

Will you be rooting for Rocco Baldelli and Dan Wheeler in the ALCS?

Tell us what you think at projosports.com/redsox



TOLMAN POSTS SOCCER WIN OVER HOPE: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

Projo Video

Two Rhode Islanders have qualified for the Ironman Triathlon Championship in Hawaii. See their story at projosports.com

First class

It's still early, but this year's class of rookie NFL coaches may have more staying power than classes of rookie coaches in previous years:

COACH	TEAM	RECORD
Jim Zorn	Redskins	4-1
Mike Smith	Falcons	3-2
Tony Sparano	Dolphins	2-2
John Harbaugh	Ravens	2-2

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

SECTION C



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projo SPORTS

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American League Championship Series

DAY	SITE	TIME
Tomorrow	at Tampa Bay	8:37 p.m.
Saturday	at Tampa Bay	8:07 p.m.
Monday	at Boston	4:37 p.m.
Tuesday	at Boston	8:07 p.m.
*Oct. 16	at Boston	8:07 p.m.
*Oct. 18	at Tampa Bay	4:37 p.m.**
*Oct. 19	at Tampa Bay	8:07 p.m.

* -- if necessary
** -- will be switched to 8:07 p.m. if NLCS is over

All ALCS games televised on TBS

THE STARTING ROTATIONS

The Red Sox and Rays announce their rotations for the ALCS (below). Read the reasoning behind the Sox' lineup. **Page C5**



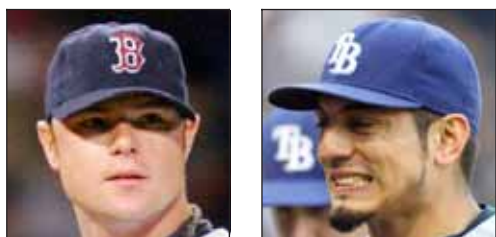
GAME ONE

Red Sox: Daisuke Matsuzaka (1-0, 3.00 in 3 starts vs. Rays this year)
Rays: James Shields (2-2, 5.85 in 4 starts vs. Red Sox this year)



GAME TWO

Red Sox: Josh Beckett (2-1, 2.06 in 5 starts vs. Rays this year)
Rays: Scott Kazmir (0-2, 9.00 in 4 starts vs. Red Sox this year)



GAME THREE

Red Sox: Jon Lester (3-0, 0.90 in 3 starts vs. Rays this year)
Rays: Matt Garza (1-1, 4.50 in 4 starts vs. Red Sox this year)



GAME FOUR

Red Sox: Tim Wakefield (0-2, 5.87 in 3 starts vs. Rays this year)
Rays: Andy Sonnanstine (0-0, 0.00 in 2 starts vs. Red Sox this year)

TODAY ON PROJOSPORTS.COM

Joe McDonald and Kevin McNamara are in Tampa and will file updates from Tropicana Field, where the Rays and Red Sox will be working out. Go to projosports.com/redsox

INSIDE

- The Rays' strange motto — 9 = 8 — has gotten them into the ALCS. **Page C4**
- Both the Red Sox and Rays say the regular-season bad blood between the teams won't carry over into the playoffs. **Page C5**
- The Sox will announce their ALCS roster today. But whether he makes it or not, Gil Velazquez is thrilled to be part of it all. **Page C5**
- Tim Wakefield "beats" Paul Byrd in the battle for the fourth spot in the rotation, but Byrd says he's willing to do whatever the Sox ask. **Page C5**

RAYS' R.I. ROOTS



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Tampa Bay's Rocco Baldelli, who has battled metabolic mitochondrial disorder for months but has gotten steadily stronger, will be in the Rays' starting lineup at some point during their series against the Red Sox.

Baldelli's grit uplifts Tampa Bay

BY JOE McDONALD
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Rocco Baldelli has no idea when his baseball career will end. What the 27-year-old Rhode Island native does know is that it won't end this year.

That wasn't the case earlier this year during spring training, when he was diagnosed with a metabolic mitochondrial disorder, which causes severe fatigue and muscle cramping. There were days — plenty of them — when he couldn't run, hit or throw.

It got so bad that he actually thought his baseball career was over.

When the Tampa Bay Rays take the field here against the Red Sox for Game One of the American League Championship Series tomorrow night, Baldelli will not only be in uniform, but he'll be in the starting lineup at some point during the series.

