THE 19TH ANNUAL TRADITION
THE SPORTS MUSEUM

2001 PATRIOTS
2004 RED SOX
2008 CELTICS
2011 BRUINS

NESP PREMIERE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020
The Tradition Celebrates
A DECADE OF CHAMPIONS

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THE TRADITION 2020

HOSTS
TOM CARON AND JACKIE MACMULLAN

HONOREES

FOOTBALL LEGACY AWARD
2001 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
The Team that Shocked the World

“We are all Patriots”
REPRESENTED ON THE NESN TELECAST BY:
JOE ANDRUZZI, ROMAN PHIFER, AND RICHARD SEYMOUR

BASEBALL LEGACY AWARD
2004 BOSTON RED SOX
The Team that Reversed the Curse

“Don’t let us win tonight”
REPRESENTED ON THE NESN TELECAST BY:
KEITH FOUlKE, TERRY FRANCONA, AND JASON VARITEK

BASKETBALL LEGACY AWARD
2008 BOSTON CELTICS
The Team That Turned Ubuntu into Banner 17

“Anything is possible!!!!”
REPRESENTED ON THE NESN TELECAST BY:
KENDRICK PERKINS, LEON PowE, AND DOC RIVERS

HOCKEY LEGACY AWARD
2011 BOSTON BRUINS
The Team That Brought Lord Stanley Back to Boston

“It’s our ice now”
REPRESENTED ON THE NESN TELECAST BY:
PATRICE BERGERON, ZDENO CHARA, AND MARK RECCHI

THE CLASS OF 2020

NESN PREMIERE | DECEMBER 16, 2020

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HONORING THE LEGENDS SINCE 2002

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2002  MILT SCHMIDT
2003  PHIL ESPOSITO
2004  JOHNNY BUCYK
2005  TERRY O’REILLY
2006  HARRY SINDEN
2007  RAY BOURQUE
2008  CAM NEELY
2009  KEN HODGE
2010  1970 STANLEY CUP TEAM
2011  WILLIE O’REE
2012  JEREMY JACOBS
2013  DEREK SANDERSON
2014  PATRICE BERGERON
[COMMUNITY SERVICE]
2015  GERRY CHEEVERS
2016  WAYNE CASHMAN
2017  RICK MIDDLETON
2018  DON CHERRY
2019  ZDENO CHARA

BOSTON CELTICS
2002  BILL RUSSELL
2003  RED AUERBACH
2004  TOMMY HEINSOHN
2005  KC JONES
2006  BOB COUSY
2007  SATCH SANDERS
2008  CEDRIC MAXWELL
2009  JOHN HAVLICEK
2010  SAM JONES
2011  JO JO WHITE
2012  ROBERT PARISH
2013  CELTICS OWNERSHIP GROUP
       WYC GROUSBECK, IRV GROUSBECK,
       STEVE PAGLIUCA, AND BOB EPSTEIN
2014  ANTOINE WALKER
2015  DANNY AINGE
2016  SHAQUILLE O’NEAL
2017  DAVE COWENS
2018  PAUL PIERCE
2019  PAUL SILAS

BOSTON RED SOX
2002  TED WILLIAMS
2003  JOHNNY PESKY
2004  LUIS TIANT
2005  MO VAUGHN
2006  RED SOX OWNERSHIP GROUP
       JOHN HENRY, TOM WERNER, AND
       LARRY LUCCHINO
2007  JIM RICE
2008  1967 BOSTON RED SOX
2009  DOMINIC DIMAGGIO
2010  CURT SCHILLING
2011  DWIGHT EVANS
2012  MIKE LOWELL
2013  ROBERT PARISH
2014  PEDRO MARTINEZ
2015  CARLTON FISK
2016  TIM WAKEFIELD
2017  BILL LEE
2018  JASON VARITEK
2019  MANNY RAMIREZ
### NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Gino Cappelletti</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Steve Grogan</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>The Kraft Family</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Mike Haynes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Andre Tippett</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>John Hannah</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Stanley Morgan</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Irving Fryar</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Troy Brown</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Steve Nelson</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Ty Law</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Rodney Harrison</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Vince Wilfork</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tedy Bruschi</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Richard Seymour</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Drew Bledsoe</td>
</tr>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Willie McInest</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Deion Branch</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Matt Light</td>
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### INDIVIDUAL & AMATEUR SPORTS

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Tenley Albright, Figure Skating</td>
<td>Dave Cowens, The Sports Museum</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Mary Pratt, Softball</td>
<td>1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team, Jim Craig, Mike Eruzione, Jack O’Callahan, and Dave Silk</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Tony DeMarco, Boxing</td>
<td>Dick and Rick Hoyt, Boston Marathon</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Harry Agganis, College Football</td>
<td>Peter and Abigail Fuller, Horse Racing</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Darryl Williams, High School Football</td>
<td>Nancy Kerrigan, Figure Skating</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Jack Parker &amp; Jerry York, College Hockey</td>
<td>Kristine Lilly, Soccer</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Micky Ward, Boxing</td>
<td>Gil Santos</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Chris Ernst, Rowing</td>
<td>Alexi Lalas, Soccer</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Jack Nicklaus, Golf</td>
<td>Doug Flutie, College Football</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Aly Raisman, Gymnastics</td>
<td>Kayla Harrison, Judo</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Joan Benoit Samuelson, Boston Marathon</td>
<td>Don Rodman, Philanthropy</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Laila Ali, Boxing</td>
<td>The One Fund, Philanthropy</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Jim Gallagher, Mike Sheehan, and Jack Connors</td>
<td>Martina Navratilova, Tennis</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Julie Foudy, Soccer</td>
<td>Richard Petty, NASCAR</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>Ben Crenshaw, Golf</td>
<td>Michelle Kwan, Figure Skating</td>
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### MEDIA

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<tr>
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<td>Curt Gowdy</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Eddie Andelman</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Chris Berman</td>
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The Boston Athletic Association is proud to support The Sports Museum and congratulates the four championship teams being honored at the 19th Annual Tradition.

Boston’s champions are celebrated for their hard work, determination, and success. From start to finish, they are a reminder of the deep tradition of athletic excellence that makes Boston the City of Champions. We’re proud to have celebrated your championships and cheered you across the Boston Marathon Finish Line during your victory parades!
Our role as a trusted guardian is to protect and preserve what matters most to our customers and communities. Leveraging our footprint, resources and services, we help you store and protect your most precious assets. Trusted by more than 225,000 organizations around the world, your sports memorabilia, legacy and reputation are safe with us. We are proud to be the Official Archive Partner of the Sports Museum.

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THE KRAFT FAMILY, THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS AND NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION CONGRATULATE
THE 2001 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

AND ALL TONIGHT’S HONOREES
Everyone was wrong about the 2001 New England Patriots, including the guy who jokingly predicted before Super Bowl XXXVI that they would lose to the St. Louis Rams, 73–0. Some things seem a lot funnier when you say them than when you later read them...especially when you have to eat those words for the next 20 years.

Four days before the birth of a pro football dynasty, I was asked to pick the winner of Super Bowl XXXVI by a correspondent from USA Today. At the time, the St. Louis Rams were considered “The Greatest Show on Turf” with good reason. They were making their second Super Bowl appearance in three years, had scored over 500 points for the third straight season, had an MVP quarterback, the league’s best and most versatile running back, and two Pro Bowl wide receivers. Oh, and by the way, they ranked third in total defense and seventh in fewest points allowed. To think they were not going to steal the glass slipper from the Cinderella Patriots seemed absurd to nearly everyone, including the Vegas oddsmakers.

To try and put what was about to happen in historical perspective, I threw out the score of 73–0 because that was how badly the Chicago Bears hammered the Washington Redskins in the 1940 NFL Championship Game. It was the widest victory margin in a league title game and although I didn’t think it would be repeated it seemed to indicate the disparity between these two combatants.

Only one problem. The dynasty in waiting did not belong to the Rams. It belonged to the Patriots. It was just that no one realized it until after they had not only upset St. Louis, 20–17, but won two more Super Bowls in the next three years and a total of six while appearing in nearly half the Super Bowls played between 2001 and 2019 (nine). Who knew?

The Patriots had played in two Super Bowls and one AFL Championship Game in the previous 42 years and lost by an aggregate score of 132–41. They had put up a fight five years earlier against the Green Bay Packers but ultimately lost the game, 35–21. They then lost the coach who had rebuilt them from the ashes when Bill Parcells defected over the border to coach New England’s hated rival, the New York Jets.

