

<https://www.si.com/vault/2002/03/04/8100281/polls-apart-si-polled-native-americans-and-sports-fans-in-general-on-the-use-of-indian-nicknames-and-got-some-surprising-answers>

Polls Apart SI polled Native Americans and sports fans in general on the use of Indian nicknames, and got some surprising answers

By [Andrea Woo](#)

Although most Native American activists and tribal leaders consider Indian team names and mascots offensive, neither Native Americans in general nor a cross-section of U.S. sports fans agree. That is one of the findings of a poll conducted for SI by the Peter Harris Research Group. The pollsters interviewed 351 Native Americans (217 living on reservations and 134 living off) and 743 fans. Their responses were weighted according to U.S. census figures for age, race and gender, and for distribution of Native Americans on and off reservations. With a margin of error of +-4%, 83% of the Indians said that professional teams should not stop using Indian nicknames, mascots or symbols, and 79% of the fans agreed with them. Surprisingly, there is a greater divergence of opinion between Native Americans who live on reservations and those who don't. Sixty-seven percent of Indians on reservations do not object to the use of Indian images, against 87% of those off the reservations. When pollsters asked about the Washington Redskins, they found no great resentment toward the name. Instead, they again found agreement between Native Americans and fans (69% of the former and 74% of the latter do not object to the name), and less agreement between Indians on and off reservations (57% and 72%, respectively). Other results appear in the boxes that follow.

--Andrea Woo

Asked whether the use of Native American team names and mascots contributes to discrimination against Indians, respondents said:

INDIANS LIVING	TOTAL	TOTAL ON/OFF RESERVATION	FANS %	INDIANS %	ON%	OFF%
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Contributes to	12	23	45	17		
discrimination						

Does not contribute 88 75 53 81

Undecided 0 2 2 2

Asked what they thought of the tomahawk chop at Atlanta Braves games, respondents said:

INDIANS LIVING
TOTAL TOTAL ON/OFF RESERVATION
FANS % INDIANS % ON% OFF%

Like it 28 28 11 33
Find it objectionable 21 23 39 18
Don't Care 51 48 46 49
Undecided 0 1 4 0

Asked their opinions of team nicknames derived from other ethnic groups--Celtics, Fighting Irish, Ragin' Cajuns, Flying Dutchmen--respondents said:

INDIANS LIVING
TOTAL TOTAL ON/OFF RESERVATION
FANS % INDIANS % ON% OFF%

Like them 49 25 16 27
Find them objectionable 4 12 14 12
Don't care 47 62 68 60
Undecided 0 1 2 1

Source: Peter Harris Research Group, Inc.