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NFL Teams Losing Fans in Droves Over National Anthem Protests

Though the National Anthem protests seem to be increasing, with more and more players participating, NFL teams are beginning to lose fans in droves as a result.

The *Daily Caller* reports that a total of 28 NFL teams, including approximately 250 players, engaged in protests during flag ceremonies following weekend tweets from President Trump criticizing the protests.

"If NFL fans refuse to go to games until players stop disrespecting our Flag & Country, you will see change take place fast. Fire or suspend!" Trump tweeted on September 24.



The first two teams to respond to Trump were the Baltimore Ravens and the Jacksonville Jaguars, with players from both teams kneeling on the sidelines during the National Anthem. Other teams playing that day followed suit. Still others remained in the locker room during the National Anthem in protest.

But fans are heeding President Trump's advice and are taking to their teams' Facebook pages to berate the players for their protests, according to the *Daily Caller*.

Following the Baltimore Ravens dramatic loss against the Jacksonville Jaguars in London on Sunday, for example, Baltimore Ravens fans announced on the team's Facebook page that they would no longer support the team, not because of the loss but because nearly all of the Ravens players knelt in protest of the National Anthem at the game.

"Introducing politics into today's [game] was the lowest behavior of any team. I'm no longer a Ravens fan after today," one man wrote. "If you don't support my country, you ... don't deserve my support or my money either."

Another fan said that the Ravens players should remember that they represent their fans when they take the field. "You all forget who you represent. Not just yourselves," a woman posted. "You represent the Ravens, Baltimore, and America. And you embarrassed yourselves and us today. You not only broke the unity of us as Americans today, I think you broke the unity between Ravens players and Ravens fans."

And despite the Jaguars' impressive win, they were not immune to their fans' ire. "You disrespected our Flag, our Veterans who fought for it and our Country and you did it on foreign soil," wrote one angry fan. "Not one more dime of my money! Not one more minute of my time!"

Steelers' fans have also been vocal about their frustration with the team's protest. "I have been a Pittsburgh Steelers Fan for 60 years and Not so much anymore. I'm done," Joyce Maletto wrote on the team's Facebook page. "How dare you dis-respect our country like that. You only have one player that is a true American," she added, referencing Pittsburgh Steelers offensive tackle Alejandro Villanueva, a



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former Army Ranger, who has been praised for taking the field on Sunday during the flag ceremony while the rest of his team stayed in the locker room.

In fact, Villaneuva's jersey has now become the most popular jersey on the Internet as football fans wanted to show their support for his decision to take the field. Fanatics confirmed to ESPN's Darren Rovell that more Villaneuva gear has been ordered than that of any other player on Monday.

Unfortunately, Villaneuva has since backtracked his position and has even issued an apology for breaking from his team.

In addition to football fans, two veterans groups, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and The American Legion, have now openly criticized NFL players for protesting the National Anthem by taking a knee. "There is a time and place for civil debate, and wearing team jerseys and using sporting events to disrespect our country doesn't wash with millions of military veterans who have and continue to wear real uniforms on real battlefields around the globe," VFW's national commander Keith Harman stated. American Legion National Commander Denise Rohan joined the VFW in attacking the NFL players who knelt during the National Anthem as "misguided and ungrateful."

"The American Legion is one of the original architects of the U.S. Flag Code," Rohan asserted. "That code was produced by 69 patriotic, fraternal, civic and military organizations in 1923. It included members of all political parties, big labor, industry and minorities."

"The code calls on all present to stand at attention while the anthem is played. It wasn't political when it was written, and it shouldn't be political today," Rohan added.

None of this bodes well for the NFL as a league. According to a study by the Remington Research Group, 64 percent of polled Americans agree with President Trump's stance on the National Anthem protests, while just 25 percent do not. That same study asked whether the respondents watched more or less football as a result of the protests compared to previous years, to which 51 percent stated they've watched less, and just 19 percent answered more. Eighty percent said they'd like sporting events to be less political, and 60 percent said the National Anthem at NFL games was an inappropriate place to protest.

So NFL teams continue to lose fans over their players' protests against the National Anthem, and polls show that the majority of Americans are opposed to the protests; however, the continued support for the protesters among the mainstream media and the clearly left-leaning NFL will likely ensure that the protests continue indefinitely. What this means for the future of the NFL, however, remains to be seen.



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