

Sign In or Sign Up

Like 144K

Subscribe/Manage Account

Place Ad

LAT Store

Jobs

Cars

Real Estate

Rentals

Classifieds

Custom Publishing

Los Angeles Times | SPORTS

How to reach over 8 million voters now. Los Angeles Times MEDIA GROUP

LOCAL U.S. WORLD BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT HEALTH LIVING TRAVEL OPINION DEALS

WEEKLY AD

LAKERS DODGERS ANGELS NFL DUCKS/KINGS USC UCLA COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREPS SCORES/STATS

SPORTS BLOGS: FABULOUS FORUM | LAKERS | DODGERS | VARSITY TIMES INSIDER

Search

CHRIS ERSKINE / FAN OF THE HOUSE

The Lions are building something real

Detroit is a tough town going through tough times, but Lions have been there, done that, and now they're a team a city can love, whether it's Motown . . . or Pasadena, home to an actual Lions hangout.

Share 73 Comments 3 7 Recommend 34

1 2 next | single page

Recommended on Facebook Like 144K



N.H. staffers tell Michele Bachmann they're gone, gone, gone

Richard Hawkins and 377 others recommend this.



Panorama: The Los Angeles Times' Globe Lobby

Richard Hawkins and 164 others recommend this.

advertisement



More Sports



A Lions fan roots for Detroit during their season-opening game at Tampa Bay. (Reinhold Matay / Associated Press / September 11, 2011)

By Chris Erskine

October 22, 2011 | 12:50 p.m.

You've got to give it to Detroit, one of the last places in America that actually makes something, including — so far this season at least — some pretty Teamster-friendly football.

Tough town, tougher defense.

CHRIS ERSKINE



Bio | E-mail | Recent columns

ALSO



Raiders try to get a leg up on the competition



Saints' Darren Sproles could be too hot for Colts to handle



Lions' Jerome Harrison scheduled for surgery for brain tumor



Denver's Tim Tebow experiment has Dolphins fans conflicted



Sam Farmer's NFL Week 7 picks

These days, all our Cinderellas seem to be in therapy, or doing court-ordered community work, but not these Lions. This is what a Cinderella's supposed to look like: young, clear-eyed and sporting a Herman Cain-like charisma.

Not so long ago (2008), the Lions couldn't win a single game. This year, they looked capable of going 16-0 till the almost equally surprising San Francisco 49ers slipped by them last Sunday. Like the New Orleans Saints of two years ago, they are becoming America's Team.

Let's recap.

I located that most elusive of things, a Detroit Lions hangout, in a fluffy stretch of Old Pasadena, which is like Pasadena, though somehow older — if that's even possible.

Anyway, I found a Barney's Beanery with Detroit fans lining the bar — a doctor, an architect and an off-duty bartender, and some blogger named Josh who was taking things a bit too seriously, so I mostly kept my distance.

There was another patron with a black eye hovering around me, very Detroit-like. What I love about my job is the sense of impending danger. Not to mention the existentialist overtones. And the company card.

I know what you're thinking: "If it's Sunday, why aren't these folks in church?" No one had the answer, though there was a barmaid with a tight I ♥ JESUS T-shirt. You know, if you're into religious iconography. Or hearts.

Turns out these Lions fans are all originally from Michigan, or dating someone from Michigan, which is the doctor's excuse. Her name is Amy. She is the chatty cousin of Cal Coach Jeff Tedford, so she knows a little football. And she knows heartbreak, because she's dating a dude who's been following the Lions almost since conception.

Now, name the most toxic franchises in America — Pirates, Cubs, Red Lobster — and the Lions have to be near the top of that sad heap. They've had some excellent players through the years — Lem Barney, Joe Schmidt, Bobby Layne, a jackrabbit named Sanders — but plenty more bad ones, and a front office that seemed an inept extension of the auto industry itself.

--Topics-- GO



Kadafi's family will reportedly sue NATO



What happened to the double-dip recession?



More than 100 arrested at Occupy Oakland



Unique beer gardens thriving in Southland

LA DEALS



\$200 for 4.5 hours of spa/salon services (reg. \$400)

Most Viewed Most Emailed Latest News

Rick Perry: 'No doubt' Obama's birth certificate is real [video] 10/26/2011, 12:08 p.m.

Red Hot Chili Peppers' Flea sells Malibu house for \$3.15 million 10/26/2011, 11:32 a.m.

Mitt Romney is '110% behind' Ohio law limiting union power 10/26/2011, 9:18 a.m.

Paul Ryan: Obama preying on 'fear, envy and resentment' 10/26/2011, 8:57 a.m.

'Joe the Plumber' makes House run official [Video] 10/26/2011, 7:34 a.m.



Raiders in no rush to name starting quarterback

See more stories »

ADS BY GOOGLE

Online MBA Degree

Earn Your MBA Online in Only 1 Year Courses Start Soon, Get Info Now!

www.Westwood.edu/OnlineMBA

Earn J.D. In Law Online

Get your Law degree online with ALU in California - Request info!

www.ALU.edu/LawSchool

Detroit Lions Store

Buy Exclusive Detroit Lions Gear & Custom Jerseys only at NFLShop.com.

NFLShop.com/DetroitLions

Indeed it was . . . Fords everywhere.

Silly us, giving up hope.

See, while teams like the Philadelphia Eagles paid for solutions far and wide, the Lions bought domestic. In the last few years, they've been harvesting high draft choices — Ndamukong Suh, Gosder Cherilus and Matthew Stafford, a deadly but fragile young (22) quarterback who has made fellow first-rounder Calvin Johnson the most feared receiver in the game.

