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Find more on last night's Patriots-Colts game, including a photo gallery, online today at projosports.com/patriots

Familiar foes

The Pats and Colts have played nine games in the last six seasons (including playoffs):

YEAR	MEETINGS	VENUES
2008	1	Indianapolis
2007	1	Indianapolis
2006	2	Foxboro, Indianapolis
2005	1	Foxboro
2004	2	Foxboro
2003	2	Indianapolis, Foxboro

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Colts 18
Patriots 15

LOW EXPECTATIONS

Neither team was undefeated this time. They weren't both in first place. They're not seen as sure-fire Super Bowl contenders. So the hype for this Patriots-Colts game wasn't nearly as suffocating as its been in years past.

HIGH DELIVERY

But New England and Indianapolis put on a show that kept everyone watching last night right to the end.

THE END GAME

The Patriots have a lot of what-ifs to chew on: The questionable challenge by **Bill Belichick** in the third quarter that cost them a time out. The certain touchdown pass that went through **Jabar Gaffney's** hands on a drive in which they wound up settling for a field goal. And, most of all, the personal-foul penalty on **David Thomas** that basically ended New England's last hopes.

BIG HURT

"This is a tough one to take tonight." — **Matt Cassel**
"A lot of guys are really down because we let a game like this slip." — **Randy Moss**

BIGGEST OF ALL

But what are they really upset about?
"This is one of those funny games," said Moss. "You really got to watch what you say, because fines could be out on Wednesday. So I'll leave it at that."
And what he means, of course, is that if he said what he really was thinking about the referees, the National Football League would take away some of his money later this week.

SHAKE IT OFF

Moss had one other piece of advice to Gaffney and his other teammates: "Go home, kiss your wife and kids, and see you on Wednesday."

ONE THAT GOT AWAY

Dropped TD pass and late penalty derail the Patriots

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

INDIANAPOLIS — David Thomas might just be the quietest player in the New England Patriots' locker room. He's friendly, not the most quotable guy, and just seems to go about his business day-to-day.

But that quiet guy made the blunder heard 'round New England last night.

With less than five minutes to play and the Colts holding an 18-15 lead, the Patriots were moving the ball well, were in field-goal range and appeared capable of

going in for the go-ahead touchdown. But then, after BenJarvis Green-Ellis came up a yard short on a second-and-two from the Indianapolis 32-yard line, Thomas was whistled for the most undisciplined of penalties: Unnecessary roughness, called after he shoved the Colts' Robert Mathis and knocked him to the ground after the play was dead.

That moved the ball back to the Colts' 46-yard line and gave the Pats a third-and-16. Partly because of a failed — and questionable, since the advantage it would have given them seemed to be neg-

ligible — challenge early in the third quarter, New England had no timeouts remaining. The Pats attempted a short screen pass on third down, hoping to gain enough yards to get them back in field-goal range, but Kevin Faulk was stopped after gaining only a yard. That led to a desperation fourth-down pass that the Colts' Bob Sanders intercepted at the 25-yard line, and that was it. Indianapolis held on for a 15-13 victory.

The Colts ended a two-game losing streak and upped their record to .500 on the season. The loss dropped New Eng-

land to 5-3, and there is now a three-way tie atop the AFC East between the Patriots, Bills and Jets.

"We've come here the last couple of years and it's been just like this, last possession, last couple of plays," said Patriots coach Bill Belichick. "In the end, the Colts just made a couple of more plays than we did. And that was it. That was the difference."

Old friend Adam Vinatieri provided the game-winning points, making a 52-yard

SEE PATRIOTS, B4



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

A sure touchdown pass from Matt Cassel to Jabar Gaffney slips through Gaffney's hands during the third quarter of last night's game against the Colts.

After hanging tough for so long, they totally lost their grip



JIM DONALDSON

INDIANAPOLIS — The Patriots managed to hang on to the football, but gave away the game.

They did a great job of controlling the clock last night against the Colts, but lost control of their emotions and, at least in the case of coach Bill Belichick, one could argue their senses, as well.

With sole possession of first place in the AFC East in their grasp following the Bills loss to the Jets in Buffalo earlier in

the day, the Pats let victory slip through their hands as surely as Jabar Gaffney dropped a guaranteed touchdown pass in the final seconds of the third quarter.

Belichick, too, dropped the ball. Just when it appeared quarterback Matt Cassel — who, once again, did a fine job of "managing" the game — had picked up a first down on fourth-and-1 at the Indianapolis' 7 with the Pats trailing by three points, 15-12, a little more than three minutes into the fourth quarter, the officials waved off the play because Belichick had called a timeout.

Which happened to be New England's last one, Belichick already having blown

one by futilely protesting the Colts had 12 men on the field in the third quarter.

"That was a big play," Colts coach Tony Dungy said, "the challenge that wound up costing them a timeout."

Belichick then decided not to go for the first down and a possible six points, instead opting for the sure three, which came on a 25-yard field goal by Stephen Gostkowski.

"We didn't get a very good look at the (third-down) spot," Belichick said, by way of explanation. "Once we saw what the distance was, it just seemed better to go for the (three) points."

As it turned out, the Patriots would

need more, as Adam Vinatieri — remember him? — booted a 52-yard field goal for the decisive points with 8:05 remaining.

New England appeared on its way to at least tying the game on the ensuing possession, driving — as they had most of the night — slowly, but surely, down the field.

Until, that is, their drive was ruined by a personal foul call against tight end David Thomas for pushing an Indianapolis player after the whistle.

"That really cost us," Thomas ac-

SEE DONALDSON, B4



At left is Allison Stasiuk, of North Kingstown High, runner-up in the girls' race at the state cross-country championships, is congratulated by her parents, Mickey and Paul Stasiuk. Westerly High's Andrew Springer (174) was the winner at the boys' cross-country championships at Ponaganset High School. North Kingstown's Cassie Raye-Stuart (12) gets a big hug from teammate Meaghan Farrelly after Raye-Stuart scored the winning goal in double-overtime in yesterday's Division I field hockey championship at Cranston Stadium. At far right, Moses Brown players celebrate after their final goal in yesterday's 3-0 victory over Wheeler in the Division II field hockey championship. Inside: Field hockey on Page B7, Cross Country on B8. More photos and video at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland



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