



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on June 8, 2020

Denver Bronco Players and Management Imply Many of Their Fans Are Racists

More than 70 players, coaches, and other staff of the NFL's Denver Broncos joined in on rallies in Denver on Saturday, wearing black t-shirts sporting the slogan, "If you ain't with us, you against us."

Linebacker Jeremiah Attaochu spoke to the crowd, saying, "We can't keep putting a Band-Aid on an old wound."

Broncos general manager John Elway, once one of the premier players in the NFL while playing quarterback with the Broncos, was effusive in his support of the sentiment, "If you ain't with us, you against us." Elway said, "I fully support them using their platforms and influence in a positive way to create change.... I am joining with the players, coaches, and our organization in speaking up against racism, police brutality, and any injustice against the black community."

The clear implication in saying, "If you ain't with us, you against us," is that if anyone disagrees with anything the Bronco players have to say on the subject of racism or police brutality, "you" are a racist. Considering that a large portion of the fan base of the Denver Broncos no doubt disagrees with kneeling during the playing of the National Anthem, does that make them either racist, or in favor of police brutality?

"If you ain't with us, you against us." pic.twitter.com/OT0Vqfw3cj

— Denver Broncos (@Broncos) [June 6, 2020](#)



In 2017, Colin Kaepernick, who was then the mediocre second-string quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, began kneeling during the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner as a way of protesting social injustice in the United States. Since that time, apologists for Kaepernick have argued that he was simply staging a peaceful protest against the alleged oppression of black people in America, but was not disrespecting the flag or the country.

But Kaepernick's own words contradict these soothing reassurances. "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people." In fact, while the controversy has



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centered on the playing of the National Anthem, it has been somewhat overlooked that Kaepernick's problem is really with the entire country. He has even been effusive in his praise for Fidel Castro, who until his death was the brutal communist dictator of Cuba.

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After many other players joined Kaepernick in taking a knee rather than standing during the playing of the National Anthem, the NFL suffered a steep decline in television ratings and a rise in the number of empty seats in the stadiums. Over the past few seasons, ratings and attendance have slowly risen, but it now appears that not only the Broncos, but also the NFL leadership itself have decided they were wrong to discourage kneeling during the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner.

Roger Goodell, the NFL commissioner, released a statement on Friday: "We, the National Football League, condemn racism and the systematic oppression of black people. We, the National Football League admit we were wrong for not listening to NFL players earlier and encourage all to speak out and peacefully protest." Goodell added, "The protests around the country are emblematic of the centuries of silence, inequality and oppression of black players, coaches, fans and staff."

Predictably, President Donald Trump rebuked Goodell's apparent capitulation on the kneeling issue. "Could it be even remotely possible that in Roger Goodell's rather interesting statement of peace and reconciliation, he was intimating that it would now be O.K. for the players to KNEEL, or not to stand, for the National Anthem, thereby disrespecting our Country & our Flag?"

With even more players expected to take a knee during the playing of the National Anthem this fall, many Broncos fans will no doubt be enraged and disappointed. But with the Denver Broncos organization from John Elway on down saying, "If you ain't with us, you against us," those fans are confronted with a choice — either join them in kneeling, or be accused of being "against" the plight of African-Americans.

Obviously, there are millions of Americans — black, white, and other — who were outraged at the treatment of George Floyd, a black man, by a Minneapolis police officer, but are also patriotic Americans who do not want to disrespect the flag of the United States, and everything it stands for.

It is not logical to conclude that a person must either show disrespect for the flag or disrespect for Floyd — or anyone else, of any ethnicity. While the police officer who killed Floyd *may* have harbored racial animus against African-Americans, we really do not know that. That the officer was white and Floyd was black does not prove that, any more than a black police officer killing a white person means that he is prejudiced against persons of European ancestry. Just because one officer did wrong does not mean that all police officers do wrong. We should not judge all persons of an ethnic group for the actions of a few, and neither should we judge all of America's police officers for the actions of a few police officers. That is as bigoted as the most bigoted of racists.

Yet, the NFL hierarchy in general, and the management of the Denver Broncos, specifically, have decided to tell the fans, essentially, "Either you agree with us and support our taking a knee during the playing of the National Anthem, or you are a bigot."

Such unfair remarks can be expected to cause a huge drop in ticket sales across the NFL this fall, and a similar drop-off in TV viewership, as well. I think I will prefer to take a nap on Sunday afternoon rather than watch the product of an organization that tells me I must either disrespect the flag or I am a racist.

Image: screenshot from [Twitter post](#)



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