

QBs

Continued from Page B5

streak of 155 games. That also ended Drew Brees' string of 45 consecutive games with a touchdown pass, the fifth-longest in NFL history.

The flip side of that is the Texans have won four in a row to stay tied with Indianapolis for first place in the AFC South. The current streak — Houston's longest since it won six straight in 2012 — came on the heels of an 18-point loss at Miami.

"We just had enough of playing like that," Texans linebacker Brian Cushing said. "We started simplifying things and playing hard. Just had a bad taste in our mouth from a couple of those games and just internally promised each other it wouldn't happen again."

In other words, those losses were getting old.

NOTEBOOK: The Seahawks had a big setback in their win, losing star tight end Jimmy Graham to a season-ending knee injury. The bad break came in the fourth quarter when Graham landed awkwardly while trying to make a touchdown catch. He lay in the end zone for several moments, clutching his right knee before being carted off wearing a hip-to-ankle air cast. The team confirmed after the game he suffered a torn patellar tendon. Before he was injured, Graham had four catches for 75 yards. ... Not only did the Vikings tighten their grip on first place in the NFC North, but also Adrian Peterson had a typically impressive day. He ran for 158 yards and two touchdowns against the Falcons to be-



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Matt Hasselbeck runs off the field after the win against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Lucas Oil Stadium on Sunday in Indianapolis. The Colts won 25-12.

SAM RICHE | TNS

come the sixth player in league history to have 30 games with at least 125 yards rushing. The other five in that group are in the Pro

Football Hall of Fame: Barry Sanders, Jim Brown, Walter Payton, Eric Dickerson and Emmitt Smith. Sunday's effort was a nice bounce-back

for Peterson after gaining just 45 yards in a Week 11 loss to Green Bay. Peterson said of that 30-13 defeat, "We took it personal."

UM-Augusta holds off UMPI 62-61

AUGUSTA — The University of Maine-Augusta Moose **COLLEGE ROUNDUP** surged to a nine-point lead with three minutes left and then held off the UM-Presque Isle Owls for a 62-61 men's basketball victory Monday night.

Two free throws by Keith Chesley gave UMA a 59-50 lead with 3:03 left, but Kevin Collins hit a layup and Chase Vicaire canned a 3-pointer for UMPI to cut it 59-55 with 2:21 left.

Joseph Davila made a layup for UMA a minute later, but UMPI's Brandon McGill answered with a conventional three-point play to cut it to 61-58 with 1:01 left. UMA's Brandon Rogers added a free throw 12 seconds later and the Moose

held UMPI to three free throws over the final 48 seconds to secure the victory.

Chesley paced UMA (4-5) with 18 points and 11 rebounds while Rogers chipped in with 15 points and 13 rebounds.

Kim Collins scored 11 points to lead UMPI (3-2) and Vicaire added 10. Maurice Harris contributed nine points, 10 rebounds and four assists.

Women's Basketball UMA 69, UMPI 52

At Augusta, UMaine-Augusta took a four-point lead at the end of the first quarter and then outscored UM-Presque Isle 23-12 in the second quarter en route to the victory.

Jamie Plummer sparked UMA (9-3) with 20 points, 10 rebounds, four assists and three steals. Caitlin LaFoun-

Women's Basketball

MAINE vs. COLBY

Time, site: Tuesday, 7 p.m., Cross Insurance Center, Bangor

Records: Maine 5-3, Colby 4-0

Series, last meeting: UMaine leads 9-1, UM 83-45 on 2/19/86

Key players: **Maine** — 5-8 G Sigi Koizar (17.4 points per game, 3.8 rebounds per game, 4.1 assists per game, 1.4 steals per game), 6-2 F Mikaela Gustafsson (8.1 ppg, 4.6 rpg, 2.1 apg), 5-10 G/F Liz Wood (10.6 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 3.3 apg, 3.0 spg), 5-8 Sophie Weckstrom (7.3 ppg, 2.3 apg), 5-10 G Chantel Charles (6.7 ppg), 5-11 F Bella Swan (5.1 ppg, 3.1 rpg); **Colby** — 5-9 G/F Desi Smith (13.8 ppg, 2.3 spg), 5-8 F/G Carylanne Wolfington (12.5 ppg, 4.8 rpg), 5-11 C Haley Driscoll (9.5 ppg, 5.3 rpg), 5-10 C Emily Davis (7.8 ppg, 6.3 rpg), 5-7 G Mia Diplock (7.0 ppg, 3.0 apg, 2.3 spg)

Game notes: The Black Bears must guard against a letdown after going 2-1 at the Gulf Coast Showcase in Florida. That included Sunday's 52-41 win over Louisiana State of the Southeastern Conference. Koizar was named to the all-tournament team after averaging 18.3 points on 55 percent shooting. She netted a career-high 30 in the win over Missouri State. UMaine has allowed 58 points or fewer in four of its last five games. Division III Colby, coached by Augusta native and former Black Bears guard Julie Veilleux, is unbeaten coming off Sunday's 62-57 victory over NESCAC rival Bates. Veilleux played at UMaine from 2000-2004. The Mules are averaging 74.8 ppg, shooting 47 percent from the field while holding opponents to 30 percent shooting. Wolfington is a former Hall-Dale HS standout, while Diplock played at Cony. This will be UMaine's seventh game in 12 days and its fifth in the last seven. The Bears have done so largely with an eight-player rotation. Colby lost in the NESCAC quarterfinals last season.

tain added 15 points and 10 rebounds while Carmen Bragg netted 10 points. Sydney Churchill scored

25 points to lead UMPI (0-5) and Amanda Hotham contributed 14 points and seven rebounds.

