

## DAGG STARS AS CRUSADERS MAUL JAGUARES

**WELLINGTON:** Israel Dagg made a triumphant return to Super Rugby as the Canterbury Crusaders downed Argentina's Jaguares 32-15 in Christchurch yesterday. The 49-Test fullback scored a brace as the Crusaders ran in five tries to two for a bonus point win that maintains pressure in a tight New Zealand conference. It was the sixth win on the trot for the seven-time champions and Dagg provided the impetus as the Crusaders raced to a 22-3 half-time lead, scoring one try and setting up another. He followed up with a spectacular solo effort after the break to end hopes of a Jaguares revival, brushing off two defenders as he raced to the line.

The 27-year-old, discarded for last year's World Cup

then sidelined with a shoulder injury, is a certain contender for an international recall if he can maintain such blistering form. It was the sixth defeat in a row even though they were nearly at full strength after squad rotations, leaving them with a single win so far in their debut season. "We had a bad game, especially in the first half, but it's part of our learning curve," assistant coach Felipe Contepomi said. "The Crusaders are one of the best teams in the competition and we made a lot of unforced errors. It's disappointing." The Crusaders almost had a try in the first two minutes after stealing the ball in a lineup, with the Jaguares stopping Nemani Nadolo just short of the line.

Andy Ellis made no mistake three minutes later,

touching down after Dagg slipped him a defence-splitting pass. The Crusaders then ran away with the match, notching two tries when Jaguares fullback Joaquin Tuculet was sinbinned for slowing down play. Dagg took advantage of the extra space for his first five-pointer, then Richie Mo'unga stripped the ball from Jeronimo de la Fuente for another to make it 19-3. A Mo'unga penalty then made it 22-3 at half-time. Facundo Isa clawed one back for the Argentines after the restart, darting from the back of a maul then powering past Ellis. The Crusaders restored their dominance with tries to Kieran Read and Dagg, although Santiago Gonzalez Iglesias crossed for a late consolation try to the visitors.— AFP

## DONALD, GRACE SHARE LEAD, AHEAD OF DAY AT HERITAGE

**LOS ANGELES:** Former world number one Luke Donald, stung by his failure to qualify for this month's Masters, was pleased to produce a straightforward 66 on Thursday for a share of the RBC Heritage first-round lead. "It was a pretty simple 66," said England's Donald, who had six birdies and a bogey in a five-under effort that left him tied with South Africa's Branden Grace at Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head, South Carolina. They had a one-shot lead over a quartet of players led by world number one Jason Day of Australia and including Sweden's David Lingmerth and Americans Matt Kuchar and Tony Finau. "I didn't have to scramble very hard and was able to just put it in good positions," added Donald, who rolled in birdie putts of 15 feet, 16 feet, six feet and five feet.

That's a step in the right direction for a player who said attempts to rebuild his swing had ultimately hurt his game, costing him sharpness in his short game and putting. Harbour Town might be just the place for Donald to reverse his fortunes. He owns five runner-up finishes in the Heritage, the most heart-breaking a defeat to Matt Kuchar's chip-in from a bunker two years ago. Grace, playing the Heritage for the second time, also fired six birdies and a bogey to grab his share of the lead in tricky, windy conditions. "It was not the best ball-striking day, but nothing's easy on a day like today with the wind blowing all over the show," Grace said.

Day's five birdies included a 27-footer at the par-four 11th. He fell out of a share of the lead with his only bogey of the day at 18, where he took an unplayable lie in a greenside bunker. "I played some nice golf," Day said. "Obviously that wasn't the finish I wanted. I shouldn't have been in the bunker in the first place. Today was the easiest day and now we got three tough days coming up." Day is coming off a respectable finish where he contended in The Masters, the first of four major championships in 2016. "It is always tough to play the week after a major championship," he said. "I wasn't pleased with how I hit it on Sunday (at Masters). So I came in here Monday to get in a good hitting session." Reigning US Amateur champion Bryson DeChambeau made his pro debut and hit a 70.— AFP



**LOS ANGELES:** Los Angeles Kings goalie Jonathan Quick blocks a shot by San Jose Sharks right wing Melker Karlsson (left) in the first period in round 1, Game 1 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup playoffs at Staples Center on Thursday, April 14, 2016. — AP

## CAPITALS FRUSTRATE FLYERS

**WASHINGTON:** John Carlson scored a power-play goal and Braden Holby made 19 saves to help the Washington Capitals beat the Philadelphia Flyers 2-0 in Thursday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference first-round series. Washington's penalty kill went for 4 for 4 and frustrated the Flyers. Holtby had seven saves on Philadelphia power plays to pick up his third career shutout in the playoffs. Flyers counterpart Steve Mason stopped 29 shots he faced, giving up Carlson's second-period goal on a shot that deflected in off teammate Chris VandeVelde. Jay Beagle added a late goal. The Flyers lost second-line center Sean Couturier to an upper-body injury in the second period. Game 2 is today's night in Washington.

### ISLANDERS 5, PANTHERS 4

John Tavares had a goal and two assists, including one that set up Kyle Okposo's go-ahead goal early in the third period, and New York beat Florida Game 1 of the Eastern Conference series. Thomas Greiss survived a shaky beginning and made 42 saves for the

Islanders in his first playoff start, and Brock Nelson, Frans Nielsen and Ryan Strome added goals for New York. Home-ice advantage in the series now belongs to the Islanders, and they can take a 2-0 lead back to Barclays Center if they prevail when the series resumes in a quick turnaround. Reilly Smith had two goals, Jussi Jokinen had a goal and two assists and Teddy Purcell also scored for the Panthers. Roberto Luongo made 21 saves.

### SHARKS 4, KINGS 3

Joe Pavelski broke a tie with his second goal early in the third period, and San Jose opened its playoff return with a victory over Los Angeles. Brent Burns and Tomas Hertl scored for the Sharks in their first postseason game since losing four straight to the Kings in 2014, completing a seven-game flop in the first round. Los Angeles rode the momentum to its second Stanley Cup title, but both California rivals missed the playoffs last year. San Jose's Martin Jones made 19 saves against

his former Los Angeles teammates in his first career playoff start. Trevor Lewis scored a short-handed goal and Jonathan Quick stopped 19 shots for the Kings. Game 2 is today's at Staples Center. Jake Muzzin and Jeff Carter also scored, but Los Angeles struggled to keep up for long stretches of the two-time champs' return to the postseason.

### STARS 4, WILD 0

Kari Lehtonen made 22 saves for his second career playoff shutout, Jamie Benn had a goal and two assists and Dallas beat Minnesota in Game 1 of the Western Conference series. Jason Spezza returned to the postseason with a nifty goal and added an assist. Spezza was skating along the right side and initially faked a slap shot with just over 8 minutes left in the second period. After skating a few more feet to near the center of the faceoff circle, he took a wrist shot and sent the puck in the upper right corner to make it 2-0. Patrick Eaves and Radek Faksa also scored. Game 2 is today's night in Dallas.— AP