

# Redskins wins are good for local retailers

Gregg MacDonald

Saturday's crushing wildcard defeat snapped an inspiring four-game winning streak for the Washington Redskins, simultaneously dashing all hopes of the team winning the 2007 NFC championship.

But while the magical season lasted, fans were inspired and showed it by patronizing local sports bars and buying team apparel.

Ironically, the Seattle Seahawks' victory last Saturday was won by a margin of 21 points, for a final score of 35-14. Twenty-one was the number Redskins defensive back Sean Taylor, whose violent death in November galvanized the team, wore on his jersey.

"This was the most surreal season that I can ever remember," said Michael Richman, lifelong fan and author of "The Redskins Encyclopedia."

"You had the unprecedented NFL situation of Taylor's death, and then backup [quarterback] Todd Collins came in after Jason Campbell was injured in the Chicago game and began leading the resurgence. Fans around here have been longing for a winner for so long that they felt re-inspired."

Herndon resident Renee LeBlanc, who watched the wildcard game at Champs sports bar in Reston along with more than 300 other fans, agrees.

"This season has brought me back into the Redskins," she said. "I had kind of strayed, and this season brought me back. Sean Taylor's death was part of it. It turned the team around and then [Todd] Collins took it from there."

Champs manager Carey Vereen said this season was very memorable in terms of sales volume for the sports bar.

"There is definitely a direct correlation of a winning Redskins season and draft beer sales," he said. "When the Redskins are doing well, our beer sales are upward of 45-percent higher."

Hunter Johnson, manager of Modell's Sporting Goods, also in Reston, said this season was also a winner for his store.

"Redskins jerseys have been selling really well this year," he said. "We have been selling 50 to 60 a week as well as several car flags, pennants and other Redskins items. When the Redskins do well, we do well," he said.

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