasons at Wembley, the home of England's national soccer team. The Bills (3-4) were playing in the British capital for the first time.

EJ Manuel started at quarterback for

the Bills for the second straight game because of the absence of the injured Tyrod Taylor.

Manuel's early struggles allowed Jacksonville to take a 27-3 lead, but Manuel led the rally until the Jaguars took over for good in the final minutes.

Bortles was 13-for-29 for 182 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. The defense was even better, though, scoring two touchdowns in a 7-second span and setting up another for T.J. Yeldon, who finished with 116 yards.

Trailing 3-0, Bortles hit Allen Robinson on a 10-yard TD pass. Then the defense stepped up.

On third-and-9, Aaron Colvin forced a fumble from Manuel. Sergio Brown nearly smothered the ball, but Chris Clemons grabbed the loose ball and ran 6 yards

into the end zone.

After the kickoff and a touchback, Manuel was again in the pocket but his pass was picked off by Telvin Smith, who ran it in from the 26.

And the defense wasn't done yet. On the fourth play of the next drive, Manuel was again picked off, this time by Paul Posluszny.

The Jaguars' offense didn't disappoint this time, with Yeldon running it in from the 28 to give Jacksonville a 27-3 lead after Jason Myers missed the extra point.

The Bills' comeback started when Manuel completed a 16-yard touchdown pass to Robert Woods. That score and another field goal from Dan Carpenter made it 27-13 at the half.

In the fourth quarter, Carpenter kicked a third field goal before Manuel hit Marcus

Easley on a 58-yard touchdown pass — only minutes before Graham gave the Bills a 31-27 lead with 5:21 left.

Manuel started at quarterback for the second straight game, and for the second straight loss. He finished with 298 yards on 24 of 42 passing with two touchdowns and two interceptions.

Manuel was starting because Taylor sprained a ligament in his left knee in the 14-13 win over Tennessee on Oct. 11. With a week off after the trip, as usual for teams playing in London, Taylor will have more time to heal before the Bills host the Miami Dolphins on Nov. 8.

The Jaguars, who will again travel to London next season, next play at the New York Jets, also on Nov. 8.

NBA making moves to address injuries

Associated Press

The potshots have come at the Golden State Warriors from all directions this offseason. Some rivals have dismissed their breathtaking championship run with a wave of the hand and a snort.

The Warriors just got lucky, they said. They were able to stay mostly healthy for the entire grueling season, avoiding the big injuries that plagued so many other contenders, both in the regular season and in the playoffs.

Considering the stack of injuries that ruined some seasons, keeping 15 players healthy should be viewed as a tremendous accomplishment, not just a random gift from the basketball gods.

As the NBA prepares to tip off the regular season on Tuesday, the biggest issue facing a league on the upswing may not be labor strife or the age limit for draft eligibility. After a season in which star after star missed huge chunks of time, one of the biggest priorities is player health.

"I think what we saw in this season and in the playoffs, especially, is there is no question that injuries had a big impact on the competition," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "Not that that's anything new. One of the things we're looking at as a league is what can we do to keep players on the floor?"

The numbers last year were staggering. Eight players on the NBA's list of most popular-selling jerseys missed at least 15 percent of the 82 regular season games, including LeBron James (13 games missed), Blake Griffin (15), Derrick Rose (31) and Russell Westbrook (15).

Kevin Durant (55), Carmelo Anthony (42), Dwight Howard (41), Paul George (76) and Kobe Bryant (47) are among the stars who missed at least half the season and seven of the top 10 draft picks — not including Philadelphia's Dario Saric, who played in Europe — missed significant time with injuries.

Injuries to Cleveland stars Kevin Love

LeBron returns to practice, may play

CLEVELAND — LeBron James has gone through a full practice for the first time since he received an anti-inflammatory injection in his back.

James had been limited to shooting drills and conditioning since getting the shot Oct. 13. But he took part in every aspect of Cleveland's workout Sunday, increasing his chances of playing in the season opener Tuesday in Chicago.

Cavs coach David Blatt describes James' practice as "a good step" and says it "bodes well" for the four-time MVP to face the Bulls to begin his 13th NBA season.

The 30-year-old James received a similar shot in his back early last season, when he was slowed by back pain and a strained left knee. James played in only two of Cleveland's seven exhibition games during the preseason.

The Cavs would like to cut his minutes during the regular season to keep James fresh for the playoffs.

From The Associated Press

and Kyrie Irving in the playoffs hampered the Cavaliers' ability to hang with the Warriors in the finals, while the Miami Heat (Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh missed 58 games combined) and Oklahoma City Thunder (Westbrook, Durant and Serge Ibaka missed 88 games) did not make the playoffs for the first time in years due mostly to their missing stars.

