

# Should we kneel down to the national anthem?

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## What happened?

"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," Kaepernick told NFL Media after Friday's game. "To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder." This, in the 49ers third preseason game of the 2016 season, Kaepernick said after he knelt down during the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as opposed to the tradition of standing. In fact the tradition consists that, in the United States, is supposed to be played "The Star-Spangled Banner", (the national anthem), before sporting events. According to the United States Code, those present should stand at attention with right hand over heart

## Why this happened?

We know that criminal justice reform is one of the most problematic issues that NFL players have been supporting in their protests. Kaepernick initially thought to protest by the deaths of African Americans at the hands of police or while in police custody. These deaths gained prominence through the media and the Black Lives Matter movement in the years immediately preceding the protest. Data backs up his concerns. For decades, the modern U.S. criminal justice system has proven to be consistently unfair and deadly for black people. African-Americans are 30% more likely than whites to be pulled over by police, as well as three times more likely to be searched, twice as likely to be arrested and twice as likely to be shot by a law enforcement officer

## The context surrounding those first protests

This has come as a result of repeated videos showing police shooting and killing unarmed black men, which have been posted online and gone viral and illustrating the brutality that black people in America must contend with when dealing with some police officers, who often do not serve any prison time for pulling the trigger.

## What does the president of USA think about this?

Mr Trump became a catalyst for the protest in September when he said during a campaign rally in Alabama that he wished that NFL players would be fired for kneeling during the national anthem. He also said these horrible words about this issue: "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a b\*\*\*\* off the field right now, out, he's fired. He's fired,'- and then "You know, some owner is going to do that. He's going to say, 'That guy that disrespects our flag, he's fired.' And that owner, they don't know it but they'll be the most popular person in this country."

## Against Trump, the rebellion continues

In the games immediately following Trump's statements, the protest gained broader participation when over 200 players knelt during the anthem, others linked arms with their teammates or raised fists, and three teams chose to stay in the locker room for the anthem. Many players beyond the 2017 season have knelt or raised fists in protest against Trump's policies. In a May 2018 interview, he said "You have to stand proudly for the national anthem, or you shouldn't be playing, you shouldn't be there. Maybe you shouldn't be in the country". Trump applauded the new policy that NFL players must either stand for the anthem or stay back in the locker room, but felt that this policy was not strict enough. However, the response quickly turned into one towards Trump, rather than Kaepernick's original protests of racial injustice.

## Consequences

The kneeling subject isn't just for NFL players and managers. It also involves the business side of NFL and has affected the viewers or fans. The Viewership has gone down 7.5 percent since the Colin Kaepernick kneeling. Some viewers don't even want to watch football because of the matter. In the begin of 2017 season, DirecTV offered free refunds on the Sunday Ticket package. This package is the one you can get with all of the games, highlights, and Red Zone channel. Many people bought this package. A scary number of people ended up taking the refund, and now the business part of the NFL is getting worried that they won't make enough money this season. You may think 7.5% is not a lot at all, but in any movie, sport, or TV show losing that much viewership can destroy a company that produces the event.

### Now who is protesting?

Some football teams chose not to come out onto the field at all after Trump's comments, while other teams allowed their players to protest at their own discretion. In addition to most of the NFL teams seeing some players protesting the weekend after Trump's September remarks, baseball professionals and basketball professionals also joined in. Moreover, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady called Trump's comments "divisive" and locked arms with his teammates during his game following the president's remarks.

### Kaepernick's fate

Kaepernick is not currently on any NFL team, even though many of his supporters think that he is good enough to be picked up by a team. He said himself last year that he was ready to play if any team was willing to hire him. But, while Kaepernick is out of an NFL job, he has remained busy with charity work. That includes a \$1m pledge he made to charitable organisations, which has included support for a variety of groups. Kaepernick has largely refused to comment on the most recent NFL protests and has refrained from responding to Mr Trump's criticism of the protest movement he started as "unpatriotic". His deal with Nike is a pointedly political choice from the sportswear giant, which deserves every credit.



**Sitography:** <https://dailydolphin.hbcso.org/3362/lifestyle-health-and-leisure/consequences-of-kneeling/>

[Why are athletes kneeling during the national anthem? Here's what you need to know.](#)

[San Francisco 49ers cheerleader kneels for US anthem - BBC News](#)

[U.S. national anthem protests \(2016–present\) - Wikipedia](#)

[Refusing to Stand for the National Anthem: Top 3 Pros and Cons](#)

[Eric Reid Resumes Kneeling Protest During National Anthem - The New York Times](#)

[No Kneeling During Super Bowl LIII National Anthem, but Still Plenty of Talk - The New York Times](#)