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Editor's Note

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

Hot guys, lesbians and football



Stonewall St. and past *The Charlotte Observer* building, I started downhill toward the stadium. Thousands upon thousands of people were making their way to the stadium at the same time. I knew the Panthers were big, but I'd never expected they were *this* big. It's

just one of those things you kind of have to see for yourself.

Sports. Not really my thing. I don't understand any of the games or their rules. I don't know what shot or throw equals how many points. I'm lost when it comes to "first down" or "third down," although I do know a touch-down is a good thing. A basketball sailing through the net hanging from the hoop — that's a good thing. A soccer ball flying past the goalie — congrats to the successful kicker.

In short, I've just never been really "sporty." People get so crazy and passionate over their favorite teams. Not me. When others dress up in their elaborate head gear, make up silly chants and go bonkers when their guys and gals win that elusive championship, I'm usually stuck in front of a computer, watching MSNBC or CNN. A championship victory is to a sports fan what a successful election bid is to me.

Because I wasn't really invested in the game, my attention throughout the evening was easily distracted and refocused on the people around me. It was interesting seeing so many different folks crammed in together. I easily spotted out the guys whom I thought were obviously gay and the butch-lesbian couples decked out in their sports wear. Every once-in-a-while, my eyes would glance over to a "straight acting dude" who was nothing more than a 'mo in disguise.

Despite my general lack of understanding of sports, all this athletic madness is just one of the many reasons why I enjoy being a native Tar Heel. I've grown up around it all and have heard my entire life of the trials and tribulations of Duke, N.C. State, Wake Forest and UNC — not forgetting, of course, the pro-teams we've had, too.

It is unfortunate that our American sports culture doesn't reflect the diversity of its own fan bases, becoming so super-masculinized and homophobic when it is so clear that sporting and athletic competition is such an "every man" experience. The thousands gathered for the Panthers game were all there because of some interest in the game or the aura of the experience. Their race or ethnicity, shape or size, gender or sexual orientation was of no consequence to those around them. And, I thought to myself, "Wouldn't it be nice if all society were like this all the time?"

So, it was with excitement that I headed to my first-ever Carolina Panthers game a few weeks ago. Despite living in Charlotte for two years so far, I'd never had the opportunity to make the trek to Bank of America Stadium. Now that I've gone at least once, I'm happy I did.

The Thursday night game against the Dolphins was packed. As I walked up

'speakout'

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