



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on August 24, 2017

## ESPN Yanks Announcer From Virginia Football Game Because of His Name

Just when you thought the hysteria over symbols of the Confederate States of America couldn't get any more ridiculous, it did. ESPN announced Tuesday that it had transferred a play-by-play announcer from a Virginia football game to a Pittsburgh game "simply because of the coincidence of his name." That name: Robert Lee.

Lee, an Asian-American who works as a part-time announcer for ESPN, was scheduled to call the September 2 game pitting the College of William and Mary against the University of Virginia at the latter's campus in Charlottesville, Virginia.



However, after violent clashes over the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville left one person dead earlier this month, ESPN decided not to send its employee Robert Lee to that town. Instead, the network reassigned him — with his consent, according to [USA Today](#) — to a game between Youngstown State University and the University of Pittsburgh in the Steel City.

"We collectively made the decision with Robert to switch games as the tragic events in Charlottesville were unfolding, simply because of the coincidence of his name," ESPN said in a statement. "In that moment it felt right to all parties. It's a shame that this is even a topic of conversation and we regret that who calls play by play for a football game has become an issue."

Of course, it wasn't an issue until ESPN made it one. The network, owned by Disney, has been credibly accused of having a left-wing bias. It took Hank Williams, Jr.'s, *Monday Night Football* introduction [off the air](#) after Williams made a politically incorrect analogy on Fox News Channel, and it [fired](#) former big-league pitcher Kurt Schilling as an on-air analyst when Schilling posted comments and images on Facebook opposing laws granting people the privilege of using the restroom of the opposite sex. An April [study](#) by Deep Root Analytics found that ESPN has lost significant numbers of Republican viewers, which is surely part of the reason the network's profits have plummeted and it [laid off](#) 100 employees earlier this year. The Lee decision is not likely to help matters any.

"It seems ESPN was hoping to shield their employee from any potential ridicule or embarrassment," wrote [USA Today](#). "Instead, they made a mountain out of a molehill and the entire thing has backfired spectacularly."

Indeed it has. Since the decision to reassign not-General Lee was announced, social media has been abuzz with criticism, some of it serious, some mocking.

"This nonsense is the result of people cowering [sic] in fear to the reign of terror of The Left as they do this for your own good," tweeted actress [Stacey Dash](#).

User [Disco Superboogie](#), who describes himself as "Christian" and "Texan," tweeted: "Fun fact: ESPN



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pulls an announcer from a broadcast because of his name, Robert Lee. He is Asian. Don't think this is going to stop."

"So just to clarify, Robert Lee, Asian play by play man, & Robert E. Lee, Confederate General, are different people," tweeted [Clay Travis](#) of [Outkick the Coverage](#), which first reported the ESPN move.

Memes with Robert Lee's face superimposed on Robert E. Lee's body have been making the rounds, and more than one person asked if ESPN would refuse to cover a game in which a player named Robert Lee participated.

Even the [very liberal](#) Congressman [Rick Larsen](#) (D-Wash.) took to Twitter to voice his disapproval, writing, "If this isn't the same Lee that led the Confederate Army, ESPN needs to reverse this idiocy."

Do the suits at ESPN really think that football fans and television viewers are so crazy with Confederacy hatred as to be offended that an announcer has the same name as a southern general, not to mention a [steamboat](#) and an [orange car](#)? Apparently so. Sadly, given events of recent days, they just might be correct.



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