

## Sports

# Crusaders thrash Jaguares for 10th Super Rugby title

## Jaguares left in tears in Christchurch

**CHRISTCHURCH:** Richie Mo'unga kicked the Canterbury Crusaders to a record 10th Super Rugby title, and their third in a row, with a 19-3 victory that left the Jaguares in tears in Christchurch yesterday. In a match complicated by a slippery ball, the Crusaders scored the only try through Codie Taylor and Mo'unga landed four penalties for the defending champions as they beat the Argentines. To chants of "three-peat" from the capacity home crowd of 18,000, they extended their run to three back-to-back titles, remain unbeaten in their last 31 games on home soil and have won all 24 of their home play-off games since the competition's inception in 1996.

"Thank god for that," coach Scott Robertson said after the final whistle. "It was a massive relief, and it was a party tonight even though the rugby was pretty uneventful in a rugby sense in terms of points, on defence it was tough, it was a grind but everyone climbed into it and knew that a bit of history was going to be made." In a clash of Test-match proportions, with most of the players either All Blacks or Pumas, the Jaguares put up a gallant showing but could not break the Crusaders defence and their forwards melted as the game wore on.

But their stubborn early resistance and the playing conditions, meant the Crusaders could not make any headway until they abandoned their free-flowing game plan. "It was actually quite slippery out there so we actually found we were better without the ball than with it," captain Sam Whitelock said. "So we kicked those contestable kicks a bit more and tried to put their skills under pressure and at times it worked for us."

It was a tactic that also made Crusaders flanker Matt Todd and the Jaguares' Pablo Matera the two central figures in the game as they fought for possession. The Jaguares have been the surprise of the season, winning their last seven games to make the grand final in only their fourth year in the competition. They believed they could go all the way, and were unhappy even though they lost to the most successful side in the history of the competition. "No one likes losing so of course there's a bit of frustration," coach Gonzalo Quesada said.

### 'In tears'

"Everyone must imagine that the guys should be proud and just happy to be here but the dressing room is very sad and terrible. They guys are in tears." The Jaguares produced a rock-solid defensive effort to withstand a powerful opening attack by the Crusaders over the first 10 minutes.

A subtle break by Matais Moroni then put the Jaguares on attack where Joaquin Diaz Bonilla opened the scoring with a 40-metre penalty. With the game marred by multiple handling errors — the result of a ball made slippery from the combined effects of heavy rain during the day and dew in the evening — the only try came in the 25th minutes when Todd stole the ball and lock Whitelock stormed 20 metres before passing inside for Taylor to score. Mo'unga landed the conversion and a penalty on half-time for the defending champions to turn around with a seven point advantage. Moroni, the standout right wing for the Jaguares, was denied a try at the start of the sec-



**CHRISTCHURCH:** Crusaders players and team members celebrate their win in the Super Rugby final match between New Zealand's Crusaders and Argentina's Jaguares in Christchurch yesterday. — AFP

ond half from a kick-and-chase effort that was shut down by Jack Goodhue on the line. From there the Crusaders went up several gears and while they could not score

another try Mo'unga landed three more penalties, two of them from the destructive efforts of the Crusaders pack at scrum time. — AFP

## Kawhi joins Clippers, as George follows in the NBA blockbuster

**LOS ANGELES:** Kawhi Leonard, who led the Toronto Raptors to last month's NBA title, agreed to a four-year deal worth \$142 million with the Los Angeles Clippers, who also landed playmaker Paul George, according to multiple reports. The blockbuster deal announced by ESPN, USA Today and several other media outlets is part of a reshaping of the NBA that leaves next season wide open without a heavy favorite from either the Eastern or Western Conference.

The Clippers' moves added superstar skills to an already solid team that went 48-34 last season, losing to Golden State in the first round of the NBA playoffs. The club, founded in 1970, has never reached a conference final. Leonard was named NBA Finals Most Valuable Player in leading the Raptors to the crown. Toronto and the LeBron James-led Los Angeles Lakers tried in vain to sign him for next season. It was the second NBA Finals MVP award for Leonard, the 28-year-old forward who also won the honor with San Antonio in 2014.

Leonard, who returns to his hometown, averaged a career-best 26.6 points this past season along with 7.3 rebounds and 3.3 assists a game. In the playoffs, Leonard lifted his averages to 30.5 points and 9.1 rebounds a con-

test. New NBA free agent contracts cannot be signed until later Saturday, when teams will begin confirming deals as they are completed. In all, there have been more than 80 major free agency deals worth more than \$3 billion.

"This has been the craziest NBA summer ever!!!" tweeted free agent swingman Jamal Crawford. With Leonard and George and guard Patrick Beverley, all among the top defensive players in the NBA as well as formidable point producers, the Clippers should instantly become title contenders in the Western Conference.

