

of pitchers, fielders, hitters, . . . blah, blah blah.

Smile for the cameras and give us the usual schtick.

Then cut to the chase.

"As the new owner [owners- of this great team, I [or we- have decided to embrace our fans without exclusion.

"That is why we are retiring Chief Wahoo.

"The Chief represents bigotry, not athleticism. His grinning countenance, with its blood red skin and arch expression, ranks alongside other symbols of racist stereotyping: black Sambo; the sleeping Mexican in the huge sombrero; the yellow-skinned Asians with slits instead of eyes; the barefoot hillbilly toting a shotgun and a jug of moonshine.

"The place for these effigies is in an exhibit decrying the viciousness of prejudice, not on baseball caps or team jerseys.

"So, effective immediately, his leer will no longer mar any team uniform or paraphernalia. Fans can wear team colors without being a walking billboard for insensitivity."

And then, while the reporters huddle over their notes, remind us of something we already know.

The chief should have been scuttled a long, long, time ago.

The logo is demeaning and provincial. The only thing more insulting than the portrait is the claim that it honors American Indians.

Anyone who has ever glimpsed an American Indian of any tribe, whether Cherokee, Choctaw, Navajo or Iroquois, could never think the grinning Red Sambo is a fair representation of any one person, much less a race of people.

But the old owners didn't want to lose face by acknowledging Chief Wahoo's offensiveness.

You can start afresh. You will get some boos and catcalls at first. You might even lose a few fans in the process.

But don't worry about those empty seats in the stadium. They will be filled with folks who are happy that cheering for the home team no longer includes condoning intolerance.

Messages for Scruggs may be left at (216) 999-4327.

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