

THE SPORTIER

Athletes Speak Out During Protests

During the past weeks, the world has been swept with the largest civil rights movement ever, the *Black Lives Matter* initiative fighting for equality for African-Americans. Throughout these past few days, many athletes have taken action and publicly voiced their opinions regarding the African-American community. Two of the most influential athletes and possibly people in the world, Michael Jordan and LeBron James, recently voiced their opinions. MJ released a personal statement regarding the situation, highlighted by the message, "I stand with those who are calling out the ingrained racism and violence toward people of color in our country. We have had enough." LeBron and his company, Uninterrupted, through many strongly-worded tweets and Instagram posts, sent the powerful words "We will never just 'shut up and dribble,'" a reference to a directive towards him by a news reporter when he spoke of his political views with Kevin Durant in 2018. Additionally, the NFL has seen activism as well. The Denver Broncos, with over 70 players and staff, led a protest in the streets of Denver yesterday, sporting t-shirts reading "IF YOU AIN'T WITH US, YOU AGAINST US." NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell voiced an about-face regarding the modern day issue. Goodell said, "We, the National Football League, admit we were wrong for not listening to NFL players earlier and encourage all players to speak out and peacefully protest. We, the National Football League, believe that black lives matter." An interesting nuance is that Goodell did not mention Colin Kaepernick. Kaepernick was the first player to controversially kneel during the National Anthem during an NFL game, and has since been left out of the NFL. With many more people across the globe contributing to the cause, this movement is sure to be one of the most powerful in history. As baseball Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson stated, "Our Protest feels different this time . . . It pumped me up inside. Made me feel others could feel what my heart needs."

Percentage of Black Players in the Four Major US Sports (2018)

NBA - 80.7% Black

NFL - ~70% Black

MLB - 7.7% Black

NHL - ~3% Black





MLB Update:

As unfortunate as it is, it seems as though the MLB is inching closer to not returning this season. After the MLB owners most recently proposed a very short, 50 game season, the Players Association rejected the deal and it seems as though the negotiations have reached a standstill.

Sources:

[ESPN](#), [ESPN](#), [CBS Sports](#), [Uninterrupted \(Twitter\)](#), [GlobalSport Matters](#), [USA Today](#), [NY Post](#), [USA Today](#), [NBA](#), [NBA](#), [ESPN](#)

The NBA: They're Back

After long last, some good news: the NBA will return. On June 4th, the NBA's Board of Governors approved a new format to finish out the 2020 NBA season. The first major American sport to return, the NBA had flown under the radar as of late with its negotiation, though, as they had very few games remaining in their season. It was a quick negotiation amongst teams. The plan, with a tentative start date, is highlighted by the glaring and most impactful change, which is that 22 out of the 30 teams will be traveling to empty Disney World in Orlando, Florida. As the race for the final 8th seed* in the Western Conference is up for grabs heading into the playoffs, 13 total Western Conference teams were invited, all within a matter of games away from the playoffs. The Eastern Conference brought along one extra team, the Washington Wizards, as they too has a chance to make the playoffs in their conference. Here are some of the important details:

- The tentative date for games to begin is July 31
- 8 games will be played by all teams prior to the playoffs for seeding
- As not all teams will end up with the same amount of total games played, standings will be determined by winning percentage from the overall season
- If the 8th seed in one conference is four games or fewer ahead of the 9th seed in the same conference after the "regular season", then there will be a play-in game for who gets to play in the postseason
- The new date for the NBA Draft is October 15, and the 2020-21 NBA Season is slated to start on December 1

*The top 8 teams in each conference will make the playoffs, unless a play-in tournament is necessary