

Should the Red Sox extend Manny Ramirez's contract?

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Always a first time

This NFL season, six teams will try to do something they haven't done before — play in a Super Bowl:

TEAMS	CONF./DIV.
Arizona Cardinals	NFC West
Cleveland Browns	AFC North
Detroit Lions	NFC North
Houston Texans	AFC South
Jacksonville Jaguars	AFC South
New Orleans Saints	NFC South

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



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THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Patriots coach Bill Belichick looks on as time winds down in last season's Super Bowl loss.

Belichick has to fine-tune team's focus

One of Bill Belichick's best traits as a coach is his ability to keep his players focused on the here and now, the game ahead of them, and not the past.

Every bit of that ability will come in handy in the coming weeks as the New England Patriots begin training camp and then the 2008 season.

When last we saw the Patriots in shoulder pads, they were on the losing end of one of the biggest upsets in Super Bowl history, with the Giants' Eli Manning and David Tyree pulling off a never-to-be-duplicated pass and reception and the New England offensive line inexplicably falling apart at exactly the wrong time.

SHALISE MANZA YOUNG



What was supposed to be a coronation — with the Pats becoming the first team to go undefeated in the NFL's 16-game-schedule era and win the championship, thus putting an exclamation point on a dynasty — became a big question mark.

As in, what happened? In the nearly six months since, all of the members of the Patriots, from Belichick on down, who were involved in the game have said that "it's in the past" when asked about Super Bowl XLII.

Technically, it is. But some things aren't easily forgotten. The Patriots did lose the Super Bowl. It lives on in highlights, NFL Network specials, on the Internet. They'll be asked about it, many of the players may privately relive it, wondering had one play or another gone differently, whether that would have tipped the balance.

Which is where Belichick's prowess comes in. His biggest job will be ensuring that there is no Super Bowl hangover.

He's been in this predicament before, albeit on the other side. After shocking the St. Louis Rams in Super Bowl XXXVI for the franchise's first title, Belichick saw his team get a bit too absorbed with its success the following season, and the Patriots missed the playoffs and the chance to defend their crown.

But he righted the ship in 2003, and knew the right buttons to push to get a Patriots repeat in 2004.

And he succeeded in insulating his team last year against the onslaught of discussion over

SEE PATRIOTS, B2



AP / GUS RUELAS

Casey Kotchman of the Angels follows through on a two-run double that gave his team the lead during the eighth inning of last night's series finale against the Red Sox. Los Angeles completed a three-game sweep after its eighth-inning rally.

Struck down again

Wakefield, Sox leave Calif. empty-handed

BY SEAN MCADAM
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

ANAHEIM, Calif. — In the seventh inning, they had gotten the break that eluded them in the first two games of the series, and the Red Sox were telling themselves that, just maybe, their road fortunes were about to change.

Vladimir Guerrero had mishandled a line drive hit directly at him, enabling Coco Crisp to score from second and the Red Sox had their first lead of the afternoon.

Maybe the Red Sox wouldn't get swept, after all. Maybe they would succeed in finally beating a good team on the road. Maybe they wouldn't, for a change, waste another fine effort by Tim Wakefield.

With a modest pitch count, Wakefield went back out for the eighth inning and promptly gave up back-to-back doubles. A sacrifice, a walk and a ringing double down the right-field line later, and the Angels had themselves a 5-3 win.

The loss resulted in a sweep for the Angels and more road misery for the Red Sox, who dipped to

ANGELS
5
RED SOX
3

NEXT GAME

Tonight at Seattle 10:10 p.m.

21-32 on the road.

For the series, the Sox managed just eight runs.

"We're not going to win a lot of games by scoring two or three runs," said Dustin Pedroia, one of the few Sox players who continues to hit, regardless of the venue. "It seems like we're not getting consecutive good at-bats like they did in the eighth. We haven't been doing that."

"We've got to find a way to have better at-bats. The approach is there, but the results aren't."

Case in point: in the last two games of the series, the Sox were a combined 2-for-18 with runners in scoring position.

Wakefield gave up back-to-back solo homers to Guerrero and Torii Hunter in second, but surrendered just two singles over the next five in-

SEE RED SOX, B5



Coco Crisp of the Red Sox reacts after striking out in the ninth inning of last night's game in Anaheim.

A repeat performance by Harrington

Padraig Harrington captures his second consecutive British Open title, and Greg Norman fades to a tie for third.

BY DOUG FERGUSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SOUTHPORT, England — Padraig Harrington enjoys few moments more than the walk down 18th fairway of a century-old links course, especially with a four-shot lead in the British Open and the engraver putting the final touches on the oldest trophy in golf.

He stopped yesterday to share the moment with Greg Norman, who knows this path all too well. Celebration for one, sympathy for the other.

"I did say to him coming down 18 that I was sorry it wasn't his story that was going to be told," Harrington said. "I did feel that, but I wanted to win myself. In this game, you have to take your chances when you get them."

SEE BRITISH OPEN, B6



AP / MATT DUNHAM

Padraig Harrington displays the British Open spoils of victory.

Vongphoumy is put to the test

Juliet Vongphoumy has a grant from the American Junior Golf Association, and the R.I. golf community is helping her.

BY PAUL KENYON
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

PROVIDENCE — It turns out that Juliet Vongphoumy, the Rhode Island Interscholastic League golf champion, is going to have a busy summer, after all.

Vongphoumy will spend several days this week in Mattapoisett, Mass., competing in an American Junior Golf Association tournament with top players from the United States. Later this summer, she will compete in at least two other AJGA events. Then there will probably be several in-state tournaments, with both women's organizations and the U.S. Challenge Cup.

The La Salle Academy sophomore, who just celebrated her 15th birthday, is going to go through what so many standout young golfers hope to experience — test herself against the best competition she can find.

She is going to do it because a number of people have rallied to her side. Vongphoumy has received a boost with a grant given by the American Junior Golf Association. And the Rhode Island golf community has jumped in to provide assistance, as well.

"Juliet's going to have plenty to do," said Bernie McCrink, one of the advisers to Vongphoumy and her family. "It's really kind of a nice situation. So many people are helping her."

McCrink was among the first to rec-

SEE VONGPHOUMY, B6