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What's In A Name

by

Tom Holbrook

I don't know how many of you are into sports out there, but I bet a great many of you, if not all, went to a high school or college that had its own nickname and mascot to match. If so are probably aware of the current feel good, but futile I hope, attempt by the powers that be to make some schools change their nicknames so as not to insult or needlessly malign anyone. The NCAA has listed approximately 18 names they determined are verboten and if a school with one of those names chooses to keep their decades old name they will be forbidden from hosting any post-season playoff games.

My question is this... Just how long will it be before **PETA**, (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals,) will get their act in gear and demand that the list of names be expanded to include all those poor beleaguered animals whose names have been besmirched by improper association with losing teams? Remember the 2003 Detroit **Tigers'** 118 game losing season, the South Carolina **Gamecocks** 21 game losing streak several years ago, the Temple **Owls** football team who were tossed out of the Big East Conference for their successive losses and the Savannah State **Tigers'** softball teams went 1 and 53 over the last two seasons. It is absolutely a crime that these animals should have to bear the brunt of shame and degradation these schools have brought upon their names. There are many more but too painful to bring them up.

It's not just animals or Indian names that are being singled out in this obvious attempt to rewrite the way we refer to our favorite teams, ethnic heritages are also being targeted and, potentially, being dragged through the mud by insensitive schools. Consider all the peace loving folks of Irish descent who constantly have to bear up under the burden of being associated with Notre Dame's "**Fighting Irish**?" It just isn't right!

Of course, this whole political correctness run amok initiated by the NCAA is going too far... get a life you guys. Most of these schools' nicknames were chosen as symbols of a people or species that they would be proud to associate their schools' name to and not to defame, malign or denigrate in the least. I mean, seriously folks, how many times have you seen a school take a student vote and find that the chosen nickname and/or mascot would be, "**The Fighting Fleas**," "**The Awesome Amoebas**," or those intimidating "**Gnashing Gnats**?"

I will agree that some schools with names somewhat ... different... have some suspect agenda in mind but not many. I will list some of those without listing the schools' names to give you an idea of what I speak. They are: The **Argonauts**; the **Blue Boys**; the **Banana Slugs**; the **Chanticleers**; the **Griffins**; the **Ichabods**; the **Black Squirrels**; the **Gaels**; the **Jumbos**; the **Lord Jeffs**; the **Wonder Boys**; the **Nanooks**

(*of the North I presume.*) and the **Violets** (UGH!) I just can't get a picture in my mind of the mascots' costumes that would go along with the names, can you?

All in all there really aren't that many colleges with names that I would consider as insulting to anyone. Of the hundreds of colleges listed in the resource I researched, the most popular name chosen by 53 schools was that of the noble, high flying "**Eagle.**" There were schools that were the "**Fighting....**," "**Running....**," "**Flying....**," and those multi-colored ones, i.e., "**Blue...**" (the most popular,) "**Red...**," and "**Golden....**"

There were some schools with nicknames for which I could find no understandable meaning such as: the **Billikens**, the **Duhawks**; the **Elis**; the **Eutectics** (*word means "easily melted"*); the **Nads**; the **Hoyas**; and the **Hokies**. (*I've been told that a Hokie is a castrated turkey but I've not been able to verify that.*)

The National Football League is not immune to those wanting a change in names either and I've got a solution for one of the teams when they are approached. The Washington Redskins should tell everyone that they named their squad after the mighty peanut of the same name.

Please, please, oh powers that be... we beseech thee... please call off your hunt so that those famous **Vixens, Vulcans, Women of Troy, Yeowomen, White Mules** and **Zips** will be forever among us for decades to come.

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Tom Holbrook
judyandtom@comcast.net
352-750-3339