

BIG GAME BREWS

Starbucks vs. Dunkin'

By BROOKE STEINBERG

A showdown is brewing. The Seattle Seahawks and the New England Patriots are facing off at Super Bowl LX on Sunday — but there's a hotter battle that's caught the attention of coffee lovers nationwide.

Seattle is the home of Starbucks, while New England is the birthplace of Dunkin' — and both places proudly proclaim that their java is superior.

While Dunkin' boasts almost 10,000 stores nationwide, they don't have a single franchise in Washington state. Starbucks, on the other hand, has charged into Dunkin' territory, with more than 500 outlets in New England alone.

Seattle's Mayor Katie B. Wilson told The Post that it's proof her city's sip is superior.

"Starbucks has already overwhelmed New England defenses with 300 stores just in Massachusetts alone," Wilson taunted.

Newsroom taste test

"Meanwhile, Dunkin' still isn't willing to go head-to-head out here on our home turf — they don't have a single store in Washington. That's because they know something the Patriots are about to find out: whether it's Starbucks or the Seahawks, Seattle beats New England any day, and especially on Sunday."

Given that The Post is on relatively neutral ground, we decided to stage a blind taste test to settle the debate once and for all.

Does our newsroom run on Dunkin' — or does Starbucks score the touchdown?



PREGAME PERK: Associate Lifestyle Editor Andrew Court says he's long been loyal to Starbucks, while colleague Fabiana Buontempo repped her team — and Dunkin'.

A round-up of 43 caffeine-craving Post journalists, including some from both Seattle and New England, were presented with two unbranded carafes of java. Dunkin's was labeled "Coffee 1," while Starbucks was "Coffee 2."

Our taste testers were asked to guess which was which and then

pick their favorite.

Lifestyle reporter Ben Cost hails from Seattle and has long asserted that Starbucks is superior.

However, it was painfully awkward when he took a sip of Starbucks — and mistook it for Dunkin'.

"This tastes like something from

a spaceship cafeteria," he spluttered, further bashing the brew by describing it as "swampy" and "a little more like ashtray juice."

He wasn't the only one, though, to get the coffee confused. Ten of our 43 journalists thought they were drinkin' Dunkin' when they were actually sipping Starbucks.

In contrast to Cost, numerous New England natives asserted that they were Dunkin' fans, only to label Starbucks as superior during the blind test.

After testing both brews, proud Connecticut native Marissa Matozzo similarly stated that the Starbucks coffee was far better, remarking on its smooth taste.

"I didn't need any sugar. I didn't need any flavor — and that's what makes me think it's Dunkin'," she proudly predicted. "I hope I'm not wrong; as someone born and raised in New England, I'd be humiliated."

Unfortunately for Matozzo, she was incorrect — and embarrassed.

The results are proof that hometown bias is strong when it comes to coffee and that once a blind taste test is employed all bets are off.

Elsewhere, other taste testers said both coffees seemed shockingly similar.

"I really don't know the difference, which is surprising because I thought I could tell," said associate lifestyle editor Andrew Court said, noting that he's long been loyal to Starbucks.

And the winner is ...

There was still a clear champion — and, as it turns out, the New York Post doesn't run on Dunkin'. Starbucks came out on top in the newsroom, with 25 people preferring their coffee, compared to 18 people who preferred Dunkin'.

And if the Super Coffee Bowl is any indication of what might happen this Sunday, the Seattle Seahawks could be brewing up their second win in franchise history.

Tamera Bucknall/Post