



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 4, 2018

## Nike Gives Kaepernick Lucrative Deal

Colin Kaepernick thinks former communist dictator Fidel Castro of Cuba was a great guy, even wearing to a press conference a shirt that was favorable to the late dictator who killed thousands of his own people during his multi-decade rule of that country.

Despite that, Kaepernick has been rewarded for his leftist activism by the capitalist shoe company, Nike, with a lucrative contract worth millions of dollars to the former NFL quarterback. Nike began an ad campaign on Monday featuring Kaepernick, as part of its

30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sports apparel company's "Just Do It" campaign.



Kaepernick has not played a down in the National Football League for over a year, but his official licensed jersey is ranked the 39th best-selling jersey. In addition to jerseys, the campaign boosting Kaepernick will feature shoes and T-shirts. Additionally, Nike will donate money to the "Know Your Rights" campaign, created by Kaepernick.

The former San Francisco 49er had a mediocre career on the field, but after he decided in the 2016 pre-season to "protest" what he considered social injustices in American society by taking a knee during the playing of the National Anthem, he launched a movement that spread to other players on other teams. The protests have offended thousands of NFL fans, and are blamed for a significant decline in both ticket sales and TV viewership of NFL games.

While some have tried to obscure what the protests are all about, downplaying the anti-patriotic tone, Kaepernick was actually quite explicit regarding his intent when he began kneeling two years ago. "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 explained at the time. "To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way."

Kaepernick charged then that many police officers were specifically targeting African-Americans. "There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder." In other words, Kaepernick does not care for the country because it allegedly "oppresses black people," and he thinks police get paid leave for killing them, and are thus "getting away with murder."

Later, when veterans in particular began to voice their displeasure at what they considered disrespect for the flag under which they fought, and the country for which many have been wounded or died, Kaepernick attempted to placate them, saying, "The media painted this as I'm anti-American, anti-men-and-women of the military and that's not the case at all." So apparently those veterans just misunderstood someone saying, "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country" as somehow anti-American.

Since Kaepernick began his kneeling during the National Anthem in 2016, the NFL has had to deal with the on-field protests, which have clearly damaged the League's brand. President Donald Trump entered



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the fray, saying players who trash the flag and the country should be fired.

Amazingly, Nike makes a great amount of money off the NFL, the business enterprise that has been severely damaged by the Kaepernick-initiated protests. In March, the NFL extended a deal with Nike until 2028, in which the company will supply all 32 teams with uniforms and other apparel. Brian Rolapp, the chief media and business officer for the NFL, called Nike “a longtime and trusted partner” of the league.

Some police officers have opted to counter-protest against the NFL by boycotting the league. During the pre-season, the Broward County (Florida) Police Benevolent Association, one of the largest police unions in South Florida, reacted to continuing protests, particularly by the Miami Dolphins, by announcing a boycott. They have announced that they are asking their members and officers in neighboring jurisdictions to join them in returning their tickets and demanding full refunds. They are also urging a boycott on all Dolphins merchandise.

Rod Skirvin, vice president of the Broward County PBA, told ABC News in August, “Anybody that disrespects the flag during the national anthem is personally offensive to me, having spent four years of my life — six months in the Persian Gulf — and having friends that have died while serving in the military.”

Some, of course, argue that players have some sort of constitutional right to protest against the police and the country *while in uniform*, arguing that it is an oppressive country. One can only imagine the national outrage if police officers across the country chose, while in uniform, to wear buttons on those uniforms in support of, say, President Donald Trump!

Would a restaurant owner allow his waiters to wear campaign buttons on the job? Customers who don’t like the preference of the waiter might just decide to spend their dining dollars at a place that doesn’t mix politics and food.

The NFL owners can certainly choose to let their employees show disrespect to the flag, country, and the police. But fans — and Broward County police officers — also have the right to spend their entertainment dollars elsewhere.

One has to wonder about the ownership of Nike, as well, in making such a decision. Does this mean that they agree with Kaepernick’s trashing of America, and his support for a communist dictator? Can they really believe that the negative reaction across the country against the NFL will not also be directed at them, too? Are they so dedicated to this radical cause that they are prepared to lose corporate profits?

Gino Fisanotti, the vice president of brand for North America at Nike, told ESPN on Sunday, “We believe Colin is one of the most inspirational athletes of this generation, who has leveraged the power of sport to help move the world forward.” A fair interpretation of that statement is that Nike *agrees* with Kaepernick’s pro-Castro views, and his trashing of the flag, the country, and the police.

Outrage over Nike’s decision to make Colin Kaepernick the face of its new ad campaign has indeed led to some fans protesting against Nike by burning Nike products. Within hours of the company’s announcement, country musician John Rich posted a photo on Twitter, with the Nike logo cut off from a pair of socks, belonging to his sound man, a former Marine. “Get ready @Nike multiply that by the millions,” Rich tweeted.

Within hours of the announcement, dozens of photos were posted on social media of average citizens either burning their Nike products, tearing them up, or throwing them in the trash, in protest of the



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company's decision to make Kaepernick the face of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

One person tweeted, "First the @NFL forces me to choose between my favorite sport and my country. I choose country. Then @Nike forces me to choose between my favorite shoes and my country. Since when did the American Flag and the National Anthem become offensive?"

Ironically, "Nike" is named after the Greek goddess of victory (Νίκη). The word comes from the Greek word for "victory," and the concept has its roots in athletics and national pride. In ancient history, the Athenians of Greece faced a much larger invading Persian military force on the plain of Marathon, about 26 miles from Athens. When the Greek forces won a surprising victory, one of their soldiers, who was an Olympic running champion, took off to tell the people of Athens they had won. After running to Athens, Pheidippides shouted, "Nike!" then collapsed and died. Since then, thousands around the world have run "marathon" races in his honor — a patriotic athlete who announced a stunning military victory — or "Nike!"

Apparently, the company that uses that word, which has its origins in the patriotic act of a famous Olympic athlete, has chosen to honor a man — Colin Kaepernick — who says he takes no pride in his own country.

It is an interesting business decision by Nike. We will soon find out if it was a good business decision, and what Americans think of that decision.

*Photo: AP Images*



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