

Colin Kaepernick expresses his feelings against US racial and police violence



Colin Kaepernick refuses to stand during national anthem

National News - By refusing to stand during the national anthem, San Francisco 49ers' quarterback Colin Kaepernick is making an important, bold rebuke of police violence against Black people. Kaepernick joins a long history of Black athletes using their platforms to advance racial and gender justice issues - like Tommie Smith and John Carlos giving the Black Power

salute during the national anthem at the 1968 Olympics, Jackie Robinson writing that he could not salute the flag as "a Black man in a white world," the women of the WNBA wearing black in protest of police brutality, or LeBron James leading the Miami Heat to pose in an evocative photo, all wearing hoodies to express grief and outrage at the murder of Trayvon Martin.

All of these Black athletes demand that America live up to its own ideals - and that takes a courage we should all strive for. We need to continue working to ensure that such brave stands aren't remembered as gestures, but as catalysts for positive change.

Since the Kaepernick protest began other athletic teams have taken a knee and refused to stand. Corner Jeremy Lane with the Seattle Seahawks remained seated on the bench as his teammates stood for the anthem.

At least 15 black people have died during encounters with the police since San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick began protesting police violence. The most recent being killings in Tulsa, Oklahoma and South, Carolina.

The head of the Santa Clara police union wrote a letter Friday threatening to stop working San Francisco 49ers home games unless the team takes action against controversial quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

Colin Kaepernick explained why he will not stand, "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 told NFL Media in an exclusive interview after the game. "To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder.

"The 49ers issued a statement about Kaepernick's decision: "The national anthem is and always will be a special part of the pre-game ceremony. It is an opportunity to honor our country and reflect on the great liberties we are afforded as its citizens. In respecting such American principles as freedom of religion and freedom of expression, we recognize the right of an individual to choose and participate, or not, in our celebration of the national anthem."

By taking a stand for civil rights, Kaepernick, 28, joins other athletes, like the NBA's Dwyane Wade, Chris Paul, LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony and several WNBA players in using their platform and status to raise awareness to issues

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