

# TAYLOR EYES RECORD OF LATE MENTOR CROWE

**WELLINGTON:** Ross Taylor goes into the first Test against Bangladesh tomorrow on the brink of equalling his late mentor Martin Crowe's record for New Zealand centuries.

Less than a year after Crowe died of lymphoma aged 53, Taylor's bid, in his return following eye surgery in late November, has become a focal point for New Zealand cricket fans. "Even people in the supermarket come up and mention it," Taylor said, ahead of the two-Test series opener at Wellington's Basin Reserve. Taylor, 32, has 16 centuries to his name while Crowe, who was a key adviser and close friend, holds the New Zealand

record with 17. New Zealand won their first five Test series against Bangladesh but drew their two Tests on tour in 2013, when Taylor posted his highest score yet against the team with an unbeaten 54 in the first game. At the Basin Reserve, Taylor averages a shade under 56 and he has scored centuries there against the West Indies in 2013 and India in 2009.

In his last Test in Hamilton in November, Taylor scored a century against Pakistan before having a small, benign growth removed from his left eye. Batting second would be a preference at green-topped Basin Reserve, which has a history of assisting

the fast bowlers early before flattening out.

But Taylor said New Zealand cannot afford any complacency against Bangladesh, despite the tourists' lack of match play on green wickets.

"Over the last few years they haven't played a lot of Test cricket away from home so it's going to be difficult on that wicket," he said. "We can't take them lightly and I'm sure their fast bowlers will be licking their lips. When there is a bit of green grass it brings the teams a bit closer together."

The tourists have lost all three one-day internationals and three Twenty20s and the two Tests offer a

chance for redemption. But 21-year-old fast bowler Taskin Ahmed, who is expected to make his Test debut, said Bangladesh were looking forward to taking to the green Wellington pitch. "The bowlers are pretty happy-it's greenish and hard, good to bowl on. We're going to enjoy it," he said. Bangladesh have confirmed they have a full squad to call on with captain Mushfiqur Rahim back to fitness after missing most of the limited-overs games with a hamstring injury.

Opener Imrul Kayes has recovered after crashing into an advertising hoarding in Tauranga in the second Twenty20 on Sunday. — AFP

## WASHINGTON BEATS MONTREAL, FLORIDA DEFEATS NEW JERSEY

**MONTREAL:** Alex Ovechkin tied Canadiens great Maurice "Rocket" Richard with his 544th career goal to lead the Washington Capitals to a 4-1 victory over Montreal on Monday night for their sixth straight win. Ovechkin, who has won the Maurice Richard Trophy as the league's goal-scoring leader six times, tied Richard for 29th place on the NHL's all-time scoring list. He also had two assists and his three points moved him within one of 1,000 career points. Evgeny Kuznetsov, Brett Connolly and Nicklas Backstrom also scored for Washington while Braden Holtby finished with 22 saves. Holtby's career-best shutout streak ended at 169 minutes 12 seconds when Tomas Plekanec scored at 7:18 of the third period. Capitals coach Barry Trotz worked his 1,400th regular season game and picked up his 684th win.

**PANTHERS 3, DEVILS 0**  
Roberto Luongo made 28 saves for his 73rd career shutout to lead Florida past New Jersey. Luongo, top among active goalies in shutouts, got his first of the season to move three behind Ed Belfour and Tony Esposito for ninth all-time. Retired Devils great Martin Brodeur holds the NHL record with 125. Reilly Smith, Jussi Jokinen and Vincent Trocheck scored for Florida, which won for the third time in five games. New Jersey was shut out for the third time this season and for the first time at home since a 1-0 loss to Washington last March 25th. Cory Schneider finished with 26 saves for the Devils, who lost their third straight.

