

What do the Sox need to do to return to the Series in 2009?

Tell us what you think at projosports.com/redsox



RAMS TO MEET REBELS IN SOCCER FINALE: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

projovideo

Scenes from the Ryan Center as the Rhody Rams take on Concordia in their first exhibition tilt, at projosports.com

On the cheap

According to Forbes Magazine, the five NHL teams holding the least value are as follows:

RANK	TEAM	VALUE
26	Capitals	\$160m
27	Thrashers	\$158m
28	Blue Jackets	\$157m
29	Islanders	\$154m
30	Coyotes	\$142m

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

SECTION C



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2008

projosports

Phone: 401-277-7340 Fax: 401-277-7444 E-mail: pjsports@projo.com

URI 123, CONCORDIA 84

Plenty of run in new-look Rams as they race past Concordia

URI acknowledges it still has work to do on defense, but its up-tempo, helter-skelter style of play sure is fun to watch.

BY PAUL KENYON
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SOUTH KINGSTOWN — Jim Baron is not one of those coaches who likes to ease into a season. He wants his URI basketball team to go full speed all the time.

That's exactly the way the Rhody coach had his team working last night in the Rams' first exhibition game. As was obvious from the opening tip, URI plans on turning up the throttle even higher this winter.

That's saying something since the Rams played in high gear last winter when they averaged 80 points on the way to posting a 21-12 record. This year, they want to play defense the same way they have played on offense — that is, pressure full-court to make the game play as fast as possible.

They did not hide their plans last night. Pressing full court all the way, they poured in 65 first-half points on the way to a 123-84 victory over Concordia University of Montreal at the Ryan Center.

"This was like an NBA game," Baron said. "The guys have been working real hard in preparation for this type of scenario."

"We have athleticism that we've never had here. We have depth," Baron added. "We've just added on to what we started two years ago. We're really pushing the ball."

The decision to press all-out was not done by accident.

"I really studied this. I spent a lot of time this summer with my staff, understanding what it takes to do this. It's exciting," Baron said.

"We love it," said forward Delroy James, who led the scoring with 24 points.

"We're playing to our strengths," added guard Keith Cothran, who had 20 points. "Everybody on the team, including the freshmen, likes to run. We

SEE **URI, C5**



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KRIS CRAIG

URI's Jimmy Baron drives on Concordia's Dwayne Buckley for two of his 20 points in last night's exhibition contest at the Ryan Center.

COLD IN THE RED ZONE Patriots misfiring near goal line

BY ROBERT LEE
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — The Patriots' offense is a work in progress with Matt Cassel running the show and with the injuries that are piling up at the running back position.

So it doesn't come as a surprise that New England is ranked 22nd in the NFL in red-zone offense, scoring only 14 touchdowns on 30 possessions inside the 20-yard line.

But what comes as a surprise is

that the Patriots rank 30th in red-zone defense, allowing teams to score a touchdown when they get inside the red area 63.6 percent of the time (14-for-22).

That is surprising because the Patriots have allowed an NFL-best 17.24 points per game since the 2003 season, and have given up 18.8 points per game this season (ranked ninth).

Patriots coach Bill Belichick said that the Patriots need to improve in

the red area on both sides of the ball, and Sunday's 18-15 loss to Indianapolis is a prime example.

The Patriots scored only one touchdown on four red-zone tries and allowed the Colts to score touchdowns on both of their red-zone attempts.

"If we made any one of those plays (in the red zone), it probably would have made a difference in the game on either side of the ball in any situation," Belichick said. "So we just

have to keep working harder (and do a good job on those things.)"

Belichick said that for the Patriots to improve their red-zone play on both sides of the ball, they need to coach it better and then execute it better.

"It just comes down to better execution," Belichick said. "(It's) an area where there is not much field space. It is harder to throw down

SEE **PATRIOTS, C3**



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

Patriots safety Mike Richardson, who was unable to stop the Colts' Anthony Gonzalez from reeling in a third-quarter touchdown on Sunday, and New England's defense have been unable to keep opponents at bay in the red zone this season.

For those who worried about Cassel, worry no more

You are Matt Cassel, and no one could have dreamed up this scenario, maybe not even you.

BILL REYNOLDS You are Matt Cassel, and you spent the preseason all but fighting for your football life, not playing well in the games, complete with the speculation that you might even be cut.

And then, in one of those moments that changes everything, Tom Brady goes out for the year in the first quarter of the first game and there you are, the Patriots quarterback, sink or swim.

No matter that you hadn't started a game since you were in high school.

No matter that you spent your entire career at USC backing up two

Heisman Trophy candidates in Carson Palmer and Matt Leinert.

No matter that you'd been hanging around the Pats for the last three years as Brady's caddy, a little garbage time here and there.

There you were in the game against the Chiefs, ready or not.

You are Matt Cassel and you suddenly were right in the middle of the microscope, even though the

NFL is not exactly the ideal place to have on-the-job training.

And even if there were people who wanted to make comparisons to Brady in 2001 when he, too, came out of nowhere to replace the injured Drew Bledsoe and take the Pats all the way to the Super Bowl, it really wasn't the same situation. Bledsoe

SEE **REYNOLDS, C3**

Red Sox will be in hunt for bevy of top-line hurlers this winter

CC Sabathia, Ben Sheets, A.J. Burnett and former Sox pitcher Derek Lowe could be on Theo Epstein's radar.

BY JOE McDONALD
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

Now that baseball's offseason has begun, teams are planning their strategy as players jump into the free-agent market.

Those players who are eligible for free agency have 15 days after the World Series to file, and many have already taken the plunge. General managers yesterday gathered at a posh hotel in Dana Point, Calif., to discuss possible trades and to talk to agents about their available free-

agent players.

While there are a few major free-agent position players in the mix for GMs to vie for — namely Manny Ramirez, Mark Teixeira and Jason Varitek — it is the crop of solid starting pitchers that will earn much of the attention.

The Red Sox should be in the mix for, or at least interested in, high-end hurlers such as CC Sabathia, A.J. Burnett, Derek Lowe, Ben Sheets and possibly Jon Garland.

Boston's rotation heading into 2009 will have Josh Beckett, Jon Lester, Daisuke Matsuzaka and Tim Lincecum in place. That means there is one opening. Adding a big name wouldn't hurt, and Red Sox GM Theo Epstein won't be afraid



SABATHIA



LOWE



SHEETS



BURNETT

to look outside the organization for help.

It didn't take long for the Brewers to make a formal offer to the left-handed Sabathia, who was acquired by the club at the trade deadline last July.

Sabathia (11-2 with a 1.65 ERA in 17 starts in the second half) and his agent will no doubt explore other options. The

Yankees, who missed the postseason this year for the first time since 1995, have made Sabathia their top priority this offseason. They probably will wait for all other clubs to make offers before dropping their trump card in hopes of landing the former Cy Young winner.

The problem with that is that Sabathia

wants to play closer to home, in Southern California, which gives the Dodgers and the Angels a chance in the bidding. Even if the Red Sox feel they have no shot in the sweepstakes, they will try to drive Sabathia's price tag up for other clubs, especially the Yankees.

Sheets finished the season with a 13-9 record with a 3.09 ERA with the Brewers. Health has always been an issue with the right-hander, but the Red Sox have shown interest in the past in him.

Burnett has two years remaining on his deal with the Blue Jays and is due \$24 million over that time. He has a clause that would allow him to opt out of his contract

SEE **RED SOX, C5**