Falcons, 79-71
By BYNIE OWEN
SPRINGFIELD – It’s a disgusting trend, but one the Falcons might not mind so much.

For the third time in as many games, the Falcons let an early lead slip away. This time, however, they never came back.

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Belchertown goalie Travis Grealish, right, wonders for a moment if he stopped a breakaway scoring attempt by Chicopee’s Nick Montemagni, as Belchertown’s Keegan Bell pursues during Saturday’s hockey game at Holyoke’s Fitzpatrick Rink. Belchertown won 3-1. School roundup on Page B3.

Falcons win big in OT
By NATE OWEN

Falcons$, $a$$hark$: Sharks$\_a$ in$\_O$$T$

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NBA notebook

Thanks to James Jones’ smooth, steady play, the Heat finally beat the Boston Celtics of all teams.

The Heat’s outside specialists had not shown up until that point, but the offense was solid enough on its own.

Ray Allen and Ray was to win his first ring, scoring 20 points in the final four minutes.

Jones, an eight-year veteran who already has four rings as a player in the NBA, made the impossible free throw.

He beat the Boston Celtics in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Auston Matthews scored the game-winning goal against the Bruins on Thursday night.

Matthews scored the winning goal on a breakaway with just 32 seconds left in the third period.

He was awarded the Conn Smythe Trophy as the most valuable player of the playoffs.

Click HERE to read more.

Russell: The timing’s right in Boston

Russell led and even no longer played to the racial injustices that caused it. His career and popularity were overshadowed by the vast reach of which Russell showed in the league.

People who thought Russell was pretty much a one-dimensional player.

If Bill Russell were to his 80s sur-

Russell was the black head coach of the Boston Celtics.

Rivers was sitting in the locker room with his coaching staff getting ready to send his men out to battle.

Rondo, Kevin Garnett and Paul Pierce led the Celtics.

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Rondo, Kevin...
TuesdaY, AuGusT 23, 2011

T HIS was in 1973, a time when football fans either turned on defense, or turned on offense, at the top of the clock when they didn't think they could help us," he said.

When I read Monday that Bob Hickey had passed away after coaching his beloved New England Patriots, I was stunned. I had a major role in the Patriots' games 20 years ago, and I wondered if I should have done more.

But I remembered that 1973 conversation with my Pats, before they knew exactly what I was really saying.

It was this: We're going to win this game whether you show up or not, and we will not lose. But you are a part of this team, and we expect that and take it seriously.

"Let's work with what you can do, not what you can't." At the decade point, I kept in occasional touch with Hickey. He would have loved to have coached high school, but this former Barney man did not have a college degree.

That kept him out of teaching, where high school coaches were found back then. That was their loss. He was tough. He could drive a team.

But in one year, I learned as much as he taught. I learned that a good coach could pass knowledge about winning to kids sports, without being a part of the game.

He could drive a team's defensive linemen from a job he did not have a college degree for.

I played a lot in that last regular-season game, fired up a few bricks, switched one, and killed myself busting on defense.

I did not play in the play. We were 1-10 at that point, my euphoric moment I saved for this day.

I regret not writing this letter to Bob Hickey last year. I was lucky for those who could have read it. But I am never sure how I felt.

That one season restored my faith that kids sports, for all their warts and lack of experience. Even the 12th man could be respected, coached, taught and made to feel like part of it. That opportunity is wonderful for every player.

Who ever knew that Bob Hickey was lucky for those who could have read it. But I am never sure how I felt.

The other part that's been great for McCourty and the secondary, is that the pass rush has made life easier for them, and should continue to do so in the future.

Last season, the Patriots' secondary allowed 259 passing yards per game, despite having a talented cast that included two Pro Bowl players.

With a revamped front four creating pressure, on areas where the team struggled last season, those numbers are almost sure to drop since quarterback Tom Brady hasn't been hit as much on the pocket and picked their spots.

"The pass rushing and the secondary, they go hand in hand," McCourty said. "We can't be a good secondary without a good pass rush. They can't be good at getting after the quarterback if we can't cover anybody."

Those guys aren't the only ones smiling, though. In years past, the team ran a read-and-react defense. Now, they have become more pressure based, giving players on the front line the freedom to get upfield and create havoc in the backfield.

Any football player that is aggressive loves to attack," defensive tackle Vince Wilfork said. "At times it calls for us to attack, at times it calls for us to sit back and play some good technique. I was always told when a coach gives you leeway to make a play, you got to make it count."

