

What is the biggest issue facing the Red Sox?

Tell us what you think at projosports.com/redsox



LACROSSE SHOWDOWN I GOES TO EAGLES: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

Gagne, Kapler: Oh my

Familiar faces return to Fenway tonight. Get the latest, including Sean McAdam's audio, today at projosports.com/soxblog

Road Warriors

The Celtics inability to win away from home has their fans a bit concerned, especially considering what Doc Rivers-coached playoff teams have done on the road in the past:

YEAR	ROAD GAMES	ROAD WINS
2000	2	0
2001	2	0
2002	3	1
2004	3	2
2007	5	0

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Celts' focus is on big picture vs. Cavaliers

"Our focus is to win the series. I think everybody else's focus is about the road," says Boston coach Doc Rivers on the eve of Game Six.

BY MIKE SZOSTAK
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

While the rest of us obsess over the fact that the Celtics have yet to win a road game in these NBA playoffs, they are more concerned with the big picture.

"Our focus is to win the series. I think everybody else's focus is about the road," coach Doc Rivers said yesterday before catching a plane to Cleveland for Game Six of the second-round matchup with the Cavaliers. His team leads, 3-2, and can advance to the Eastern Conference finals against Detroit with a victory tonight.

"We know that this is the playoffs," he said, "and winning on the road is difficult. We understand that. But our focus is to win the series, and if we can win it in Game Six, that's great, and that's what we want to do. But the point is to win the series."

The Cavs, not the Celtics, must win tonight to send the series back to Boston for a Game Seven showdown on Sunday. The Celtics have lost only six games at home this season, none in the playoffs. Perhaps that's why they are not worried.

"I don't see the stress with us as far as the road," said Rivers. "We want to win on the road, and we're going to play well (tonight)

SEE CELTICS, D5

Senator, here's how you get past Spygate

Senator Specter needs help. Oh, boy, does he ever need help. Helpful soul that I am, I am going to give him a hand.

JIM DONALDSON | He wants a "transparent and independent" investigation into Spygate? Well, I'm certainly independent, and I've been told many times that I'm transparent.

He insists that the NFL "has not been objective" in its probe of Spygate — the New England Patriots' illegal videotaping of opponents' signals. Objectivity is my middle name. (In the interest of full disclosure, Senator, it's actually William. But you get the point.)

"If you cheat in the NFL," Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said Wednesday in high dudgeon — or, more precisely, on Capitol Hill, "you can cheat in college, you can cheat in high school, you can cheat on your grade school math test. There's no limit."

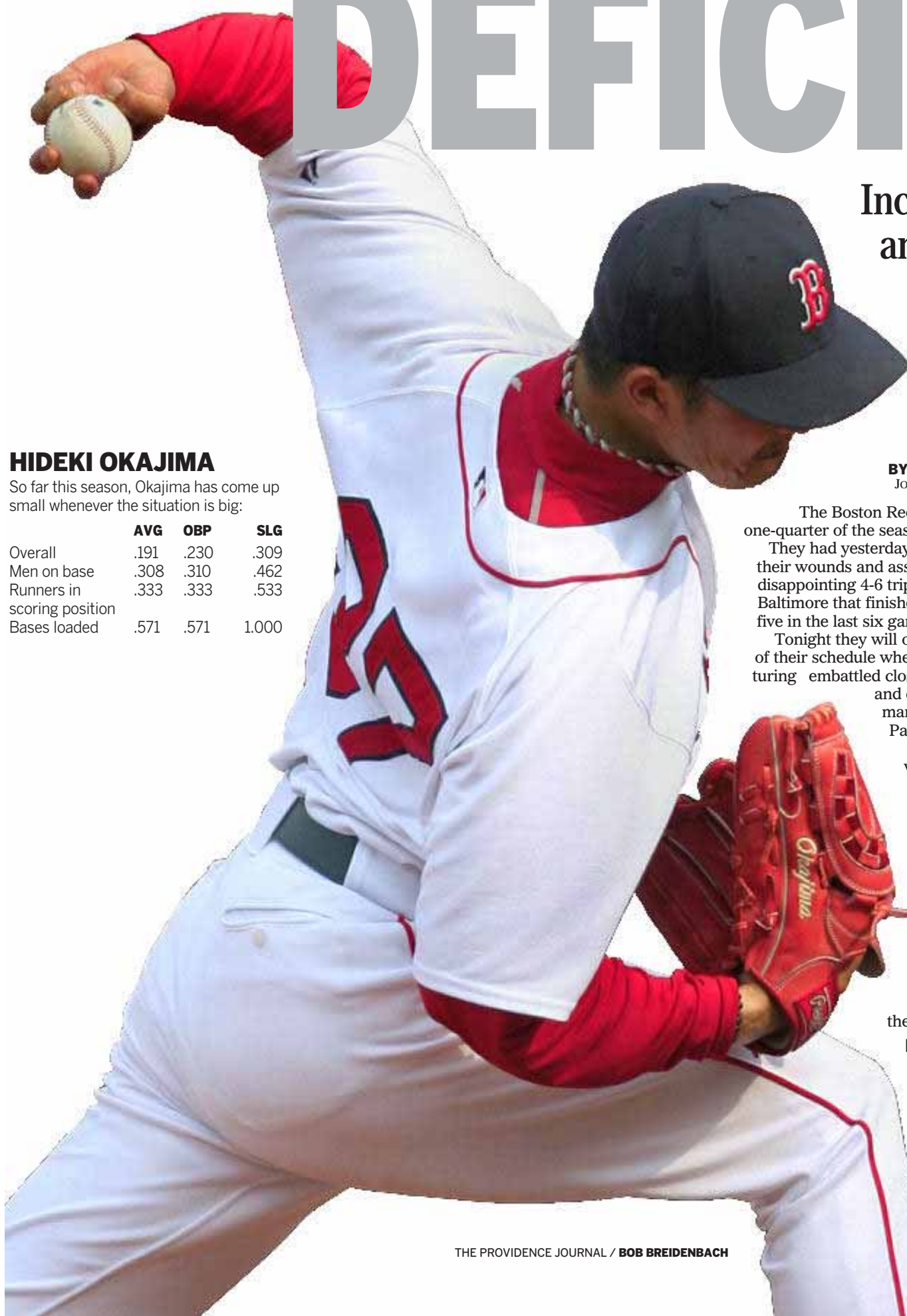
You can even cheat in the Oval Office. Just ask former President William Jefferson Clinton to air his dirty laundry. Or Monica Lewinsky's, as the case may be.