From overtraining at the AAU level to poor sleep patterns developed during the season's unforgiving travel schedule,

the theories are many as to the number of injuries. And efforts are coming on all fronts to address the scourge.

The NBA appointed Dr. John DiFiori as the league's director of sports medicine, partnered with GE Healthcare to research musculoskeletal injuries and formed a board of physicians around the league to examine the issue. The league also changed the schedule to drastically reduce the number of back-to-backs and stretches of four games in five nights in hopes of easing some of the stress on players' bodies.

The NBA Players' Association hired Joe Rogowski, a well-regarded strength coach and athletic trainer, as its new sports science guru.

And teams across the league are re-vamping their training and medical staffs and building new practice facilities to try to cater to player health.

The Warriors, Minnesota Timberwolves, Atlanta Hawks, Milwaukee Bucks and Detroit Pistons have all brought in new medical and/or training personnel while the Wolves have partnered with the world-renowned Mayo Clinic to open a \$25 million practice center that includes a chef on site to prepare healthy meals and a sports medicine wing with MRI machines and physicians available for immediate consultation.

"I think it's still too early to say this is why these injuries are happening," Rogowski said. "But we are doing our due diligence. There are so many variables that are involved with injuries. So being able to look at all the different variables and not just one thing is very important."

Silver is pushing teams to share more on what methods and technologies they are using to combat injuries. Some teams consider that proprietary and are reluctant to give it.

"I don't want to see our teams just competing in terms of best practices when it comes to the health and welfare of the players," Silver said. "Teams can learn from each other and can apply it

to the league as a whole. As you heard [Warriors coach] Steve Kerr say, as great as it is to win, you want to win with both teams best players on the floor."

It's a good line, but one that may fall on deaf ears when presented to hyper-competitive teams looking for any edge.

"The league feels like it's a priority, but it's a little interesting," Dallas Mavericks head athletic trainer Casey Smith said. "Every team is their own entity. There are many of us that do share best practices quite often on all levels and there are some, frankly, that don't. That's their decision."

Smith has kept the Mavericks at the forefront of sports science technology for years, teaming with coach Rick Carlisle and owner Mark Cuban to aggressively examine ways to keep their players healthy. From sleep studies to biomechanics and GPS tracking technology, the Mavericks are throwing everything they have at one of the league's fundamental problems.

While they have embraced the need for players to rest during the season, Smith said it's also important to make sure a resting player gets in a hard workout on his "off day." Dirk Nowitzki may not do the cutting, accelerating and decelerating and physical contact that he does during a game, but he will go through a weightlifting and cardio workout so that his body remains in "active recovery."

"Although we may limit them from the court at times, we still very much expect some type of demand on their bodies to keep them at that highest threshold," Smith said, "which I think surprises people sometimes."

Smith is a big believer in studying movement patterns and trying to reduce the biomechanical asymmetry that can put greater stress on joints and muscles. That also requires athletes to do the same, often tedious, warmups and exercises every day to foster the needed muscle memory.



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Georgia Tech tops Seminoles

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Lance Austin ran toward the ball, rolling along at the Georgia Tech end of the field as the final seconds ticked off the clock. He hesitated, a bit confused as his coach screamed for him to leave it alone.

Paul Johnson was content to go to overtime against mighty Florida State.

Austin had other ideas.

The sophomore scooped up the ball at his own 22 and took off the other way. He didn't stop running until he reached the end zone, his 78-yard return of a blocked field goal on the final play giving Georgia Tech a stunning 22-16 upset of the No. 9 Seminoles on Saturday night.

Call this one Kick Six, The Sequel.

"When I picked it up and started running up the field, I saw a lot of green," Austin said. "So I was like, 'OK, I can return it.'"

That he did.

All the way to the end zone.

"I go from yelling 'get away from it' to 'run, run, run,'" quipped Johnson, the Georgia Tech coach.

It all started when Roberto Aguayo, perhaps the best kicker in the country, attempted a 56-yard field goal to win it for the Seminoles (6-1, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) with 6 seconds remaining. But the kick had to be low to get some distance on it, and Patrick Gamble managed to get a hand on the ball.

While most of the Georgia Tech players celebrated, thinking they were going to overtime tied at 16, Austin went back to retrieve the ball as it was bounced inside the 25-yard line.

Johnson was thinking overtime, too, waving and screaming to let it roll dead.

Austin paused briefly, looking around, and then decided to scoop it up. He took off the other way in front of the Georgia Tech bench, avoiding Aguayo's diving attempt, then cutting back on the final guy who had a shot at the tackle to win the game for Georgia Tech (3-5, 1-4).

After that, it was bedlam in Bobby Dodd Stadium.

On the Florida State sideline, coach Jimbo Fisher stoically removed his headset, clearly shocked at only the second loss in the last three seasons for the Seminoles.

