

Which postseason tournament will give URI an invitation?

Tell us what you think at projsports.com/uri



PLAYOFF ACTION HEATS UP ON THE COURTS: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

Sox in Japan

When the team heads to Tokyo this month, look for Sean McAdam's live reports at projsports.com/redsox

Packing it in

After 17 NFL seasons, Green Bay Packers QB Brett Favre calls it quits. But he leaves a legacy he can be proud of:

	Total	Rank
TD Passes	442	1st
Yards Passing	61,655	1st
Passes Attempted	8,758	1st
Passes Completed	5,377	1st
Reg. Season Wins	160	1st

For up-to-the-second stats and scores: projsports.com/Patriots



SECTION C
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THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon, with the support of the Players Association, continues to publicly state he deserves more money.

Papelbon's pitch is for a better deal

FORT MYERS, Fla. — On the surface, the stalled negotiations between closer Jonathan Papelbon and the Red Sox

SEAN MCADAM would seem to be nothing more than a contractual stalemate.

Nothing new there: teams and players have been fighting over money since the days of Babe Ruth.

But there's more at work here, apparently. Papelbon is just the latest high-profile star with less than three years of major-league service time — and thus, without the leverage of salary arbitration — taking his salary quest public and alluding to a sense of responsibility he feels for

players who follow him.

In the last week alone, Milwaukee's Prince Fielder and Philadelphia's Cole Hamels have been similarly vocal in their displeasure about having their deals renewed — that is, unilaterally imposed by teams after unresolved negotiations — and increasingly, it seems as if determining the salaries of the game's youngest stars has become the new battleground between clubs and the Major League Players Association.

For the second time in the last three days, Papelbon yesterday spoke of his frustration in failing to reach agreement with the Sox on a 2008 contract. And, also

for the second time in the last three days, he sounded a communal theme while talking about his battle.

"It's a tough situation for me right now," said Papelbon, "because basically I'm at a point to where I feel like the position I'm in, there's a certain standard that needs to be put in place here. I feel like, with me being at the top of my position, I feel like that standard needs to be set and I'm the one to set that standard. And I don't think that the Red Sox are really necessarily seeing eye to eye with me on that subject right now."

SEE **MCADAM, C2**

Post-season destination for URI still up in the air

The Rams' fate will be tied to their success in Saturday's regular-season finale, as well as how they do in the A-10 tourney.

BY PAUL KENYON
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SOUTH KINGSTOWN — Thirty games into the season, nothing has been decided for the URI basketball team.

As the Rams prepare for their regular-season finale Saturday night when they host Charlotte, they are in the same position they were in four months ago when Florida Atlantic visited the Ryan Center for the season opener.

They still have a chance to qualify for the NCAA Tournament. They are very much a possibility for the NIT. They might end up being one of the first teams to experience the new College Basketball Invitational. Or they could end up with none of the above.

Already the season has produced three winning streaks of at least four games, offset by one crushing five-game losing skid. The team has been involved in 15 games decided in single digits, and has gone 7-8 in those contests. The Rams have scored at least 80 points 19 times. They are tied for 11th in the country in scoring, with Notre Dame, Kansas and Boise State all at 81.6.

It has been an entertaining, surprising, confusing, and wild season. And nothing has been decided. Here is one view on what could happen in the next two weeks:

■ **The NCAA Tournament**

Obviously, things are not looking good for an invitation to the dance. However, all is not lost, especially not after the victory Saturday at La Salle. That win was huge in several ways, with NCAA hopes on the top of the list.

The first thing the Rams did by snapping their losing streak was to maintain the opportunity to finish at .500 in conference play. That is important when the NCAA, and even the NIT, is considering its field.

With a victory in Saturday's finale, URI could finish as high as a tie for fifth

SEE **URI, C3**



PLAYING FOR KEEPS



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / RUBEN W. PEREZ

North Kingstown's Will Smiley, center, prepares to take a pass as Woonsocket's Lee Vasques, left, and Antjuan Jones defend during the second half of last night's Division I semifinal game.

BOYS DIVISION I BASKETBALL

SEMIFINALS Results Last Night
Woonsocket 59, North Kingstown 52
Hendricken 73, Mount Pleasant 60

BOYS DIVISION II BASKETBALL

SEMIFINALS Games Tonight
West Warwick vs. Coventry, 6:30 p.m.
Classical vs. Rogers, 8 p.m.
Both games at CCRW-Warwick

GIRLS DIVISION I BASKETBALL

SEMIFINALS Results Last Night
La Salle 56, South Kingstown 51
Bay View 49, Coventry 39

GIRLS DIVISION II BASKETBALL

SEMIFINALS Games Tonight
Woonsocket vs. Mount St. Charles, 6:30 p.m.
Scituate vs. Barrington, 8 p.m.
Both games at RIC

Details on Page C6

Pats reconnect with Gaffney and add depth to secondary

Jabar Gaffney, a reliable target for Tom Brady, signs a one-year deal and veteran cornerback Jason Webster lands in New England.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

The New England Patriots continued to add players yesterday, signing one familiar face and one not-so-familiar.

Last night, the Pats came to terms with wide receiver Jabar Gaffney on a one-year contract. Earlier in the day, New England announced that it signed cornerback Jason Webster.

Gaffney, signed by the Patriots in October 2006 to help a then-thin receiving corps, has filled a couple of roles with New England. He became Tom Brady's go-to guy in the playoffs, with 21 catches for 244 yards and two touchdowns. Eighteen of those receptions came in the Pats' first two playoff games.

Last season, with an influx of talent at the position, Gaffney's receptions went way down as Brady sought out Randy Moss, Wes Welker and Donte Stallworth. But midway through the season, Gaffney passed the now-departed Stallworth. Twenty-four of his 36 regular-season catches came after

SEE **PATRIOTS, C5**



AP / MIKE ROEMER

Green Bay Packers' fans will no longer get a chance to see Brett Favre — who started 275 consecutive games in the NFL — wreak havoc on opposing defenses.

Mental fatigue is reason Favre is calling it quits

One of the NFL's all-time great quarterbacks surprises Packer fans and Green Bay coach Mike McCarthy by retiring after 17 years in the league.

BY JUDY BATTISTA
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The enthusiasm that drove him to a Super Bowl championship and three NFL Most Valuable Player awards gave way to weariness. And so on Monday night, Brett Favre, the beloved quarterback of the Green Bay Packers and one of the most crowd-pleasing players in

football history, told the Packers he was retiring.

Favre, 38, had pondered retirement for a few years, and his long-time agent, Bus Cook, suggested yesterday that Favre wanted to play at least one more season but may have retired, in part, because he felt the Packers had not expressed enough interest in having him return.

"Nobody pushed Brett Favre out the door, but then nobody encouraged him not to go out that door, either," Cook told The Associated Press from Hattiesburg, Miss.

SEE **FAVRE, C5**