Sioux Unhappy: Challenging the NCAA's Ban on Native American Imagery

Kelly P. O'Neill

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.law.utulsa.edu/tlr

Part of the Law Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.utulsa.edu/tlr/vol42/iss1/9

This Casenote/Comment is brought to you for free and open access by TU Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tulsa Law Review by an authorized editor of TU Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact megan-donald@utulsa.edu.
SIoux Unhappy: Challenging the NCAA’s Ban on Native American Imagery

Absolute discretion is a ruthless master. It is more destructive of freedom than any of man’s other inventions.

—United States Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas

I. INTRODUCTION

With more than a century of competition under its belt, the University of North Dakota (UND) athletic program has reaped in its share of victories. Men’s hockey has brought seven national titles to Grand Forks. Women’s basketball has contributed three championships, and football fielded the nation’s best squad in 2001. Individual student-athletes from UND have claimed more than seventy-five titles in swimming, diving, and track and field.

Much of this athletic success has been the work of student-athletes who also excelled academically. Since 1978, fifty-four UND student-athletes have earned Academic All-America status, including ten Academic All-America honorees from 2002–2006. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), intercollegiate
sports’ largest governing body,10 granted its inaugural USA Today NCAA Foundation Academic Achievement Award to UND in 2001 because of UND’s impressive student-athlete graduation rate.11 In 2003, the NCAA bestowed its prestigious Walter Byers Postgraduate Scholarship12 on a UND football student-athlete.13

This success has helped UND and Grand Forks build some of the finest athletic facilities in intercollegiate athletics. Ralph Engelstad Arena is one of the premiere ice hockey facilities in the nation. It seats 11,406 fans, and “[a]menities include an eight-screen video scoreboard, an adjacent Olympic-sized practice rink, a 10,000-square-foot weight room[,] and a padded leather seat for every spectator.”14 The Betty Engelstad Sioux Center seats 4,000 and houses UND’s men’s basketball, women’s basketball, and volleyball teams.15 It allows all three teams to practice at the same time, provides a players’ lounge, and is equipped with a study area.16 The Hyslop Sports Center is home to the men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams and features “an eight-lane, [fifty]-meter swimming and diving pool.”17 Grand Forks’ Alerus Center functions as UND’s football home on game days.18 It seats 13,500 fans and includes eighteen luxury suites, state-of-the-art scoreboards, and video replay boards.19 The NCAA has trusted UND with hosting no less than thirteen NCAA Championship events at these four facilities since 2000.20

Given that the NCAA’s purpose is to “promote and develop educational leadership


12. The NCAA awards the Walter Postgraduate Scholarship to one male and one female student-athlete each year. The criteria for the award is academic excellence, community involvement, and potential as a future leader. The scholarship permits those student-athletes to pursue career interests on the graduate level See Laronica L. Conway, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and University of North Dakota Student-Athletes Receive Walter Byers Postgraduate Scholarships, http://www.ncaa.org/releases/awards/2003051201aw.htm (May 12, 2003).

13. UND offensive lineman McLain “Mac” Schneider won the award in 2003. Id.


16. Id.


[and] athletics excellence.\textsuperscript{21} the academic and athletic achievements of the UND athletic department and its student-athletes would seem to qualify UND as one of the NCAA’s ideal institutions. So one can imagine UND’s surprise on August 5, 2005, when the NCAA informed the school that it could not compete at NCAA championship events if it displayed any imagery associated with its seventy-five-year-old nickname—\textit{the Fighting Sioux}—and that it could not host future NCAA Championship events if it kept Fighting Sioux as its nickname.\textsuperscript{22}

The conflict between the NCAA, UND, and eighteen other NCAA membership institutions\textsuperscript{23} began when the NCAA placed UND on a list of colleges and universities that used what the NCAA considered to be “hostile or abusive [racial or ethnic]... mascots, nicknames or imagery.”\textsuperscript{24} In setting forth its policy, the organization targeted nineteen schools\textsuperscript{25} that continued to use Native American imagery to promote their athletic teams despite public opposition to,\textsuperscript{26} and the NCAA’s disdain for,\textsuperscript{27} this

\begin{itemize}
\item[25.] NCAA, supra n. 23.
\item[26.] Id. There were originally eighteen schools on the list, but the NCAA later added the College of William and Mary. See NCAA, Press Release, \textit{Statement by NCAA Senior Vice President for Governance and Membership Bernard Franklin on the College of William and Mary Review}, http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/press_room/2006/may/20060516_wandm_mascot_rls.html (May 16, 2006). Northeastern (Oklahoma) State University was inadvertently left off the list but agreed to change its nickname when the NCAA came calling in the spring of 2006; however, the school was never officially subject to the NCAA’s policy. April Marciszewski, \textit{NSU Mascot Update Sought, Tulsa World A15} (Sept. 23, 2006).
\end{itemize}

28. In April 2001, the NCAA began investigating the use of Native American mascots in educational settings. This investigation was sparked by three occurrences: (1) the Executive Committee’s review of the Confederate battle flag and whether use of the flag should have a bearing on what schools are permitted to host NCAA Championships; (2) St. Cloud State University President Roy Saigo’s request to eliminate Native American mascots from intercollegiate athletics; and (3) the United States Commission on Civil Rights determination that athletic teams should not use Native American imagery because such use perpetuates racial stereotypes. NCAA, \textit{NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee Report on the Use of American Indian Mascots in Intercollegiate Athletics to the NCAA Executive Committee Subcommittee on Gender and Diversity Issues}, http://www1.ncaa.org/prise/main/membership/governance/assoc-wide/ncic/2003/mascot_report/mascotreport.htm (Oct. 2002); see also CNN, \textit{Mississippi Will Retain Its 107-Year-Old Flag}, http://archives.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/04/18/mississippi.flag/index.html (Apr. 18, 2001); U.S. Comm. on Civ. Rights, \textit{Statement of U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on the Use of Native American Images and Nicknames as Sports Symbols}, http://www.usccr.gov/press/archives/2001/041601st.htm (Apr. 16, 2001). The Executive Committee assigned the NCAA’s Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee and the Executive Subcommittee on Gender and Diversity Issues to study the issue and make recommendations to the Executive Committee. The Executive Subcommittee on Gender and Diversity Issues came back with a report and recommendations in October 2002. The NCAA requested a second report in November 2004, less than one year prior to the announcement of the NCAA’s new policy, from thirty-three institutions to evaluate their campus’ use of Native American imagery. The NCAA determined that fourteen of those schools complied with the league’s policy by either removing references to Native American culture or keeping such references out of their athletic programs. The fourteen schools were California State University-Stanislaus (Warriors), East Stroudsburg University (Warriors), Eastern Connecticut State University (Warriors), Hawai‘i-Manoa
practice. The nineteen schools were:
- Alcorn State University Braves;
- Arkansas State University Indians;
- Bradley University Braves;
- Carthage College Redmen and Lady Reds;
- Catawba College Indians;
- Central Michigan University Chippewas;
- Chowan College Braves;
- Florida State University Seminoles;
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Fighting Illini;
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania Indians;
- University of Louisiana at Monroe Indians;
- McMurry University Indians;
- Midwestern State University Indians;
- Mississippi College Choctaws;
- Newberry College Indians;
- University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux;
- Southeastern Oklahoma State University Savages;
- University of Utah Utes; and
- College of William and Mary Tribe.

Punishments for these institutions were severe. As of February 1, 2006, schools whose student-athletes wore uniforms or utilized equipment that displayed hostile or abusive imagery were prohibited from competing in NCAA championships. As of that same date, the offending institutions would not be permitted to host NCAA championship events unless an institution was already designated a host school, and, in that case, school officials would be forced to eliminate any "hostile or abusive references" at the facility. As of August 1, 2008, "mascots, cheerleaders, dance

University (men are Warriors), Husson College (changed from Braves to Eagles), Lycoming College (Warriors), Merrimack College (Warriors), San Diego State University (Aztecs), Southeast Missouri State University (Redhawks), the University of West Georgia (changed from Braves to Wolves), Stonehill College (changed from Chieftains to Skyhawks), the University of North Carolina-Pembroke (men are Braves and women are Lady Braves), Winona State University (Warriors), and Wisconsin Lutheran College (Warriors). NCAA, supra n. 24; see Leilana McKindra, MOIC Forwards Recommendations from Mascots Review, http://www.ncaa.org; select The NCAA News, select NCAA News Archive, select 2005, select Association-wide, select MOIC forwards recommendations from mascots review 7-4-05 NCAA News (July 4, 2005). The University of North Carolina Pembroke, a school founded for the purpose of educating Native Americans, was permitted to retain its nickname because of "the foundation of the school, the history of the school and its continuous union with the Native American community." Earl Vaughan, Jr., NCAA Lets UNCP Keep Nickname, Fayetteville Observer (Fayetteville, N.C.) (Aug. 6, 2005); see also U.N.C. Pembroke, About UNCP, http://www.uncp.edu/uncp/about/history.htm (accessed Jan. 29, 2007).

30. Id.
31. Id.
32. Id. The NCAA had previously stated that schools already contracted to host NCAA championship events would have to cover up any Native American imagery at the host facility. Senior vice-president Bernard Franklin stated, "[I]t is not reasonable to cover up or remove all of the Native American imagery in the [Ralph Engelstad Arena], and the restriction was adopted... after the contract was awarded to the university." NCAA, Press Release, Statement by NCAA Vice-President for Governance and Membership Bernard Franklin on University of North Dakota Review, http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/press_room/2005/september/20050928_franklin_stmtn_und.html (Sept. 28, 2006).
teams," and band members would not be permitted to participate in NCAA championships if they displayed Native American imagery on their uniforms or equipment.  

The NCAA later extended the policy to the Bowl Championship Series (BCS), which determines the NCAA Division I-A football national champion, at the request of BCS officials. 

