

**LeBron James:
Is he the most
dangerous player
in the NBA?**

Tell us what you think at
projosports.com/celtics



BARRINGTON TOPS LA SALLE IN LACROSSE: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

Bandwagon rolls on

Updated slide shows, Cavaliers links, suggest a question to add to Ken Hamwey's Celtics quiz, at projosports.com/celtics

Home Sweet Home

In this year's regular-season battles between the Celtics and Cavaliers, the teams in the NBA Eastern Conf. semifinals which begins tonight, the home team has held serve each time:

DATE	SITE	SCORE
11/27/07	Cle.	Cavs, 109-104
12/2/07	Bos.	Celts, 80-70
2/5/08	Cle.	Cavs, 114-113
2/27/08	Bos.	Celts, 92-87

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UNSTOPPABLE?

Celts must find way to slow Cavaliers superstar James

BY KEVIN McNAMARA
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

WALTHAM — Paul Pierce and the rest of the Boston Celtics know what they're getting into when they tip off an Eastern Conference semifinal series tonight against the Cleveland Cavaliers.

The Celtics are going to see a steady diet of LeBron James. As in see LeBron shoot, see LeBron pass, see LeBron dunk, see LeBron rebound. James, quite simply, does it all for the Cavaliers.

"He's arguably the best player in the NBA," said Pierce.

That argument probably begins and ends with Kobe Bryant. James, a 6-foot-8 guard, led the NBA in scoring this season with 30 points per game. He also averaged 7.9 rebounds and 7.2 assists and beats teams with a scoring-passing panache not seen in the NBA since Magic Johnson engineered Showtime in Los Angeles. The Lakers' Bryant is expected to be named the league's MVP and New Orleans' Chris Paul has burst onto the scene as the next great point guard but James may be feared more than anyone.

He's certainly the toughest opponent to plan for. In three games against the Celts (2-1 record) this season, James averaged 32.3 points, 9.7 assists and 7 rebounds. James is coming into Boston red-hot. In a series-clinching win over the Washington Wizards last Friday, James went for 27 points, 13 assists and 13 rebounds.

No one defender can deal with James. He handles the ball the bulk of the time and owns a quick, powerful first step that allows him to

SEE **CELTICS, C3**

CAVALIERS AT CELTICS

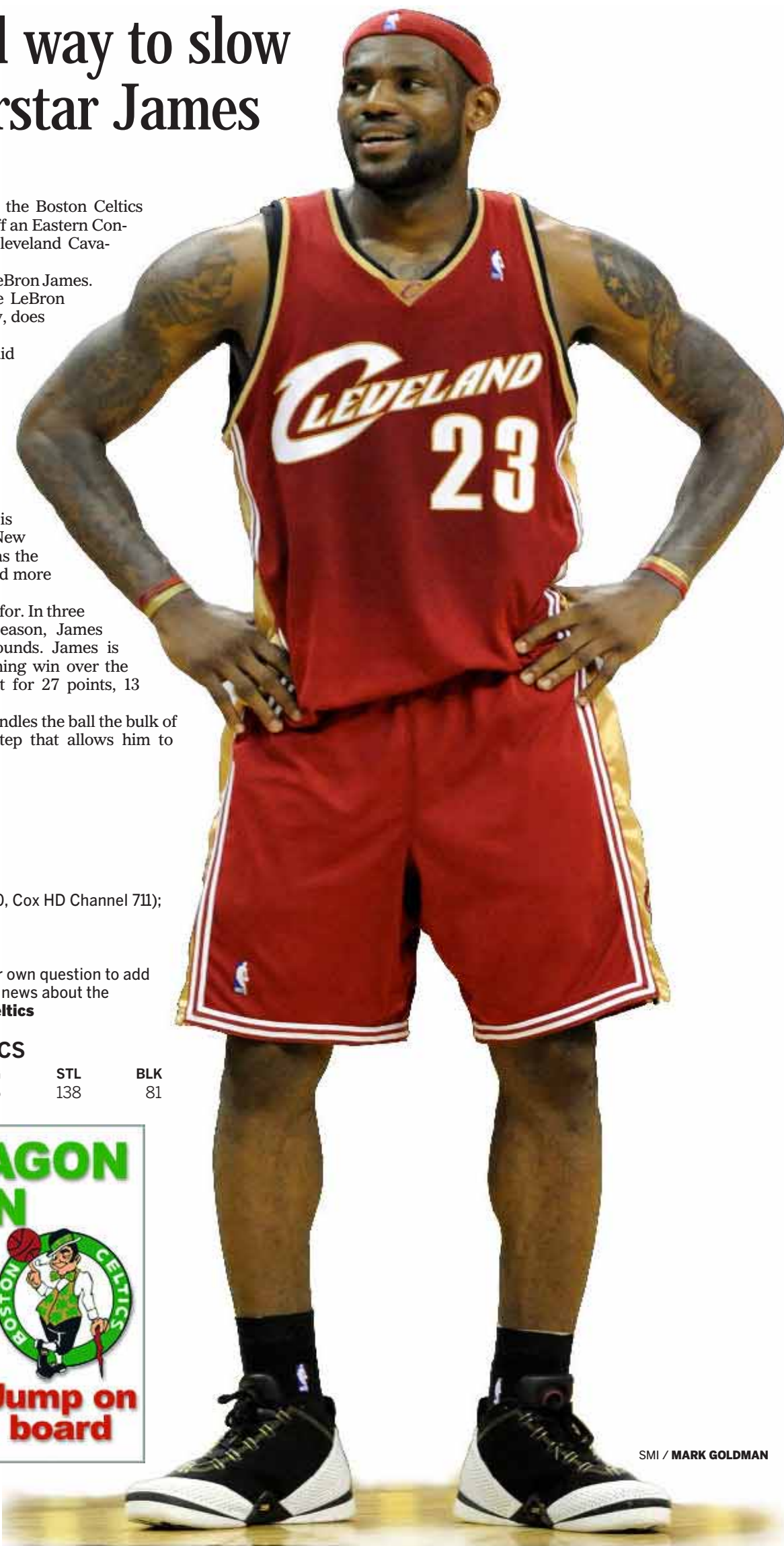
- **WHAT:** Game One, NBA quarterfinals
- **WHEN:** Tonight at 8 p.m.
- **WHERE:** Television — ESPN (Cox Channel 30, Cox HD Channel 711); radio — WEEI-FM (103.7)