Four years later, Parcells’ top assistant, Bill Belichick, returned to New England to take over but went 5–11 his first season and began 2001 losing the first two games and his $103-million quarterback. The latter occurred when Jets linebacker Mo Lewis leveled Drew Bledsoe on September 23, 2001 in the Patriots’ first home game since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. That hit nearly killed Bledsoe but it gave life to a moribund franchise and launched the Patriots dynasty.

Earlier that day, guard Joe Andruzzi led the Patriots onto the field carrying two
huge American flags, one for each of his 
two brothers, who were New York City 
firefighters that had worked in the rubble 
of the fallen World Trade Center’s twin 
towers on September 11. It was a moment 
of hope — but when word came down that 
Bledsoe was out indefinitely and a second-
year quarterback who hadn’t been a full-time 
starter in his college days at Michigan was 
replacing him, a Super Bowl run was not 
under discussion.

Tom Brady had thrown only three passes in 
his brief NFL career but went 6-for-10 that 
day and nearly rallied the Patriots late in the 
game. Few noticed. New England was now 
5–13 under Belichick and Bledsoe was gone 
for who knew how long with a sheered blood 
vessel that caused his abdomen to fill with 
blood, flooding his lungs. His life was saved 
at Mass General Hospital but it seemed the 
season was dead.

Belichick surprised some by naming Brady 
over veteran backup Damon Huard but what 
did it matter? By the end of the month, New 
England was 1–3. Brady had quietly beaten 
the Indianapolis Colts but followed up by 
passing for less than 100 yards in a 30–10 
loss to Miami. Expectations were lower than 
ebb tide but a week later he showed some 
spark in a 29–26 overtime victory over the 
San Diego Chargers, passing 54 times for 364 
yards and the game-tying touchdown with 36 
seconds left in regulation.

New England won two of its next three but 
then Brady had an awful day in a loss to 
the Broncos, throwing four interceptions. 
The question of the day was, “When would 
Bledsoe return?”

Yet Brady’s faith in himself remained 
unshaken. He led New England to two more 
wins and a surprising 5–4 record when the 
swaggering Rams arrived in Foxboro in 
mid-November. Bledsoe had been cleared to 
play that week but Brady was 5–2 as a starter 
and Belichick announced on local radio 
after St. Louis barely escaped with a 24–17 
win that Brady would be the starter barring 
“unforeseen circumstances.”

Although the Rams piled up 500 yards of 
offense, the defense that was becoming the 
hallmark of the Patriots’ Cinderella run twice 
intercepted Kurt Warner and came away 
believing that if it saw him in a rematch, The 
Greatest Show on Turf was in trouble. Faith 
was also growing in Brady, who was running 
the offense efficiently by limiting mistakes 
and making plays at critical moments. When 
that game ended, Belichick announced this 
was now Brady’s team going forward.

Brady responded with four touchdown 
passes the next weekend to beat the Saints 
and embark on a season-ending six-game 
winning streak that left New England an 
astonishing 11–5 and set to face the Oakland 
Raiders in a divisional playoff game that 
would be the snowy farewell to dilapidated 
Foxboro Stadium.

By kickoff, snow had blanketed the region, 
giving Foxboro the air of Siberia as far as 
the shivering Raiders were concerned. The 
combination of blowing snow and swirling 
winds stymied Oakland’s high-powered 
offense and the Patriots all but abandoned 
the pass most of the night and struggled 
to find their footing until, with about 12 
minutes left and trailing by 10, Belichick told 
offensive coordinator Charlie Weis to begin 
having Brady throw short passes in front 
of Oakland’s deep dropping defense out of 
a no-huddle offense that played to Brady’s 
strengths.

“Once we went to the no-huddle, they had 
only three or four (defensive) calls and I 
knew what to expect,” Brady would say later.

That alteration made for an unlikely hero 
out of East Boston-born tight end Jermaine
Wiggins. Seldom used in the passing game during the season, Wiggins would be targeted 13 times by Brady and would haul in 10 of those passes, including a critical one that set up a six-yard Brady touchdown scramble that cut Oakland’s lead to 13–10 late in the game. Unable to sit on its lead, Oakland was forced to punt. Troy Brown ran it back to midfield only to fumble in the slippery conditions, but Larry Izzo fell on it at the Patriots 46 with slightly more than two minutes left.

During a timeout after having advanced the ball seven yards, Brady and Weis were in deep conversation on the sideline. Oakland cornerback Eric Allen overheard their call and told his teammates to expect a backside slant. Stunned to see the play covered and All-Pro cornerback Charles Woodson bearing down on him, Brady tried to pull the ball to his chest but Woodson flattened him and it popped loose. When linebacker Greg Biekert recovered the game, and the season, were over.

Or maybe not.

Referee Walt Coleman had ruled a fumble but with less than two minutes to play the call was automatically reviewed. Enter into history the “Tuck Rule.”

Because Brady had initially been trying to throw when he brought the ball toward his stomach, the play was ruled an incomplete pass. The Raiders went berserk when soon after David Patten made a sliding catch for a 14-yard gain to the 29 to set up the most dramatic field goal in Patriots history. With snow swirling and the wind howling, Adam Vinatieri wrote the first line in what will likely be his Hall of Fame resume, drilling a low line drive, 45-yard field goal through the uprights with 27 seconds left to force overtime.

New England won the toss and Brady continued to complete short throws until the ball reached Oakland’s 30. Weis then fed the ball to 1,000-yard rusher Antowain Smith until Vinateri trolled out and sent the Patriots off to face the Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC title game with a game-winning 23-yard field goal. As the wind howled, Wiggins and long snapper Lonie Paxton were seen making snow angels on the stadium turf.

It seemed unlikely the Patriots could repeat their magic in Pittsburgh but Troy Brown got them going with a 55-yard punt return for a touchdown and a 7–0 lead. Hope was alive until Brady suddenly grasped his ankle after being leveled by Pittsburgh’s Lee Flowers following a 28-yard completion to Brown.

In came the forgotten Bledsoe, and in 35 seconds he would earn his keep. His first pass was a bullet for a 15-yard gain. Then he got blasted while scrambling in a fashion similar to what had happened against the Jets. This time he popped up and high-fived his relieved teammates. Two plays later he found Patten in the corner of the end zone with an 11-yard touchdown pass and it was 14–3.

That would be the Patriots only offensive touchdown of the day but it was all they needed because in the third quarter Brown recovered a blocked Steelers punt, ran 11 yards, then lateraled to Antwan Harris, who sprinted the remaining 49 to make it 21–3. Pittsburgh battled back but safeties Tebucky Jones and Lawyer Milloy each picked off Kordell Stewart late in the game and the Patriots were off to New Orleans. Waiting for them were the cocksure Rams.

Days before the game, New England’s defense rebelled against a game plan designed to play soft zone coverages to keep Warner under control. Cornerback Ty Law angrily told defensive coordinator Romeo Crennel he wanted Isaac Bruce, St. Louis’ most dangerous receiver, man-to-man. The rest of the secondary was equally aggressive.
and so changes were made. Crennel told his secondary to play tight and physical and for the rest of the defense to concentrate on hounding Marshall Faulk, primarily with defensive end Willie McGinest. The hope was to turn the game into a rock fight and the plan worked perfectly, Law intercepting a Warner pass and returning it 47 yards for a second quarter touchdown and a 7–3 lead. New England would not trail again.

With just over a minute to play in the half, Antwan Harris forced a fumble that Terrell Buckley returned to the 40-yard-line to set up what would become Brady’s trademark, a nearly perfect two-minute drill capped by an eight-yard touchdown pass to Patten with 31 seconds left that gave New England a 14–3 lead at the half.

Another interception of Warner set up a third quarter field goal but suddenly the Rams came to life, scoring twice in the fourth quarter to tie the game. With 81 seconds to play, CBS analyst John Madden opined that New England should play for overtime. Down on the sidelines, the Patriots had a different idea.

After a brief discussion, Belichick told Brady, “Okay, let’s go for it” and so he did. Passing deftly, Brady moved the Patriots 53 yards in nine plays with the son of Boston, Jermaine Wiggins, once again playing a vital role. Needing a few more yards to give Vinatieri a reasonable shot to win the game, Brady calmly found Wiggins for an eight-yard completion to the Rams 30 and then clocked the ball.

