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# The National Football League

kenney g. wooten

*Murray State University*, [kenneywoo90@gmail.com](mailto:kenneywoo90@gmail.com)

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The National Football League

Kenney Wooten

Murray State University

Fall 2018

Football has become one of America's favorite past times. The sport of football has been around for almost ninety years now. Football was first played in the early 1900's and is now played everywhere in the United States. Twenty two, out of the fifty states have one or more professional football teams practice, and operated out of them. Football is also played in a few different countries. You can see the community that football brings to a town, school, state and now is easily watchable anywhere in America. Watching football whether it be at a high school, college, or the NFL level. (The National Football league has shaped modern American history). Some people might say that this sport has become the success that it has, because it is a product of changing technologies. Football was becoming a big deal at the same time as radio talks, and digital television. This is said because you could hear or see football on either radios, TV, and even in newspapers every week. "Professional football is a massive industry in America, with the National Football League (NFL) expected to pull in \$14 billion in revenue this year alone. As of 2017, the average NFL franchise is worth \$2.5 billion, according to *Forbes*, which makes NFL owners a very wealthy group."(Miami Herald) This league has become world renowned. At the beginning, this sport wasn't highly regarded, since America's favorite pastime was baseball, and professional baseball had become a huge part of America, having another sport competing for loyal fans was hard. It has become a tradition in some families that every Sunday they come together after church and watch football, or if the team you're rooting for is lucky enough to be playing the Thursday night game of the week, everyone gets excited for that too. Walk around anywhere, whether it be at a store, a college campus, a park, someone there will be wearing a National Football League shirt, or hat, etc. representing the team they have become so attached

to watching. This is like any tradition in American culture where you can ride around to many families and friends houses and there will be football on at least one tv in their house.

There are many founders of the National Football League which was originally called the American Professional Football Association, and then was later renamed the National Football League on June 24, 1922. One of the more prominent founders of this sport was Ralph Hay, he was important in organizing the initial meetings. Ralph Hay was the owner of the Canton Bulldogs, which was the center of professional football at the time of the name change. Jim Thorpe was actually a player on the Canton Bulldogs when Hay was the owner. The league's first president was Jim Thorpe, and he was one of the most famous athletes of his time and helped get the National Football League its credibility. "Jim Thorpe, arguably the world's greatest athlete at the time, joined the Canton Bulldogs in 1915 and led the team through five championship seasons. As the most talented and most popular player on Ralph's team, the two became close friends. The friendship continued even after Thorpe's retirement, as he often traveled back to Canton to visit Hay." It was said that Hay had no idea what a legacy he would create, since he became easily frustrated when he owned the Bulldogs and ended up selling the team just a couple of years after becoming the owner (Ralph HayNFL). Once they were renamed the National Football League they had an original eighteen teams, "The NFL fielded 18 teams, including the new Oorang Indians of Marion, Ohio, an all-Indian team featuring Thorpe, Joe Guyon, and Pete Calac, and sponsored by the Oorang dog kennels. Canton, led by player-coach Guy Chamberlin and tackles Link Lyman and Wilbur (Pete) Henry, emerged as the league's first true powerhouse, going 10-0-2." (ProFootballHOF) This was just the start of the franchise growing, now in 2018 there are thirty two official National Football League teams, all owned

and operated by their own presidents. In 1932 the National Football League franchise was at its lowest membership only having just eight teams, lowest in franchise history. The sport then became increasingly popular over the years, and in the late 90's regained its popularity by getting more than just football lovers involved, but making it a family concept.



(These are the thirty two teams that are currently represented in the NFL and their logos that are put on their jerseys, and merchandise they sell to get money for each of their teams. -Scoopnest)



