

The Lowell Sun

Gearing up for Pats opener

By John Ingoldsby
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Decisions, decisions.

As a Patriots season-ticket holder preparing for my third Super Bowl banner-raising ceremony in four years, I have a clothing dilemma for Thursday night: What to wear from my ample supply of Patriots paraphernalia?

Let's take it from the top, which in this case means hats. Like many Patriots fans, I have all three Super Bowl championship hats to choose from, but have to decide which one to wear for the 'Raiduhs.' Do I wear my newest item, the Super Bowl XXXIX hat straight from the UPS brown line? Or do I sport my personal favorite, the Super Bowl XXXVIII hat from Houston? For old times sake, there's always the well-worn Super Bowl XXXVI cap, which would certainly be a fitting way to pay tribute to my Super Bowl weekend in New Orleans the way it was before last week's devastating hurricane.

Now, let's move down below to shirt-level. I can always wear my shirt for all seasons, a year-old official home blue Tom Brady jersey with the silky numbers sewn on. But this being 'SB banner night,' maybe I should wear my 'official' ring neck T-shirt from SB XXXVIII. And knowing the New England September night air will inevitably get chilly, I could bring my heavy-duty sweatshirt from the Houston championship as well.

Or, I could stick with the New Orleans theme, which includes a myriad of 'official' choices from SB XXXVI. For early evening wear, I can decide between the gray T-shirt or a golf shirt. To be ready for the colder night air, I could choose from a hooded sweatshirt or a silver V-necked wind shirt.

This is just my 'official' championship garb from SB XXXVI. Not even making the cut are my three Patriots vs. Rams T-shirts and two generic Super Bowl hats bought in New Orleans the night before SB XXXVI.

Moving to below the belt, I only own one item, and that is my Patriots pajama bottoms. They most definitely won't be making it to Gillette since they are for home use only, such as sleeping or taking out the garbage. I will just have to tough it out with generic blue jeans, which come to think of it still keeps the Patriot Blue theme intact.

Left behind, but not forgotten, will be my Patriots winter coat. As a 13-year season ticket holder, the weather-hardened garment is a veteran of many bad weather games, starting with the 1996 playoff wins against the Steelers in the Fog Bowl and Jaguars in the AFC

title game. It sports a hood, thank goodness, that was my personal MVP of both 'Snow Bowl I' versus these same Raiders and 'Snow Bowl II' against the Dolphins, when the throwing-snow-in-the-air-to-music concerto was composed.

Fortunately for this week, I also won't be needing my Homeland Defense ski hat from the 'Cold Bowl' against the Tennessee Titans. I also don't see a reason to bring our dog's Patriots leash and collar, and, well, who wants to explain that to stadium security any way.

Editor's note: John Ingoldsby is a former copy editor at The Sun and a 13-year season-ticket holder now living a few Adam Vinatieri field goals from Foxboro.