

The Daily Show – Headline Script – “What’s in a Name?”

(HOST)

Ladies, I come to you with a dire warning. Soon you’ll notice your husband’s waistline getting even bigger and attention span getting even shorter, because we are now just a few weeks away from the beginning of NFL training camp.



On the bright side, after spending the past year talking about the size and texture of Tom Brady’s balls, it’ll be nice to finally get back to what football is all about: keeping America’s most dangerous men occupied so the rest of us can live in a somewhat humane society. But not so fast football fans. Just when you thought it was safe to call the guys, grab a beer, ignore your kid climbing dangerously close to the knife drawer and enjoy the game free of off-the-field scandals, an old controversy has re-poked its stoic, chiseled, sideways-facing head. That’s because Washington’s prestigious Sidwell Friends School has decided to ban all Redskins paraphernalia from their campus.



This, according to Sidwell's head of school Bryan Garman. And kids you better listen to him, because if there's anyone who's a stickler about following directions, it's a guy named Garman. Now you're probably thinking, "What's the big deal about some school banning 'Skins swag?'" This isn't just any school. It's one of the most elite private schools in the country whose alumni happen to include the children of President Obama – not to mention Chelsea Clinton and the kids of Teddy Roosevelt, Richard Nixon and Al Gore. This place is like Hogwarts for kids so well-behaved they'll never get Hogwarts.

Everyone's wondering if this ruling will have a domino effect throughout D.C. Actually, since we're talking about the NFL I guess it would technically be a Papa John's effect. Of course, many in the D.C. area have been calling for a name change for a while. Just last year, Nevada Senator and angry elf Harry Reid took time from his *Men in Black* theme party to say that NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell demeans Native Americans by allowing the Redskins name to remain.



Now whether Harry Reid's anger stems from a genuine concern for the Native American people or from the fact that his name is a synonym for an unshaved penis, there's no doubting his dedication to the cause - he hasn't been able to get into a fancy restaurant in over three years because he won't even say the word reservation. Now, let me say that I am all for eliminating team names and mascots that make a large group of people feel uncomfortable. For instance, many women were glad that the NFL recently voted down this proposed logo change for the Buffalo Bills:



My only trepidation is where does it end? If you really want to, can't you find something offensive in every team's mascot? I mean, will the New York Giants eventually have to change their name to the "People with Pituitary Gland Disorders"? The New Orleans Saints to the "Non-Denominational Do-Gooders". And sorry Browns fans... no, you don't have to change your name, I'm just sorry that you're Browns fans.



The question is where do you draw the line? If the NFL starts appeasing every group with an axe to grind, the league will quickly become more sterile than an OCD surgeon's scalpel. Pretty soon you'll have Hindus protesting the word "end zone" because there is no end and the term "holding" will be deemed insensitive to lonely single women.



And the team name dilemma isn't limited to the NFL. The Houston school board recently voted to ban a team called the "Indians". Apparently you can't say "Indian" anymore, you have to say "tech support operator". I know that last joke wasn't politically correct but all of my Indian friends tell me it's better to be Mac than P.C. Another Texas team called the "Rebels" had to change its name because some complained the word has links to the Confederacy. Really? The word rebel is offensive now? First of all, the South lost the war, why would anyone deliberately name their team after the losing side? That's like calling yourself the "Jebbs". Second of all, rebel is such a common word. Am I supposed to feel guilty now every time I watch *Rebel without a Cause* or rock out to *Pitch Perfect* when my wife's not home?



By the way, the Rebels have since changed their name to the "Huskies", which would be fine if our nation's sensitivity level wasn't set on "pregnant woman's areolas". While the name Huskies clearly refers to the dog breed, you know it's only a matter of time before the obese community hop on their motor scooters and clog the streets of City Hall like an artery to complain that it's offensive to the horizontally challenged.

Now, in some cases I get it. For instance, Coachella Valley High School in southern California recently dropped their mascot, "the Arab".



On the plus side, dropping the name has made it a heck of a lot easier for the team to move through airport security, though it has significantly affected the intensity of their rivalry with the Marin County Mensches.



And these examples are just the tip of the arrowhead. So, will the NFL feel pressure to follow suit? At the end of the day the decision is in the hands of Roger Goodell, a man who's seen more scandals in the past two years than Kerry Washington's stalker. Between the Redskins name change, deflategate, player discipline and the recent sudden drop in viewership, Goodell presently has more on his plate than Chris Christie after lent.



But if there's one thing Roger Goodell can take comfort in, other than receiving a \$44M salary to come out of hiding one day a year like Punxsutawney Phil to say "and the Jets select," it's that the vilifying of pro sports leagues seems to be cyclical. First it was PEDs in baseball. Then pro cycling's integrity was "lanced".

Now it's the NFL's turn to get Ray Rice'd in the gut until the next league finds itself in hot water – probably when Al Sharpton says the NHL is racist for allowing a bunch of toothless white guys to whack a defenseless black puck with a stick.



Until that day comes, Roger is going to do everything he can to appease the masses. And considering that the NFL's public image is currently shakier than a nervous old man playing Jenga during an earthquake, Goodell's eventual capitulation on the Redskins name change seems to be an inevitability. The last thing he wants to do is ruffle any more feathers, especially on a Native American headdress.