The blacklisted institutions and their supporters wasted no time in crying foul. Five days after the NCAA issued its policy, Florida State University (FSU) led the way when its Board of Trustees gave the university permission to sue the NCAA for the right to continue using Seminoles as the school’s mascot. The Florida legislature threatened to open an antitrust investigation into the NCAA. UND quickly followed suit when Charles E. Kupchella, the university’s president, submitted an open letter to the NCAA in which he stated that “the action taken by the NCAA was insulting, and a flagrant abuse of power.” Even Florida Governor Jeb Bush weighed in on the highly publicized controversy when he stated, “[h]ow politically correct can we get?”

“This is not about an effort to be politically correct,” shot back NCAA President Myles Brand in an editorial published in USA Today. “It is about doing the right thing.” In his editorial, the NCAA’s leader clarified possible misconceptions arising from the policy. First, members of the NCAA’s Executive Committee—not NCAA

33. NCAA, supra n. 24.
34. The Bowl Championship Series (BCS) is not a NCAA championship but includes the University of Notre Dame and football member schools from all Division I-A conferences: Atlantic Coast Conference, The BIG EAST Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, Pacific-10 Conference, Southeastern Conference, Sun Belt Conference, and Western Athletic Conference. See Bowl Championship Series, BCS Conferences, http://www.bcsfootball.org/bcslby/conferences (accessed Jan. 29, 2007). Schools that fell subject to the NCAA’s extension of the ban to the BCS were Arkansas State University, Central Michigan University, Florida State University, Illinois, The University of Louisiana at Monroe, and The University of Utah.
35. See NCAA, supra n. 3.
36. BCS officials requested that the NCAA take action to extend the ban to bowl games because the BCS did not have the power to enforce such a provision. The NCAA, however, retains the right to license Division I-A bowl games. NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 30.9, 406–07. The NCAA changed its licensing requirements, requiring “that all bowl games sign as part of the licensing process . . . a criterion stating that ‘they will follow the policy’ of not letting participating teams display Native American mascots or nicknames.” NCAA, Press Release, Statement Regarding Licensing Criteria for Division I-A Postseason Football http://www2.ncaa.org/media_and_events/press_room/2005/september/20050920_postseason_mascot_stmt.htm 1 (Sept. 20, 2005); see also Doug Lederman, NCAA Extends Reach of Mascot Ban, http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/09/21/bowls (Sept. 21, 2005); Associated Press, NCAA Requires Bowl Games to Ban Indian Mascots, http://sports.espn.go.com/ncaa/news/story?id=2167497 (posted Sept. 20, 2005).
38. FSU is well-represented politically in the form of alumni in the Florida state legislature. See Fla. Senate, infra n. 263; Fla. House of Reps., infra n. 264.
39. Id.
43. Id.
44. When the NCAA set forth its policy, the nineteen members of the NCAA’s Executive Committee included Ronald D. Wellman, Athletic Director, Wake Forest University; G. Wayne Clough, President,
officials—voted to put the policy in place. Second, the policy did not force schools to change their nicknames or mascots even though listed schools would not be permitted to wear uniforms or use equipment with reference to Native American imagery at NCAA championship competitions. Third, these institutions were permitted to appeal. Finally, Brand called the policy "a teachable moment" that would bring the Native American mascot issue to the forefront of public discussion.

Several respected organizations supported the NCAA’s new policy. The National Congress of American Indians praised the NCAA. Tex Hall, president of the National Congress of American Indians, stated, "[t]he ridicule, mockery and utter racism Native Americans are subject to because of the use of Indian mascots are intolerable." The American Psychological Association also passed a resolution in support of banning Native American imagery from all levels of competitive athletics.

The uproar following the announcement of the new policy was fueled by three primary concerns. First, many believed that the NCAA overstepped its bounds by forcing its political agenda on member institutions. Miami University President James C. Garland, who guided his institution through a nickname change from Redskins to RedHawks in the 1990s, commented,

[T]he NCAA clearly overstepped its mission by involving itself in the internal affairs of its member institutions. Deciding whether or not to change a nickname is a difficult decision for any school, and the beliefs and depth of emotion of all sides have to be weighed carefully. In my opinion, the NCAA is unwise to trespass into that territory.

Georgia Institute of Technology; John D. Welty, President, California State University, Fresno; Martin C. Jischke, President, Purdue University; Michael F. Adams, President, the University of Georgia; Peter Likins, President, the University of Arizona; Philip E. Austin, President, the University of Connecticut; Shirley Raines, President, the University of Memphis; Sidney McPhee, President, Middle Tennessee State University; Clinton Bristow, Jr., President, Alcorn State University; Daniel Curran, President, the University of Dayton; Robert Fisher, President, Belmont University; Walter Harrison, President, University of Hartford; Kathryn A. Martin, Chancellor, the University of Minnesota Duluth; Paul H. Engelmann, Faculty Athletics Representative, Central Missouri State University; Arthur F. Kirk, Jr., President, Saint Leo University; Ivory Nelson, President, Lincoln University (Pennsylvania); Michael Miranda, Faculty Athletics Representative, Plattsburgh State University of New York; Philip C. Stone, President, Bridgewater College (Virginia). NCAA, Executive Committee, http://web1.ncaa.org/committees/committees_roster.jsp?CommitteeName=EXEC (accessed Oct. 21, 2005).

The late Clinton Bristow, Jr., was President of Alcorn State University and voted for the policy even though his school would be affected by the policy.

45. "The Executive Committee is the highest governance body in the NCAA and is composed of institutional chief executive officers that oversee Association-wide issues. The committee is charged with ensuring that each division operates consistently with the basic purposes, fundamental policies and general principles of the Association." NCAA, NCAA Executive Committee, http://www1.ncaa.org/epprise/main/membership/governance/assoc-wide/executive_committee/index.html (accessed Oct. 21, 2005).

46. Brand, supra n. 42.

47. Id.

48. Id.

49. Id.


53. Peter Bronson, Miami President Should Know: NCAA Out of Bounds on Mascots, Cincinnati Enquirer 9B (Sept. 6, 2005).
In an open letter to Brand and the NCAA, Newberry College President Mitchell M. Zais, whose Indians made the list, remarked, "Mr. Brand, the NCAA has more important things to do than to try to establish itself as the arbiter of political correctness for our institutions of higher learning... Get back to the job which the member institutions pay you to do."

Second, the ban prevented the nineteen schools, their conferences, and their home cities from reaping the financial rewards of hosting or participating in championship competition. As part of the Basketball Fund, Division I conferences receive money for every game in which one of their schools competes in the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship. In 2005-2006, the NCAA paid $122.8 million to conferences based on their performances in the 2000-2005 basketball championship tournaments. The Big Ten Conference netted $13,774,430 from that distribution—a large portion of which was courtesy of the University of Illinois’ (Illinois) earning a bid to each tournament during that span, including its championship-game run in 2005.

NCAA bylaws allow institutions that host championship events to retain a portion of the profits made from those events. UND estimates that it received $471,269 in revenues from hosting NCAA Championship events held at Ralph Engelstad Arena from October 2003 to March 2006. The listed institutions also worried that the inability to host could affect the finances of non-revenue, Olympic sports. UND representatives noted that the NCAA’s “[p]olicy negatively impacts the willingness of member institutions to make the significant investment required in building facilities capable of hosting NCAA championship events.” Illinois’ athletic director stated, “[t]he department has invested large amounts of resources in facilities, scholarships and coaches in our Olympic sports. The inability to host NCAA championship competition would have an unbelievably negative effect on our programs.”

55. This fund, which is part of the NCAA’s Revenue Distribution Plan, allows the conferences of tournament participants to receive a specified amount of money for one “unit,” the equivalent of one game, in which the school participates, but it excludes the title game. For example, the conferences of the sixty-four schools invited to the 2005 championship each received $152,000 for each game in which their schools participated. NCAA, 2006-07 Revenue Distribution Plan, http://www1.ncaa.org/finance/revenue_distribution_plan#schedule (accessed Jan. 29, 2007). In 2006-2007, the per-game amount rises to $177,000. Id.
56. NCAA, supra n. 3.
57. NCAA, supra n. 55.
58. Id.
61. See NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 31.4.4, 435.
63. Olympic sports are those that do not generate revenue. While sports that actually make money vary among schools, money-making sports are usually men's football, basketball, and ice hockey.
64. Pl's. Memo., supra n. 63.
65. NCAA Edict Threatens Chief Illiniwek Tradition, http://www.news.uiuc.edu/ii/06/0504/0504.pdf (May
The NCAA markets its championships to cities around the country with a promise that they will secure revenues if they choose to host such an event.\textsuperscript{67} The promotional brochure provided to potential host cities makes several claims about the economic impact that hosting can have on a city.\textsuperscript{68} Prior to hosting the 2004 NCAA Women’s Volleyball Championship, Steve Goodling, President and CEO of the Long Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, noted the impact that the event would have on Long Beach:

Long Beach has hosted a variety of NCAA championships, and each one has had a strong economic impact on the city. . . . This event is expected to have a $3.6 million economic impact and bring in more than 18,000 spectators to downtown Long Beach, where more than $1 billion in renovations and new construction has recently taken place. Everyone wins when the NCAA comes to Long Beach.\textsuperscript{69}

The NCAA’s brochure, which was published in 2004, even uses an action photograph of a UND football student-athlete.

