**Giving Seattle The Needle**

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Okay, Seattle, grab a grande, skinny, no-foam, half-caf Espresso Macchiato and let me explain why the Pittsburgh Steelers are going to grind you up like a Sumatra blend in Super Bowl XL.

You suck at sports.

You always have. You make nice motherboards, but you're dweebier than Frasier Crane's wine club. You've had the big three pro sports for 30 years now--almost 40 for the NBA--and you have one lousy championship to show for it. Uno. The 1978 SeattleSuperSonics. My God, you people have fewer parades than Venice.

What's amazing is, you do college sports even worse. In the 70 years that a mythical national championship has been awarded in college football, the University of Washington has one half of one title: in 1991 (with Miami). Zippo in basketball, baseball, track or field. O.K., the Huskies are good at crew (three women's titles, one men's). Wonderful. Somewhere, three salmon cheer.

Your most famous athlete is a horse, Seattle Slew. Your most famous athletic moment was Bo Jackson's turning the Boz's chest into a welcome mat on Monday Night Football. Your greatest contribution to sports was the Wave, the fan-participation stunt that screams to the world, "We have no idea what the score is!"

And do you know why you stink, Seattle? Because ...

1. You're too damn nice.

Look at your Seahawks. Your MVP halfback, Shaun Alexander, teaches kids chess. Your scariest player is named Pork Chop. My God, last week, you offered valet parking service to reporters at Seahawks headquarters. (Seattle fans: If you see valet parking at Detroit's Ford Field this week, they're trying to steal your car.)

Nearly everyfive-dollar-steak-tough athlete who comes to Seattle leaves--Gary Payton and Randy Johnson for instance. Consider Seattle's two favorite athletes—Steve Largent and Fred Couples. Those guys wouldn't complain if somebody extinguished a Cohiba in their ears. Your sportswriters are more forgiving than Hillary Clinton. If they covered Jeffrey Dahmer, they'd refer to him as "a people person."

You Seattle fans don't just accept mediocrity. You crave it. You support your boys come hell or low water. You show up at the rate of three million a year for the Mariners, who never fail to let you down. Even the stadium sounds cuddly: Safeco Field. You pack the house for the underachieving SuperSonics, led by the NBA's nicest loser, Ray Allen. Your Seahawks went 21 years without a playoff win, and the fans didn't so much as clear their throats. Everybody just goes, "Well, that was fun. Let's kayak!" Hey, you can't spell Seattle without settle.

The whole town is100% June Cleaver. I once walked into Nordstrom, the Seattle-based department store, and sheepishly asked if I could bring back a shirt I'd bought a month before in another town. The clerk said, "Sir, this is Nordstrom. You could wear it for 10 years, throw up on it and roll down a mountain in it and we’d take it back." Ask that at Neiman Marcus and they call security.

It ain't happening. Walruses don't do triple Salchows, and Seattle teams don't win titles.

2. You're too damn geeky.

Your owner, Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen, looks like the kid in high school who always got taped to the goalposts. If Allen wins, will he call all his friends from band camp? Throw his slide rule into the air? Plot his joy on a scatter chart?

Look, your average Seahawks fan drives a Prius. Your average Steelers fan drives a Ford Excursion, which has Priuses in its tire treads. Seahawks fans own poodles. Steelers fans eat them.

3. You're too damn wet.

Seattle is a great place if you happen to be mold. It just rained 27 straight days and it wasn't even a record. Seattle is basically a lot of guys waiting for a bus with rain starting to seep into their socks. Most kids are seven years old before they realize the umbrella is not an extension of the right arm. No wonder most great athletes leave. Ken Griffey Jr. left, basically saying, "I want my kid to be able to play outside once in a while."

In short, you people are too damn peaceful and happy in your Emerald City. You ever know anybody from Pittsburgh? You want this Super Bowl. Pittsburgh needs it. You're going to get smoked like a platter of smelt.

(But do you mind if we come live there?)

• If you have a comment for Rick Reilly, send it to reilly@siletters.com.