

Cosgrove

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ence that was increasingly centered in the mid-Atlantic region, that cemented their bond.

“Beating Division I [Football Bowl Subdivision] teams, getting them to the playoffs like he did and just what he had to do with the resources that he had over the years there is really amazing,” McDonnell said. “We used to talk a lot about what we had and what we didn’t have and how he did things and how I do things.” McDonnell, who this week is preparing New Hampshire for its 12th straight Football Championship Subdivision postseason appearance, has the utmost respect for Cosgrove.

“He did it the right way. He did it with class,” he said.

Jake Eaton was the quarterback on UMaine’s NCAA national quarterfinal teams in 2001 and 2002. He gushed when describing the influence Cosgrove had on him as a player and as a person.

“You won’t find a more loyal, passionate and hard-working leader of men than Jack Cosgrove,” said Eaton, who is a high school athletic director and coach in his home state of Vermont. “Cos is integrity personified. His positive influence and impact on his players reach far beyond the game of football.

“He has successfully developed and built a family atmosphere at UMaine football where hard work, character and camaraderie are the foundations of the program,” Eaton continued. “I feel blessed to have played for and learn from such an amazing and inspirational man. I know I am the man I am today because of the lessons learned from him and my absolutely amazing time spent playing football at UMaine.”

Matt King, a consensus first-team All-American in 2006, played linebacker and defensive end for Cosgrove from 2003 to 2006 and later

was signed by the NFL’s New York Jets and Pittsburgh Steelers. He returned to serve as UMaine’s head strength, speed and conditioning coach.

King was shocked to hear that Cosgrove was giving up coaching.

“This guy is Maine football,” said King, who is now a sports performance coach at Columbia University. “I can’t imagine another guy on the sideline next year.”

King, who played at Stoughton (Massachusetts) High School, is among countless prospects whose football potential was recognized only by Cosgrove and his UMaine staff.

That group included Lofa Tatupu, an All-America linebacker for Southern Cal who went on to become the NFC Defensive Player of the Year at Seattle, and defensive lineman Mike DeVito, who plays for the NFL’s Kansas City Chiefs.

“He gave me an opportunity when a lot of other schools thought that I might have been too small or didn’t have good enough grades,” King said. “I’ll forever be thankful for that.”

Despite the fact UMaine seldom was able to attract prized recruits sought by more high-profile Football Championship Subdivision schools, Cosgrove and Co. drew upon longtime coaching connections, a keen eye and persistence to bring in good players.

King said one key dynamic at work at UMaine was the ability to convert players’ potential into success with a program that provided the structure and environment to help them learn and improve.

“He knows how to develop football players and develop men,” King said.

However, the relationship often extended beyond that of player and coach.

“He’s like a second father to me,” King said. “If you mess up, he’ll be quick to tell you that you’re doing something wrong ... and he’ll be the first to congratulate you when you do something well.”

Patriots

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A bizarre play in the third quarter may well have taken seven points away from New England. Brady scrambled to his right and, as he was nearing the sideline, threw 14 yards to an open Amendola, who had only one opposing player between himself and a touchdown.

But a whistle blew and, after a long meeting, the play was blown dead after 14 yards — and Ryan got a sideline penalty for 15 more yards. With the crowd booing, the Patriots kept moving and Gostkowski missed wide right from 54 yards — ending his streak of 31 straight field goals overall and 52 at home.

Some takeaways for the Patriots from the game:

— Take away Edelman? No big deal. Take away Amendola, the guy who took his place? Now that could be a problem. Amendola ran

the Bills ragged to the tune of nine catches for 117 yards but suffered a knee injury not fielding a punt return. In addition, Aaron Dobson, doubtful for the game with a back injury, injured an ankle during the game. No word on either after the game.

— The Patriots can win even on nights Brady isn’t at his best. Brady was chased and hit from the first snap on Monday and finished just 20 of 39 for 277 yards, a touchdown and his third interception of the year. But he had enough to increase his record against Buffalo to 25-3.

