

## WATSON INSPIRED BY DAY AGGRESSION, BUT NOT AT EAST LAKE

**ATLANTA:** Two-times Masters winner Bubba Watson says he has learned a valuable lesson from Jason Day about aggression. But the lesson might have to be put on hold this week at the Tour Championship at East Lake, where, Watson says, he will be cautious to avoid the rough. Watson marveled at how the 27-year-old Australian attacked courses in recent triumphs at the PGA Championship at Whistling Straits and last week's BMW Championship that carried him to the world number one ranking.

"I went in the playoff at PGA Championship at Whistling Straits (in 2010). I definitely didn't see people getting to 20-under-par like this year," Watson told reporters on Tuesday. "I went into that golf course thinking ... in the 60s was good, or under par was good. And then there (were) guys basically saying, 'no, 65 is good.' I didn't see that, because of my thinking. Obviously I took the wrong thinking, or I give majors too much credit." Day won last month's PGA Championship for his maiden major at 20-under 268, a major record low score in relation to par.

He won the BMW Championship on Sunday at 22-under, and in between captured The Barclays at 19-under. "I thought I played pretty good, but I finished 21st (at seven-under at the PGA Championship)," Watson continued. "Jason Day decided that that course was easy."



**ATLANTA:** Bubba Watson chips to the green while practicing for the Tour Championship golf tournament at East Lake Golf Club on Tuesday, Sept 22, 2015. — AP

Jason was obviously looking at birdies and not how tough the golf course was." East Lake, site of the season-ending Tour Championship starting on Thursday, is a different matter, said the long-hitting lefty, who flagged a more conservative approach on a course that has struggled to conquer.

"This golf course always beats me. Very tricky for me with the rough ... it catches fliers all the time for my swing. "We're trying to figure out how we can attack this golf course the right way, and play more conservative." Watson has a lot riding on a win. He is fifth on the PGA Tour points list, and along with the others in the top five - Day, Jordan Spieth, Rickie Fowler and Henrik Stenson - victory would clinch the FedExCup's \$10 million bonus.

Self control from the rough may be the key, said Watson. "It's difficult for me because I think I can hit every shot. I think I can move the ball every direction," he said. "So it's aiming more to the centre of the greens. It's playing to the safer side. It's not trying to get too much out of a club." Watson's choices can get complex. "With a flier lie I could hit a wedge 190 (yards), no problem. "From the fairway, I could hit a wedge from a hundred yards, so you're talking about a 90-yard gap." Watson wants to get away from guess work. "It's a learning process," said the 36-year-old. "My whole golf game is about thinking." — Reuters



**SUZUKA:** In this file photo, pit crew for Marussia driver Jules Bianchi of France (center) push his car to the grid at the Formula One Japanese Grand Prix in Suzuka. Jules Bianchi's death shook Formula One and forced it to take a fresh look at safety, two decades after Ayrton Senna's fatal crash ushered in a series of reforms. — AFP

## BIANCHI TRAGEDY LOOMS OVER THE EMOTIONAL JAPAN RETURN

**TOKYO:** Formula One will make an emotional return to the scene of Jules Bianchi's fatal crash this week in what promises to be a somber Japanese Grand Prix. Bianchi died in July, nine months after suffering severe head injuries in a collision with a recovery vehicle in rain and fading light, and the race at Suzuka is set to be a difficult occasion for drivers and team officials. Bianchi's Manor Marussia team and rivals alike are set to honor his memory before world champion Lewis Hamilton bids to resume normal service after a freak technical glitch ended his race in Singapore last weekend.

Hamilton's advantage over Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg has been cut to 41 points with Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel a further eight points back after the German's surprise victory in Singapore. But the Briton, who won in Japan last year as news of Bianchi's crash filtered through to shocked drivers, has promised to hit back in Sunday's race as he looks to equal boyhood hero Ayrton Senna's 41 career wins. Hamilton warned: "I was fast and on form and I will make sure I bring that out to Suzuka."

After winning seven of this season's 13 races so far, victory this weekend would put Hamilton tantalizingly close to a third world title with just five races to go. However, the memory of Bianchi's sickening crash will be at the forefront of many people's minds. "Jules is never far away from our thoughts," Manor Marussia sporting director Graeme Lowdon told Autosport.com. "We're now going to Japan, and we have to be strong. "We know it's going to be difficult," he added. "But equally we know Jules was a racer

and would want to see the team focus on the job of racing."

