

## Super Bowl XLIX

# Patriots not dwelling on last Super Bowl loss in Arizona

Past defeat not a deterrent for New England

By HOWARD ULMAN  
Associated Press

CHANDLER, Ariz. (AP) — The road to perfection reached a dead end in the Arizona desert. Now the New England Patriots are back where a Super Bowl championship — and an unbeaten record — barely eluded them seven years ago.

Not that they dwell on their return to the place where the best season in NFL history slipped from their grasp.

"It's not where we play, it's how we play," Tom Brady said Wednesday, "and I'm glad we're here with the opportunity to do something really special."

A win Sunday night against the Seattle Seahawks would even the Patriots record in Super Bowls at University of Phoenix Stadium at 1-1. New England is seeking a championship, not closure for its 17-14 loss to the New York Giants in 2008.

"I'm sure it will be a cool story if we win, saying we came back to the same place," kicker Stephen Gostkowski said, "but I don't



FILE - In this Feb. 3, 2008, file photo, New York Giants receiver David Tyree (85) catches a pass while in the clutches of New England Patriots safety Rodney Harrison (37) as James Sanders (36) watches during the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl XLIX football game in Glendale, Ariz. A win Sunday night, Feb. 1, against the Seattle Seahawks would even the Patriots record in Super Bowls at University of Phoenix Stadium at 1-1.

think about that stuff. I'm just looking to make the first kick that they send me out for."

So when a receiver leaps for a pass at the opponent's 23-yard line, don't expect the Patriots to have flashbacks to David Tyree trapping the ball against his helmet at that spot with Rodney Harrison draped over him.

That 32-yard completion with just over a minute left, after Eli Manning kept the

play alive by breaking free with defensive end Richard Seymour tugging at his jersey, set up the winning 13-yard touchdown pass to Plaxico Burress.

It took Patriots players a long time to get over how close they came to a 19-0 record. Then coach Bill Belichick met with his assistants.

"One day Bill walks in," running backs coach Ivan Fears said. "He says, 'we got to move on guys, start

smiling.'"

It's a cornerstone of Belichick's philosophy. Lamenting misfortunes leads to more of them, Fears said.

Fears, offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels and defensive coordinator Matt Patricia remain from the staff at the 2008 Super Bowl. Brady, Gostkowski and defensive tackle Vince Wilfork are the only players from that game still on the Patriots.

"It was a heartbreaker," Gostkowski said, but "we've already played in (and lost) another Super Bowl since then, so I don't even sweat that. I have two kids and a wife and two dogs, and I didn't have any of that seven years ago. So life has changed a lot since then."

The Patriots are staying in a different hotel, meeting in different rooms and practicing at a different site than in 2008. The retractable roof on the stadium was closed for that game. The current plan is to have it open Sunday.

"Everything is different," McDaniels said. "That was a great season and we were trying to obviously win an incredible game and the Giants made one more play than we did. But I don't think that has anything to do with this week."

## BLAZERS: Irving nails go-ahead 3-pointer

Continued from 1B

Irving broke the previous scoring record at Quicken Loans Arena held by Allen Iverson. His point total was also the highest in the league this season, bettering the 52 scored by Golden State's Klay Thompson and Minnesota's Mo Williams.

Irving, who scored 38 on Tuesday in Detroit, made a team record 11 3-pointers and finished 10 of 10 from the free-throw line in a tour-de-force performance. He scored 24 of Cleveland's final 28 points and 16 of the Cavs' 20 in the fourth quarter. But it was his long jumper in the final seconds that shook the Q.

With the score tied at 94-all, Irving froze 6-foot-8 forward Nicolas Batum with a move toward the basket before stopping and sinking his 3-last 3-pointer. After the Trail Blazers called timeout, and as the 20,562 fans screamed, James ran onto the floor and greeted his teammate with a chest bump.

James sprained his right wrist on Tuesday, when he fell hard after trying to block a shot against Detroit. James reached out with both arms to brace his fall and said afterward he was scared after breaking his left wrist on a similar play while he was in high school. The team said an MRI revealed the sprain and that James is doubtful for Friday's game against Sacramento.

Until he's ready, Irving is ready to carry the load.

LaMarcus Aldridge, playing his second game since deciding to delay



Cleveland Cavaliers' Kyrie Irving (2) shoots over Portland Trail Blazers' Damian Lillard (0) during the second quarter of an NBA basketball game Wednesday in Cleveland.

thumb surgery until after the season, scored 38 to lead the Trail Blazers, who have dropped six of seven. Lillard added 14 on just 4 of 19 shooting.

Irving was nearly unstoppable in the first half.

