

INTRODUCING

The Border Patrol

They came up with the big game Sunday and now they've got the great nickname.

The Chargers defensive line of Leslie O'Neal, Chris Mims, Shawn Lee and Reuben Davis has decided to dub itself "The Border Patrol."

In the 24-10 victory over the Seahawks, the front four produced five sacks: three by O'Neal, who is the Chargers all-time sack leader with 84; one by Lee and another by backup defensive end Raylee Johnson. Linebacker Junior Seau also picked up a sack as he collected a team-high 10 tackles.

"We came up with the name collectively," said Lee, who added that a poster of the front line is in the works. "I would say that if there is a top officer in The Border Patrol, it would be Leslie."

—KEVIN KERNAN

UNION-TRIBUNE
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I, Couch Potato/Fritz Quindt

Politically correct, fine — but Chargers deserve a nickname as great as they are



The Chargers now have everything emblematic of a great team, except a nickname.

Last week the defensive line decided to call itself The Border Patrol. Which, like most good nicknames, has a local flavor and is metaphorically true.

Unfortunately, The Border Patrol is not a politically correct term, according to those who called the Chargers offices to complain of *socio-economic insensitivity*. Boy. Some people.

Big mistake. Only Junior Seau has broken through on NBC and HBO sans nickname. The rest of the squad is handicapped, er, *disabled*.

The Border Patrol has yet to be declared *nonviable*, but the Chargers are sponsoring a contest to rename their D-line. Hey, good ones are hard to find. Natrone Means is "N Train"; Chris Berman came up with "Refried" — uh-oh.

Geez. What will the PC police do next? Arrest Stanley "The Sheriff" Richard? Order Stan "The Man" Humphries to cease and desist since his name is not gender-blind? Charge Steve "The Rocket" Hendrickson with being as militaristically imposing as Air Coryell?

Today, the NRA would shoot holes in Lance "Bambi" Alworth, and Gary "The Ghost" Garrison would be cursed by LaToya Jackson.

Just one peril of being on top in the PC '90s. In the '70s, the Steelers could call their front four The Steel Curtain and sleep well, because Eastern Europe ignored infringement of its Iron Curtain trademark.

Dot races on football

Hypothetical: If Humphries hadn't returned, could Gale Gilbert have engineered a game-winning drive? At least the support he received on the bench inspired confidence . . . As Alexander Wright and Steve Ortmyer hint on kickoffs, speed kills. Does Al know? . . . Notice: Every Raiders fan looks just like Cheech Marin or Downtown Julie Brown. (Except for that obese man with the skull-and-crossbones painted on his bare chest) . . .

Check the whine list for yesterday's vignettes of Jeff Hostetler and Dan Marino . . . Just a coincidence that Warren Moon was involved in the biggest blown leads of all time . . . Did the Chiefs open with four games vs. the NFC because the NFL wanted Fox to get a head start with two Joe Montana cameos? . . . You know Joe must be getting old. Because the last time he was that sick he rallied Notre Dame to victory in the 1979 Cotton Bowl. The locals can only hope he doesn't lay his hands on any chicken soup for two weeks . . . With NFL zebras getting the big pay raise, they needn't be so timid about making a call . . .

Bully for the Aztecs' effort in Fort Collins. Too bad their best was no better than a 52-yard field-goal try. One play and a few yards might have made the difference, but seconds flew by in the huddle and at the line in the final minute of that final drive. Who's in charge of the clock management, Wayne Fontes? . . . USC played a *night game*. At the *Coliseum*.

Ellipses on the air

The Voice of the Aztecs/Chargers made a concentrated effort at self-improvement this weekend. Didn't invoke the dreaded "Everybody into the pattern" phrase till late in the first quarter Saturday, and yesterday instantly ID'd even Deems May. In the words of Brad Cesmat and Joe Tutino: Thanks, Lee . . . Falsetto voice and abuse of the word athleticism aside, Gill Byrd's Aztecs TV debut was OK; yet Mark Halda's audio is more anal-retentive . . . Prime Ticket missed Ray Peterson's runback. It did get E.J. Watson barfing in the huddle . . . Hope ABC was rewarded with a 1.1 rating for exporting Arizona-Stanford to Channel 10 instead of Michigan-Colorado. Cripes . . .

No Chargers made Howie Long's Tough Guys list on Fox. Grudge time, maybe . . . Describing Raiders play-calling at the end of the first half, NBC's Bob Trumpy could only be described as apoplectic. Isn't it great? . . . According to "NFL Live," the Rams are headed for Baltimore, to play at Camden Yards . . . If Phil Simms was uncomfy talking about forsaking a TV career for a last chance to play for Buddy Ryan, he didn't show it on ESPN . . . Two words for NBC's In The Grid isolation graphic gimmick: Don't get.

