



community
the Left

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DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- After explaining how an athlete wearing a uniform represents a community, Mr. Travis reasons that, "...a soldier, also in uniform, represents his country. He is a member, in effect, of the nation's team. The flag and the anthem are symbols of that team. That's why every professional sports event in America begins with the National Anthem. When you stand for the Anthem you are not only cheering for the home team, but for the nation. In short, we begin every sports contest united." Do you think that it is important for people at a sports contest to 'cheer for their nation' before the competition? Why or why not? What is so profoundly important about Mr. Travis' observation about beginning sports contests as a united group that transcends the rivalries on the field? Explain.
- Further along in the video, Mr. Travis laments that, "...the unifying power of sports is being trashed. Who is responsible? The worst culprits are, ironically, the very people who cover sports in the first place - the sports media. They've turned sports into politics by another name." Do you think that politics should dominate the content of sports journalism? Why or why not? In what ways, specifically, might the sports media, and even athletes themselves, purposefully injecting politics into sports be negating the positive outcomes that sports brings to individuals and to communities- especially to young athletes? Explain.
- Mr. Travis goes on to explain that, "You'd think that sports reporters, the guys who eat, drink and sleep sports, wouldn't put up with this nonsense; that they'd know politics has no place on or off the field. But you'd be wrong. They're just as political as their news desk colleagues. Why? Because they're afraid of being called racist or sexist, because they want to be friends with the athletes, because they want to think of themselves as 'serious' journalists, and because they come from the same journalism schools as the political reporters. And because, yes, they're overwhelmingly on the left." Do you agree with Mr. Travis' view that politics has no place in sports? Why or why not? Why do you think that journalism schools indoctrinate journalists to be Leftist? Explain.
- Later in the video, Mr. Travis points out that, "Since 2011, the network [ESPN] has been losing about 2 million subscribers per year. It hasn't turned out any better for the NFL. The league has lost nearly 20 percent of its viewership since 2016." Do you think that the majority of the loss of subscribers is due to the network injecting politics into sports coverage? Why or why not? Do you think that this trend will continue? Why or why not?
- Towards the end of the video, Mr. Travis concludes that, "We need sports. We need that break from our everyday cares. We need its unique ability to unite our communities, our nation. We need the civics lesson." What do you think the 'civics lesson' that Mr. Travis refers to is? Do you agree with Mr. Travis' assertion that we need sports and its unifying power? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: NFL Ratings Decline

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Survey: Main reason for NFL’s ratings slide was player take-a-knee protests,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What did the newly released survey demonstrate was to blame for the NFL’s ratings decline? Which reason on the survey had the ‘largest annual increase of any explanation cited for watching less NFL?’ How much did ratings decline in the regular season and in the playoffs? How did the NFL Players Association explain the decline in ratings? When did the act of refusing to stand for the National Anthem begin, and who began it? Which demographic accounted for the largest drop in viewership? What did 2ndVote have to say about the situation? What did NFL Hall Of Famer Mike Singletary have to say about it?
- What is so disrespectful about not standing for the national anthem? Do you think that such protests at a sports competition are effective and worthwhile- i.e. do you believe that dishonoring the nation publicly has any practical chance of persuading a significant amount of others to support whatever the cause is and to effect actual change? If yes, explain specifically how you think that this works and give at least two examples where such a strategy has been successful. If no, explain why you think that some people are naïve and ignorant enough to behave in such a manner and why you think that those people don’t realize and/or care about how futile their efforts will likely be.
- Which points made in the video are supported by points made in the article, if any? Explain, and give specific examples. Do you think that professional athletes should use their competitive environment as a stage for demonstrating their personal political stance? Why or why not?



QUIZ

POLITICS AND SPORTS: KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY FOOTBALL

1. What song begins every sports contest, uniting the fans?
 - a. America the Beautiful
 - b. God Bless America
 - c. The National Anthem
 - d. My Country 'Tis of Thee

2. Who has trashed the unifying power of sports?
 - a. MSNBC
 - b. FOX
 - c. ESPN
 - d. CNN

3. Which of the following magazines have a sports section that leaves players political opinions out of its reporting?
 - a. USA Today
 - b. Yahoo
 - c. Sports Illustrated
 - d. None of the above.

