

Who has been the most valuable Rhody Ram player so far?

Make your selection at projosports.com/uri



PATRIOTS SEASON IN REVIEW: View the gallery at Projosports.com/patriots

PC hoops chat

Kevin McNamara answers your questions at noon today from Milwaukee. Send them in now at projosports.com/chat

Home cooking

The Patriots have won nine consecutive home playoff games, the second-longest streak in NFL history:

	WINS	SEASONS
Packers	13	1939-2001
Patriots	9	1996-present
Bills	9	1988-95
Redskins	8	1942-83

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

SECTION C



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Welker, Moss are the perfect combination

If Randy Moss is Butch Cassidy, then Wes Welker is the Sundance Kid. Although Moss spent last season suffering in Oakland, while Welker was toiling in Miami, now that the two of them are thoroughly enjoying life together in New England, it's hard to imagine one without the other.

They complement each other perfectly. While each is an outstanding player in his own right, neither would be putting up quite the same, dazzling numbers without the other. Moss is, without question, the better of the two. He's the star, the main man, the biggest difference-maker on this year's undefeated Patriots team from last year's, which, even with a mediocre corps of receivers, came within a few, frustrating minutes of going to the Super Bowl.

This season, the Patriots' receiving corps — headed by Moss and Welker — is nothing short of sensational.

Moss is everything you'd want in a receiver — tall (6-foot-4), strong (210 sinewy pounds), fast (4.4 speed), with long arms and huge hands.

As for Welker, well, he's short — 5-foot-9, on tiptoes — and is quick, rather than fast. Which explains why Texas Tech was the only Division I school to offer him a scholarship, even though he'd been the Oklahoma high school Player of

SEE WELKER, C5



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / GLENN OSMUNDSON

Wes Welker, fielding a punt against the Giants, has been a versatile record-breaking receiver for the Patriots this season.

Grit helped Pats finish the season in record fashion

New England maintained its focus as it handed the Colts their first loss, overcame lapses against the Eagles and Ravens and mounted a comeback against the Giants to finish 16-0.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

This morning, Bill Belichick will hold his first news conference since Sunday morning, and will turn the page on New England's 16-0 regular season. It is now the playoffs, Belichick will say, and everyone is 0-0, with the same chance of making it to the Super Bowl.

Which of the Patriots' 16 regular-season wins was your favorite? Make your selection at projosports.com/patriots

While that's true, we can still take one last chance to look back on the Patriots' undefeated regular season, finishing up games 9 through 16 after looking at the first eight games yesterday.

PATRIOTS AT COLTS, NOV. 4
News of the week: Dubbed Super Bowl XLI½, it was the first-ever matchup of teams 7-0 or better during the regular season, and it becomes one of the most hyped and eagerly anticipated non-playoff games in years. New England's loss to the Colts in the AFC title game 10 months previous likely sparked the team's transformation from good to outstanding.

The game: The first close game of the season for

SEE PATRIOTS, C5

ON ALL CYLINDERS



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL // BOB BREIDENBACH

URI's Jimmy Baron, right, battles with Fairleigh Dickinson's John Galvin for a loose ball during the first half of their game last night at the Ryan Center. Baron led Ram scorers with 22 points.

Full team effort keys URI's win

BY PAUL KENYON
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SOUTH KINGSTOWN — For the first 10 minutes of its game against Fairleigh Dickinson last night, the URI basketball team seemed a bit lethargic, less emotional than usual. The Rams did not play as well as they have been in earning a national ranking.

But the final 30 minutes, well, that's when the Rams showed why they are the 23rd-ranked team in the country.

URI 94
FDU 63

NEXT GAME
Wednesday at Dayton
7 p.m.

Once it got going, URI did a little of everything as it dismantled the Knights and swept to an easy 94-63 victory. Sophomore Lamonte Ulmer was the guy who supplied the wake-up call, sparking a 14-2 run that turned a 19-16 deficit into a 30-21 Rhody lead. From then on, it was a Rhody party as coach Jim Baron emptied the bench, gave everyone a chance to play extended minutes and just about everyone got in on the fun. There were dunks and fast breaks and 3-point baskets flying in from all angles.

It made FDU coach Tom Green the latest to become a believer that Rhode Island, now 14-1, is for real.

"I've got a vote in the ESPN top 25 poll. I voted them 18th this past week," Green related. "Believe me, I'm going to vote them a lot higher this week."

While URI scored 94 points, led by 22 from Jimmy Baron even though Baron took only 10 shots in the game, it was the Rhody defense that really impressed Green.

"Defensively, they just get after you," Green said. "They're probably the best defensive team we've seen all year long. It's team defense and individual defense."

It was defense, especially from Ulmer, that broke the Rams out of their early funk, helped them get going and made it another impressive night despite the sluggish first 10 minutes. The Rhody bench outscored the FDU bench, 42-5. The bench guys, Ulmer, Keith Cothran, Joe Mbang, Marquis

SEE RAMS, C3

Friars counting on Efejuku to take it to the limit

Weynmi Efejuku has enjoyed a nice career in the Big East, but he's been asked to elevate his game this season.

BY KEVIN McNAMARA
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

MILWAUKEE — If anyone knows what the curse of lofty expectations can bring, it's Providence College guard Weynmi Efejuku.

After only a handful of games as a Friar, Efejuku was blessed by none other than Hall of Fame coach Dave Gavitt. After watching Tim Welsh's new recruits play a bit, Gavitt compared the freshman's style to the newest NBA star at the time, Dwyane Wade.

"Dave thought he had the body and explosiveness like (Wade)," said Welsh. "He said he could be a top-notch guard in our league. I didn't disagree."

When the bar is set at Wade, a player has a long way to climb. Now a junior at PC, Efejuku has enjoyed a nice career in the Big East. As a sophomore last season, he averaged 14

points a game and carried the Friars several times to big wins. In PC's NIT loss at Bradley, Efejuku poured in 28 points, his career-high. This season, he's Providence's leading scorer heading into tonight's Big East Conference opener at Marquette, and will be a major focus for Tom Crean's defense.

Yet everyone wants more from the 6-foot-5 native of the Fresh Meadows section of Queens, N.Y. Welsh wants better defense and decision-making. Fans want a consistent star, not a tease who is capable of scoring 24 points in one game and none the next.

Most of all, Efejuku expects more from himself, and with point guard Sharaud Curry out (perhaps for the season) with a broken foot, more weight than ever lies on his shoulders.

Efejuku basically has the green light on offense. He'll start at point guard tonight and be asked to run the offense, take his man off the dribble, shoot 3-pointers, whatever is necessary.

"I'm in a better situation now," Efejuku said. "I understand more what



AP / STEW MILNE

PC's Weynmi Efejuku, center, scrambling for a loose ball during a game against Harvard in November, will man the point tonight.

coach wants out of me. Guys have been playing together for a while now and they know where I like to score from."

Welsh's directions are fairly simple. They're also music to any player's ears.

SEE EFEJUKU, C3