Wide world of dots

Two reasons to make Hooters, the new titillating sports bar TV stations editorialized against, your place to watch football: 1) Chicken wings 2) There's not a bad seat in the house . . .

Baseball. The NHL. Now the NBA. Is this really what Sam Gompers had in mind? . . . Oliver McCall, meet Buster Douglas . . . Worst thing about the outcome of Saturday's

HBO fight: It makes Don King viable again. Am eagerly awaiting future duels by Tabasco Cat and Best Pal on the Senior Tour . . .

What subtlety on *The Sporting News* editorial page this week. There's a headline, Greed Kills. And underneath, 10 inches of white space. For the Dodgers to dump Ron Perranoski, he must've swiped somebody's antipasto . . . Barry Bonds is a campaign worker for Pete Wilson. Sure. Both hit to right.

Tater tots

■ Vital statistic: NFL kickers are 0-for-10 from 50-plus yards.

■ Posture Police: After the 90-yard punt return, Darrien Gordon shook his booty for the Raiders' Pirate Pavilion — and a fan ran to the fence to make an obscene gesture. (Alas, no NBC reverse-angle replay.)

■ Needle Drop: NBC's "NFL Live" played about 10 seconds of Pink Floyd's "The Division Bell" over a Moon feature.

■ Chris Berman's (Nick)Name of the Week: Willie Fuller "Rush Man."

■ Jim Rome-to-English Dictionary: "The Stud" means UCLA hoops coach Jim Harrick.

■ Commercialism: Joe Greene's Coke and a smile for Russell Athletic's ad (Sean Gilbert gives his jersey to a kid, then wants it back); don't get Nike's bizarro spot listing The All-Time Top 5 Football Players (Dan Fouts is No. 4; Al Del Greco is No. 1), either.

■ Soundalikes: The answering machine of former Padres publicist Jim Ferguson & Jim Rockford's.

■ Lookalikes: New USD coach Brad Holland & Jim Carrey.

■ Thought for the day: "Raiders: Last place, baby!" — Lee Hamilton, the clock at 0:00.

KO60
George WEBER

CHARGERS FUMBLE THE BALL --STOOP TO MEXICAN BASHING!

Chicano Community Outraged by Racist "Defensive Line"!

The Committee on Chicano Rights (CCR) has labeled the Chargers' statement "that the defensive line of Leslie O'Neal, Chris Mims, Shawn Lee and Reuben Davis are 'the Border Patrol' as racist, insulting and offensive to the more than 3,000,000 persons of Mexican ancestry who live in San Diego and Tijuana.

Herman Baca, chairman of the CCR said, "The label is racist. How would the Black community react if the Raiders front defensive line had labeled themselves the 'Klan Patrol'? Or how would the Jewish community feel if the New York Giants defensive or offensive front line labeled themselves the 'Gestapo Patrol'?"

This idiotic racist public relations stunt approved by the lily white Chargers front of-

fice has probably made Raider fans of 99% of the 3,000,000 Mexican and Chicanos who reside in San Diego and Tijuana. Is it a coincidence that the Chargers defensive front line is all Black? So much for the Rainbow Coalition."

Baca added, "If the Chargers are stating that by labeling themselves the 'Border Patrol' they are inferring that they can hold the line, then they have definitely chosen a wrong and ludicrous label. By the Border Patrol's own admission, for every person apprehended 9 or 10 slip through the U.S./Mexico border! Some defense snorted Baca."

"The lily white front office of the Chargers, is playing politics rather than football! With the hate filled current political climate brought

about by the Mexican bashing of Governor Pete Wilson, the San Diego Board of Supervisors, and the radical right wing prop. 187 supporters, the Chargers involvement in the political arena with the volatile immigration issue will cost them monetarily and tarnish their public relations image in San Diego County, the border and in Mexico."

"As far as I am concerned," said Baca, "a BOYCOTT by all self respecting persons of Mexican ancestry is in order until those responsible for the statements and the San Diego Chargers front office retract the Border Patrol label and apologize to persons of Mexican ancestry here in the U.S. and Mexico for their racist, bigoted, discriminatory statements."

Viewpoints

Sports Letters

The San Diego Union-Tribune welcomes letters to the Sports Editor. They should be kept as brief as possible and may be edited. To be considered for publication, letters must include an address and telephone number (which will not be published). Our address: Sports Letters, The San Diego Union-Tribune, P.O. Box 191, San Diego 92112.