**JETS 2, FLAMES 0**  
Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves for his third shutout of the season as Winnipeg won for the third time in four games. Dustin Byfuglien and Blake Wheeler scored for the Jets. Hellebuyck now has five shutouts in his two-year NHL career. Chad Johnson stopped aside 25 shots for the Flames, who had won five of their previous seven. The Jets were playing for the first game since rookie star Patrik Laine was lost indefinitely due to a concussion suffered in Saturday's 4-3 loss to Buffalo. Drew Stafford took Laine's spot on the top line with center Mark Scheifele and right wing Nikolaj Ehlers, a trio that spent some time together last season.

**STARS 6, KINGS 4**  
Jiri Hudler scored the tiebreaking goal with 12:16 to play as Dallas blew a late two-goal lead before hanging on for a wild win. Hudler, Tyler Seguin and Devin Shore had a goal and an assist apiece for the Stars, who ended a three-game losing streak despite giving up four goals to the Kings in just over 10 minutes spanning the final two periods. Brett Ritchie, Jamie Oleksiak and Patrick Shore also scored for Dallas. Drew Doughy scored the tying goal on the power play early in the third period, chasing Dallas goalie Kari Lehtonen. But Hudler capitalized on a turnover behind the Kings' net and scored the first goal of his first season with the Stars moments later. Nick Shore scored a short-handed goal for the Kings, while captain Anze Kopitar and Dustin Brown both broke lengthy goal-scoring droughts during the Kings' rally. — AP



**TAMPA:** Clemson Tigers players pose after defeating the Alabama Crimson Tide 35-31 in the 2017 College Football Playoff National Championship Game at Raymond James Stadium on Monday in Tampa, Florida. — AFP

# WATSON, CLEMSON DETHRONE TOP-RANKED TIDE, 35-31

**TAMPA:** College football's first national championship rematch was even better than the original, with an incredible twist at the end.

Deshawn Watson and Clemson dethroned the champs and became the first team to beat Nick Saban's Alabama dynasty in a national title game, taking down the top-ranked Crimson Tide 35-31 Monday night in the College Football Playoff. Watson found Hunter Renfrow for a 2-yard touchdown pass with a second remaining to give the Tigers their first national championship since 1981. A year after Alabama won its fourth title under Saban with a 45-40 classic in Arizona, Clemson closed the deal and denied the Tide an unprecedented fifth championship in eight seasons.

"That has to be one of the greatest games of all time," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said. The lead changed hands three times in the fourth quarter, but Watson got the ball last. Likely playing in his final college game, the junior quarterback threw for 420 yards and three touchdowns. In two games against Alabama and the most ferocious defense in college football, Watson has thrown for 825 yards and accounted for eight touchdowns. He was sacked four times and took some cringe-inducing shots from All-Americans Jonathan Allen and Reuben Foster.

"You know, I never got the sense that he was rattled," Allen said about Watson. Swinney, the native Alabamian and former Crimson Tide walk-on receiver, has built an elite program at Clemson that was missing only one thing. Now the Tigers can check that box, too.

"Eight years ago we set out to put Clemson back on top," said Swinney, who can turn postgame interviews into a rousing sermon. "We came up a little short last year, but today on top of the mountain, the Clemson flag is flying."

After three quarters of vicious hits and tight defense, Tigers-Tide II ended up looking a lot like the first meeting when the teams combined for 40 points in the fourth quarter.

Clemson took its first lead when Watson found Mike Williams for a 4-yard touchdown a minute into the fourth quarter to make it 24-21.

The Tigers took a 28-24 lead with 4:38 left in the fourth quarter when Wayne Gallman surged in from a yard out. The Tide's offense, which had gone dormant for most of the second half, came to life with the help of a sweet call from newly promoted offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian. Receiver ArDarius Stewart took a backward pass

from Jalen Hurts and fired a strike to O.J. Howard for 24 yards. On the next play, Hurts broke free from a collapsing pocket and weaved his way through defenders for a 30-yard touchdown run to make it 31-28 with 2:07 left.

More than enough time for Watson. "I was calm," Watson said. He said he thought about Vince Young's last-second touchdown for Texas that derailed the Southern California's championship run in the 2005 championship game at the Rose Bowl. He told his team: "Let's go be great." Watson hooked up with Williams and Jordan Leggett, who made great catches for big gains to get to first-and-goal with 14 seconds left.

