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BARRINGTON TOPS EAST PROVIDENCE: View the gallery at [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

**Projo PatsTalk**

Shalise Manza Young discusses the latest on the 13-0 Pats, posted by early this afternoon at [projosports.com/patsblog](http://projosports.com/patsblog)

**Prime-time players**

With the switch of the Dec. 23 game to 4:15 p.m., the Pats will have played only 5 of their 16 games at 1 p.m. this season:

START TIME	NO. OF GAMES
1 p.m.	5
4:15 p.m.	5
8:15 p.m.	4
8:30 p.m.	2

For up-to-the-second stats and scores: [projosports.com/patriots](http://projosports.com/patriots)

SECTION C



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# RAM NATION

The word is out: This URI team is good

BY KEVIN McNAMARA  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

So what did Jim Baron do to celebrate the University of Rhode Island's biggest regular-season win in 30 years? He went recruiting. He also answered his cell phone a lot.

As Baron checked up on some prospects the last two days, his phone frequently buzzed with friends offering congratulations and reporters inquiring about a Ram team that's off to a 10-1 start, the school's best since 1991-92. That's what a 91-89 win at Syracuse's Carrier Dome on Saturday night can mean for a coach.

"It's probably the biggest week of my career because of the kids and what they've achieved already," Baron said.

"We've been on the road and beaten Alabama-Birmingham and South Florida, which beat Florida State. Then Providence and Brown. Finally Syracuse at the Dome. The magnitude of what we're doing is pretty impressive."

How impressive was URI's win over the Orange? Jim Boeheim's team may not sit in its customary spot in the national polls, but ask any team in the Big East how tough it is to win at Syracuse. Providence, for example, owns a 3-16 record in its visits to the Carrier Dome. The win may be Rhody's most impressive regular-season victory since it beat No. 19

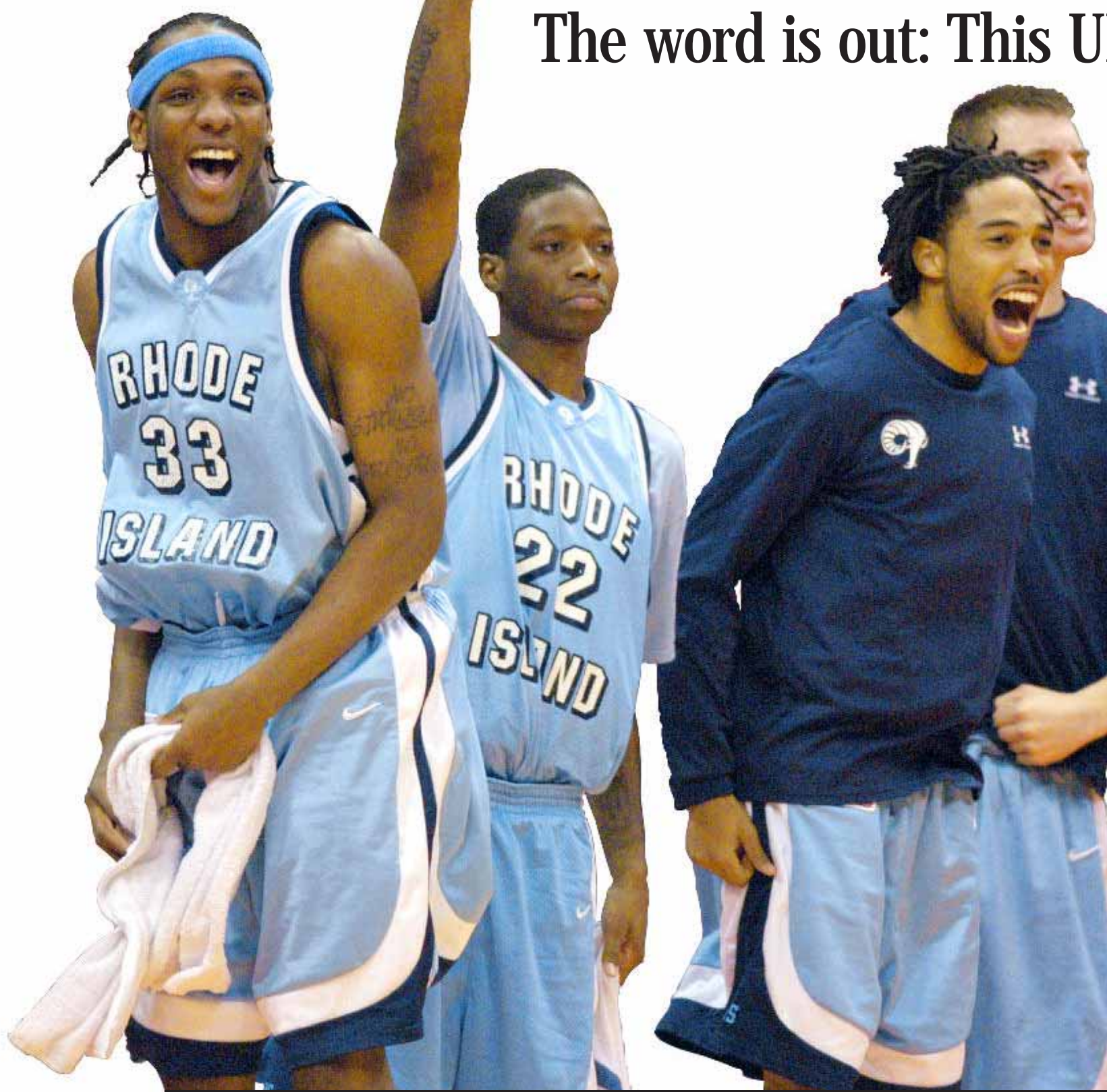
San Francisco and its All-America center Bill Cartwright on the road on Dec. 23, 1977.

