



LA is a Dodger Town

What's in a name? That is what millions of America's sports fans and thousands of business owners in Los Angeles County are asking upon news that Orange County's American League baseball team wants to be officially known as the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.

Since the team announced its new name, red billboards have popped up all over town promoting the Angels as LA's baseball team. I have noticed many of these billboards along arteries to Dodger Stadium.

Why should we oppose this name change? Well, besides sounding silly, it belittles every business that uses Los Angeles in their business name and is actually located--and pays taxes--in LA County.

As much as I like the Angels and enjoy watching Vladamir Guererro belt home runs, I think it is disingenuous for the Angels to pretend that they are LA's team. Since they chose to move from Los Angeles in 1966, the Angels are clearly an Orange County team.

From a practical standpoint, how will other teams respond? Will teams rename themselves as the Boston Braves of Milwaukee and Atlanta? How about the New York Giants of San Francisco, or the Brooklyn Dodgers of Los Angeles? How will sports announcers refer to these teams during broadcasts of games?

The reason given as to why the Angels changed their name is to maximize their marketability since more people are familiar with Los Angeles than Anaheim. If they are so concerned that fewer Americans (who apparently are unfamiliar with Disneyland) that they want to be more specific about the location of Anaheim, why didn't they just rename the team the Anaheim Angels of California? This would clarify where Anaheim is and play into the team's nostalgia when they were known as the California Angels.

I already miss the Angels' charm of representing the smaller community of Anaheim, which reminds baseball fans of the Dodgers' origins in Brooklyn. With the name change, the Angels have now brought back unpleasant memories of when the Rams moved to Orange County and when the Colts moved to Indianapolis. It just doesn't sound right.

What gets lost in the name-change debate is how LA businesses feel about it. It takes a lot to stay in business in Los Angeles. While Los Angeles has its challenges, those businesses who locate here and pay taxes made a choice to do so, and they are proud of it.

Those of us who chose to be here do love LA. We love the culture and diversity. A business in another region--with no presence in LA County--changing its name to pretend it is really from LA is wrong, and a form of intellectual piracy.

We pay taxes here, and we invest in our communities. If a team from another county wants to use our name, they are welcome to move here, create local jobs and invest in our neighborhoods--just as the Dodgers have done since 1958.

And that's the Business Perspective.

The Business Perspective is a weekly award-winning opinion piece created to provide a thought-provoking analysis on current issues.