

# Romo ready to ‘win the whole thing’

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Quarterback Tony Romo is expected to be activated Wednesday and start for the Cowboys, his first start since Week 2, and the last time Dallas won a game.

## NFL NOTEBOOK

Brandon Weeden was released as the Cowboys move forward with two quarterbacks on the roster: Romo and Matt Cassel.

The Cowboys visit the Miami Dolphins this week and play two games in five days, hosting the Carolina Panthers in their annual Thanksgiving home game.

Romo posted a video to his personal Twitter feed Tuesday and at 2-7, knows the Cowboys could need a comeback of monumental proportions to make the playoffs. Romo's post implies just that.

Romo posted a clip from the film "Major League" in which catcher Jake Taylor makes a speech that concludes "I guess there's only one thing left to do. Win the whole (expletive) thing."

Romo broke his collarbone at Philadelphia and missed seven games, all losses, as the Cowboys enter Sunday's game with the Dolphins on the franchise's longest losing streak since 1989.

A Hollywood ending might not be in the cards, but the Cowboys stand only 2 1/2 games back with seven to play in a division that lacks a clear leader. The New York Giants are in first place at 5-5.

## Nicks returns to Giants

Former New York Giants first-round pick Hakeem Nicks is re-joining the team to fill the roster spot created Monday when Victor Cruz was placed on injured reserve.

Nicks, 27, last played for the Giants in 2013, after turning down a contract offer to reach free agency. But from 2009-2013, Nicks had 27 touchdown catches and was the team's No. 1 receiver in 2011 with 76 receptions for 1,192 yards and seven touchdowns. He had 11 TD catches in 2010.

A foot injury curbed Nicks' development.

He signed a one-year deal with the Indianapolis Colts in 2014 and started six games, catching 38 passes for 405 yards and four touchdowns.

Nicks went unsigned since the end of the 2014 season but has worked out for several teams — including spending training camp with the Tennessee Titans.

Cruz was slowed by injuries after missing most of last season with a torn patellar tendon. He eased back into practice only to strain his calf in September and multiple setbacks, most recently last Saturday, led to the decision to have surgery to fix the muscle tear.

Cruz was inactive for all 10 games this season.

## Raiders' Smith facing one-year suspension

Oakland Raiders outside linebacker Aldon Smith is facing a one-year suspension by the NFL

for substance abuse, according to multiple reports.

Smith, who was released by the San Francisco 49ers in August following a string of off-field incidents, pleaded not guilty in September to hit and run, drunken driving and vandalism. The 25-year-old was arrested in August on drunken driving charges in Santa Clara, Calif.

Previously, he was suspended nine games in 2014 for what the league called violations of its policies on substance abuse and personal conduct.

Smith was also arrested in April 2013 at Los Angeles International Airport after being uncooperative during a random secondary screening while passing through security.

The Raiders are expected to stick with Smith during his suspension, according to the NFL Media's Ian Rapoport. A first round pick out of Missouri in 2011, Smith has 3.5 sacks and 28 tackles in nine games for Oakland this season and

47.5 sacks in 59 career regular-season games.

Smith is currently second to Khalil Mack (5.0) in sacks for the Raiders this season, but now will be ineligible to play until late November 2016.

## Seahawks release Super Bowl standout Matthews

The Seattle Seahawks released wide receiver Chris Matthews and signed wide receiver Kevin Smith from the practice squad to active roster on Tuesday.

The 26-year-old Matthews had four receptions for 54 yards in nine games this season for the Seahawks after emerging during last season's Super Bowl with four catches for 109 yards and a touchdown.

Matthews earlier spent time in the Arena League and the Canadian Football League.

Smith was signed Feb. 9 by the Seahawks and was part of the team's practice squad this season.



BDN FILE

Nia Irving of Lawrence High School drives around Abigail Strickland of Thornton Academy in the Class A state championship basketball game in Augusta on Feb. 28. Irving is hoping for another successful season.

# Lawrence High star looking for big senior year

BY LARRY MAHONEY  
BDN STAFF

Nia Irving has accomplished a lot on the basketball court in the past several years.

## HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

The Lawrence High School of Fairfield senior center/forward led her team to its first Class A state championship since 1994, she was Maine's Gatorade Player of the Year last season as well as being chosen a Bangor Daily News All-Maine Schoolgirl first-teamer, and she realized her dream by signing a National Letter of Intent to attend Boston University.

Nia Irving will begin the season with a clean bill of health unlike a year ago when she was coming off anterior cruciate ligament (knee) surgery

Now Irving is looking forward to helping her Bulldogs defend their title, although the realignment to five classes in basketball, including the establishment of a Class AA, means their rivalry with Bangor won't be renewed in the postseason. However, the teams will meet once during regular season on Jan. 30 in Fairfield.

Bangor is in AA North, and Lawrence is in A North.

Lawrence beat Bangor in a memorable Eastern Maine Class A final 46-42 a year ago after the teams split regular-season meetings.