"When there is a blocked kick, you've got

to cover," he said. "We talk about that all the time."

In a finish reminiscent of Auburn running back a missed field goal to beat Alabama two seasons ago — the original Kick Six — Georgia Tech snapped a five-game losing streak, its longest since 1994, and dealt a devastating blow to Florida State's title hopes. The Seminoles won the national championship in 2013 and reached the national semifinals a year ago.

Now, they'll need some help to get that far again, though a victory over No. 6 Clemson in two weeks could boost them back into the running.

"We can't let one loss become two," Fisher said.

The Yellow Jackets also ended FSU's streak of 28 straight victories against ACC opponents, a run that dated back to 2012 and came up one shy of the Seminoles' record of winning their first 29 conference games after joining the league in 1992.

USC 42, No. 3 Utah 24: In less than two weeks, Southern California went from the depths of a coach's firing to the heights of a wild celebration after beating the No. 3 team in the nation.

Most of these Trojans have been on a roller coaster from the day they joined this storied but troubled program. This particular peak sent them soaring over mighty Utah.

Cameron Smith returned the second of his three interceptions 54 yards for a touchdown, and host USC knocked the third-ranked Utes from the unbeaten ranks with a 42-24 victory Saturday night.

Air Force 42, Fresno State 14: Air Force shifted its tailback to fullback. The Falcons quarterback played more like a battering ram near the goal line. Their receiver threw with the accuracy of a QB.

Sound confusing? Trying being Fresno State's defense. Quarterback Karson Roberts rushed for four touchdowns and caught another on a trick play, helping Air Force overcome a sluggish start to beat the Bulldogs 42-14.

"Worked out well for us," said Roberts, whose five total touchdowns ties for the second-most in school history, one behind the mark set by QB Dee Dowis in 1989.

Indeed, it did. The Falcons (4-3, 3-1 Mountain West) had to improvise a little bit to earn their 10th straight home win.

With their top fullbacks sidelined by injuries, coach Troy Calhoun moved 195-pound tailback Jacobi Owens to the all-important spot in the option offense. In goal-line situations, Roberts stuck his helmet into the middle of piles.

As for receiver Jalen Robinette, well, he keeps showcasing his arm. He spun out of a tackle on a reverse and threw his second TD pass of the season — a 20-yard strike to a wide-open Roberts.

"It's always great to win. But when we get to do a little bit of trickery and stuff like that, that's a blast, too," said Robinette, who also had three catches for 79 yards. "This whole day was just fun."

Navy 31, Tulane 14: At Annapolis, Md., Navy quarterback Keenan Reynolds ran for a pair of touchdowns and the Midshipmen forced three straight turnovers in the second half for a 31-14 victory over Tulane on Saturday.

Reynolds is now just two shy of the NCAA record for rushing touchdowns set by former Wisconsin tailback Montee Ball (77) from 2009-2012.

Navy (5-1, 3-0 American Athletic Conference) entered the game ranked third nationally with 335.4 yards rushing per game but was held to just 133 as Tulane stacked nine players in the box.

Rice 38, Army 31: At Houston, Army did everything it could to mount a comeback against Rice on Saturday, coming back from trailing 14-0 early but coming up one magical play short, falling 38-31 on the road.

"Our guys did a great job of fighting back, staying in the game and giving ourselves a chance to win," Army coach Jeff Monken said. "We did that all the way to the last play of the last drive."

The Black Knights (2-6), after tying the game with 2:13 left on a 20-yard field goal by Daniel Grochowski, gave the ball back to a surging offense in Rice.

Driving through the rain Rice quarterback Driphus Jackson, who finished 20-for-30 for 267 yards and two touchdowns, led the Owls (4-3) on a seven-play, 75-yard game-winning drive in 1:49.

Despite the late touchdown, Army had a chance to fire at the end zone on one last play from 36 yards out to only have its last hope batted down into the soaked turf at Rice Stadium.

Canadiens take win streak to 9 games

Associated Press

MONTREAL — Even when the Montreal Canadiens get outplayed lately, they have Carey Price in net to save the day.

The Canadiens were outshot 52-27 by the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday night but Price's stellar goaltending and three special teams goals lifted Montreal to a 5-3 victory that extended its season-opening winning streak to nine games.

The Canadiens are a victory away from tying the NHL record set by the Maple Leafs in 1993-94 and matched by Buffalo in 2006-07. Their next game is Tuesday at Vancouver.

Blue Jackets 4, Avalanche 3: Ryan Murray and Brandon Dubinsky scored goals early in the third period and Columbus came back to beat host Colorado for its first win in nine games this season.

Boone Jenner had two goals, and Sergei Bobrovsky made 31 saves for the Blue Jackets. Their 0-8-0 start was the worst since the New York Rangers lost their first 11 games in 1943-44.

