

Who will go down as the greater player: Kobe or Magic?

Tell us what you think at [projosports.com/celtics](http://projosports.com/celtics)



NORTH SMITHFIELD ROLLS TO TITLE: View the gallery at [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

Complete Game One

Late game stories and notes, a photo gallery, more analysis today and throughout the series, at [projosports.com/celtics](http://projosports.com/celtics)

ABC Bullish on viewers

ABC is optimistic that this year's L.A. Lakers-Boston Celtics NBA Finals can garner similar TV ratings as past finals, which featured Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls. The top rated NBA Finals:

YEAR	NET.	SERIES	RATING
1998	NBC	Bulls-Jazz	18.7
1993	NBC	Bulls-Suns	17.9
1997	NBC	Bulls-Jazz	16.8
1996	NBC	Bulls-Sonics	16.7

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# projo SPORTS

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NBA FINALS 2008

## Celtics 98-88

THE BIG THREE

Kevin Garnett scored 24 points, Paul Pierce 22 — 11 after he returned from suffering a sprained knee — and Ray Allen 19, accounting for 66% of the Celtics' point total.

THE BIG EDGE

The Celtics had a 46-33 rebounding edge, including 10-7 in offensive boards.

THE BIG MOMENT

Pierce's knee injury looked at first as if it would knock him out the game... and perhaps the series. But he returned less than two minutes later and hit a pair of three-pointers in a 22-second span. Boston never again trailed.

THE BIG REACTION

"YES!!" — Garnett's scream when Pierce came back on the court.

RESULTS

GAME ONE Celtics 98, Lakers 88

SCHEDULE

GAME TWO	Sunday	at Boston
GAME THREE	Tuesday	at L.A.
GAME FOUR	June 12	at L.A.
xGAME FIVE	June 15	at L.A.
xGAME SIX	June 17	at Boston
xGAME SEVEN	June 19	at Boston

x — if necessary  
All games begin at 9 p.m. Eastern.

NOW ON PROJO.COM

A complete postgame report, including:

- Game recap from Kevin McNamara, with locker-room reaction.
- Postgame column from Bill Reynolds.
- Additional stories from Rob Lee.
- A slideshow from the game.

COMING ON PROJO.COM

- An audio report from McNamara.
- News from today's practice session.

ALWAYS ON PROJO.COM

- 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)

# JOB ONE IS DONE

## Celtics hijack Bryant's spotlight

BOSTON — Can the Celtics contain Kobe?

That is the key question that hovers over this series.

Can the Celtics contain Kobe, or is this NBA Finals going to turn out to be the Kobe

Bryant Invitational, a showcase for all his basketball gifts, like the earlier rounds for the Lakers were.

So last night was the first in this cat-and-mouse game, as both the Celtics and the Lakers survived all the pre-game hype and all the stories of their history and actually played against each other.

Can the Celtics contain Kobe, keep from him from being Superman in baggy shorts?

And this starts with the premise that *no one* can guard Kobe. Not really. He is the one player that comes every generation or so, someone so gifted that he's essentially unguardable. You don't stop Kobe. You just try to make things difficult for him, and hope he has a bad shooting game.

And let's not ourselves here. Without Kobe the Lakers would have been hanging out in Marina Del Ray last night, not here in the Garden in the first game of the NBA Finals. He is not the one-man team that LeBron is with the Cavaliers, but he is still the show, the guy who puts the rest of the Lakers on his back and carries them.

He came in here last night as the MVP of the regular season, came in here averaging nearly 32 points a game, came in here billed as this generation's ver-



AP / ELISE AMENDOLA

The Celtics' Paul Pierce, who suffered an apparent knee injury in the third quarter but returned to play, celebrates after sinking a 3-point shot against the Lakers last night.

## Garnett, Pierce, Allen lift the Celtics

BY KEVIN McNAMARA  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

BOSTON — East Coast grit trumped West Coast flash in Game One of what looks like a very evenly matched NBA Finals last night at TD Banknorth Garden.

With Kobe Bryant and his Los Angeles Lakers within striking distance through all of the second half, the Boston Celtics' defense made just enough tough stops down the stretch to escape with a 98-88 victory. Game Two is Sunday night in Boston.

The Celtics clung to a 92-86 lead with less than two minutes to go when Kevin Garnett slammed in an offensive rebound and sank two critical free throws. When Bryant couldn't muster a final charge, the Celtics' defense had preserved a critical series-opening win.

Garnett led the Celtics with 24 points and skied high for 13 rebounds. Paul Pierce shook off a mid-game knee injury and finished with 22 points. Ray Allen added 19 points.

The dynamic Bryant wasn't at his best but still finished with 24 points. He shot 9-for-25 from the floor. Neither Pau Gasol (15 points) nor Lamar Odom (14) hurt the Celtics badly, either.

The game featured plenty of back-and-forth action as this band of Celtics and Lakers showed they're ready to make fans forget about Bird, Magic and the other old caretakers of basketball's premier rivalry.

Both teams waded through an inconsistent first half as they clearly struggled at times figuring out just how they hoped to attack one another. The Lakers

SEE REYNOLDS, C4

SEE CELTICS, C4

## Red Sox sweep Rays amid rhubarbs

Jon Lester stays cool on the mound despite two altercations, while Manny Ramirez and J.D. Drew provide the firepower.

BY STEVEN KRASNER  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

BOSTON — Everywhere around him, chaos was erupting.

A Red Sox-Rays bench-clearing brawl. A Red Sox-Red Sox intramural tussle in the dugout.

But Jon Lester kept his composure, enduring 6½ innings in pitching Boston to a 7-1 victory over Tampa Bay last night at Fenway Park for a sweep of the

three-game first-place showdown and the team's 13th straight home win.

The left-hander surrendered only one run, scattering eight hits as he improved his record to 4-3. Lester fanned five in the triumph, which boosted the Sox into a 1½-game lead over the Rays in the American League East standings.

Lester was given a nice cushion to work with early last night. In the first inning, after Dustin Pedroia was hit with a pitch and red-hot J.D. Drew ripped a double off the scoreboard in left-center, Manny Ramirez croaked Tampa Bay ace right-hander James Shields for a titanic three-run homer over the Green Monster.

RED SOX  
7  
RAYS  
1

NEXT GAME

Tonight vs. Seattle 7:05

Then Lester had to sit around for a long time before getting back to the mound again because of the bench-clearing brawl, touched off when

SEE RED SOX, C7



Boston's Coco Crisp is subdued by Tampa Bay players after he was hit in the leg by a pitch from James Shields, resulting in a bench-clearing brawl and player ejections.

THE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH



Peter Taylor, Senior and Charles Kurtz, Junior Bishop Hendricken High School



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