

Patriots' Brady leads Pro Bowl fan voting

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, with 141,750 votes, is leading all players in voting by fans for the 2016 Pro Bowl.

NFL
NFL.com announced Wednesday that Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers (120,242 votes) ranks second overall, followed by Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton (114,368 votes), Atlanta Falcons running back Devonta Freeman (103,334 votes), Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski (101,674 votes) and Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton (94,810 votes).

Fan voting for the 2016 Pro Bowl will continue online and on web-enabled mobile phones at www.NFL.com/probowl/ballot until it concludes on Tuesday, Dec. 15. NFL players and coaches will cast their votes on Dec. 18. The Pro Bowl players will be announced Dec. 22 on

NFL Network.

The Pro Bowl players are determined by the consensus votes of fans, players and coaches. Each group's vote counts one-third toward determining the 88 All-Star players who will be eligible for the Pro Bowl Draft.

Players will later be assigned to teams through the Pro Bowl Draft during the week leading up to the game. The 2016 Pro Bowl will be played on Sunday, Jan. 31.

The Pro Bowl will continue using the revised game format that debuted in 2014, with NFL Legends captains having final say over Pro Bowl Draft decisions. The Pro Bowl will remain "unconferenced," with several playing rules changed. Players will be selected without regard to conference in vot-

ing by fans, coaches and players, and later assigned to Pro Bowl teams via a fantasy football-style draft.

Four leading vote getters — comprised of two offensive and two defensive player captains — will be joined by two NFL.com fantasy football champions to draft players.

The fantasy football champion will have Hall of Fame help. Two Pro Football Hall of Fame wide receivers — Michael Irvin and Jerry Rice — will serve as NFL Legends captains for the 2016 Pro Bowl.

Gates playing through knee injury

SAN DIEGO — Not that he had to, but tight end Antonio Gates continues to show what makes him so special. He's playing with a strained MCL in his left knee and it's obvious when watching him get off the line and then try to make cuts in his routes. Gates is having trouble getting a separa-

tion, but he won't ask out. "I'm just trying to fight through it and lead by example to show these guys what it's like to be a pro in this league," said Gates, who finished with six receptions for 69 yards on Monday night against the Chicago Bears. "This is what it takes to be successful. Sometimes you have to fight through these situations when it's not as comfortable as you like."

Wide receiver Malcom Floyd's career could be over if it's true he sustained a torn labrum in his right shoulder in Monday's loss to the Bears. Floyd, 34, who announced before the year that this would be his last season, laid out on a Philip Rivers deep pass, landing hard on his upper body.

"He gave it a great effort,"

Rivers said.

Rivers leads the NFL with 3,033 passing yards and is on pace to extend his club record for the most seasons with 4,000 passing yards to seven. At this rate, he will throw for 5,392 yards and become the sixth NFL player with a 5,000-yard passing season.

Danny Woodhead is on pace for 926 receiving yards, which would surpass the single-season mark for a Charger running back. In 1992, Ronnie Harmon had 914 receiving yards.

Disney chairman Bob Iger has joined the Chargers and Raiders in their efforts to build a stadium in the Los Angeles suburb of Carson.

Packers to start Starks over Lacy

Coach Mike McCarthy said running back James Starks will start ahead of Eddie Lacy when the Green Bay Packers play host to the Detroit Lions on Sunday. McCarthy said Wednesday

that Starks "is our No. 1 back right now going into Detroit."

Lacy has rushed for more than 1,100 yards in each of his first two seasons, but has just 308 yards through eight games this season. Starks is the team's leading rusher with 334 yards on five fewer carries.

"He's played very well, he's earned that opportunity," McCarthy said of Starks. "I'm not a big believer in just riding one running back the whole season. We'll stay with the 1-2 punch."

Starks rushed for a season-high 112 yards on just 10 carries in starting against the San Diego Chargers on Oct. 18. Meanwhile, Lacy left Sunday's loss at the Carolina Panthers with a groin injury after rushing for just 10 yards on five carries.

McCarthy said he expected Lacy to be a full participant in practice this week, indicating the change is not injury related.



KEN BLAZE | USA TODAY FILE

Carson Palmer hopes to help the confident Arizona Cardinals get a victory against the Seattle Seahawks on Thursday night.

Cardinals accept underdog role in Seattle

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

TEMPE, Arizona — The Seattle Seahawks swept the Cardinals a year ago, but as Arizona coach Bruce Arians **NFL** likes to note, they did it against backup quarterbacks.

The last time the Cardinals' regular starting quarterback, Carson Palmer, played against the Seahawks, Arizona won. Palmer had four passes intercepted in that game in 2013, so Arizona really won in spite of him.

