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NCAI Applauds NCAA Decision to Ban Use of Indian Mascots in Postseason Activities

WASHINGTON—August 5, 2005—The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) strongly supports a decision by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), banning the use of Indian mascots by sports teams in all postseason tournaments. More than 100 colleges and universities currently practice the offensive use of Indian mascots. Such depictions are inaccurate, unauthentic representations of the rich diversity and complex history of more than 560 Indian tribes in the United States and perpetuate racial and cultural stereotypes.

"This is a big step in the right direction," said NCAI President Tex Hall. "NCAI has been advocating for the NCAA to ban the use of Indian mascots and we are more than pleased about this decision. The ridicule, mockery and utter racism Native Americans are subject to because of the use of Indian mascots are intolerable."

The NCAA's executive committee made the decision, limiting the ban to postseason tournament play only. According to the NCAA ruling, nicknames or mascots deemed "hostile or abusive" would not be allowed by teams on their uniforms or other clothing beginning with any NCAA tournament after Feb. 1, 2006.

"The NCAA objects to institutions using racial/ethnic/national origin references in their intercollegiate athletics programs," said NCAA President Myles Brand when issuing the decision today. "Several institutions have made changes that adhere to the core values of the NCAA Constitution pertaining to cultural diversity, ethical sportsmanship and nondiscrimination. We applaud that, and we will continue to monitor these institutions and others."

Any postseason play at any of the schools that fall under the NCAA's "hostile or abusive" category will be banned from hosting postseason events. In addition, offensive logos also would be prohibited at postseason games on cheerleader, dance team and band uniforms starting in 2008.

"While this is ia positive move," said Hall. "NCAI continues to urge all schools and professional sports teams to end the use of racist mascots during the regular season or tournament play. We hope that in the future the uses of Indian mascots are discontinued in all sports arenas."

The NCAA decision follows the recent ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., to revive a 1992 suit brought by Native Americans challenging the Washington Redskins' trademark of a racially derogatory mascot..



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