

# The NFL National Anthem Protests: 21st Century Turning Points



## The NFL National Anthem Protests (21st-Century Turning Points) by Carlos Fuentes

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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The NFL national anthem protests were a series of demonstrations by American football players during the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" before games. The protests began in 2016 when Colin Kaepernick, then a quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, kneeled during the anthem to protest police brutality and racial injustice.

Kaepernick's protest was met with mixed reactions. Some people supported his right to protest, while others criticized him for disrespecting the flag and the national anthem. The protests quickly spread to other NFL players, and soon became a major news story.

The NFL initially tried to suppress the protests, but eventually relented and allowed players to kneel during the anthem. However, the protests continued to be controversial, and some fans boycotted NFL games in protest.

The NFL national anthem protests were a watershed moment in American history. They helped to raise awareness of the issues of police brutality and racial injustice, and they sparked a national debate about the role of protest in society.

## **The Origins of the Protests**

The NFL national anthem protests can be traced back to the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. Brown's death sparked widespread protests and unrest, and it helped to galvanize the Black Lives Matter movement.

In the wake of Brown's death, Kaepernick began to speak out about police brutality and racial injustice. He said that he would not stand for the national anthem until the United States stopped "oppressing black people and people of color."

Kaepernick's decision to kneel during the anthem was a powerful and symbolic gesture. It was a way to show solidarity with the victims of police brutality and to protest the systemic racism that he believed was present in American society.

## **The Protests Spread**

Kaepernick's protest quickly spread to other NFL players. In the weeks and months following his initial protest, dozens of other players kneeled, sat, or

raised their fists during the anthem.

The protests were met with mixed reactions. Some people supported the players' right to protest, while others criticized them for disrespecting the flag and the national anthem. The protests also sparked a debate about the role of protest in society.

Some people argued that the players were using their platform to raise awareness of important issues, while others argued that they were disrespecting the flag and the country. The debate over the protests was often heated and divisive.

### **The NFL's Response**

The NFL initially tried to suppress the protests. In 2017, the league adopted a new policy that required players to stand for the national anthem or face fines or suspensions. However, the league eventually relented and allowed players to kneel during the anthem.

The NFL's response to the protests was criticized by some people. Some argued that the league was not doing enough to support the players' right to protest, while others argued that the league was putting profits ahead of social justice.

### **The Legacy of the Protests**

The NFL national anthem protests were a watershed moment in American history. They helped to raise awareness of the issues of police brutality and racial injustice, and they sparked a national debate about the role of protest in society.

The protests also had a lasting impact on the NFL. The league has become more open to discussing social issues, and it has created a new platform for players to speak out about important issues.

The NFL national anthem protests were a turning point in American history. They helped to change the way that we think about race, protest, and the role of sports in society.

## Additional Resources

\* [The NFL National Anthem Protests: A Timeline of Events]

(<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/09/25/us/politics/nfl-national-anthem-protests-timeline.html>) \* [The NFL National Anthem Protests: A Deeper Look]

(<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/09/25/553312602/the-nfl-national-anthem-protests-a-deeper-look>) \* [The NFL National Anthem Protests: A Conversation with Colin Kaepernick]

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53YmW2bNxwY>)



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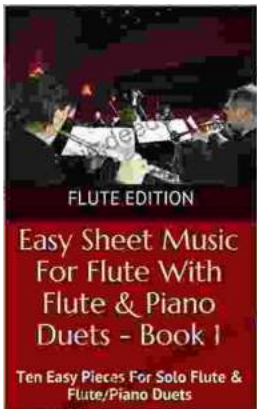
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