More than ever, the NFL is about pitching.

"You saw that they were building this team, but there was always something that would go wrong," notes longtime fan Josh Kushner, citing Stafford's glass shoulder.

So in retrospect, this Lions resurgence all makes sense, but also in retrospect, they won a mere six games last year with a defense that ranked 21st in the league.

And three autumns ago, the Lions went 0-16 — a season-long joke on Leno.

"Lot of good games this weekend," went one of Leno's spiels.

"Ravens are playing the Titans, Chargers are playing the

Steelers, Lions are playing Guitar Hero."

The consensus is that the Lions' current turnaround began with the 2008 removal of team president Matt Millen, responsible for more busts than Ludwig van Beethoven. And that — after a series of flops such as Mornhinweg, Mariucci, Marinelli — they can never again hire a coach with a name starting with a certain letter.

Copyright © 2011, Los Angeles Times

1 2 next | single page

Share 73 Comments 3 7 Recommend 34

« Previous Story More Sports - Lakers, Kobe Bryant, Dodgers, UCLA, USC - latimes.com Next Story »



NBA reportedly set to cancel more games



What if Terrell Owens held a workout and nobody showed up?

MORE FROM THE TIMES

Great white shark kills American diver in Australia

Michele Bachmann's misstatements may be catching up to her

After ugly loss, little doubt about Rick Neuheisel's future

MLB accuses Frank McCourt of 'looting' \$189 million from Dodgers

California Bullet Train: The High Price of Speed

FROM AROUND THE WEB

Wireless Displays Cut the TV Cable for Good | PC World Latest Technology News

Why Renters are the Next Mortgage Crisis | HouseLogic

Economist Who Predicted the 2008 Crash Gives Chilling 2012 Forecast. See the Evidence. | Newsmax.com

How Long Will Your Hybrid Battery Last? | GOOD

Barnett Shale proves to be a jobs and revenue generator in Texas | ExxonMobil's Perspectives



[One weird trick to build muscle fast](#)



[Wrinkle research revealed: study shows dramatic results](#)



[College you can afford: WGU Washington](#)



[Revealed: How the stars keep their skin so young](#)



[Shocking discovery for joint relief](#)



[Don't throw your life away to back pain](#)

Bleacher Report | Los Angeles

Reader contributions from Times partner Bleacher Report



20 Scariest Scorers in Lakers History



11 People with a Grudge against Lane Kiffin



5 Players Lakers Should Pursue

[More on Bleacher Report »](#)

Calendar

	10/26	10/27	10/28	10/29	10/30	10/31
		@Min 5 pm Prime		@Nas 5 pm KDOC	@CBJ 3:30 pm Prime	
		@Dal 5:30 pm FSW		@Pho 6 pm FSW	@Col 5 pm FSW	

[what's this]

Complete Calendar | NFL | MLB | NBA | Soccer
NHL | More

ADS BY GOOGLE

English Football Fan?

On 11/1 Dtv will drop FOX Soccer! Learn more now.

[KeepMyNets.com](#)

Dental Hygiene School

No waiting list for dental courses Financial Aid for those who qualify

[WestCoastUniversity.edu/BS-Dental](#)

List Of Paralegal Schools

Search A Complete List Of Colleges That Offer Paralegal Legal Programs

[www.CampusExplorer.com](#)

100 Photos & Videos of Hawaii »



Here are some of our favorite clips and images of Hawaii from Los Angeles Times staffers.

Comments (3)

[Add / View comments](#) | [Discussion FAQ](#)

rdiamond5220 at 4:56 PM October 23, 2011

Two straight losses are unreal.

subiac010 at 9:55 AM October 23, 2011

sell the team to someone who won't take +forty years to produce a decent team....Ford Sr. sell the team to Mike Illitch!!!!

rdiamond5220 at 6:10 PM October 22, 2011

Well, they are not building something "unreal." Or are they?

Comments are filtered for language and registration is required. The Times makes no guarantee of comments' factual accuracy. Readers may report inappropriate comments by clicking the Report Abuse link next to a comment. Here are the full legal terms you agree to by using this comment form.

Marketplace: L.A. Team Gear



Lakers Shop



Dodgers Shop



Angels Shop

More: USC Trojans | Angels | Dodgers | Clippers | Explore Fanshop

In Case You Missed It...



Student loans add to angst at Occupy Wall Street



MLB accuses Frank McCourt of 'looting'



A thermostat for the iPhone generation



HPV vaccine should be given to boys, experts say



Rand retracts report on pot clinics and crime

[More spotlights...](#)

[Corrections](#)

[Horoscopes](#)

[Media Kit](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Site Map](#)

Los Angeles Times

[Burbank Leader](#) | [Coastline Pilot](#) | [Daily Pilot](#) | [Huntington Beach Independent](#) | [News Press](#) | [Pasadena Sun](#) | [Valley Sun](#) | [KTLA](#) | [Hoy](#) | [Los Angeles Times Magazine](#)
[Baltimore Sun](#) | [Chicago Tribune](#) | [Daily Press](#) | [Hartford Courant](#) | [Los Angeles Times](#) | [Orlando Sentinel](#) | [Sun Sentinel](#) | [The Morning Call](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy, Updated 10/19/11](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Los Angeles Times, 202 West 1st Street, Los Angeles, California, 90012](#) | [Copyright 2011](#)

A Tribune Newspaper website