

What do you expect from the Patriots in the 2008 season?

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



INJURY FUND FOOTBALL KICKS OFF: View the gallery at [HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland](http://HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland)

He said, she said

Sean McAdam's projo SoxTalk and Shalise Manza Young's projo PatsTalk, posted today at [projosports.com](http://projosports.com)

Fans fill Fenway

When the Red Sox host the Tampa Bay Rays Monday, they will have broken the record for most consecutive sellouts in MLB history. Previous record holders:

TEAM	YEARS	SELLOUTS
Red Sox	2003-2008	455
Indians	1995-2001	455
Rockies	1995-1997	203

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

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# LITTLE BIG MAN

## Sox' Pedroia brings real passion to every game and every at-bat

BY JOE McDONALD  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

BOSTON — Almost a year ago — Oct. 16, 2007, to be exact — Paul Byrd toed the rubber at Jacobs Field as a member of the Cleveland Indians and had the daunting task to beat the Red Sox in Game Four of the ALCS.

The Indians won that game, 7-3, and with it took a 3-1 series advantage. Boston won the next three and advanced to the World Series and beat the Rockies for its second title in four seasons. But it was that night in Cleveland that Byrd, a veteran pitcher, began to appreciate the talent and drive of Red Sox rookie second baseman Dustin Pedroia.

Now the two are teammates since Byrd was acquired in a trade with the Indians last month. Now Byrd has a completely different outlook when he watches Pedroia dazzle game after game after game.

"He plays the game hard," Byrd said. "He plays the game with a lot of passion. He plays with a lot of energy and it's absolutely beautiful to see. I hated playing against him and now I love [that] he's on my team."

During that ALCS game, Pedroia collected one of the six hits Byrd allowed that night, a single to right. It was during the other at-bats, however, that Byrd thought he had read the wrong scouting report because on everything he threw, Pedroia was able to put the barrel to the ball.

"You roll the dice when you're pitching to him," Byrd said. "It was frustrating, so it's nice to be in the same dugout."

"I didn't realize he was that good," added Byrd. "He's amazing. Another thing he does well, and you kind of take it for granted, is that he plays great defense. I feel like I have two guys at second base. That's something that's not always valued today. People value offense, and that's what the game has changed to. He doesn't just help you out at the plate; he helps you out on defense. He plays hard. He's fired up in the dugout. Here's a guy who only has a year and a half in the big leagues, it's not like he's a 10-year

veteran, but his presence in the dugout and in the locker room is amazing."

Red Sox third baseman Mike Lowell has become very close with Pedroia, and the veteran remembers exactly the moment when he knew the rookie was going to be a very important player for Boston.

Lowell's first impression didn't come during spring training of 2006, because Pedroia was injured very

early in the spring and ended up spending most of the season with the PawSox. He was called up to Boston and made his major-league debut Aug. 22 and hit a lowly .191

in 31 games for the rest of the season. It was during that late-season call-up when Lowell became a fan and a friend of Pedroia.

"I really felt he hit the ball a lot better than .190," Lowell said. "He lined out a lot and he didn't look like he was overmatched. I felt he could be a contributing factor. I liked the fact he had good pitch recognition, but I never expected the power that he has when you look at him height-wise. I thought he had a chance to be a good player in the big leagues. I definitely think he has surpassed everyone's expectations."

Even when Pedroia struggled mightily during the first month of the 2007 season, Lowell and the rest of the Red Sox showed patience with him because they all knew how good

"You roll the dice when you're pitching to him."

PITCHER PAUL BYRD

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SEE PEDROIA, C5

TONIGHT  
Red Sox at Rangers  
8:05 p.m.

THE POSTSEASON CHASE

EAST DIVISION				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Rays	85	53	.616	—
Red Sox	82	57	.590	3½

  

WILD CARD				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Red Sox	82	57	.590	—
Twins	77	63	.550	5½

RESULTS LAST NIGHT  
Rays 7, Yankees 5  
Blue Jays 9, Twins 0

	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG.	OBP	SAVG.
Through June 13	66	277	39	72	17	0	4	29	18	29	.260	.311	.365
Since June 14	68	297	71	119	27	2	13	47	23	19	.401	.440	.636
TOTALS	134	574	110	191	44	2	17	76	41	48	.333	.378	.505



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Second baseman Dustin Pedroia, smacking a single to center Tuesday against the Orioles, has become a hitting machine for the Red Sox while providing outstanding play in the field.

## Glass at least half-full is way Pats look at it

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — New England Patriots observers generally fall into one of two camps when it comes to a discussion of the team's winless preseason: Either "the sky is falling" pessimism or "they'll flip the switch and be fine" optimism.

The truth as it stands now might be somewhere in the middle, maybe leaning a bit toward the they'll-be-fine way of thinking, particularly where the defense is concerned.

At least that's the sense one gets when talking to members of the defensive unit.

[projosports.com](http://projosports.com)

VIDEO: Patriots beat writer Shalise Manza Young discusses Sunday's opener against the Chiefs. Watch the video at [projosports.com/video](http://projosports.com/video).

They may not have looked all that impressive at times — particularly as each opponent marched down the field for a touchdown during their opening possession, generally against the Pats' starters — but don't despair.

"Preseason, we use that to get better," safety James Sanders

SEE PATRIOTS, C3



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

QB Tom Brady is not worried about being rusty Sunday, when the Pats will take on Kansas City.

## Brady confident he's ready to take the helm

Despite not having played in the preseason, the MVP says he knows the playbook and how to hit his receivers.

BY ROBERT LEE  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — What Tom Brady did as the quarterback of the Patriots last season was simply spectacular.

The reigning most valuable player of the NFL's record-setting season has been well-documented.

Among the many NFL records that he broke includes the most

touchdowns thrown in a season (50) and the most games with three or more touchdown passes (12).

To think that Brady broke numerous NFL and franchise records when he entered the 2007 training camp with three starting wide receivers (Randy Moss, Wes Welker and Donte Stallworth) who had never taken a snap for the Patriots makes all of those records even that more remarkable.

This season, Moss and Welker had a firm grasp on the playbook from day one. So does third re-

SEE BRADY, C3