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## Trademarking your territory

### A&M, Seahawks caught in licensing battle over 12th Man

By: [Sonia Moghe](#)

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Adán Peña and Wade  
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The Twelfth Man may have to work overtime going back and forth between Seattle and College Station to support two football teams.

With the Super Bowl approaching, the Seattle Seahawks' own 12th Man flag caught the attention of Texas A&M fans who watched the Seattle team advance during the NFL playoffs.

A&M Athletic Director Bill Byrne said the Office of Collegiate Licensing is working on having the Seahawks cease and desist their use of the trademark.

"We had similar situations with the Buffalo Bills and the Chicago Bears, and they responded quickly with our requests to stop using our Twelfth Man trademark," Byrne said in his weekly update address. "But Seattle has been slow-rolling us."

Representatives from the Seahawks would not comment.

The Seahawks retired their No. 12 jersey in honor of their fans in 1984 and have flown a 12th Man flag in their end zone at Qwest Field.

The Aggies' Twelfth Man tradition started in 1922 when E. King Gill, a student not on the football team, suited up and stood on the sidelines of a football game in case his help was needed.

Jeff Schmahl, the senior associate athletic director for external operations, said it is important to protect trademarks at all times, and that the Seahawks' advancing to the Super Bowl for the first time does not give this incident more importance.

"If you don't protect your copyrights and trademarks you can lose them," Schmahl said.

A person who identified herself as an A&M student in an online forum said that as a Seattle native, she agrees A&M has rights to the Twelfth Man, but that she sees benefits in Seattle using the name, too.

"Seeing the flag and over winter break, seeing the 12(th) Man signs...it's not all that bad to let Seattle in on the...12th Man," the student wrote. "I like having the two teams I root for having a common bond."

A&M President Robert M. Gates briefly mentioned the Seahawks' use of the trademark during a Wednesday student senate meeting, said junior political science major and student senator J.P. Morris.

"The 12th Man was started here at A&M," he said. "We started the whole concept, it sounds a lot like they stole the original idea. I don't like how they are using one of our registered trademarks."



Adán Peña - The Battalion

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