

TV HIGHLIGHTS

Olympics: Mixed doubles curling: final, 12:05 p.m., USA
Olympics: Men's figure skating, 12:30 p.m., USA; 1:45 p.m., NBC
Olympics: Women's luge: final run, 12:45 p.m., NBC
Olympics: Women's hockey: US-Canada, 2:10 p.m., USA
Men's college basketball: BYU-Baylor, 7 p.m., ESPN2
Listings, C7; Olympics, C2

Sports

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THE BOSTON GLOBE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026 | BOSTONGLOBE.COM/SPORTS

One bad day didn't unravel Patriots' progress

CHRISTOPHER L. GASPER



SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Year 1 of the Mike Vrabel era had everything but the story-book ending. Instead, it had a final chapter in Super Bowl LX on Sunday that was about as far from a fairy tale as it gets.

For the first time since the first game of Vrabel's inaugural season as coach, a 20-13 loss to the Raiders a lifetime ago, the Patriots looked like a team that was only in the first season of its program.

When Vrabel took over, we assumed there would be days like this following back-to-back 4-13 seasons. Days when

they were overwhelmed, overmatched, and underwater. After they willed, worked, and mind-melded their way to 17 wins, they appeared impervious to such pitfalls. But their beginner's luck ran out.

That's what made this final football act cruel. They had one of those days in the NFL's ultimate game. The result was a not-that-close 29-13 loss to the Seahawks at Levi's Stadium. Season over. Dream over.

What stings more for the Patriots is they did it in an unrecognizable manner. They were shut out for three quarters and trailed, 19-0, after Seattle broke through for the game's first touchdown 1:36 into the fourth quarter on a Sam Darnold-to-AJ Barner toss.

Entering the fourth quarter, Drake Maye and Co. had eight punts, five first downs, and had been outgained, 271 yards to 78.

"We had a really, really good year

MORE SUPER BOWL

Imperfect result
As good as the Patriots' defense played Sunday, more was needed. **Finn, C5**

Somber scene
The postgame locker room, long a joyous place, became a reflective spot. **C5**

Runaway winner
Walker's big game led the Seahawks to victory and earned him the MVP. **C6**

and one that I'm proud of," said Vrabel. "But this game, I don't think it's a reflection of our year. We lost. We were beaten, outcoached, and outplayed. Give them credit."

The ball was kicked off under a cloudless Northern California sky, but the Patriots played in a fog. Football America must have been wondering how the Patriots wandered into Super

Bowl LX without tickets.

New England trailed, 9-0, at half-time and was lucky it wasn't worse. On the 10th Seahawks possession, the Patriots' defense finally folded and allowed only its third touchdown of the postseason. Even that wasn't their fault as Maye was strip-sacked, setting up the Seahawks at the Patriots' 37.

Maye was under siege all game, sacked six times — one off the Super Bowl record — and pressured on 52.8 percent of his dropbacks.

The Seahawks exploited an inchoate component of the ahead-of-schedule Vrabel roster — the offensive line. Seattle's No. 1 scoring defense teed off on Maye like it was playing Pebble Beach. Its Dark Side defense forced three turnovers, including a pick-6 by Uchenna Nwosu that was a choose-your-flavor calamity — traditional strip-sack fumble or QB crunch interception.

"We had a good plan. Shoutout to

Mike Macdonald," said Seahawks safety Julian Love, who had Seattle's other interception. "We installed some stuff [Saturday]. We're always chasing that edge."

The lasting image of this game will be the Patriots' offensive line getting dominated Super Bowl XLII-style, but the biggest surprise was Seattle's ability to run against a defense that entered No. 1 in the postseason in rushing yards allowed (71.3 per game).

Super Bowl MVP Kenneth Walker led the way, averaging 5 yards per carry, with 27 for 135 yards as Seattle rushed for 141. We haven't seen a Walker wiggle like that since Antoine was in his prime with the Celtics.

That meant Darnold (19 of 38, 202 yards) could be a Super Bowl sidecar. Spooky Sam didn't turn the ball over all postseason after leading the league in turnovers the last two seasons with 36.

GASPER, Page C5

MEN'S BEANPOT CHAMPIONSHIP



MATTHEW J. LEE/GLOBE STAFF

BC players celebrate as captains Brady Berard, Lukas Gustafsson, and Andre Gasseau hold the Beanpot after their 6-2 win over BU.

BC finally turns 21

Two goals each by Vote, Gasseau take care of BU

By Andrew Mahoney
GLOBE STAFF

BC 6
BU 2

For all that the Boston College men's hockey team had accomplished the previous two seasons — consecutive Hockey East regular-season crowns and NCAA Tournament appearances, a Hockey East tournament title, and a trip to the NCAA championship game — a Beanpot championship had eluded the program, with losses to Boston University in each of the last two seasons.

But the Eagles can now check off that box after defeating BU, 6-2, in front of a sold-out

►This 'W' carried a lot more weight than bragging rights. On college hockey, C6

crowd of 18,258 at TD Garden on Monday night to capture their 21st Beanpot title, and first since 2016.

