

The Hernandez Line

By **MICHAEL LETENDRE**
STAFF WRITER

FOXBORO – The New England Patriots are headed for Super Bowl 46.

And that means Bristol's own Aaron Hernandez will be making a trip to Indianapolis for a chance to win one of sport's biggest prizes.

It was a big game and a huge contest that, frankly, could have gone either way as the Baltimore Ravens made all the big plays to pull out one last, late miracle.

But the Ravens played it safe – went for a “sure” three points.

And Baltimore paid the ultimate price by not going for a victory (and a touchdown attempt) on a 4-and-1, with the Ravens on the New England 14 yard line with time running out.

The game tying kick was missed and Patriots fans went into a frenzy.

New England did just enough to get by a defensive minded Ravens' club to

put up 23 points and stave off a perennial playoff performer.

It was a great game and the AFC champions are headed for the biggest game of their collective lives next weekend.

Here's how it all went down this past Sunday:

Postseason – AFC Championship Game, New England vs. Baltimore Ravens.

Location: Gillette Stadium, Foxboro, Massachusetts.

Final Score: New England Patriots 23, Baltimore Ravens 20. With the victory, New England moved to 2-0 in the post-season (15-3 overall this season) and punched its ticket to Super Bowl 46 while Baltimore fell to 2-1 in playoffs and was eliminated in the AFC Championship game. New England moved to 4-0 all-time in AFC championship games from Foxboro.

Game statistics: Aaron grabbed seven receptions for 66 yards (9.4 yards-per-



Aaron Hernandez

catch) and was thrown to a game high 11 times. And again, he became a ground gainer during the third period as he made three rushes for nine big yards.

Additional News and Notes: This was the ultimate game of cat and mouse, a tit-for-tat struggle and it appeared the team who had the ball last was going to win this thing.

Whoops...try again.

For those of you on the local football scene, I was brought back to Bristol Eastern's first ever home game on campus against Northwest Catholic.

On Friday, Oct. 8, 2010, the Indians scored a late fourth period touchdown and was trailing 13-12.

If Northwest decided to go for two points, it would have captured the lead and the Lancers would have had precious little time to scramble for another score.

Instead, the Indians went for the tie, playing it safe...and missed the extra point try.

Eastern won by one.

Hey, if you're on the road and you're facing a daunting task of trying to win the game in overtime, why not try to go for the victory outright at the end of regulation?

Baltimore followed the Northwest lead and banked the game – going for a tie – on a shaky kicker.

So the Ravens – literally rushing its field goal kicker onto the field as the play

clock was just under 10 seconds – put it all on Billy Cundiff...and he missed the kick wide left with just 11 seconds left in the game.

It was, frankly, a classic shank.

But offensively for the Patriots, Aaron did a little of everything this past Sunday.

He didn't overwhelm but he made a couple key first downs, he kept the chains moving, his first rush caught everybody by surprise...it's becoming a Hernandez staple.

Aaron is a game changer that doesn't have to score points to do so.

In fact, his nine yard rush was one of New England's longest of the day.

But his 17 yard catch – getting some of those yards after the catch – was something pretty to watch.

And it was a pretty loud move against an excellent defensive squad.

However, credit New England's defense as it did just enough to keep the Ravens' offense off-bal-

anced to pick up the win.

Vince Wilfork was huge on the day with six big tackles and a bone crunching sack. That man is a great leader, on and off the grid-iron.

And then, throw in Tom Brady and head coach Bill Belichick...you're talking about, possibly, the greatest quarterback and coaching duo EVER.

The Date for the Super Bowl: Sunday, Feb. 5 from Indianapolis, Indiana, the Patriots will go after its fourth Super Bowl. It will be the fifth Super Bowl appearance for New England since 2001.

Final thoughts: Congratulations to Aaron Hernandez and congratulations to the whole Hernandez family as Super Bowl weekend will certainly be special for the entire city of Bristol. We're all going to be watching, perhaps, the biggest sporting event a Bristol athlete has ever participated in.

Lewis Mills' 26 shots from charity stripe halt Central

By **MICHAEL LETENDRE**
STAFF WRITER

BURLINGTON – It seems strange to see the home basketball team shoot about a zillion free throws while the visitors only get to attempt about ten.

Boys basketball

But then again, it's the life of a high school basketball team on the road.

That's the frustration Bristol Central boys coach Tim Barrette and his squad

faced against non-league opponent Lewis Mills of the Berkshire League as the Spartans made 26 shots from the charity stripe to pick up a big 56-42 victory over the Rams on Tuesday, Jan. 17 from Burlington.

It was the first ever showdown between the schools with the bigger, taller Spartans taking advantage of its superior size throughout the contest.

Central, who fell to 3-7 at the halfway mark of the season, saw the home squad march to the free throw line over 40 times in the game and out-shot the

LEWIS MILLS 56, BRISTOL CENTRAL 42

from Lewis Mills High School, Burlington

Bristol Central (3-7) 7 8 15 12 – 42

Lewis Mills (5-6) 10 10 17 19 – 56

Bristol Central (42): Nick Prentiss 0 4 4, Joey DeFillippi 1 0 2, Sinclair Lewis 5 0 12, Dan Siemiatkoski 6 1 14, Daquan Rice 2 0 5, Zach Signore 2 1 5, Mike Taft 0 0 0. **Totals: 19 6 42.**

Lewis Mills (56): Devin Pease 0 0 0, Ben Borkowski 6 17 29, Kevin Sullivan 0 0 0, Joe Bruzas 0 0 0, Spencer Maloney 3 4 10, Robert Powers 0 0 0, Travis Martin 0 0 0, Dan Kryzanski 0 0 0, Jeremy Dunn 4 4 12, Dave Neuhausser 2 1 5. **Totals: 15 26 56.**

Three-point goals: Lewis (BC) 2, Rice (BC), Siemiatkoski (BC).