Bangor was the only team to beat Lawrence, which finished 21-1. The Bulldogs topped Thornton Academy of Saco 50-43 in the state final.

Irving doesn't have an opinion on the new alignment.

"I know we're losing out on rivalries against Bangor and Oxford Hills, but I don't care who we play. As long as I'm playing, I'm happy," she said.

The Bulldogs lost some valuable players such as Paige Belanger, Abby Weigang and Jordyn Towers,

but Irving, sharp-shooting guard Dominique Lewis and junior Morgan Boudreau supply coach John Donato with a quality trio to build around.

"We'll find out what's successful for us, and we'll stick with it," said Irving, whose Bulldogs open on Dec. 4 at Messalonskee of Oakland.

"I'm really excited for the season," she said. "We've all improved a lot over the summer and fall. We've got some new moves. It's going to be really interesting to watch us all play together again."

Irving will begin the season with a clean bill of health unlike a year ago when she was coming off anterior cruciate ligament (knee) surgery.

She improved over the course of the season and capped her campaign with a 27-point, seven-rebound performance against Thornton.

The 6-foot-1 Irving averaged 22.5 points, 14.6 rebounds, 3.6 assists and a blocked shot in 2014-15. And she has added another weapon to her already well-stocked arsenal.

She has expanded the range on her jump shot while playing for the Maine Maniacs AAU team during the offseason.

"I shot a lot of 3-pointers, and I've also worked on my one-on-one fast break moves," said Irving.

She doesn't feel there will be any additional pressure on her based on last year's accomplishments.

"I don't go out there looking to score 20 points. I just think about trying to help our team win," she said.

She enjoyed the NLI signing ceremony at Lawrence High surrounded by her family and coaches who have had major influences on her career.

"It was really interesting to finally make it official," said Irving, who fell in love with BU when she was in sixth grade.

Irving expects to be an inside player at BU, although she said, "I'll probably range around a little bit."

"I like to stick inside the post, but if [I] catch the ball at the 3-point line and I'm open, I feel confident enough to take the shot now," she added.

# Patriots adjust to losing Edelman

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

New England Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman is expected to be out six to eight weeks after undergoing foot surgery on Monday.

Edelman had a screw placed into his broken foot after the injury occurred during the unbeaten Patriots' comeback win over the New York Giants on Sunday.

The six- to eight-week window would likely keep Edelman from returning during the regular season, but he could be available for the post-season. If the Patriots receive a bye, their first playoff game would come in mid-January.

The veteran Edelman had a team-leading 61 receptions at the time of the injury on the final play of the first quarter against the Giants. His loss will force quarterback Tom Brady to rely on wide receivers Danny Amendola and Brandon LaFell and tight end Rob Gronkowski.

In Edelman's absence, Amendola finished Sunday's game with 10 receptions for 79 yards. Edelman is also a punt returner.

"There's nothing that's really seamless when you lose a great player," Brady told WEEI Radio in Boston in his weekly Monday interview. "When someone that's been the leading receiver on your team for multiple years and you lose him, it's not like you go, 'OK, well, let's just put someone else in.' He's too good of a player for that."

"You just got to kind of find a way to make some adjustments, and I think we just made some critical plays when we needed to which was really important down the stretch. Certainly defensively and special teams we did, and offensively I thought we just did enough."

A week earlier, the Patriots lost pass-catching running back Dion Lewis to a torn ACL.

"I've got a lot of confidence in Brandon LaFell," Brady explained to WEEI. "Danny's role has been very different than Julian's was for us. I just think they're a little different type of players. And certainly Julian has been incredible for us. Incredible."

"And Danny's had just a great year this year, and really continued from the way he finished last season. It's



JIM O'CONNOR | USA TODAY

New England Patriots wide receiver Danny Amendola is pulled down after a reception during the fourth quarter at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on Sunday. New England defeated New York 27-26. The Patriots will have to rely more on Amendola now that wide receiver Julian Edelman is expected to be out six to eight weeks because of a foot injury.

kind of like when you lose a great player like Dion Lewis, there's different ways you're going to need to produce. We'll need to find different ways to produce with the

guys that are on the field."

Head coach Bill Belichick had plenty of praise for Amendola's performance including the heady final play that set up the winning field goal.

"I thought he showed really good awareness on that, especially on that last play," Belichick said. "If they had tackled us where he caught the ball, it would have been an even tougher kick. It was tough as it was, but it would have been an even tougher kick. Danny showed a great instinctiveness to kind of work back inside and get away from (linebacker Jonathan) Casillas and then get what he could get and get down quickly so the ball could get spotted and we'd have enough time to clock it and kick the field goal, not try to waste time trying to dodge around and make another yard or two and waste time going through the whole end-of-the-play process. I thought his awareness on that was outstanding and his quickness and ability to get up-field and get about an extra six or seven yards after the catch was really critical to the next play, or the field goal two plays later."

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