Third, the exclusion from NCAA Championships could prevent student-athletes already enrolled at the offending institutions from competing for or hosting national championships. UND’s Kupchella summarized many schools’ opinions:

The NCAA Constitution provides that the welfare of student-athletes is paramount, yet the policy in question would penalize student-athletes in the interest of a Committee’s view on sociopolitical correctness—in some instances. The impact of earning home field advantage just to have it stripped away due to an inconsistently applied policy clearly penalizes the group that the NCAA seeks to protect—student-athletes.\textsuperscript{50}

At the time the NCAA announced its policy, four of the schools on the list—FSU, Illinois, UND, and the University of Utah—had combined to win forty-eight NCAA Division I national team titles.\textsuperscript{71} The University of Utah’s female student-athletes had secured the tenth most women’s titles for any school in NCAA history\textsuperscript{72} while the UND men’s ice hockey team had the second-most championships ever in that sport.\textsuperscript{73}

Illinois’ men’s tennis team was the first team to be penalized by the NCAA’s policy. The school’s men’s tennis squad earned a bid into the 2006 NCAA Division I Team Championship. Despite being ranked eighth in the nation,\textsuperscript{74} earning the seventh

---

\textsuperscript{4} 2006.
\textsuperscript{67} NCAA, \textit{Host Brochure} (copy on file with author).
\textsuperscript{68} Id.
\textsuperscript{69} Id.
\textsuperscript{71} FSU has won four titles: two in men’s gymnastics, one in women’s indoor track and field, and one in women’s outdoor track and field. Illinois has won seventeen titles: nine in men’s gymnastics, five in men’s outdoor track and field, two in men’s fencing, and one in men’s tennis. North Dakota has won seven men’s ice hockey titles. Utah has won twenty titles: ten in coed skiing, nine in women’s gymnastics, and one in men’s basketball. See NCAA, \textit{How Many Division I National Championships Has Your School Won?} http://www.ncaa.org/champadmin/champs_listing1.html (last verified after 2005 spring championships).
\textsuperscript{72} Id.
\textsuperscript{74} Intercollegiate Tennis Assn., \textit{Fila Collegiate Tennis Rankings}, http://itatennis.com/Div1Rankings/d1men_5_1_06.htm (May 1, 2006).
seed in the tournament, because the team was told that it would have to travel to the University of Louisville—the home site of a lower-seeded team—because of Illinois' continued use of Native American imagery. "We are very disappointed that we don't have the ability to host," Illinois Coach Brad Dancer said. "We'll be working on loading up the buses and getting as many Illini faithful to Louisville as possible."

While the outlook was grim for the eighteen offending schools, the NCAA maintained that those institutions would be allowed to appeal their potential exclusion from NCAA championships, and on August 19, 2005, the NCAA published its appeals process. The NCAA noted that the "primary factor" in evaluating appeals would be "documentation" that "a 'namesake' tribe has formally approved of the use of the mascot, name and imagery by the institution" but added that other factors unique to each school could also be considered. Bernard Franklin, the NCAA's senior vice-president for governance and membership, would accept the appeals and would chair a staff committee composed of members designated by the Executive Committee. That committee would then decide whether a school should remain on the NCAA's list. If that appeal were to be rejected, an institution would be given the opportunity to appeal to the NCAA's Executive Committee. If this second appeal was denied, an institution would be subject to the restrictions set forth in the policy.

Since it announced its policy on Native American imagery in August 2005, the NCAA has granted and rejected numerous appeals. Five schools were successful in all aspects of their appeals because they secured the approval of what the NCAA termed "a namesake tribe." FSU, The University of Utah, Central Michigan University, Brad Bernard was governing UND's and governance/committees/governance and coached Illinois. NCAA sports/m-tennis/spec-rel/050306aaa.html

77. It is typical for the NCAA to allow higher-seeded teams to host events that are not pre-determined. NCAA Manual, supra n. 21 at § 31.1.3.2.3, 422 ("When a championship site is not predetermined, the governing sports committee may award the site to the higher ranked team.").
78. Ill. Athletics, supra n. 76.
79. 
80. NCAA, supra n. 26.
82. Id.
83. id.
84. Id.
85. Id.; see also NCAA, NCAA Governance Organization Chart, http://www2.ncaa.org/legislation_and_governance/committees/governance_org_chart.html (accessed Jan. 29, 2007). After the NCAA denied UND's first appeal, UND thought that it had two more appeals within the NCAA, but it later learned that this was incorrect and it would only have one more appeal. Kupchella, supra n. 70, at 14.
86. NCAA, supra n. 81.
87. Id.
Catawba College, and Mississippi College all found a local tribe that would support them in the NCAA’s appeals process. Catawba College student-athletes must be referred to as the “Catawba Indians.”

Eleven schools have agreed to change their use of imagery, their mascots, or their nicknames. The Carthage College men’s teams will go by Red Men instead of Redmen. Chowan College will be known as the Hawks instead of the Braves. The University of Louisiana at Monroe will use the nickname Warhawks instead of Indians. Midwestern State University will be the Mustangs instead of the Indians. Southeastern Oklahoma State University will use the nickname Savage Storm instead of the Savages. Indiana University of Pennsylvania will now be the Crimson Hawks instead of the Indians. Student-athletes at Northeastern (Oklahoma) State University—which was pressured by the NCAA to change its nickname after being inadvertently left off the original list—will be known as RiverHawks instead of Redmen. McMurry University has decided not to use a nickname at all. The College of William and Mary Tribe reluctantly decided to take the feathers off its logo.

Illinois agreed to retire its controversial mascot, Chief Illiniwek, after the

(Sept. 2, 2005).
90. Id.
93. NCAA, supra n. 91.
94. NCAA, Statement by NCAA Senior Vice-President for Governance and Membership Bernard Franklin on Carthage College and Midwestern State University, http://www2.ncaa.org/media_and_events/press_room/2005/november/20051109_carthage_midwestern_stmt.html (Nov. 9, 2005).
100. April Marciszewski, NSU: From Redmen to RiverHawks, Tulsa World A14 (Nov. 15, 2006); see also Marciszewski, supra n. 26.
104. Chief Illiniwek is Illinois’ mascot and may be the most documented and most controversial of all college mascots. He is known for his coordinated dances at football, basketball, and volleyball contests. He has been the subject of numerous protests and has even had a book written about him. See Ill. Athletics, Chief Illiniwek, http://fightingillini.collegesports.com/trads/ill-trads-thechief.html (accessed Jan. 30, 2007); see generally Carol Spindel, Dancing at Halftime (N.Y.U. Press 2000).
NCAA denied both of the school’s appeals. The NCAA also determined that Illinois could not use a logo depicting a Native American with a feathered headdress. The school is permitted to go by Illini or Fighting Illini because those terms are tied to the State of Illinois’ name.

The most surprising of the institutions that agreed to discontinue use of Native American imagery was Newberry College. The school’s president, Mitchell M. Zais, was originally one of the most vocal critics of the NCAA’s policy:

Newberry College has no intention of changing its nickname. Changing at this time would indicate that we did not truly believe in the validity of our appeal, or that our moral compass was subject to be swayed by the collective opinion of the NCAA Executive Council.

Our participation in postseason play will not be affected since we have uniforms that do not bear what the NCAA deems ‘offending’ or ‘offensive’ marks. We are sorry that the NCAA feels that Newberry is unfit to host postseason play because of a nickname that our athletic teams have borne for nearly a century.

But after the football team finished the 2006 regular season with a 10–1 record—the best in school history—the school’s president changed his tune and acquiesced to the NCAA. The school agreed to come into compliance with the NCAA’s policy by the fall of 2008 if the NCAA would allow Newberry College to host NCAA championship events.

The NCAA placed Bradley University on a “Watch List” because the school no longer used Native American imagery to promote its teams with the exception of its nickname, Braves. The NCAA will observe the school’s use of Native American imagery for five years.

Two schools have neither appealed their placement on the list nor taken any action to alter their nicknames or mascots and, therefore, remain subject to the NCAA’s championship restrictions. Arkansas State University—known as the Indians—has

---

105. See NCAA, Press Release, Statement by NCAA Senior Vice-President for Governance and Membership Bernard Franklin on University of Illinois, Champaign Review, http://www.ncaa.org/wp/wp/ut/p/kxml/04_Sj9SPykssy0xPMLMnMz0vDM0Y_QjKLNN4j3CQXjgFjGayRqCOCaAFFj_zcVH1v_QDgztzQiHJHRUAAc0tpTA!!/delta/base64xml/L3dJdyEvUUd3QndNQSEvNEIVRS82XzBTFU!?CONTENT_URL=http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/media_and_events/press_room/2005/november/20051111_illinois_mascot_stmnt.html (Nov. 11, 2005); NCAA, supra n. 23.

106. Id.


108. Supra n. 104.

109. Zais, supra n. 54.


113. Id.

114. Associated Press, Arkansas State Still the Indians; La.-Monroe Now Called Warhawks,
"no immediate need to change the school’s mascot." The school has stated that it would cost $250,000 to make the changes necessary to comply with the NCAA’s policy. Alcorn State University—nicknamed the Braves—has not commented on the NCAA’s policy in its website or in the media.

That leaves UND. In October 2006, the Attorney General of North Dakota filed suit against the NCAA and requested a preliminary injunction against the application of the NCAA’s policy. The lawsuit alleges that the NCAA breached its contract with the school, breached the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing in its contract with the school, and violated North Dakota anti-trust law. Following a hearing on the motion for injunctive relief, the North Dakota state court granted UND’s request for a temporary injunction. The court later set a trial date for December 10, 2007, but urged the parties to settle. Both parties refuse to budge.

This comment argues that the NCAA arbitrarily and capriciously applied its policy on Native American imagery to UND—a claim which falls under UND’s allegation that the NCAA breached its implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing with UND. Part II catalogues the history of the Native American mascot controversy. Part III details the NCAA’s status as a private actor, examines its relationship with its member institutions in this context, and compares the NCAA’s application of its policy on Native American imagery to FSU—a school that won its first appeal with the NCAA—with the organization’s application of its policy to UND.

