

From Jumping Joe to Howl: the evolution of A-State's mascot

A brief history of Arkansas State's mascot changes over the years

REBECCA ROBINSON

SPORT EDITOR

The Herald has been covering sports at Arkansas State before the Sun Belt Conference even began sponsoring football in 2001. Before college football teams were ranked or before the first games were broadcasted. The Herald, formerly known as Aggie Herald and State College Herald and has been covering sports for a century.

When the paper ran its first issue in 1921, the Red Wolves sports teams looked different than today. Arkansas State's first time fielding a football team happened in 1911, only 10 years prior to the first issue. A-State has undergone several mascot changes since The Herald began covering sports.

Gorillas

In 1925 Arkansas State became the First District Agricultural and Mechanical College. In the same year, the athletics teams also became the Gorillas while the school was still an Texas A & M Satellite school.

Jumping Joe

The Indians was the mascot that stuck with A-State the longest. Arkansas State used the Indians as a mascot for 77 years. Established in the 1930s, Indians became the official athletic nickname. Jumping Joe was made in 1951 by Dr. Gary Dehls.

At the time of the creation of Jumping Joe, Dehls was a Junior at A-State or ASU as it was called then.

Running Joe

The original Jumping Joe mascot was shown wearing a loincloth with a scalp in one hand and "ASU" painted across his chest. Jumping Joe eventually was modified to Running Joe, they got rid of the scalp in his hand and changed to pants instead of the original loincloth.

Red

In 2003, Arkansas State introduced Red as a spirit character. Created by ASU's director of athletic marketing, Andrea Scott, Red was intended to "elevate spirit" at games.

"The spirit character began as a project to design a character that looks friendly, is unique, and is not an animal," Scott said. "Red will absolutely not replace Arkansas State's official mascot, the Indian Family."

NCAA Mascot Policy Change

On Aug. 4, 2005, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) passed a policy requiring all members of the NCAA to maintain "an atmosphere of respect and sensitivity to the dignity of person." Fourteen schools removed Native American culture or symbols from their athletics. ASU's mascot was referred to as "hos-

tile and abusive" by the NCAA.

In 2007, The Herald covered Arkansas State's hesitation in removing the mascot. Former student reporter Austin Emerson covered former ASU System President Les Wyatt saying no considerations had been made to change the mascot. The story ran on the front page of The Herald.

"We are not in limbo in this. We are the ASU Indians. That is our official name and mascot," Wyatt said. "And until a decision is made, that is our identity."

The Herald continued reporting the mascot updates as they came out. Later, Wyatt furthered his statements of hesitation on changing the mascot.

"When and if that decision is made, we probably will put a process together that would involve everyone including alumni, boosters and letterman's clubs, but so far we have not made this decision," Wyatt said. "We will continue to use the existing mascot."

In July 2007, the NCAA mascot review committee recommended that ASU "respectfully" retire the mascot and select a new one. Following the NCAA's wishes, A-State began the selection for a new mascot. The Herald began reporting on the decisions the mascot selection committee made.

The first phase of transition was narrowing 1,500 choices down to 12. Some of the 12 new mascot ideas included the A's, Black Wolves, Mallards, Red Dragons, and, of course, Red Wolves.

The last time the football team used the 'Indians' as their mascot was Nov. 15, 2007 at a home game against North Texas. They used the halftime show as part of the goodbye ceremony. In the following September, mascot selection began with former ASU board of trustees chair Jim Pickens who was selected to chair the committee. On Jan. 30, 2008, the mascot committee voted to recommend 'wolves' as a mascot.

Red Wolves

The Herald covered the final farewell Monday, March 3, 2008, which ran at the top of the front page. The last men's basketball home game of the season was the last time the Indian Family was seen. The Indian Family consisted of the Indian Chief, the Indian Princess and the Brave.

"I will always be an Indian," former coach Dickey Nutt said. "We will just have to change the name and live with that. It is a new era."

The athletic teams remained the Indians until the end of the 2008 spring season.

"I'll tell you I didn't like it," former governor and ASU alum Mike Beebe said. "I didn't like

that they were forced to change. I was a longtime Indian."

Despite the reluctance from some to change, Arkansas State officially changed their mascot to the Red Wolves, an idea that was endorsed by some students at the time online and covered in The Herald's Opinion section.

"I know a lot of people like the name Red Wolves," former student Cierra Lee said. "They even have a group for it on Facebook."

Three bronze wolf statues were placed around campus at Aggie Circle, in the Reng Student Union and the Red Wolf Center.

"Change is hard sometimes," Beebe said. "So your initial reaction is to resent the change. But in a matter of months, I realized it was a needed change and a good change that actually advanced the program."

