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Human Rights Tribunal Green Lights Cardinal's case against Cleveland Major League Baseball Team

Ontario Human Rights Tribunal green lights discrimination case against Cleveland major league baseball team name and logo.

The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario has rejected Major League Baseball, the Cleveland major league team, and Rogers Communications' attempt to have First Nations Elder Douglas Cardinal's discrimination claim against them thrown out on jurisdictional grounds. (The ruling can be read in full by clicking here.) Cardinal argues that use of the Cleveland team name and "Chief Wahoo" logo during games played at Toronto's Rogers Centre constitutes discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

"As an Indigenous person, I am encouraged that the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal has accepted jurisdiction over my complaint and agrees that it can proceed to a hearing," Mr. Cardinal said. "Unfortunately, the consciousness of genocide and apartheid continues to be fostered by the insensitive use of demeaning and degrading symbols, mocking indigenous peoples. This must cease in order for reconciliation to have any meaning and substance."

MLB, the Cleveland team, and Rogers made numerous arguments in an attempt to have the matter dismissed. Among other things, they argued that the tribunal lacks jurisdiction, that Mr. Cardinal was pursuing his claim under the wrong law, and that since he's brought a similar complaint before the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Tribunal should stand down.

The tribunal rejected the validity of MLB, Cleveland, and Rogers' arguments and agreed with Lenczner Slaght partners Rebecca Jones and Paul-Erik Veel that the case should proceed.

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