On came Vinatieri and the rest is history. His 48-yard field goal soared through the uprights as the clock flipped to 0:00. In this most patriotic of seasons, the Patriots had won but history would prove it was no upset. Tom Brady and that ball-hawking defense would go on to win two of the next three Super Bowls. The Rams never returned. In the end, it was those 2001 Patriots who turned out to be The Greatest Show on Turf... and one of the greatest dynasties in NFL history.

RON BORGES has covered the NFL since 1975. He has a weekly national radio show on SB Nation Network, teaches at UMass-Lowell, and is producing a documentary on the De La Hoya-Chavez fight series and finishing a book to be published in 2022 on Christy Martin, who is considered the greatest female boxer in sports history.
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TO
THE 2001 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
FOR RECEIVING THE FOOTBALL LEGACY AWARD
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THE SPORTS MUSEUM OF NEW ENGLAND

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THE 2004 RED SOX
ON THEIR BASEBALL LEGACY AWARD
2004 is the greatest year in Red Sox history. It can’t be overstated. For 86 years, there had been two incontrovertible truths — the Red Sox couldn’t win the World Series and the Red Sox couldn’t beat the New York Yankees when it mattered.

Couldn’t.

Wouldn’t.

We did.

Every ghost, expectation, curse, and self-punishing Boston-fan nightmare was destroyed in 2004. It was the year everything went right. It has been said the difference between truth and fiction is fiction has to make sense. You couldn’t make 2004 up.

The season started with a new manager. It was a necessary move. The club had lost to the Yankees in the wretched ’03 ACLS when Grady Little, another in a long line of well-meaning but overmatched Red Sox managers, left Pedro Martinez in too long... We know the story. Same story as 1949 and 1978 — succumbing to the Evil Empire on the last crucial day. Succumbing to fate.

The first vital move was over Thanksgiving ’03 when Theo Epstein, baseball’s youngest general manager, CEO Larry Lucchino, and assistant GM Jed Hoyer travelled to Phoenix and convinced Curt Schilling to accept a trade to Boston. They produced statistics about pitching in Fenway and threw down the challenge of winning a championship in Boston. It was indeed a challenge. The last time the Red Sox had won a World Series, Babe Ruth was the best lefthanded pitcher in the American League and the United States was fighting the Kaiser. Schilling had an important credential — he had beaten the Yankees in the World Series in 2001 while pitching for the Diamondbacks.

Besides Schilling, another crucial piece had been added, free agent closer Keith Foulke. Other additions were Mark Bellhorn at second and Kevin Youkilis, who would fill in when Bill Mueller was hurt. The lineup was strong. Johnny Damon led off (.304, 20 HRs, 94 RBIs for the season); Bellhorn hit second (.264, 17 HRs, 82 RBIs), then Manny Ramirez (.308, 43 HRs, 130 RBIs) and David Ortiz (.301, 41 HRs 139 RBIs). After the postseason, Ramirez and Ortiz would have to be considered one of the great one-two punches in history to be mentioned with Mantle-Maris, Mays-McCovey, even Ruth-Gehrig. The rest of the order included hard-hitting catcher Jason Varitek (.296, 18 HRs, 73 RBIs), streaky, clutch Kevin Millar (.297, 18 HRs, 74 RBIs), and sometimes Bill Mueller (.283, 12 HRs, 57 RBIs), Trot Nixon (.315, 6 HRs, 23 RBIs), and Gabe Kapler (.272, 6 HRs, 33 RBIs). And, significantly, the lineup also included an iconic shortstop named Nomar.

The pitching staff was solid with Schilling (21–6), Pedro Martinez (16–9), Derek Lowe (14–12), Tim Wakefield (12–10), and Bronson Arroyo (10–9). Mike Timlin, Alan Embree, and Foulke (32 saves) were in the bullpen.
The season opened with Pedro Martinez losing to the Orioles. The next day Schilling beat the Birds. The club played well in April, including a three game sweep of the Yankees in New York. On June 1, Boston and New York were tied for the division lead. Then the Yankees got hot and the Sox went cold. Nomar Garciaparra came off the DL, didn't play well, and made it clear he was far from happy. On July 1, after two losses in New York, Nomar sat out a 13-inning loss. It didn't help his reputation in Boston. Derek Jeter cemented his by leaping into the stands in the twelfth inning to catch a foul pop. Jeter got up holding the ball, chin bleeding. He needed x-rays and stitches. It was a perfect example of New York can-do, Boston no-do.

July 24 is the most important date in Red Sox history. The Red Sox stood up to the Yankees. Literally. Boston pitcher Bronson Arroyo hit Alex Rodriguez, who started for Arroyo, but Jason Varitek stepped in. Words were exchanged. Varitek stuck his mitt in A-Rod's face, and the benches emptied. Unlike most baseball fights, there were actual fights. Yankee starting pitcher Tanyon Sturtze tangled with Gabe Kapler and got a bloody ear. Varitek's mitt—in-the-face was caught in a photograph seen around the baseball world. The moment was season-changing. The Red Sox stood up to the Yankees. Literally. Boston pitcher Bronson Arroyo hit Alex Rodriguez, who started for Arroyo, but Jason Varitek stepped in. Words were exchanged. Varitek stuck his mitt in A-Rod's face, and the benches emptied. Unlike most baseball fights, there were actual fights. Yankee starting pitcher Tanyon Sturtze tangled with Gabe Kapler and got a bloody ear. Varitek's mitt—in-the-face was caught in a photograph seen around the baseball world. The moment was season-changing.

The Red Sox trailed 9–4, were losing 10–8 in the ninth, and then beat Mariana Rivera, the greatest relief pitcher of all-time, on a walkoff Bill Mueller homer. The Red Sox fought for a teammate. Something the 1976 club didn't do when Bill Lee was mugged by Graig Nettles, who tried to pull Lee's arm out of its socket. This team fought back.

No one knew it, but this was the beginning of the greatest karmic payback in the history of sports.

Theo Epstein made the next vital move. In a four-team deal, Nomar Garciaparra went to the Cubs, and shortstop Orlando Cabrera and first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz came to Boston. It was a shock. The two-time batting champion swapped for two Gold Glove winners? It was a gamble and it was brilliant. Pokey Reese, who had filled in when Nomar was injured, was injured himself. First base had been a defensive liability all year. Still, Nomar was a potential Hall of Famer and a shortstop with power. He was, however, going to be a free agent, injury prone, and unhappy. The same day, Theo picked up Dave Roberts, a fleet outfielder. It went almost unnoticed.

After August 1, the fight-galvanized, Nomarless Red Sox went 42–18. The infield defense was much improved. Cabrera may have been the best fielding shortstop the Red Sox have ever had. The club cruised to a wild card spot, finishing three games behind New York.

The first playoff opponent was the California Angels. The Sox took the first two games, as Schilling and Pedro each pitched well. The third foreshadowed things to come. With the game tied 6–6 in the 10th inning, Ortiz hit a two-run walkoff homer. On to New York.

On October 12, 2004, the most unlikely, otherworldly, incredible series began. The Red Sox–Yankees rivalry was the most ballyhooed in sports, at least in Boston. In reality, the Red Sox had never beaten the Yankees when it mattered in the live-ball era. The first three ALCS games bore out this
unpleasant truth and seemed to confirm this awful Red Sox fate. Schilling now had an ankle injury, a serious injury. The Yankees knocked him out in the fourth inning of Game 1 and led 8–0 in the seventh. The Sox didn’t get a hit until the seventh, got the score to 8–7, and lost 10–7. Pedro started Game 2. He hadn’t pitched well against New York, saying after losing in September, “I just tip my hat and call the Yankees my Daddy,” which lead to ALCS chants of “Who’s your Daddy” at the Stadium. Paternity or not, Pedro pitched well but New York prevailed 3–1. It was announced Schilling would need ankle surgery.

The Yankees delivered what should have been the coup de grace — it certainly felt like a coup de grace — with a 19–8 shellacking of the Sox in Game 3. The Bronx Bombers had 22 hits, 8 doubles, and 4 homers. No team in baseball history had ever comeback down 3–0 in a postseason series. Like the Red Sox not winning the World Series, or the speed of light, this was an immutable law of the universe.