II. BACKGROUND

The controversy surrounding the use of Native American mascots in educational settings began in 1968 when the National Congress of American Indians championed the movement to remove stereotypical Native American imagery from the media. In

115. Id. 116. Id.
120. Joseph’s Memo., supra n. 63, at 3.
123. Founded in 1944, NCAI’s mission is to “secure... the rights and benefits to which [American Indians] are entitled; to enlighten the public toward the better understanding of the Indian people; to preserve rights under Indian treaties or agreements with the United States; and to promote the common welfare of the American Indians and Alaska Natives.” NCAI, Our History, http://www.ncai.org/About.8.0.html (accessed Jan. 30, 2007).
124. Am. Indian Sports Team Mascots, Chronology: Over 35 Years of Effort Addressing the Use of
1972, students at the University of Oklahoma pressured school authorities into halting the appearances of Little Red, a man who danced while wearing traditional Native American dress, at school events. Several universities followed suit as Stanford University changed from Indians to Cardinal, Dartmouth College students decided to go by Big Green instead of Indians, and, several years later, Syracuse University opted to use Orange as its mascot instead of the Saltine Warrior, a prior mascot. Since the early 1970s, at least twenty-three four-year colleges and universities have chosen to distance themselves from nicknames, traditions, official mascots, or unofficial mascots that could be traced back to Native American history. This number does not include those schools that decided to change after being subjected to the NCAA’s policy.

Universities with non-Native American mascots or nicknames have also taken a stand on the practice. The NCAA praised two such schools for their policies against the use of Native American imagery during athletic events held on their campuses. The University of Iowa and the University of Wisconsin do not schedule athletic contests against universities that use Native American imagery in promoting their teams or allow such imagery on their campuses. The University of Iowa’s policy provides,

---


125. The tradition of Little Red began when white students attempted to mimic Native American dance while wearing what was thought to be Native American clothing. After dissent by Native American students, the university had Native Americans dress up and dance. Still unsatisfied, Native American students formed a chapter of the Native Indian Youth Council and protested the use of the mascot by conducting a sit-in front of the university president’s office. Little Red was retired soon thereafter. See Suzan Shown Harjo, Chief Offenders, http://www.nativepeoples.com/site/np_features/np_articles/1999summer-article/su99-mascots.html (accessed Jan. 30, 2007).


129. See Am. Indian Sports Team Mascots, supra n. 124.

130. NCAA, supra n. 23.


132. The University of Wisconsin’s policy discourages visiting athletic opponents from bringing Native American mascots on the campus and visiting bands and cheerleaders from performing war chants, opposes the sale of gear donning Native American logos, and requires that athletic teams not schedule contests against institutions that use Native American mascots or logos. See U. Wis. Am. Indian Student Academic Servs., University of Wisconsin Athletic Department Policy on Native American Logos and Names, http://www.lssaa.wisc.edu/aisas/policy.php (Sept. 19, 1993).
"[i]t is the view of the [Presidential Committee on Athletics] that the use of Native American mascots by athletic teams is demeaning and offensive. The use of dance, music, symbols, or other behavioral representations of Native Americans trivializes that culture and is also offensive."133 While those two schools are members of the Big Ten Conference with Illinois,134 and must compete against Illinois dozens of times each year135 as members of the same conference, they do not allow Illinois' mascot, Chief Illiniwek, to come on their campuses.136

The campaign to end the use of Native American imagery in nicknames and mascots in educational settings has not been limited to colleges and universities. Over 125 school districts and elementary, middle, and high schools have stopped using Native American mascots in the past thirty years.137 Since 1997, education boards for the State of New York,138 the State of Michigan,139 and the City of Los Angeles140 have supported the elimination of Native American imagery in public schools. The City of Los Angeles Board of Education found that the use of Native American mascots "evokes negative images that become deeply embedded in the minds of students" and depicts "American Indians in inaccurate, stereotypic, and often violent manners."141

The area with the least amount of success has been the professional sports arena. Most high-profile professional sports teams have kept Native American nicknames and mascots. These teams include the Atlanta Braves,142 the Chicago Blackhawks,143 the Cleveland Indians,144 the Kansas City Chiefs,145 and the Washington Redskins.146 Several Major League Baseball farm teams147 have retained Native American nicknames and logos including the Cleveland Indians' single-A Kinston Indians,148 the Cleveland

133. U. Iowa, supra n. 131.
141. Id.
Indians’ rookie league Gulf Coast League Indians, and the Pittsburgh Pirates’ triple-A Indianapolis Indians.

There are some examples of Major League Baseball farm teams changing their nicknames. The Peoria Chiefs kept its nickname but changed its logo to a Dalmatian dressed as a fire chief. The Akron Aeros, a Cleveland Indians double-A affiliate, changed its nickname from Indians in 1996. The Syracuse Chiefs organization, the Toronto Blue Jays triple-A affiliate, changed its name to SkyChiefs in 1996. The Syracuse team reverted back to Chiefs in 2006 but the team chose to use a locomotive in its logo instead of Native American imagery.

Opponents of Native American imagery in schools and professional sports have used the courts to try to stop the practice of using such imagery for nicknames and mascots. School districts, universities, and professional sports teams have been put on the defensive in suits where plaintiffs attacked the use of Native American symbolism with a myriad of legal theories. The first such challenge came in 1972 when more than a dozen individuals filed suit against the Cleveland Indians Baseball Club seeking $9 million dollars in damages and injunctive relief in requesting that the team stop using its mascot, Chief Wahoo. Two of the plaintiffs, Russell Means and Jerome War Bonnet, allegedly settled the suit secretly for $30,000. The settlement purportedly promised the Cleveland Indians club that no other Native American individuals or organizations would sue the Cleveland Indians again.

In 1992, a group of seven Native Americans brought a group libel suit against the Washington Redskins claiming that the Redskins logo should not receive federal trademark protection because it violated section 2(a) of the Lanham Trademark Act of 1946. The plaintiffs called the team’s logo and use of Redskins as its nickname “pejorative, derogatory, degrading, offensive, scandalous, contemptuous, disreputable, disparaging and [a] racist” designation for a Native American person. The Trademark Trial and Appeal Board sided with the plaintiffs in holding that the trademark disparaged

---

149. Id.  
153. See Daniel J. Trainor, Student Author, Native American Mascots, Schools, and the Title VI Hostile Environment Analysis, 1995 U. Ill. L. Rev. 971, 975–76.  
155. Id.  
156. Group libel suits are more common in Canadian courts. Trainor, supra n. 153, at 975–76.  
157. Harjo v. Pro-Football, Inc., 50 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1705, 1708 (P.T.O. 1999). The Lanham Act provides, “No trademark . . . shall be refused registration . . . unless it—(a) Consists of or comprises immoral, deceptive, or scandalous matter; or (b) consists of or comprises matter which may disparage or falsely suggest a connection with persons, living or dead, institutions, beliefs, or national symbols, or bring them into contempt, or disrepute.” 15 U.S.C. § 1052(a) (2000).  
Native Americans. On appeal to the District of D.C., the defendants asserted the equitable defense of laches in claiming that all of the plaintiffs were born at the time of the first Redskins' trademark in 1967, were aware of the Washington Redskins most of their lives, and slept on their rights to challenge the Redskins' logo. The District of D.C. sided with the defendants, but in 2005, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals held that one of the plaintiffs was not subject to the laches defense because he was one year old in 1967 and could not have been cognizant of the Redskins' logo at that age. The D.C. Circuit remanded the case back to the District of D.C., which recently denied a motion by the plaintiffs for "further, limited discovery."

In 1994, a woman filed suit in a Wisconsin state court claiming that the Mosinee School District discriminated against its Native American students, particularly her children, by using a Native American mascot and logo. The plaintiffs lost in the trial court and on appeal. The appellate court stated that the logo was not discriminatory because a reasonable person would not be offended by it and something must be offensive from a subjective and objective standard for it to be discriminatory.

The most recent lawsuit came in 2001. The plaintiffs were professors and students at Illinois who claimed that the university's mascot, Chief Illiniwek, created a "hostile environment" for Native Americans and wanted to contact student-athletes who were being recruited by the university to inform the student-athletes of this practice. A member of Illinois' athletic department staff informed the plaintiffs that they were not permitted to contact prospective student-athletes pursuant to NCAA rules. The plaintiffs sued the university's chancellor on the basis that the chancellor had violated their First Amendment rights. The plaintiffs won in the trial court and on appeal. They continue to write letters and specifically target student-athletes being recruited by the Illinois' men's basketball program.

Courts have been lukewarm to challenges to the use of Native American mascots, nicknames, and logos, and little has been accomplished through the legal system except that two plaintiffs walked away with a small settlement and another group of plaintiffs gained permission to write letters to high school students. However, Chief Wahoo is still the logo for the Cleveland Indians, the Washington Redskins' helmets are still

159. Harjo, 50 U.S.P.Q.2d at 1748.
162. Id at 50.
165. Id. at *3.
166. Id.
167. Supra n. 104.
169. Id.
170. Id.
171. Id.
172. Id. at 1137.
173. Crue v. Aiken, 370 F.3d 668 (7th Cir. 2004).
175. Cleveland Indians, supra n. 144.
decorated with their Indian-head logo, students in Wisconsin’s Mosinee School District are still referred to as the Indians, and Illinois still has one of the nation’s top basketball teams. With the NCAA’s policy, however, the tables have turned, and institutions of higher education that insist on utilizing Native American imagery to promote their athletic teams may have found an impenetrable opponent in the NCAA.

