Unit 3 Reading Pre-Test

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**Osceola's Last Stand**

**Are Native American Team Names Racist?**

Before every home football game at Florida State University, a student portraying the famous Seminole leader Chief Osceola gallops down the field on the back of an Appaloosa horse named Renegade.

With the cheers of fans echoing through the stadium and Seminole players waiting to take the field, "Chief Osceola" launches a flaming spear into the air. The spear lands at midfield, delighting the thousands of Florida State fans who have come to watch their favorite team.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)—the organization that regulates college sports—recently banned the use of Native American logos and mascots during its postseason tournaments.

Chief Osceola, however, escaped that fate. Both the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma said they liked FSU's nickname, forcing the NCAA to rethink its stance against mascots—at least as far as the Seminoles were concerned.

But other mascots, such as Chief Illiniwek of the University of Illinois, may not be so lucky.

Specifically, nicknames, logos, or mascots considered "hostile or abusive" have not been allowed on team uniforms in any NCAA tournament since Feb. 1, 2006. The NCAA has also barred band members and cheerleaders from using Native American names or designs on their uniforms, beginning in 2008.

At least 18 schools have Native American mascots. Many people are angry about the ban. Some schools are considering legal action to get the new rules overturned.

"To be fair, some American Indian tribes have expressed their approval of the manner in which their names and imagery are used by specific institutions," Myles Brand, NCAA president, wrote in USA Today. "At the same time, many individuals and tribes view such uses as disrespectful toward their customs and culture."

**Gone Too Far**

Those who oppose the NCAA's new rules say that the schools are honoring the traditions of Native American tribes by the names and mascots the schools choose. The student who rides Renegade at FSU earns that honor by studying the tribe's heritage. At the University of North Dakota, the name Fighting Sioux will have to go. Basketball coach Rich Glas is proud of the name and what it symbolizes.

"We try to represent the Sioux name in a prideful way, and we're proud to have that as our symbol for our team," Glas told the Grand Forks Herald. "We'd like to think we represent it in a positive way. And I'm not convinced that all Native Americans want to do away with it."

**Not Far Enough**

Some Native Americans, however, say it is laughable to think that sports teams are honoring Native American culture.

"It is not respectful to parade around in war paint and feathers, speak in broken English, and dance barefoot," John Sanchez, an associate professor of journalism at Pennsylvania State University and a member of the Yaqui/Apache tribe, told Senior Edition. "This is not honoring; it is making fun of."

Native American leaders say that universities should teach athletes about Native American culture instead of portraying them as characters.

"Oftentimes, when a video camera is panning an audience at a football game, we see a young person with [a painted] face "wearing a huge headdress," Steve Densen, a member of the Chickasaw Tribe, told Senior Edition. "This is not respectful. It is akin to a person painting [his or her] face black to represent an African American. We have to educate that individual."