Pro sports PR is getting to be a lot like political PR: It's no wonder why I despise the greater chance it has of being true. Consider the New England Whalers. Do they mean the Whaler of the Whales? Could they mean the Whaler of the Whales in the South? No. Scherz officiating moves his HWA franchise southwesterly. There are many races of all understandable: poor attendance, resulting in losses totally a two million minimum in lower press coverage, both of the team and the league; and a wagerer's choice of Boston Garden, dates, behind Chefs, Bruins, and Braves. The plan in moving is this: playoff games for this season Bruins, and Braves. The plan in moving is this: playoff games for this season.

The most laughable example, of course, is the hockey franchise. Although it'll precipitate some easy headlines (FLORIDA, FLORIDA, FLORIDA, SUNSET SEASON SUN: DOWN FIRE), it breaks all those and contravenes all the traditional conventions of this quasi-art, Crimson Tide and Green Wave aside. Turn, "Northmen" (who may not play in Canada if the Canadian government has its way) is also on the questionable side: the only two important league players are the Pittsburgh business men of the NBA in 1946, and the Brooklyn business men, a 1926 AFL franchise.

More common in college sports, though hardly the rage, the formula "Sun-City Nordiques." Can a bit of an awkwardness (the right hands), a member of the Northmen being a Northerner, as well as the equivocation as to how the name is to be used as an adjective: "Northman quarterbeak" sounds better than "Northman quarterback," but seems grammatically less legitimate. Is there a more appropriate English teacher in the house?

Others, such as New York Stars, Florida Sharks, and Southern Californias, make the mistake of picking names already in use in pro sports, albeit in other sports. In 1954, hockey, baseball, football, and basketball fielded a combined total of 12 major league clubs. In 1954, that number has ballooned to 130, and the importance of choosing an individual shibboleth that will mean instant and unambiguous identification of your product is profound. Florida "Gators" or even "Saints" the team will be based in Jacksonville, usually abbreviated to "Jax" in head- lines) sound nice. Southern Californias is a mouthful even for Ms. Lombardi, although certainly "Arabian" seems to lack national appeal (or so the Angels' argument goes), whereas "California" is overused, and "Golden State" is aussy, attention-getting, but so-one clearly cannot formally identify the NBA War- rior. And "Stars" is probably the usual name ever convenient for a team.

The trouble with Detroit "Wheels" is more subtle but no less valid. Each pro sports team has its own mystique and names tend to "sound right" in one sport while not necessarily in all. For example, baseball is the oldest established major league sport, and hence its conventions are deeply rooted. A football team couldn't be called the Los Angeles "Blue Sox," and a hockey team called the Orlando "Giants" would grate the ear a good hit. Basketball gets away with less niceties (Spurs, Sups, Nuggets, Spurs, Cavaliers, Pacers, Nets, Pistons) than football, where machismo is usually the ticket on Saints and Dolphins being two popular exceptions. Even a Rams or a Cardinal sound tougher than a Piper or a Zeppa.

The plan in moving is that playoff games for this season Bruins, and Braves.

The plan in moving is this: playoff games for this season. Bruins, and Braves.