

Sports

# Jaguars overturn 27 point deficit, rookie Purdy stars for 49ers

## They couldn't have written a better script: Trevor Lawrence

MIAMI: The Jacksonville Jaguars pulled off a remarkable playoff comeback, fighting back from 27 points down to beat the Los Angeles Chargers 31-30 while rookie quarterback Brock Purdy led the San Francisco 49ers past the Seattle Seahawks 41-23 in the NFL playoffs on Saturday.

A last second, 36-yard field goal from Riley Patterson completed an astonishing turnaround from the Jaguars, who had trailed 27-0 late in the second quarter of the AFC wildcard clash. It was the third-biggest comeback in NFL playoff history and came after Jacksonville quarterback Trevor Lawrence endured a nightmare first half, throwing four interceptions.

"They couldn't have written a better script," Lawrence said. "We are never out of the fight." The game had all the hallmarks of a blowout as the Chargers took advantage of Jacksonville's turnovers, with a pair of rushing touchdowns in the first quarter from Austin Ekeler.

Asante Samuel had grabbed three of the picks for the Chargers, who extended their advantage to 27-0 with Gerald Everett collecting a nine yard touchdown pass from Justin Herbert and Cameron Dicker converting a 23-yard field goal.

"I was breaking, not a good record in the first quarter, I had a couple of interceptions, we were not looking good offensively but we just kept believing in one another," Lawrence said. The Jags gave themselves some hope just before the interval with Lawrence finding Evan Engram with a nine yard touchdown pass, but there was no sign of what was to come.

Jacksonville began the second half with a 14-play, 89-yard drive which ended with Lawrence finding Marvin Jones in the corner of the end zone. After a Cameron Dicker 50-yard field goal for the

Chargers, Lawrence threw a 39-yard touchdown pass to Zay Jones.

With 5:25 left in the fourth, Lawrence connected with Christian Kirk and then reached across the line for a two-point conversion. That left Jacksonville needing just a field goal to complete the stunning result and a ten-play, 61-yard drive left Patterson to convert from 36-yards and set off the wild celebrations.

### Purdy puts nerves aside

San Francisco quarterback Purdy, who only took on the starting role last month after injury to Jimmy Garoppolo, became the first rookie quarterback with three touchdown passes and a rushing touchdown in a playoff game.

Putting any early nerves aside, Purdy threw for 332 yards and no interceptions while running back Christian McCaffrey rushed for 119 yards. The 49ers made a strong start, opening up a 10-0 lead when McCaffrey rushed three yards into the end zone to finish off a drive that had seen him produce a blistering 68-yard run.

Seattle responded early in the second quarter with Kenneth Walker III's seven-yard rushing TD. A 33-yard field goal from Robbie Gould for the 49ers made it 13-7, but Seattle got themselves in front when quarterback Geno Smith found D.K. Metcalf with a 50-yard scoring pass.

Another Gould field goal restored San Francisco's advantage but then some ill-discipline from the normally rock solid Niners defense allowed the Seahawks to go in at half-time with a 17-16 lead. Smith was sliding when Jimmie Ward inexplicably dived into a low tackle conceding a 15-yard penalty that led to Jason Myers's 56-yard field goal.

But San Francisco started the second half in



JACKSONVILLE: Austin Ekeler #30 of the Los Angeles Chargers carries the ball against the Jacksonville Jaguars during the first half of the game in the AFC Wild Card playoff game at TIAA Bank Field in Jacksonville, Florida. — AFP

emphatic fashion with a 13-play drive ending in a quarterback sneak from Purdy. Smith was then sacked by Charles Omenihu with Nick Bosa recovering the ball for a decisive turnover. Purdy connected with Jauan Jennings with a 33-yard pass and then found Elijah Mitchell with a short pass which the running back took into the end zone. The 49ers went for the two-point conversion, Purdy finding

tight-end George Kittle to make it 31-17. Seattle fell further behind when they left Deebo Samuel in acres of space to collect a pass from Purdy and burst down the left for a 74-yard touchdown. When Smith was picked off by Deommodore Lenoir it was all over for a Seattle team who had snuck into the playoffs when the Green Bay Packers lost their final game of the regular season. — AFP



NAPLES: Napoli's Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen (R) celebrates with Napoli's Georgian forward Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (C) after he scored a goal during the Italian Serie A football match between Napoli and Juventus at the Diego-Maradona stadium in Naples. — AFP

## Napoli's title dream fuelled by 'goal twins'

MILAN: Dazzling duo Victor Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia have Napoli dreaming after starring in a five-goal massacre of Juventus which made them clear favourites to claim a first Serie A title in over three decades. Luciano Spalletti's team have bewitched much of Europe with their all-action football this season and the way his two star attackers combined to destroy Juve on Friday night and secure a nine-point lead on champions AC Milan suggests that this time southern Italy's biggest club are the real deal.

Osimhen took his league tally to 12 with a brace, while Kvaratskhelia netted his ninth of the season in all competitions and had a hand in all the others as Juve and their eight-match winning streak were blown away in Naples. The pair set up each other's goals with the crowning moment Kvaratskhelia's inch-perfect cross which allowed Osimhen to head in Napoli's fourth midway through the second half at a packed, and delirious Stadio Maradona.