He scored 11 points in the final 1:39 of the first quarter, a mere appetizer for his scoring spree. He drove past Lillard for several layups and when Portland's speedy guard gave him some space Irving made him pay by dropping six 3-pointers, including one that had James ranting on the sideline.

Irving beat Lillard with a cross-over dribble and then stepped back behind the line to drain a 3, giving Cleveland a 54-38 lead. James was out of his seat speaking to coach David Blatt when Irving launched his shot and James returned to the bench screaming about his teammate's on-court eruption.

Portland spent two days in Cleveland, arriving earlier than planned after Monday night's game in New York was postponed by the massive snowstorm in the Northeast.

"I was glad we could get out of New York when we did," coach Terry Stotts said. "The travel could have been much worse. With the way the forecasts were, if we had played the game we would have been in New York for a little bit longer."

Stotts said Aldridge's decision to delay surgery didn't surprise him.

"He's been a consummate pro since I've been here," he said. "I like the fact he was very aggressive. He didn't shy away from contact. He didn't show any ill effects of the hand bothering him at all."

Kevin Love's shooting woes continued. He missed 11 consecutive shots after starting 3 of 4 and 6 of 26 in his past two games.

Once James returns, David Blatt intends to keep a close eye on the minutes he plays going forward.

"We're doing our best to keep him fresh," Blatt said. "We will try not to overplay him in any game."

## PAC-12: Hot-shooting Devils take down Beavers

Continued from 1B

over the Ducks Wednesday night.

"That shows just how lethal we can be," said Arizona point guard T.J. McConnell, who had 10 points and five assists. "That was one of our best games all year."

Arizona (19-2, 7-1 Pac-12) routed Oregon in the teams' first meeting behind its defense. The Wildcats gave the Ducks fits at that end again, particularly over the game's final 13 minutes, but added a dose of share-the-ball offense that made this rout even worse.

The Wildcats had their way with Oregon inside and out, building a 15-point lead in the first half and crushing the Ducks' hopes with a big run midway through the second to win their 33rd straight home game.

Gabe York provided the big lift during the second-half run and finished with 16 points. Brandon Ashley scored 13 and freshman Stanley Johnson added 12 while showing off his all-around game, finishing with six rebounds and five assists.

Oregon (14-7, 4-4) hit its first three shots of the second half to cut the lead to 10, but collapsed under Arizona's pressure, hitting one field goal while being outscored 34-10 over the final 12:56.

"It was a lack of organization that hurt us," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "We needed to get in the right spots and we didn't do a good job executing it. Arizona did a good job taking away some looks from us. We had a hard time getting shots tonight, that's it."

Elgin Cook had 16 points and Joseph Young added 12 for Oregon.

**ARIZONA STATE 73, OREGON STATE 55** — At Tempe, Ariz., A key streak of 3-point shooting - against the best 3-point defense in the Pac-12 - proved the difference for Arizona State.

Shaquille McKissic scored 17 points and Arizona State made eight first-half 3-pointers in a 73-55 conference win Wednesday night over Oregon State.

"It's good to make outside shots against the zone," Arizona State coach Herb Sendek said. "But we didn't necessarily want to live and die by that. But like we've said all along, when the ball is going in, it makes a big difference."

Gary Payton II had 23 points to lead the Beavers (14-6, 5-3), who had won three straight.

Arizona State (11-10, 3-5) used an 18-3 run early to take a 40-23 lead into the break and extended it to as many as 22 points in winning its third game in the last four. Oregon State never got closer than 15 in the second half.

"We've been leading this league in 3-point field-goal percentage playing a large majority of zone — you find shooters, you communicate, you find who is in your area and you get to him," said Oregon State coach Wayne Tinkle. "Tonight we didn't. We short-closed on guys that stuck them in our face and we lost them in transition."

Arizona State hit five straight 3-pointers in one stretch to open up a 21-10 lead in the first seven-plus minutes of the game. The Sun Devils made

9 of 24 from beyond the arc on the night.

The Beavers missed 9 of 12 shots during a first-half stretch, trailing 38-18 at that point.

Malcolm Duvivier added 14 points for Oregon State before fouling out with 4:38 left.

"Disappointed in our effort, in our lack of focus, and I thought our leadership out on the floor wasn't where it's been," said Tinkle. "We had too many guys who had off nights. But you can't have off nights offensively and carry it to the defensive end."

**STANFORD 84, WASHINGTON 74** — At Seattle, Anthony Brown scored 23 points and Stanford took advantage of Washington's depleted inside game for an 84-74 victory Wednesday night.

It was Washington's first game since dismissing 7-foot center Robert Upshaw for unspecified violation of team rules.

That left little inside resistance for Cardinal 7-foot center Stefan Nastic, who scored 15 of his 17 points in the first half.

