

Does the Super Bowl hype affect how much you enjoy the game?

Tell us your answer at projosports.com/patriots



NORTH KINGSTOWN UPSETS WOONSOCKET: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

Projo PatsTalk

A final multimedia look at the Patriots-Giants Super Bowl matchup, posted this afternoon at projosports.com/patriots

4th . . . and climbing?

Tom Brady has the fourth-highest Super Bowl quarterback rating in history (minimum 50 pass attempts):

| | RATING |
|----------------|--------|
| Joe Montana | 127.8 |
| Terry Bradshaw | 112.8 |
| Troy Aikman | 111.9 |
| Tom Brady | 99.9 |

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



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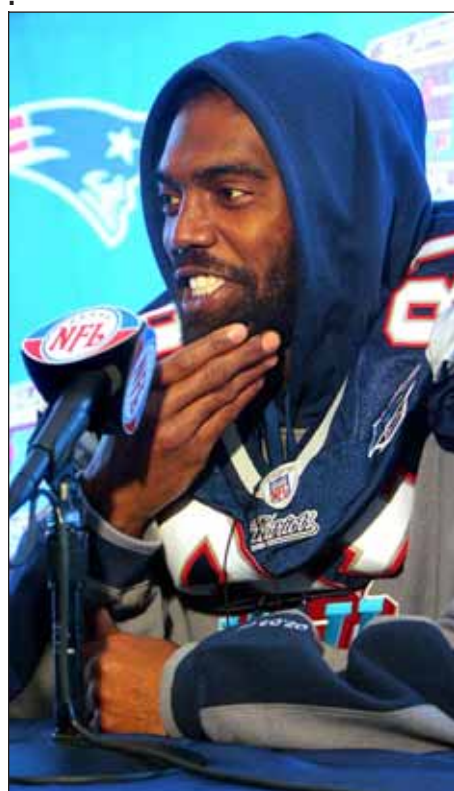


THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Pats linebacker Tedy Bruschi says he's hoping his hands can get hold of Giants quarterback Eli Manning in the big game Sunday.



Pats receiver Troy Brown, who may be playing in his last game, offers his thoughts on the Super Bowl.



A hooded Randy Moss tells how he wants his beard to be like that of Pats teammate Dan Koppen.



Patriots linebacker Mike Vrabel, who sometimes lines up as a receiver, wouldn't mind being in the spotlight.

3-POINT MAN



JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

Kicker Adam Vinatieri will forever be remembered by Patriots fans for his game-winning Super Bowl field goals against the Rams, above, and the Panthers, below.



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GRETCHEN ERTL

Pats kicker Stephen Gostkowski says he thinks only of the job at hand when preparing to kick a field goal — not what his predecessor did or even how his last kick fared.

Gostkowski unfazed by Vinatieri's legend

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Memo to Patriots kicker Stephen Gostkowski: all three of the Patriots' Super Bowl victories have been by a margin of three points. Which is to say, a field goal.

"So I've been told," he said yesterday morning at the team hotel. "I don't keep tabs on that stuff."

As far as NFL kickers are concerned, ignorance isn't merely bliss — it's a necessity.

They have trained themselves to think only about the process, not the result. To think strictly about their technique, not the situation. And never, ever, to think about missing.

"I don't think about negative situations," Gostkowski said. "I work on being mentally prepared for every kick. I can't be thinking: 'Oh, man, we need this kick.' I just play dumb, and do what I do."

What Gostkowski has done for the past two seasons is handle the placekicking for your New England Patriots.

You may remember his

predecessor — fellow by the name of Adam Vinatieri?

You may recall that Vinatieri kicked a 48-yard field goal as time expired to beat the Rams, 20-17, in Super Bowl XXXVI, and a 41-yard field goal with four seconds to go to beat the Panthers, 32-29, in Super Bowl XXXVIII. His 22-yard field goal in the fourth quarter proved to be the difference in New England's 24-21 win over the Eagles in Super Bowl XXXIX.

You also may not want to mention any of that when you're talking to Gostkowski.

"I'm not answering any more questions about Adam Vinatieri," he said, in a tone more befitting a linebacker than a kicker. "I don't care about replacing Adam Vinatieri."

"He was great. He did some great things. I can't control the opportunities he had. I can only do what I do."

Because the Patriots so often win by lopsided scores, Gostkowski has seldom been in a position to hold the outcome of the game in his hands. Or on his foot, as the case may be.

