



## Washington Redskins

For decades, Native Americans have urged the team to change its name.

# Insult or Honor?

Indian mascots are a tradition for hundreds of schools and pro sports teams. But many people think they're racist.

BY ALESSANDRA POTENZA

**T**he Washington Redskins face some tough competitors on the gridiron, but lately some of their fiercest opponents have been off the field.

Many Native American groups, lawmakers, and fans are pressuring the NFL team to change its name and mascot. They say it's offensive, even racist, and have targeted the team with lawsuits, letters, a prime-time TV commercial, and a Twitter campaign. In June, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office agreed: It stripped the Redskins of its trademark registration, saying that "this racial designation based on skin color is disparaging to Native Americans."

The controversy surrounding the Redskins is the latest in a decades-long debate over American Indian sports mascots. Their use dates back to the 19th century, and today many teams say

Watch a video on the history of Native Americans at [www.upfrontmagazine.com](http://www.upfrontmagazine.com).