

National Collegiate Athletic Association

Main article: [NCAA Native American mascot decision](#)

The [National Collegiate Athletic Association](#) (NCAA) distributed a "self evaluation" to 31 colleges in 2005, for teams to examine the use of potentially offensive imagery with their mascot choice.^[144] Subsequently 19 teams were cited as having potentially "hostile or abusive" names, mascots, or images, that would be banned from displaying them during post-season play, and prohibited from hosting tournaments.^[145] All of the colleges previously using Native American imagery changed except for those granted waivers when they obtained official support from individual tribes based upon the principle of [Tribal Sovereignty](#).^[21]

[San Diego State University](#) was not cited by the NCAA in 2005 due to a decision that the Aztecs were not a Native American tribe with any living decedents.^[146] However, the [Aztec Warrior](#) whose performance including human sacrifice, has drawn criticism.^[147] A SDSU professor of American Indian Studies states that among other problems the mascot teaches the mistaken idea that Aztecs were a local tribe rather than living in Mexico 1,000 miles away.^[148]

United States

In January 2014 the [Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee](#) sent a letter to two northern Idaho school districts with American Indian mascots asking that they be changed. The mascots are the Sacajawea Junior High Braves in [Lewiston](#) and the [Nezperce](#) High School Indians. The school officials state that they will have meetings and gather public opinions before making a decision.^[160]

Turners Falls High School of [Turners Falls](#), Massachusetts changed its fight song, known as the tomahawk chop, but did not change its name, the Indians. [Blacksburg High School](#) in [Blacksburg, Virginia](#) changed their mascot from the Indians to the Bruins, and the corresponding middle school mascot of the Braves was changed to the Titans.

[The Dalles High School](#) in [The Dalles, Oregon](#) will become the Riverhawks for Fall 2014 after being the "Indian Eagles" since 2000 after the merger of two schools. Although the Oregon legislature has allowed high schools to retain native mascots with the approval of a local tribe, the North Wasco County School District Superintendent Candy Armstrong states that, with 48 tribes in the area, "We thought [working with one] might not cause harmony but create more issues."^[161]

[John Swett High School](#) in [Crockett, California](#) dropped its Indians mascot by a unanimous vote of the School Board in February, 2015 in response to the group Sacred Sites Protection and Rights of Indigenous Tribes which lobbied for the change.^[162] However, citing the [Golden State Warriors](#) as an example, this Bay Area school changed from Indians to Warriors in February, 2016. Unlike the NBA team the high school has not eliminated Native American references.^[163]

Students of [Belmont High School](#) in Belmont, New Hampshire questioned the use of Native American imagery in connection to their name, the Red Raiders, saying that while it was never intended to be offensive it is time for a change. At a meeting on the subject there were equal, but respectful comments of both sides.^[164] The Shaker Regional School Board voted down the student council request to change the logo.^[165]

The last high school in [Maine](#) using a Native American name, the [Skowhegan Area High School](#) Indians, held a forum to discuss the issue in May, 2015. Only residents of the school district and elected officials were allowed to speak. Individuals spoke both for and against retiring the name.^[166] At a previous meeting of a school subcommittee, tribal representatives called for a change in the name.^[167] Subsequently, the

school board voted 11-9 to keep the name.^[168] However local Native Americans, including representatives of Maine's four [Wabanaki](#) tribes, continue to protest the name.^[169]

[Natick High School](#) in [Natick, Massachusetts](#) was also the Redmen. An initial vote by the school committee to change the name was in 2007, prompting the formation of a "Redmen Forever" committee by alumni of the school.^[170] In spite of their activity, including a nonbinding town referendum in which 65% of the voters supported asking the school committee to reconsider the change, the name was dropped in 2008.^[171] The school team is now the Redhawks,^[172] however some continue to favor returning to the previous name.^[173]

A group of Native American female basketball players from the Tiospa Zina Tribal School hosted a rally during a game with [Sisseton High School](#) in [Sisseton, South Dakota](#), asking the Sisseton School District to change the name of its team and logo from Redmen. The grandparents of four of the students protested the name in the 1990s. The school district superintendent said there was support for the name.^{[174][175]} There was a report of a fight between the brother of one of the protestors and a Sisseton student over the sale of "Not Your Mascot" T-shirts.^[176]