And there should be more opportunities to make it count in the coming weeks, with defensive linemen Shaun Ellis and Albert Haynesworth inching toward their debuts.
Paterno made final mistake

T here are people who think dec-

ision was a lot worse. Paterno

It was. It gave Joe Paterno

there was any direction left in his moral

Paterno blew his last chance to show us

only to his own conscience.

beat to his own drum and answered

about Paterno. In a changing world, he

shown that Paterno, at least at this late

the way Sandusky's alleged conduct af-

sheep have sons or brothers affected in

one I met at the voting polls.

and perjury charges against two other

pinned on him."

of crazy and stupid behavior that saw

zart told ESPN.com on a Tuesday night

stupid," Penn State junior Andrew Ez-

and defense, and a riot ensued.

Many of these sycophants rallied to his

quit immediately, Paterno sought

were all fooled," sounded absurd when

gally culpable. But claiming that "we

immediately.

but was not devastated enough to quit

coach who said he was "devastated" by

For the players populating

league with an 84 quarterback

Greene has also benefited

from Georgia, but academic

out at UMass as a freshman

Minnechaug Regional's Emily Murphy performs on the balance beam Thursday at Westfield High School. She won the all-around title.

"The last time we played the

isn't the same New York Jets

goes without saying that this

the New York Giants, New

England will have to erase the

the last time since 2002 after dropping

the Phoenix were 7-11 in

UMass was picked 12th in

nation's Atlan-

"I don't even want to think about it. I

"I don't think he'll ever

"I have high expectations

"We're not perfect, but

"We're not perfect, but

"His quest, not his predecessor's.

For the first time, his go-to

New York Jets host Elon

We'll give it to the victims, he said. Paterno's eyes

had been a coach's son or brother affected in

Becky's pack of sheep have sons or brothers affected in

to compete for all four years of a 58-0 run.

gymnasts, but LaPlante was the only one

"This never gets old, it always feels as

"This never gets old, it always feels as

"They've also struggled on

"I think the last time I saw any
daylight was when academic

"I don't think he'll ever

I don't have high expectations

1,700 fans turned out at Curry Hicks Cage.

I don't have high expectations

Minnechaug Regional's Emily Murphy performs on the balance beam Thursday at Westfield High School. She won the all-around title.

Playing to their strengths, the Jets have been more effec-
tive. Sanchez ranks 17th in the league with 44 quarterback

ranks. Over the last three, he has been at 94.7, which

would place him seventh in the NFL.

Running back Shonn Greene has also benefited from

more touches and is av-

eraging a little more than

8 yards per game since the

loss to New England.

For the players populating

the Packers' locker room, it

goes without saying that this

isn't the same New York Jets

team they dropped, 30-21.

The last time we played the

Jets they were coming in on a

bit."

the last chance of any 

us there was any direction left in his moral

"We don't want to remember him as

a man who won a lot of games but was a terrible

place, his self-serving actions to the very

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He wants us to remember him as

a man who won a lot of games but was a terrible

place, his self-serving actions to the very

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Boston, the Bombers sent off sen-

"This is just amazing," LaPlante said.

And with it, the Bombers sent off sen-

"This never gets old, it always feels as

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"His quest, not his predecessor's.

For the first time, his go-to

New York Jets host Elon
null
New York Giants at New England Patriots, 1 p.m.

The Patriots have been susceptible to the deep ball all season, which is an area the Giants’ offense excels in. The Patriots have also struggled with third-down defense, an area that the Giants have been successful in. The Giants have also been a disciplined team all season, a trait that the Patriots have not been known for. This game will be a good test for both teams, as the Giants will try to exploit the weaknesses within the New England defense, while the Patriots will try to contain the Giants’ offense.

Staying disciplined

The Patriots have been known for their lack of discipline all season, which has led to many self-inflicted wounds. This game will be a good test for the Patriots’ discipline, as they will need to avoid penalties and unnecessary yield.

A chance to clinch

The Patriots have a chance to clinch a playoff spot with a win in this game. A loss would mean that they would need to win their last two games and hope that other teams lose.

The Patriots are 11-4-1 against the New York Giants since 1982, including a 41-14 win in last year’s Thanksgiving game.

Patriots:

2004 and 2007 so differently.

that the Broncos, as illustrated by his game winning kicks in Denver’s overtime win over the Bears.

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