Still, Arians' point has validity. The Cardinals are a much better team when Palmer starts. And he believes he's much better than he was in 2013, when the Cardinals won in Seattle.

"There is no comparison," he said.

Drew Stanton started in Seattle a year ago, and he was decent. But his teammates didn't support him.

Receiver Jaron Brown dropped a pass in the end zone right before the half, kicker Chandler Catanzaro missed a field goal and the Seahawks blocked a punt when the Cardinals had only 10 men on the field.

While Stanton did an admirable job filling in last year, the Cardinals are a different team with Palmer starting.

"If you have your quarterback, you have a chance," Arians said. "As far as confidence in the locker room when Carson is in there, it's totally different."

"Any time we're playing with him on the field, we feel like we can beat anybody, anywhere."

Palmer said the Cardinals have had this game circled for some time.

"It's a huge game for us, a big game for them," he said. "It's a game that means a ton for us."

"Obviously, as you get to this point in the season,

every game becomes more meaningful and more 'must-winnish.'"

The Cardinals appear to be adopting the storyline that this series is not a rivalry, because Seattle has dominated in recent years.

"Not on their side," Palmer responded when asked if it was a rivalry. "It is to us, that's all that matters."

NOTES: Safety Tyrann Mathieu has played well overall this season, intercepting two passes, returning one for a touchdown. He also is third on the team in tackles. But Mathieu also has given up six touchdown passes, third-most in the NFL, according to profootballfocus.com. All but one of the scores has come in the red zone. ... QB Carson Palmer has 20 touchdown passes, the most by a Cardinal through eight games. The franchise record for a season is 30, set by Kurt Warner in 1998.

MEDICAL WATCH: C

Lyle Sendlein (shoulder) missed practice time this week but could play against Seattle. That would be a bonus because he has experience handling the noise at CenturyLink Field. ... Cornerback Jerraud Powers (hamstring) is expected to play after missing the Browns game before the bye. ... Wide receiver John Brown (hamstrings) is expected to play after missing the Browns game. ... Outside linebacker Alex Okafor (calf) is expected to play after missing the last three games.

SERIES HISTORY: 33rd meeting, series is tied at 16-16. The Seahawks lead 15-11 since both teams have been in the NFC West. Seattle won both games a year ago, 19-3 in Seattle and 35-6 in Arizona. Cardinals quarterback Carson Palmer missed both games a year ago because of injuries. The teams meet again in Arizona the final game of the season.

Keene State edges Husson to advance

KEENE, New Hampshire — Kayla Renaud's goal just one minute into the game stood up as Keene State **COLLEGE ROUNDUP**

edged Husson University of Bangor 1-0 in the first round of the NCAA Division III Field Hockey Championship on Wednesday.

The Owls advanced to meet No. 1 Bowdoin College (18-0), in a four-team regional at Brunswick on Saturday. Game time is 11 a.m.

Renaud took a shot from the top of the penalty circle that deflected off a Husson stick and sailed over the shoulder of goalie Anne-Marie Provencal.

Meghan Dwyer made four saves in posting her third shutout, including a sprawling stop on Libby Kain with 42 seconds left. Defender Paige Heffernan was credited with two defensive saves for the 17-7 Owls.

Provencal finished with 12 saves for 8-12 Husson, which is still looking for its first NCAA tournament victory.

Keene State had a 21-10 edge in shot attempts and had 10 penalty corners to Husson's six.

Women's soccer UNE 5, Framingham State 0

At Biddeford, Edie Pallozzi and Becca Murphy combined for all five University of New England goals as the No. 4 Nor'easters shut out No. 5 Framingham State in the quarterfinals of the ECAC Division III New England Championship on Wednesday.

UNE (12-7-0) advances to face No. 1 Wentworth Institute of Technology on Saturday.

The Nor'easters were unable to get into the scoring column until the 43rd minute when Murphy found the back of the net off assists from Jessica Meader and Harley Chute.

Murphy made it 2-0 just 5:15 into the second half, taking a pass from Jackie Dickerson and driving a low shot past Sullivan for her seventh marker.

The Nor'easters then put the game out of reach when Pallozzi tallied three goals in a span just over four minutes.

Brielle Robinson made three saves for the shutout, while Sara Sullivan finished with nine stops.

Yanks discuss dealing Gardner to Mariners

WIRE SERVICE REPORTS

The New York Yankees have discussed a potential trade of outfielder Brett Gardner to the Seattle Mariners, according to The New York Post.