A pass interference on Alabama made it first-and-goal at the 2 with six seconds left. Time for one more play to avoid a game-tying kick and potential overtime. Renfrow slipped away from the defense at the goal line with the help of some traffic created by his teammates - or maybe it was an illegal pick? - and was alone for an easy toss. It was the walk-on receiver's second TD catch of the night, adding to the two he had last season against Alabama.

When it ended, Clemson's 315-pound defensive lineman Christian Wilkins did a cartwheel and Ben Boulware, one of the toughest linebackers in the country, was in tears.

"Don't call it an upset," Swinney said. "We expected to win this game." The Tigers had

snapped Alabama's 26-game winning streak and beaten a No. 1 team for the first time ever.

"It's been 35 long years!" Boulware screamed. "It's coming home baby! It's coming home!" Alabama was 4-0 in national championship games under Saban. It was 106-6 in games it led at half and 96-0 when entering the fourth quarter with a double-digit lead as the Tide did Monday night. Clemson overcame all those odds.

The Tide jumped out to a 14-0 lead behind two long touchdown runs by Bo Scarbrough in the first half. The 230-pound sophomore back was pretty much Alabama's whole offense for a while, running for 93 yards on 16 carries while Hurts and the passing game struggle. Scarbrough left in the third quarter with a leg injury, but the Tide finally found some other help. Hurts hooked up with O.J. Howard, one of last year's heroes for 'Bama, for a 68-yard touchdown pass to make it 24-14 late in the third quarter.

"Look, there's not one play in the game that makes a difference in a game," Saban said. "We could have done a lot of things a lot better. But I have to say that I was proud of the way our guys competed in the game, and just sorry for all of them that we didn't finish it better." Last season Alabama met its match in Clemson, but prevailed. This time, Clemson made sure the sequel had a different ending. — AP



**TAMPA:** Quarterback Deshaun Watson #4 of the Clemson Tigers poses with cheerleaders after defeating the Alabama Crimson Tide. — AFP



**NEWARK:** Michael Sgarbossa #48 of the Florida Panthers loses his stick as Sergey Kalinin #51 of the New Jersey Devils defends on Monday at Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. The Florida Panthers defeated the New Jersey Devils 3-0. — AFP

### NHL results/standings

Dallas 6, Los Angeles 4; Winnipeg 2, Calgary 0; Washington 4, Montreal 1; Florida 3, New Jersey 0.

Western Conference						Eastern Conference							
Central Division						Atlantic Division							
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS							
Chicago	26	12	5	120	104	57	Montreal	25	10	6	125	97	56
Minnesota	25	9	5	123	85	55	Boston	21	17	5	105	105	47
St. Louis	21	14	5	114	118	47	Ottawa	21	14	4	99	102	46
Winnipeg	20	20	3	118	126	43	Toronto	18	13	8	120	116	44
Dallas	17	16	8	109	125	42	Florida	18	16	8	98	113	44
Nashville	17	16	7	112	110	41	Tampa Bay	19	19	4	118	127	42
Colorado	13	25	1	79	130	27	Buffalo	15	15	9	89	109	39
							Detroit	17	18	5	100	115	39
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division							
San Jose	24	14	2	105	90	50	Columbus	28	7	4	132	85	60
Anaheim	21	13	8	113	113	50	Pittsburgh	26	8	5	139	109	57
Edmonton	21	14	7	120	113	49	Washington	26	9	5	115	84	57
Calgary	22	19	2	114	119	46	NY Rangers	28	13	1	146	107	57
Los Angeles	20	17	4	102	105	44	Philadelphia	21	15	6	123	129	48
Vancouver	20	19	3	105	121	43	Carolina	18	15	7	104	108	43
Arizona	12	22	6	86	128	30	New Jersey	16	18	8	95	124	40
							NY Islanders	15	15	8	106	117	38

# JAGUARS HIRE MARRONE, BRING BACK COUGHLIN, EXTEND CALDWELL

**NEW YORK:** Jacksonville's coaching search landed someone from its past and present. The Jaguars can only hope the old-school combination leads to better results in the future. Owner Shad Khan hired Doug Marrone as head coach Monday and brought back Tom Coughlin to oversee football operations. Marrone replaces Gus Bradley, who was fired in late November after going 14-48 in three-plus seasons.