No question that Baldelli's story is one set for a Hollywood script. He has inspired the Rays during their magical season, one that he and his teammates thought might not be possible.

"He can have a potential blowout every time he puts his cleats on," said teammate and good friend Jonny Gomes. "But he still puts them on every single day. I wasn't alone [thinking he would never play again]. This guy was in bad shape. It was very easy to write him off, but he didn't allow that to happen. This guy is a warrior. He's bounced back and now he's helping this team go to the World Series from the operating table."

The lowest point for Baldelli was during spring training. A naturally gifted athlete, he couldn't perform normal daily baseball activities. He couldn't take batting practice. He

SEE BALDELLI, C4

Ex-Pilgrim star Wheeler sets sights on World Series title

BY KEVIN McNAMARA
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — If, at some time during the American League Championship Series Dan Wheeler finds himself on the pitcher's mound trying to close out a win for the Tampa Bay Rays, he'll be in his element.

"That's what I do for a living," he said plainly in the Rays' clubhouse at Tropicana Field yesterday.

Wheeler is the former Pilgrim High star who's crafted a major-league pitching career that's reached its apex. In 2005, he threw in the World Series for the Houston Astros. After a trade last summer to his offseason home in Tampa, he's carved out a vital role in one of baseball's premier bullpens.

He saved Game One of Tampa's ALDS win over the White Sox and if the Rays need someone to shut down Dustin Pedroia, Kevin Youkilis or Jason Bay over the next 10 days, he's likely to get the ball.

"Dan has closed for us but the whole bullpen has shown amazing versatility. That's a strong suit for us," Tampa manager Joe Maddon said.

Versatility has been Wheeler's strong suit for several seasons. He appeared in 25 games for the Rays last season but didn't earn a save. He was the setup guy, the pitcher Maddon pointed at to grab a tough out or two in the seventh or eighth innings.



That was the same role Wheeler settled into this season. He's accumulated 26 holds (second-best in the A.L.) but when veteran closer Troy Percival went down with a sore back in August, Wheeler stepped in and shined. He finished the season with a career-

OCEAN STATE TEAMMATES

Rocco Baldelli and Dan Wheeler are the sixth set of Rhode Island natives to play on the same team in the major leagues since World War II:

YEAR(S)	TEAM	PLAYERS
2007-08	Rays	Rocco Baldelli, Dan Wheeler
1983-84	A's	Bill Almon, Davey Lopes
1982	White Sox	Bill Almon, Jim Siwy
1963	Senators	Art Quirk, Dave Stenhouse
1955-56	Braves	Chet Nichols, Phil Paine
1951, '54	Braves	Chet Nichols, Phil Paine, Max Surkont

Warwick native Dan Wheeler, a stalwart in the Rays' bullpen, hopes to close the door on the Red Sox in the American League Championship Series.

AP / MIKE CARLSON

high 13 saves and held opposing hitters to a .183 average in 70 appearances.

"He's the jack of all trades," said Percival, a 13-

SEE WHEELER, C4

Against low-budget Rays, Sox fans are in role reversal

We have become the Yankees. We have become the team we always hated, the one with all the money and all the advantages, the big baseball bullies.

We have become the Yankees. At least in this series with the Rays. That's the irony here.

It's the Red Sox that are the team with the huge payroll, the Red Sox with the two World Series titles since

2004, the Red Sox with the huge fan base, the Red Sox, the team that always played to sold-out crowds, the Red Sox with one of the best brands in all of sports, the Red Sox that are the big dog in this fight.

The Rays? They're the '67 Red Sox.

They are the team that's come out of nowhere, the team that went from last to first in the A.L. East this year, the team that plays in that ridiculous domed stadium in Tampa, the one where no one ever used to go to, a

baseball Death Valley.

They are the team that always has toiled in a low-level media market, out of sight and certainly out of mind, playing in one of those places that never used to count, the team that was derisively referred to as the Devil Dogs. Complete with players that were just guys with names known only to baseball fans, names that have yet to explode into the culture the way true stars do.

That they are where they are today

is an amazing story, the best story in the game. If nothing else, they're great for baseball, for it sends out the message that you don't have to have a huge payroll to win, that if you are smart and can acquire a good young nucleus and keep it together for a while you can overcome the odds. It's the perception that baseball needs, even if the reality so often refutes it.

They are the ultimate underdogs,

SEE REYNOLDS, C4