

In the week leading up to Ohio State-Michigan, there are always plenty of warning shots fired over the opposing bow. But a lot of times, it's just the same old "Columbus is a cow town/Ann Arbor is one enormous gay disco" type of childish putdowns. The insult war never gets to the heart of what we, and they, are really trying to prove: What is the better place to live? Who should take more pride in their roots, Ohioans or Michiganders? Papa Cass is here to try and sort it all out in the most journalistically-objective way possible: with just the facts.



Visit the Papa Cass weblog at <http://papacass.blogspot.com/>

— In the week leading up to Ohio State-Michigan, there are always plenty of warning shots fired over the opposing bow. But a lot of times, it's just the same old "Columbus is a cow town/Ann Arbor is one enormous gay disco" type of childish putdowns.

The insult war never gets to the heart of what we, and they, are really trying to prove: What is the better place to live? Who should take more pride in their roots, Ohioans or Michiganders?

I'm here to try and sort it all out in the most journalistically-objective way possible: with just the facts.

### **Best rust belt city**

**Ohio: Cleveland**

**Michigan: Detroit**

Both have rotting infrastructures, decaying schools and ineffectual leaders. Both have gleaming downtown skyscrapers surrounded by miles upon miles of biting poverty.

Detroit is bigger. Cleveland is easier to get around in. All in all, this battle is a push. So I'm going to turn to the only arbiters I know who can settle this:

The panhandlers.

On a recent trek to downtown Cleveland, my friend Justin and I were approached by a scruffy-looking man who asked us if we had seen "the task force." He then asked Justin for six cents. Not five cents. Not 10. Six cents.

On a trip to Detroit this summer to watch a Tigers-Indians game, Justin and I had dinner at the Hockeytown restaurant near Comerica Park. After dinner, a panhandler came up to Justin and asked him for his slices of leftover pizza. Justin, being the kind soul he is, obliged. I wouldn't have had too much of a problem with that except Justin was approached *in the restaurant lobby*.

The verdict: Cleveland panhandlers are goofy and entertaining. Detroit panhandlers stalk you in restaurant lobbies.

## **Edge: Ohio**

### **Most embarrassing coach moment**

**Ohio: Woody Hayes punching out a Clemson player**

**Michigan: Gary Moeller drinking like a fish, then trying to slug a cop**

Even though Woody was well past his prime when he punched Clemson's Charlie Bauman in the closing seconds of the 1978 Gator Bowl, it still ended up being one of the defining moments of his career. It was a disgraceful way for a cherished legend -- one who had been celebrated for his hot competitive fire -- to end his career.

Compare that with Moeller's drunken outburst at a Southfield, Mich. restaurant in 1995. Quicker than you could say "indelible black mark," Michigan accepted Moeller's resignation and got on with life. Moeller went on to coach the Lions for a spell, but for the most part, he's antimatter among the Michigan faithful.

I'd take a fired-up Woody Hayes over a liquored-up Gary Moeller to watch my back in a dark alley any day, but Woody did Ohio State no favors by the way he went out.

## **Edge: Michigan**

### **Best TV show/movie settings**

**Ohio: "Family Ties," set in Columbus**

**"The Drew Carey Show," set in Cleveland**

**"WKRP," set in Cincinnati**

**"Howard The Duck," set in Cleveland**

**Michigan: "Robocop," set in Detroit**

**"8 Mile," set in Detroit**

**"Home Improvement," set in suburban Detroit**

OK, "Howard The Duck" does dock Ohio some points, but all in all, our reality-based Ohio settings offered a rich diversity of locales, and numerous opportunities to show off the good aspects of their settings -- though "Family Ties" was set in Columbus in dialogue only.

Michigan's turn at providing movie settings was bleak, bleaker and bleakest. "8 Mile" is depressing, "Robocop" is downright post-apocalyptic. I need Prozac just thinking about it.

The trump card? "Home Improvement" had an episode set in Cleveland, during which the characters made more Cleveland landmark references than they did for Detroit during the entire run of the series.

**Edge: Ohio**

**Best Music**

**Ohio: Dean Martin, Tracy Chapman, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, Chrissie Hynde, Nine Inch Nails, Marilyn Manson, the O'Jays, Devo, James Gang, Filter and polka king Frankie Yankovic.**

**Michigan: Ted Nugent, Bob Seger, Alice Cooper, Grand Funk Railroad, Kid Rock, MC5, Iggy and the Stooges, Eminem, Madonna, the White Stripes, the Von Bondies and a small army of incredibly successful artists from Motown Records.**

Love the Pretenders. Love Deano. But Michigan wins this one, fair and square.

**Edge: Michigan**

**Best excuse to riot**

**Ohio: When Ohio State beats Michigan**

**Michigan: Halloween in Detroit, or when the Tigers win the World Series**

Rioting in Detroit fills a very necessary purpose. Much like when a naturally-caused forest fire burns away dead brush, Detroit rioting helps clear many of the burned-out building shells from the landscape, opening the way for new brownfields that can sit vacant for 20 years until the weeds overtake them.

Having said that, post-victory Columbus rioting usually involves creative usage of signs and alcohol, thereby giving an amusement-park feel to the burning mounds of dorm furniture. The presence of assorted paper products in the trees is always a nice touch.

**Edge: Ohio**

**Championships in the past 40 years**

**Ohio: 2002 Buckeyes. 1968 Buckeyes. 1975 and 1990 Reds.**

**Michigan: 1968 and '84 Tigers, three Pistons titles, three Red Wings Stanley Cups, 2000 Michigan State basketball, 1989 Michigan basketball, etc., etc.**

....why bother?

**Edge: Michigan**

**Presidents**

**Ohio: William Henry Harrison, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, William McKinley, William Howard Taft, Warren Harding**

**Michigan: Gerald Ford**

Now, granted, none of Ohio's presidents really accomplished anything terribly memorable in office. Four of the eight died in office -- Garfield was assassinated by a jealous and delusional associate, McKinley was assassinated by an anarchist nutjob, Harding died of a stroke and William Henry Harrison died after 30 days in office when he contracted pneumonia giving a long-winded inauguration speech in cold weather.

What's more, Taft was reputedly so overweight he once got stuck in the White House bathtub.

But I'm going to turn this in to a Woody Hayes-esque war of attrition and say Ohio's eight presidents trump Michigan's lone part-term president who was known primarily for hitting errant golf balls and being impersonated by Chevy Chase.

**Edge: Ohio**

In the end, Ohio ekes out the win, four matches to three, and proves, irrefutably, that the Buckeye State is a better place to live than that barren wasteland up north. At least until Detroit wins another championship.

—