USC hires Helton as permanent head coach

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

USC hired Clay Helton as permanent head coach after he guided the Trojans to a 5-2 record and a berth into the Pac-12 championship game as the interim coach, athletic director Pat Haden announced Monday.

The Trojans beat UCLA 40-21 on Saturday to win the Pac-12 South and clinch a spot in the conference title game against Stanford this Saturday.

Helton signed a multi-year contract, the school said. According to ESPN, Helton received a three-year deal and the contract includes incentives for a two-year option if he attains certain goals.

"After weeks of searching the collegiate and pro ranks, interviewing candidates, and speaking with head coaches, athletic di-

rectors, NFL executives, and very knowledgeable football people, and after observing Clay in action the past seven weeks, it became abundantly clear that what we were searching for in a coach was right here in front of us," Haden said in a statement.

"Choosing a coach is an inexact science. In Clay's case, there is exactness. We have a man with unquestioned integrity. He is a fantastic person and he is real. Clay is a leader of young men. He is a terrific communicator. He brings high character, stability, continuity, consistency, toughness and resiliency to our program.



Helton

"Clay was not hired because his team defeated UCLA Saturday. He was not hired because many current and former players voiced their support for him. And he was not hired because he is a Trojan. He is our choice because we believe he can win Pac-12 and national championships here. Clay Helton is the right man at the right time for the USC football program."

Helton, 43, replaced a fired Steve Sarkisian on Oct. 12 after serving as offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach.

"I am extremely humbled and grateful to (USC president) Max Nikias, Pat Haden and the Trojan Family for having the opportunity to be the head football coach at the University of Southern California," Helton said in the university

release. "During my six years here, I have learned the standard of excellence that it takes to be a Trojan. I understand the expectations of this great university and welcome the challenge. I am so proud to have the chance to lead what I feel is the pinnacle of college football and to represent our Trojan Family."

Helton, who has been at USC since 2010, was an assistant coach for 10 years at Memphis.

A source told ESPN's Brett McMurphy that USC never talked with Philadelphia Eagles coach Chip Kelly, but school officials did have discussions with a representative of PSU coach Jimbo Fisher and former Rutgers coach Greg Schiano — along with other current NFL coaches and assistants.

he told Jordan on the phone. "He is actually one of the first people that I told over the summer. We've been in frequent contact."

Bryant, speaking after the Lakers' 107-103 loss to the Indiana Pacers at Staples Center, said he asked Jordan when he knew the time was right to retire.

"We had some laughs, went back and forth about it," Bryant said. "But the important thing for him, he said, 'Just enjoy it. No matter what, just enjoy it. Don't let anybody take that away from you, no matter what happens, good or bad. Enjoy it, man.'"

UMaine

Continued from Page B4

The relentless Bates logged 57 tackles, including 14½ for a loss of yardage (7½ sacks), and powerhouse Ricard made 53 stops among which were a team-leading 16½ TFLs. Samuels topped UMaine tacklers with 72 and made two interceptions.

Also departing are linebacker and No. 2 tackler Cabrinni Goncalves (57 tackles), end Mike Kozlowski (50) and linebacker John McCabe of Winslow (37), along with cornerback Sherrod Baltimore (24 tackles, two interceptions).

Returning veterans are Ricard, linebacker Christophe Mulumba Tshimanga (37 tackles, one interception), safeties Jason Matovu (44 tackles), Sinmisola Demuren (34) and Darrius Hart (knee injury), cornerbacks Najee Goode (33) and A.J. Dawson (24), tackle Darius Greene (23), safety Spencer Carey of Fairfield and corner Tayvon Hall (19).

Because of inexperience and injuries, UMaine was to build its depth by fast-forwarding numerous players into more prominent roles. Several from that group should be ready to step in next season.

That group includes linebacker Sterling Sheffield; safeties Jeffrey DeVaughn and Mozai Nelson; linebackers Zach Hume, Ben Davis and Austin Brown; and linemen Schuyler Huntington, Andrew Stevens, Connor Walsh and Jean Point-DuJour.

Assuming good health, UMaine will welcome back two starters up front, one at linebacker, two at safety and another at cornerback. Yet there is much more experience among those who saw significant playing time.

In spite of its sporadic efficiency and general inconsistency, the UMaine offense will build around numerous returning starters. Among them are quarterbacks Dan Collins and Drew Belcher, each of whom appeared in nine games without firmly establishing himself as the definitive leader of the offense.