Two high schools in [West Hartford, Connecticut](#) have replaced their Native American logos, but retain the names: the [Conard High School](#) Chieftains and [Hall High Warriors](#).^[177] [Pascack Valley High School](#) in New Jersey has also decided to retire its "Indian Head" logo while retaining its Indians nickname.^[178]

[Bellevue East High School](#) in Nebraska will remain the Chieftains, but headdresses and war-paint have been banned at games.^[179] In 2015, 92% of the community and 90% of the students voted to keep the "Indians" mascot of [Belin High School in Wisconsin](#).^[180]

[Onteora High School](#), located in [Boiceville, New York](#) was scheduled to drop its "Indian" mascot in 2000, but the decision was overturned by a town vote. The current plan to select a new mascot comes from students, the Student Government Association holding a contest to come up with new names, which will be given to the school board to make the final decision.^[181]

While retaining its team name, the "Arrows", the school district for [Watertown High School](#) in [Watertown, South Dakota](#) has voted to remove Native American references from its homecoming pageant, which featured white students dressed as Indians.^[182]

Professional teams

None of the [National Basketball Association](#) (NBA) teams that previously used Native American mascots continue to do so. The [Atlanta Hawks](#) were originally the [Tri-Cities Blackhawks](#) (using an "Indian" logo)^[199] before [moving](#) to [Milwaukee](#), [Wisconsin](#) and changing its name to Hawks in 1951. The former [Buffalo Braves](#) relocated to [San Diego](#) in 1978, and are now known as the [Los Angeles Clippers](#).

The [Golden State Warriors](#), originally known as the Philadelphia Warriors before moving to [San Francisco](#) in 1962, eliminated Native American imagery in 1971.^[200] Since that time, their logos have emphasized the state of [California](#), with their current primary logo depicting the [new eastern span](#) of the [San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge](#). The warrior depicted on logos used from 1997–2010 was a generic lightning-wielding figure.

Atlanta Braves

The [Atlanta Braves](#) remain the home of the tomahawk chop (although it began at [Florida State University](#)).^[201] The logo has changed through the years from an Indian in full headdress to an Indian with a [Mohawk hairstyle](#) and single feather (described as either laughing or shouting), then to the Braves name in script over a tomahawk. The mascot [Chief Noc-A-Homa](#) was replaced in 1986. The current mascot is "Homer the Brave".^[202]

Chicago Blackhawks

The [National Hockey League](#) (NHL)'s [Chicago Blackhawks](#) was named in honor of the [U.S. 86th Infantry Division](#), which was nicknamed the "Blackhawk Division" after [Black Hawk](#), a Native American chief; the team's founder, [Frederic McLaughlin](#), having served in that division.^[203] The team's primary logo is a Native American's profile. In 2008, the staff of [The Hockey News](#) voted the team's logo to be the best in the NHL.^[204] An alternate logo is a block "C" with crossed tomahawks.^[205] The Blackhawks mascot is "[Tommy Hawk](#)", an anthropomorphic bird who also wears the four feathers worn by the logo figure.^[206]

[Suzan Shown Harjo](#) of the Morning Star Institute, a Washington-based advocacy group, has said that the typical Native American logo, "relegates native people to a certain time in history that's not today, and it's intended to do so. It's not something that reflects anything that's current. It kind of keeps us in the backwater of history." Harjo says the Blackhawks have escaped the scrutiny given to other teams using Native imagery because [hockey](#) is not a cultural force on the level of [football](#). But she says national American Indian organizations have called for an end to all Indian-related mascots and that she found the hockey team's name and Indian head symbol to be offensive. "It lacks dignity," she said. "There's dignity in a school being named after a person or a people. There's dignity in a health clinic or hospital. There's nothing dignified in something being so named (that is used for) recreation or entertainment or fun." The National Congress of American Indians also opposes the Blackhawks' logo, as it does all Native American mascots.^[207] In 2010, sports columnist [Damien Cox](#) called on the franchise to retire the "racially insensitive" logo, saying that: "Clearly, no right-thinking person would name a team after an aboriginal figure these days any more than they would use [Muslims](#) or [Africans](#) or [Chinese](#) or any ethnic group to depict a specific sporting notion."^[208]

