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Winners' circle

The Patriots are heading to their sixth Super Bowl, the second-highest total in history:

	NO.	W	L
Cowboys	8	5	3
Steelers	6	5	1
Patriots*	6	3	2
Broncos	6	2	4

* — will play in their sixth on Feb. 3

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



MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2008

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AFC CHAMPIONSHIP: PATRIOTS 21, CHARGERS 12

ALMOST PERFECT



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Wes Welker celebrates his fourth-quarter touchdown, which came on a six-yard pass from Tom Brady. The score clinched New England's victory over San Diego and moved the undefeated Patriots into Super Bowl XLII against the New York Giants, who beat the Green Bay Packers in overtime last night in the NFC title game.



EIGHTEEN DOWN

The Patriots became the first team in National Football League history to go 18-0 in a single season as they defeated the San Diego Chargers, 21-12, yesterday at Gillette Stadium for the American Football Conference championship.

ONE TO GO

All that's left for the Pats to complete the perfect season is a victory in Super Bowl XLII against the Giants — who beat the Packers, 23-20, in an overtime thriller last night — on Feb. 3 in Glendale, Ariz.

SOMETHING NEW

And that game will lift the Boston-New York rivalry, so focused all these years on baseball, onto a whole new level.

SECOND EFFORT

The Patriots got there with a grind-it-out victory against the lame but game Chargers, overcoming a mediocre day from Tom Brady with a dominating rushing performance by Laurence Maroney and clutch work from the defense, which held San Diego to field goals instead of touchdowns.

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INSIDE

- The story of the game. **B8**
- Jim Donaldson: The quest isn't over yet. **B8**
- Laurence Maroney was a tower of power as he rushed for 122 yards. **B9**
- Squib Kicks: Notes from the game. **B9**
- Give the defense credit for this one . . . **B9**
- . . . and see how they did it. **B10**
- Game statistics. **B10**
- Kevin Faulk showed again why he's the Pats' unsung hero. **B11**
- Quoteboard. **B11**
- Talking Points. **B11**
- The full report on the Giants-Packers NFC title game. **Pages B6 and B7**