### Rule changes

Bianchi became the first driver since Brazilian triple world champion Senna, at Italy's Imola circuit in May 1994, to die from injuries suffered during a grand prix weekend when he passed away on July 17. His accident occurred towards the end of a wet race when, with light fast deteriorating, Bianchi's car skidded off the track and smashed into a crane picking up the Sauber of German Adrian Sutil, who had come off at the same spot a lap earlier. Television footage of the incident, which was not broadcast publicly but was posted online, showed the Marussia's roll hoop torn off in the impact as Bianchi's car ploughed under the crane.

The findings of an investigation into the crash prompted Formula One to make changes to its safety regulations, allowing a "virtual safety car" so stewards can neutralize a race in hazardous conditions. In the wake of Bianchi's crash and criticism of Suzuka organizers for not doing so despite the atrocious weather - the start times of some races were also brought forward to prevent drivers having to race in poor light. Meanwhile, Red Bull's recent threat to quit F1 if it cannot find a competitive engine following Renault's decision to stop supplying engines will be the subject of continued paddock chatter in Japan. And Britain's Jenson Button is reportedly poised to announce his retirement after failing to negotiate a contract extension at McLaren. — AFP

## CANADIAN COACH 'IRON MIKE' KEENAN THRIVING IN RUSSIA

**MOSCOW:** Although fiery Canadian ice hockey coach Mike Keenan has been compared to Stalin throughout his decorated career, it turns out he actually does a pretty good Lenin impersonation. Keenan, who is into his third season at the helm of Metallurg Magnitogorsk in Russia's top hockey league, recently made a star turn as the Bolshevik revolutionary in a promotional video for the club. "I don't know if I am a revolutionary or not," said Keenan, who actually resembles Lenin with his thinning hair and sweeping arm gestures.

"Maybe in the hockey world, I might be a little bit." Nicknamed "Iron Mike" for his tough coaching style and temper tantrums, Keenan first made the long-distance move to Magnitogorsk, a gritty steel city of 400,000 people just east of Russia's Ural Mountains, in 2013. That journey to the depths of Russia came after a career in which Keenan coached eight different National Hockey League (NHL) teams in North America over 20 seasons, served as a general manager and dabbled in broadcasting.

In his debut season in the Kontinental Hockey League (KHL), Keenan, 65, led Metallurg to their first Gagarin Cup, making him the only coach to have won a championship in both the NHL and KHL, the world's top two leagues. Keenan, who coached the New York Rangers to the NHL's Stanley Cup in 1994, has thrived in a league, and country, that is growing hostile to foreign presence. The KHL last year adopted a five foreign-player limit for its Russian clubs and foreign trainers have fallen out of fashion.

But a foreign passport has not been a factor for Keenan, who has been embraced by the Russian public, perhaps because he has gone out of his way to immerse himself in his new environment. He made headlines this summer by publicly musing about applying for Russian citizenship and charmed the public with an inspired locker-room karaoke performance in

broken Russian after winning the Gagarin Cup. "It's better for me to understand that to be understood," said Keenan, who ranks seventh among coaches for all-time NHL wins with 672 victories. "It's my responsibility. I'm the import now, I'm the foreigner." Keenan, whose players at times have accused him of being unnecessarily harsh and irascible, has been called the most "Russian-like coach the team has ever had" by Metallurg's management. Although Metallurg have surrounded him with an English-speaking entourage, Keenan knows enough Russian to give instructions on the ice-like "faster" and "let's go" and negotiate his way around Magnitogorsk. "They definitely understand what we are speaking about most of the time," Keenan said of his Russian players.

### 'Win or win'

Metallurg, winners of 9 of 11 games this season, rank second in the KHL's eastern conference. "The expectations here are the same as in the NHL. You better win," said Keenan, whose injury-plagued team lost in the conference semifinals last year. "It's win or win." After two decades of NHL life, the far-flung KHL presents other challenges. Travel is extensive, with teams across more than 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles) from the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok to the Croatian capital of Zagreb.

The 60-game schedule, compared to 82 regular-season games in the NHL, also gives teams less margin for error. Keenan said he was happy in Magnitogorsk but has not abandoned his desire for another job in the NHL, where he last coached the Calgary Flames in 2009. With another Gagarin Cup within reach, Keenan has shown no sign of slowing down, although he concedes he no longer coaches with the same fury as when he landed his first NHL job in 1984 as a stick-breaking 34-year-old. "My style has a thread of consistency," he said. "But I think the methodology has changed." — AFP

## YANKEES HALL OF FAME YOGI BERRA DIES AT 90

**NEW YORK:** The lovable legend of Yogi Berra, that ain't ever gonna be over. The Hall of Fame catcher renowned as much for his dizzying malapropisms as his record 10 World Series championships with the New York Yankees, died Tuesday. He was 90. Berra, who filled baseball's record book as well as "Bartlett's Familiar Quotations," died of natural causes at his home in New Jersey, according to Dave Kaplan, the director of the Yogi Berra Museum. Berra played in more World Series games than any other major leaguer, and was a three-time American League Most Valuable Player.