Beating Syracuse certainly put Will Daniels, Parfait Bitee, Jimmy Baron and the Rams on the national map. URI's sweep of PC and Syracuse earned it Team of the Week honors from both ESPN.com and FoxSports.com, as well as mention in newspapers from New York to Chicago. URI fell short of cracking either of the two national Top 25

SEE **URI, C3**

Celebrating their team's winning effort Saturday night in Syracuse are, from left, University of Rhode Island players Kahiem Seawright, Keith Cothran, Marquis Jones and Will Martell.

AP / KEVIN RIVOLI



## Low-key coach Baron deserves the credit for his highflying squad

BILL REYNOLDS



Maybe it's time to give Jim Baron some love. Maybe it's time to realize that this is what he's been talking about since he first got here to the University of Rhode Island, inheriting a program that had fallen into the basketball quicksand, beset with too many losses, too many academic disasters, the price that was paid for the complicated comet ride that was Jim Harrick.

Maybe now, on this morning when his Rams are 10-1 and coming off a great win against Syracuse in the Carrier Dome, the kind of win that goes out across the basketball world like a slap upside the head.

Maybe it's time to finally give Baron some love. Rebuilding this program, getting it to where it is this morning, shouldn't be taken for granted. Last year, he returned one kickoff 21 yards, and had three punt returns for 76 yards.

one wants to hear the reasons why you don't. For this was a valley of ashes when Baron first got here in the spring of 2001, 14 wins in two years, the cheers as gone as Harrick and Lamar Odom.

That was the landscape Baron inherited, and the only bright spot was the spanking new Ryan Center, just a year away. That was the promise, the visible symbol of a new era.

But how do you get to it? And so Baron began, this old-school, blue-

SEE **REYNOLDS, C3**

**RANK ACHIEVEMENT**

Since 1978-79, URI has posted four victories in the regular season over ranked teams. Syracuse wasn't ranked when the Rams prevailed Saturday, but it was still an important victory for the program:

DATE	TEAM	NO.
2/20/93	UMass	21 71-68
2/10/98	at GWU	24 69-61
2/18/98	at UMass	20 87-85
12/2/99	Utah	25 70-63

## Patriots' Chad Jackson awaits more action

Because New England is deep with wide receivers, the second-year speedster fielded punts and kickoffs Sunday.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — As the New England Patriots lined up to receive the opening kickoff of Sunday's game with the Pittsburgh Steelers, the player who was back deep to field the kick was a bit of a surprise. Instead of No. 27, Ellis Hobbs, it was No. 17, Chad Jackson. Last year's second-round draft pick, Jackson remains a largely unknown commodity after a rookie season in which he had a hamstring injury and struggled to comprehend the playbook. He played in 12 games, recording 13 receptions, but reportedly tore an ACL playing special teams in the AFC Championship game.

As a result, Jackson began the season on the physically-unable-to-perform list. He made his season debut on Nov. 18 in Buffalo, but was inactive for Philadelphia and Baltimore before showing up on the field Sunday evening. Coming out of Florida, the 6-foot-1 receiver was known as a speedster, which obviously comes in handy on returns. Last year, he returned one kickoff 21 yards, and had three punt returns for 76 yards. Against the Steelers, Jackson had four kickoff returns for 70 yards (17.5 yard average) and fielded two punts for 7 yards. His second kickoff return went for 39 yards, setting up the Patriots at their own 48-yard line and leading to their first touchdown after Pittsburgh opened the scoring with a first-drive field goal. Just before halftime, however, Jackson muffed a kickoff, falling on it for no return.

**MORE PATRIOTS**

- Next game: Sunday vs. Jets at Gillette Stadium, 1 p.m.
- Pats' game on Dec. 23 against the Dolphins is shifted from 1 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.
- Defensive lineman Richard Seymour says he's "not quite 100 percent ready." **C5**
- The chemistry between quarterback Tom Brady and his receivers developed early. **C5**

"I thought he did a good job," Bill Belichick said of Jackson's efforts. "There are some other things that could have been better, like the [muffed] kickoff return. But I thought getting the ball back to midfield after they scored was good." Given the surplus of wide receivers New England has on the roster, it was

SEE **PATRIOTS, C5**



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / MARY MURPHY

This pass to Chad Jackson goes incomplete last season as Miami defender Will Allen breaks it up.