

# The Day That the Court Stood Still

As sports around the country went dark on Wednesday night, we see that things haven't changed.

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9 min 1



Photo Credit: Kevin C. Cox | Getty Images

Yesterday, on the fourth anniversary of Colin Kaepernick's initial protest in the NFL, the hardwood floor in Florida stood still. No LED panels with virtual fans. No dunks, three-point shots, or argued calls. Silence. The Milwaukee Bucks decided right before gametime to boycott their game five outing against the Orlando Magic in reference to the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenoshia. Soon after, all the other teams followed suit and the games were promptly postponed.

It made me think back to the 1968 Olympics where two African American 200 meter sprinters, Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists on the podium. They were then banned from the Olympic Village thereafter and received death threats when they returned home from Mexico City. Commentator and then writer Brent Musburger called the men, "a couple of black-skinned storm troopers. Mind you, these are the same Olympics that were held in Berlin in 1936 at the height of Nazi Germany where Hitler salutes were raised. Jessie Owens competed there and won four gold metals, yet, was not even invited to the White House to meet then president Franklin D. Roosevelt. He came back to the United States and was still treated as a second-class citizen.

The irony here is that the bubble in Florida has been shielded from the raging pandemic that's happening outside of it. A pandemic that has been afflicting communities of color more. Even though the players have been kept safe from this virus, they are not immune to the pains of racial prejudice and inequality. Racism doesn't care about your social status or standing. Ask NBA player Thabo Sefolosha or Toronto Raptors president Masai Ujiri where that has gotten them. It hasn't gotten them any immunity, but there sure is in the cases of police brutality and to those who wheld that tool. Who are the ones are privilege - the millionaire basketball players or the institutions that uphold racist policies?

As the NBA player deserves applause for making this step, let's not forget the efforts of those in the WNBA. Phoenix Lynx star Maya Moore gave up an entire year of her illustrious career to fight for Jonathan Irons, a man who was wrongfully given a 50 year sentence for burglary and assault. The Atlanta Dream continue to protest against the wishes of co-owner and senator from Georgia, Kelly Loeffler. Take a look at the Washington Mystics players and their shirts in reference to Jacob Blake. The women athletes have been in this fight for a long time.



Photo Credit: Julio Aguilar/Getty Images

The silence of the basketball court on Wednesday night was in contrast to Vice President Mike Pence's RNC speech where he said that you will not be safe in Joe Biden's America. When have Black people ever felt safe in any iteration of America? From slavery, Jim Crow, sundown towns that still exist - when is it ever going to be safe? When will Black athletes be looked upon as more as entertainment? Racism doesn't stick to sports - so why do we expect our athletes to?

While we marvel at the sacrifices that the players in the NBA and WNBA continue to make; the question remains as to why the burden is put on their shoulders alone? The ownership collective of these teams make a good buck off the talent of these players. When are they going to utilize their money and their political connections to help usher in lasting change? We question players at pressers and stick microphones in their faces in every instance. Players like George Hill and Fred Vanfleet have been echoing the sentiments of African-Americans everywhere. It's just sad that it takes the possibility of sports ending other than bullet wounds, blood spilled, and deaths in order for you to hear us.

So, yes - maybe you had to change your Wednesday night plans because you wanted to watch the Lakers vs. the Blazers in game five. Black parents across the country are having 'the talk' with their children. 'If you do the right things and say the right things, you'll be safe.' They are saying this with a lump in their stomachs with the realization that even doing the right things won't save your life. A 17-year old kid named Kyle Rittenhouse was able to take a semi-automatic rifle and murder two people during a protest walking by police. You know who else was 17? Trayvon Martin. One of them are still alive. In June before the bubble was supposed to happen, Kyrie Irving questioned if sports should even go on. He worried that it would take away from the social justice movement that was happened. Irving was also wrongfully vilified for his comments because America needed an escape. African-Americans don't want to be an escape - they want change. How would you feel if your profession was deemed a relaxing getaway while you can't rest?

Irving was willing to give up everything for racial progress. The NBA and WNBA were willing to sacrifice changes at championship - a pillar that they work all year for. It's time for sacrifices to be made across the board so that the need for these demonstrations don't need to happen.

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Before we begin, I wanted to have everybody watch the following video: Right there are generations of pain and sadness being expressed. It's the heavin...

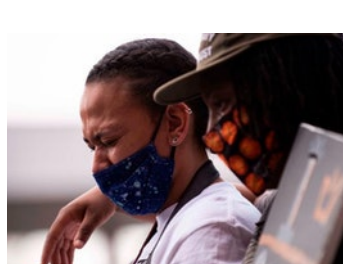
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## #BlackoutTuesday Is Over. The Work Needs To Continue.

Now that #BlackoutTuesday is finished, the work needed to dismantle racism has only begun.

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## How Many More?

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