English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

Articles of the week

Rainbow armbands are dividing opinion at Euro 2025

By CIARÁN FAHEY AP Sports Writer

Some captains are wearing them, some are not.

Rainbow armbands at the Women's European Championship are proving more divisive than perhaps intended for a symbol promoting tolerance and inclusion.

UEFA is giving team captains the option of wearing armbands with the bright colors of the rainbow flag or plain monocolored versions with the word “respect” when they play.

“Standard yellow and blue armbands are provided to all teams and rainbow armbands are available upon request,” UEFA told The Associated Press.

Both versions have been worn so far at the tournament in Switzerland, with the captains' choices facing scrutiny for the meaning behind their decisions.

What it means

The rainbow armband is intended to show solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, while it also stands for diversity.

“UEFA is committed to making football a safe and welcoming environment for everybody, independent of who we love, our gender identification or gender expression,” the governing body said before the women's Euro 2022, where it also gave team captains the option of wearing rainbow armbands.

UEFA faced criticism the year before when it nixed Munich's plans to illuminate its stadium in rainbow colors for Germany's game against Hungary during the men's European Championship.

The Germans wanted to protest to a law passed by Hungarian lawmakers the week before that prohibited sharing with minors any content portraying homosexuality or sex reassignment.

Who's wearing the rainbow armbands?

When Germany played France in their quarterfinal on Saturday, the German captain, Janina Minge, wore a rainbow armband while her French counterpart did not.

Switzerland captain Lia Wälti wore a rainbow armband in her team's quarterfinal against Spain the day before. Her opposite, Irene Paredes, did not.

Norway captain Ada Hegerberg wore a rainbow armband, as did Wales captain Angharad James, Iceland's Glódís Viggósdóttir, England's Leah Williamson and others.

England defender Lucy Bronze also wore a rainbow wristband during her team's quarterfinal win over Sweden, whose captain, Kosovare Asllani, also wore a rainbow armband.

Elena Linari became the first to wear a rainbow armband for Italy when she captained the side against Spain, but Cristiana Girelli wore a plain one when she returned for the quarterfinal against Norway.

France chose 'respect' armband

France captain Griedge Mbock Bathy suggested the rainbow armband's message is too restrictive because of its focus on LGBTQ+ rights.

“Highlighting a single issue also potentially excludes the others,” she said. “We cannot champion a single cause through our diverse group because there are so many causes to defend.”

Mbock said the France team is “so diverse that we cannot highlight just one cause. I think that the armband with the word 'respect' really represents what we want to convey as a message and that is the most important thing.”

When told that nine of the 16 countries participating at Euro 2025 wear the rainbow armband, France coach Laurent Bonadei defended his team's choice not to.

“Our one has 'respect' written on it. Respect as a word gathers a lot of causes such as racism. I think the 'respect' one is really a nice one,” Bonadei said.

Controversy in Qatar

Swedish player Nilla Fischer, the former Wolfsburg captain, was the first in Germany to wear the rainbow armband in the women's Bundesliga in 2017. She inspired others to follow suit, both in women's and men's sports.

Germany was a strong campaigner for rainbow armbands at the men's World Cup in Qatar in 2022. That developed into a showdown with FIFA over the compromise “One Love” campaign, which featured a rainbow-type heart design that was supposed to be a symbol against discrimination. It was still largely seen as a snub to the host nation, where homosexual acts are illegal and its treatment of migrant workers was a decade-long controversy.

FIFA banned the armbands and threatened to book team captains who wore them, leading the German players to cover their mouths for the team photo before their opening game, suggesting they were being silenced.

Germany's interior minister at the time, Nancy Faeser, who was also responsible for sports, wore a “One Love” armband in the stands beside FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

Qatari supporters later hit back by holding pictures of former Germany player Mesut Özil while covering their mouths during Germany's match against Spain. They were referring to the racist abuse in Germany of Özil, a German-born descendant of Turkish immigrants, who became a scapegoat for Germany's early World Cup exit in 2018.

Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann called for an end to political statements in 2024, saying they were too distracting for his players. The German men's team ultimately failed to deliver on the field.

AP soccer: https://apnews.com/hub/soccer

Bald eagle's new status as the official US bird brings pride and hope to many Native Americans

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

PRAIRIE ISLAND INDIAN COMMUNITY, Minn. (AP) — Some Native Americans traditionally bestow bald eagle feathers at ceremonies to mark achievements, such as graduations, and as a form of reverence for the bird they hold sacred as a messenger to the Creator.

This year, many are doing so with elevated pride and hope. The bald eagle is now the official bird of the United States, nearly 250 years after it was first used as a symbol of the newly founded nation that's deeply polarized politically today.

“The eagle is finally getting the respect it deserves. Maybe when the nation looks at the eagle that way, maybe there will be less division,” said Jim Thunder Hawk. He's the Dakota culture and language manager for the Prairie Island Indian Community, a small Mdewakanton Sioux band on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minnesota.