The Blackhawks have worked with the [American Indian Center](#) to help educate their community and fan base by sharing Native American culture and history. Scott Sypolt, Executive Counsel for the American Indian Center weighed in on the logo and name controversy by stating, "There is a consensus among us that there's a huge distinction between a sports team called the Redskins depicting native people as red, screaming, ignorant savages and a group like the Blackhawks honoring Black Hawk, a true Illinois historical figure."^[209]

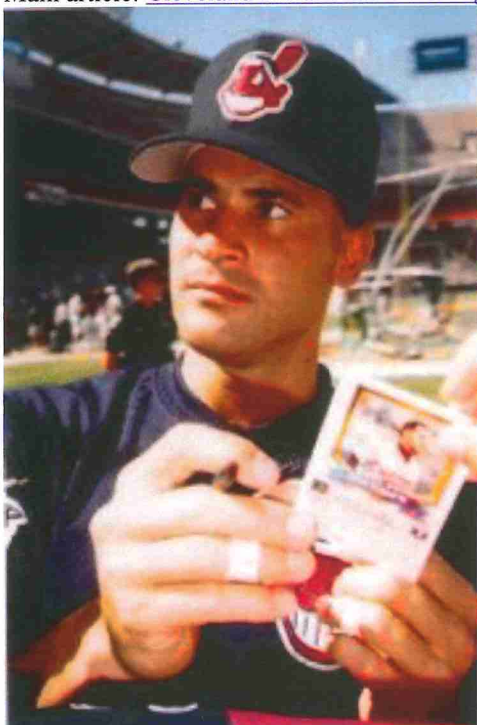
However, this stance is markedly different from the one previously taken by the American Indian Center, with the shift coming only in the past few years. In 2010, for instance, Joe Podlasek stated that, "The stance is very clear. We want the Chicago Blackhawks logo to change. For us, that's one of our grandfathers. Would you do that with your grandfather's picture? Take it and throw it on a rug? Walk on it and dance on it?" ^[210] John Blackhawk, Chairman of the [Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska](#), has suggested that the change in position for the American Indian Center may be connected to contributions the Blackhawks organization has recently begun making to the center: "We all do contributions, but we don't do it for the sake of wanting to be forgiven for something we've done that's offensive." ^[207]

Ghislain Picard, the head of the [Assembly of First Nations](#) of Quebec and Labrador, says he would support the change of the logo to one designed by an [Ojibwe](#) artist featuring a black hawk. ^[211]

The owner of the [NHL Winnipeg Jets](#) has decided to ban fake Native headdresses at games after meeting with First Nations leaders. The meeting took place in response to a complaint by a Jets fan after seeing a Blackhawks fan in a headdress last season. ^[212]

Cleveland Indians

Main article: [Cleveland Indians name and logo controversy](#)



Former Cleveland Indians player [Venezuelan Omar Vizquel](#) wearing a baseball cap showing the image of the Cleveland Indians mascot, [Chief Wahoo](#)

In 1997 and 1998, protesters were arrested after effigies were burned. Charges were dismissed in the 1997 case, and were not filed in the 1998 case. Protesters arrested in the 1998 incident subsequently fought and lost a lawsuit alleging that their [First Amendment](#) rights had been violated. ^{[213][214][215][216]}

The [Chief Wahoo](#) logo was replaced with a block letter "C" or script "I" in many situations, such as on their caps and batting helmets. ^[217] At the beginning of 2014, a decision was made to make the block "C" the team's primary logo—although Chief Wahoo will not disappear entirely—and some see this as a first step toward inevitable elimination. ^[218] A variety of responses to the issue has emerged from the Cleveland

fanbase. Some fans have removed Chief Wahoo logos from purchased apparel, an outcome that is being termed "de-chiefting".^[219]

