

**The Seattle Times**

# DOWNTOWN LIVING

## Home-field advantage: Residents can follow the crowd noise for Seattle sports action

**S**eptember is prime time for Seattle sports fans, as all four of the city's professional teams are in action. For those who live downtown, it can feel as though the games are being played in their own backyards.

CenturyLink Field (known until recently as Qwest Field) is the home field of the National Football League's Seahawks and Major League Soccer's Sounders FC, while Safeco Field hosts Major League Baseball's Mariners. Both are located in the neighborhood just south of downtown known as Sodo.

Uptown at Seattle Center, the Seattle Storm defends its title as 2010 champion of the Women's National Basketball Association at KeyArena.

Throw in the occasional college football game, international soccer match or regional college basketball tournament — not to mention a slew of popular sports bars — and downtown Seattle becomes a haven for the sports nut and casual fan alike.

For those not close enough to walk, the area's public-transit systems can deliver you to and from the venues. The Seattle Center Monorail runs between Westlake Center and Seattle Center until 11 p.m. daily for rides to and from Storm games. The Sounder train makes special weekend trips to King Street Station, and Sound Transit's Link light rail stops at the nearby Stadium Station for Seahawks, Mariners and Sounders games.

Here's where you can catch your favorite Seattle team:

### **CENTURYLINK FIELD**

Qwest Field, recently renamed CenturyLink Field following a sponsorship change, opened in 2002. Known then as Seahawks Stadium, it replaced the iconic



Kingdome as the team's home and quickly earned a reputation for being one of the loudest stadiums in the NFL. Ear-splitting crowd noise has led to numerous penalties against opposing teams and famously registered on the Richter scale during last season's playoff game against New Orleans.

The Seahawks home opener is Sept. 25 against the Arizona Cardinals. Other games at CenturyLink Field this year are against Atlanta and Cincinnati in October, Baltimore and Washington in November, and Philadelphia, St. Louis and San Francisco in December. Ticket information is available by visiting [seahawks.com](http://seahawks.com).

Sharing the field with the Seahawks for their home games are the Sounders, the city's hugely popular soccer franchise. The team has led the league in attendance

each year since joining in 2009. Its rabid supporters regularly march to the stadium from Pioneer Square and stand, chant and even sing throughout the matches.

The Sounders have one of the top records in the league this season. They continue their march toward the MLS Cup with a match today at 1 p.m. against Real Salt Lake. Ticket info is at [sounders.com](http://sounders.com).

CenturyLink Field will also be the location of this year's Apple Cup, the annual University of Washington–Washington State college-football matchup being played this year on the west side of the Cascades on Nov. 26. It will be the first of several games that the Huskies will play there; all of the team's home games in 2012 will take place at CenturyLink Field while Husky Stadium is being remodeled.

## SAFECO FIELD

Now in its 12th season as the home of the Mariners, Safeco Field remains one of the jewels among major-league ballparks. It is located adjacent to CenturyLink Field, and many seats offer fans a view not just of the action on the field but of the city skyline, Puget Sound and Olympic Mountains as well.

The stadium opened in 1999 with a retro-modern architectural style, combining a brick façade and natural grass with amenities such as luxury suites and a retractable roof — perfect for those rainy Seattle evenings.

Fans who want to dine while they watch the game can choose from the usual baseball fare of hot dogs, peanuts and beer. But in true Seattle style, concession stands also offer sushi (the “Ichiroll” is named after outfielder Ichiro), crepes, Thai food, crab sandwiches, pasta and much more.

The Mariners’ 2011 season concludes with a home stand against Oakland Sept. 26–28. For tickets, visit [mariners.com](http://mariners.com).

## KEYARENA

Seattle sports fans have experienced the highest of highs and the lowest of lows at KeyArena during the past several years.

The city’s oldest pro sports team

— the National Basketball Association’s SuperSonics — left town for Oklahoma City in 2008, in part because of team owners’ claims that KeyArena was not a viable NBA venue.

Seattle’s remaining pro basketball team, the Storm, filled the void left behind by the Sonics — and more. Having already won a WNBA championship in 2004, the Storm captured the title again last year. It is among the league’s top teams again, and will wrap up the regular season Sunday with a 6 p.m. matchup against Chicago. Tickets are available by visiting [wnba.com/storm](http://wnba.com/storm).

The arena was built in 1962 as part of the World’s Fair in Seattle. Known originally as the Washington State Pavilion and then the Washington State Coliseum, it was later renamed the Seattle Center Coliseum and became a popular venue for events ranging from ice shows to pro wrestling.

The facility was rebuilt between 1994 and ’95 to bring it up to NBA standards of the day, and the city of Seattle sold naming rights to KeyBank.

In addition to Storm games, KeyArena also is home to the Rat City Rollergirls, a flat-track roller-derby league, and the Seattle University men’s basketball team.

In April, it was the site of a professional bull-riding competition.

# Home teams

## SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

**What:** Pro football

**When:** September–December

**Where:** CenturyLink Field, 800 Occidental Ave. S.

## SEATTLE MARINERS

**What:** Pro baseball

**When:** April–September

**Where:** Safeco Field, 1516 First Ave. S.

## SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC

**What:** Pro soccer

**When:** February–October

**Where:** CenturyLink Field, 800 Occidental Ave. S.

## SEATTLE STORM

**What:** Pro basketball

**When:** June–September

**Where:** KeyArena, 305 Harrison St.