Derek Lowe pitched well in Game 4, leaving with a lead in the sixth, but Mike Timlin couldn’t hold it. Yankees led 4–3 in the ninth with Mariano Rivera closing. Kevin Millar walked and little used Dave Roberts entered as a pinch runner. In what later became regarded as the most important stolen base in club history, Roberts stole second, barely beating Jorge Posada’s throw. Bill Mueller singled and the score was tied 4–4. Four innings later, at 1:22 AM, David Ortiz hit a two-run homer into the Yankee bullpen. That, at least, saved face.

Much has been made of Red Sox bravado supplied by Kevin Millar, Johnny Damon, and the unwavering positivity of Dave Roberts and manager Tito Francona. Wherever it came from, magic had started. Pedro pitched well in Game 5 but left in the seventh with New York leading 4–2. Ortiz homered in the eighth, the Sox added another run, and the game went 14 innings. It was agonizing. The Yanks left man after man on base. Tim Wakefield, sacrificial victim in the ’03 ALCS, managed to hang on despite passed balls and wild pitches. Ortiz singled in the winning run.

Could this really be happening?

The drama of Game 6 started with Curt Schilling’s ankle. A flapping tendon in his right ankle had to be repaired. Team doctor William Morgan practiced on a cadaver and operated on Shilling. It was a surgical win. As Schilling pitched, he bled into his sock. Legends are made of less. Schill went seven strong innings. In the eighth, Alex Rodriguez, running to first, slapped the ball out of Bronson Arroyo’s hand, and was called out for interference, killing a Yankee rally. Bad New York karma. Boston won 4–2.

The Red Sox still had to win a seventh game in New York — so much history, so many memories, so many ghosts. The Sox destroyed all of it in two innings. Ortiz hit a two run homer in the first and Johnny Damon hit a grand slam in the second and then a two-run homer in the fourth: 8–0 Sox. No curse, ghosts, or memory could overcome that lead.

The Red Sox had done the impossible. They had come back from 3–0 and done it against the Yankees.

It was a Yankee who said, “It ain’t over until it’s over.”

He was right.

The World Series with the Cardinals was nevertheless anti-climactic. It had to be won, of course, but the energy was with Boston. The Red Sox could not be stopped. Success was just in the air. The Sox swept the Cardinals, never trailing for a single inning. The first game was the most exciting. Ortiz homered in the first inning (of course!), the
Sox led 7–2 in the fourth, the Cards tied it, Boston went ahead 9–7, and St. Louis tied it in the top of the eighth. Mark Bellhorn hit a two run homer in the bottom of eighth. Foulke saved it.

The excitement of Game 2 was the physical condition of Curt Schilling. He told reporters he didn’t think he could pitch, but he did. Sock bloody again, he went six strong innings. The Red Sox won 6–2.

Pedro started Game 3, pitched seven scoreless innings, allowing three hits, and the Sox won. Derek Lowe pitched Game 4. He also went seven scoreless giving up three hits. Arroyo, Embree, and finally Foulke came on to get the final six outs that closed out the Cardinals for good.

After four score and six years, the Red Sox had finally won the World Series.

They did it with the unprecedented, impossible comeback against the Evil Empire, avenging ’49, ’78, and ’03. They swept the Cardinals, answering 1946 and ’67.

They exorcised the ghost of Babe Ruth.

A year later at Fenway Park, I met superfan Stephen King and asked him if he believed the Red Sox had actually won the World Series. The horror-master said, “No.” It did seem too good to be true.

But it was.

Ortiz, Ramirez, Pedro, Schilling, and the rest are gods.

Superlatives forever in order.

2004.


2004 RED SOX REPRESENTED AT THE TRADITION ON NESN BY:

KEITH FOULKE, PITCHER
- **2004:** In first season as Red Sox closer, recorded 5 wins and 32 saves
- **Career:** 11 year MLB career with four different teams, 191 career saves (with four seasons of 30+ saves)

TERRY FRANCONA, MANAGER
- **2004:** In first season as Red Sox manager, led team to its first World Series title in 86 years
- **Career:** 10 year MLB career as player, 20 years (and counting) in MLB as manager

JASON VARITEK, CATCHER
- **2004:** Hit 18 hrs, 73 RBIs, .296 BA while also providing exemplary leadership
- **Career:** 15 year MLB career (all with the Red Sox), long-time team captain, 3-time All-Star
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A new and very special sponsorship benefit for this year’s Tradition has been The Legendary Cocktail Party.

The Legendary Cocktail Party is a private VIP session with a Tradition Alumni exclusively for a sponsorship group of 10. It takes place via Zoom, is hosted by Sports Museum Executive Director Rusty Sullivan, and lasts approximately 45–60 minutes.

And, again, each such Legendary Cocktail Party involves only the sponsorship group of 10 and one of our Tradition Alumni — and that’s it. It provides for unprecedented access to a Boston sports legend and a special experience with enduring memories. For the hundreds of folks who participated in a Legendary Cocktail Party over the past several months, it has been the one Zoom session of 2020 that they will never forget.

By the end of 2020, The Sports Museum will have conducted approximately sixty (60) Legendary Cocktail Parties for Tradition sponsors. We couldn’t have done it without all the Tradition Alumni displayed on these two pages who helped us out by participating in one or more of these Legendary Cocktail Parties. We are both honored and grateful for their continued involvement with The Tradition and The Sports Museum.
OUR PARTICIPATING TRADITION ALUMNI (CONTINUED)
FROM ONE LEGEND TO ANOTHER...

Cheers

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FROM FIELDS WHERE GLORY DOES NOT STAY,
AND EARLY THOUGH THE LAUREL GROWS
IT WITHERS QUICKER THAN THE ROSE.”

— A.E. Housman from
“To an Athlete Dying Young”

Part of what makes Boston such a great sports community is the seemingly limitless scope and depth of the accomplishments of the athletes who have worn our colors. Over my four decades as Curator of The Sports Museum, I have come to realize that one of the more important aspects of my job is simply ensuring that the accomplishments of many long-forgotten athletes are preserved for future generations.

Included in their number are four athletes whose achievements merit special consideration and would form the basis for some excellent movie scripts. After all, would we have known of the inspirational victories of Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell at the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris had it not been for the Oscar-winning Chariots of Fire?

Let’s tell their stories in chronological order. And please feel free to grab a bucket of popcorn while you envision how all of this would play out on the silver screen.

GEORGE “IRON” DAVIS

We start with George “Iron” Davis, Williams College Class of 1913. Though he only won seven games in his four-year major league career, he made history on September 9, 1914 when he pitched the first no-hitter in the history of Fenway Park. Davis didn’t hurl his gem for the Red Sox, however. Instead, he pitched the no-hitter for the Boston Braves, who were atop the National League in a heated pennant race and were playing at Fenway rather than their usual and smaller home (Braves Field) to accommodate the large crowds that were flocking to their games.

Braves manager George Stallings tabbed Davis, a former New York Highlander, as a late season addition to his pitching staff as the “Miracle Braves,” who had languished in last place as late as July 4, made their dramatic run to the National League pennant and the World Series title. At the time, Davis was, somewhat improbably, also a student at Harvard Law School.

Facing the Phillies in the second game of a doubleheader on September 9, he escaped from a monumental fifth inning jam that saw him walk the bases full with no outs and then proceeded to notch a strikeout and a double play. He completed his no-hitter in a tidy two hours, assisting his own cause by going for 3 for 4 at the plate to help fuel the 7–0 rout of the Phillies.

Davis had the second fewest career wins (seven) of any man with a no-hitter to his credit in the majors. Only Bobo Holloman, with three, had fewer.

In later life, Davis practiced law in Buffalo. He was fluent in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Arabic and read Sanskrit. He was also familiar with Egyptian hieroglyphics and dabbled in Chinese. In addition, he was recognized as one of America’s great amateur astronomers.

He once remarked, “Reading is my favorite sport. There is nothing, not even baseball, that I like quite as well.”
served as an American League umpire for two decades (1942–62) and a head linesman in the National Football League for 24 seasons.

In his brief and uneventful stint with the Red Sox, Berry served mostly as backup catcher on teams that finished in last place for four of the five seasons he wore a Boston uniform. His best season came in 1931 when he batted .283 in 111 games, including one in which he upended Babe Ruth in a jarring home plate collision that sidelined the slugger for two weeks. The following season he was traded to the White Sox.

When assessing his career highlights, Berry’s time in Boston represents a mere footnote when taking into consideration his football heroics and his 31 years in the majors, which included his umpiring five no hitters and five World Series and All Star games, not to mention serving as a top NFL official.

