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Mitchell report

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Closing in

Tom Brady now has the third-highest number of single-season touchdown passes in NFL history, and he still has three games remaining:

	NO.	YEAR
Peyton Manning	49	2004
Dan Marino	48	1984
Tom Brady	45	2007
Dan Marino	44	1986

For up-to-the-second stats and scores: projosports.com/patriots

SECTION C



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AP / STEPHAN SAVOIA

Bill Belichick says he is focusing on Sunday's game against the Jets and not the controversy surrounding it.

Foes are cool in line of fire

Patriots coach Bill Belichick and Jets coach Eric Mangini choose to keep a lid on Spygate and fail to directly address issues on their relationship.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — As Bill Belichick approached the podium where he conducts his daily news conferences, he surveyed the massive media crowd and a bemused smile took over his face.

Belichick knew what some of the reporters suspected: there would be no talk of Eric Mangini and the series of events known as Spygate.

Not yesterday, not today, not if he can help it.

The Patriots' coach was more than willing to talk about New England's game with the New York Jets on Sunday, and offered a list of positives on their AFC East rival: They've been in a lot of close games, they're very explosive, they can score quickly, they're a different team than the one the Pats faced in the season-opener.

But when it came to his former protégé and his whistle-blowing actions in that Sept. 9 game, or whether this game was a personal grudge match, Belichick wasn't biting.

In fact, with any query that mentioned Belichick's relationship with Mangini or the video-taping situation that led to \$750,000 in fines for himself and the franchise as well as the loss of a first-round draft pick, he barely let the questioner finish.

Belichick began his chat yesterday by apologizing for his tardiness; he had been on a conference call with members of the Jets' media corps and it had run longer than scheduled.

Asked if he had fielded a lot of questions about his relationship with Mangini, Belichick responded that they did have a lot of questions, but that the transcript would likely be available.

Asked if the game would be

SEE PATRIOTS, C3

Mass Exodus

R.I. high school players with big dreams are taking their basketball talents elsewhere

BY PAUL KENYON
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

If a college scout was to put together a list of the best high school basketball players in Rhode Island this winter, there would be some names certain to be near the top.

Erik Murphy of South Kingstown likely would be number one on the list. The 6-foot-9 forward is being recruited by many of the top college programs in the country. Smithfield's sweet-shooting Mike Marra would be a definite on the list, as would Barrington's Matt Brown and big Ben Crenca from West Greenwich.

"College coaches prefer a player who comes to them at 19 or 20, who is more mature."

MIKE HART

St. Andrew's coach

All are Division I prospects. And they all have one thing in common: they will not be playing in the Rhode Island Interscholastic League this winter. They all are out of state, in prep schools.

It's a sign of the times. The exodus is relatively new for basketball, but not for high-school athletes. Hockey started it all. It has been a given in hockey for 20 years now. It also is common in swimming, tennis, golf, and, well, most other sports.

In basketball, as recently as a few years ago, players tended to stay at home through their high-school graduation and then prep a year, if needed. Consider this year's three Rhode Island Division I programs. All have a Rhode Islander excelling this season — Barrington's Mark McAndrew at Brown, Hendricken's Jimmy Baron at URI and St. Raphael's Jeff

SEE EXODUS, C5

Murphy has taken his game to a higher level

The first time I met Erik Murphy was in the winter of 2005.

It was after a South Kingstown High School basketball game, and he was standing on the court with his father, Jay.

BILL REYNOLDS | He was only in the eighth grade then in South Kingstown, but he was about 6-foot-5, and the word was already out on him. He was going to be one of this state's next great high-school basketball players. It was just a question of where, for already there were rumors swirling about where he was going to go to high school.

"Where's he going next year?" I asked his father.

"Not here," Jay Murphy said. Because Jay Murphy, the former Boston College star who played four years in the NBA and another seven overseas, knew then that if you have big basketball dreams it doesn't help you to be in the R.I. Interscholastic League. That's not meant as criticism. It's simply a statement of fact, the growing perception that if you are trying to get to the big arenas and big cheers of college basketball, the odds are better if you play against better competition.

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SEE REYNOLDS, C5



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KRIS CRAIG

Erik Murphy of South Kingstown, a junior at St. Mark's in Southboro, Mass., who is being tied up during a game at Lawrence Academy yesterday, is prepping for a college basketball career outside of Rhode Island.