Blogger Peter Pattakos captured a photograph on April 4, 2014 outside a Cleveland Indians game which depicts a discussion between activist [Robert Roche](#) of the American Indian Movement and a sports fan costumed as the team mascot Chief Wahoo.^{[220][221]} One reader's comments on press reports of the event led to a comparison with a "But I'm honoring you, dude!" editorial cartoon from 2002.^[222] An advocate for replacing Chief Wahoo makes the connection between the logo and fans wearing [redface](#), beating a [tom-tom](#), and other stereotypical "Indian" behavior that would not be acceptable toward any other ethnic group.^[223]

Former MLB Commissioner [Bud Selig](#) said in 2014 that he had never received a complaint about the Wahoo logo, and that individual teams such as the Indians and Braves should make their own decisions.^[224] Native Americans protested Chief Wahoo on [Opening Day](#) 2015, as they have for many years, making note that this is the 100th anniversary of the team becoming the Indians. Owner [Paul Dolan](#), while stating he is respectful of critics, says he mainly hears from fans who want to keep Chief Wahoo, and has no plans to change.^[225] While claiming to honor Native Americans, fans confronted by the Native American protesters gave them [the finger](#) and made disparaging remarks about [scalping](#).^[226] The success of the team in the 2016 season led to renewed attention, first during the playoffs with the Toronto Blue Jays,^{[227][228][229]} then during the World Series games in Cleveland.^[230]

Edmonton Eskimos

The [Edmonton Eskimos](#) had little controversy over the years, in part because they do not use any native imagery. The name [Eskimo](#) originated as a word used by the [Cree](#) to refer to the [Inuit](#), who are few in the Edmonton area, and are ambivalent or supportive of the team name. A notable Inuk who openly supported the team name was former Edmonton Inuit player Dave Ward, now better known as [Kiviaq](#).^{[231][232]} However [Natan Obed](#), the President of [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#), Canada's national Inuit organization, has stated that "Eskimo" "is not only outdated, it is now largely considered a derogatory term" and is a "relic of colonial power".^[233] Former Eskimos player [Andre Talbot](#) stated: "Sports organizations need to be community building organizations. And if we're isolating and offending part of that community, then our particular organization or league is not doing its job."^[234]

Kansas City Chiefs

In 1963 the [Kansas City Chiefs](#) adopted a name referring to Native Americans, when the Dallas Texans (AFL) relocated. While adopting Native American imagery, the team was named in honor of Kansas City mayor [Harold Roe Bartle](#) who was instrumental in bringing the Texans to [Kansas City, Missouri](#). Bartle earned his nickname as founder of a [Boy Scouts](#) honor camping society [Tribe of Mic-O-Say](#) in which he was "Chief" Lone Bear. In 1989 the Chiefs switched from [Warpaint](#), a [Pinto horse](#) ridden by a man in a feathered headdress, to their current mascot [K. C. Wolf](#). Warpaint returned in 2009, but is ridden by a [cheerleader](#).^[235]

Following the appearance of photographs of fans attending an October 2013 game wearing feathers and warpaint—and doing the tomahawk chop—in the [Kansas City Star](#), numerous Native Americans submitted complaints to the publication. One caller, who was especially upset that the photographs were published on [Columbus Day](#), described the images as a "mockery" and "racist". Writing for the *Star*'s "Public Editor" column, Derek Donovan explained that he found the complaints "reasonable" and suggested that the newspaper depict "other colorful, interesting people in the crowds."^[236]

The *Kansas City Star* reported in early August 2014 that the team's management is planning discussions with some Native American groups to find a non-confrontational way to eliminate, or at least reduce, offensive behavior.^[237] Amanda Blackhorse, the lead plaintiff in the trademark case against the Washington Redskins, thinks the real solution is a name change for the Chiefs.^[238] Native Americans in [Phoenix](#),

