

Will the Patriots win or lose, and will they cover the spread on Sunday?

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**Pats preview**

Shalise Manza Young and Jim Donaldson look to Sunday in a multimedia presentation at [projsports.com/patriots](http://projsports.com/patriots)

**On the defensive**

Since the beginning of the 2003 season the Patriots have allowed an average of 17.17 points per game (including playoffs), the best mark in the NFL:

	REG. SEASON	POST-SEASON	TOTAL
Patriots	16.84	19.42	17.17
Ravens	17.91	17.5	17.9
Steelers	17.75	21.57	18.06
Bucs	18.31	20.50	18.37
Jaguars	18.23	29.33	18.63



FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 2008

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## Billikens' defense frustrates the Rams

BY PAUL KENYON  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

ST. LOUIS — The URI basketball team became an unhappy participant in an unusual and unlikely Atlantic 10 hat trick last night.

**ST. LOUIS 68**  
**URI 61**

The 23rd-ranked Rams, who had scored at least 72 points in each of the first 17 games, were shut down by St. Louis, 68-61, at the Scottrade Center.

The Billikens gave the Rams fits from the outset. They stop-

ped URI's two leading scorers, Will Daniels and Jimmy Baron, getting Daniels in foul trouble and playing superb defense on Baron. That got the Rams out of sync.

URI (15-3, 1-2 in the A-10) missed eight straight shots early in the game as it went 6:59 without a field goal, its longest dry spell of the season. That was enough to allow SLU to take the lead and dictate the tempo. The Rams several times made second-half attempts to rally, but

SEE **URI, D5**



AP / FRED BECKHAM

Connecticut's Jeff Adrien, left, battles for a loose ball with PC's Randall Hanke in the first half of last night's game at Hartford.

## Friars' rain of 3s fells the Huskies

BY KEVIN McNAMARA  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

HARTFORD — Connecticut came into the XL Center last night thirsting for a signature win. Instead, the Huskies left with a signature loss courtesy of long-range-bombing Providence College.

**PC 77**  
**UCONN 65**

The Friars are getting used to frustrating the Huskies here, but last night's 77-65 win was something to behold. Providence drained 3-pointers from all over

the floor, 14 in all, and left UConn's players, coaches and fans shaking their heads after their third consecutive win in the building and fourth in a row as the visiting team in the series.

"We see one go in and we all want to get hot," said sophomore Brian McKenzie, who canned all four of his 3-pointers and finished with 20 points. "We can let them go from anywhere."

That's exactly what McKenzie, Dwain Williams (six threes, 23 points) and Jeff Xavier (two

SEE **PC, D5**

# YES, THEY TAKE OFFENSE



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Back in September, Patriots offensive linemen Logan Mankins, left, and Matt Light, second from right, block two players for San Diego, which is noted for its pass rush.

## Pats' unsung front line gives Tom Brady time to work his magic

BY ROBERT LEE  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — Patriots running back Laurence Maroney joked yesterday that the average NFL fan, and a lot of Patriots fans, for that matter, can't name the Patriots starting offensive linemen.

"You know, they've been overlooked and everybody wants to crack jokes and act like they don't know the names of our linemen, but through all that they still come and get the job done every day."

They might be overlooked by some fans, but ask any Patriot and they'll tell you how important the offensive line has been to them this season.

Tom Brady threw an NFL-record 50 touchdown passes during the regular season, but he said he couldn't have done that without the exceptional play of the Patriots offensive linemen — starting center Dan Koppen, left guard Logan Mankins, left tackle Matt Light, right guard Stephen Neal, and right tackle Nick Kaczur, along with backup linemen Russ Hochstein (eight starts), Ryan O'Callaghan (1 start), and Billy Yates (1 start).

They gave him the time he needed to make plays this year, and he's hoping that trend continues in Sunday's AFC Championship game because San Diego's pass rushers have rushed opposing

### Stingy with sacks

The Patriots' offensive line allowed just 21 sacks this season, the lowest total for the franchise since the National Football League adopted a 16-game schedule in 1978:

YEAR	GAMES	SACKS
2007	16	21
1994	16	22
1993	16	23
1988	16	23

Not including the 1982 strike season, in which the team allowed 14 sacks in 9 games.

quarterbacks into throwing 33 interceptions this year — the most in the NFL. The Chargers also sacked opposing

quarterbacks 42 times in the regular season, which was the fifth-best mark in the AFC.

The Patriots' offensive linemen are battling a flu bug this week and they might not be at 100 percent Sunday. O'Callaghan missed practice Wednesday with the flu, and Light missed practice yesterday with the flu.

Brady and Co. have confidence in them no matter what.

"They're a great group, and I think the thing that has been so important to us this season is that they have been healthy, and they have played each game," Brady said of his offensive linemen. "Koppen and Logan and Light have

been there, Steve has been healthier, and Nick has done a great job. We have great depth and great coaching; so the longer they're together, the more they communicate."

Koppen said they were glad help Brady in his quest to break Peyton Manning's touchdown record.

"I think as a line, we're really happy to see him get that record just because he's our guy back there," Koppen said. "We want him to succeed as much as the team, so it's nice to have... Tom's done a great job of putting us in the right position all year. He deserves a lot of credit

SEE **PATRIOTS, D3**

## Moss' friend gives her side of accusation

In a non-criminal case, Rachele Washington says she is a battery victim, which Moss has denied.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — As with many cases of this nature, the situation between Patriots' wide receiver Randy Moss and his longtime friend, Rachele Washington, has become a matter of he said-she said.

And with Moss taking the opportunity Wednesday to give his

side of the story, Washington's attorney shed a little light on her side yesterday.

Also yesterday, New England coach Bill Belichick said he supported Moss "100 percent."

On Monday, Washington, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., resident who has known Moss for 11 years, received a temporary restraining order against the New England star based on events that allegedly took place at her home Jan. 6.

The case is civil matter only, and no criminal charges have been filed against Moss, who

said this week that the only thing he's guilty of is an accident, stating repeatedly that he has never put his hand on a woman in an angry manner.

Yesterday, attorney David McGill released a statement that said Washington has "cared deeply" for Moss over the last decade-plus.

"However, she refuses to be further disrespected by him. It has never been her intent to hurt Mr. Moss in any way. However, she has suffered mental and

physical harm as a result of his actions. She simply wants him to take responsibility for what he has done. As a battery victim, she has shown great strength throughout this entire ordeal."

Left unsaid is why Washington has not sought criminal charges against Moss for the alleged battery.

Moss and his Minnesota-based attorney, Joe Friedberg,

SEE **MOSS, D3**



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Receiver Randy Moss speaks to the media in the Patriots' locker room Wednesday about the restraining order that was filed against him by a Florida woman.