



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on August 13, 2018

## Police Urge Boycott of Miami Dolphins Over Anthem Protests

During the playing of the National Anthem at last Thursday night's preseason National Football League (NFL) games, 15 players from five teams staged various forms of protest, including players from the Miami Dolphins.

This week, the Broward County Police Benevolent Association, one of the largest police unions in South Florida, reacted by urging its members (and all other law enforcement officers in South Florida) to boycott the NFL in general, and the Dolphins in particular. Many officers are particularly offended at the protests, which depict police officers as routinely mistreating African Americans.



Dolphin players who did not stand respectfully for the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner included Kenny Stills and Albert Wilson, two wide receivers, who each took a knee. Defensive end Robert Quinn stood, but shook his head, while raising a right clenched fist high in the air.

Colin Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49er quarterback who launched the protests in 2016, tweeted praise for the Dolphin players, specifically Stills, saying that the former receiver from the University of Oklahoma "continued his protest of systemic oppression by taking a knee ... Stay strong brothers!"

Kaepernick also expressed support in 2016 for the communist revolution in Cuba by wearing a shirt favorable to Cuban communist dictator Fidel Castro.

While some have tried to obscure what the protests are all about, downplaying the anti-patriotic tone, Kaepernick was 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 targeting blacks. "There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave *and getting away with murder.*" (Emphasis added.) 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 African Americans and are "getting away with murder."

Later, Kaepernick told reporters that he was not against the military. "The media painted this as I'm anti-American, anti-men-and-women of the military and that's not the case at all. I realize that men and women of the military go out and sacrifice their lives and put themselves in harm's way for my freedom of speech."



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Kaepernick became a free agent in the off-season in 2017, and no team has opted to offer him a player's contract since then.

The continuing protests in 2016 and 2017 are believed to have contributed to a significant decline in ticket sales and TV viewership of NFL games, causing the NFL to try to develop a policy to stop the visual protests. The policy they tentatively adopted would have allowed players to remain in the locker room during the playing of the National Anthem.

But the NFL has not yet fully implemented that policy, and announced players would *not* be penalized before the League reaches an agreement with the NFL Players Association, specifically on how to treat players who continue protesting.

The Broward County Police Union has evidently seen enough, posting an announcement on Facebook, asking its own 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 Dolphin merchandise.

Rod Skirvin, vice president of the Broward County association, told ABC News Sunday, "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." He added: "That being said, I do not have a problem with peaceful protests, whatsoever, I also served in the military to preserve that right for people. I just feel that the forum that they are using to do that is extremely offensive to a large part of America."

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!

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

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