For many, though, he was even better known for all those amusing "Yogi-isms." "It ain't over 'til it's over" is among eight of them included in Bartlett's. "When I'm sittin' down to dinner with the family, stuff just pops out. And they'll say, 'Dad, you just said another one.' And I don't even know what the heck I said," Berra insisted. Short, squat and with a homely mug, Berra was a Yankees great who helped the team reach 14 World Series during his 18 seasons in the Bronx.

"While we mourn the loss of our father, grandfather and great-grandfather, we know he is at peace with Mom," Berra's family said in a statement released by the museum. "We celebrate his remarkable life, and are thankful he meant so much to so many. He will truly be missed." Berra served on a gunboat supporting the D-Day invasion in 1944 and played for the Yankees from 1946-63. His teammates included fellow Hall of Famers Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford. "No! Say it ain't so. He was a good man, my former manager and friend! RIP Yogi," former Yankees star Dave Winfield tweeted.

Lawrence Peter Berra, the son of Italian immigrants, got his nickname while growing up in St. Louis. Among his amateur baseball teammates was Jack McGuire, another future big leaguer. "Some of us went to a movie with a yogi in it and afterwards Jack began calling me Yogi. It stuck," Berra told the Saturday Evening Post. He was a fan favorite, especially with children, and the cartoon character Yogi Bear was named after him. Until recent years, he remained a fixture at Yankee Stadium and in the clubhouse, where the likes of Derek Jeter, Joe Torre and others in pinstripes looked up to the diminutive old-timer.

In 1956, Berra caught the only perfect game in World Series history and after the last out leaped into pitcher Don Larsen's arms. The famous moment is still often replayed on baseball broadcasts. After his playing days, Berra coached or managed the Yankees, New York Mets and Houston Astros. He led both the Yankees and Mets to pennants. In 1985, his firing as manager by the Yankees 16 games into the season sparked a feud with George Steinbrenner. Berra vowed never to return to Yankee Stadium as long as Steinbrenner owned the team. But in 1999, Berra finally relented, throwing out the ceremonial first pitch of the Yankees' season-opener. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of a Yankees legend and American hero, Yogi Berra," the Yankees posted on Twitter.

Berra, who played in 15 straight All-Star Games, never earned more than \$65,000 a season. He died on the same date, Sept. 22, as his big league debut 69 years earlier. Growing up, he was anything but a natural. Chunky and slow, Berra was rejected by his hometown St. Louis Cardinals after a tryout in 1943. But a Yankees scout recognized his potential and signed him.

He reached the majors late in the 1946 season and homered in his first at-bat. The next year, he continued to hit well, but his throwing was so erratic he was shifted to the outfield, then benched. His breakthrough season came in 1948, when he hit .315 with 14 homers and 98 RBIs while improving his fielding. In 1949, he compiled a .989 fielding percentage and did not make an error in the All-Star Game or World Series. "I don't care who the hitter is," Yankees Hall of Fame manager Casey Stengel told the New York Journal-American, "(Berra) knows just how he should be pitched to." Berra was the AL MVP in 1951, 1954 and 1955. He holds World Series records for most hits (71) and games (75).

He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1972. "You never think of that when you're a kid," Berra said. "But egads, you gotta be somethin' to get in." Among his boyhood friends was Joe Garagiola, who went on to a career as a major league player and broadcaster. In rejecting Berra at the 1943 tryout, the Cardinals signed Garagiola, another catcher, instead. Berra was born in St. Louis on May 12, 1925, the son of Pietro, a laborer in a brickyard, and Pauline Berra. He grew up in "The Hill," or Italian district, with three older brothers and a younger sister. Berra was forced to drop out of school in the eighth grade and go to work to help support his family. He took jobs in a coal yard, as a truck driver and