And of that legacy, there are two scenes that remain indelible.

The first is the kick that Berry made in 1925 that was the most important field goal in NFL history at the time, providing the Pottsville Maroons with the margin of victory over the famed Notre Dame team of The Four Horsemen. The victory, which elevated the league to hitherto unreachable heights, was also deemed as unauthorized and resulted in the Maroons being stripped of their NFL title.

Later, in his role as head linesman at the famed 1958 “Sudden Death” NFL title game, Berry’s much-debated call of Frank Gifford’s unsuccessful attempt for a first down set the stage for the Baltimore possession which led to their tying the game, pushing it to overtime, and eventually winning the most famous game in NFL history.

Of the 1,792 men who have played for the Red Sox since 1901, Charlie Berry was truly the most accomplished all-around sportsman, a genuine man for all seasons.

Charlie Berry

Long before there was Bo Jackson or Tim Tebow, there was the phenomenal Charlie Berry, perhaps the most remarkable athlete and career official who ever combined the sports of football and baseball. As Casey Stengel used to say, “You can look it up.”

The athletic feats of the one-time Red Sox catcher (1928–32) surely would defy the imagination of most screenwriters, as he starred for a consensus national championship football team at Lafayette in 1921, led the NFL in scoring as captain of the 1925 Pottsville Maroons, played major league baseball while also serving as head football coach at Grove City College, coached for Connie Mack’s Philadelphia Athletics, and

Tony Plansky

For most of the 46 years that Williams College track coach Tony Plansky rode his improvised motorized bicycle through the bucolic Berkshires, none of his athletes had ever seen him drive a car and few, if any, knew of his prodigious athletic accomplishments. Of course, several had heard that coach had once played a little pro football, but they never would have gotten him to admit that he finished second in NFL scoring to Hall of Famer Ernie Nevers in 1929 while starring as a fullback for the New York Giants. Nor were they likely to have heard him boast of the national decathlon championship he had won while a student at Georgetown in 1924, or the successive decathlon titles he captured at the Penn
Relays in 1925 and 1926. In fact, only a regrettable technical error prevented him from representing the United States and capturing a likely gold medal in the 1928 Summer Olympic Games.

The following year, despite not having played competitive baseball for over a decade, he was one of the last players cut from the 1929 Boston Braves. In the three seasons that followed, he played both pro football with the Giants and Boston Braves (Redskins) and minor league baseball with the Erie Sailors, Scranton Miners, and Buffalo Bisons, batting .337 with 16 home runs in 199 games. After signing on as assistant track coach at Williams in 1931, he spent his summers on Cape Cod where he starred for the better part of a decade for the Bourne Braves and was later named to the Cape Cod Baseball League’s Hall of Fame.

In 1999, Sports Illustrated listed Plansky as the twenty-fifth greatest sports figure in the history of Massachusetts, while proclaiming that the South Boston native was "perhaps the state’s best all-around athlete."

In the movie script of his life, the opening or closing scene would have to be drawn from an anecdote shared in the Williams College alumni report of the Class of 1968 where George Schelling recalled his first encounter with then then 68 year old coach: "Part of the lore was, he was demonstrating to a bunch of us duffers how to throw the hammer. This was well into his advanced years. So he went out, he demonstrated, threw the darn thing, and he said, ‘Now I think you’ll find that that stands up pretty well’—it had beaten the college record."

In 1999, Sports Illustrated listed Plansky as the twenty-fifth greatest sports figure in the history of Massachusetts, while proclaiming that the South Boston native was "perhaps the state’s best all-around athlete."

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Just as Jackie Robinson should have broken baseball’s color barrier in the uniform of the Boston Red Sox, Malden’s Louise Stokes should have been America’s first African-American female Olympian at the 1932 Summer Games. The tale of her ascent to Olympic status for both the 1932 and 1936 US Olympic teams, and subsequent prevention from competing in either competition as a member of the 4 x 100 relay teams, is both inspiring and crushingly tragic.

Known as the “Malden Meteor,” Stokes was a truly remarkable all-around track athlete. As a seventeen year old in 1931, she set a New England record in the 100 yard dash, capturing the Curley Cup at Fenway Park, while later that year tying the world record in the standing broad jump.

The following year she traveled to Northwestern University, where she finished third in the 100 at the Olympic Trials, which earned her a place on the women’s 4 x 100 relay team. Among her teammates was fellow African-American Tidye Pickett, with whom she roomed, as both were virtual outcasts on a squad dominated by the hostile presence of star performer Babe Didriksen.

Among the indignities suffered by the women was an ice water dousing administered by Didriksen as the women slept on the train west. Once in Los Angeles, they also faced the twin challenges of the fact that American Olympic Committee (AOC) President Avery Brundage was vocally opposed to the participation of women in Olympic track and field events and that officialdom was increasingly concerned about the dominance of black male track athletes such as Eddie Tolan and Ralph Metcalfe.

It was in this climate that the decision was made by AOC officials to replace Stokes and Pickett with two white West Coast sprinters they were deemed faster. Thus were both denied the chance to make history as well as to win gold as members of a world record setting quartet.
No full explanation was ever offered to the women as Brundage, the one official who could have insisted they compete, ducked controversy and more than lived up to his reputation for racial insensitivity.

Rumors of a row between Pickett and Didrikson fueled speculation as to the real reason for the decision, but both women refused to speculate on the controversy and returned home.

By 1935, Stokes had returned to competition winning many local races as well as capturing a national AAU title in the 50 yard dash at Chicago’s Soldier Field. And, on July 4, 1936, she earned a spot on her second US Olympic squad despite finishing fifth in the finals of the 100. Once again, she had been placed on the 4 x 100 relay team.

Bolstered by a fundraising effort that saw her Malden neighbors raise $683.30 to cover the $500 she was required to secure for her trip to Berlin, she and Pickett were reunited on a team that also included Jesse Owens.

And while Pickett made history as the first African-American female Olympic competitor in a losing effort in the 80-meter hurdles, several days later she and Stokes were once again replaced on the 4 x 100 relay team by lesser runners who were white. Once again, both were denied a shot at gold when the favored German team dropped the baton on their final pass.

For Stokes, it proved the suspicions she had harbored prior to the Games, where in a piece in the Boston Chronicle she observed, “I feel I have more to fear from my own countrymen than from Nazi officials.”

On her return to Malden, a tickertape parade of more than 6,000 greeted her though family members acknowledge she carried the hurt until her death at the age of 64 in 1978.

In 2016, after President Barack Obama was made aware that a White House reception for the members of the 1936 US Olympic team had excluded African-American team members, he extended an invitation to the families of those who had been ostracized. Among the guests were Stokes’s only son, Wilfred Fraser, Jr., who had the honor of standing next to Michelle Obama in the official White House photograph of the gathering.

Stokes is remembered with a statue in the courtyard of her alma mater Malden High School that was partially funded by money raised by students in the mid-1980s.

As with the stories of Iron Davis, Charlie Berry, and Tony Plansky, the story of Louise Stokes vividly comes to life in its retelling. Her story, too, is ready for the silver screen.

Richard A. Johnson is the long-time Curator of The Sports Museum, and has also authored or edited 24 sports books, including volumes on each of Boston’s pro franchises as well as the Boston Marathon, Fenway Park, and Braves Field.

SEVEN (7) MORE BOSTON ATHLETES WHO DESERVE THEIR PLACE IN THE SUN

1. **Chuck Cooper**  
   The first African-American to be drafted into the NBA by the Celtics in 1950

2. **Will “Cannonball” Jackman**  
   Legendary pitcher for the touring Philadelphia and Boston Giants of the Negro Leagues

3. **Eva Morrison**  
   Legendary marathon swimmer who also saved the lives of over 40 swimmers near her Scituate home

4. **Ron Perry, Sr.**  
   Prolific two-sport athlete at Somerville High and Holy Cross who then served as AD at his alma mater for three decades

5. **Eleonora Sears**  
   Noted horsewoman, swimmer, runner, walker, racer of both cars and airplanes, and squash player who was also a four-time national doubles tennis champion

6. **Hank Soar**  
   Football player who caught the game-winning TD for the NY Giants in their 1938 NFL title game, coached in the NBA, and worked as a baseball umpire (American League) for 23 seasons

7. **Bill Stewart, Sr.**  
   The NHL’s first American born referee and coach of 1938 Stanley Cup champion Chicago BlackHawks who also worked as a baseball umpire (National League) for 22 seasons
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2008 CELTICS
THE TRADITION 2020 HONOREE
The Celtics had been waiting 22 years to renew the championship heritage of Bill Russell, John Havlicek, and Larry Bird. Now that he was on the verge of Boston's NBA record 17th title, Wyc Grousbeck didn't know how to react.