Records: Bristol Central 3-7; Lewis Mills 5-6.

Rams from the charity stripe by a 4-to-1 margin.

But the Rams didn't give up and it was a game throughout as the Spartans finally put in late free throws to sink pesky

Central.

Ben Borkowski scored a game-high 29 points and hit a mind boggling 17 free throws to lead the Spartans, now 5-6 on the campaign.

Jeremy Dunn posted 12

points and 13 rebounds for Lewis Mills while Spencer Maloney collected 10 big points.

Dave Neuhausser also aided Mill's cause with 11 rebounds and five assists.

Central's Dan Siemiatkoski made his return from injury a successful one and picked up right where he led off.

The sharpshooter scored 14 points – nailing a three-pointer in the process – while Sinclair Lewis added 12 in the losing effort.

Daquan Rice and Zach Signore both scored five points for the Rams.

Mills scooped up a 10-7 edge after one period of play while seizing a 20-15 push at the half.

The Spartans outscored Central 17-15 in the third frame to seize a 37-30 edge but Central battled back in the final period of play.

The Rams closed within a couple possessions of the lead but those late free throws were too much to overcome as Central dropped a tough 14-point decision to Mills on the road.

Rams' tourney chances delayed

By **MICHAEL LETENDRE**
STAFF WRITER

BRISTOL – The Bristol Central girls basketball team had a big chance to pick up another victory in its quest to qualify for state tournament play.

Girls basketball

And, in that quest, every win becomes more important than the last.

But against Plainville, it was a game that got away.

Central's Lauren Bossi netted a big 10 points but it wasn't enough as Plainville shot down Bristol Central 33-28 in a CCC South battle from Bristol on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

The win moved the Blue Devils to 7-5 on the season while the Rams fell

PLAINVILLE 33, BRISTOL CENTRAL 28

from Bristol Central High School

Plainville (7-5) 6 8 8 10 – 33

Bristol Central (4-8) 10 6 4 8 – 28

PLAINVILLE (33): Carly Martino 0-2-2, Katy Dressel 2-3-7, Kelsey Clemens 2-6-11, Mikayla Wells 1-2-4, Alle Caponigro 2-3-7, Kelley Slabinski 1-0-2. **Totals 8-16-33.**

BRISTOL CENTRAL (28): Lauren Bossi 4-2-10, Erika Monsalve 1-0-3, Gretchen Edelman 1-3-5, Chandler Walker 3-1-7, Katie Raymond 0-3-3. **Totals 9-9-28.**

Three-point goals: Clemens (P), Monsalve (BC).

Records: Plainville 7-5; Bristol Central 4-8.

to 4-8 and must win four out of its next eight games to qualify for the state tournament.

Central led by two at the halftime break but managed only 12 points the rest of the game as the Rams' offense went cold.

Both Kat Dressel and Alle Caponigro tallied seven points apiece while Mikayla Wells netted four in the victorious effort for Plainville.

Chandler Walker put together nine points for Central while Gretchen Edelman added five big

points.

The game was a back and forth affair as the Rams took early control of the contest.

Central lead 10-6 after one period of play but the Blue Devils surged to an 8-6 second quarter edge and trailed only 16-14 at the half.

Plainville claimed the lead off an 8-4 third period jaunt to capture a 23-20 push and finally took the game by outscoring the home team 11-8 in the final period to seize a 33-28 win.

Lancers take 2nd in R.I. tourney

By **MICHAEL LETENDRE**
STAFF WRITER

CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND – At the John D. Gorman Memorial Wrestling Tournament in Cumberland, Rhode Island, the Bristol Eastern squad was one of the featured teams at the event.

Wrestling

And, of course, the Lancers had one of the best showings of the meet and took second place at the event.

Up and down the lineup, Eastern showed toughness and grit in a very competitive atmosphere.

Three Lancers made first place finishes while one other garnered second place honors.

At 126 pounds, Rob

Pedrazza stood out and pinned Tyler Noury of Ponaganset in 4:49 while at 138, Craig Sassu picked up a victory in 3:13 over Jon Maccini of Cumberland. Finally at 160, Matt Marquis picked up an impressive 11-3 decision over Aaron O'Toole of Cumberland.

Brett Akerly was a second place finisher and dropped an 11-5 decision to Anthony Zambarano of North Providence.

In a couple third place showdowns, Peyton Soucy and Mike Cassin were big winners. Soucy (120) picked up a 9-7 decision over Dufee's Adam Pereira while Cassin (195) dominated Bobby Deveau and netted a 22-6 major decision.

Eastern's A.J. Mangual lost by decision to John

Sturgis in the third place match at 220. This past Wednesday on Jan. 17, the Lancers had very little difficulty in defeating Berlin 57-14.

Ethan Greider was one of the highlighted matches of the evening and with his victory, remains undefeated on the season.

John D. Gorman Memorial Tournament

at Cumberland RI

Team results – 1. Cumberland RI, 2. Bristol Eastern, 3. South Windsor

Individual results

120 pounds: Shane Leblanc (North Attleboro) dec. Alex D'Aloisio (Lincoln) 8-1; 3. Peyton Soucy (Bristol Eastern) dec. Adam Pereira (Durfee) 9-7

126: Rob Pedrazza (Bristol Eastern) pin Tyler Noury (Ponaganset) 4:49; 3. Tim Tedesco (Johnston) dec. Hunter Rich (South Windsor) 9-4

138: Craig Sassu (Bristol)

See **WRESTLER**, page 27