George comes to from Oklahoma City in a trade deal. The Clippers sent Italian Danilo Gallinari, 20-year-old Canadian guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and several draft picks sent to the Thunder. George, 29 and also from the Los Angeles area, averaged 28.0 points, 8.2 rebounds, 4.1 assists and an NBA-best 2.2 steals a game. The departure of George also puts Oklahoma City in a rebuilding position that might push them to trade superstar Russell Westbrook.

### Lakers scramble quickly

Former Lakers legend Jerry West, now an executive with the Clippers, has frustrated his former club. Foiled in their bid to have Leonard join James and Antonio Davis in a 'Big Three', the Lakers instead switched to spending their remaining salary cap funds to surrounding James and Davis with enough supporting talent to make them a solid contender in a wild western conference.

They signed Danny Green, an ex-Clipper who played for Toronto last season, to a two-year deal worth \$30 million, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope on a two-year deal worth \$16 million. JaVale McGee also agreed to a two-



Kawhi Leonard

year deal worth \$8.2 million deal to remain the Lakers' center. "That LAL vs. LAC rivalry is going to be (fire emoji)," tweeted Kevin Love, a former Cleveland Cavaliers teammate of James. The Clippers and Lakers will be trying to overtake Golden State, who have lost injured Kevin Durant to Brooklyn.

Add to that a revamped Utah team powered by French big man Rudy Gobert and a Houston squad featuring scoring champion James Harden and star guard Chris Paul and the Western Conference looks up for grabs. In the Eastern Conference, the Raptors will be weakened by the loss of Leonard and Green. The Milwaukee Bucks, who won an NBA-best 60 games last season, and the Philadelphia 76ers, who revamped the lineup around Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons, look the top contenders. — AFP



**LAUSANNE:** Noah Lyles of the US poses next to a screen reading his time for the Men's 200m as he celebrates after breaking the meeting record in the discipline and winning the race during the IAAF Diamond League competition in Lausanne. — AFP

## Lyles becomes the fourth-fastest 200m runner of all-time

**LAUSANNE:** American Noah Lyles became the fourth-fastest man in history over 200 metres with a stunning Diamond League victory in 19.50 seconds at Lausanne on Friday. The 21-year-old was expected to face a close challenge from Andre De Grasse, but the Canadian was left trailing in third as Lyles laid down a serious marker ahead of September's World Championships in Doha.

"Oh my God, would it be crazy if I said yes?," said Lyles when asked if he expected to run so fast. "The worlds-I've been waiting for this since 2017, for so long, but I have no pressure as I have never participated in a big championship." Only world-record holder Usain Bolt (19.19sec), his fellow Jamaican Yohan Blake (19.26sec) and four-time Olympic gold-medal winner Michael Johnson (19.32sec) have run quicker.

Lyles will now have the US Track and Field Championships, which run from July 25-28 in Iowa, in his sights. "I was even disappointed that the trials are postponed until July (from June)," he added. "It makes me wait even more, and I want to show that I'm the best." Running in lane 7, Lyles seized a clear lead coming out of the bend and was never going to be caught in the final 100m. Ecuador's Alex Quinonez snatched a

surprise second place from lane 8, ahead of De Grasse (19.92sec), running 19.87sec.

### Wins for Fraser-Pryce, Gatlin

Two-time Olympic champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce powered to a dominant victory in the 100 metres to confirm her return to the upper echelons of sprinting, while reigning world champion Justin Gatlin won the men's race. The 32-year-old Jamaican, on the comeback trail after taking time away from the sport to give birth to her son Zion, clocked 10.74 seconds to beat European champion Dina Asher-Smith into second. Fraser-Pryce had already impressed when finishing second at the Jamaican trials last month, managing the same time (10.73sec) as winner Elaine Thompson.

She won the 100m gold medals at both the 2008 and 2012 Olympics, before having to settle for bronze behind compatriot Thompson in Rio de Janeiro three years ago. Fraser-Pryce will be a contender for a medal at the worlds if she can maintain this kind of form. Her time was only 0.02secs slower than Marion Jones' 21-year-old meeting record. Britain's Asher-Smith, 23, ran a season's best time of 10.91sec to beat world silver medallist Marie-Josée Ta Lou (10.93sec) into third.

American veteran Gatlin proved his is still capable of defending his world 100m title later this year with a second consecutive Diamond League win. The controversial 37-year-old, who has twice served doping bans in his career, claimed victory in 9.92sec, having run 9.87sec to triumph in Stanford last weekend. The 2004 Olympic champion beat fellow countryman Michael Rodgers (10.01sec) and Canada's Michael Rodgers (10.07sec). "I feel good, I feel strong," said Gatlin. — AFP

## Teunissen 'dream' winner of dramatic Tour opening stage

**BRUSSELS:** Dutch rider Mike Teunissen won a chaotic opening stage of the Tour de France yesterday after a collision in the final kilometre blew the bunch sprint wide open in Brussels. The 26-year-old Jumbo-Visma rider becomes the first yellow-jersey holder on the 2019 Tour and the first Dutchman to lead the race since Erik Breukink 30 years ago. Teunissen edged Peter Sagan in a photo finish at the winning line, with the Slovak taking the green sprint points jersey after he won the early intermediate sprint.

