

Are the New York Yankees' playoff hopes dead for this season?

Tell us what you think at [projsports.com/redsox](http://projsports.com/redsox)



SKIPPERS, EAGLES FOOTBALL SCRIMMAGE: View the gallery at [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

**Patriots postgame**

See a photo gallery and hear Shalise Manza Young talk about the game today on PatsTalk, at [projsports.com/patriots](http://projsports.com/patriots)

**Catch as catchers can**

Red Sox Jason Varitek appeared in his 1,251st game behind the plate yesterday, the fifth most among active major league catchers:

PLAYER	RANK	GAMES
Ivan Rodriguez	1	2,159
Brad Ausmus	2	1,875
Jason Kendall	3	1,745
Jorge Posada	4	1,390
Jason Varitek	5	1,251

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

SECTION C  
The Providence Journal  
[projo.com](http://projo.com)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 2008

# projo SPORTS

Phone: 401-277-7340 Fax: 401-277-7444 E-mail: [pjsports@projo.com](mailto:pjsports@projo.com)

## Red Sox can get by without Beckett for now, but not in October



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

Josh Beckett won't be starting as planned tonight because his right elbow is not 100 percent.

NEW YORK — His tiny office crammed with reporters, Terry Francona reviewed yesterday's 3-2 loss to the Yankees with uncharacteristically blunt language.

Ordinarily, Francona dismisses defeats with a promise to regroup tomorrow. But the nature of this cruel setback, in which the Red Sox wasted a masterful pitching performance by Jon Lester, seemed more than usual. "This one hurts," he said. "We played our hearts out and lost a really

tough game." He labeled the loss "hard to take." And, still, the worst was yet to come. Minutes after Francona delivered his post-mortem, general manager Theo Epstein

produced the really ominous news.

Josh Beckett would not be starting as planned tonight, after all. His elbow, which had sidelined him twice already on this road trip, was not yet 100 percent.

Then Epstein uttered the three words to which pitchers never want to be associated: Dr. . . . James . . . Andrews.

Beckett will fly to Birmingham, Ala., this morning and visit with the famed orthopedist. The Sox insist the visit is merely for Beckett's "peace of mind," but then their track record is not exactly spotless in this matter. Recall that 10 days ago Beckett was scratched from a start in Baltimore because, said the Sox, he slept awkwardly on his prized right arm, resulting in tingling and numbness in the fingers on his right hand. Only days later did the Sox admit the problems were, in truth, rooted in inflammation of the right elbow, a more disconcerting

diagnosis.

As recently as two days ago, when Beckett successfully completed a 50-pitch side session here, the Red Sox were borderline ecstatic with the results.

Then, last night, 26 hours before his next scheduled start, he was scratched again, even though the numbness and tingling hadn't recurred.

"The elbow itself doesn't feel 100 percent," according to Epstein.

"We're pretty optimistic this is getting better," Epstein later added.

Maybe the Red Sox are telling the truth now; time will tell. But what seems unassailable is that this is potentially disastrous news.

With a healthy Beckett, the Sox must be viewed as one of the two teams to beat in the

SEE **MCADAM, C5**

# Sweep denied



AP / FRANK FRANKLIN II

The Yankees' Jason Giambi blasts a two-run homer to tie the game in the seventh yesterday. His single in the ninth inning won it.

## Yanks' Giambi gets better of Papelbon in 9th

BY JOE McDONALD  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

NEW YORK — Sinatra was playing over the sound system yesterday, which meant the Yankees beat the Red Sox to avoid a sweep in the final regular-season game in Yankee Stadium in the storied rivalry.

New York won it in style with a walk-off hit by Jason Giambi for a 3-2 victory. Giambi, who was inserted into the game as a pinch-hitter in the seventh inning and hit a two-run homer to tie the score at 2-2, had the bases loaded in the ninth when Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon entered the game.

Giambi scorched a liner to center field for the game-winning hit.

Afterwards, Papelbon wouldn't talk. He just sat at a table in the visitor's clubhouse with a piercing look. He didn't speak with his teammates, and they stayed away from him.

As dramatic a game it was, and as difficult as it may have been for the Red Sox to lose in this fashion, the club had a solid 6-3 road trip and head back to Fenway Park tonight with a load of momentum.

"We played really good baseball," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said. "We played re-

ally good baseball today, too. We didn't get a win, but we played real good baseball. I think everybody around here feels really good about our ball club. I think the players do. I do and Theo (Epstein) does."

What makes this successful trip through Baltimore, Toronto and New York even more impressive is the fact that the Red Sox have a bunch of injuries.

Mike Lowell, J.D. Drew, David Aardsma and Julio Lugo are all on the disabled list. Josh Beckett has been pushed back three times now with elbow problems. Still, the Sox needed to have a successful trip and they did just that.

"It was big," said the Sox' Jason Bay of the three-city road trip. "It was against three big division opponents. We put ourselves in a position to sweep, but we can take solace [in] that we won the series. We had them up against the ropes and it would have been nice to finish it off. All in all, it was a pretty good road trip, especially against the teams we played. Now we get to go home where we've played well."

YANKEES  
**3**  
RED SOX  
**2**

**NEXT GAME**  
Today  
vs. White Sox  
7:05 p.m.

Despite yesterday's loss, Boston has won 8 of 12, and 10 of its last 15 road games. During that stretch, the Red Sox needed contributions from everyone and everyone contributed.

"We had a good road trip," said Kevin Youkilis. "Our goal is to win series and we won two series on the road. Everyone wants to win every game we play, but it's not going to happen. So, if we can win every series from here on out, we're going to put ourselves in a great position to make a push for the playoffs."

Yesterday was the 773rd time the clubs have played each other in the regular season. The players weren't too concerned about the nostalgia; they just wanted a sweep.

The media "is more wrapped up in that than the players," Youkilis said. "We just want to win ball games, and we wanted to win today."

Before Giambi displayed his heroics, it was a pitcher's duel.

Because the Yankees' Mike Mussina and the Sox' Jon Lester were so efficient, there wasn't much scoring from either club.

The Red Sox finally scored a pair of runs in the top of the fifth inning thanks in part to the speed of Jacoby Ellsbury. Boston gained a 1-0

SEE **RED SOX, C5**

**PATRIOTS**

## O'Connell adds spark in another losing effort

Rookie QB Kevin O'Connell leads the Patriots on two scoring drives, but New England comes up short.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Sometimes improvement can't be measured or quantified or even witnessed.

But sometimes it can. Witness Kevin O'Connell.

Three months ago, his main concern was just calling plays properly.

By his own admission, three weeks ago he probably would not have been able to make the check down and complete the pass to Chad Jackson that resulted in the New England Patriots' second touchdown of the night against the New York Giants.

Yet there he was last night, under center and at the 16-yard line with two options, depending on what he saw from the Giants' defense. O'Connell's eyes didn't deceive him; he checked to the new play and executed a beautiful sideline pass to Jackson.

Though he led the Patriots on two scoring drives, it wasn't enough to keep New England from losing, 19-14.

The Pats went 0-for-the-preseason for the first time since 1990; that regular season the team was a dismal 1-15. Clearly all involved in New England are hoping there isn't a repeat of that this year.

New England's first scoring drive began in Giants territory, thanks to a 44-yard kickoff return by C.J. Jones — who then fumbled the

SEE **PATRIOTS, C6**



AP / BILL KOSTROUN

New York Giants tight end Darcy Johnson breaks away from the Pats' James Sanders to score a 26-yard touchdown.