



## Cleveland Police to Protest the National Anthem Protesters at Browns Game

Police officers in Cleveland are frustrated by the NFL anti-national anthem protests, which they regard as a show of disrespect against police and the United States as a whole, and have taken to launching their own anti-national anthem campaign.

The Cleveland union states that it felt compelled to launch its own protest after players for the Cleveland Browns took a knee during the national anthem in an August 21 preseason game, the *New York Post* reports.



Approximately one dozen players for the Cleveland Browns took a knee last month to protest the national anthem in their preseason game against the New York Giants. The Huffington Post notes it was one of the largest anti-national anthem demonstrations since they began with San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick in 2016.

The police protest is set to take place during the Browns' season opener on September 10. Traditionally, members of the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association would participate in the ceremonious unfurling of a giant American flag across the field during the playing of the national anthem. In protest, however, the association has opted out this year.

According to the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association, the officers are frustrated by the fact that the management for the Cleveland Browns allowed the team to protest the national anthem.

"When management allows you to do those things, then that's on them," said association president Steve Loomis. "It's hypocritical of the Browns management and ownership to want to have an armed forces first-responder day, and have us involved in it when they allow their players to take a knee during the national anthem. That's the very representation of what we stand for. That's why we aren't going to [hold the flag]."

Executives for the Cleveland Browns have not condemned the actions of the players, and in fact the executive vice president of football operations, Sashi Brown, said that the team respects the players' actions.

"We respect their efforts to use their platform to make some change," Brown stated.

The police association is not alone in its opposition. The president of a union that represents EMTs and other first responders has also announced that it will be pulling out of the event to protest the anthem protesters. "The NFL brags about how they love the military and safety forces and everything that we do for this country, but obviously they don't show it because they're not setting forth any rules about [the national anthem]," said Daniel Nemeth, president of a local branch of the Cleveland Association of Rescue Employees.

Nemeth told the Huffington Post that while he understands that there are some legitimate concerns



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about police misconduct and injustice, he does not believe that professional athletes should use their positions to stage political protests. “I don’t believe in using your position and where you’re at to make it a big thing,” said Nemeth. “From what we came from, what this nation came from, to what is now, is it a better place? Heck yeah.”

Police officers are beginning to take a stand against national anthem protesters elsewhere too. In Florida, for example, a police union asked deputies not to escort players for the Miami Dolphins from the stadium after some had taken a knee for the anthem. A California police union took it even further, threatening to boycott 49ers games last year after Colin Kaepernick sparked the trend.

The American people are also increasingly disenchanted with the NFL as it has become more politicized. In fact, many believe that Kaepernick, who is currently a free agent, has been unable to find a spot on an NFL team as a result of the backlash his protests have provoked.

The NFL’s refusal to condemn the protests has also been problematic. Last year, it even awarded San Francisco 49ers Colin Kaepernick the Len Eshmont Award for being “inspirational and courageous,” based on his vocal opposition to the National Anthem.

And while the NFL has been warm to Kaepernick’s protests, it has stood firmly against other more innocuous demonstrations from football players. The league [prohibited](#) one player from wearing patriotic cleats in memory of 9/11 and also prevented the Dallas Cowboys from placing an “Arm in Arm” decal on their helmets to honor the five police officers killed in Dallas last year.

The NFL’s support for Kaepernick has produced some fallout for the organization as a whole. A 2016 Rasmussen survey [found](#) that 32 percent of adults said they were less likely to watch NFL games because of the national anthem protests.



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