ON PROJO.COM

See all-new Celtics photo galleries, suggest your own question to add to Ken Hamwey's Celtics quiz, and find links to news about the Cleveland Cavaliers. Go to projosports.com/celtics

LEBRON JAMES' 2008 STATISTICS

G	PPG	3PM	RPG	APG	STL	BLK
74	30.1	112	6.9	6.6	138	81



SMI / MARK GOLDMAN

RED SOX 6, TIGERS 3

3 homers bail out a laboring Dice-K

Daisuke Matsuzaka improves his record to 5-0 despite going only five innings, walking eight and throwing 109 pitches.

BY STEVEN KRASNER
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

DETROIT — Daisuke Matsuzaka was not feeling well, said manager Terry Francona.

He's still feeling the effects of the flu that cost him a start against the Angels two weeks ago, said the manager. So when Francona started him last night against the

NEXT GAME
Tonight
At Detroit
7:05 p.m.

Detroit Tigers at Comerica Park, he didn't know how long Dice-K would be able to go. It turned out Matsuzaka was able to last only five innings. Along the way he walked a whopping eight batters in a 109-pitch struggle, but still came out with the victory in Boston's 6-3 triumph over the slumping Tigers.

Two-run homers by Mike Lowell (second inning) and Kevin Youkilis (fourth) helped carry Dice-K, and a solo homer by David Ortiz in the ninth put the exclamation point on Boston's sixth win in the last seven games.

"There are not too many nights where you walk that many and get through it, but he did," said Francona. "He's still physically not where he wants to be after his bout (with the flu). He was hacking and coughing before the game. He didn't have his strength or his best stuff. But he pitched with a lot of heart. He really competes."

Matsuzaka didn't want to use being sick as an alibi for another outing in which he struggled mightily with his command.

"I'm not 100 percent but I'm not so bad I can't pitch," said Matsuzaka. "My command was my biggest problem. Physically,

SEE **RED SOX, C5**



AP / PAUL SANCYA

The Red Sox' Mike Lowell, left, is congratulated by Manny Ramirez after his two-run homer in the second.

Patriots' McDaniels, newest QB O'Connell appear to be on the same page

Quarterback Kevin O'Connell, who played for San Diego State, looks for a receiver during the Patriots' rookie mini-camp last Friday.

PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / JOHN FREIDAH



Kevin O'Connell, New England's third-round draft pick out of San Diego State, shows he's a fast learner.

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — Toward the end of the third practice session of rookie mini-camp last weekend, New England Patriots' offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach, Josh McDaniels, went off to one end zone with third-round draft pick Kevin O'Connell, the team's newest quarterback.

As O'Connell and McDaniels worked, a member of the Patriots' video department knelt a few paces in front of O'Connell, taping his every move. The young signal-caller worked on three- and five-step drops, holding a ball but not throwing to anyone.

Before he was sent home for a couple of weeks, O'Connell was given a DVD of the session and a

detailed list of things to work on away from Gillette Stadium.

That gave O'Connell an immediate idea that things were different in New England, and in the NFL.

"I haven't been exposed to coaching like this before," he said after the Saturday session. "There's a lot that coach McDaniels wants me to work on every day."

McDaniels had firsthand knowledge of what the 6-foot-5, 225-pound former San Diego State Aztec was capable of before O'Connell arrived in Foxboro. McDaniels worked him out personally in California before the draft. While there were, of course, things that needed work, McDaniels clearly liked the raw talent he saw in O'Connell.

On the day he was drafted, O'Connell said he was impressed with McDaniels.

SEE **PATRIOTS, C3**