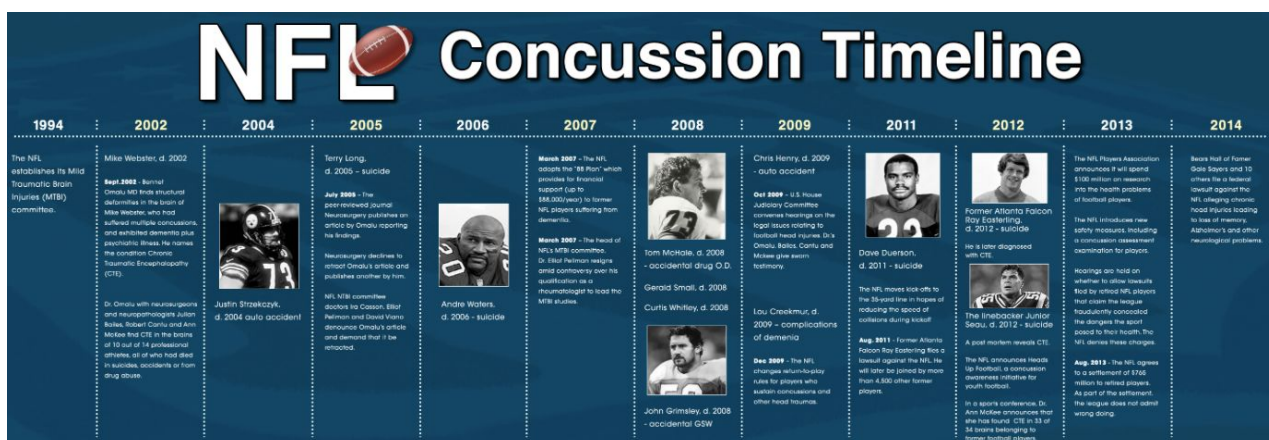
(This is the National Football Leagues logo that is known to all of those who love and follow the league. They have had a few different variations of this logo but they logo has always mainly stayed the same.)

The National Football League commissioner is basically the president of the National Football League, he gets the last say in all things National Football League. The current commissioner is Roger Goodell. He has been the commissioner since August if 2006. He was chosen to succeed the former commissioner Paul Tagliabue. He was chosen as over four finalist

and won the 5th vote unanimously approved by National Football League owners. He is known as one of the most powerful man in sports. He has been one of the greatest commissioners in National Football League history. The commissioner plays a important role in football while organizing and making rules so that that everything is up to part. You can see why this is such an important job. Without a commissioner there would be no rules or regulations. Like with all of the protest commissioner gordon had meetings with Donald trump the president of the united states. The meeting was about the national anthem protest and the NFL players kneeling through it. The commissioner is the main man of the league, and he is the one who is behind the scenes keeping it all together.

For many people they think of football as just watching men run around and hit each other in this, what has been labeled, “violent” sport. It benefited from an increasing concern over issues of masculinity in a sedentary world, and from expressions of masculinity through vicarious violence. Football is a dangerous sport and many people don't feel the need or want to play it nowadays, due to the studies that have come out about past and present players health conditions. A lot of young adults who said they were not allowed to play football when they asked as a child because their parents feared the physical aspect of the sport. Although there is more knowledge about it now, back in the early 20th century there was no concrete evidence that this professional sport was damaging the health of the players. Early in football there was barely any football pads or protective equipment, which is where you could see these problems arise. The helmets were leather hats with no face mask, their jerseys were not fitted and the shoulder pads were oversized. During the beginning of this sport, they also had no idea of concussions or even what they were. There was a time that players played this full contact sport without a

facemask on their helmet. Helmets didn't get face masks until the late 1950's, yet some players were still hesitant about using them because they thought they altered the game. The National Football League then had to make rules, such as not being allowed to grab the face mask of a player, as the equipment in this sport evolved.



(This is a concussion timeline for the NFL. It shows that within the years they have made extra protocols and the way they have been trying to protect players because of the CTE studies that have come back. Because before like it says in 1994 they only had Mild Traumatic Brain injuries knowledge. -Hagan Law)