"I never thought I could beat the sprinters, but in the end I got it," said Teunissen. "I started cycling with these kind of dreams. It's a dream come true. I'll remember this day for a long, long time." Australian rookie Caleb Ewan took the young rider's white jersey after staying clear of the crash. The race was marked by two falls as young Dutch sprinter Dylan Groenewegen, who many tipped for the stage win, caused a mass fall as the tension mounted a kilometre from home.

One of the Tour de France overall favourites, Denmark's Jakob Fuglsang also crashed 18km from the finish but struggled back to the peloton looking shocked and bleeding from the head. Greg Van Avermaet claimed the first King of the Mountains polka dot jersey after winning an intense struggle on the 7.8 percent gradient Mur de Grammont climb at 45km, which often features in the Flanders one-day classics.

The 34-year-old Van Avermaet, on his golden Olympic champion bike, was in yesterday's early breakaway, from which he also came second on the day's other, lesser, Bosberg climb securing the polka dot jersey after just 50km. Half a million fans and well-wishers turned out as the race embarked in balmy sunshine from Brussels city centre, passing the Grand Place, the Royal Palace and the European Commission building before a 194.5km loop through the lush Belgian plains. — AFP



**BRUSSELS:** Dutch rider Mike Teunissen celebrates his best sprinter's green jersey on the podium of the first stage of the 106th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Brussels and Brussels yesterday. — AFP

## NHL notebook: Sullivan gets a 4-year extension

**NEW YORK:** Pittsburgh Penguins coach Mike Sullivan agreed to a contract extension through the 2023-24 season on Friday. Sullivan's extension will begin after the 2019-20 campaign. He has won two Stanley Cup titles since becoming Penguins coach in December 2015. "Mike has done a great job delivering four 100-plus-point seasons with our team," Pittsburgh general manager Jim Rutherford said in a statement. "To win back-to-back Cups in this era speaks volumes of him as a coach."

His instincts in managing the inter-workings of our team both on and off the ice has been impressive." The 51-year-old Sullivan is 174-92-34 as coach of the Penguins with the club reaching the playoffs in all four seasons. Pittsburgh won the Stanley Cup in 2016 and 2017, making Sullivan the first American-born coach to win multiple Stanley Cups.

### Scott Harrington

Defenseman Scott Harrington has re-signed with the Columbus Blue Jackets on a three-year deal that runs through the 2021-22 season. Harrington, who was a restricted free agent, played in 73 games with the Blue Jackets last season and had two goals and a career-best 15 assists. "Scott Harrington is a very smart, reliable defenseman who made great strides to become a regular contributor on our blue line last season," said Jarmo Kekalainen, the team's general manager. "He works very hard and has continued to improve steadily over the past three seasons. Scott has shown himself to be an excellent leader who has earned the respect of his coaches and teammates and we look forward to his continued contributions to our club."

### Arizona Coyotes

The Arizona Coyotes signed forwards Michael Bunting and Hudson Fasching to two-year, two-way contracts, the team announced. Terms of the deals were not announced. Bunting, a fourth-round draft pick by the Coyotes in 2014, made his NHL debut with the Coyotes last season, scoring one goal in five games. He also played 52 games with the Tucson Roadrunners of the AHL, tallying 19 goals and 22 assists. Fasching, taken in the fourth round by the Los Angeles Kings in 2013, appeared in 22 games over three seasons with the Sabres, notching a goal and two assists. He finished with 16 goals and 17 assists in 64 games with the Roadrunners last season.

### Cedric Paquette

The Tampa Bay Lightning re-signed forward Cedric Paquette to a two-year, \$3.3 million contract. Paquette scored a career-high 13 goals while posting 17 points last season. The 25-year-old has 67 points (40 goals, 27 assists) in 316 games with the Lightning over the past five-plus seasons. Tampa Bay also re-signed forward Carter Verhaeghe to a one-year, two-way contract. The 23-year-old had 82 points (34 goals, 48 assists) in 76 games for Syracuse of the American Hockey League last season.

### Philip Broberg

The Edmonton Oilers signed their top 2019 draft pick-defenseman Philip Broberg-to a three-year, entry-level deal on Thursday. Financial terms were not announced. Broberg, 18, was the No. 8 overall pick in the draft and the third defenseman taken. With AIK of the Swedish Allsvenskan League, Broberg had two goals and seven assists in 41 games during the 2018-19 season. He added eight points (two goals, six assists) for AIK J-20 in the Swedish SuperElit League. — Reuters