This wide, unruffled stretch of water framed by wooded bluffs is prime bald eagle territory. The size of Minnesota's population of the majestic, white-head-and-tail birds that are exclusive to North America is second only to that of Alaska.

The legislation that made the eagle official came from members of Minnesota's Congressional delegation. The federal act recognizes the eagles' centrality in most Indigenous peoples' “spiritual lives and sacred belief systems,” and a replica of it is on display at the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minnesota, 40 miles (65 kilometers) downriver from the Prairie Island community, which partners with the center in eagle care.

“If you grew up in the United States, eagles were a part of your everyday life,” said Tiffany Ploehn, who as the center's avian care director supervises its four resident bald eagles. “Everyone has some sort of connection.”

Fierce symbols of strength and spiritual uplift

A bald eagle, its wings and talons spread wide, has graced the Great Seal of the United States since 1782, and appears on passport covers, the $1 bill, military insignia, and myriad different images in pop culture.

But a prolific collector of eagle memorabilia based in Wabasha realized recently that, while the United States had an official animal (the bison) and flower (the rose), the eagle was getting no formal credit. Several Minnesota legislators sponsored a bill to remedy that and then-President Joe Biden's signature made it official in December.

With their massive wingspan and stern curved beak, bald eagles are widely used as symbols of strength and power. In reality, they spend 95% of their day perched high in trees, though when they hunt they can spot a rabbit 3 miles (5 kilometers) away, Ploehn said.

For many Native Americans, the soaring eagle represents far more; it delivers their prayers to the Creator and even intercedes on their behalf.

“My grandma told me that we honor eagles because they saved the Ojibwe people when the Creator wanted to turn on them. The eagle, he can fly high, so he went to speak with the Creator to make things right,” said Sadie Erickson, who is Ojibwe and Mdewakanton Sioux.

Marking life milestones with eagle feathers

Erickson and a dozen other high school graduates received a bald eagle feather at an early July celebration by the riverbank at Prairie Island.

Thunder Hawk said a prayer in the Dakota language urging the high school graduates and graduates receiving higher education degrees to “always remember who you are and where you come from.”

Then they lined up and a relative tied a feather — traditionally on the left side, the heart's side — as tribal members sang and drummed to celebrate them.

“It just feels like I went through a new step of life,” said Jayvionna Buck.

Growing up on Prairie Island, she recalled her mother excitedly pointing out every eagle.

“She would genuinely just yell at me, 'Eagle!' But it's just a special occurrence for us to see,” Buck said. “We love seeing it, and normally when we do, we just offer tobacco to show our respects.”

Some Native Americans honor the eagle by taking it as their ceremonial name. Derek Walking Eagle, whose Lakota name is “Eagle Thunder,” celebrated the graduates wearing a woven medallion representing the bird.

To him, eagles are like relatives that connect him to his future and afterlife.

“Being able to carry on to the spirit world … that's who guides you. It's the eagle,” Walking Eagle said.

That deep respect attaches to the feathers, too.

“It's the highest respect you can bestow on a person, from your family and from your people, from your tribe,” Thunder Hawk said. “We teach the person receiving the feather that they have to honor and respect the eagle. And we tell them why.”

Persistent troubles, but new hope

In many Native cultures, killing an eagle is “blasphemous,” he said. It is also a federal offense.

Historically, Sioux warriors would lure an eagle with rabbit or other food, pluck a few feathers and release it, said Thunder Hawk, who grew up in South Dakota.

Today, there's a nationwide program that legally distributes eagle feathers and parts exclusively to tribal members, though it's very backlogged. U.S. wildlife and tribal officials worry that killings and illegal trafficking of eagles for their feathers is on the rise, especially in the West.

In Minnesota, eagles are most often harmed by road accidents and eating poison – results of shrinking wildlife habitat that brings them in closer contact with humans, said Lori Arent, interim director of the University of Minnesota's Raptor Center.

The center treats about 200 injured bald eagles each year. Of those they can save, most are eventually released back into the wild. Permanently disabled birds that lose an eye or whose wings are too badly fractured to fly are cared for there or at other educational institutions like the Wabasha eagle center.

The official designation could help more Americans understand how their behaviors inadvertently harm eagles, Arent said. Littering by a highway, for instance, attracts rodents that lure eagles, which then can be struck by vehicles. Fishing or hunting with tackles and ammunition containing lead exposes the eagles eating those fish or deer remains to fatal metal poisoning.

Humans have lost the ability to coexist in harmony with the natural world, Thunder Hawk said, voicing a concern shared by Indigenous people from the Chilean Andes to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

He hopes more people might now approach the eagle with the same reverence he was taught. It's what leads him to offer sage or dried red willow bark every time he spots one as a “thank you for allowing me to see you and for you to hear my prayers and my thoughts.”

Erickson, the new graduate, shares that optimism.

“I feel like that kind of shows that we're strong and united as a country,” she said by the Mississippi, her new feather nestled in her hair.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Article Archive

- Finance
- Work & Business
- Society
- Science
- Culture
- Miscellaneous