

Red-Tailed Hawk to Generate Hysteria in Fans

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Chronicle Staff Writer

The University of Utah has given sporting fans the bird.

A red-tailed bird to be exact. Since 1992, U. students, alumni and administration have been crafting their feathered friend for Ute sporting fans and finally let the hawk free at the Jan. 3 Utah-Brigham Young University basketball game.

"We feel the hawk was a consensus and natural choice," Ted Capener, vice president of university relations, says. "It's a proud, strong, and beautiful bird. It represents the pride of the university."

Both Capener and the U.'s Athletic Marketing Director, Marc Amicone, hope the bird will enhance the competitive spirit at all Ute games. The mascot will represent the university at sporting events, parades and campus activities.

Mascots have somewhat of a controversial past at the U. The U.'s association with Native American names and symbols have been a cause for concern for many.

During the early 1970s, Native American students on campus protested the liberal use of exaggerated Indian symbols.

In 1972, sportswriters and students were referring to the U.'s athletic teams as the "Runnin' Redskins." The U.'s administration and athletic department changed the name to "Runnin' Utes" after getting permission from the Ute tribe.

Before the hawk showed its feathers, the Crimson Warrior made its path on the playing field.

From 1985 to 1992 a person dressed as a Native American rallied sporting spirit for the Utes, but due to political pressure, the mascot was dropped.

Even now, many have argued that the U. should respect the Native American culture. Others argue that the U.'s choice of a hawk mascot shows bowing to political pressures.

"I would like to propose a different mascot that Red-tail Hawk for the University of Utah," writes a recent U. graduate to the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "Considering the lack of backbone shown by the president and the impotent nature of the school to bow at the whim of change, I believe that we ought to be known as the 'University of Utah Eunuch.'"



CHRONICLE PHOTO Spencer Young

This anonymous U. business student flaunts his feathers as the new Ute mascot at the Jan. 3 U.-BYU basketball game.

"I don't think the issue is about political correctness," explains Capener, "it's about courtesy. It's about understanding human beings and about understanding the Native American people."

What's important to the committee is that the U. will remain known as the "Utah Utes." The hawk was chosen because of its indigenousness to the area and red tail.

Most importantly it will not be a caricature of a human that would offend Native American communities, says Capener. Rather, "it will reflect the soaring spirit of the state and school."

The man behind the mask will remain anonymous - a marked "tradition" for any mascot character whether it's Big Bird or the Cougar's Cosmo. The personator is a business major and may pursue a future career in the entertainment industry. A panel of judges selected him after open auditions were held in public.

His entertainment, so far, seems to amaze crowds at the Huntsman Center.

"He's great, really funny," says Tiffany Fraderich, a senior in exercise and sports science, while watching the game. "The problem is that school spirit at the U. is weak. I feel we need a strong mascot to add to the spirit at the university."

Tami Leatham, a "sophomore studying communications," says, "The mascot is great, but people are cheering more for the mascot when he was skiing down the steps than they did for the basketball team."

At this point the mascot remains nameless. An upcoming contest will be sponsored by the athletics department to involve students in naming it.

Await the hawk to swoop by you at Ute sporting events.

What do you think of the Hawk?

Write the editor and let him know. Submit Letters at 240 Union or via E-mail to Robert.Goffka@utah.edu

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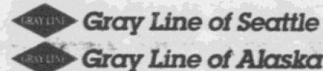
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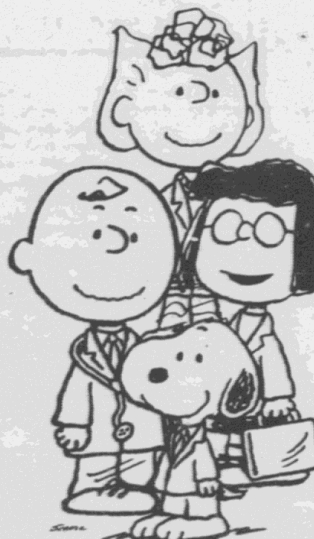
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