

**Should Red Sox' fans be worried about Josh Beckett's back?**

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GAME-THREE THRILLS ON THE ICE: View the gallery at [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

**Hoops chat**

Kevin McNamara takes your questions about the Rams and the Friars from 11 a.m. to noon today at [projosports.com/chat](http://projosports.com/chat)

**Lester we forget**

In his brief major-league career, Jon Lester has put more than his share of men on base. But his 11-2 record proves he can pitch out of trouble:

	IP	H	BB	HBP
2006	81.3	91	43	5
2007	63.0	61	31	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>144.3</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>6</b>

For up-to-the-second stats and scores: [projosports.com/redsox](http://projosports.com/redsox)



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## This Friar finds heaven at Garden

PROVIDENCE — The Friars will be in New York this week, the annual pilgrimage to Madison Square Garden and the Big East Tournament.

**BILL REYNOLDS** | Once upon a time, going to Madison Square Garden was not a rite of passage, more like a gift from a benevolent basketball god.

The Rev. Robert Morris remembers.

He's one of the last few left at PC who does.

"Every kid who lived on campus, except two who were in the infirmary, went to New York," he says. "Kids hung bed sheets out of dorm rooms that said, 'Go Friars.' And in New York, everywhere you went, you saw PC kids. They flooded the bars on Eighth Avenue."

The good-old days. It was 1959, back when Providence College basketball was as new and fresh as first love and going to the

SEE **REYNOLDS, C3**



PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

The Rev. Robert Morris recalls the good-old days when the Friars were a hit in the NIT at Madison Square Garden.

## Rams' season boils down to A-10 tourney

Once nationally ranked but now struggling, URI will likely have to win the conference championship to earn a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

BY **PAUL KENYON**  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

The options are pretty much gone now for the URI basketball team.

As the Rams head to Atlantic City for the Atlantic 10 basketball championship, they must put their total focus on trying to win games.

There is no need to be wondering about positioning anymore, no need to concern themselves about being on the NCAA Tournament bubble, no need to think about what they might be doing next week.

