

IOWA BOY



Let's talk nicknames

As small schools in Iowa get more and more involved in reorganization or sharing of programs, a whole lot of



new school names, school colors, nicknames and mascots are coming onto the scene.

In eastern Iowa, for example, Center Point and Urbana have merged this year. Center Point teams, in the past, were known as the Pointers, as in dogs that "point" in pheasant hunting, which is real big in that area. Urbana's kids were the Cyclones.

But now we have the Center Point-Urbana "Stormin' Pointers" — and get this — the team logo shows "a cyclone with a pointer dog coming out of the top of it," said Gail Jones, secretary to the high school principal.

You know how it goes in these mergers, everybody has to give some as far as traditions go, and that can get real tough when people have spent years being passionate about certain colors and nicknames.

As in Everly, in northwest Iowa.

Say it ain't so

Everybody has been enchanted with the Everly "Cattlefeeders" over the years. ESPN, the sports channel on cable TV, has rated it one of America's 10 best high school nicknames.

Alas, it's most likely bye-bye for the Cattlefeeders.

This year, Everly and the neighboring Clay Central school district are sharing most programs. Next year, they go into what's called "whole grade sharing," which is almost a reorganization but isn't called one. There'll be one high school (at Everly), one middle school (at Royal), elementary schools in both towns, one superintendent but still two school boards.

"It'll be kind of like an engagement period," said Richard Wede, who is already the shared superintendent, "to see how we get along together before we decide to go ahead and get married somewhere down the road."

No decision has been made yet on what the name of the high school and its sports teams will be. "I think I can say it's the intent of both school boards, from the discussions we've had, that they want the student bodies to get involved and come up with something they're comfortable with," said Wede. "If the students are comfortable, then the adults in both communities will probably be supportive of what the kids come up with."

Clay Central has been the Comanches. The kids there probably aren't going to be real thrilled about totally giving up their nickname just because the Cattlefeeder nickname has been recognized as being so unique.

Meanwhile, the Everly kids may have trouble being anything but you know what.

The Everly student newspaper, the Bull Roar, last week surveyed 23 students on the matter of new school name and nickname. The most popular school name, getting 15 votes, was West Clay. But for the nickname, it was divided, with five favoring hanging on to Cattlefeeders, five picking Warriors and a scattering of votes for Bulldogs, Knights, Broncos, Bulls, Wildcats, Tigers and Vikings.

But that's thinking about next year. Wait till you hear what's going on in the meantime.

An aspirin, please

Keep in mind that what we have this year here is two high schools fielding one sports team, which sometimes plays its home games in Everly and sometimes plays them in Royal, depending on which sport were talking about and what point it is in the season.

For discussion purposes, let's take the girls basketball team.

"We've divided the season around the date of Jan. 16," said Everly athletic director Harry Tatum. "Until Jan. 16, the girls team will play its home games at Everly and will be known as the Everly-Clay Central Cattlefeeder Comanches. After Jan. 16, the team will play its home games at Royal and will be known as the Clay Central-Everly Comanche Cattlefeeders."

Uh, CC-E or E-CC? And Comanche Cattlefeeders or Cattlefeeder Comanches? I think I'm getting a headache.

Life used to be so simple, you know? Ah, for the days before they busted up Ma Bell and deregulated the airlines and started merging schools.

We'll get used to it, I know, but in the meantime, thank God we still have the Sheldon Orabs and Mallard Ducks and Estherville Midgets and Audubon Wheelers and New Hampton Chickasaws and Sumner Aces and Osage Green Devils. We still do, don't we?

— Chuck Offenburger