The Jaguars (3-13) also gave general manager Dave Caldwell a two-year contract extension. So Marrone, Coughlin and Caldwell are now signed through 2019, giving the new regime a three-year window to, at the very least, make Jacksonville relevant in the AFC South. "I have confidence that one day soon we'll look back on today's news as the moment that inspired and ultimately established the Jacksonville Jaguars as a football team that wins, week to week and season to season," Khan said in a statement. "The results

will speak for themselves in time, but with Tom coming in to join Dave and Doug, there is no question the Jacksonville Jaguars are a stronger football team today."

Marrone and Caldwell will report to Coughlin, meaning Jacksonville's first coach is now in charge and will have final say in personnel decisions.

Marrone is the fifth head coach in franchise history, following Coughlin (1995-2002), Jack Del Rio (2003-11), Mike Mularkey (2012) and Bradley (2013-16). "I think Doug has earned the respect of the offensive players, and I'm excited for him to get this opportunity and the direction of this team," quarterback Blake Bortles told AP in a text message.

### DECISION MAKER

Coughlin, a winner of two Super Bowls in 12 seasons with the New York Giants, will serve as executive vice president of football operations. Coughlin, who led the Jaguars to four

playoff appearances in his first five years, will have final say in the NFL draft and in free agency. Caldwell has been the primary decision maker in all personnel moves the last four years. "I am honored to welcome Tom Coughlin back to Jacksonville, where winning was customary under his leadership," Khan said. "I know he expects the same in his return to head our football operations, and that's good news for us and Jaguars fans everywhere. The extension of Dave Caldwell's contract speaks to his excellent work thus far and the continued importance of complementing our talented and promising roster."

Khan, who hired Jed Hughes of Korn Ferry International to help with the search, also interviewed Atlanta offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan, Tampa Bay defensive coordinator Mike Smith, New England offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels and Arizona offensive coordinator Harold Goodwin for the head coaching job. He ended up keeping Marrone, who

served as Jacksonville's interim coach for the final two games. The Jaguars won one and blew a late lead in the season finale at Indianapolis. Players seemed to rally around him, but after the loss to the Colts, rookie cornerback Jalen Ramsey said a "complete flip will serve us good."

Marrone and Coughlin could provide that. They surely will bring a different vibe, a much more disciplined approach that will put more emphasis on winning games than Bradley did. "I can see what they're doing," veteran tight end Marcedes Lewis told AP. "These are good moves for a young team, a team that needs to be held to a certain standard. Marrone's a good man. He's good for the culture."

"It's not like we're bringing in a brand new coach and he's going to wipe the face of the earth of everything we've built," Marrone likely will keep offensive coordinator Nate Hackett, providing some stability for the inconsistent Bortles. The 2014 first-round draft pick has had

three play callers in three seasons. Marrone has been Jacksonville's assistant head coach/offensive line coach since January 2015. He joined the team after two seasons as Buffalo's head coach. He guided the Bills to a 15-17 record before opting out of his contract because of uncertainty over potential organizational changes. The Bills went 9-7 in Marrone's second season in 2014, the franchise's only winning record since 2004. The 70-year-old Coughlin led the Jaguars to a 68-60 record in eight seasons. Coughlin resigned last January after a dozen years with the Giants, but made it clear he wanted to return to the NFL. He served as a senior adviser to the league's football operations department this season.

"He's got so much experience on myself or on any coach that we have in this building and he's a great individual, so I think you can always learn from people," Caldwell said after Bradley was fired. "There's always a place for knowledge." — AP