On Sunday daily La Repubblica crowned them "the goal twins", the same nickname given to Roberto Mancini and recently deceased Gianluca Vialli who shot Sampdoria to their one and only league title in 1991. Napoli last won the Scudetto

the previous season, at the tail end of Diego Maradona's reign in Naples before he was chased out of Italy in disgrace.

Kvaratskhelia is the closest Napoli have come to replicating the Maradona magic, his seven league goals matched with as many assists and an air of attacking menace which has taken his team to another level. "He's an extraordinary player, the best of the lot, the most complete," said Spalletti on Friday.

"In some situations he's simply devastating and he's got the courage to try things out." Meanwhile the astonishing form of Nigeria striker Osimhen has made him look like the club's best centre-forward since Edinson Cavani.

### On fire Osimhen

The 24-year-old has scored 11 times in as many games in all competitions since returning from a thigh injury in mid-October, and Spalletti thinks there is even more to come. "Osimhen is such a great striker. The potential he has is scary, I'm excited to see what he can do in future," Spalletti said.

"He still has a remarkable amount of room for improvement." The one negative note for Napoli is that they will not have their hardcore fans following them away from home after they were barred from travelling for two months on Saturday.

The ban was put in place after serious clashes between Napoli's ultras and their Roma counterparts last weekend, a mass brawl at a service station which temporarily shut down one of Italy's most important motorways. — AFP

## Nadal facing tough test in Australian Open defence

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal opens his Australian Open title defence Monday feeling vulnerable and against a dangerous young opponent, with women's top seed Iga Swiatek also facing a tricky encounter as she targets a maiden crown.

The first Grand Slam of the year kicks off at Melbourne Park with the men's world number one ranking at stake and a new women's champion set to be crowned after Ashleigh Barty's shock retirement following her win last year. Spanish great Nadal, 36, has lost six of his past seven matches, including his opening two this year, ahead of a difficult afternoon clash on Rod Laver Arena against Britain's in-form Jack Draper.

"Probably one of the toughest first-round (games) possible, being seeded," said the 22-time Grand Slam winner and top seed. "Young, powerful, growing very, very fast on the ranking, playing well." The fast-improving Draper, 21, made the semi-finals of the Adelaide International this week and said he would not be overawed, despite Nadal being an idol.

"I want to go and compete hard and really play well and I want to go and win the match, of course. So that will be the plan," he said. Nadal surged to the title last year with a thrilling five-set win over Russia's Daniil Medvedev, who faces American Marcos Giron on centre court in an evening match.

His run to a first Australian crown since 2009 came in the absence of nine-time champion Novak Djokovic, who is back this year and heavy favourite after missing the 2022 event when he was deported over his COVID vaccination stance.

The 35-year-old Serbian begins on Tuesday against Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena, bidding not just for a 10th title and to equal Nadal's 22 Slams, but to reclaim the top world ranking. "I like my chances," said Djokovic, who is in form, winning at Adelaide last week after ending 2022 with another ATP Finals triumph.

He can return to the top by lifting the trophy. So can Norway's Casper Ruud and Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas, according to the governing body ATP. World number three Ruud can also become world number one by reaching the final, as long neither Djokovic nor Tsitsipas win the title.

If none of those scenarios play out, the reign of Carlos Alcaraz, who is not playing in Melbourne due to injury, will continue. Tsitsipas opens his campaign against France's Quentin Halys on Margaret Court



MELBOURNE: Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return during a practice session at the Melbourne Park ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on January 15, 2023. — AFP

Arena, with Ruud in action on Tuesday. Top seed Swiatek is clear favourite having dominated women's tennis following the retirement in March last year of Barty. The Pole secured eight WTA titles in 2022 and became the first woman in six years to win two Grand Slams in the same season - at Roland Garros and New York.

With retired great Serena Williams and two-time Melbourne winner Naomi Osaka also missing, it is almost certain that there will be a new name on the Daphne Akhurst trophy. The only former title-holders in the draw are out-of-sorts Sofia Kenin, who won in 2020, and Victoria Azarenka, whose second Australian Open triumph was a decade ago. — AFP

### Today's matches on TV

#### ARABIAN GULF CUP

Iraq v Qatar 16:15  
Dubai Sports 1

Bahrain v Oman 20:15  
Dubai Sports 1

#### SPANISH LEAGUE

Cádiz CF v Elche CF 23:00

beIN Sports HD 1

beIN Sports HD 2

#### ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Empoli v UC Sampdoria 22:45

AD SPORTS Premium 1

# Classifieds

### Hospitals & Clinics

#### Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000

#### Physiotherapy Hospital

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134

#### Clinics

Nuzha Industrial Shuwaikh	22526804
Qadsiya	24814764
Dasmah	22515088
Bneid Al-Gar	22532265
Shaab	22531908
Qibla	22518752
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22459381
Mirqab	22451082
Sharq	22456536
Salmiya	22465401
	25746401

### Change of Name

I, SAIFUDDIN (current name in passport) holder of Indian Passport No. Z3810159 having permanent Address NAJAMPURA, SAGWARA, DISTT. DUNGARPUR, RAJASTHAN, INDIA, PINCODE NO. 314025 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Given name: SAI-

FUDDIN and Surname: BURAKSHA (C#2833) - 16-01-2023

I, DIANA AGNELA FALEIRO, holder of Passport No. L3856658, do hereby change my name to DIANA AGNELA (as Given Name) PEREIRA (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name DIANA AGNELA PEREIRA and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C#2832) 15-1-2023

Automated enquiry about the CivilID card is 1889988