The Celtics, already sitting on a series lead of 3 games to 2, were leading Kobe Bryant's Lakers by 23 points at halftime of Game 6 of the 2008 NBA Finals. And yet Grousbeck, owner of the Celtics, was fretting in TD Garden's high-end Courtside Club lounge as he sought perspective from Patriots coach Bill Belichick.

“I go, ‘Bill, I'm a little worried,’” recalled Grousbeck. “I'm thinking if anybody's going to give me the canned speech — it's not over till it's over — it's Bill Belichick. He says, ‘Hell, you got this; you're world champs! Have a shot.’ And he hands me a shot of tequila.”

Belichick turns out to be undefeated (1–0) in his publicly-known predictions. The Celtics would continue to build upon their lead throughout the second half of a 131–92 beating of their age-old rival, enabling their patient fans to celebrate for 24 deafening, cathartic minutes.

The evening concluded with Paul Pierce dumping coach Doc Rivers with Gatorade, Kevin Garnett screaming memorably about all that is possible, and plenty of cigars to go around in honor of Red Auerbach, who had died 20 months earlier.

This team was a remembrance of Celtics past, with Garnett doing his best to conjure the defensive leadership of Russell, Pierce scoring under pressure like Sam Jones, Ray Allen running as tirelessly as John Havlicek, and Rajon Rondo distributing with the flair of Bob Cousy. It was a different time of wealth and fame that their ancestors of the '60s, '70s, and '80s never could have imagined, and yet, in terms of the qualities that matter and endure, it was all the same white cloth — trimmed in green, caked with sweat, and smeared with a hint of blood here and there.

As much as the personalities and performances of the 2007–08 Celtics resonated with their forefathers, there was, at the heart of this team, a sense of surprise.

For no one saw it coming.

Not even Pierce, the team captain who had been on the verge of requesting a trade one summer before the championship.

Do you remember just how bad the Celtics were in 2006–07? They lost 58 games overall and 18 times in a row, all with the goal of landing one of the prize incoming rookies, Greg Oden or Kevin Durant — and when it came time for the lottery, they lost that too. They slid backward to fifth in the first round, which was momentarily discouraging but turned out to be their best break in decades.

Instead of drafting for the future, Danny Ainge traded for today.
Grousbeck and Steve Pagliuca, the investment bankers and long-time Celtics fans who bought the team for $360 million in 2002, began the turnaround by joining with Ainge to convince Pierce to stick it out a little while longer, despite three playoff series wins in nine otherwise barren years.

On draft day, Ainge traded that No. 5 pick (which became Jeff Green, a name that may ring familiar), Wally Szczerbiak, Delonte West, and a future second-rounder to the Seattle SuperSonics for Ray Allen (and the rights to draft Glen “Big Baby” Davis in the second round) — which was inspiring to Pierce, as Allen instantly became his most talented Celtics teammate ever.

One month later, Ainge traded (take a deep breath) Al Jefferson, Ryan Gomes, Gerald Green, Theo Ratliff, Sebastian Telfair, and two future first-round picks (who eventually turned into Wayne Ellington and Jonny Flynn) for Garnett, who instantly transformed Allen into Pierce’s second-most talented Celtics teammate.

Both deals were held up momentarily by demands that Boston include Rondo. But Ainge wouldn’t give up his mercurial and indispensable point guard, who not quite one year later would generate 21 points, 8 assists, 7 rebounds, and 6 steals in the conquering Game 6 of the NBA Finals.

The 2007–08 Celtics were a remarkable blend of experience, young talent in need of polish, and a variety of reformed ambitions. Garnett had been a league MVP, Pierce and Allen had been All-NBA scorers, each had been the best player on his team — and none of them had reached the NBA Finals.

If they were going to make their title dreams come true, Rivers warned them incessantly, then Garnett, Pierce, and Allen were going to have to adapt to each other. One afternoon before they embarked on their preseason trip to Rome, the three stars were asked to meet Rivers outside his Boston residence for what turned out to be a surprise journey. An empty Duck Boat pulled up. They hopped on and rode the route of the downtown championship parade that would be theirs to take — so long as they followed the preachings of their coach, himself a former All-Star point guard whose Atlanta Hawks had failed to reach the NBA Finals (thanks to Larry Bird).

“The concern was that all three were leaders,” Rivers recalled recently on The Cedric Maxwell Podcast. “I told them, if we’re going to win, we’re going to have to sacrifice.”

All three stars grew to believe in “Ubuntu,” a traditional African philosophy of balance and teamwork that explains how individuality is expressed by togetherness. They were trying to become the first championship with three leading scorers in their 30s, and the Celtics stars met that challenge by scoring less:

- Pierce averaged 19.6 points per game, a drop of more than 5 points from the previous season.
- Garnett generated 18.4, the first time in a decade that he hadn’t averaged 21 or more.
- Allen settled for 17.4, which was 9 points fewer than his farewell year in Seattle.

Garnett, 31, created a sea-change in Boston. By way of his ruthlessly consistent example, he prevailed upon Pierce, 30, and Allen, 32, to play the best defense of their careers. Rivers was assisted by Tom Thibodeau, who backed out of a job with the Washington Wizards in order to become a defensive coordinator for the Celtics, thereby launching his reputation as the NBA’s most effective coach at that end of the floor.

The Celtics were the league’s dominant team at both ends that year. They won 20 of 22 to
start, they shared possessions like volleyball players, and they introduced an intensity and court-shrinking style on defense that contenders would seek to emulate for years to come.

Rondo, 21, contributed 10.6 points, 5.1 assists, and 4.2 rebounds as he dreamed of becoming a peer to the Big Three. Kendrick Perkins, the 23-year-old starting center, was influenced by Garnett to defend, box out, and set screens without regard for his stats, which were as minimal as they were irrelevant. James Posey was a crucial two-way veteran, Eddie House provided shooting off the bench, and Tony Allen at 26 began to assert himself defensively.

Leon Powe, Sam Cassell, and Davis all contributed during the playoffs. But the biggest variable off the bench turned out to be P.J. Brown, the 38-year-old big man who had been talked out of retirement in midseason by Pierce. He played out the end of Boston's league-leading 66-win season, and then revealed his importance during Game 7 of the Eastern Semifinals against the Cavaliers and nemesis LeBron James.

At that stage of the postseason, in mid-May of 2008, the Celtics had been a troubling enigma. In the opening round, they had needed a seventh game on their home floor to fend off the 37-win Atlanta Hawks, the worst team in the tournament. They continued their winless ways on the road in Cleveland, where 23-year-old Lebron made them look old and uncertain. In the seventh game at Boston, James would put up 45 points and 6 assists to frighten everybody who was there. But Pierce was ready.

“Tonight was very simple,” Garnett said afterward. “Get the ball to Paul Pierce, get the hell out of the way. That’s exactly what it was. That was the game plan. That was what we did.”

Pierce had a legendary Game 7 performance of 41 points on 23 shots. He drove incessantly to the basket. The Cavs doubled him soft and hard and he dealt with both defenses, either splitting through the coverage with drives or hitting the difficult fallaway jumpers that had been missing from his inventory for much of these playoffs.

Unlike LeBron, Pierce had backup. When James stripped Pierce for a breakaway dunk to bring Cleveland within a point with 2:20 remaining, P.J. Brown responded with a soothing 15-footer. Brown made all four of his shots for 10 points to go with 6 rebounds and 5 necessary fouls. He played 10 minutes in the fourth quarter and helped provide the decisive stop on a James drive that turned into an airball; the Celtics recovered the miss, and Ray Allen’s ensuing free throws clinched the 97–92 win.

After needing six games to ease by the Detroit Pistons, who were ending their run of six straight conference finals, Pierce would offer one more dramatic scene at the NBA Finals opener in Boston. After all these years of waiting and wondering, he had played his way into June against none other than the Lakers — the team he adored throughout his childhood in L.A. — in a renewal of basketball’s ultimate rivalry. Midway through the third quarter of Game 1, the 280-pound Perkins landed on Pierce’s right foot as Pierce swiveled to defend Kobe Bryant. Pierce heard his knee pop. He curled in pain throughout the ensuing timeout as the fans stood murmuring around him. It was the sound of a cathedral before a funeral.