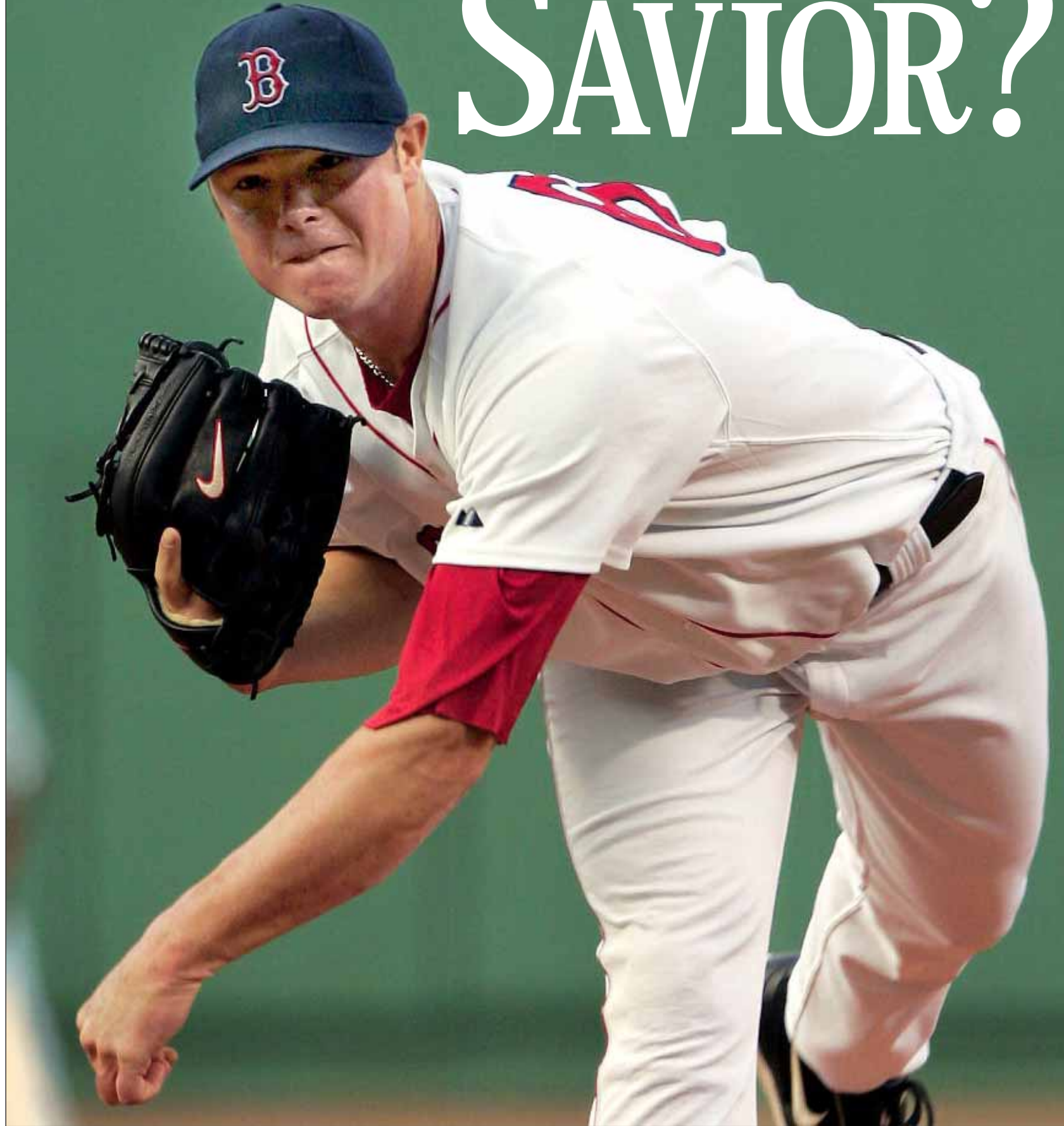
The only thing that matters this week is staying alive.

Just win, baby. That's the only thing the Rams have to be concerned about.

After losing seven of its last nine regular-season games, Rhody has gone from a sure-fire postseason team to

SEE **URI, C3**

# SURVIVOR TO SAVIOR?



AP / ELISE AMENDOLA

With ace Josh Beckett nursing a sore back, lefty Jon Lester, who has gone from cancer survivor to World Series hero, could wind up being the Opening Day starter for the Boston Red Sox against the Oakland Athletics in Japan.

## Lester could get the call to start Opening Day

BY **JOE McDONALD**  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — When one door closes, another door opens.

The door seemed to close yesterday — or at least start to swing shut — on Josh Beckett's chances of pitching on Opening Day in Tokyo two weeks from today.

Beckett, who was unable to make his scheduled Saturday start because of back spasms, had "a tough night" Sunday, according to manager Terry Francona, and the chances of his

pitching in Japan are in question.

"He's resigned himself to do the right thing and not something silly," Francona said of Beckett, who stayed back in Fort Myers for treatment. "We'll be OK; we just have to get [Beckett's back] calmed down."

Through that open door stepped Jon Lester.

There was already a shot Lester would take Beckett's spot at the top of the rotation, even before he took the mound here against the Mets yester-

day. Not only did nothing happen to make that less likely, but Lester probably helped his chances.

"He pounded the strike zone. He was aggressive. He looked confident. He was in charge of the game, which is exactly what we're looking for," said Francona after Lester had worked four shutout innings, allowing only two hits and one walk with five strikeouts, in a 1-1, 10-inning tie with the Mets. "It was exciting to see."

"I felt a lot better," said Lester. "Ev-

ery start I'm taking a step in the right direction. I'm going to look to build off this. Hopefully I can carry this over to my next start and keep it going."

Lester earned fame last year as a cancer survivor, to the point that he seemed to be more known for beating cancer than for his pitching ability.

"It was an unbelievable story," said Francona. "[But] what we're looking for, and he had a good grasp of this, is

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