— The Patriots are the fourth Super Bowl champion to start the next season with 10 straight wins and have reached double figures in victories for the 13th straight season. The other three Super Bowl champs to start at least 10-0 were the 2011 Green Bay Packers (13-0), the 1998 Denver Broncos (13-0) and 1990 San Francisco 49ers (10-0).

clude games taking place in Portland, Augusta and Bangor. MPBN will announce its coverage schedule in early February 2016.

MPBN

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on creating a Championship Weekend of coverage to include live coverage of all the Friday and Saturday state games and delivering them to MPBN’s state-wide television audience as well as rebroadcasting the games in their entirety that Sunday.

“We are very excited to once again partner with the Maine Principals’ Association and continue our tradition of covering high school basketball and thank them for this opportunity. Offering basketball coverage to every community across Maine is very important to us as an organization,” Mark Vogelzang, MPBN’s CEO, said in the release.

“We believe our Championship Weekend will create considerable excitement in the state as we showcase the top teams and student-athletes competing for their schools and their communities. You never know what might happen on the court at any given time, and MPBN will be there for every play and outcome,” he said.

The state finals will in-

Future up in the air for Manning

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

ENGLEWOOD, Colorado — Peyton Manning spent Monday traveling to Charlotte, North Carolina, for a second opinion on his injured foot from specialist Dr. Robert Anderson.

Brock Osweiler spent his Monday reviewing his first career start and beginning preparations for his second.

There was no surprise when head coach Gary Kubiak announced Monday that Osweiler would make his second consecutive start for next Sunday’s game against the New England Patriots, who roared into their Monday night game with the Bills unbeaten.

Manning is considered week to week, and such was the nature of his rehabilitation that the Broncos opted to leave him back in Denver for the weekend so he could focus on his recovery. He

met with Kubiak on Monday before heading to North Carolina for his appointment with Anderson, and the decision was set to leave him out for another game.

But the performance of Osweiler in Manning’s stead could not be overlooked, either. Manning reportedly is ready to commit to play in 2016, when the Broncos owe him \$19 million.

Although you don’t want to rush to judgment regarding Osweiler’s debut — especially with a Bill Belichick-led defense looming next week — the 20-for-27, 250-yard, two-touchdown performance was a perfect start and one that must have Denver management weighing how to navigate the next turn and then some.

“It’s encouraging,” Kubiak said. “The thing that he’s going to be able to do is see a lot of good things, but he’s also going to look at some things and say, ‘Boy, I can do that. I could have been better in this situation.’ I think he’s going to take a lot from that, but it was encouraging. I think, for a first start in this league.”

Osweiler was composed all weekend — from when he spoke to the team during its Saturday night meeting at a downtown Chicago hotel to the first series, when he guided the Broncos to a

touchdown in just four plays.

“Everybody’s asking the Brock questions, but we knew Brock could do this,” said running back C.J. Anderson. “He’s always been a part of our team and he got an opportunity to show the world, show you guys what he can do — what we’ve always seen in him.”

And with Osweiler at the controls, the offense did something it hadn’t done all year: play a game without a giveaway. The Broncos’ defense remains the league’s best on a per-game and per-play basis; all the team needs is an average offense that doesn’t make mistakes.

Bears’ White ready for first practice

First-round pick Kevin White will take the practice field with the Chicago Bears for the first time in the regular season on Tuesday.

White was the seventh overall pick in the 2015 NFL Draft. He will be limited early as he works back from surgery to repair a stress fracture in his left tibia.

The Bears will have 21 days, beginning Tuesday, to add White to the active roster or shut him down for the year. White is on the reserve/physically unable to perform list.

The West Virginia star had surgery August 23 and a titanium rod was place in

his left leg for stability.

