

# Coaching carousel: Kelly eyes 49ers' job

BY JEFF REYNOLDS  
THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Turns out Chip Kelly might be on the unemployment line only a matter of days. The former Eagles head coach, fired Dec. 29 after going 26-21 in Philadelphia with a pair of 10-win seasons, is interested in replacing Jim Tomsula in San Francisco. Here's what else is spinning around the mill as the NFL coaching carousel shifts into gear:

**Cleveland Browns**  
**OUT:** Mike Pettine was fired Sunday. He went 10-22 in two seasons.  
**WHO'S NEXT:** Chicago Bears offensive coordinator Adam Gase is a top candidate. He has been an acquaintance of owner Jimmy Haslam and might not be

bothered by the peculiar personnel department structure being controlled by lawyer Sashi Brown. Detroit Lions defensive coordinator Teryl Austin is on the interview list, as is Patriots ofensive coordinator Josh McDaniels. Don't rule out a swing at Chip Kelly, the man the Browns tried to hire three years ago.

**Miami Dolphins**  
**OUT:** Joe Philbin was fired on Oct. 5. He was 24-28 in four seasons. Interim coach Dan Campbell could interview for the full-time position.  
**WHO'S NEXT:** Campbell was handed a 1-3 team and went 5-7. The Dolphins are planning to interview Mike Shanahan and Lions defensive coordinator Teryl Austin, who was able to coax top

effort out of Ndamukong Suh in Detroit.  
**New York Giants**  
**OUT:** Tom Coughlin, 69, met with Giants co-owners Steve Tisch and John Mara on Monday afternoon, and informed them that he is stepping down as the team's head coach. The Giants posted three straight losing seasons for the first time since 1978-80.  
**WHO'S NEXT:** Sean Payton is the name leading the rumor mill in New York since early December. Offensive coordinator Ben McAdoo could get a look but don't rule out top college coaches. This is a top-three NFL job because of the market and ownership structure.  
**Philadelphia Eagles**  
**OUT:** Chip Kelly was fired Dec. 29 after three seasons and a 26-21 record.

**WHO'S NEXT:** Owner Jeffrey Lurie wants a coach who understand what it means to coach the Eagles. That reduces the candidate pool significantly, but Chiefs offensive coordinator Doug Pederson and current Eagles' staffers Pat Shurmur and Duce Staley meet that prerequisite.  
**San Francisco 49ers**  
**OUT:** Jim Tomsula was fired Sunday after one season.  
**WHO'S NEXT:** Chip Kelly could push for this job, which would give him some say in personnel and bring him back to the West Coast. Kelly was 26-21 with the Eagles and might be willing to attempt a salvage job with quarterback Colin Kaepernick. Sean Payton is reportedly on the radar of GM Trent Baalke, but the Saints would require a second-round pick in return.

Other veteran coaches with ties to the franchise could get a look, including Mike Holmgren and Mike Shanahan.  
**Tennessee Titans**  
**OUT:** Mike Mularkey, interim head coach, could return. Head coach Ken Whisenhunt was fired Nov. 3.  
**WHO'S NEXT:** Based on CEO Steve Underwood's comments at the Whisenhunt news conference at midseason, tickets and making a splash will matter. Keeping Mularkey is not a splash. Hiring Chip Kelly was a shore-to-shore prediction when Kelly came available before the New Year based on his relationship with franchise quarterback Marcus Mariota. Guessing what the unpredictable and seemingly unstable management structure might do in Nashville is risky busi-

ness, and Kelly can cash sizable checks by sitting out a year to make himself available for top college jobs.  
**Indianapolis Colts extend Pagano's contract**  
An 8-8 season was enough to save Chuck Pagano's job, as the Indianapolis Colts gave their head coach a contract extension late Monday night. Pagano's contract was due to expire at the end of the league year in March. After a long day of meetings with players, his coaching staff, and then team owner Jim Irsay, Pagano remains as the head coach. Pagano finished his fourth season in charge in Indianapolis, and the team reached the playoff the first three years. He has a 40-23 regular-season record with the Colts, 3-3 in the postseason.

# Pats coordinators targeted by teams

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — The New England Patriots' top assistant coaches are often in high demand this time of year as other NFL franchises try to fill out open head coaching jobs. According to ESPN's Adam Schefter that is once again the case as the Dolphins have reportedly requested permission to interview New England offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels and defensive coordinator Matt Patricia for the Miami head coaching vacancy. McDaniels, who was the Broncos head coach for a year-plus from 2009-10, is no stranger to the interview and head-coaching search process. He has both interviewed and turned down interviews in recent years in his second tour of duty leading the Patriots Tom Brady-paced passing attack. But Patricia is a newcomer to the job-hunt landscape. The bearded defensive boss is in his fourth season running Belichick's defense and 12th as an NFL assistant, all in New England. The Patriots' defense has outperformed expectations in 2015, including the development of first-time Pro Bowlers Malcolm Butler, Jamie Collins and Chandler Jones.