A wheelchair was involved, famously.

In the locker room as the third quarter went forth without him, Pierce tried to stand. He could hear the crowd bellowing through the locker room walls as he leaned his full weight on his throbbing right leg. He could withstand the weight, and he was able to absorb the pain of shifting from side to side.
“I was like, man, it can’t be over like this,” he said.

Less than two minutes of game time after he had been carried off, his teammates looked up to an unexpected roar and the raising of fists like goosebumps by the thousands. On the scoreboard was live video of Pierce half-jogging out of the locker room tunnel and onto the floor. It was as though Larry Bird in green headband and freckles really was walking through that door.

Pierce hit back-to-back threes, which will go down as Boston’s answer to Willis Reed, as the Celtics took early command of the series. In Game 4 at L.A., they generated the biggest NBA Finals comeback (since records were first kept in 1971) by recovering from a 24-point deficit — while Rondo and Perkins were sidelined with injuries — to win 97–91.

The ultimate statement of who they were and why they prevailed was revealed in Game 6.

The Celtics completed the biggest improvement — 32 games better than the preceding year — in league history. They became the first overhauled team to win the NBA championship in its initial year together; no franchise since the 1948–49 expansion Minneapolis Lakers had ever won a title with two newcomers among its top three scorers. In a league that had been undermined by the destructive feud of Shaq and Kobe, and other young stars who wanted to be The Man of their own teams, the older Celtics flung open a door to the better way that followed — a new era of stars wanting to team up together in order to prioritize team success at the expense of individual stats.

Game 6 was a culmination, a celebration, an achievement, and revelation, one of those deliriously happy nights that rings in your ears through to the morning. Maybe, after all these years, you can still hear it.

KENDRICK PERKINS, CENTER
- 2008: FIFTH YEAR WITH THE CELTICS, STARTED AT CENTER, AVERAGED 6.9 POINTS AND 6.1 REBOUNDS PER GAME
- CAREER: 13 SEASONS IN THE NBA WITH FOUR DIFFERENT TEAMS

LEON PowE, FORWARD/CENTER
- 2008: SECOND YEAR WITH THE CELTICS, PLAYED SEVERAL FRONTCOURT POSITIONS, AVERAGED 7.9 POINTS AND 4.1 REBOUNDS PER GAME
- CAREER: 5 SEASONS IN THE NBA WITH THREE DIFFERENT TEAMS

Doc Rivers, Head Coach
- 2004: IN FOURTH SEASON AS CELTICS COACH, LED TEAM TO ITS FIRST NBA CHAMPIONSHIP IN 22 YEARS
- CAREER: 13 YEAR NBA CAREER AS PLAYER, 22 YEARS (AND COUNTING) IN NBA AS HEAD COACH

IAN THOMSEN, who covered the 2007–08 Celtics as a senior writer for Sports Illustrated, is the author of The Soul of Basketball.
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2011 BRUINS
The 2010–11 Boston Bruins didn’t just win the Stanley Cup, they emptied New England’s closets of faded, worn, and sometimes torn black and gold sweaters, tees, and jackets.

Along the path to glory, Nos. 4, 24, 77, 8 and, yes, 19, became more noticeable among the sea of 33s, 37s and 46s, as generations united in their shameless emoting, shaking their fists at the sky, merging their primal screams into a deafening roar.

Together, their pent-up release of unresolved feelings shook TD Garden like it was the old barn itself and, three days after their June 15, 2011 victory in Vancouver, filled Boston’s sidewalks for the rolling rally. Young and old, those who remembered watching Bobby Orr and those who only knew of him all came out to celebrate. Fanatics were born and reborn.

The younger fans reminded the older ones what it felt like to believe, and in turn their noise reminded the players of what they had dreamed about as kids skating on ponds and community rinks in Canada, the U.S., and abroad.

“If you haven’t played playoff hockey before, it’s an amazing experience,” said Bruins president Cam Neely, recalling his own playing career and 2011 but also the Game 7 heartbreaks that preceded the run to glory. “That collapse against Philly [in 2010], that woke a lot of guys up. Those guys really took the offseason to think, ‘What do we need to do better?’ They came back with a lot of hunger. The expectations started to grow around here, too, which is a fantastic thing.”

At the beginning of that fateful 2010 series versus the Flyers, Marc Savard returned from a career-threatening head injury to score a dramatic overtime goal, ignite the Garden, and spark what would become a 3–0 series lead before David Krejci’s injury coincided with Simon Gagne’s comeback to tilt the rink ever so slightly Philadelphia's way.

For four straight games.

It felt like the season might end sooner in 2011 when the Bruins dropped their first two playoff games at home to the visiting Canadiens. Never before in 86 seasons had the Bruins dug out from a 2–0 series hole. Compounding the stress, Montreal authorities had threatened to arrest Bruins captain Zdeno Chara for his regular-season rub-out of young star Max Pacioretty.

Montreal lusted for a sweep, but Chris Kelly and Andrew Ference became unlikely heroes as the Bruins took both games in Montreal to even the series and make clear that it was going the distance.

“That building block against Montreal, a lot of people thought we wouldn't get to a fifth game, never mind a seventh game,” said Neely.

When Game 7 back in Boston went to overtime, P.K. Subban narrowly missed. Later, Milan Lucic would sweep the puck off of Subban’s stick, setting the stage for Nathan
Horton’s shot that deflected off Jeff Halpern and past Carey Price.

Pandemonium. Relief. The Bruins were onto Philadelphia poised and ready to complete the sweep they had almost finished the year before. This time, they finished off the Flyers in four.

This is what the great hockey teams do. They push, they pull and tug not only on the opposition but on the hearts they capture. They make you crazy, they break your heart, they inspire belief and, sometimes, they make your day.

Horton repeated his heroics in the epic Game 7 of the 2011 conference final against Tampa Bay, a series that saw rookie Tyler Seguin showcase his skills while Patrice Bergeron recovered from a mild concussion.

Horton sustained a more severe knock in Game 3 of the Cup final when Canucks defenseman Aaron Rome stepped up with a late hit to the head. Horton didn’t return, but he made his presence felt, pouring out a bottle of TD Garden ice shavings onto Rogers Arena ice before Game 7 in Vancouver.

Thomas took the Conn Smythe Trophy home from Vancouver and would soon add a second Vezina Trophy to his collection, but the hip injury that cost him the starter’s role in 2009–10 also continued to cast a shadow on the onset of his 2010–11 campaign.

Postseason surgery had gotten the veteran goaltender back in tip-top health, but second-year NHLer Tuukka Rask started the October 9 opener against the Coyotes in Prague, Czech Republic. The Bruins came out flat and lost. Julien came back with Thomas, who never looked back on the way to the Cup.

The stories from the march to the Stanley Cup also include a playoff pit stop in Lake Placid, N.Y., a glove “malfunction,” and a riot in Vancouver’s streets, but there is no real way to talk about the 2010–11 Bruins without addressing the franchise cataclysm of 2006, the 2007 ditching of the FleetCenter sweaters for a more classic look, Marco Sturm’s playoff and Winter Classic heroics, the hiring of Claude Julien, and the concussions that threatened the careers of Bergeron and Savard.

“For me a big stepping stone was that season in 2007–08,” said Milan Lucic of his rookie campaign. “We were pegged for 13th or 14th and we took Montreal to seven games. If you look at all those steps that we took to get to 2011, it was all necessary and parts of the lesson we had to learn to become champions.”

The next steps are always harder, and faith had not yet found a home in Bruins fans, who had for four decades been marking their calendars by Bernie Parent, too many men on the ice, Claude or Mario Lemieux (take your pick), Petr “Triple Overtime” Klima, Ulf Samuelsson, (Brad) May Day, Brian Bellows, Jose Theodore, or the 14 years from 1995 to 2008 that yielded one series victory and six Aprils without playoffs altogether.

Bruins fans had become somewhat of a secret society in a town owned by the Patriots and the Red Sox. After Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen came to Boston, the State House posted a banner wishing the Celtics luck in the playoffs in the spring of 2008. The Bruins? They had come a long way in that same season from the hot mess they had been following the labor war that canceled the 2004–05 NHL season. But they had to ask for their banner.