White was drafted by the Bears after a breakout junior season with the Mountaineers and viewed as the replacement for Brandon Marshall, who was traded to the New York Jets.

NFL suspends Panthers’ Alexander for year

The NFL on Tuesday suspended Carolina Panthers defensive Frank Alexander without pay for a minimum of one year for violating the Policy and Program for Substances of Abuse for a third time.

He is the third Panthers player to be suspended this week. On Monday, Panthers defensive end Wes Horton was suspended four games for violating the NFL policy on performance-enhancing substances.

Injured wide receiver Stephen Hill was suspended one game for violating the NFL’s policy and program for substances of abuse.

Alexander, who is on injured reserve, was suspended twice last season for substance abuse violations.

Alexander was drafted out of Oklahoma in the fourth round in 2012.

Manziel

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has gained a good understanding of what it takes to be successful at the quarterback position on this level. It goes well beyond the field. We are going to continue to support him in every way possible, but at this point, we’ve decided it’s best to go with Josh as the starter going forward.”

Manziel, who spent three months in a rehab facility he entered voluntarily in January, can be seen drinking champagne and in a general party atmosphere in photos and video published by the website Busted Coverage.

“Disappointing. Very,” said a visibly frustrated Pettine on Tuesday before a decision had been made.

Pettine only seven days before had named Manziel



CHARLES LECLAIRE | USA TODAY

Cleveland Browns quarterback Johnny Manziel passes the ball against the Pittsburgh Steelers during the first quarter at Heinz Field on Nov. 15.

the starter for the remainder of the 2015 season, a move designed to help the Browns determine if Manziel was an option as the long-term solution at quarterback. The Browns have not had the same starter for three consecutive seasons since re-

turning to the NFL in 1999.

Manziel’s off-field issues cast doubt over his future during his redshirt sophomore season at Texas A&M and despite effort to make changes, the Browns are not seeing the type of commitment expected of a face of

the franchise.

Pettine asked for time to review the video and gather more information about the timing of the video before he announced the change.

McCown started Oct. 11 and helped the Browns beat the Baltimore Ravens, who are up next on Cleveland’s schedule.

Before he returned home to Texas for the bye weekend, Manziel said he was elated for the opportunity on the primetime stage of “Monday Night Football.”

“Coach Pett said I couldn’t ask for a better stage, so I guess he said it pretty well,” Manziel said. “I wanted the chance to be the guy and that was always my goal. I’m excited, I think as I should be. This is a great opportunity with a great group of guys that are going to go out and fight with me every week so I couldn’t be more excited.”

Theriault

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Theriault had signed a contract to run 13 truck series races for BKR, for whom he had driven Super Late Model cars previously.

He wound up running nine races and had two top-five and four top-10 finishes. He never finished lower than 14th and wound up in 24th place in the driver points standings. He was the only driver in the top 24 who didn’t run at least 10 races.

“You always want more. I felt like I could have done a better job in a couple of those races,” said Theriault. “We didn’t execute the way we should have. But, all in all, it has been a year of progress and I hope to keep that going.”

Theriault’s teammate, Tyler Reddick, finished second in the driver and owner standings behind Erik Jones. Reddick caused the accident that sidelined Theriault when he lost control of his truck, slid down the track and sideswiped Theriault, which sent the No. 29 truck careening into the outside wall.

Theriault isn’t sure about his future.

Daniel Hemric, who finished seventh in the driver points, has signed on to join BKR and become Reddick’s teammate next season. Both will run a full schedule.

Keselowski has indicated he wants to run a third truck using several drivers and Theriault said he would be interested in that.

“It would be cool to stay with the team,” said Theriault. “Right now, there

aren’t any doors that are closed. I’d like to drive in the Xfinity or Truck series. It would be great if I could get a full-time ride.”

He drove three races in

the NASCAR Xfinity series for JR Motorsports in 2014.

He will be looking for sponsorship and has hired other people to help him secure sponsors.



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