There are many teams in the National Football league that are either owned or passed down from their family heirloom. Most of these people are multi-millionaires or even some franchises are worth billions. For example, let's take Jerry Jones who is the owner of America's team the Dallas Cowboys. Jerry Jones has been the owner of the Dallas Cowboys from 1989 and is also the general manager and president of the team. He bought the Dallas Cowboys from H.R Bum Bright on February 25, 1989. Although Jerry Jones bought the Dallas Cowboys, some teams owners we're given the team through family inheritance. Since Jerry Jones has invested a lot of his life into this team, he has become quite successful with the team. While



inheriting a franchise isn't too much of a risky financial risk, those who are buying teams outright from a previous owner, are going into debt. For instance like the Miami Dolphins owner wants to keep improving his franchise to keep up with other teams but has come forward and said, "That debt comes due between 2015 and 2017, meaning Ross must find a way to retire or extend that debt while raising new dollars for the planned renovation. Katz said none of the proposed \$400 million funding would be used to retire any of the team's existing debt." (Miami Herald) Having to add four hundred million dollars to an already existing over two hundred million dollars that the team had already accumulated from past owners, isn't easy. Back when they renovated their stadium, they overestimated their profit for the year and, "But debt payments tied to the stadium are set to increase from \$9 million a year to \$20 million in 2014. Should revenues dip from more lackluster performances on the field, the Dolphins may face a profit squeeze." Revenue in the National Football League is extremely important and based on the players performance, and gaining attention from fans. While the players and fans are the main way to raise money, the owners are the ones that are being blamed for the debt the team is in. (Miami Herald) While back when the National Football League first started, making money off of the teams was easy, because they only costed a couple hundred dollars to start, and now it is to be said that the last three teams to be sold have barely broke even and they were sold for millions. This may also be due to recently the National Football League has been under scrutiny for multiple things and their rating recently have declined, not majorly, but from the peak of its time to now it has.

The players and fans are the main money makers for the teams individually. The bigger the fan base the more money your team will get. The more popular your players are with all ages,

the more viewers you have, it is a simple concept. With this you will get a bigger crowd which will make for a need of a bigger stadium. The fan base is brought in through the players lets take for an example the New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady. Brady is one of the top players in the National Football League right now and in the past five years has won two Super Bowl championships, which has made their franchise world known. The more you win the more money that you will make and the more money a team will have to build its program and franchise. Selling merchandise with the players names, and titles that they have won is a great way for the teams publicity. They also raffle off signed products at various events which get auctioned off for thousands sometimes. This is why most teams that have low number draft picks have more publicity from start. The players who are first round draft picks usually have merchandise already made for them. This is because most fans start off thinking that this kid is a good college athlete so that he can change the franchise if he is drafted. Merchandise is really big in the National football league because you can go anywhere in the united states and even in the world and buy a jersey with one of you favorite football players name and number on it. This also helps the team itself gain publicity, especially if certain players aren't as known and their jerseys are being worn all over by their fans it makes others interested in who they are. Players are the main focus in the franchise if the team is not winning. A team can have zero wins but just because they have that one great player or an past heisman winner he will bring the franchise bundles of money.

There are many players in the National Football League who get plenty of money and some players who get little to none comparatively. Quarterbacks are usually the ones who gets the most money because in most instances they are usually the ones who carry the team, and who

is most known on the teams to viewers. Some quarterbacks are being paid an insanely large amount of money. Lets take for example Kirk Cousins, he is being paid 135 million for a five year contract. There is also Khalil Mack who is being paid the same as Kirk Cousins because he is a dominant player in the league. Quarterbacks are usually also the most protected player on the team, due to the entire offense being based around them, and their comfort zone with the players. All of the big time names that are known in the sports industry are also guaranteed to get paid in the hundreds or at least close to the hundreds of millions within their contracts. Although the big names get a lot of money some other players that get a great compensation, even though they are not the “name” of the team. A National Football League contract is at average two million dollars per year. To most we say that two million isn’t bad but we have to realize that the players also have to pay taxes depending on what state they live in. Like for instances, it is a fact that players in Texas and in Colorado do not have taxes taken out of their checks, but most other states do. After taxes are taken out of a two million dollar contract it leaves them with only one point four million. Also there is no guarantee after their contract is up, that they will get re-signed so some players look for advertising gigs, commercials, and make a name for themselves that way. Especially with sport Brands like Nike, Colin Kaepernick lost his career in the National Football League due to a protest he started, but now is making a lot of money off the brand of Nike. Most players in the National Football League will save their actual paycheck and use the money they get from endorsements, while saving their contract money in case they do not get re-signed. For an example, Marshawn Lynch throughout his entire career, he never spent any of the money he made with the actual National Football League, just what he got from doing endorsements while he was a player. There are also a lot of players that give back to their

