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NORTH SMITHFIELD, LA SALLE WIN IN PLAYOFFS: View the gallery at [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

**Celtics bandwagon**

A photo gallery for each Celtics starter, plus Ken Hamwey's interactive basketball quiz, at [projosports.com/celtics](http://projosports.com/celtics)

**Big Brown eyes TC**

Big Brown, this year's Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner, tries to become thoroughbred racing's first Triple Crown winner in 30 years when he runs in Saturday's Belmont Stakes. Some previous TC winners:

YEAR	HORSE	JOCKEY
1978	Affirmed	Steve Cauthen
1977	Seattle Slew	Jean Cruguet
1973	Secretariat	Ron Turcotte
1948	Citation	Eddie Arcaro

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SECTION C



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NBA FINALS 2008

**THE SCHEDULE**

- **GAME ONE:** Thursday at Boston, 9 p.m.
- **GAME TWO:** Sunday, June 8 at Boston, 9 p.m.
- **GAME THREE:** Tuesday, June 10 at Los Angeles, 9 p.m.
- **GAME FOUR:** Thursday, June 12 at Los Angeles, 9 p.m.
- **xGAME FIVE:** Sunday, June 15 at Los Angeles, 9 p.m.
- **xGAME SIX:** Tuesday, June 17 at Boston, 9 p.m.
- **xGAME SEVEN:** Thursday, June 19 at Boston, 9 p.m.

x — if necessary

All times Eastern. All games televised on ABC.

**ON PROJO.COM**

Get all the latest Celtics news as it happens, as well as:

- Photo slideshows of every playoff game
- A slideshow of the celebrities sitting courtside at TD Banknorth Garden
- Audio blogs from Journal writers
- Video from Journal photographer Kris Craig
- "The Bandwagon," featuring quizzes, Q-and-A's, and everything you need to know about the Celtics.

Go to: [projosports.com/Celtics](http://projosports.com/Celtics)

**INSIDE**

■ Backup guard Tony Allen probably won't be ready for Game One of the NBA Finals Thursday night. The only Celtic with a health issue didn't practice much yesterday because of an injury to his "ankle region" he suffered a week ago while playing one-on-one after practice. "It doesn't look good. He couldn't get through the walk-through," coach Doc Rivers said. See Celtics Journal. **Page C3**



AP / MARK J. TERRILL

Lakers guards Kobe Bryant, right, and Derek Fisher are psyched for the NBA Finals.

■ The Lakers' Derek Fisher is smiling these days and for good reason. His 2-year-old daughter Tatum is doing well in her battle with retinoblastoma — cancer in the left eye — and her father gets a chance to play for an NBA championship after leaving the Jazz. **Page C3**

# A NEW MINDSET

"I'm glad [Kobe Bryant] stayed out West. I'm glad Paul stayed here. I'm glad it worked out the way it worked out."

**DOC RIVERS**

Celtics' head coach

"There are times you want to give up and times when you want to move on."

**PAUL PIERCE**

Celtics' star forward



"I knew these guys were unselfish. You see the way they (Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen) played with their teams."

**PAUL PIERCE**

AP / MORRY GASH

## Big-ticket acquisitions for Celtics and Lakers inspired Pierce, Bryant

BY MIKE SZOSTAK  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

WALTHAM, Mass. — They sat together last June, two disgruntled NBA stars swigging water after a pickup game at UCLA. One, a three-time champion, had already gone national with his desire to be traded. The other, frustrated by years of losing and teammates barely out of high school, bet that he would be traded first.

"The crazy thing about this is, this time last year, I remember being in the gym with Kobe, and all I was doing was 'Who's going to get traded first?'" Paul Pierce was saying with a chuckle.

As we all well aware, the Los Angeles Lakers did not trade Kobe Bryant, the Boston Celtics did not trade Paul Pierce, and Thursday night they will take the floor at the TD Banknorth Garden for Game One of the 2008 NBA Finals.

That bet?

"Nobody won the bet. We both stayed with the teams. That's what's so crazy. Now we're both sitting here in the Finals," Pierce said yesterday after Boston's first practice for the season-ending showdown.

The Celtics and Lakers are still playing because Mitch Kupchak and Danny Ainge traded boldly to improve. Kupchak, the Lakers' general manager, acquired Pau Gasol from Memphis in February for two first-round draft picks, three players and the rights to Gasol's brother Marc. That move that sparked the team to a 57-25 record, the best in the Western Conference.

Ainge, the Celtics basketball boss, traded for Ray Allen of Seattle on draft day last June and a month later imported Kevin Garnett from Minnesota in exchange for Boston's supposed future, Ryan Gomes, Al Jefferson and Sebastian Telfair, and Theo Ratliff.

Almost overnight the Celtics went from one of the worst

SEE **CELTICS, C3**

## With a little luck, Gomes wouldn't be on outside looking in

In a perfect world, Ryan Gomes would still be a Celtic, the former Providence College great getting ready to play the Lakers in the NBA Finals.

**BILL REYNOLDS**

In a perfect world, he'd be getting ready to come in off the bench and maybe guard Lamar Odom, two former Rhode Island superstars on basketball's biggest stage.

But he lives in the NBA, where the vagaries of fate and the bouncing ball can change everything.

Or, one minute you're playing for the Celtics, an hour away from where you played in college and a short drive from your Connecticut hometown. The next, you're playing in Minnesota for a young Timberwolves team stuck in the same rebuilding cycle the Celtics were a year ago, part of the blockbuster

trade that brought Kevin Garnett to Boston.

One minute you're teammates with Paul Pierce and Rajon Rondo and Kendrick Perkins, the next you are sitting in the Garden in Game Five watching them play against the Pistons, a restricted free agent, your NBA career as up in the air as a deep 3-pointer.

Is it any wonder Gomes watches these playoffs through a swirl of emo-

tion?

"One side of me is very happy for them," he said. "I'm happy for the organization, the legends. I know what it means to everybody."

The other side?

"I don't think about the other side that much," he said.

Ah, the other side.

SEE **REYNOLDS, C3**

**ORIOLES 6, RED SOX 3**

## Sweep plan swept away as O's hammer Okajima

After a solid performance by starter Tim Wakefield, reliever Hideki Okajima allows four runs on four hits in the eighth.

BY JOE McDONALD  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

BALTIMORE — While droves of Red Sox fans returned to New England after spending the weekend at Orioles Park at Camden Yards, the players remained to finish the four-game wraparound series.

The first three games were sellouts, but last night only 25,711 were in attendance to witness the Orioles avoid a sweep with a 6-3 victory over the Red Sox.

It was certainly an interesting weekend here. Friday's night game went 13 innings. Manny Ramirez collected

Tendon injury puts the Sox' David Ortiz on the disabled list. **Page C5**

three home runs in the series, including his 500th of his career on Saturday. Now it's going to get real interesting as the Red Sox will host the leader of the A.L. East — the Tampa Bay Rays — beginning tonight at Fenway Park.

Before the Red Sox could look ahead to this once-unlikely anticipated series with the Rays, Boston needed

SEE **RED SOX, C5**



North Kingstown High's Samantha Morrell lines up a putt yesterday at Point Judith Country Club, where her 4-over-par 76 won the RIL girls golf championship by five shots over La Salle's Juliet Vonghoumy. **Story, Page C6.** More photos at: [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / ANDREW DICKERMAN