



## NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

Dear Mr. Tony Rowe, trustees and members:

CC: Mark Stevens, Bill Sweeney, Tom Ilube, Simon Massie-Taylor, Andrew Higginson

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is the oldest, largest, and most representative organization in the United States serving the broad interests of Tribal Nations and peoples. It has been leading Indian Country's consensus-driven movement to eradicate offensive and harmful Native "themed" mascots, imagery and branding from sports and popular culture for *more than fifty years*.

Since 1968, the NCAI has worked to educate schools, sports teams and leagues, and the general public about Indian Country's broad and longstanding opposition to this practice, and the deep and well-documented harms that the stereotypical and dehumanizing monikers, symbols, imagery, and fan behaviors associated with Native "themed" mascot branding cause Native people, particularly Native youth. We are writing to inform you that our objections extend to the branding employed by the Exeter "Chiefs", specifically the logo, the venue names (e.g. the "Mohawk Bar"), the headdresses, and other uses of Native "themed" collateral. **The NCAI requests your support to retire all of the Native "themed" imagery associated with the mascot branding of the Exeter "Chiefs" Rugby Club.**

Ahead of [the club member vote later this month](#), we wish to share with you resources documenting the ways this imagery and branding harms Native people through the offensive stereotypes it promotes, exemplified by Exeter "Chiefs" fans' misappropriation of culturally sacred headdresses and facepaint, and the degrading "tomahawk chop" rituals they perform during matches. For your convenience, we have included NCAI resolutions—and those of partner organizations—expressing our formal opposition to the use of Native "themed" mascots, logos and imagery in sports and popular culture. Please see below:

[NCAI "Ending 'Indian' Mascots" Initiative](#)

[NCAI "Ending the Legacy of Racism" Report](#)

[Study finds only harmful effects from Native themed mascots](#)

[National Museum of the American Indian: Native American Is Not a Costume](#)

[NCAI Reiterates Longstanding Opposition to Atlanta Braves' Mascot and "Tomahawk Chop" Fan Ritual as Team Plays in World Series](#)

[NCAI Commends Announcement by Major League Baseball's Cleveland Franchise of Its New Name "Guardians"](#)

[NCAI Statement on Washington Football Team's Retirement of Racist Mascot](#)

[NCAI 2020 Resolution: Support for the Elimination of Race-Based Native Logos, Mascots, Names, Behaviors and Practices](#)

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[NCAI 2014 Resolution: Urging the U.S. Secretary of Education to Take Substantive Action Regarding Schools with "Native" Sports Stereotypes](#)

[American Psychological Association Resolution: Retiring American Indian Mascots](#)

[National Education Association Resolution: Supporting Removal of Native Themed Mascots](#)

[National Indian Education Association Resolution: Elimination of Race-Based Indian Logos, Mascots, and Names](#)

[NCAI: Learn About Tribal Nations, Citizenship, History, and Contemporary Issues](#)

**The will of Indian Country is clear – Native “themed” mascot imagery and the dehumanizing stereotypes it perpetuates must go.** Out of respect for tribal sovereignty, we ask that you heed the voices of tribal leaders representing hundreds of Tribal Nations and the organizations that serve their citizens – not the voices of a few select individuals – when working to understand where Indian Country broadly stands on this issue.

Please know the NCAI is committed to working with the Exeter Rugby Club to aid in its mascot branding transition, including offering a tribal leader to share with your leadership, club members, and/or the Exeter community our perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Dante Desiderio  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Congress of American Indians