

Mascots, Cheerleaders, And Fanatical Fans

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MASCOTS, CHEERLEADERS, AND FANATICAL FANS

? Professional cheerleader Krazy George Henderson led the first documented “wave” at an Oakland Athletics playoff game on October 15, 1981. It's since become a fan favorite activity everywhere.

? Fan violence is not unique to the modern world. On Tuesday, January 13, 532 CE, chariot racing fan factions in Constantinople, known as the Greens and Blues, nearly brought down the Byzantine Empire in what is known as the Nika Riots.

? Modern cheerleading began as an all-male venture in the US. Although cheerleading is now primarily female, it remains an American-centric activity.

? During the early 1900s, the Chicago Cubs often used a live bear cub as a mascot. In 1908, though, they opted for a bear taxidermy mount.

? Percy Abeysekera (born 1936) may be one of the most dedicated fans in the world. At 86-years-young, Percy has followed the Sri Lankan cricket team around the world and always waves the team's flag at matches.

? It's believed that the first organized cheer at an American sporting event took place in 1884 at a Princeton University football game.

? Johnny Campbell is often credited with being the world's first cheerleader. Campbell led a group of male University of Minnesota students in a cheer at a football game on November 2, 1898.

? The National Basketball Association (NBA) Phoenix Suns' official team mascot is not a Sun, but a gorilla named “Go.” Three different people have worn the gorilla suit.

? Baseball is one American sport where cheerleaders are usually absent. Cheerleaders do play a big part in the Korean Baseball League's (KBO) fan experience, though.

? The San Diego Chicken is often credited with being the start of the American mascot craze. Ted Giannoulas first donned the outfit in 1974 and has been the only “official” Chicken since.

? Organized soccer/football hooligan clubs are known as “firms.” It’s believed that soccer hooliganism began in England in the late 1880s, but it wasn’t until after World War II that the first firms formed.

? There are now dozens of professional and amateur cheer competitions around the world. Still, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) doesn’t recognize cheerleading as a sport.

? The 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow, the Soviet Union were the first to have an official mascot. ‘Misha the Bear’ greeted Olympians and viewers from around the world in Moscow.

? In 1954, the Baltimore Colts became the first National Football League (NFL) team to have a cheerleading squad. They were part of the team’s marching band and more closely resembled a high school or college cheer, squad.

? Major League Baseball’s (MLB) Philadelphia Phillies’ mascot is the “Phillie Phanatic.” The green, flightless bird first entered the diamond during the 1978 season and is still the mascot.

? On April 30, 1993, a fanatical fan stabbed Yugoslavian tennis star Monica Seles during a match at the French Open. Although the injury was minor, she didn’t compete for two years as a result.

? Since 1917, the official nickname and mascot of Yuma Highschool in Yuma, Arizona has been the “Criminals.” The name comes from the original school being on the grounds of the old territorial prison.