

How confident are you about a perfect Patriots season?

Send in your answer at projosports.com/patriots



PATRIOTS KEEP ON ROLLING: View the gallery at projosports.com/patriots

A carol for Papelbon

Hear Gerry Goldstein recite his Christmas song, posted this afternoon at projosports.com/soxblog

Closing in

Tom Brady now has the third-highest number of single-season touchdown passes in NFL history, and he still has three games remaining:

	NO.	YEAR
Peyton Manning	49	2004
Dan Marino	48	1984
Tom Brady	45	2007
Dan Marino	44	1986

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

SECTION B



MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2007

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Patriots 34
Steelers 13

GUARANTEED ...

As everyone who cares enough to pay attention knows, Pittsburgh defensive back **Anthony Smith** guaranteed a Steelers victory over the Patriots yesterday. And all those folks also know that you don't tug on Superman's cape, you don't spit into the wind, you don't pull the mask off the 'ol Lone Ranger, and you don't deliberately rattle the cage of a team as proud and talented as New England.

... HUMILIATION

So, of course, the Patriots rolled up 399 passing yards on Smith's secondary, burned the overmatched safety on two long touchdown plays, and the Pats took a huge step toward completing their quest for an undefeated regular season with a rout of Pittsburgh.

OVER AND OVER

The Pats' air attack was so overwhelming that at one point they called 34 consecutive passing plays.

WE HEARD YA

Tom Brady got in Smith's face after one Patriot touchdown, though he sheepishly admitted, "You probably can't repeat what I said, especially if my mother reads it."

RESUME SPEED

Even though there are three games remaining, the next two — home contests against the 3-10 Jets and 0-13 Dolphins — would require upsets of apocalyptic proportions for the Patriots to lose. In practice, the only thing standing between them and a 16-0 record is their Dec. 29 matchup against the Giants.

ONE AT A TIME

When asked if 16-0 meant something to him, Brady responded: "14-0 means something to me. That's as far as I'll go."

THIRTEEN AND OH!



Patriots quarterback Tom Brady scrambles out of the pocket for a gain of four yards during the third quarter of yesterday's game as Pittsburgh's Brett Keisel, left, hauls him down.

Pats regain their edge in routing Steelers

BY SHALISE MANZA YOUNG
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FOXBORO — It wasn't that the New England Patriots needed Anthony Smith to open his mouth and give them extra motivation for yesterday's game with the Pittsburgh Steelers, but, well, let's let Rodney Harrison explain:

"It's almost like when you go to the pizza shop and you order your pizza with extra sausage," he said. "You don't really need it, but what's wrong with extra sausage?"

In the wake of New England's 34-13 dismissal of the Steelers, that pizza must have been pretty tasty, especially with all that sausage Smith had heaped onto it.

Although the game with Pittsburgh had long been considered the toughest game on New England's schedule, many observers began to favor the Steelers after the Patriots were less than dominating against the Eagles and Ravens.

It became vogue to claim that there was a blueprint for stopping the Pats, and after close calls against Philadelphia and Baltimore, it appeared that Pittsburgh provided the best chance to end New England's winning streak: their defense was the top-ranked unit in the league, and their offense, while not spectacular, was balanced enough

SEE PATRIOTS, B9

Outspoken Steeler safety chokes on his silly guarantee

JIM DONALDSON



error of his ways and turn himself in to the CIA.
Outrageous? Ridiculous?
No more so than the second-year

FOXBORO — Anthony Smith has some more guarantees for you.

There will be no more housing foreclosures. Gasoline will cost 99 cents a gallon by the end of the month. Osama bin Laden will realize the

safety brashly — and, as it turns out, erroneously and embarrassingly — guaranteeing the Steelers would beat the undefeated Patriots yesterday at Gillette Stadium.

Chocolate is not fattening. Guaranteed. It won't snow again in New England this winter. Guaranteed. Britney Spears will win a Grammy as top female vocalist. Either that, or she'll be named Mother of the Year. Guaranteed.

Hillary Clinton will be elected president and promptly cut taxes by 20 percent, across the board. And her

husband, Bill, did not have sex with "that woman" — meaning Monica, not Hillary.

There's about as much chance of those "guarantees" coming true as there was of the overmatched Steelers beating the fired-up Pats, who took notice of Smith's ill-chosen words — guaranteed.

"He's got to be smart with his words," Hines Ward, Pittsburgh's veteran wide receiver, said of young Mr. Smith. "When you're playing the best team in the NFL, you don't need to give them bulletin board stuff."

The Patriots, you may have noticed, make plays, not guarantees. The only thing the Pats guarantee is that they will show up for the game. Which, the way they're playing, is the same thing as guaranteeing a victory.

But they don't come out and say it, the way Smith did last week.

"When you guarantee you're going to win," said Steelers defensive end Brett Keisel, "it definitely affects how the other team approaches the game."

While the Patriots downplayed

SEE DONALDSON, B7

Determined Providence takes advantage of Brown at the Dunk

"They grinded it out tonight," says Friar coach Tim Welsh of his players. "We'll take it."

BY KEVIN McNAMARA
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

PROVIDENCE — A grind. That's what both Tim Welsh and Craig Robinson had to say about last night's basketball rematch between Providence College and Brown University.

A year ago, the Bears stunned the Friars, 51-41, in Robinson's first crack at

PC. Last night, the Bears were just as proficient on offense but couldn't keep Providence in check as the Friars pulled away in the final 11 minutes and won easily, 70-51.

Afterwards, Welsh spoke about the physical and emotional grind the Friars have survived over the last eight days, which included a 2-2 record and troubling losses to Rhode Island and South Carolina. Robinson was simply disillusioned with his team's effort, especially after carrying a sharp, three-game win-

ning streak into the Dunkin' Donuts Center.

"I counted six layups that we missed in the first half," he said. "You do that against a team like [PC] and you will lose. And it'll be demoralizing. We didn't see this coming. It's very disappointing."

Welsh was happy his team responded with some defensive energy at the start of the game and that carried through enough to ward off a pesky pack of Bears. PC held Brown to 33-percent

shooting and a season-low point total.

"They grinded it out tonight. I didn't know how much they had in the tank but they found a way to play pretty well. We'll take it," said Welsh.

PC improves to 6-3 on the season, while Brown falls to 5-4. No doubt in response to the two-game slide, Welsh shuffled his cards a bit. The main change was the quick insertion of center Randall Hanke into the lineup early in the game and he played well, scoring 13 points on 5-of-5 shooting. Brian McKen-

zie hit three 3-pointers and also finished with 13 points and Greedy Peterson scored all 13 of his points in the final 15 minutes.

Brown's offensive stars were limited. Mark McAndrew was the only double-digit scorer but his 15 points came on 5-of-15 shooting. "We beat ourselves tonight," said Robinson. "To play a team this good, who has it in for you after last year, and play like that is disappointing."

SEE FRIARS, B3

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