III. Litigation Involving the NCAA and Schools Subject to the NCAA’s Restrictions on Native American Imagery at NCAA Championships

UND faces an uphill battle in litigation with the NCAA. The U.S. Supreme Court has determined that the NCAA is a private membership organization and not a state actor. Since the Civil Rights Cases of 1883, the Court has held that private actors do not guarantee Fourteenth Amendment protections to others. This distinction as a private actor affords a membership organization like the NCAA the opportunity to use its judgment in interpreting any bylaws set forth by its members without judicial intervention. A private organization, however, cannot act arbitrarily and capriciously in applying its bylaws to its members. UND claims that the NCAA breached its contractual duty of an implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing, and couched in that claim is an assertion that the NCAA arbitrarily and capriciously applied its policy on Native American imagery to UND. While this is difficult to prove, there is evidence that suggests the NCAA has not been even-handed in applying its policy.

A. The NCAA As a Private Actor

The NCAA is “a diverse, voluntary, unincorporated Association of four-year colleges and universities, conferences, affiliated associations and other educational institutions.” Until the late 1980s, there was a split of authority as to whether the NCAA was a state actor or private entity, but courts typically held that the NCAA was a state actor and had to provide its members procedural due process. The face of intercollegiate athletics changed in 1988 when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its

176. Wash. Redskins, supra n. 146.
180. “No state shall make or enforce any law which shall . . . deny to any person . . . the equal protection of the laws.” U.S. Const. amend. XIV. Equal protection does not apply to private conduct even if it is discriminatory or wrongful. Shelley v. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1 (1948); Civil Rights Cases, 109 U.S. 3 (1883).
181. Ind. High Sch. Athletic Assn. v. Avant, 650 N.E.2d 1164, 1167 (quoting State ex rel. Givens v. Super Ct. of Marion Co., 117 N.E.2d 553 (Ind. 1954) (“A voluntary association may, without direction or interference by the courts, for its government, adopt a constitution, by-laws, rules and regulations which will control as to all questions of discipline, or internal policy and management, and its right to interpret and administer the same is as sacred as the right to make them.”)).
183. See NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 4.02.1.22.
184. See John C. Weistart & Cym H. Lowell, The Law of Sports 34 (Bobbs-Merrill 1979) (providing the following cases as support for this contention: Regents of U. of Minn. v. NCAA, 560 F.2d 352 (8th Cir. 1977); Associated Students, Inc. v. NCAA, 493 F.2d 1251 (9th Cir. 1974); Colo. Seminary v NCAA, 417 F. Supp. 885 (D. Colo. 1976)).
decision in *NCAA v. Tarkanian*. In *Tarkanian*, the Court determined that the NCAA was a private membership organization and could promulgate and enforce its own rules without providing procedural due process protections to its members.

The facts in *Tarkanian* dated back to 1973 when Jerry Tarkanian accepted the men’s basketball coaching position at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) after a successful stint as the head coach at Long Beach State University. Within six days of his arrival in Las Vegas, the NCAA reopened an investigation into the men’s basketball program at UNLV. Less than three years later, the NCAA cited UNLV’s men’s basketball program for thirty-eight rules violations with ten of these allegations being linked to Tarkanian. The NCAA placed UNLV’s men’s basketball program on probation for two years and ordered the school to either sever its ties with Tarkanian or show cause as to why it should not receive further sanctions. In response to the NCAA’s decision, UNLV ordered Tarkanian to dissociate himself from UNLV’s athletic program for two years.

Tarkanian filed suit in state court against UNLV claiming that the school violated his procedural due process rights, and he later amended his complaint to add the NCAA as a defendant. The Nevada Supreme Court determined that the NCAA was a state actor and was required to provide procedural due process protections to Tarkanian for two reasons. First, the NCAA was comprised of state institutions or institutions supported by the federal government. Second, the state was usually the entity that disciplines a state employee, but, in this case, the state, through UNLV, was disciplining Tarkanian only because the NCAA demanded that UNLV do so. Therefore, the Nevada Supreme Court determined that the NCAA and UNLV were disciplining Tarkanian, thus making the NCAA a state actor.

The U.S. Supreme Court disagreed. It determined that the NCAA did not change from private actor to state actor when UNLV imposed disciplinary sanctions suggested by the NCAA. The Court determined “that the source of the legislation adopted by the NCAA is ... the collective membership, speaking through an organization that is independent of any particular state,” and that the NCAA did not

---

186. Id.
189. Broyles, supra n. 187, at 504.
190. *Tarkanian*, 488 U.S. at 185–86.
191. Id. at 186.
192. Id. at 187.
193. Id. at 187–88.
194. Id. at 190.
196. Id.
197. Id. at 199.
198. Id. at 195–98.
199. Id. at 193.
have a strong enough connection with any one state to be considered a state actor. The Court also reasoned that UNLV was an active participant in establishing the organization's rules and UNLV accepted those rules through its voluntary membership in the organization. The Court stated:

By joining the NCAA, each member agrees to abide by and to enforce such rules.

Neither UNLV's decision to adopt the NCAA's standards nor its minor role in their formulation is a sufficient reason for concluding that the NCAA was acting under color of Nevada law when it promulgated standards governing athlete recruitment, eligibility, and academic performance.

The Court maintained that UNLV retained the right to leave the organization even if the alternatives were "unpalatable," and the university could change the rules through the NCAA's legislation process if it deemed the rules "harsh, unfair, or unwieldy."

Tarkanian established that the NCAA is a private actor even though some of its members were state actors and those state actors enforce the NCAA's rules. The general rule is that a private membership organization should be permitted "to 'paddle [its] own canoe' without unwarranted interference from the courts." Courts consider decisions made by a private membership organization to be conclusive because courts do not want to substitute their judgment for the judgment of a membership's tribunal.

But there are exceptions to this rule. Courts will not allow a private entity to act mistakenly, fraudulently, collusively, or arbitrarily. While mistake, fraud, and collusion do not apply in the NCAA's application of its policy, UND may be successful in arguing that the NCAA has acted arbitrarily and capriciously in the application of its policy on the use of Native American imagery at NCAA championships.

B. Alleging That the NCAA ActedArbitrarily and Capriciously in Applying Its Policy

The leading case involving a claim that the NCAA arbitrarily applied its rules is NCAA v. Lasege. Muhammed Lasege was one of a trio of talented basketball

201. Id. at 193–94.
203. Id. at 195.
204. Id. at 199 n. 19. In dictum, the Court stated that even if the NCAA had a monopoly, that did not mean its actions were under color of state law. Id. at 198–99.
205. Id. at 195.
206. NCAA v. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d 77, 83 (Ky. 2001); see also Shelton v. NCAA, 539 F.2d 1197, 1198 (9th Cir. 1976) ("It is not judicial business to tell a voluntary athletic association how best to formulate or enforce its rules.").
207. See Weistart & Lowell, supra n. 184, at 37–38.
208. Arbitrary is defined as "[d]epending on individual discretion; specifically, determined by a judge rather than by fixed rules, procedures, or law" or "a judicial decision[] founded on prejudice or preference rather than on reason or fact." Black's Law Dictionary 112 (Bryan A. Garner ed., 8th ed., West 2004).
209. 53 S.W.3d 77.
players from Nigeria who wanted to play intercollegiate basketball in the U.S. The three players left their homeland for Russia because they thought it would be easier to acquire a visa to enter the U.S. from that nation. Lasege accepted an $800 airline ticket to travel from Nigeria to Russia and signed a contract with an agent to play in Moscow's professional basketball league. Lasege was supposed to be paid a $9,000 annual salary, but he claimed that he only received enough money to cover his room and board. There were also allegations that Lasege signed a second professional contract and received more funds for traveling and playing basketball.

Lasege eventually found his way to the United States, signed an athletic scholarship with the University of Louisville (Louisville) in the spring of 1999, and enrolled at the school during the 1999-2000 academic year. In March of 2000, Louisville discovered Lasege's prior status as a professional athlete and declared him ineligible to play at the university. Louisville requested that the NCAA reinstate Lasege's eligibility because Lasege was unaware of the NCAA's rules on amateurism prior to his arrival in the United States and because other mitigating circumstances existed.

The NCAA's Student-Athlete Reinstatement Staff determined that Lasege had violated NCAA bylaws regarding contracts and compensation, the use of agents, and preferential treatment, benefits, or services. Based on these violations, the Student-Athlete Reinstatement Staff determined that Lasege could not participate in intercollegiate athletics at Louisville or any other NCAA institution. Louisville appealed Lasege's ineligible status, but the Division I Subcommittee on Student-Athlete

210. Benjamin Eze and Uche Okafor were the other two athletes.
211. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80.
212. Id. at 81.
213. Id.
214. Id.
215. Id.
217. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80.
218. Id.
219. “Subject to review by the Academics/Eligibility/Compliance Cabinet, the student-athlete reinstatement staff is authorized to apply the eligibility rules of the division.” NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 21.7.6.2.3.2.3.1(a), 385.
220. NCAA Bylaw 12.2.5.1 is the same as current NCAA Bylaw 12.2.5. It provides that “[a]n individual shall be ineligible for participation in an intercollegiate sport if he or she has entered into any kind of agreement to compete in professional athletics, either orally or in writing, regardless of the legal enforceability of that agreement.” Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80 n. 2; NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 12.2.5, 76.
221. NCAA Bylaw 12.3.1 is currently the same as it was when Lasege was decided. It provides that “[a]n individual shall be ineligible for participation in an intercollegiate sport if he or she ever has agreed (orally or in writing) to be represented by an agent for the purpose of marketing his or her athletics ability or reputation in that sport.” Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80 n. 3; NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 12.3.1, 76.
222. NCAA Bylaw 12.1.1 provides that “[a]n individual loses amateur status and thus shall not be eligible for intercollegiate competition in a particular sport if the individual: (a) uses his or her athletics skill (directly or indirectly) for pay in any form in that sport.” Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80 n. 4; NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 12.1.1.70. The Lasege court also looked to the NCAA definition of pay and prohibited forms of pay. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80 n. 4; NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, §§ 12.1.1.1, 12.1.1.6, 70, 72.
223. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80.
224. U. Louisville Athletics, supra n. 216.
Reinstatement denied the appeal after finding that Lasege’s “violations exhibited a clear intent to professionalize.”

