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OF BUSINESS
The Sharkey Institute

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Seton Hall Sports Poll

**84% Support NFL Players' Right to Protest But Vary on How to Carry That
Out;
*Only 16% Say Protesters Should Be Dropped from Team***

Wide Discrepancy Between African-Americans and Whites

South Orange, NJ, September 28, 2017 – The Seton Hall Sports Poll has found that 84% of Americans support the NFL players' right to protest, with only 16% saying the players should be ordered to stand for the anthem or be dropped from the team if they refuse.

Of the 84% supporting the players' right to protest, 49% felt they should find a different way to express their political opinions, and 35% felt that not standing for the anthem is an acceptable way to protest. There was a wide racial gap in those saying it was an acceptable form of protest with 70% of African-Americans choosing that option and only 28% of whites doing so.

The poll of 845 adults (on both landline and cellphone) was conducted across the US on Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday of this week. It has a margin of error of 3.4%.

An identical question was asked a year ago about just Kaepernick. At that time, 80% supported the right to protest and 20% believed they should be dropped from the team if they refused an order to stand.

Asked specifically this week about players not standing during the playing of the anthem, 44% of all respondents disapproved, 32% approved, and 25% had no opinion or did not know. The responses to the same question about just Kaepernick a year ago were 47% disapproval and 27% approval.

“These attitudes are remarkably stable given all that has happened in this past year and the recent spike in attention being paid to the subject, noted Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, which is sponsored by the Sharkey Institute.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed more with President Trump who called on NFL owners to fire any players who refuse to stand or with Commissioner Roger Goodell and several NFL owners who called the President’s comments divisive. Trump received the support of 28% and Goodell received 50%. Among African-Americans Trump received 6% vs. 78% for Goodell and whites were 32% to 47%.

Asked about Kaepernick’s lack of a contract by an NFL team, 47% felt it was because of his protests and 19% because he wasn’t good enough. 81% of African-Americans felt it was because of his protest with only 7% saying it was because he was not good enough, while among whites the ratio was 41% (protest) and 22% (ability).

“This is an emotional issue for many people with obvious differences between whites and African-Americans,” said Gentile. “The overall support for the players’ right to protest — in some form — is heartening especially considering some of the divisive rhetoric we’ve heard revolving around this issue.”

The protests can be very damaging to the NFL’s popularity. 29% of respondents said they were watching fewer games this season, and of that group, 47% cited the player protests during the national anthem.

In an identical question asked in November 2016, 25% said they were watching fewer games because of the anthem protest.

ABOUT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

One of the country’s leading Catholic universities, Seton Hall University has been a catalyst for leadership — developing students in mind, heart and spirit — since 1856. Home to nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students and offering more than 90 academic programs, Seton Hall’s academic excellence has been singled out for distinction by The Princeton Review, U.S.News & World Report and Bloomberg Businessweek.

Seton Hall, which embraces students of all religions, prepares its graduates to be exemplary servant leaders and global citizens. Its attractive main campus is located in suburban South Orange, New Jersey, and is only 14 miles by train, bus or car from New York City, offering a wealth of employment, internship, cultural and entertainment opportunities. The university’s nationally recognized School of Law is prominently located in downtown Newark.

For more information, visit www.shu.edu.

About the poll:

This poll was conducted by telephone September 25-27 among 845 adults in the United States. The Seton Hall Sports Poll is conducted by the Sharkey Institute.

Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard landline and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus 3.8 percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

The Seton Hall Sports Poll has been conducted regularly since 2006.

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The results:

1. This season, do you find yourself watching more NFL games, fewer NFL games or about the same amount of NFL games?

1. More	5%
2. Fewer	29
3. About the same	50
4. Don't know	16

(IF "FEWER" ASK QUESTION 2. IF "MORE", "SAME", OR "DON'T KNOW" SKIP QUESTION 2)

2. Why have you watched fewer NFL games? Please pick your main reason from the following:

1. The games aren't as good as in past years	3
2. Too many games on TV	2
3. Too many commercial interruptions	4
4. The players' protests during the national anthem	47
5. Boycotting in support of player protests	6
6. Bothered by danger of head injuries	1
7. Other	21
8. Don't know	15

1.

3. Colin Kaepernick waged a protest last season by kneeling during the national anthem. This year other players have continued the protest by not standing during the playing of the anthem. Do you approve, disapprove or have no opinion about the gesture?

a. Approve	32
b. Disapprove	44
c. No opinion	22
d. Don't know	3

4. Which of the following statements do you agree with most:
1. I don't support the players' right to protest and believe they should be ordered to stand for the anthem or be dropped from the team if they refuse 16
 2. I support the players' right to protest but believe they should stand for the anthem, finding a different way to express their political opinions 49
 3. I support the players' right to protest and I think not standing for the anthem is an acceptable way to protest 35
5. Colin Kaepernick has not been signed by an NFL team and some say it is because of last year's protest. Do you think he would be signed today if he had not protested or has he not been signed because he's not a good enough player?
- a. Protested 47
 - b. Not good enough 19
 - c. Don't know/No opinion 34
6. President Trump has called on NFL owners to fire any player who refuses to stand for the national anthem. Commissioner Roger Goodell and several NFL owners have responded that the president's comments were divisive. Whom do you most agree with?
- a. President Trump 28
 - b. Commissioner Goodell and the owners 50
 - c. Neither (DON'T READ) 7
 - d. Both (DON'T READ) 2
 - e. Don't know/No opinion 13
7. How closely would you say you follow sports, very closely, closely, not closely or not at all?
- a. Very closely 24
 - b. Closely 33
 - c. Not closely 30
 - d. Not at all 13

(IF "VERY CLOSELY", "CLOSELY", OR "NOT CLOSELY" ASK QUESTION 12. IF "NOT AT ALL" SKIP QUESTION 12)

8. How closely would you say you follow the NFL, very closely, closely, not closely, or not at all?
1. Very closely 20
 2. Closely 31
 3. Not closely 28
 4. Not at all 22