



## No Anthem Protests for NASCAR

“Get you a ride on a Greyhound bus when the national anthem is over,” responded Richard Childress of Richard Childress Racing to a query from *USA Today* as to what he would do if one of his employees protested during the playing of the “Star Spangled Banner.” “I told them anyone who works for me should respect the country we live in. So many people have [given] their lives for it. This is America.”



Childress’s opinion appears to be typical of the owners of NASCAR teams. Richard Petty, a seven-time NASCAR champion, and co-owner of Richard Petty Motorsports, expressed similar views. “Anybody that don’t stand up for that ought to be out of the country. Period,” Petty told the Associated Press. “If they don’t appreciate where they’re at ... what got them where they’re at? The United States.”

Petty said any employee who did not comply with the rules to stand during the playing of the National Anthem would be fired.

Andrew Murstein, another co-owner of Richard Petty Motorsports, was much milder in his comments, although he said he disagreed with the demonstrations. He said he would not fire an employee simply “for expressing their feelings.” He would, however, “sit down with them and say it’s the wrong thing to do that [to kneel], and many people, including myself, view it as an affront to our great country. If there is disenchantment towards the president or a few bad law enforcement officers, don’t have it cross over to all that is still good and right about our country.”

“So much has been sacrificed for our country and our flag,” said Joe Gibbs, owner of Joe Gibbs Racing. “It’s a big deal for us to honor America.” Gibbs is a famed former coach of the Washington Redskins of the National Football League.

It was an NFL player, Colin Kaepernick, who launched the practice of kneeling before a football game during the playing of the National Anthem. Kaepernick was the quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, but is not presently on an NFL roster. He began the 2016 season voicing support for Black Lives Matter and Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, while saying, “Cops are getting paid for killing people.”

NASCAR’s fan base tends to be very patriotic, and as Walt Czarnecki, the executive vice president of Penske Corporation, told *USA Today*, “It’s an issue we’ve never faced and don’t anticipate facing.”

But the NFL is facing the issue, and other professional sports leagues will probably face the same issue. One suspects that with Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors and LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers publicly denouncing President Donald Trump for his remarks against such National Anthem protests, we can expect to see similar kneeling demonstrations in the NBA.

Trump, speaking at a rally for Republican U.S. Senate candidate Luther Strange last Friday, touched off heated reaction, after his comments against what he considered disrespect for the flag. “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.’”



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 25, 2017

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With the major league baseball season drawing to a close, Oakland Athletics catcher Bruce Maxwell cited Trump's remarks in his decision to take a knee during the playing of the National Anthem before Saturday's contest. While saying, "At the end of the day, this is the best country on the planet," Maxwell said he was motivated to act because of Trump's comments and his own experiences growing up in Huntsville, Alabama, where he claims he faced problems with racism. (Maxwell is black).

In a profanity-laced Saturday morning tweet, Maxwell said, "Yeah, f\*\*\* this guy! Our president speaks of inequality of man because players are protesting the anthem! F\*\*\* this man!"

Last year, Adam Jones, an outfielder for the Baltimore Orioles, who is also black, offered an explanation why no baseball players (at that time) had joined in the kneeling protests, saying "baseball is a white man's sport." Around seven percent of major league rosters are African-American.

NASCAR, on the other hand, is not expecting any protests at all. Dale Earnhardt, Jr., one of the sport's most noted drivers, did "tweet" out this morning his support of peaceful protest. "All Americans R granted rights 2 peaceful protests. Those who make peaceful revolutions impossible will make violent revolution inevitable — JFK," Earnhardt tweeted.

Of course, Earnhardt misses the point. The Constitution does prevent the government from curtailing peaceful protest. Surely Earnhardt does not believe the Constitution would keep a restaurant owner from terminating a wait person who took a knee in the restaurant to make a political statement, or NASCAR owner from firing an employee who used the company's time to stage a political demonstration at the track.

NFL viewership was down last year, and with continued disrespect for the flag and the country going on this year, one can suspect it will go down even more this year. As President Trump tweeted Sunday morning, "If NFL fans refuse to go to games until players stop disrespecting our Flag & Country, you will see change take place fast. Fire or suspend!"

Apparently, NASCAR owners are not going to allow their businesses to be disrupted by prima donnas making left-wing political statements on company time.



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