4. An Asian American named Robert Lee couldn't comment on a college football game because of an incident involving a statue of Robert E. Lee.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. Over 80% of sports journalists voted for _____ in the 2016 election.
 - a. Ted Cruz
 - b. Bernie Sanders
 - c. Donald Trump
 - d. Hillary Clinton



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/feb/6/nfl-ratings-down-due-anthem-protests-survey/>

Survey: Main reason for NFL's ratings slide was player take-a-knee protests



In this Sept. 24, 2017, file photo, several New England Patriots players kneel during the national anthem before an NFL football game against the Houston Texans in Foxborough, Mass. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer)

By Valerie Richardson - The Washington Times - Tuesday, February 6, 2018

The reasons for the NFL's ratings decline have been hotly disputed, but a newly released survey suggests that the take-a-knee protests were primarily to blame.

A UBS Securities analysis released Tuesday showed that 50 percent of U.S. consumers who watched less football in 2017 cited their disapproval of players refusing to stand during the national anthem, the most popular response and up from 32 percent last year.

The second most checked explanation was "not as interested in professional football," which registered 29 percent, followed by off-field player behavior, which was cited by 23 percent.

"The National Anthem protest was not only the most frequently cited reason, it also had the largest annual increase of any explanation cited for watching less NFL," said the UBS Evidence Lab in its note to investors.

The survey comes with the NFL caught up in the debate over whether the protests are driving the ratings decline, a point of contention that resurfaced after this year's Super Bowl ratings fell 7.1 percent to their lowest level since 2009.

The Sunday game drew 103.4 million viewers on television, down from 111.3 million who tuned in the previous year, for an audience number that was still good enough for the 10th most popular television broadcast in U.S. history.

The Super Bowl drop-off followed a 10 percent ratings decline in the regular season and 16 percent drop in the playoffs, according to UBS.

The survey was conducted in November with 2,000 consumers age 13 and over, using a sample representative of the population on gender, age, geography, household size and household income.

About 800 said they watch football, and of those, 17.5 percent said they watched less NFL in 2017 than they had in the past. Respondents were allowed to check more than one reason for their lack of interest.

Will the trend continue? “It could be argued that this is a temporary headwind for the NFL, however the protests have already impacted two consecutive seasons,” said the UBS analysis. “Additionally there is no guarantee that viewers who stop watching NFL games because of the protests would return if protests were to stop.”

Blaming protests called ‘intellectually dishonest’

The NFL Players Association has challenged the assertion that the protests are driving the ratings slide, pointing to factors such as cord-cutting, or fans watching the games on media platforms other than television.

Other factors cited for NFL’s decline include heightened concern over player concussions, un compelling games, poor officiating and even bad weather.

At last week’s pre-Super Bowl press conference, NFLPA executive director DeMaurice Smith called the protest explanation “intellectually dishonest.”

“There isn’t a television show, a news show that isn’t experiencing a double-digit decline,” he said.

Baltimore Ravens tight end Benjamin Watson added, “When I hear that, my initial response is, why are you saying that? And usually the person that’s saying that or the institute that’s saying that does not agree with what the players are doing.”

“So it’s a very willfully ignorant thing to say, that it’s inextricably tied to a player kneeling, and it’s a very easy cop-out to say, well, look at the NFL, they’re ruining their game,” said Mr. Watson, a member of the NFLPA executive committee.

#ICYMI: The #NFLPA Executive Committee gives their understanding of the current NFL game day tv ratings.

□: <https://t.co/O3G309p3Pa>

— NFLPA (@NFLPA) February 2, 2018

ESPN commentator Stephen A. Smith wasn’t convinced. “The biggest issue of all to me is the Colin Kaepernick situation,” he said Tuesday on “First Take.”

He referred to the fan backlash over players refusing to stand for the national anthem, which began in the 2016 season with the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback and peaked in September after being criticized by President Trump.

“Regardless of what his [Kaepernick’s] purpose was, and his purpose was entirely different than what the president tried to formulate it as, the way he hijacked the issue and turned it into something that it was not about, the reality is in the eyes of a lot of Americans, that’s exactly what it is,” said Mr. Smith.

An NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll released Sunday found that 49 percent of respondents said they followed the NFL closely, down from 58 percent in 2014, and that white men accounted for the largest drop.

“So, in a sense, the NFL’s viewership/popularity problems seem to boil down to a problem with white men,” said the NBC News analysis, prompting conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh to counter that the problem lies with the NFL.

The conservative watchdog group 2ndVote also pinned the blame on the protests, saying “fans have sent the National Football League a clear message—they want football, not politics.”

Echoing that sentiment was Pro Football Hall of Fame linebacker Mike Singletary, who said last month he thought the protest “turned a lot of fans off.”

“I think with everything that we have going on in our country, the whole kneeling process was not something that America looked upon favorably, and it showed in the television ratings,” Mr. Singletary told CNBC. “Hopefully that’s behind us and we can continue to move forward.”