On November 27, 2000, Lasege and Louisville filed a motion in Kentucky state court seeking a temporary injunction requiring the NCAA to overturn its decision by reinstating Lasege’s eligibility. The parties also asked the court to prohibit the NCAA from seeking restitution under NCAA Bylaw 19.8 should an injunction be granted and later set aside or reversed. The trial court conducted an evidentiary hearing and found that the NCAA had acted arbitrarily in applying its own rules and that NCAA Bylaw 19.8 was invalid.

The trial court offered four rationales for its decision. First, it found mitigating circumstances related to “economic and cultural disadvantages,” ignorance of NCAA rules, and “elements of coercion associated with execution of the contracts.” Second, the trial court determined that the NCAA’s ruling on Lasege’s eligibility was inconsistent with previous cases involving similar facts to Lasege’s situation and conflicted with the organization’s stance on amateurism. Third, the trial court found that one of the contracts Lasege signed in Russia was unenforceable because he was a minority at the time it was signed. Finally, Lasege’s intent in committing these violations was not to become a professional athlete but rather to ultimately become an amateur athlete in the U.S. Additionally, the court determined that NCAA Bylaw 19.8 was “invalid because it prevents parties from availing themselves of the protections of the courts.

In a scathing opinion, the Supreme Court of Kentucky vacated the injunction citing an abuse of discretion by the trial court. The Court determined that the trial court had improperly substituted its judgment for that of the NCAA and took issue with the court’s use of mitigating evidence in examining whether Lasege had intended to compete professionally in Russia. The Court concluded that the trial court had unfairly tipped

225. “After the student-athlete reinstatement staff has acted on a reinstatement matter, the involved institution may appeal the decision to the Committee on Student-Athlete Reinstatement. The committee’s determination shall be final, binding and conclusive and shall not be subject to further review by the Management Council or any other authority.” See NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 21.7.6.2.3.2.3.1(b), 385.
226. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 81.
227. Old NCAA Bylaw 19.8 is the current NCAA Bylaw 19.7. It states that, should a court conflict with the NCAA’s opinion on a student-athlete’s eligibility and that court’s opinion is later “voluntarily vacated, stayed or reversed” or determined by another court to be unjustified, the NCAA can seek restitution including, among other things, that team victories in which the ineligible student-athlete competed be forfeited, that the ineligible student-athlete’s institution remit television receipts, and that a fine be assessed to any institution which was represented by an ineligible student-athlete. For the old Bylaw 19.8, review Lasege, 53 S.W.3d 89. For the new Bylaw 19.7, review NCAA, Manual, supra n. 21, at § 19.7, 350–51.
228. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 80, 86.
229. Id. at 80, 85.
230. Id. at 81–82.
231. Id.
232. Id. at 82.
233. Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 82.
234. Id.
235. Id. at 86.
236. Id. at 84.
237. Id. at 85.
the scales in Lasege’s favor when it neglected to consider the NCAA’s perspective.\textsuperscript{238} It also concluded that the NCAA had not acted arbitrarily in applying its rules because the organization’s decision was sufficiently supported by the evidence.\textsuperscript{239} The court stated, “a ruling is arbitrary . . . only where it is ‘clearly erroneous,’ and by ‘clearly erroneous’ we mean unsupported by substantial evidence.”\textsuperscript{240}

As to the trial court’s invalidation of NCAA Bylaw 19.8, the court discussed how Louisville had contracted to be a member of the NCAA and abide by the NCAA’s rules.\textsuperscript{241} The court relied upon \textit{Indiana High School Athletic Association v. Reyes}\textsuperscript{242} in finding that the NCAA’s restitution clause “allows for post-hoc equalization when a trial [court]” acts erroneously in balancing the competing interests of institutions which use ineligible student-athletes in competitions against those which do not.\textsuperscript{243}

The \textit{Lasege} Court’s finding that the NCAA did not act arbitrarily is consistent with other legal challenges made by student-athletes and members to the organization’s interpretation of its rules. In 1996, Darren Phillip filed suit in Connecticut state court seeking injunctive relief against Fairfield University and the NCAA after the NCAA determined he was academically ineligible and Fairfield University prohibited him from playing for its basketball team.\textsuperscript{244} Phillip claimed that the NCAA had breached its contractual duties of good faith and fair dealing by denying him the right to compete.\textsuperscript{245} The trial court found that the NCAA’s “refusal to grant a waiver was arbitrary” because others in similar situations had been granted exceptions.\textsuperscript{246} However, the appellate court vacated the judgment in finding that the NCAA did not act in “bad faith simply by acting arbitrarily.”\textsuperscript{247}

The NCAA has also been alleged to have applied its rules arbitrarily towards corporate entities that are members of the NCAA. In the early 2000s, the Hispanic College Fund (HCF) brought suit against the NCAA,\textsuperscript{248} challenging a new NCAA rule that stated, beginning in 2002, exempted football games\textsuperscript{249} could only be sponsored by

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 85–86.
\item Id. at 85.
\item Id. (quoting \textit{Thurman v. Meridian Mut. Ins. Co.}, 345 S.W.2d 635, 639 (Ky. 1961)).
\item Id. at 87.
\item 694 N.E.2d 249 (Ind. 1997).
\item If a school wants to enjoy the benefits of membership in the [Indiana High School Athletic Association], the school agrees to be subject to rule that permits the [Indiana High School Athletic Association] to require the school to forfeit victories, trophies, titles, and earnings if a trial court improperly grants an injunction . . . prohibiting enforcement of [Indiana High School Athletic Association] eligibility rules.
\item Id. at 257.
\item Lasege, 53 S.W.3d at 88.
\item \textit{Phillip v. Fairfield U.}, 118 F.3d 131, 132–33 (2d Cir. 1997).
\item Id. at 134–35.
\item Id. at 135.
\item Id.
\item \textit{Hispanic College Fund, Inc. v. NCAA (HCF)}, 826 N.E.2d 652 (Ind. App. 2005).
\item The HCF court described exempted football games:
\item Prior to 1999, the NCAA permitted Division I schools to play a maximum of eleven football games. However, a Division I school could participate once every four years in an "exempted" preseason football game, i.e., one that was certified by the Championships/Competition Cabinet and would not count toward the eleven-game limit.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
members that already had contracts to televise the contests. At the time the legislation was passed, only one member—the Black Coaches Association—fell within this category. In 2001, members who wanted to sponsor exempted football games appealed within the organization, and the NCAA granted their waivers for one year. After the 2002 football season, however, the NCAA stated that only the Black Coaches Association could sponsor such contests. The HCF still wanted to sponsor exempted football games, so it turned to the legal system. Both in the trial court and on appeal, the NCAA was granted judgment on the pleadings. The appellate court reiterated that a court will not interfere with decisions made by a private membership organization. The court, however, went further in stating that "the actions of a voluntary membership association with respect to a member cannot be reviewed under an arbitrariness standard." This latter claim is unsupported by any case law beyond HCF.

From Lasege to HCF, it is apparent that UND bears a heavy burden in trying to convince a court that the NCAA has acted arbitrarily and capriciously in applying its own rules. But the NCAA’s Native American imagery ban may be such a case.

C Whether the NCAA Acted Arbitrarily and Capriciously in the Application of Its Native American Mascot Policy to the University of North Dakota

UND asserts that the NCAA breached its contractual duty of an implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing by applying its Native American imagery policy in an arbitrary and capricious manner. A comparison between FSU, an institution whose use of Native American imagery is permitted at NCAA championships, and UND, a school whose use of Native American imagery is prohibited from NCAA championships, may convince a court that the NCAA has not applied its policy fairly.

UND has two arguments that the NCAA unjustly kept it on the list after removing FSU. First, at the time the policy was effected, the two schools held disparate power in governmental and organizational politics which inherently put UND at a disadvantage in the NCAA’s promulgation of such a policy. Second, the NCAA’s policy falls short of its goal of eliminating imagery at its championships through its use of a subjective standard which hinges upon a misapplied “namesake tribe” approval.

1. Political Considerations

The NCAA did not intend to keep FSU from hosting NCAA championship events

In January of 1999, the Division I Board of Directors adopted a proposal to eliminate after the 2002 season the certified preseason games and to establish a twelfth regular season game for those institutions that had a fourteen-week season. If a school chose to participate in a certified preseason games in 2002, it could not participate in a twelfth regular season game that year.

250. Id. at 654.
251. Id. at 654–55.
252. Id. at 655.
253. Id. at 656.
254. HCF, 826 N.E.2d at 653–54.
255. Id. at 655.
256. Id. (citing Reyes, 694 N.E.2d at 256).
when it issued its policy because the NCAA knew it would face legal and political challenges from a powerful coalition of FSU alumni who serve in political office. UND and other similarly-situated schools, the NCAA knew or should have known, did not have the political clout to put up the type of battle that a school like FSU could; thus, the NCAA pushed its Native American policy on those less-powerful institutions and gave a pass to FSU.

