# Is Your Favorite Fight Song Under Copyright Protection?

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Just about every sports team has its own fight song. Some teams wrote fight songs or had them commissioned specifically for the team. Others adopted previously written songs as their own. Some have been around since the 1800s. and some are relatively new. Are they free for anyone to play? Samantha Levin, 2019 spring law clerk in the Copyright Office's Office of Public Information and Education, researched the copyright status of ten famous fight songs. Remember, this status only refers to the registration of the song (lyrics and/ or music). Arrangements and sound recordings of songs in the public domain could still be under copyright protection.



The 1934 Notre Dame football team runs through plays to the music of the Notre Dame University band.

# "Victory March" Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Brothers and Notre Dame alumni John and Michael Shea composed "Victory March" in 1908. The song was registered for copyright that same year and first played in 1909. It is now in the public domain.

# "The Victors" Michigan Wolverines

University of Michigan student Louis Elbel wrote "The Victors" in 1898 after Michigan's loss to then-rival University of Chicago. In 1899, John Philip Sousa first played the song publicly. It is now in the public domain.

# "Rocky Top" Tennessee Volunteers

While it's not the school's official fight song, "Rocky Top" has come to be associated with the Volunteers. The story told is that married songwriting duo Boudleaux and Felice Bryant wrote the song in ten minutes in 1967 as a diversion from writing slower songs. University of Tennessee has a perpetual license to play the song at games, but "Rocky Top" is under copyright protection until 2062.

## "Boomer Sooner" Oklahoma Sooners

This fight song began with a tune borrowed from Yale University's fight song (itself a borrowed tune). University of Oklahoma student Arthur M. Alden wrote "Boomer Sooner" in 1905. It is now in the public domain.

## "Glory, Glory" Georgia Bulldogs

The Georgia Bulldogs fight song has been played at football games as early as the late 1800s. Renowned pianist Hugh Hodgson arranged the song in its current form in 1915. It is now in the public domain.

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#### "Yea Alabama" **Alabama Crimson Tide**

University of Alabama student Ethelred "Epp" Sykes entered "Yea Alabama" in a 1926 school newspaper fight songfinding contest and won. The student-run magazine Rammer Jammer first published the song in May 1926 and Sykes registered the song with the Copyright Office the same year (renewed in 1954). In 1947, Sykes donated the song's copyright and future royalties to the University of Alabama. "Yea Alabama" is under copyright protection until 2021.

## "On Wisconsin" **Wisconsin Badgers**

William T. Purdy composed the song in 1909 under the name "Minnesota, Minnesota." A University of Wisconsin alumnus convinced Purdy to give the song to the school, and the lyrics were changed to reflect the school's name. The song made its game-day debut on November 13, 1909. It is now in the public domain.

### "Fly, Eagles Fly" **Philadelphia Eagles**

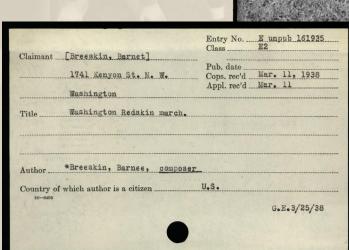
The Eagles Pep Band composed "Fly, Eagles Fly" in 1995 in an attempt to increase fan support. The song became a staple at Eagles football games starting in 1999. The song is registered with the Copyright Office with the Eagles Pep Band as the author as a work made for hire. "Fly, Eagles Fly" is under copyright protection until 2092.

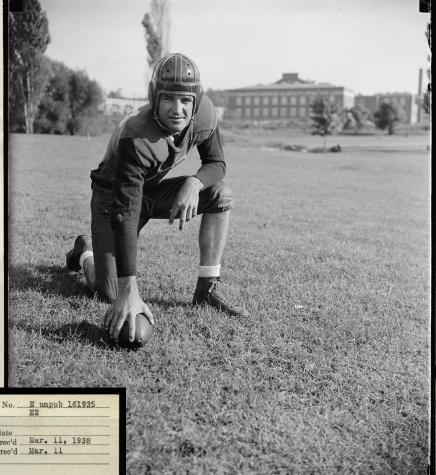
## "Hail to the Redskins" **Washington Redskins**

Corinne Griffith, Redskins owner George Preston Marshall's wife, wrote the lyrics to "Hail to the Redskins" when the team moved from Boston to Washington in 1937. The Redskins' band leader Barnet Breeskin wrote the music and registered it with the Copyright Office that same year, and it became the official Washington Redskins fight song on August 17, 1938. "Hail to the Redskins" is under copyright protection until 2032.

#### "Miami Dolphins No 1" **Miami Dolphins**

Leo Ofman wrote "Miami Dolphins No 1" right before the Miami Dolphins 1972 undefeated season. Ofman registered the words and music with the Copyright Office that year and renewed the registration in 2008. "Miami Dolphins No 1" is under copyright protection, and the duration is not yet set, as Ofman is still alive. @





Sammy Baugh starts with the Redskins in the fall of 1937, the same year the Washington Redskins fight song "Hail to the Redskins" was written.

Copyright registration card for "Hail to the Redskins."