Previous Mascots, A Spirit Character & Team Names:

1911-1925

- Aggies

1925-1930

- Gorillas

1930-1931

- Warriors

1931-2008

- Indians

2003-2008

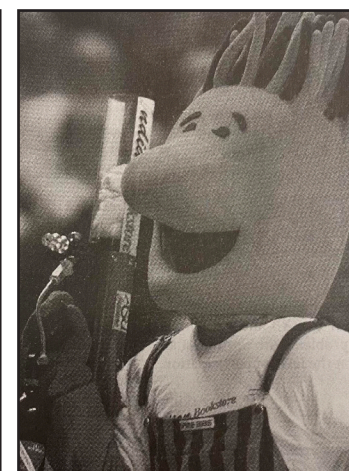
- Red

2008 - Present

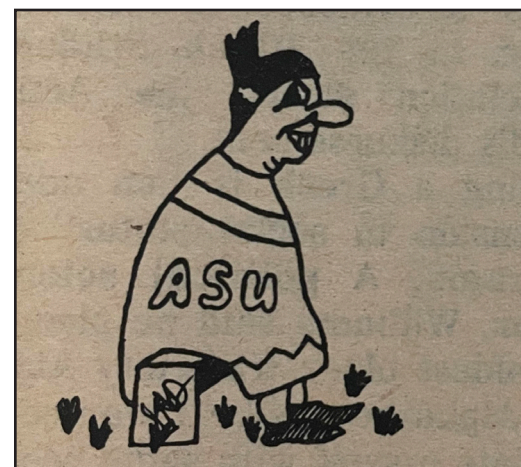
- Howl



PHOTO FROM PREVIOUS EDITION OF THE HERALD On, Oct. 22, 1999 Arkansas State hosted a pow wow from 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Robert Phillips, an Apache Indian of Jacksonville performed their war dance for entertainment in preparation of Homecoming. "I love it. We have a pretty good crowd," Phillips said.



PHOTOS FROM OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE HERALD Left: Jumping Joe in a cartoon featured with a story about an A-State baseball game. Middle: Red, a former spirit character. Right: Running Joe featured in a comic in The Herald about the mascot retiring.



PHOTOS FROM OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE HERALD Left: an illustration of an ASU Indian that used to be a part of sports headline in The Herald during the late '70s. Right: a graphic in The Herald for the baseball team, called the ASU Indians at the time.

How The Herald used to cover sports

- Sports used to be covered on the front page of the State College Herald.
- In the '70s, The Herald had a sports editor and an assistant sports editor as well as a sports reporter.
- The Herald sports pages used to cover intramural football played by Greek Life organizations.
- The sports page used to feature several ads for different local businesses, churches and even a women's community health center.
- The first female sports reporter was hired in the '30s.



PHOTO FROM PREVIOUS EDITION OF THE HERALD In the '60s, The Herald, known at the time as the State College Herald would run sports stories on the front page, especially if the game was important.

Arkansas State football beats ULM by three points

Arkansas State played ULM Saturday. The final score ended with a 27-24 win for Arkansas State.

Arkansas State is now 2-8 overall and 1-5 in SunBelt Conference games. This is the first Conference game win of the season.

This is the 12th straight time Arkansas State has beat ULM. ULM did not score once in the 4th quarter.

"We created a lot of adversities for ourselves, but I thought our defense kept us in the game in the first half," head coach Butch Jones said. "I thought we left a lot of points out there, but you have to gut through wins like this. To win a game like this, on the road, when everything doesn't go your way, it was great to see moving forward."

Arkansas State has one more road game left until they play their last game of the season at home.

A-State will play Georgia State next in Atlanta, Georgia at 1 p.m.

The game will be broadcast on ESPN3.

The last game of the season will be played against Texas State at 1 p.m.



Photo by Hannah Risker | Photo Editor



Miss Lillie M. Fears
Herald Adviser,
1990-1993



Lillie M. Fears, Ph.D.
Professor & Coordinator
Multimedia Journalism Program

Congratulations On 100 Years
Of Reporting News That Matters!!!

Weekly Roundup

Basketball

- Women's Basketball won their game against Mcneese State 96-72.
- Men's Basketball beat Central Baptist College 90-63.

Bowling

- The Bowling team finished fourth place at Ladyjack Classic.

Cross Country

- Cross Country team member Lexington Hilton qualified for NCAA Championships Friday in Waco, Texas.

Soccer

- Soccer Senior Sarah Sodoma named to CoSIDA Academic All District Team.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, Nov. 18

- Volleyball will play against Georgia State for the Sun Belt Conference Championship in Foley, Alabama.

Friday, Nov. 19

- Men's basketball will play at Southeast Missouri State at 6:30 p.m.
- Women's basketball will play Arkansas at a home at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 20

- Football will play at Georgia State at 1 p.m.
- Cross Country will compete at the NCAA Cross Country Championships in Tallahassee, Florida.

Monday, Nov. 22

- Women's Basketball will play at Southeast Missouri State at 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 23

- Women's Basketball will play against the University of the Ozarks at home at 7 p.m.

For more sports visit The Herald Website, theherald.home.blog