Blackhawks 1, Lightning 0 (OT): Jonathan Toews scored his first goal of the season 17 seconds into overtime to give host Chicago a victory over Tampa Bay in a rematch of the Blackhawks' Stanley Cup victory.

A determined Toews netted the winner when he barreled into the Tampa Bay zone, and muscled between Anton Stralman and Valtteri Filppula to the net. Rookie goalie Kristers Gudlevskis stopped Toews' initial chance, but the Chicago captain knocked in his own rebound.

Red Wings 3, Canucks 2 (OT): Gustav Nyquist scored in overtime and visiting Detroit beat Vancouver to end a four-game losing streak.

Devils 4, Sabres 3: Adam Henrique scored twice and added an assist and New Jersey beat host Buffalo for its fourth straight victory after an 0-3-1 start.

Flyers 3, Rangers 2 (SO): Sam Gagner and Claude Giroux scored in a shootout to lift host Philadelphia past New York.

Mark Streit and Scott Laughton scored in regulation, and Steve Mason had 37 saves for the Flyers. Mason stopped Dominic Moore to end it.

Panthers 6, Stars 2: Nick Bjugstad had a goal and an assist in Florida's victory over host Dallas.

Sharks 5, Hurricanes 2: Joel Ward had a hat trick and San Jose beat visiting Carolina to end a three-game losing streak.

Wild 3, Ducks 0: Devan Dubnyk stopped 15 shots for his first shutout of the season and 15th of his career, leading host Minnesota past reeling Anaheim.

Coyotes 4, Senators 1: Mikkel Boedker scored three goals and Arizona beat host Ottawa to end a four-game losing streak.

Penguins 2, Predators 1 (OT): Phil Kessel scored 41 seconds into overtime to lift Pittsburgh past host Nashville.

Chris Kunitz also scored, and Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 37 shots to help Pittsburgh win for the fourth time in five games.

Islanders 3, Blues 2 (OT): Mikhail Grabovski scored his first goal of the season 4 minutes into overtime in New York's victory over host St. Louis.

John Tavares scored his fifth of the season and extended his points streak to six games for the Islanders. Kyle Okposo also scored, and Frans Nielsen had two assists.

Mets look to Harvey for strong start

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Looking for a fast start in the World Series, the hard-throwing New York Mets will hand the ball to Matt Harvey.

They hope to have a healthy Yoenis Cespedes against the Royals, too.

With their opponent now in place, Mets manager Terry Collins announced his rotation Saturday when the team worked out at Citi Field. Harvey was picked to pitch the opener at Kansas City on Tuesday night, followed by Jacob deGrom in Game 2.

When the best-of-seven series shifts to New York, the National League champions will turn to rookies Noah Syndergaard and Steven Matz.

"I do think the depth of our starting pitching gives us a good chance against almost anybody," general manager Sandy Alderson said.

Collins said the Mets wanted to give deGrom an extra day of rest, and they like going into Kauffman Stadium with their top two starters. They also feel good about

Syndergaard pitching at home, where he's been most successful.

"We thought that's a good mix," Collins said, adding Harvey could be available out of the bullpen in a potential Game 7.

No matter which starter is on the mound for the Mets, one thing is certain: He throws hard.

New York delivered 5,752 pitches clocked at 95 mph or better this season, by far the most in the majors, according to STATS. (The Royals were second at 4,315).

That makes for an intriguing matchup against a Kansas City lineup that struck out the fewest times of any team in the regular season and had the highest contact rate in the big leagues.

Royals batters hit a major league-best .300 on heaters 95 mph or faster, STATS said.

"We're not going to change the way we go about things. We've still got to pitch to our strengths and our strength is power," Collins said. "I still think we'll strike some people out because our guys have got good stuff."

Harvey shut down the Chicago Cubs in

the NL Championship Series opener and won both his playoff starts.

Last season's NL Rookie of the Year, deGrom is 3-0 with a 1.80 ERA in three post-season outings.

Syndergaard, the hardest thrower of the group with a fastball that tops out around 99-100 mph, is 1-1 with a 2.77 ERA in three games — including his first career relief appearance.

Those young arms are the reason the surprising Mets were installed as pick 'em or even a slight favorite to beat a club that's captured consecutive AL pennants.

"We're playing against a team that has a comparable payroll, so if anything I think that is some evidence money is not absolute king," Alderson said.

Kansas City, which finished off Toronto in the ALCS on Friday night, fell just short of a World Series crown last year with a Game 7 loss at home to San Francisco.

"It just seems like they're a competitive, fiery bunch — I think kind of like our guys," Mets captain David Wright said. "It just seems like they kind of never go away. It seems like they always find a way to win."