How did their fortunes change?

As former Bruins captain Joe Thornton was thriving in San Jose and about to become the first player ever to be traded during the season and win the Hart Trophy, Peter Chiarelli was winding down his tenure as Ottawa Senators assistant general manager. At age 29, Chara was hitting his prime years and, coincidentally, free agency. Chiarelli knew Chara wouldn’t generate offense like Ray Bourque had for two decades, but he was nonetheless sold on hockey’s biggest player.

“What I saw him do in Ottawa, I was absolutely sure,” says Chiarelli, Bruins GM from 2006 to 2015. “I don’t know how much people knew him in Ottawa, but after year one (in Boston) and Zee was trying to do everything, I was like, ‘Uh oh’, but ... when he figured it out, what he figured out was how to do it with others. That was his greatest accomplishment.”

As Red Sox fans who appreciated new GM Theo Epstein also eventually acquired a newfound respect for their former GM, Mike O’Connell likewise lurks as the Bruins’ “Dan Duquette,” having gifted his successor Patrice Bergeron, David Krejci, and Tim Thomas, among other assets that would yield members of Chiarelli’s eventual championship team. The Bruins’ rapidly changing roster would
need time to settle and would undergo tweaks, but with Julien behind the bench in 2007–08, Chara was allowed to focus on his strengths.

“He’s very methodical in his approach to everything,” said Chiarelli of Chara. “What I saw in his leadership was he had to smooth out some of the edges, but he became self-deprecating and people caught on to the fact he’s a real dude. When you see him up close and how he trains, then he validates the myth because you know people are going to follow him.”

As the biggest, baddest guy in the NHL, Chara was more than a tough guy who could play the shutdown role. As captain, he was a catalyst as the Bruins learned to play for one another and thereby reestablished their Big, Bad identity.

In the Bruins’ official memoir, *Full 60+ to History* (Skybox Press, 2011), Chara writes, “You might have missed the moment just prior to my picking up the Cup. As I skated to the table, I thought about the ultimate goal I set five years ago for the Boston Bruins organization, for the fans, for all the kids playing sports, simply for all the people in Boston. I also thought about all the things that we have been through as a team: the injuries, the ups and downs, and the tough losses. But most of all, when I turned around and pointed at my teammates, I was thinking of them. I wanted to show them that I was going to get the Cup and that none of this would have happened without all of them. The whole team.”

Ference was asked at the 2011 trade deadline what he thought was more important, the missing hockey widget or acquiring a player who fits in? The defenseman didn’t hesitate in his preference of the player who fits into the room, and the right hockey widget wasn’t even a close second.

Without this mentality, the 2010–11 Bruins could not have won. Chara was the catalyst for a cultural shift.

“We’d been looking for that in my prior job in Ottawa, we had a lot of skill and could never get over the hump — my whole time there,” said Chiarelli. “I came (to Boston) with that idea half-baked in my mind. As far as the recipe, we were just looking for guys that were heavy on their stick and protecting the puck well. Often times, those guys came with the...toughness.”

Shortly after joining the Bruins in 2007, Julien set forth a message after a game in which fists were flying and the penalty boxes were full. The Bruins believed in standing up for one another. A squandered power play might cost them a game, but squandered opportunities to strengthen bonds cost teams whole seasons.

Shawn Thornton was tough but was an excellent example of adherence to the team concept. Johnny Boychuk, Adam McQuaid, and eventually Gregory Campbell were frequent example setters, but it was never just one player. Bergeron, Krejci, and even Thomas fought.

Strategically, Julien calmed the Bruins down in their own end by installing a zone defense that has persisted well into successor Bruce Cassidy’s tenure.

“We wanted to defend better,” said Chiarelli. “I remember when we went through our group and cherry-picked five or six successful teams at that time, we looked at their D-zone coverage, that’s all we looked at. Claude’s (New Jersey) team was one of them. We knew how he coached.”

The number-one staple of every great Bruins team of the past was missing from this one. No Orr, Park, or Bourque to quarterback the attack from the blue line. Chara was a Norris Trophy winner only two years before the run to the Cup, but his was a shutdown game.

Under Julien’s system, Bergeron and Krejci would come all the way back and act as the puck-moving defenseman, taming the
breakout and even improvising the transition under pressure.

The tactic resulted in lower point totals for the 200-foot centermen, but it also enabled the Bruins to build offense through their forecheck, change up for fresh legs, and apply a five-man pressure.

On track as a hockey team, the work of winning back New England was just beginning in 2007, according to Lucic.

“I walk in as a 19-year-old in the city of Boston, it’s around September 11 of 2007 and nobody ever had a Bruins hat on. (I) never saw a Bruins t-shirt, you can’t blame them,” he said, citing the 2007 champion Red Sox, the Patriots’ 16–0 season, and the 2007–08 Celtics. “I understand why it was the way it was. Tuesday night if we’re playing Atlanta, we’d get maybe 8 or 9,000. I remember Student Night, all that type of stuff.”

“Yes, we brought a championship back, but we brought respect back to Bruins hockey because of the brand that we played. You know what’s funny, if you ask one of these new guys — (Charlie) McAvoy, (Jake) DeBrusk, (Brandon) Carlo, they have no idea...they’ve only seen what they’re walking into.”

For players as well as fans, there is an unmatchable gratification that comes to those who began on the ground floor. And, while the younger generation of Bruins benefits from the precedents set by the 2010–11 team, it remains to be seen if those advantages will work for them or against them.

A full decade later, the Bruins officially have four remaining members of the 2011 squad, Bergeron, Krejci, Marchand, and Rask, with Chara (unsigned at press time) looming as a potential fifth. If Chara decides not to return, he will have nonetheless influenced a team-wide culture and its emerging young leaders.

“The product on the ice drives the bus so, if the fans enjoy what they’re coming to watch, on the ice and off the ice in the community, something this organization has done very well — the players have been fantastic with it,” said Neely. “More importantly, the product on the ice and our fans enjoying what they’re seeing. We’re talking ‘original-six’ franchise, they want to see their teams compete.

“Obviously, you’ve got to have some skills, but if you’re not putting out the effort they let you know it. That’s why I think it’s one of the best places to play.”

MICK COLAGEO has been covering the Bruins since 1991. Follow him on Twitter @MickColageo.

**2011 Bruins Represented at the Tradition on NESN by:**

**Patrice Bergeron, Center**
- **2011:** 22 goals and 35 assists in regular season, 6 goals and 14 assists in playoffs
- **Career:** 16 years (and counting) in the NHL with the Bruins, 2-time All-Star, 4-time winner of Selke Trophy (best defensive forward in NHL), winner of King Clancy Trophy in 2013 (leadership and humanitarian contribution)

**Zdeno Chara, Defenseman**
- **2011:** 14 goals and 30 assists in regular season, 2 goals and 7 assists in playoffs
- **Career:** 22 years (and counting) in the NHL, long-time Bruins captain, 6-time All-Star, winner of Norris Trophy in 2009 (best defenseman in NHL)

**Mark Recchi, Right Wing**
- **2011:** 14 goals and 34 assists in regular season, 5 goals and 9 assists in playoffs
- **Career:** 22 years in the NHL, 7-time All-Star, 3-time Stanley Cup Champion
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To learn more, email Debbie Kim at dkim@sportsmuseum.org
The Sports Museum is a non-profit educational institution that has served Boston and New England for more than 40 years.

Founded in 1977 and housed on Levels 5–6 of the TD Garden, The Sports Museum features a half-mile of exhibits celebrating the history and character of Boston sports.

Through its award-winning educational programs *Boston vs. Bullies* and *Stand Strong*, The Sports Museum leads the way in using the power of sports to help kids build character and prevent and stop bullying. All told, more than 35,000 upper elementary and middle school students each year experience a character-building Sports Museum educational program.

Delaware North Companies, Inc. — Boston (the company that owns the TD Garden and the Boston Bruins) provides The Sports Museum with office space, exhibit space, and management support. The presenting sponsor of The Sports Museum is New Balance Athletics, Inc.

To find out more about how The Sports Museum is making an impact in our community, please visit www.sportsmuseum.org.
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**The Sports Museum** is dedicated to helping at-risk children in the Greater Boston Area through a variety of community outreach programs, including bullying prevention and character development.

Choate congratulates The Sports Museum and its educational programs on their many successes.
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