FSU was well-represented in the political landscape of the fourth-most-populated state in the United States at the time the policy was issued.258 FSU alumni accounted for one member of the U.S. Senate,259 one member of the U.S. House of Representatives,260 three members of the Florida Senate,261 and twenty members of the Florida House of Representatives.262 These former Seminoles held such high-ranking positions as Florida Senate majority leader,263 Florida House speaker,264 and Florida House minority leader.265 An FSU student-athlete was serving as an aide to Florida Governor Jeb Bush.266 The same year that the policy was issued, Governor Bush admitted to text-messaging a high school student-athlete being recruited by the FSU football team and urging that student-athlete to play for FSU.267 FSU’s alumni have not been afraid to throw their weight around the state legislature on behalf of their alma mater.268 In the mid-1990s, a $90 million facelift given to the school’s football stadium was attributed to the work of FSU alumni.269

If the NCAA was not aware of this political power before the announcement of its policy, the NCAA became acutely aware of it when, just days after the NCAA announced its new policy, the Florida legislature debated whether it should compose a bill to protect its universities from the NCAA’s ban.270 The FSU Board of Trustees—which is closely tied to the state’s legislature—threatened an “assault” on the NCAA

265. Id.
269. Id.
270. Associated Press, supra n. 37.
after the policy was announced. The FSU Board of Trustees hired a lawyer and threw out the words “anti-trust”—possibly to intimidate the NCAA because the organization has lost anti-trust lawsuits in previous legal challenges.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida—which gave FSU approval to use the “Seminoles” nickname—is also conscious of this political power. All tribes rely on federal politicians because they make decisions affecting Native American communities. Native American tribes have recently begun making significant political campaign donations to lobby for their causes. Tribes know that they must maintain a strong relationship with federal and state legislatures if they are to have political support on tribal objectives such as casinos. From the late 1990s until 2001, tribal leaders devoted $40 million to finance political campaigns—including an increase from $128,000 in 1991 to $2.9 million in 2000 on federal elections. The Seminole Tribe of Florida reaps financial gains from six casinos in the state—money it can use to lobby state and federal government. In 2000, the Seminole Tribe of Florida donated $325,000 to federal campaign contributions because it wanted electronic gaming machines in its casinos and the Florida State Legislature opposed the machines. The Seminole Tribe of Florida got its machines. Lending the Seminole name to one of the state’s universities—and the alma mater of powerful state and federal legislators—would be the equivalent of a free donation by the Seminole Tribe of Florida to FSU alumni and supporters who represent the people of Florida.

UND is not as powerful. While it has an alumnus representing North Dakota in the U.S. Senate and an alumnus is the state’s only member of the U.S. House of Representatives, the state ranks forty-eighth in state population, making it an afterthought in national politics. Native Americans comprise the state’s largest minority population and pose a more independent contingent than those in Florida. North Dakota tribes do not have to accommodate UND alumni who are North Dakota politicians as the Seminole Tribe of Florida must accommodate FSU alumni who are

271. Marc Caputo, Notes Ready to Fight for Name, Miami Herald D1 (Aug. 11, 2005).
272. Id.
274. See e.g. Tony Thornton, State Tribes Could Lose Big with Proposal, Daily Oklahoman A1 (Sept. 17, 2005).
275. Id.
277. Id.
279 Claxton & Puls, supra n. 276.
280. Id.
283. World Almanac, supra n. 258, at 374.
284. Id. at 354.
Florida politicians.

This disparity of power is also evident in the NCAA’s infrastructure. The NCAA’s Executive Committee is the NCAA’s highest-ranking committee, and it deals “with issues that affect all members of the Association and perform[s] duties necessary to the ongoing operation of the Association.” Half of the Executive Committee’s sixteen voting members are Division I-A representatives while two voting members represent Division II. Therefore, FSU’s interests as a Division I-A institution are better represented in the NCAA’s Executive Committee than UND’s interests as a Division II institution. It was the NCAA’s Executive Committee that issued the ban on Native American imagery.

An example of how this organizational structure benefits Division I288 schools is the NCAA Division I men’s ice hockey tournament. The NCAA allows a number of Division II schools—including UND—to be considered Division I institutions for purposes of competing in men’s ice hockey.289 Under its revenue distribution plan, however, the NCAA only shares proceeds from its Division I men’s ice hockey championship with Division I institutions that compete in the tournament and not with schools that are Division I only for men’s ice hockey.290 Division II institutions receive only enough money to cover the travel expenses of thirty-one individuals in their travel parties.291 In 2003, the NCAA made $1,564,927—excluding television money—on its men’s ice hockey championship, but none of that was shared with Division II schools that competed for the title.292 While Division II representatives did not want an arrangement where the NCAA paid their rivals and did not pay their institutions, their status as minority members in the NCAA’s organizational structure afforded them little ability to change this—or any other—rule.

FSU and its ties to national and state politicians all but guaranteed that the NCAA would let FSU off the hook in its Native American mascot ban, and it is likely that the NCAA never intended to subject FSU to such a policy because it knew it could not defeat such a well-connected school. UND, on the other hand, is a school the NCAA knew it would likely defeat. As FSU’s alumni magazine stated, “[h]aving all those friends in high places . . . has been good for FSU.”294

---

285. For a clarification on the requirements for each classification within the NCAA, review NCAA, supra note 3.
286. The NCAA Executive Committee is comprised of eight I-A member representatives, two Division I-AA member representatives, two I-AAA member representatives, two Division II member representatives, and two Division III member representatives. NCAA, NCAA Governance Organization Chart, supra n. 85.
287. NCAA, supra n. 24.
288. See NCAA, supra n. 3.
291. Id.
292. Id.
293. Id.
294. Matus, supra n. 268.
2. A Comparison between FSU and UND

In its press release setting forth the appeals process for schools whose use of Native American imagery was banned from NCAA championships, the NCAA stated that its review committee would “consider all of the facts related to each institution’s appeal.”295 It added that “one primary factor that will be considered in the review is if documentation exists that a ‘namesake’ tribe has formally approved of the use of the mascot, name and imagery by the institution” and that other factors unique to each school could also be considered.296 A comparison of FSU’s and UND’s use of Native American imagery in promoting their teams will reveal three things. First, both schools violate the NCAA’s policy through the use of Native American imagery. Second, FSU’s flagrant perpetuation of Native American stereotypes through the use of historically inaccurate and possibly offensive traditions makes the Florida school a far worse offender than UND. Third, the NCAA acted arbitrarily and capriciously in granting FSU’s appeal solely because FSU had the approval of the Seminole Tribe of Florida without consulting the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. Furthermore, the NCAA should allow UND to host NCAA championships at its new hockey and basketball facilities because construction of the facilities was not within complete control of the university but hinged on the opinions of an alumnus who donated the money for the facilities.

Should FSU and UND host or compete for an NCAA national championship using their current nicknames, both schools would violate the NCAA’s ban on Native American imagery at its championships. Both institutions have nicknames that are derived from Native American tribes—Seminoles and Fighting Sioux. Both schools have logos that depict their respective Native American nicknames with the face of an Indian.297 Both schools’ facilities contain numerous references to Native American imagery via their logos and other images.298 Fans watching an FSU home football game view the school’s logo at midfield and spears in the endzones299 while UND’s fans observe its logo at the center of the ice in its home arena.300 In fact, UND’s Fighting Sioux logo can be found at least 2,400 times in Ralph Engelstad Arena.301

But FSU goes several steps further than UND in violating the NCAA’s policy by stereotyping Native Americans and their traditions. The most notable of FSU’s offenses is its mascot, Chief Osceola.302 The school’s website describes Chief Osceola’s

295. NCAA, supra n. 81.
296. Id.
300. Ralph Engelstad Arena, supra n. 298.
traditional ride to midfield prior to football contests: “[p]erhaps the most spectacular tradition in all of college football occurs in Doak Campbell Stadium when a student portraying the famous Seminole Indian leader, Osceola, charges down the field riding an Appaloosa horse named Renegade and plants a flaming spear at midfield to begin every home game.”303 This reenactment is fictitious according to current tribe members who claim that the real Chief Osceola did not have a horse named Renegade and the tribe only used horses to herd cattle.304 UND does not have a mascot.305

FSU does not stop with Chief Osceola. The second line of the school’s fight song reads, “[y]ou got to scalp ‘em Seminoles!”306 UND’s fight song has no Native American references in the lyrics.307 FSU’s fans do the “Tomahawk Chop,”308 a chopping motion with the right arm, which is derived from a prior cheer called “massacre.”309 UND students have done the “Tomahawk Chop” in the past, but the UND athletics department has cracked down on this under pressure from Native American groups.310

FSU also falls short of UND in terms of educating Native Americans and informing its student body and supporters about issues relating to its namesake tribe. At the time the NCAA set forth its policy, UND’s student body was approximately 2.9 percent Native American311—the largest minority population on the campus—while 0.4 percent of FSU’s student body was Native American.312 Only fourteen members of the Seminole Tribe had ever attended FSU313 and a mere three Seminoles had completed their studies at the school.314 The school recently began actively recruiting potential students from the Seminole Tribe of Florida and offers these tribal members substantial scholarships.315 In the fall of 2006, FSU also began offering a course titled “History of the Seminoles and Southeastern Tribes, Pre-Contact to Present” to educate all students about the school’s nickname.316

---


309. Id.


315. Id.

316. FSU U. Rel., At FSU, Students Learn the History of University’s Namesake Tribe, http://www.fsu.com/
UND recently completed construction on a new building to house the school’s American Indian Center, and the school currently boasts thirty-six American Indian related programs, eight American Indian publications, and seven American Indian student organizations. The school also plays a video for fans at hockey and basketball contests that links the school’s use of the nickname Sioux to the Native American history of North Dakota. UND has also started a Sioux Scholarship Endowment. UND has taken affirmative steps toward appeasing critics of its Fighting Sioux nickname—short of retiring its nickname and logo—and has accomplished what the NCAA and its president, Brand, wanted to do with the mascot ban: UND has turned it into “a teachable moment.”

The NCAA utilized an arbitrary standard in considering the appeals of FSU and UND because the NCAA relied solely upon the approval of a namesake tribe and used different standards in assessing what constituted the approval of a namesake tribe. In granting FSU’s appeal, the NCAA cited the approval of the Seminole Tribe of Florida but neglected to consider the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. In denying UND’s appeal, the NCAA found that UND did not have the support of any namesake tribes even though the school had a resolution of approval from one namesake tribe.