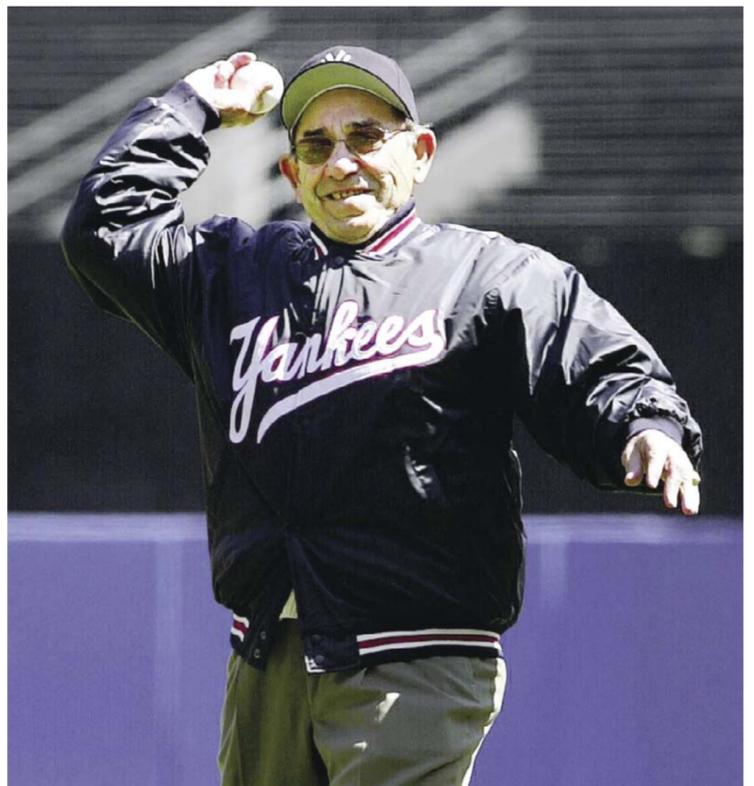
**MONTCLAIR:** Flowers rest at the foot of a statue of former New York Yankees Hall of Fame catcher Yogi Berra outside of the Yogi Berra Museum yesterday in Montclair, NJ. Berra died yesterday at the age of 90. — AP

in a shoe factory.

He continued to play amateur baseball, which brought him to the attention of major league scouts. In 1943, his first professional season with the Yankees' farm team in Norfolk, Virginia, was interrupted by World War II. Berra married his wife, Carmen, in 1949. The couple met in their native St. Louis. Carmen died in 2014. Yogi is survived by their three sons. Dale Berra, a major league infielder, who briefly played for his father on the Yankees in 1985; Tim, who played one season for the NFL's Baltimore Colts, and Lawrence Jr Berra published three books: his autobiography in 1961, "It Ain't Over ..." in 1989 and "The Yogi Book: I Really Didn't Say Everything I Said" in 1998. The last made The

New York Times' best seller list.

In 1996, Berra was awarded an honorary doctorate from the state university in Montclair, NJ, where he and his family lived. The university also named its baseball stadium for Berra. The adjoining Yogi Berra Museum opened in 1998. The museum houses Berra memorabilia, including what he said was his most prized possession, the mitt he used to catch Larsen's perfect game. He tickled TV viewers in recent years by bringing his malapropisms to a commercial with the AFLAC duck. ("They give you cash, which is just as good as money.") His wife once asked Berra where he wanted to be buried, in St. Louis, New York or Montclair. "I don't know," he said. "Why don't you surprise me?" — AP



**NEW YORK:** File picture shows former New York Yankees catcher Yogi Berra throwing out the first pitch to start the home season for the New York Yankees in New York. — AFP

## FURYK WITHDRAWS FROM TOUR

**ATLANTA:** Former US Open champion Jim Furyk withdrew from the FedEx Cup playoff's Tour Championship on Tuesday because of a wrist injury that forced him out of the BMW Championship last week.

The 45-year-old American was diagnosed with a bone contusion last week in his left wrist. He will continue rehabilitation in hopes of participating in the upcoming Presidents Cup. Furyk pulled out of the BMW Championship after playing six holes of the first round, the first time he has withdrawn from a tournament since 1995. "While I am dis-

appointed to miss this week's event in Atlanta, I am now placing all my efforts on being healthy and ready to play in the Presidents Cup," Furyk said.

"(Captain) Jay Haas will be made aware of my progress in the coming days as we see how the injury responds to the treatment." Furyk, who won the 2003 US Open crown, was assured of one of the top 30 spots in the Tour Championship which begins on Thursday at the East Lake Golf Club. His playing partner Hideki Matsuyama will play as a single in the opening round. —AFP