

There's no hospitality in hockey, Canes

Let's give it up for the Detroit Red Wings.
Booooooooooooo!

Carolina hockey fans need to turn it up a notch if we really want to show the Hurricanes how much we love them.

NEW IN TOWN



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Big-city teams have a proud tradition of acting badly, and we need to learn from the worst of them. We must cheer wildly when our guys pummel their guys, and we should realize that a profile in courage is 10 minutes for fighting.

"Board slapping" (hitting the glass) is the least we can do, and well worth the risk of stadium ejection. Our fans are trying, but we have a long way to go. For that, I blame Canada.

I knew we were in trouble when The N&O published a "thank you" note from a Toronto Maple Leafs fan. Some sad sack from Canada said that while he was sorry his team was eliminated, it was nice to play against a city with such "classy" fans.

As if that wasn't bad enough, I read another "fan appreciation" letter from the opponent

thanking us for cheering the Canadian national anthem. I know our fans are new to the sport, but please tell me these were just misguided Southerners who thought they were on the ice to see if Russia or Canada won the gold in Olympics pairs figure skating.

I'm spoiled, I know. A Philadelphia "boobird" by birth, I take mean fans for granted.

I get nostalgic just thinking about it.

We Philadelphians cheered when Dallas football player Michael Irwin got hurt (shameful, but we so hated the Cowboys).

We threw batteries at J.D. Drew, a so-called baseball phenom, for spurning us. What phenom wouldn't want to be a Philadelphia Philly?

We booed Philly native/Lakers traitor Kobe Bryant at the NBA All-Star Game.

And perhaps our greatest claim to fame, we booed Santa Claus!

That was just in the box seats. I don't even want to tell you what kind of behavior goes on in the upper decks. (Hint: The city had to install a municipal court underneath the stands just to keep up with "demand." It's like People's Court on cocktails.)

But I'm getting ahead of myself. North Carolina fans still need to work on the fundamen-



Face paint and yelling are good, but fans need to make sure they look threatening, also. Big-city hockey is war.

STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS SEWARD

tals. Before we can show rage, we need to show joy.

Let's start from the beginning. Turn back the clock and pretend the Hurricanes just beat Toronto in overtime. We're headed to the Stanley Cup Finals!

You start by hanging a cotton-sheet banner from your porch reading "GO HURRICANES!" Red toxic spray paint has just the right glow, and gives even the most pretentious house that lived-in look.

Then you go to the supermarket wearing red and black swirled face paint. Oh, and

girlfriends, have a male honey accompany you, preferably topless, drinking beer and hooting. The less sleep you get the better, because you want to have that wild look in your eyes at game time.

Which brings me to The Entertainment and Sports Arena. Unquestionably, this nameless wonder is a first-rate place to see a game.

But arena ushers need some work on their manners — like losing 'em.

For example, what's with the "No escorting people to their

seats when the puck is in play" rule? Hello? We're not at the Metropolitan Opera; we're at a hockey game.

When I buy stadium food, it's to throw it. Speaking of which, real hockey fans need something that can make it down to the ice. Brats, a staple in Chicago, or Italian sausages if you're a Bruins babe, fit the bill perfectly.

Now, a word with our mimes. See, face and body paint are to show how tough you are. Marcel Marceau is not going to cut it. Take this simple test. If, after applying your war paint, you could just as easily be heading for a performance at Chuck E. Cheese's, wash and repeat.

While we are on the subject of arts and crafts, let's talk homemade signage. Your neat little plaques are, well, too neat. Try a pair of your grandmother's old bloomers with an effigy of Chris Chelios; do you see where I'm going with this?

Practice. Practice. Practice.

I get your hate mail, so I know you've got it in you. Let's do something positive with all that negative energy.

Hey, Hockeytown, you think we were tough on you this year, wait till next year!

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