New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (left) speaks with New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick and offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels (center) during the second half of the New England Patriots' 33-16 win over the Tennessee Titans at Gillette Stadium on Dec. 20. McDaniels, who was the Broncos' head coach for more than a year, is no stranger to the interview and head-coaching search process.

By rule, assistants from playoff bye teams can interview for head coaching jobs this week. It's a process that Belichick is quite familiar with over the years having seen the likes of Charlie Weis, Romeo Crennel, Eric Mangini, McDaniels and Bill

O'Brien go through the interview process and land head jobs in either the NFL or college. The current power structure in Miami includes owner Stephen Ross, executive vice president Mike Tannenbaum and newly named general

manager Chris Grier, son of former Patriots vice president of player personnel Bobby Grier. If the Dolphins are granted permission to speak with McDaniels, Patricia or both, the interviews would likely take place later this week.

# Maine high school football stars honored

BY ERNIE CLARK  
BDN STAFF

Andre Miller of Old Town, Curtis McLeod of Maine Central Institute in Pittsfield and Dylan Severance of Brewer are among the members of the recently announced **HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL** 2015 USA All-USA Maine high school football team. Miller earned first-team offense status for his work as a wide receiver in leading Old Town to an undefeated regular season and berth in the Class C North championship game. McLeod was a second-team selection on the offensive line who was instrumental in MCI advancing to the Class D state final each of the last two years. Severance was named a second-team linebacker for his work in helping Brewer advance to the Class B North championship game. Austin McCrum, a senior

quarterback from Thornton Academy in Saco, was named the state's offensive player of the year. He passed for 1,956 yards and 20 touchdowns and rushed for 358 yards and four touchdowns in leading the Golden Trojans to their second straight Class A state championship and third in four years. Alec Clark, an offensive guard and middle linebacker from Winslow, was named the defensive player of the year. The Big 10 (Class C North) player of the year, Clark had 54 tackles and five quarterback sacks on defense in leading the Black Raiders to their second straight Class C championship and fourth consecutive regional title. Winslow's Mike Siviski was named the state's coach of the year after guiding the Black Raiders to their seventh state championship under his guidance as well as their second straight 11-0 campaign. This year's team was particularly stingy on defense, yielding 5.8 points per game.

# MMA

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because Sanders took the fight just last Monday as a replacement for injured challenger Waylon Lowe, the bout will be held at a catchweight of 160 pounds. "My only concern was that it was supposed to be a title fight but I told them there was no way I could make 155 on 10 days notice so they agreed to a non-title fight at 160," said Sanders, an Etna native who trains at Young's MMA in Bangor. "After I win on Friday it will look good because I will have beaten Felix on short notice and then he'll probably want a rematch and that one will be for the title and it will be really big." Sanders (9-7) has won three of his last four fights, including a five-round split-decision victory over Lucas Cruz on Oct. 3 in Portland to win the Toe 2 Toe Fights lightweight championship. Cruz represents a common opponent between Sanders and Felix, who similarly scored a split-decision win over Cruz on Dec. 6, 2013. "That not only reiterates that I belong with these guys but that I can beat them," said the 28-year-old Sanders. "The game plan is to put on a great fight and hopefully move up the ladder." Sanders reached out to officials from CES, one of several regional promotions around the country whose live shows are broadcast by AXS-TV, in November after his win over Cruz. "I knew they had the top three or four lightweights in the region under contract, so I said if anything happened to one of Luis' oppo-



Derek Shorey of Dover-Foxcroft lands a kick against John "First Class" Raio of Topsham during their 150-pound mixed martial arts bout as part of the NEF XVII show at Lewiston's Androscoggin Bank Colisee last April. Shorey won by a first-round technical knockout.

nents that I'd be ready for January," said Sanders. An effort to get Sanders elsewhere on CES' Jan. 8 show fell through, then plans turned toward arranging for Sanders to fight for the promotion in March until Lowe pulled out of his match with Felix. "It's a huge opportunity. I'm really looking forward to the challenge," said Sanders, who already was scheduled for a Feb. 7 fight for the Combat Zone promotion in Salem, New Hampshire. "He's the No. 1 guy, and that's the kind of fight I've always wanted." Felix (14-8) has won five of his last six bouts while ascending to the top of the CES ranks. A former high school and college wrestler, Felix also is well known for his striking skills. "I'm getting more comfortable and more confident with my striking, so hopefully I'll get the chance to display that," said Sanders. "If I start getting the better of him I assume he'll take it to the ground, but we'll see."

