



Larry Elder

## **Black National Anthem at the Super Bowl – What Happens if a White Player Takes a Knee?**

The NFL has announced that for the fourth year in a row, the so-called black national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” will be performed at the Super Bowl.

It appears we’ve come full circle since the 2004 Democratic National Convention when then-Illinois State Sen. Barack Obama said: “Yet even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us ... there’s not a liberal America and a conservative America — there’s the United States of America. There’s not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there’s the United States of America.... We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America.”

It appears we’ve come full circle since the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in his 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech talked about the day when people are evaluated based on content of character rather than color of skin. King said: “I have a dream that one day down in Alabama with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right down in Alabama little Black boys and Black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.... With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.”

The national anthem is also the black/white/Asian/Hispanic national anthem. It is the national anthem of every citizen.

The country, including the sports world, has come a long, long way. There was a time when black quarterbacks

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Author: [Larry Elder](#)

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were a rarity. White coaches and owners assumed blacks lacked the intelligence, leadership ability and fan base appeal to lead teams as quarterbacks. Black would-be coaches faced the same bigotry and discrimination. Today, the league and the public would not tolerate anti-black racism, and many a career — whether player, coach or broadcaster — has been damaged, if not ended, over racist comments or comments perceived as racist. This is not your grandfather's America.

America's three largest cities — New York, Los Angeles and Chicago — have black mayors even though none of the cities has a majority black population. Los Angeles elected its first black mayor in 1973, a man who went on to be elected three more times. Blacks have become presidents of the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association. This is just a sampling. At least four black American athletes have become billionaires: Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and LeBron James, with more in the pipeline. Blacks *have* overcome. Where's the NFL on the real problems facing the "black community" — poor urban schools and fatherlessness? No, it's all about characterizing blacks as victims and rooting out "systemic racism."

When New England Patriots owner Bob Kraft introduced his freshly hired coach to the media, Kraft said: "I want to get the best people I can get. I chose the best head coach for this organization. He happens to be a man of color. But I chose him because I believe he's best to do the job."

But his new coach Jerod Mayo said: "You want your locker room to be pretty diverse, and you want the world to look like that. What I will say, though, is I do see color because I believe if you don't see color, you can't see racism.... It goes back to whatever it is, Black, white, yellow, it really doesn't matter, but it does matter so we can try to fix the problem that we all know we have."

The problem we all know we have?

As for the black national anthem to be sung at the Super Bowl, what's next? How about playing the University of Michigan fight song? What happens if at least some players reject the narrative that blacks remain victims and consider the singing of the black national anthem at the Super Bowl divisive?

The first player, white or black, who takes a knee at the Super Bowl during the "black national anthem" will immediately have the league's bestselling jersey. As Nike says, "Just do it!"

*Larry Elder is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio talk-show host. To find out more about Larry Elder, or become an "Elderado," visit [www.LarryElder.com](http://www.LarryElder.com). Follow Larry on Twitter @larryelder. To read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).*

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