Chasson Randle added 20 points and Marcus Allen had 12 for Stanford (15-5, 6-2 Pac-12).

Nigel Williams-Goss had 17 points to lead Washington (14-6, 3-5). Mike Anderson had 16 points and Quevyn Winters added 13.

Stanford led by 12 points, 36-24, at intermission and Washington could draw no closer until pulling within 10 in the final minute.

## Australian Open



Serena Williams of the U.S. yells during her semifinal match against compatriot Madison Keys at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday.

## Williams, Sharapova to meet in Open final

Top seeds to square off again

By JOHN PYE  
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Serena Williams weathered a barrage of big serves and heavy groundstrokes early and needed nine match points before beating Madison Keys 7-6 (5), 6-2 to set up an Australian Open final against second-seeded Maria Sharapova.

Top-ranked Williams, bothered by a cold in recent days, dominated the second set of the all-American semifinal, breaking Keys' serve twice.

The 19-year-old Keys, playing in her first Grand Slam semifinal, saved seven match points on serve in a penultimate game that lasted more than 11 minutes. Williams kept her cool, wasting one match point on her serve before closing with an ace to reach her 23rd major final.

"She pushed me really hard the first set ... and I had to really dig deep mentally to get through that," Williams said, pausing to cough. "It was a little frustrating, I had like nine or 10 match points and couldn't close it out. That doesn't happen so much. She played like she didn't have anything to lose."

Sharapova, who beat No. 10-seeded Ekaterina Makarova 6-3, 6-2 in an all-Russian semifinal earlier Thursday to reach her fourth Australian Open final, has lost her last 15 head-to-head matches to Williams. Her only two wins in their 18 career meetings were at Wimbledon and the tour-ending championship in 2004.

"I think my confidence should be pretty high going into a final of a Grand Slam no matter who I'm facing and whether I've had a terrible record, to say the least, against someone," Sharapova said. "It doesn't matter. I got there for a reason. I belong in that spot. I will do everything I can to get the title."

Williams, an 18-time major winner, is back in the final here for the first time since winning her fifth Australian title in 2010.

And her semifinal win ensured she will retain the top

ranking, regardless of the outcome of the final.

The 33-year-old American said she was nervous at the start, and it showed. Keys broke her serve to open and dictated many of the longer rallies with her heavy ground strokes, forcing Williams to defend more than usual.

Keys, who beat Venus Williams in the quarterfinals to reach a Grand Slam semifinal for the first time, had control until she was broken in the sixth game.

She held in the 12th game, closing with an ace to force a tiebreaker, but quickly fell behind 4-1 with Serena firing two aces. She saved two set points with aces but had no chance of extending the tiebreaker when Williams hit another unreturnable serve, and started jumping for joy behind the baseline.

Williams broke early in the second set and raced to a 5-1 lead before Keys held, denying victory for one more game the woman who inspired her to take up tennis.

Sharapova needed 10 minutes to hold in her opening service game, fending off two break points, in the earlier semifinals. She responded to the only service break against her in the first set by winning six straight games and seizing control of the match from the 10th-seeded Makarova, who had only taken one set off her in five previous matches.

Sharapova won the Australian Open title in 2008 but was comprehensively beaten in the championship matches in 2007, by then unseeded Williams, and in 2012 by Victoria Azarenka.

The five-time major winner opened the 2015 season in confident style by winning the Brisbane International title but had a close call in the second round here, having to save match points against No. 150-ranked Russian qualifier Alexandra Panova. Since then, she hasn't faced a set point.

"It's been a strange road for me to get to the finals, but I'm happy," said Sharapova, who is now into her 10th Grand Slam final. "Came from behind in a few, really behind in one — saving match points. I felt like I was given a second chance. I just wanted to take my chances."

## Irish shock Blue Devils

Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Duke missed too many opportunities to knock off Notre Dame.

The No. 4 Blue Devils had 13 offensive rebounds but they finished with just nine second-chance points, were 10 of 20 from the free-throw line, and didn't make a shot from the floor in the final 4:30 as the No. 8 Irish rallied for a 77-73 victory on Wednesday night.

"There were just some small things, and if we had capitalized on them, things could have swung our way," Duke guard Tyus Jones said.

"We have to regroup and try to do the little things."

Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said a key was the Blue Devils' inability to extend the lead after opening a 10-point lead with less than 13 minutes left, with a turnover and allowing Notre Dame to rebound after a missed free throw and make a basket.

"Those are the critical plays that if you make then you don't have the end of the game," Krzyzewski said.

The end of the game was all Jerian Grant. He finished with 23 points and 12 assists, and in the final 67 seconds hit a jumper just as the shot clock expired.