

New school should sell rights to nickname

It's been nearly 11 years. That's when Eastern Michigan University dumped its nickname, using "political correctness" as an excuse to switch from Hurons to Eagles. Never mind that the Native American tribe known as the Hurons always considered it an honor.

Anyway, so much for distinction. There are 45 high schools in Michigan that carry the Eagles label; it's the most common nickname among high schools in the state.

So the EMU administrators were just going with the flow. Nothing wrong with being popular, right?

And it did show just how important it has become to be politically correct. Leaving such monumental decisions as a school's nickname to a vote of the student body is completely irresponsible. Teenagers cannot be trusted; everyone knows that.

So now we've reached the meat of the matter. Plymouth HS, which opens in the fall, has been laboring long and hard on what it would be called. We've already got the Salem Rocks, which is certainly original if difficult to emulate (sorry, but I could never imagine a mascot dressed as a rock).

The Canton Chiefs are a bit more mainstream, although they are sensitive to the Native American connotation attached to their name. I have been told by a reliable source that "Chiefs" has

nothing to do with Indians; rather, it is a reference to someone in charge, i.e. a chief of industry or a person (notice I didn't say "guy") in charge.

And that arrowhead on their logo isn't really an arrowhead at all. Rather, it's a pointer, "pointing the way."

Say no to Predators
Perhaps now you can understand the situation facing Plymouth athletic director Terry Sawchuk, who headed the committee in charge of choosing a nickname. The original selection seemed okay to most of us — the Plymouth Predators.

But there were quite a few people who found it offensive. I've been in this business awhile, and to be honest, I never attached anything of real significance to a school's nickname. I didn't think Washington Redskins was meant to be demeaning to Native Americans.

Still, I am open-minded. I can be a sensitive guy. If people find something wrong, something politically incorrect, with a nickname, I'll listen.

While Predators sounded all right to me, I can see the other side of the argument. The image it summons to many is a stalking creature — sneaky and subversive. No one wants to be remembered like that.

So Wildcats, the nickname the committee arrived at, is more politically correct. It's a something but original. Novi HS is also known as the Wildcats; so is Oxford. Then there's Albion, Alpena, and Alba, and that's just in the MHSAA's 'A' list.

Indeed, there are 23 other schools with the same name, making Wildcats the fifth-most popular nickname in our state.

There are no schools known as Predators, although, for the sake of political correctness, it must be noted that Eagles, Wildcats, Bears, Falcons, Crusaders, Panthers, Hawks, Tigers, Vikings, Spartans, Vandals and a bunch of the other school nicknames are all predators of some sort.

Does that make Wildcats politically incorrect? Is the change just a dodge?

I don't believe it is. But I think it should be.

A name worth something
Let me explain. I believe our schools should embrace the 21st century. It's time to do away with these ridiculous names that are, when you get right down to it, are un-American.

Think of it. Corporations buying naming rights to ball parks and to bowl games and to tournaments. Everything associated with sports is up for sale.

Soccer players in Europe look like billboards. The NASCAR circuit is a blur of advertisements, cars promoting everything from auto parts to sexual aids, a perfect camouflage against race track walls touting the same.

So why not? Sell the rights. There's got to be a local car dealer that would pay to have "Dodge" as a nickname.

Why not? The Plymouth Dodgers. Or Plymouth Voyagers. Or the Plymouth Neon. How about Plymouth Pumas? Or Quakers (as in Oats)?

As mentioned, this idea is not without precedent. Heck, the MHSAA is auctioning off the rights to all of its broadcasts and tournaments; local districts need to find ways to augment their athletic budgets too, and this is one of them.

You may find this suggestion disgusting, but I'm telling you,

it's the wave of the future. Sell now — get in on the ground floor of an idea that's on the cutting edge of capitalism in a society overwhelmed by the same.

And the heck with political correctness. Want that, then pick a nickname that's truly heroic, like Firefighters. Better yet, do both: See if you can get the MHSAA to

ante up if you push their slogan.

The Plymouth GoodSports. I can guarantee you, no other state high school would share that nickname.

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C.J. RIK

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THE WEEK AHEAD

BOYS BASEBALL Saturday, April 13 Harrison at Lakeland, TBA. Farmington at Huron Valley, TBA.	GIRLS SOFTBALL Friday, April 12 Ladywood at Mercy, 4 p.m. Saturday, April 13 Mercy at Dowling, 9:30 a.m.	GIRLS SOCCER Thursday, April 11 Mercy at Marian, 5:30 p.m. Friday, April 12 N. Farmington at Milford, 7 p.m. Harrison at Lakeland, 7 p.m. Woodhaven at Mercy, 5:30 p.m.
BOYS TRACK & FIELD Thursday, April 11 N. Farmington at Northville, 3:30 p.m. Farmington at Churchill, 3:30 p.m.	Friday, April 12 Hawk Relays at Harrison, TBA. Saturday, April 13 Farmington & Harrison at Novi Relays, 10:30 a.m.	GIRLS TRACK & FIELD Thursday, April 11 Harrison at John Glenn, 3:30 p.m. Northville at N. Farmington, 3:30 p.m.
Churchill at Farmington, 3:30 p.m. Saturday, April 13 Farmington & Harrison at Novi Relays, 10:30 a.m.	BOYS TENNIS Friday, April 12 Lakeland at Harrison, 4 p.m. Milford at Farmington, 4 p.m.	GIRLS LACROSSE Friday, April 12 Huron Valley at Farmington, 5:30 p.m.
BOYS LACROSSE Friday, April 12 Farmington at Rochester, 5 p.m. Saturday, April 13 Farmington at UD-Jesuit, noon.		

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