



CALEB BROWDER // PHOTO EDITOR

Should it stay or should it go?

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Anyone who has attended a sporting event at Clemson has heard the public announcer come over the speakers and say, “The NCAA and the Atlantic Coast Conference promote good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches and spectators.... Profanity... will not be tolerated.” For the most part, Clemson fans seem happy to oblige to this rather simple, respectful request.

However, in the thrill of competition and the excitement of beating a team “we weren’t sup-posed to,” it’s easy for players, coaches and fans to lose that respectful demeanor. This does not happen often but lately, we have had what some would consider a problem that our students and fans have allowed to creep into Clemson Athletic events.

Imagine it, Death Valley on a pleasant October afternoon. The band has just moved into its tunnel formation and the cheerleaders are ready to run the “Fighting Tigers” banner on the field. The Tigers are standing atop the hill waiting for the cannon. When it fires, excitement fills the air as the team files down the Hill. Tiger Band gets to the “woo-hoo” part of Tiger Rag and Central Spirit runs the flags on the field. “C-L-E-M-S-O---N,” shouts Clemson the faithful, but in between that “O” and that “N” a new word has found its home. A word that is facing some acceptance issues from the Tiger’s fanbase.

“What we are seeing here is a clash of folkways with each new generation of our Clemson family.”
- Gabriel Fair

This is a new tradition at Clemson, only starting in the last decade, and one that has grown in popularity each year within the student sections. However,

not all students are on board with this new trend.

“The profanity during the spell-out obviously works against the family-friendly nature of our campus,” says Holden Kammerer, Secretary of Engagement for the Clemson Undergraduate Student Government (CUSG) and president of the IPTAY Student Advisory Board.

“I have noticed the concern from alumni and families alike as the profane language was not initiated

is not conducive to the type of family environment we strive to embrace. This behavior is inconsistent with Clemson University’s core values of honesty, integrity and respect and is something we will continue to address with student leaders moving forward.”

Student organization leaders across campus have also expressed their concern with this behavior.

“I know personally being part of Central Spirit, we always make sure to let our members know that we do not

HISTORY OF THE CHANT

It is hard to imagine a gameday in Death Valley, or any Clemson sporting event, without one of the most iconic collegiate fight songs in existence. “Tiger Rag” debuted at Clemson during the 1942 football season after Robert Dean Ross, cadet bandmaster of the Clemson Corps Band, purchased the sheet music to “Tiger Rag” from a music store in Atlanta, Georgia.

“The Song that Shakes the Southland” gave way to another Clemson tradition, although its origins are surrounded with more uncertainty. In the recording of the Tiger’s 22-15 win over Nebraska to secure Clemson’s first National Championship, “Tiger Rag” can be heard playing in the background, but there is no spell-out. Richard Goodstein, Clemson Dean Emeritus and former Tiger Band director, said, “I recall the cheerleaders coming up with the cheer in the early-to-mid 80s. It took hold quickly and is now a long-standing tradition.”

John Seketa, author of “Clemson Through the Eyes of the Tiger,” shared an additional easter egg with The Tiger. “The Woo-hoo [before the spell-out,] which is not a part of the song, started after it was heard on a Tiger Band CD. Supposedly, it is what the Flag Line [Tiger Guard] said at the time,” said Seketa.

until relatively recent years, and is really disturbing to the older members of the Clemson family... an ‘experience’ such as using profane language during the spell-out is not one of tradition and may even deter families from including their children in the environment, which goes against everything Clemson aims to do as a distinguished university,” said Kammerer.

Vice President for Student Affairs, Chris Miller, echoed some of Kammerer’s concerns in a statement released by his office. It reads, “To be clear, the use of profanity in these situations

take part [in] the profanity used between the ‘O’ and the ‘N’ [of the spell-out],” said Alejandro Mejia-Tejada, president of Central Spirit. “I would like to see this phased out in the future, but due to it being such a popular tradition that makes up our atmosphere at sporting events, I don’t see it phasing out in the near future.”

Despite the unpopularity expressed above, not everyone is offended or sees a problem with the choice word. Clemson alumnus of 2013, Gabriel Fair, shared, “What we are seeing here is a clash of folkways with each new generation of our Clemson family.”

A folkway is the traditional behavior or way of life of a particular community or group of people. With each additional generation, new traditions take the place of old ones. “I would resist effort to police it,” said Fair, “this is a silly meme, common at other colleges as well, like LSU and Texas, to use adult language in a setting with adults.”

Director of Bands, Mark Spede, shared his thoughts on the matter. “A lot of people, especially parents of young children, are disheartened by the obscenity some of our fans are yelling during our fight song Clemson is famous for our family-friendly environment, our culture and certainly Tiger Rag. I’m sure there’s a better, G-rated solution we can all get behind, either different words or better yet, uniting to create a great game day experience for all ages and keeping our rich tradition of the CLEMSON spell-out as we have for decades.”

Clemson Athletics shared, “We always ask that our guests are considerate of those around them in terms of their actions, and hope that our fans/students will continue to display sportsman-ship while attending athletic events.”

After multiple requests for comment, former Student Senator Mary Frances Huggins and Senator Kate Hadley, Student Activities Chair had not responded by press time. Student Body President William Reinert and Vice President Liza Lowder did not offer a comment on the issue. Currently, it is unclear if Clemson Athletics, CUSG or school officials plan to take on this issue in the Spring term.

Student leaders want to see this issue addressed. Holland added, “I think a great first step to take would be addressing it to the entire student body, bringing light to the problem at hand and why it has started to negatively affect our reputation as a school. Maybe a video message email from President Clements or someone else would go a long way.”