

Ravens Community

So who is your favorite sports team? Most likely it's your hometown heroes (mine are the New York Giants). While you do not need to change allegiance



Your Charm City Teams

By Nick Grasso

to the teams you rooted for your whole life, make room for new hometown teams. We often hear about the ways in which Baltimore is a close-knit community, but you do not truly get a flavor for it until you walk into M&T Bank Stadium, home of the Baltimore Ravens. Nothing brings the community together like the good old Ravens. This stadium is where Baltimoreans can go and put everything aside to watch their Ravens tack-

le visiting football teams. The fans come from all walks of life but they all share a common interest in the team. The sense of community at these games feels amazing and is rare to find anywhere else in the city on such a great scale. As a student of Loyola University, you are now a part of the Baltimore community. If you want to feel what it's like to bleed purple like a real Baltimorean, take the quick 15-minute drive to watch the Ravens play.

My Experience

My first-year floor mates in Hammerman Hall and I attended two games during our fall semester and learned to love Baltimore from it. We realized that a Thursday Night Football game was hosted by the Ravens—an opportunity that was too good to pass up—so we bought cheap tickets. Upon approaching the stadium we saw a sea of black and purple Ravens jerseys. We followed them and made it to our nose-

bleed seats. I would not recommend these seats to anyone with a fear of heights. Surprisingly though, we had a great view of the field and the players. If you can afford these tickets, you will truly enjoy the view.

Before kickoff, something in the sky caught our eye. As the objects approached, we realized they were skydivers, with chutes deployed, descending from the sky. They

landed in succession, with American flags in tow, on midfield by the Ravens logo. The National Anthem echoed throughout the stadium. Adrenaline rushed through players and fans as Primetime NFL football, broadcasted nationwide, started right in front of our eyes.

The Ravens were off to a quick lead when quarterback Joe Flacco, the winner of the 2012 Su-

per Bowl, scrambled and ran to get the first down when a Dolphins defender dove at him headfirst and knocked off his helmet. He looked dazed after this jarring hit and the whole stadium gasped. He was knocked out of the game for a concussion protocol that was later confirmed. Despite losing their quarterback they would continue their commanding lead to a 40-0 win. I can still hear the announcer's voice in the stadium when he proclaimed the score of "Ravens 40, Dol-

phins O!" It was music to the fans' ears; M&T Bank stadium was electric.

We enjoyed ourselves so much that when the Ravens were hosting another primetime game we had to go again. This time they were playing the Houston Texans on Monday Night

Football. For this game it was a black out; all of the fans wore black Ravens apparel while the players wore their black jerseys. The stadium was packed with nearly 70,000 people wearing black. Had the lights of the stadium not have been turned on, it would have

been pitch dark from the sea of black surrounding us. We felt like everyone was unified through team spirit. I had only been living at Loyola for a few weeks and this was the moment

where I really fell in love with Baltimore. They ended up winning this game as well. This time without any concussions.

The Maryland Touch

Fans at M&T Bank Stadium are not far away from their favorite signature Baltimore foods either—which builds that feeling of being a Baltimorean. There are many places in the historic stadium where you can satisfy your cravings. This is evident by the smell of Maryland's favorite foods throughout the corridors of M&T. Maryland's iconic seasoning, Old Bay, is everywhere you look. It perfectly pairs with steamed Maryland crabs or a bucket of crabmeat and fries. Old Bay blends herbs and spices that include black pepper, crushed red pepper, paprika, and celery salt and is great on seafood or anything else. But Old Bay is more than the great flavor the herbs and

spices bring to the table, it is a tradition of Baltimore and the Chesapeake boxed into a blue and yellow container. Produced in the Chesapeake Bay Area where it was developed, Old Bay remains a staple in the local vicinity. It not only tops off the mouth-watering Maryland crabs; it makes going to the Ravens game a unique experience from any other pro football stadium.



In Baltimore it is hard to go a block without seeing the Ravens bird in the form of a flag, sticker, or shirt. Their professional football team is the glue that holds the Charm City community together. There's something unique about the fans in the Baltimore area, a certain feeling at the stadium that you do not get at other sports venues. I hope to see you at an upcoming game and while you're at it try the Old Bay fries—you won't be disappointed.