This will be Sanders' second nationally televised fight and he hopes it turns out better than his 10-second loss to Michael "Venom" Page during Bellator 93 at the Androscoggin Bank Colisee in Lewiston on March 21, 2013. "This is kind of the same situation," said Sanders, "but this time around I think I'm more mature. I'm not going to let the pressure get to me. I'm not going to overthink it, I'm just going to go in there and have fun. "I think that was my problem with Bellator, I took it too seriously and thought of it as too much as a big deal when it's really not. It's a different opponent and it's a different name on the cage but everything else is the same. It's just a fight and I've just got to go in there with the mentality that it's fun, that I was born to do this, and to just fight." Shorey (3-3) learned about his opportunity last Monday from New England Fights co-owner and matchmaker Matt Peterson.

"I said yes immediately," said Shorey, who operates Shatterproof Combat Club in Dexter. "Matt said he thought it would be a great opportunity for me and it's also a great opportunity for people who normally don't get to see me fight." Nordby — whose two previously scheduled opponents for this bout backed out — regularly competes at 135 pounds but agreed to fight Shorey at 145 to alleviate Shorey's need to drop weight on short notice. Nordby is 5-3 with all of his pro victories by rear naked choke. "He's a wrestler who wins by rear naked choke," said Shorey. "Anyone who's followed my amateur career knows that's been my Achilles heel, so this is just a direct challenge that I need to overcome." At 5-foot-10, the 33-year-old Shorey will enter the cage with a six-inch height advantage over his 22-year-old opponent. "I've got the reach advantage, I'm a lot taller than he is, but that hasn't seemed to affect any of his past matches," said Shorey. "He's just a really good, game fighter and I'm excited for the challenge." For Shorey, the chance to perform for a nationwide television audience will be a dream come true. "Honestly it means I can quit fighting, because that was the only goal I had, as vain as it sounds, to fight on TV," said the 33-year-old Shorey, a former high school wrestling state champion for Foxcroft Academy in 1998. "Obviously I'm not going to [retire], but it's an incredible opportunity. I know the caliber of the fight is huge on top of the pressure of fighting on national TV. But I'm ready for it. This is all I've wanted and I'm going to be smiling through it all. Regardless of what happens, I'm going to leave everything in the cage next Friday night."

# Giants

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Owen (1930-53), continued to hold his players to high standards from everything to how they dressed on the field to what they wore to away games. He famously instituted "Coughlin Time" around the facility, a practice in which clocks are set five minutes ahead so that players and staff were in their seats early and ready to go for meetings. "I think it has been evident these last 12 years here how much pride I take in representing this franchise. I am gratified and proud that we were able to deliver two more Lombardi trophies to the display case in our lobby during that time. That is a tribute to our players and staff, and it was truly fulfilling to be the leader of those teams." According to a source familiar with the coach's thinking, he is not yet ready to retire from football despite the grueling toll that the losing had on him. The source said that Coughlin has not ruled out accepting a new position if one should become available that was right for him. "I appreciate the support of John and his family and Steve and his family, and of Jerry Reese and his staff," Coughlin said. Coughlin was hired in Jan-

uary 2004 by then owners Wellington Mara and Bob Tisch, the fathers of John and Steve, respectively. "It is difficult to come up with words adequate to describe the appreciation we have for everything Tom Coughlin has done for our franchise," Mara said in a statement released by the team. "In addition to delivering two Super Bowl titles, Tom represented us with class and dignity, and restored the pride to our entire organization. He has all the qualities you could ever ask for in a head coach, and set very high standards for whoever will succeed him." Wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. only worked with Coughlin for two seasons, and although Beckham is still at an age where Coughlin's old-school ways might rub some the wrong way, the receiver had nothing but good things to say about the veteran head coach. "It's been great since the day I met him," Beckham said. "Initially a younger player would immaturity think, 'Coach is always on you. He's always on you, he's always you... why is he always on you?' "Initially I thought it's because he wanted to be. It was growing up, maturing, and learning that it was because he knew what was in you, he wanted to bring the best out, and he was going to do everything that he could to do that."

# Brady

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Despite Brady's ankle sprain, the Patriots, who are the Super Bowl co-favorites, along with the Arizona Cardinals, at 7-2, are getting healthier just in time for the playoffs. Several starters sat out Sunday's game against the Miami Dolphins — WR Julian Edelman (foot), LT Sebastian Vollmer (ankle), DE Chandler Jones (toe/abdomen) and LB Dont'a High-

tower (knee). But all of them should be ready for the playoffs, which would be a big boost for New England. **NOTES:** TE Rob Gronkowski was targeted seven times but made just two catches for 18 yards on Sunday. Gronkowski drew constant double-teams as Miami showed little respect for New England's other weapons. ... WR Danny Amendola, who had missed one game due to a knee injury, returned and caught two passes for 17 yards. He was targeted just four times as the Patriots employed a conservative game plan.