The discussions were not characterized as far along or limited only to the Mariners, but Yankees general manager Brian Cashman has said he is open to talking about any player on his roster and there is sentiment that New York has similar type outfielders in Gardner and Jacoby Ellsbury.

According to the report, Gardner has been a player new Mariners general manager Jerry Dipoto has respected since his days in the Arizona and Los Angeles Angels organizations. Dipoto recently completed a six-player deal with the Tampa Bay Rays that landed outfielder Boog Powell, a prospect with a similar skillset as Gardner, but Powell is not expected to be ready for the major leagues next season.

With all of their starting pitchers outside of Luis Severino and Adam Warren eligible for free agency over the next two years, the Yankees are searching for young starting pitchers who are under team control for several years.

Gardner, 32, has three years and \$39.5 million re-

maining on his contract and would fit the Mariners' desire to add higher on-base percentage hitters in the lineup ahead of Robinson Cano, Nelson Cruz and Kyle Seager. Gardner's .343 on-base percentage last season was better than nine of 11 Mariners who had at least 200 plate appearances last season.

Overdose possibility in Hanson's death

A cause has yet to be determined in the death of former major league pitcher Tommy Hanson, but authorities believe an overdose is possible.

His former Atlanta Braves and Los Angeles Angels right-hander was not breathing Sunday when emergency squads tried to assist him at a friend's home near Atlanta. But there was no indication from Coweta County sheriff's officials what might have resulted in the overdose.

An initial "crime incident" report included the word overdose. In a statement Wednesday, the sheriff's office said an officer spoke with hospital emergency room workers but didn't specify details of the conversation.

The 29-year-old Hanson died Monday night at an Atlanta hospital. He was visiting a friend on Sunday when rescue crews arrived and transported him to an emergency room.

Bruins' Pastrnak has small crack in foot

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Boston Bruins forward David Pastrnak has a small, non-displaced **NHL** crack in his foot, general manager Don Sweeney said Wednesday.

There is no timetable for Pastrnak's return. He hasn't played since Oct. 31. "We have to get him some time," Sweeney said. "The course of action doesn't change for him except he just needs a little bit more rest."

The 19-year-old Pastrnak has two goals and four points in 10 games this season. He was selected by the Bruins in the first round (25th overall) of the 2014 NHL draft.

Meanwhile, defenseman Dennis Seidenberg, who had back surgery in late September, is getting closer to a return.

"There hasn't been any pain; it's all about power in my lower leg and pushing off," said Seidenberg, who participated in practice Wednesday. "That's something I have to monitor and judge."

Stars assign Shore, Nemeth

The Dallas Stars re-signed forward Devin Shore, a product of the University of Maine, to the Texas Stars of the American Hockey League on Wednesday.

Dallas also loaned defenseman Patrik Nemeth to its AHL affiliate on a conditioning assignment.

Nemeth, 23, has appeared in two games this season for Dallas, registering three shots on goal. Per terms of the loan, his conditioning assignment can span up to 14 days. The 6-foot-3, 230-pound native of Stockholm, Sweden, was selected by Dallas in the second round

(41st overall) of the 2010 NHL draft.

Shore, 21, appeared in his first three career NHL games with Dallas and posted a plus-2 rating. At the time of his recall on Nov. 1, he was second in the AHL in goals (eight) and tied for sixth in points with 11 in nine games. The 6-1, 205-pound native of Ajax, Ontario, was selected by Dallas in the second round (61st overall) of the 2012 draft.

Blackhawks recall Mashinter

The Chicago Blackhawks recalled forward Brandon Mashinter from the Rockford IceHogs of the American Hockey League on Wednesday.

Mashinter, 27, is tied for second on the IceHogs with seven points (four goals, three assists) through 12 games in his first season as team captain. The Bradford, Ontario, native has notched 27 penalty

minutes in 23 career NHL games with San Jose and the New York Rangers.

Mashinter has tallied 201 points (100 goals, 101 assists) and 538 penalty minutes in 410 career AHL games.

Coyotes reassign Jeffrey

The Arizona Coyotes assigned forward Dustin Jeffrey to the Springfield Falcons of the American Hockey League on Wednesday.

Jeffrey, 27, registered one assist and a plus-2 rating in one game with the Coyotes this season. The 6-foot-1, 205-pound native of Sarnia, Ontario, has recorded 12 points (five goals, seven assists) and two penalty minutes in 10 games with the Falcons. He led Springfield in goals, assists and points at the time of his recall.

Jeffrey was originally drafted by the Pittsburgh Penguins in the sixth round of the 2007 NHL draft.



Gates



Brady



Hanson