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**Semi-tough**

The Patriots have an all-time record of 7-5 in the conference semifinals:

	W	L
Bills	1	0
Chargers	1	0
Colts	1	0
Raiders	2	1
Oilers/Titans	1	1
Steelers	1	1
Broncos	0	2

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SECTION B



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# From throwing fastballs to pitching damage control

Once upon a time, the "K" signs would line the right-field wall in Fenway Park like Kewpie dolls at a summer carnival.

Back, of course, when the world was a much simpler place for Roger Clemens.

In a better baseball world, his career would be ending in cheers and testimonials, not the Rocket being the new centerpiece in the sleazy scandal that is baseball and steroids. In a better baseball world, Clemens would not be having to duck on the ropes as the body blows keep coming, like some old fighter waiting for the bell to bail him out.

But there was Clemens last night on

60 Minutes trying to do damage control the way he used to try to throw fastballs by opposing hitters, as if Mike Wallace was just another guy trying to take him deep.

Somehow it all seemed sad. But this is not about playing a child's game anymore, not about trying to throw the ball by people, something that Roger arguably did as well as anyone who has ever lived.

This is about Clemens trying to salvage his legacy, trying to rub away the tarnish that now covers a great career like a soiled old canvas on top of a masterpiece. This is about trying to say that Brian McNamee, his personal trainer,



**CLEMENS**

before the Rocket became the new signature face of the baseball scandal.

So there he was last night with Mike Wallace, indignant, saying that his success has been because of his hard work, nothing else, maintaining his innocence, saying that the only thing McNamee ever

injected him with was lidocaine and vitamin B-12. No matter that saying you were getting a B-12 shot was the players' euphemism for taking steroids, usually said with a wink, wink. Or that a few weeks ago he said that McNamee had never injected him with anything.

Then again, a microphone never has been Clemens' friend.

He lost a lot of fan reverence in Boston in the winter before the '89 season when he complained about the rigors of being a professional athlete in Boston, the travails of having to carry his own luggage through the airport. When he

**WHAT CLEMENS SAID:**

■ "I don't know if I can defend myself. I think people — a lot of people have already made their decisions."

■ "It's hogwash for people to even assume this. Twenty-four, twenty-five years ... You'd think I'd get an inch of respect. An inch."

■ "If I would've known what this man, what Brian McNamee (had) said in this report, I would have been down there in a heartbeat to take care of it."

SEE REYNOLDS, B2

**WILD-CARD WEEKEND**



AP / DENIS POROY

Their loss to the Pats in last year's playoffs still fresh in their minds, the San Diego Chargers roared into the second round yesterday with a 17-6 victory over Tennessee. Above, Chris Chambers goes high over defender Michael Griffin for a 31-yard reception. The Chargers will take on the Colts. The Giants advanced with a 24-14 triumph over the Bucs. NFL coverage, B5.

# PATS GO JAGUAR HUNTING

## N.E.'s first playoff foe 'good at everything'

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

The Tennessee Titans made it interesting for a while, but by about 7 o'clock last night, it became clear to Bill Belichick and the New England Patriots that they'd be welcoming the Jacksonville Jaguars to Gillette Stadium on Saturday night.

Jacksonville, the No. 5 seed, became the first team to beat the Steelers in Pittsburgh twice in the same season with its 31-29 victory, and as the lowest remaining seed will travel to Foxboro for the divisional-round game.

Had the sixth-seeded Titans upset San Diego, they would have been the Pats' opponent.

The Jags may be one of the better fifth seeds in recent years. They were 11-5 in the tough AFC South — Indianapolis and Tennessee also are in that division — and had the best rushing offense in the conference. Quarterback David Garrard has proven a smart decision-maker, and the defense, particularly the secondary, has performed well.

Speaking on a conference call moments after it became clear that his team would host Jacksonville, Belichick was predict-

ably complimentary. "Jacksonville is one of the best teams in the league, and they have been, over the last third to half of the season, led the league in scoring, yards per game, third-down offense, time of possession — they're very good at everything," he said.

"They can run it, they can throw it, they're a sound team, big, physical, well coached. We have a lot to get ready for."

Belichick said he and his staff had spent most of their preparation time over the weekend on the Jaguars, as they had faced the Steelers last month and hadn't seen Tennessee since the preseason.

However, the tapes from the Jags' game with the Steelers had just arrived and the coaching staff hadn't looked at them yet.

The last time New England played Jacksonville was Christmas Eve in 2006, a 24-21 victory that clinched the AFC East title for the Pats. Tight end David Thomas had a spectacular belly-to-the-turf touchdown, Mike Vrabel picked off Garrard after he was hit by Tully Banta-Cain, and Jar-

SEE PATRIOTS, B5

# First two conference games leave PC with doubts

Two road losses in three days raised several red flags for the Friars, who are without two point guards and have had inconsistent play at the center position so far.

BY KEVIN McNAMARA  
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

PROVIDENCE — It's only two games. It's only two games.

That's the mantra that traveled with the Providence College basketball team as it escaped a long four days in the Midwest and returned home yesterday. An ugly loss at Marquette on Thursday and a bitter one

to DePaul leaves the Friars 0-2 in the Big East for the third time in the last four seasons. The other two teams never did dig out of those quick holes and they ultimately stayed home when postseason bids were handed out.

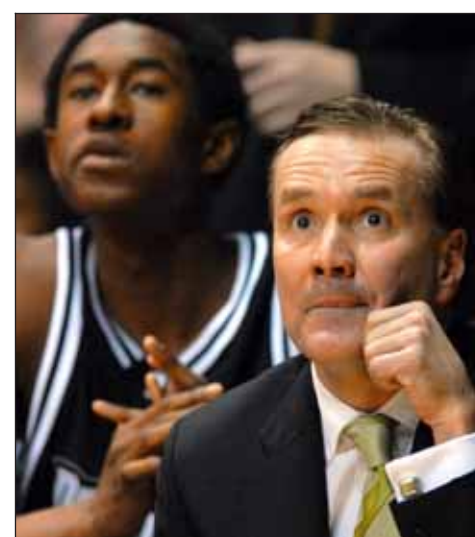
It is much too early to make a definitive call on the prospects of this season's Friars. But it is clear that a team that left town with high hopes Wednesday is dealing with doubts about itself today.

Geoff McDermott, the team's physical leader, played all 40 minutes of Saturday's 70-65 loss to DePaul. He defended guards and centers, handled the ball against the press and grabbed 15 rebounds. He also

wore a devastated look after the game. "After the other night, we felt we had to win this one," said McDermott. "Now we have to move on. We have to take this as a lesson that we have to play for 40 minutes. We need to go the whole game."

The two losses raised several red flags. First, anyone who does not think that the loss of Sharaud Curry (and Dwain Williams) is huge is kidding themselves. PC had long scoring droughts in both games, and that's where having a point guard capable of leading and jump-starting an offense is critical. Without those two, coach

SEE FRIARS, B3



PC coach Tim Welsh looks on anxiously during the final seconds of Saturday's loss to DePaul. Says Welsh, "We need to play toe-to-toe with people, especially on the road. (When) you go into people's buildings, you can't let them push you around."

AP / PAUL BEATY