"Personally, it's nice," said Greg Brown, who downplayed the significance of getting his first title in his fourth season as Eagles coach. "You want to have success for the guys. You know, we didn't play badly the last couple of years. We lost to a really good team. So that's what's most important, is you want to make sure that you're showing up in these games and playing well."

Special teams played a crucial role in the 300th meeting between the rivals. The Terriers were just 1 for 5 on the power play, while

BC scored three times with the man advantage. Andre Gasseau and Will Vote each scored twice, and Louka Cloutier recorded 27 saves as BC (16-9-1) denied BU (13-14-2) a title repeat.

Cloutier stopped 57 of 60 shots across the two games for a .950 save percentage to earn the Eberly Award, given to the goalie with the highest save percentage in the tournament.

James Hagens was named MVP after posting two goals and three assists in the two games. The sophomore acknowledged the team's fans, as well as former teammates who came back.

With the NHL on the Olympic break, Will Smith, Gabe Perreault, Ryan Leonard, and Jacob Fowler were all in attendance

BEANPOT, Page C6

Red Sox deal for Durbin, adding to infield depth

By Tim Healey
GLOBE STAFF

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Even if the Red Sox haven't decided yet who will fill out their infield, they suddenly have a lot of options.

They acquired infielder Caleb Durbin from the Brewers on Monday in a six-player trade, consummated on the brink of spring training, the teams announced. It was likely the Sox' last major move of the offseason and solidified their pivot to a pitching-and-defense approach after they tried in December and January to add multiple high-end hitters.

►Cora looks for big year from Abreu. Notebook, C4

In addition to Durbin, a short, speedy, and defensively-adapt versatile infielder who played mostly third base last year, the Sox received infielder Andruw Monasterio and catcher/infielder Anthony Seigler (plus an extra pick in the draft this July).

Headed to Milwaukee in the deal: lefthander Kyle Harrison, infielder David Hamilton, and pitching prospect Shane Drohan.

Although all three players joining the Red Sox have major league experience — and should figure into their 2026 plans — Durbin is the biggest piece, even at a listed 5 feet 7 inches and 183 pounds.

He joins Marcelo Mayer, Romy Gonzalez, and Isiah Kiner-Falefa as options at second and third base.

"It looks like," Gonzalez said, "we got a sick group."

Durbin, a righthanded hitter who turns 26 this month,

RED SOX, Page C4

PETER ABRAHAM
ON BASEBALL

This team is better, but is it good enough?

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Are the Red Sox a better team than the one that walked off the field Oct. 2 after being eliminated by the Yankees in the Wild Card Series?

Unequivocally, yes. The rotation and infield are greatly improved, and Roman Anthony and Marcelo Mayer are healthy.

"We've got a good baseball team," manager Alex Cora said Monday at JetBlue Park, a day before spring training officially starts.

But are they good enough to win a playoff series? That's far less certain.

Monday's six-player trade with the Brewers that sent infielder Caleb Durbin to the Sox further improved the infield and underlined the team's newfound commitment to win with pitching and defense.

Back in November, chief baseball officer Craig Breslow spoke at length about the need to add more thump to the lineup, pointing out that a "disproportionate number of runs are scored in the postseason via the home run" and that was something the Sox could not ignore as they built the roster.

They signed hard-hitting first baseman Willson Contreras six weeks later and stopped there, pushing third baseman Alex Bregman out the door in January by refusing to grant his demand for a no-trade clause.

They have since signed lefthander Ranger Suárez as a

ON BASEBALL, Page C4

INSIDE

Golden moment
The US figure skating squad has been in no mood to wait for its time atop the podium. **Olympics, C2-3**

Refitting Celtics' pieces
After a pretty consistent first half, Mazzulla has had to rethink his player usage following last week's moves. **C4**

THE 2026 WINTER OLYMPICS

Dropkin one win away from gold medal



FATIMA SHBAIR/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Korey Dropkin first curled at Wayland's Broomstones Curling Club and will play for a mixed doubles gold medal Tuesday.

By Katie McInerney
GLOBE STAFF

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy — As the final stone slid toward the house, Shelley Dropkin started to get to her feet. Sitting in the front row at center ice, she leaned over the edge of the railing as she watched her son Korey sweep, clearing a path for the throw by his partner Cory Thiesse to make its way to where it needed to be.

He hovered as the yellow stone swiftly knocked a red one out of place, then edged ever so slightly to the right, and more still, until it bumped one more a few inches.

Just as it happened, Dropkin pumped his arms, broom in hand, and screamed.

As Thiesse made her way down the sheet and leaped into her part-

ner's arms, Shelley embraced her son's fiancée and her husband, and then about a dozen or so other friends and family in attendance at Cortina Curling Stadium on Monday.

Thiesse and Dropkin had done it. Here at the 2026 Winter Olympics, the American mixed doubles curling team beat defending champion Italy, 9-8, to advance to the gold-medal game.

"It's mind blowing, really, when your son's 20-year goal and his dream is coming alive," Shelley said.

It was Shelley and her husband Keith who introduced their two sons to the sport all those years ago at Broomstones Curling Club in Wayland. The Dropkins lived in

CURLING, Page C3