

Is the Seminole Mascot Friend or Foe?
by Jackson Fanaro

In 1947 the FSU community gathered to choose a mascot, the name that was chosen was the Seminoles. Fans of the university have embraced the Seminole mascot and made the name a part of their lives. Even the Seminole Tribe of Florida enjoys having their tribe a part of the FSU community. Though despite the support, others have raised controversy about the mascot and say it shouldn't be allowed. I think the Florida State Seminole mascot should remain at the university for years to come because Florida Seminole tribe members support the mascot and because the name has become a symbol of the university.

The members of the Seminole tribe support the Seminole name and team. Chief Jim Billie specifically says "We Seminoles embrace that mascot. They honor us." Not only does FSU use the Seminole mascot, they also perform a pre-game ritual in which a popular Seminole chief with war paint and a costume (Specifically Chief Osceola) rides in on a horse as the band plays stereotypical music in the background. As far as that goes, the hierarchy of the Seminole tribe has already approved of it. In fact, the tribe has written a formal document stating the university can use all symbols of their heritage. This evidence hereby proves to those who believe the tribe isn't in favor of the mascot wrong.

The mascot has become a symbol that has now lasted for sixty-eight years at the university as well as the pre-game ritual that has now lasted for 37 years. The football team alone has won three national championships and three Heisman awards as the Seminoles. Changing the name would lose all remembrance of those great accomplishments. Does anyone of this century remember the Stanford Indians and their accomplishments? Probably not. Due to pressure from Native Americans, the university switched to the Cardinals in 1972. Changing FSU's mascot would also waste the millions of dollars the university and fans have spend on merchandise and decorations alone. A change in the name would simply make the university take too heavy of a loss.

Many people believe the Seminole mascot should be banned from the school. Most of this opposition comes from Oklahoma Seminoles, which have already been promptly told by Florida Seminoles to leave the matter alone and let them take the matter into their own hands. The Oklahoma Seminoles believe that the mascot wrongly portrays the Seminoles and disrespects the tribe. These statements being only partially true. To say that the FSU community disrespects Seminoles is completely wrong. In fact, they provide scholarships and cut-rate tuitions to Seminole tribe members. Also, while the way "Chief Osceola" is dressed each game is incorrect and stereotypical, being that it is really a white student with face paint on, it is not as if they are trying to make fun of the great Seminole figure. Realistically, they portray him as a brave, fierce warrior as he rides in on his horse holding a flaming spear.

Despite drawbacks to the stereotypical use of the Seminole mascot, FSU should be allowed to use the name because the Seminole tribe supports it and it has become a piece of history for the university. Changing the name would also anger the FSU community as well as make it lose money, and sentimental value. Also, who is anyone to oppose the mascot other than a Florida Seminole Tribe member themselves? I believe the mascot should be allowed to stay at the university for years to come.

Works Cited

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