

# She's immune to Pats' fever

What's the big deal about the Patriots?

When you get right down to it, they're just a bunch of grown men who get paid incredible amounts of money to run around in tight pants, bash each other's heads, and fight over who gets to carry a stuffed pigskin up and down the field.

Every year about this time I'm faced with the same dilemma. How do I avoid being bored by the great American sport without admitting my ignorance to the rest of the world?

It was harder when I was younger.

My father was a sportswriter with the Quincy Patriot Ledger — he travelled with the Patriots — and all my teachers assumed I knew everything about sports.

This has occasionally caused me great embarrassment.

When my sixth-grade teacher decided my class would write its own newspaper, he made me the



The Blank Page

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sports editor.

I was horrified.

I remember trying to tell him I didn't know a thing about sports.

"You do, too," he reminded me in disgust. "Your father's a sports writer."

Case closed.

I'm the only non-athlete in a family of super-jocks.

My sister plays tennis, basketball, softball, and soccer. She never wanted to be a cheerleader.

She wanted to play football. And

why not? She could beat up all the boys on the block.

My brother wanted to play football but Dad had seen too much of it. He talked Robert into playing soccer — a supposedly safer sport where grown men fight over a round ball, bash into each other, and wear absolutely no protective garments.

Once every few years I sit down in front of a Sunday afternoon game and try to figure out what the fuss is all about.

The yawns set in soon after the singing of the national anthem, I leave the television to die-hard football fans, and I find a good book to read.

There was one game I enjoyed watching.

It was my senior year in high school, and it was one of the last school games of the season.

One of the players on my school's team grabbed the ball and ran with it.

I remember his uniform was a

little big for him.

He ran down to the end line, made a touchdown, and left his pants behind.

Dear John

The Celtics were a different story. They didn't need such silly antics to grab my attention.

I lived and died for John Havlicek.

One of the most embarrassing moments of my life came when I was 8 years old. Dad took me to see a game at Boston Garden.

Dad also travelled with the Celtics, and he knew how thrilled I'd be to meet the team.

He tried to get me down to the bench before half-time, but by the time we managed to make our way through the crowd, the players were in the locker room.

The only person left at the bench was another Ledger reporter.

Dad introduced me to him.

"Tell Havlicek I brought my daughter down to meet him," Dad said. "She has a crush on him, you know."

For me, football season is one of the loneliest times of the year.

I'm left out of most conversations, because football is the only thing some people want to talk about.

While everyone else spends weekends jumping up and down in front of the television screen, I polish my toenails, re-brush my teeth, and pig out on left-over popcorn and potato chips stolen from the Patriots fans.

In other years I could shrug it off.

"They're a losing team," I could moan. "Why waste your time?"

But this year I've got to hand it to them.

They've taken even that excuse away from me and revealed me for the true ignoramus I really am.

I guess I'm not a true American. I'd rather be bowling.