Collins, a junior, completed 135 of 273 passes (.495) for 1,542 yards and six touchdowns. He was intercepted 10 times.

Belcher, a sophomore, provided more of a run-first mentality and finished as UMaine's No. 2 rusher with 314 yards on 88 carries. He was 78 of 120 (.650) for 728 yards with four touchdowns and two interceptions.

The new staff will be faced with the task of grooming one of those veterans, or a newcomer, into a productive leader amidst what likely will be a new offense.

The run game was hampered by the Black Bears' inability to establish themselves along the front line. Senior All-CAA first-team center Bruce Johnson was

the glue of the unit, one that included only one other senior in part-time starter Ben Wezel.

Jamil Demby and Isaiah Brooks held down the tackle slots, while Dan Burrows and John Reddington were the guards. Guard Cody Levy also saw considerable action.

UMaine wound up 94th in FCS total offense (321.7 ypg) and was 105th running the ball (115.4 ypg) and tied for 107th in scoring (14.9 ppg) — in a field of 123 teams nationwide.

UMaine cracked the top 54 percent in passing yardage (206.4 ypg) but was only 93rd in third-down conversion percentage at .337.

Tailback Nigel Beckford (123 carries, 526 yds., four touchdowns) wound up as the leading rusher, and Darian Davis-Ray showed promise despite missing seven games with a knee injury.

UMaine will have experience not only at quarterback and on the offensive line next fall, but it also welcomes back a pair of front-line wide receivers in Micah Wright (61 receptions, 818 yds., five touchdowns) and Jordan Dunn (56-595-3), both of whom earned All-CAA second-team accolades.

Senior John Hardy (22-241-1) departs, but sophomores Jared Osumah (14-110) and Jaleel Reed (14-104-1) bring significant game experience to the table.

The Black Bears were hampered by injuries at tight end, where Jeremy Salmon (11-90) was relegated mostly to blocking when available. Jason Simonovich and Max Andrews of Holden provide some depth there.

On special teams, UMaine must replace senior placekicker Sean Decloux, the program's all-time leading scorer with 230 points. He fought through injury to hit 11 of 18 field goals and 13 of 15 PATs.

The Black Bears will have a known commodity in junior transfer punter James DeMartini, who averaged 40.3 yards per kick. Sophomore Sam Lenson backup up both positions.

UMaine football fans should be cautiously optimistic about next year's squad, even in the face of a pending overhaul. The offense has seven returning full-time starters, including three up front, along with two quarterbacks, a third-year tailback, two proven wideouts and a fullback.

The most compelling lingering question is whether Collins or Belcher has the talent and savvy to become a consistent winner in the CAA.

There is a big chunk of experience to be replaced on defense, which loses six full-time starters. The saving grace for UMaine could be that the staff found quality playing time for several up-and-comers who may be ready to step in and join Greene, Mulumba Tshimanga, Matovu, Goode and Demuren as full-time starters.

Gronk

Continued from Page B5

visibly [upset] after a loss. And I think everyone felt the same way. Hopefully we can use it as motivation going forward," he added, explaining that it was upsetting how the game's final 20 minutes played out.

There was room for frustration and complaint after the Patriots squandered a 21-7 lead as they muffed a punt, lost Gronkowski and were on the wrong side of a number of borderline officiating calls.

"Like I said, there's things that we could have done better. And it's certainly not to

leave it up to a call here or a call there or one player," Brady said.

Brady rattled off details of calls that went against the injury-hit Pats during the 30-24 loss and some that could have been called on Denver. After getting that off his chest, the man with four Super Bowl rings put his business face back on.

"There's things across the board that we need to do a better job of and we can do a better job of. And that's what the focus is going to be this week," said Brady, whose freshly motivated Patriots host a Philadelphia Eagles (4-7) team on Sunday that have lost three consecutive games.

Cimbollek

Continued from Page B5

Kobe

Continued from Page B5

has exposed the dangers of getting older as an athlete."

West, 77, served in the Lakers' front office when he pulled off one of the most one-sided trades in NBA history, shipping journeyman center Vlade Divac to the Charlotte Hornets for Bryant. West now holds a post with the Golden State Warriors.

Bryant, limited by injuries to six games two seasons ago and 35 last season, announced on Sunday "this

season is all I have left to give."

"My heart can take the pounding, my mind can handle the grind, but my body knows it's time to say goodbye," he wrote on the Players' Tribune website.

West said Bryant's grit and willingness to play through injury made him "something special."

"It's a testament to his integrity in terms of how he approached the game," West said. "Many players would not have played with some of the things he had. He reminds me of a gladiator, that he was going to play, come

hell or high water, regardless of how he felt."

West said he is disappointed Bryant cannot end his career playing at a level "he's been accustomed to."

"In watching him play, it's evident that this is a tough game for him to play right now," West said. "It's sad."

Bryant reached out to Michael Jordan about his plans.

The 37-year-old Bryant recounted the story when he called the legendary former Chicago Bulls guard this summer.

"This is it," Bryant said