The NCAA’s requirement of namesake tribe approval is consistent with federal policy regarding Indians. The federal government is currently in a “self-determination” era of Indian policy that began under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson in the 1960s. President Richard M. Nixon famously advocated Indian self-determination in a speech to Congress in 1970 and stated, “[t]he time has come to break decisively with the past and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions.” Congress subsequently passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, which permitted tribes to provide services for their members via contracts with the federal government. “[T]he self-determination program was broadened

---

321. Brand, supra n. 42.
322. NCAA, supra n. 88.
323. NCAA, supra n. 23.
324. In 1996, the Spirit Lake Tribe said that it did not mind UND’s use of the logo so long as it was being used to educate the public regarding issues affecting Native Americans. See UND, Spirit Lake Tribe Res. A05-01-041, http://www.universityrelations.und.edu/logoappeal_web_assets/DOCS/Resolution%20_large.pdf (Aug. 19, 1996).
326. Id. (quoting Richard M. Nixon, Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Recommendations for Indian Policy, H.R. Doc. No. 91-363, 91st Cong., 2d Sess. (July 8, 1970)).
327. Id. at 218.
dramatically in 1994 and recast as ‘self governance.’”\(^\text{330}\) During self-determination, “legislative changes, judicial pronouncements, and administrative responsibility” have been “entrusted to tribal governments” more than during any other period in history.\(^\text{331}\) This remains current federal policy regarding Indians.\(^\text{332}\) Given that all three branches of the federal government have worked toward empowering Indians and Indian tribes, the NCAA’s namesake tribe requirement is consistent with federal policy because it allows tribes to have the final call on whether a school can use its name to promote its athletic teams.

Unfortunately, the NCAA did not apply this exception consistently. The NCAA looked to the opinion of the tribe geographically closest to the school—the Seminole Tribe of Florida—even though there are two major Seminole tribes in the United States.\(^\text{333}\) The NCAA included all three Sioux tribes in North Dakota in deliberations regarding UND’s fate despite the fact that UND may have had the approval of the Sioux tribe geographically closest to its campus.\(^\text{334}\)

The NCAA should have weighed the opinions of the Seminole Tribe of Florida—which approved of the use of Seminoles—and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma—which never officially approved of the use of Seminoles—because the Oklahoma tribe is almost twice as big in population. According to the 2000 U.S. census, 273,230 Native American lived in Oklahoma while 53,541 lived in Florida.\(^\text{335}\) Well over 12,000 individuals in the United States reported that they were of Seminole decent.\(^\text{336}\) Of those Seminoles, 3,100 resided in Florida while 6,000 called Oklahoma home.\(^\text{337}\) FSU clearly has the unwavering support of the Seminole Tribe of Florida as the tribe helped design Chief Osceola’s costume and approved of his historically inaccurate props or “minor variances” as FSU calls them\(^\text{338}\)—namely his horse, flaming spear, and face paint.\(^\text{339}\) The Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, however, signed on to a resolution passed by the Five Civilized Tribes\(^\text{340}\) which stated that the Five Civilized Tribes opposed the use of Native American mascots.\(^\text{341}\)

FSU claims it has the support of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.\(^\text{342}\) FSU Trustee Richard McFarlain—who has served three years on the American Bar Association’s Ethics Committee\(^\text{343}\)—summarized FSU’s opinion of the Seminole Nation

---

331. Id. at 225.
333. NCAA, supra n. 88.
334. NCAA, supra n. 32.
335. World Almanac, supra n. 258, at 523.
336. Id.
339. Id.
342. FSU U. Rel., supra n. 316.
343. FSU, Board of Trustees: Richard McFarlain, http://www.fsu.edu/~trustees/trustees/
of Oklahoma’s resolution: “I could care less what the Seminole Tribe in Oklahoma think. They’re in Oklahoma. . . . They got run out of here by—who was it, Andrew Jackson or somebody like that? The Trail of Tears? The real Seminoles stayed here.”344 The NCAA all but endorsed this sentiment by neglecting to consider the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma’s resolution.

In UND’s situation, the NCAA determined that two tribes—the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe—disapproved of the school’s use of Fighting Sioux.345 A third tribe—the Spirit Lake Tribe, which is the Sioux tribe located geographically nearest UND’s campus346—declined to comment.347 Here, the NCAA took this silence as disapproval by the Spirit Lake Tribe even though it had previously drawn up a resolution giving UND permission to use the name “Fighting Sioux.”348 Since the policy was announced, Leaders of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe—one of the tribes that the NCAA stated was against UND’s nickname—have met with UND officials about whether they will give permission to UND to use the Sioux name.349 The Standing Rock Sioux’s disapproval has also been called into question recently as members of the tribal council dispute whether the tribe has granted approval to UND for the use of the name.350 In deciding FSU and UND’s appeals, respectively, the NCAA considered the opinion of the Seminole tribe geographically nearest FSU, and the NCAA may have incorrectly evaluated the opinion of the Sioux tribe geographically closest to UND. The NCAA should not have decided UND’s appeal until it had an official statement from each tribe stating whether UND had their approval, and even the approval of one tribe should have been sufficient.

IV. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

UND should be permitted to host NCAA championships at the Ralph Engelstad Arena and the Betty Engelstad Sioux Center despite the school’s logo being prominently displayed throughout the facilities. First, decisions outside of UND’s control overshadowed the construction of the facilities and required that UND remain the “Fighting Sioux” or the facilities would not be completed. Second, the NCAA has already shown approval for the facilities by hosting championship events at the facilities.

The story behind the facilities dates back to 1954 when Ralph Engelstad

---

345. NCAA, supra n. 23.
346. Kupchella, supra n. 305.
347. Id.
348. See UND, supra n. 324.
350. Ron His-Horse-Is-Thunder, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman, and Archie Fool Bear, Standing Rock Sioux Judicial Committee Chairman, disagree on whether tribal members support UND’s use of the name. Fool Bear asserted that “his committee and residents in six of the reservation’s eight districts overwhelmingly supported the nickname.” Id. A meeting between the tribal council included both leaders calling for the other’s resignation over the issue. James McPherson, Standing Rock Sioux Table Talks—But Not before Council Members Call for Each Other’s Removal, Grand Forks Herald A1 (May 5, 2006).
Engelstad graduated from UND after playing for the school’s hockey team. In 1967, he sold 145 acres of land to Howard Hughes who used it to build North Las Vegas Airport. Engelstad went on to become a multi-millionaire in the real estate and contracting business and his fortune later multiplied after he became involved in hotels and casinos. In the late 1990s, Engelstad announced that he would donate $100 million to build a new hockey arena and a basketball and volleyball arena for UND’s athletic department. After construction on the facilities began, Kupchella appointed a commission to investigate whether UND should keep the Fighting Sioux as its nickname. After receiving the commission’s report in late 2000, Kupchella stated that he would announce his decision on whether to change UND’s nickname and logo in January of 2001.

Engelstad discovered that Kupchella was considering changing UND’s nickname and shared his feelings with school’s president. In correspondence dated December 20, 2000, Engelstad informed Kupchella that he would stop construction on the arena if Kupchella decided to retire the Fighting Sioux nickname. “I have spent . . . in excess of $35,000,000.00 . . . but I will take my lumps and walk away . . . I am sure it will be the number one building never brought to completion at a school of higher education due to your changing the logo and the slogan.” The day after receiving the letter, the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education—not UND or Kupchella—voted unanimously to keep the Fighting Sioux nickname. The building opened in 2001. Engelstad died on November 26, 2002.

It is not difficult to see a major reason why UND opted to keep its Fighting Sioux nickname—it wanted the new facilities. UND needs a facility like Engelstad Arena in order to compete against better-funded Division I institutions in men’s ice hockey. The school has announced that it will make the move to Division I athletics in all sports during the 2007–2008 academic year, and the Betty Engelstad Sioux Center will be an equalizer for men’s basketball, women’s basketball, and volleyball. UND made the same choice almost any other university would have, and the NCAA should not punish UND’s student-athletes because it did what any other college or university would have done and acquiesced to the opinions of a deceased alumnus who played a powerful role in university politics.

352. Id.
353. Id.
354. Id.
355. Id.
356. Brownstein, supra n. 351.
357. Id.
358. Id.
359. Id.
Furthermore, the NCAA has already profited from these facilities. As mentioned above, the NCAA has awarded at least thirteen championship events to UND in the last six years.\textsuperscript{363} Several of these events were played in the facilities built with Engelstad’s money, including a highly coveted men’s ice hockey regional.\textsuperscript{364} The NCAA clearly benefited from UND hosting NCAA championship events at these facilities.

V. CONCLUSION

UND embodies the spirit of amateurism and the successful balance of academics and athletics that are so proudly touted by the NCAA. While leaders in higher education differ on the question of whether Native American imagery should be used in promoting athletic teams, the NCAA sided with those opposing the use of Native American imagery in setting forth its policy. Unfortunately, the NCAA fell short of the movement’s goal of eliminating Native American imagery from its championships by kowtowing to institutions with stronger political ties and more power in the NCAA’s decision-making process. UND faces a potentially insurmountable obstacle in court when it argues that the NCAA has breached the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing with UND by arbitrarily and capriciously applying its policy. A comparison of FSU and UND, however, shows how FSU flaunts the NCAA’s policy while UND has attempted to make a “teachable moment” out of its use of Native American imagery. The NCAA arbitrarily used the powers granted to it by its members to punish schools that have promoted the very ideals endorsed by the NCAA, and UND should be able to deal with the consequences of using Fighting Sioux as its nickname without the NCAA’s involvement.

Kelly P. O’Neill*