

U.S. National Football League condemns racism and oppression of Blacks



The National Football League (NFL) has reversed its long-standing antagonism towards the practice of "taking a knee" to protest over police injustice against Black Americans, championed by ostracized player Colin Kaepernick, saying it was wrong not to listen to NFL players on the subject as it encouraged people to protest peacefully.

In a video statement tweeted by the U.S. league, Commissioner Roger Goodell said: "We, the National Football League condemn racism and the systematic oppression of Black People ... We, the National Football League believe Black lives matter."

Politicians, team owners and fellow players previously criticised Kaepernick and fans burned his jersey for taking a knee during the national anthem to protest violence against Black Americans. Now, in the wake of the George Floyd protests, global opinion has shifted so much that more people are now vilifying those who attack Kaepernick or misrepresent his stance.

New Orleans Saints star quarterback Drew Brees issued a public apology on Thursday after he was excoriated by teammates, other athletes and fans for saying he "will never agree with anybody

disrespecting the flag of the United States."

Even U.S. President Donald Trump echoed the earlier criticism on Friday, saying on Twitter that Brees should not have taken back his original stance. Trump said: "I am a big fan of Drew Brees. I think he's truly one of the greatest quarterbacks, but he should not have taken back his original stance on honoring our magnificent American Flag. OLD GLORY is to be revered, cherished, and flown high..."

Trump posted his tweet not long after several members of the Jacksonville Jaguars marched from their stadium to the steps of the local sheriff's department in Florida to protest against the Floyd killing. "Today we say no more," wide receiver Chris Conley said. "Today we see a nation that can't await change, a city that won't sit still or be quiet."

The march included Joshua Dobbs, Brandon Linder and Josh Lambo of the Jaguars along with family members. Coach Doug Marrone, general manager Dave Caldwell and assistant coach Terry Robiskie also walked in what the team called an attempt to "raise awareness for racial injustices against the Black community," with many wearing "Black Lives Matter" T-shirts.

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