The highlight of his brief

SEE DONALDSON, D2

THE KICK IS UP, AND IT'S . . .

Only five Super Bowls have been decided, positively or negatively, by field goals . . . and the Patriots were involved in three of them:

| Super Bowl | Score | The Kick |
|------------|----------------------|---|
| XXXIX | Pats 24, Eagles 21 | Adam Vinatieri's 22-yarder in the fourth quarter proved to be the game-winner. |
| XXXVIII | Pats 32, Panthers 29 | Vinatieri wins it with a 41-yarder with four seconds to play. |
| XXXVI | Pats 20, Rams 17 | Vinatieri's 48-yarder as time expires gives New England its first championship. |
| XXV | Giants 20, Bills 19 | Buffalo's Scott Norwood misses a 47-yarder as the clock runs out, which would have given the Bills the victory. |
| V | Colts 16, Cowboys 13 | Jim O'Brien kicks a final-second 32-yarder to give Baltimore the title. |

Pats' Brady rose through ranks to reach stardom

The quarterback learned at a young age that he needed to work hard to achieve his goals.

BY ROBERT LEE
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — If you ask his teammates how Tom Brady became such a good quarterback, the first thing they will tell you is it's because of his work ethic.

Kevin Faulk said it. So did Rodney Harrison. As did Wes Welker, Randy Moss and Jabar Gaffney.

Brady learned at a young

age that he needed to work hard to earn what he wanted. It's hard to believe, but one of the greatest quarterbacks the NFL has ever seen had to fight for a starting job on his high-school team — Junipero Serra High, in Santa Monica, Calif.

"I've always said I've been very fortunate to learn lessons about competition and self-confidence at an early age," Brady said. "I think [with] a lot of athletes, you're always the best athlete through high school and college. Then you come to the professional level and you realize, you look around and go, 'Man, all these

other guys are good, too.' You begin to think, 'Can I make it?' or 'Am I good enough?' or 'How do I find the work ethic to compete with these guys?'"

"I don't think that was ever really the case for me, and I'm lucky that that wasn't the case. I always felt I needed to work extremely hard to get whatever opportunity there may have been."

Brady not only started in his junior and senior seasons at Junipero Serra High, but he excelled, earning Blue Chip Illustrated and Prep Football Re-



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

The Patriots' Tom Brady talks with the media in Phoenix.

SEE BRADY, D3

Frustrated by missed opportunities, Friars fall to Irish in o.t.

PC, constantly struggling on offense, squanders multiple chances to win in the final seconds of regulation.

BY KEVIN McNAMARA
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Closing out tough basketball games on the road takes near perfection and often a little bit of luck. Last night the Providence Friars didn't get a dose of either one.

The Friars let a golden opportunity for a key victory slip through their hands in regulation and Notre Dame escaped with an 81-74 overtime victory at the Joyce Center. PC had two turnovers and a missed one-and-one free-throw chance in the final 36 seconds of regulation. That combination led to the Friars' toughest loss of the season.

"Absolutely," coach Tim Welsh said when asked whether his team's third straight loss was the most painful this year. "When you get two [defensive]

stops in the last 30 seconds with a two-point lead and don't close it out, that's tough."

Notre Dame (15-4, 5-2 Big East) was paced all night by center Luke Harangody, Welsh's choice as the league's Player of the Year at the midway stop. Harangody scored a game-high 31 points and grabbed 14 rebounds. Point guard Tory Jackson played very well also with 14 points and seven assists.

NOTRE DAME
81
PC
74

NEXT GAME
Tomorrow vs. W. Va. 7 p.m.

PC, now 12-8 overall and 3-5 in the Big East, was again led by Dwain Williams. He finished with 20 points but shot just 6 of 20 from the field. Four other Friars finished with 10 points but PC made only 8 of 33 threes and finished 6 for 16 from the foul line.

Paced by Harangody and plenty of trips to the foul line, Notre Dame led 58-50 with seven minutes to play but the Friars still had some-

thing left in their gas tank.

Brian McKenzie scored on an offensive rebound and after two more missed 3-pointers made the Friars 4 of 26 from behind the line, Williams canned a deep trey to cut the lead to 59-55. Another strong defensive stand gave the ball back to PC and this time a Ray Hall offensive rebound kept a possession alive. It ended with McKenzie feeding Hall for a layup and the Friars were down, 59-57

SEE FRIARS, D7