

THE SPORTIER

Combating Social Injustice While Playing Sports

2020 was rocked once again this past week with the shooting of a black man named Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin, resulting in additional protests across America within the "Black Lives Matter" movement. Using their platforms, both the MLB and NBA took action in an effort to show their support for the black community. Both leagues started this by boycotting. The NBA boycott began with the Milwaukee Bucks choosing not to play their playoff game against the Orlando Magic on Wednesday. The additional 4 teams that were slated to play on Wednesday, the Houston Rockets against the Oklahoma City Thunder, and the Los Angeles Lakers against the Portland Trail Blazers, also postponed their games. The MLB's boycott was not league-wide, though there were still teams that decided not to play. Four games out of the 16 total games scheduled were postponed Wednesday due to protests fighting racial injustices, while Thursday saw 7 total games postponed. Thursday night was capped off with an emotional Mets-Marlins postponement. Both teams took the field as if they were about to start play, but then held a 42-second moment of silence, honoring Jackie Robinson on the day prior to the day named in his honor. After the 42 seconds passed, both teams left the field, with the only thing remaining being a tee shirt reading "Black Lives Matter" sitting on top of home plate. After the teams left the field, Mets outfielder Dominic Smith, an African-American man that represents the black community, had a powerful message while he spoke through tears in his interview: "I think the most difficult part is to see people still don't care." While both leagues found that stepping off of the field was the most effective way to show support for the black community, the leagues resumed play in drastically different ways. The MLB was able to swing right back into games, as the excessive makeup games on the schedule due to COVID-19 shutdowns within certain teams pressed the league for time. The NBA, on the other hand, saw a small war between players and owners. This started on Wednesday itself, when a meeting was called to discuss the future of the playoffs in light of the postponed games. Both the Lakers and Los Angeles Clippers voted to not follow through with the season, and the apparently intense meeting was ended by LeBron James and the rest of the Lakers and Clippers exiting the meeting. James voted no, as he would like to see the owners be more active in combating racial injustice. With all other teams voting in favor of continuing a season, and the playoffs being virtually impossible to complete without the Lakers and Clippers involved, a special meeting was called for Thursday that would allow for players and owners to consult each other for a better plan moving forward. With guidance from Charlotte Hornets owner Michael Jordan, and even former President Barack Obama, the league resumed with the owners agreeing to turn their shut-down arenas into large polling locations. The NBA was able to resume on Saturday, which saw both the Bucks and Lakers officially advance to the second round. With LeBron James and his ambitious personality still in the running for the title, he will no doubt continue to use his platform to spark even more change in African-American and other communities across the country.

A New King in Queens

After long last, the New York Mets may have found their savior, the one person that can possibly dig them out of the constant mismanagement that has plagued the team over the past handful of decades: controversial billionaire hedge fund manager and lifelong Mets fan Steve Cohen. Late on Friday night, the day prior to the deadline when bids for the New York franchise were due, Cohen's seemingly only true competitor, a group comprised of many celebrities and athletes headlined by Alex Rodriguez and Jennifer Lopez, announced that they would not be following through with a final bid. This left Cohen, with a \$2.4 billion bid on the team, to be the last man standing, now in exclusive negotiations with the Mets. Cohen now requires 23 out of the remaining 29 total MLB owners to approve of his bid. If this purchase is successfully completed, Steve Cohen with his \$15 billion net worth will become the richest owner in the MLB, while also completing the most expensive sports team purchase in the history of North American sports. The last MLB team to have been sold, the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2012, were purchased for \$2 billion.



Billionaire hedge fund manager Steve Cohen

Sources:

[WBUR](#), [MLB](#), [Fox Sports](#), [Sports Illustrated](#), [NYTimes](#), [NY Post](#), [Forbes](#)