'Border Patrol' protests answered

I must respond to letters objecting to the Chargers defense being labeled "The Border Patrol." I am a second-generation legal immigrant from Mexico and I think this is a great nickname. I take no offense, racial or personal.

A border is "any separation, edge, or line," as in line of scrimmage. A patrol is an "independent group used for observation or action," as in NFL action. The Chargers defense and the U.S. Border Patrol have the same job — to contain or repel an invasion force from an opponent.

The name says, "Watch out! We're on patrol and we'll do all that we can, *within the rules*, to keep you out of our territory."

Keep the name. It makes a point. We should be proud of both our "Border Patrols."

PHILL CARREON, Vista

I find complaints about use of the nickname nauseating. My wife is an immigrant, and the first language in our home is Spanish; yet we, as Americans, are proud of the men and women of the Border Patrol, who perform a difficult and underappreciated task.

If anyone has a right to object to this use, it is these men and women; they might prefer not to have their work trivialized by use of their proud name as a slogan for a sports team.

GARY GERKEN
Chula Vista

I just read two letters that set my blood to boiling. Ernesto Araiza had the temerity, the gall, to liken the U.S. Border Patrol to Nazi Storm Troopers. How dare he make that reference. Ernst Rohm and his Brown Shirts smashed, pillaged and burned Jewish shops and homes for Hitler, who put millions of people to death. The U.S. Border Patrol arrests, detains, and then transports *illegal* aliens back to their native country.

I am not so naive as to think there are not occasional transgressions leading to excessive use of force, or even violence, but to compare the men and women who guard our borders to Nazis is an outrage.

Political correctness is the McCarthyism of the '90s, and certainly just as pernicious. Tradition and individuality are being systematically stamped out across America. College teams change nicknames to appease a small minority. Hallowed old schools like The Citadel are forced to break the century-old tradition of an all-male cadre. At an elementary school, children are told not to dress for Halloween as Native Americans (or as hobos). As someone with a significant amount of Cherokee in my blood, I have no problem with someone dressing up as Geronimo, Sitting Bull or Chief Joseph, or using the nickname "Indians." I define myself by something other than labels.

People like Ernesto Araiza and the other writer, Ernie McCray, would probably prefer to see this country reduced to one solitary, unremitting shade of gray, without texture or shape. Just conformity. I, for one, hope this never comes to pass. And, I suspect, the worm will turn, and turn hard, just like it did for McCarthyism.

CHAD W. BOYER
Pacific Beach

Ernie McCray's characterization of "Border Patrol" as "the most hateful tag imaginable" is thoughtless, disrespectful of the agents (many of Hispanic descent) and just plain stupid.

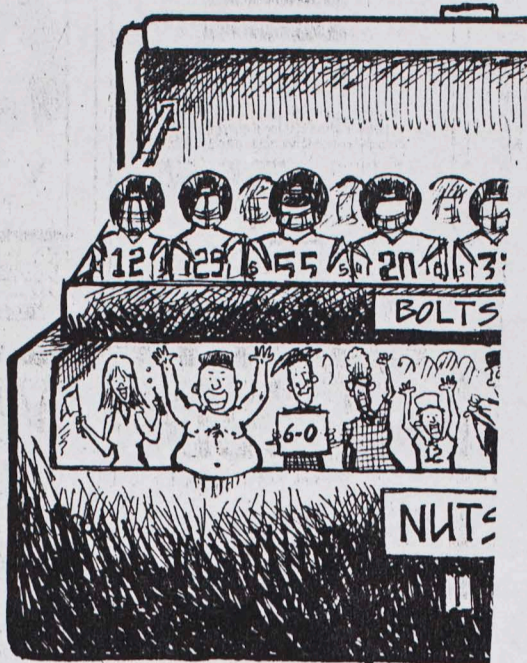
Mr. Araiza also seems to have a problem with valid comparison when he uses the "Storm Troopers" analogy, which is clearly ludicrous.

These people can't tell good guys from bad guys. The oxymoronic nature of the phrase "law-abiding illegal aliens" is lost on them.

I don't think "Border Patrol" is a particularly inspired nickname for a football squad, but to use this innocuous bit of PR as a platform from which to point the racist finger at anyone is really a long reach.

DRAW PLAY

What the foundation of San Diego's



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problem-seeking mentalities behind in the real world. "Political correctness" has no place in the NFL.

LAWRENCE LEE
Del Mar