

To KNEEL

BY SAM WESTON
PHOTO EDITOR



In the past month, the country has been arguing over NFL players kneeling during the national anthem to protest police brutality. The protest started with Colin Kaepernick of the San Francisco 49ers during the start of the 2016 season when he began to sit while the anthem played. After much criticism, he began to kneel because it showed more respect for veterans. Many followed suit and began to kneel alongside Kaepernick, and it spread throughout the league and beyond.

•While this may seem like a quiet, calm protest to you, it was not taken well by many fans and disbelievers of what they were protesting. While some of you think that what they're doing is wrong and disrespectful, I believe that what he was doing is in fact a patriotic and noble thing to do. If they were to be punished, it would go against everything that this country stands for and everything our vets fought for.

People have been offended by these protests for many reasons but the big one that keeps getting thrown around is they are disrespecting the flag, the national anthem and the veterans. I disagree. First off the whole idea of kneeling is to respect veterans and their service. I believe that a lot of people are using this as an excuse to disagree with what they are protesting because they end up arguing that they are paid millions of dollars to play a game and should stop complaining. Yes, these players are paid to play this game, and yes they are employees of the league and the teams, but it's so much more than that. They represent not just the teams but the communities they are from and the culture they were raised in.

This isn't a normal job they have.

They are more than just employees. They are heroes. They give their fans hope and joy in their lives and all they are trying to do is bring hope into the black community that they are standing with them and trying to end injustice in this country, but many people don't believe in this injustice and flat out ignore it.

Racism exists in this country and all these players are trying to say is we want to be acknowledged and put in motion to be improved. While I agree that some are doing this for attention and not because they agree with the cause but the overall support for the cause is to help. Racism has been disputed for more than a century in this country and we are still arguing that it even exists. While I would argue that ignoring the problem and the fact that it exists is in fact part of the problem, I won't go as far as saying that anyone that does so is a racist because this country has gone through a huge wave of labeling certain political parties as racist, which is wrong and in no way helping but I digress.

Protests have always been a way to get messages across and this one is no different in that and unfortunately it is being received that way. Just look at some notable peaceful protests of similar caliber. Rosa Parks sitting on the bus, the Selma March in Alabama, and the famous March on Washington. Unfortunately, King's dream has yet to be achieved. These athletes have every right to protest and argue that minorities are being targeted and profiled by our law enforcement. If you disagree with their reasoning, fine but in no way should this be considered disrespectful or wrong in terms of their job description because they're more than just an employee, they're symbols of hope to anyone watching the game.



BY DOUG FRY
SPORTS EDITOR



Or Not To KNEEL

It has been over a year since the NFL and fans everywhere watched then 49ers

quarterback, Colin Kaepernick, kneel during the National Anthem so he could take a stand for something he believes in. Kaepernick used his platform to protest police brutality and the oppression of minorities. The issue has now grown to something other than what Kaepernick began with.

As an American I am proud of my country and my flag. I am also proud that high-profile athletes are able to protest and speak up for a cause that they believe in.

In my eyes the issue is no longer about what Kaepernick set out to bring attention to. Last season Kaepernick was only joined by his teammates Eric Reid and Eli Harold, all three who believed in the same cause.

Now we see entire teams protesting the anthem, but to me they are no longer doing it for the right reasons. With the political climate in a state of unrest, players are no longer protesting for their causes, but they are using it to disrespect the president of the United States more than anything.

To be clear in no way is this an article to protect or defend President Donald Trump, this is about using your platform and power in a more professional way. I believe NFL players should continue protesting, but in a different fashion.

The biggest discrepancy is not in the act of protest from

the players but in the way they are doing it. They are using their platform to bring political arguments to a place where politics should be set aside for at least a moment when athletes step on the field.

I do believe that players have a very unique platform to voice their issues with law enforcement and political figures, but those issues should be brought up in other ways. Like in the way that Doug Baldwin and NFL commissioner Roger Goodell came together to write about their support of criminal justice reform in a letter to Congress. If the NFL pushed to show unity between players and owners we could actually move forward and create change in our communities.

I also believe that players can continue to protest while in uniform or on the field much like how Tommie Smith and John Carlos in the 1968 Olympics. They were able to show strength and unity without disrespecting the flag and a country.

Many of the players in the NFL are yet to make an effort to see change in our country, which is the largest problem with the protests.

The NFL needs a clear stance on the anthem protests instead of allowing their fans and supporters to walk away from the sport as a whole.

Agree? Disagree?
Let us know on Twitter!



@ClackamasPrint