

# Sports

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

## Patriots returning to the Super Bowl

By Barry Wilner  
AP Pro Football Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — It's the dead of winter, meaning the weather in New England can be brutal. And that the Patriots are headed to the Super Bowl.

It took them overtime and more of Tom Brady's brilliance to get there — for the third straight year. While the folks back home dealt with a frigid storm, Brady blew through Kansas City's exhausted defense on a 75-yard drive to Rex Burkhead's 2-yard touchdown run in a 37-31 victory Sunday for the AFC championship.

The drive, during which New England (13-5) had three third-down conversions, was reminiscent of when the Patriots beat Atlanta in the only Super Bowl to go to OT two years ago.

"Overtime, on the road against a great team," Brady said. "They had no quit. Neither did we."

BAKER GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Bulldogs defeat La Grande to stay perfect in the GOL

By Gerry Steele  
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Baker completed the first half of the Greater Oregon League girls basketball season with a perfect 3-0 record Friday after handing La Grande a 52-39 loss at BHS.

La Grande kept the game close in the first half, trailing just 30-25 at halftime.

"We had to make some adjustments at halftime," said Baker coach Mat Sand. "Averi Elms, Anna Carter, and others off the bench did a great job of doing what they were asked to do."

Baker's defense shut the door on La Grande in the third quarter, outscoring the Tigers 12-4 to build a 42-29 edge at the break.

"These kinds of games help prepare us for meeting our

goals," Sand said.

Sydney Younger led three Bulldogs in double figures with 17 points. Rose Gwillim added 15 points and Isabella Nemeć 11.

Baker (17-1 overall and 3-0 in the GOL) has just three games remaining in the regular season.

The Bulldogs travel to Mac-Hi Saturday, host Ontario Feb. 1 and visit La Grande Feb. 8 before beginning the GOL playoffs.

**LA GRANDE (39)**  
Howton 3 0-0 7, Collman 4-4-12, Gomes, Finler 1-2-2-4, Chamberlin, Williams 1-0-2-2, Dunlap 1-0-0-2, Neer 3-0-0-6, Reagan 3-0-0-6  
Totals 16 6-8-39

**BAKER (52)**  
Elms 0-1-2-1, Younger 8-0-0-17, Ramos 1-2-4-5, Carter 1-0-0-3, Calway, Nemeć 4-2-2-11, Benson, Gwillim 7-1-1-15, Totals 21 6-9-52

**La Grande 13 12 4 10 — 39**  
**Baker 15 15 12 10 — 52**

**Three-point baskets** — Howton, Younger, Ramos, Carter, Nemeć. **Fouled out** — none. **Total fouls** — La Grande 14, Baker 11. **Technical** — none.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald  
Isabella Nemeć scored 11 points to help her teammates beat La Grande Friday night at Baker High School.

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NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

## Rams rally to stun Saints in overtime

By Paul Newberry  
AP National Writer

NEW ORLEANS — A big comeback. A blown call. And, finally, a booming kick that sent the Los Angeles Rams to the Super Bowl.

After rallying from an early 13-0 deficit, the Rams stunned the New Orleans Saints with Greg Zuerlein's 57-yard field goal in overtime for a 26-23 victory in the NFC championship game Sunday — an outcome that might not have been

possible without an egregious mistake by the officials in the closing minutes of regulation.

Los Angeles cornerback Nickell Robey-Coleman committed a blatant interference penalty with a helmet-to-helmet hit inside the 5, forcing the Saints to settle for Wil Lutz's 31-yard field goal that made it 23-20 with 1:45 left in regulation.

That was enough time for Jared Goff to lead the Rams down the field for Zuerlein's tying field goal, a 48-yarder with 15

seconds remaining.

New Orleans won the coin toss and got the ball first in the extra period. But, with a Rams defender in his face, Drew Brees fluttered up a pass that was picked off by John Johnson III, who was able to hang on to the interception while stumbling backward.

The Rams weren't able to do much offensively, but it didn't matter. Zuerlein booted through the winning field goal from just inside midfield.

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