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# SPORTS

Section

## Pitching to Cards' slugger risky

By Jim Litke  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DETROIT — Albert Pujols showed up at the World Series hitting what baseball people like to call a "quiet" 324.

That made it sound as if the St. Louis slugger walked all the way to Motown on his tippy-toes, but no. In this case, quiet meant Pujols was putting up respectable numbers in the postseason box scores, but not enough, final-

ly on the scoreboard. Not enough, anyway, for a guy widely regarded as the most dangerous hitter in the game.

That all changed with one swing of the bat Saturday night.

Pujols re-directed the first pitch he saw in the third inning — a 94 mph fastball from hard-throwing Detroit starter Justin Verlander — into the right-field seats for a two-run homer and the road-

wary Cardinals went on to steal a 7-2 decision in Game 1.

That one swing also ignited a debate that will rage for the rest of this Series: Pitch to Pujols? Or not? "I could go into a lot of detail about that," Tigers manager Jim Leyland said tersely, "but I'll leave it at this: The manager's decision is either to pitch to him or walk him. I pitched to him and obviously he burned us.

"I'm not going to get into a lot of explanation about what the thinking was. But I take the bullet there and if somebody gives criticism you accept it, because it's ultimately my decision."

Leyland is an old-school manager who hates giving anybody anything for free, which means every Pujols' bat from here



Pujols

Please see PITCHING/2C

JOHNSON C. SMITH VS. SAVANNAH STATE | SATURDAY, 1 P.M., MEMORIAL STADIUM



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Johnson C. Smith wide receiver Marquis Belton, a North Mecklenburg High graduate, holds the JCSU all-time receptions mark with 153 and has a chance at the career receiving yards and season receptions standards.

## He's got gift of grab

Belton on verge of breaking Golden Bulls pass-catching marks

By Herbert L. White  
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For three years, Johnson C. Smith receiver Marquis Belton was the best player on bad teams. Now he's basking in the glow of individual and team success.

Last week, the senior set a new school record for career receptions with 153, breaking Nate McDowell's standard set

from 1979-82. Belton is 94 yards away from Craig Brown's receiving yards mark of 2,588 and his 42 catches this season is 12 behind Bill Lide for first all-time. With 2,494 yards and 15 career touchdowns, Belton's not easily impressed by individual accomplishments — especially his own.

"Not really," he said "I'm just

trying to get the CIAA (championship game) or the Pioneer Bowl. That's our goal right now. If things come together for us, everything for me will come through. It's basically a team game."

At 5-foot-9, 170 pounds, Belton isn't very large, but he's a key cog in the 6-2 Golden Bulls' success. He leads the team in catches (42) and

receiving yards (709), as well as intangibles. He's the one player opposing defenders must account for and teammates draw inspiration from.

"In practice, everybody's fighting to go with Belton because he's going to make us better," said linebacker Omar Bizzell. "The best players, they forget about the mistakes and

Please see GIFT/3C

## Change in Pioneer Bowl selection process keeps JCSU in the mix

By Herbert L. White  
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Johnson C. Smith still has a shot at the postseason after all.

The CIAA board of directors have authorized Commissioner Leon Kerry to

pick the league's Pioneer Bowl representative from teams with winning records that doesn't make the NCAA Division II playoffs. JCSU, which clinched a plus-500 mark last week, is 4-2 in the

CIAA West Division, two games behind N.C. Central. The change was approved last month and announced last week on the CIAA's web site. Assistant Commissioner Jeff McLeod said.

"We presented it to the athletic directors in the summer and presented it to the board of directors in September, and they accepted it," he said.

Who'll get the Pioneer Bowl

See COULD/3C

## For brothers Hubbard, football strengthens family ties



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Jonathon (left) and Ryan Hubbard of Charlotte are one of four sets of brothers playing football at Davidson.

By Erica Singleton  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Davidson football is a family affair.

The Wildcats have four sets of brothers on the team, including Charlotte natives Jonathon and Ryan Hubbard. Another pair, Mordecai and Matthew Scott, played at West Charlotte High.

"It's all about the family," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "I like the idea of having four sets of brothers on the football team because to me that says that the older brother had a good experience, compelling little brother to join in, too."

For the Hubbards, playing together in college just seemed like the natural progression.

"We've played together since middle school," said older brother Jonathon, "since he was in seventh

grade and I was in eighth" grade.

The two have played football since kindergarten. Both of them went to the same schools, so they were bound to eventually play on the same field, but for Jonathon the experience never gets old.

"It's nice to both be on the field at the same time playing on the same side of the ball."

Jonathon, a senior and co-captain for the Wildcats, is a tailback that has been described as "a punishing runner who can bowl over just about any defender one-on-one." Ryan, a junior, is a wide receiver, whose "speed and knack for making opponents miss make him a weapon as a return man," as well

"They love playing football," said Merritt. "And they're both very exciting...though they have contrasting styles of football."

See FOR DAVIDSON'S/3C



AP PHOTO/ALAN DIAZ

Shaquille O'Neal and Dwayne Wade are out to win a second straight NBA championship.

## Flash and Shaq go for second straight

Heat the class of East with Wade and aging nucleus

By Brian Mahoney  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Once the South Beach parties had all dwindled and Pat Riley committed to coming back, the dapper Miami coach got to work on his plan for keeping the Heat atop the NBA.

When Riley surveyed his roster, there was Shaquille O'Neal, who looked every one of his 34 years while laboring for a pedestrian 13.7 points per game in the NBA finals. In key reserve roles, he saw 38-year-old Gary Payton and 36-year-old Alonzo Mourning.

And Riley decided, despite his aging stars, to do practically nothing.

So back came the same old Miami Heat, who are convinced they're still good enough to get by LeBron and Big Ben in the East, and then the Mavericks, Spurs, Suns or whomever else survives in the West.

Sure, the Heat has flaws. But they're also the only team with Dwyane Wade, a bona fide superstar who's already proven he's capable of hiding or overcoming his team's shortcomings all by himself.

"However the prognosticators out there are evaluating our team based on what happened last year," Riley said recently, "I would not want to be a team on the other side of us in a seven-game series, because this is a rise-to-the-occasion type of team."

Please see SHAQ/2C

## Patriots human, even if win streak isn't

KEEP STREAKING: Independence High certainly isn't its old dominant self, but the Patriots might be more entertaining.

Last week's 31-24 come from behind win against Myers Park is another reminder that the Patriots are very human and are on the cusp of having their nation's best 101-game winning streak snapped. On the other hand, Independence wouldn't have that streak if it were one-dimensional, and the Patriots aren't that.

The offense shows flashes of brilliance, albeit not for sustained periods and the defense has been good. If they're going to be had, it'll be Butler, which has the ground game to compete. If the Bulldogs can't make it happen, I'm guessing no one in the state will come playoff time.

FEEL-GOOD STORY: East Mecklenburg wasn't supposed to be this potent. The Eagles are 6-3 and are headed to the postseason because they do the little things in a big way. Tailback Mike Mayhew isn't well-known but quietly effective. If East gets on a roll, they could be tough come playoff time. But first things first, starting Friday against Butler.

GAME OF THE WEEK: Providence at

See DRIVE/3C