SEE DONALDSON, D5

FIRST-QUARTER

DEFICITS

Inconsistent hitting and weak pitching are among the Red Sox' woes



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

HIDEKI OKAJIMA

So far this season, Okajima has come up small whenever the situation is big:

	AVG	OBP	SLG
Overall	.191	.230	.309
Men on base	.308	.310	.462
Runners in scoring position	.333	.333	.533
Bases loaded	.571	.571	1.000

BY STEVEN KRASNER
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

The Boston Red Sox have basically completed one-quarter of the season.

They had yesterday off as an opportunity to lick their wounds and assess their M*A*S*H issues after a disappointing 4-6 trip through Detroit, Minnesota and Baltimore that finished with four losses in a row and five in the last six games.

Tonight they will open up the interleague portion of their schedule when the Milwaukee Brewers, featuring embattled closer Eric Gagne (remember him?) and ex-Sox player and minor-league manager Gabe Kapler, visit Fenway Park for a three-game set.

Check around the baseball world and experts still consider the Red Sox to be the class of the American League and a good bet to make it back to the World Series with a chance to claim back-to-back world championships, even if they are a game behind the surprising Tampa Bay Rays in the A.L. East.

But no team is perfect. This interlude in the schedule provides an opportunity to discuss some concerns facing the Red Sox at the quarter pole.

■ **Hideki Okajima**
The left-hander's earned-run average is a sparkling 0.93. He has permitted only two earned runs in 19 1/3 innings. But Okajima has been a bust in situations with runners on base.

On Wednesday in Baltimore, Okajima entered the game with the bases loaded and two outs in the seventh inning and the Red Sox ahead, 3-2.

SEE RED SOX, D4

SHAKY BRIDGE

The Red Sox' bullpen has had problems finding the right set of relievers to deliver the ball to closer Jonathan Papelbon at the end of games. The Sox' overall relief numbers are bad enough, but they get worse when you remove Papelbon's stats from the mix:

	W	L	S	ERA
Overall relief numbers	7	9	12	4.56
Relief numbers minus Papelbon	5	7	1	4.94

Reliever Manny Delcarmen reacts after giving up a grand slam to Toronto last month.

AP / J.P. MOCZULSKI



FAULTY CLUTCH

The Sox' offensive numbers, strong overall, get worse in key situations:

	AVG	OBP	SLG
Overall	.294	.364	.453
Late innings of close games	.279	.358	.506
Runners in scoring position with 2 outs	.230	.361	.356

David Ortiz pounds on his helmet after he flies out on his first pitch in the first inning against the Toronto Blue Jays on May 1.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / MARY MURPHY



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