[Arizona](#) picketed at the game between the Chiefs and the [Arizona Cardinals](#), and have asked the Cardinals' management to bar "[Redface](#)", the wearing of headdresses and face paint, protesting what they perceive to be a mockery of Native American culture.^[239] A protest is planned in Minnesota when the Chiefs play the Vikings on October 18, 2015. "The Kansas City Chiefs have flown under the radar," said Norma Renville, the executive director of Women of Nations Community Advocacy Program and Shelter. "They are contributing to our cultural genocide."^[240] Achieving greater visibility by reaching the playoffs in 2016, Native Americans at [Haskell Indian Nations University](#) in [Lawrence, Kansas](#) are asking the Chiefs to stop behavior that invokes stereotypes, such as wearing headdresses and doing the "tomahawk chop".^[241]

Washington Redskins

Main article: [Washington Redskins name controversy](#)

Further information: [Redskin \(slang\)](#) and [Washington Redskins trademark dispute](#)

The [Washington Redskins](#) receives the most public attention due to the prominence of the team being located in the [nation's capital](#), and the name itself being defined in current dictionaries of American English as "usually offensive",^[242] "disparaging",^{[243][244]} "insulting",^[245] and "taboo".^[246] Those officially censuring and/or demanding the name be changed include more than 80 organizations that represent various groups of Native Americans.^[247] On June 18, 2014, the [Trademark Trial and Appeal Board](#) (TTAB) cancelled the six trademarks held by the team in a two to one decision that held that the term "redskins" is disparaging to a "substantial composite of Native Americans", and this is demonstrated "by the near complete drop-off in usage of 'redskins' as a reference to Native Americans beginning in the 1960s."^{[248][249]} On July 8, 2015 a Federal judge issued a summary opinion affirming the TTAB decision.^{[250][251]}

Native American opposition to the name began in the early 1970s with letters to the owner of the team^[252] and the editors of [the Washington Post](#).^[253] National protests began in 1988, after the team's [Super Bowl XXII](#) victory, and again when [1992 Super Bowl](#) between the Redskins and the [Buffalo Bills](#) was held in [Minnesota](#).^[254]

A symposium in February 2013 at the [Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian](#) in Washington, D.C.,^[255] followed by a media campaign sponsored by the [Oneida Indian Nation](#) of New York,^[256] led to a broader range of persons speaking out in favor of change or open discussion, including 50 U.S. Senators^[257] and [President Barack Obama](#).^[258] Statements in support of a name change have been made by religious leaders in Washington, D.C.,^[259] and the [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#).^[259]

Team owner [Daniel Snyder](#) sent an open letter to fans that was published in *The Washington Post* on October 9, 2013. In the letter Snyder states that the most important meaning of the name Redskins is the association that fans have to memories of their personal history with the team. Snyder also states that the name was chosen to honor Native Americans in general and the coach and four players at that time who were Native American.^[260] The team continues to cite current polls showing general public opinion in opposition to changing the name.^{[261][262]} In May 2016, a poll by the Washington Post (WaPo) found that 90% of respondents who identified themselves as Native Americans were not offended by the name.^[263] The [Native American Journalists Association](#) (NAJA) issued a statement calling the publication of the poll, and the reporting of its significance, as not only inaccurate and misleading but unethical. "The reporters and editors behind this story must have known that it would be used as justification for the continued use of these harmful, racist mascots. They were either willfully malicious or dangerously naïve in the process and reporting used in this story, and neither is acceptable from any journalistic institution."^[264] While not addressing the NAJA criticism, the WaPo editorial board continues to maintain its prior position that the name is a slur and that they will avoid its use as much as possible.^[265]

International teams

The [United States national rugby league team](#) was marketed as the Tomahawks until 2015, when the team was rebranded to simply the "Hawks".^[266]

Current status

A database from 2013 shows that there are currently almost 2,000 high schools with mascots that reference Native American culture.^[279] This is down from around 3,000.^[21] Though changes have been made at the high school and college levels, at the professional level there has been virtually no change. The topic remains an issue on a national level, with a hearing before the US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in 2011,^[280] and a symposium at the Smithsonian [National Museum of the American Indian](#) in 2013.^[255] In November, 2015 President Obama, speaking at the White House Tribal Nations Conference, stated "Names and mascots of sports teams like the Washington Redskins perpetuate negative stereotypes of Native Americans" and praised [Adidas](#) for a new initiative to help schools change names and mascots by designing new logos and paying for part of the cost of new uniforms.^[281]