local communities, or charities close to their hearts, for instance Michael Bennett gave most of his endorsements money to charities, “Seattle Seahawks defensive end Michael Bennett announced Thursday he would donate all of his 2017 endorsement money and half the proceeds he receives from jersey sales to inner-city programs.” (USA Today) This shows the power of their position in the National Football League, and that they can do a lot of good with the money they make. The money you get in your contract is decided by many people including the coach, president, and or the general manager. If a player has big money coming into his first first two seasons and does not produce for the team as the coach thought he should or would he will lose money, and could potentially be cut from the team. Producing, and making big plays in the National Football League can cause you to make big money or break you career as a player. The president can also release a player if the player isn’t performing to the ability they expected, the coach can take money, or have them cut if they aren’t affecting the team in a positive manner. Coaches can take a sum of the contract if the player isn’t playing because of injury, or other circumstances that have been approved by a higher up. For instance, if they think the player is being overpaid for what they are contributing to the team, like Rob Gronkowski, was injured for two years of his contract so they took some of the money that was originally agreed upon in his contract, away. Gronkowski is a dominant player, but you can see why they decided to take some of the money away if they are not playing regardless, because at the end of the day it is still a business, and they need to do what's best for the business. The National Football League also has a guarantee for the players, so that if they have a contract for one hundred million, they could be guaranteed a certain amount, like sixty million and no matter how they play or if they get injured they are protected with that money, so that they still know they have an income and can support

their lifestyle if something were to happen. Even if a player is cut from that team, they are secured with at least the amount of guaranteed money that was agreed upon. This sometimes can be viewed as a waste of money to some teams because they only get a certain amount of money to give to the players, but they understand why it is important to protect their players. That's why in some instances such as the Rob Gronkowski incident can happen. Some players in the NFL take salary cuts because teams need some of the money to bring in players for mid season reasons such as trades and other players, and the players who have some of their salary taken away are aware this could happen. A lot of people see these professional athletes as just that, athletes, and forget that this is their career, and the money they are bringing home is the money they have to live off of, and support their loved ones.

While some of the highest paying athletes in the National Football League have what you would imagine, everything they'd ever dreamt of, some of them still throw away their career. One of the first major court cases openly documented and directly correlated to the National Football League was Michael Vick who was caught dog fighting. In 2007 police raided Michael Vick's home in Virginia and found that he was taking part in, and training pitbulls for dog fighting. He, along with three others were convicted of these charges, but Michael Vick's sentence was the hardest. His sentence was said to some to be very cruel, others didn't think it was enough, "On this day in 2007, Michael Vick, a star quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons, formally pleads guilty before a Richmond, Virginia, judge to a federal felony charge related to running a dogfighting ring. That December, the 27-year-old Vick, once the highest-paid player in the NFL, was sentenced to 23 months in federal prison." This was making national headlines and made the National Football League have to decide what their punishment would be to the player,

because like we've said earlier, this franchise has a standard to withhold up too. Vick did the time in jail he was sentenced too, and then went right back to conditioning and training for the league when he got released, "That July, he was conditionally reinstated by the NFL and the following month signed a two-year deal with the Philadelphia Eagles. While his public image remained tarnished, Vick went on to make a strong comeback on the football field." Like they said, his image has forever been tarnished and he will never be the loved by many type of player he once was. Michael Vick was once known to be the face of the National Football League, and that will be a consequence he'll forever have to accept that was taken away from him because of his own actions. This was the first major case that made all the media outlets with having the National Football League had to also punish the players alongside the judicial system. Michael Vick has since ended his career as a player, but still remains highly involved in the league. (History.com) This is an extreme case of a player in this franchise getting involved with the law enforcement, there are many other players who break the law with minor offenses and have to follow those consequences they are handed. There have also been other high profile cases which have even included murder in the more recent years, and again not only the league themselves but the specific team that these players have played on and for have had to do some major damage control. One of those teams was also the Patriots, who are so highly regarded in this sport they had a player, Aaron Hernandez that was convicted of murder in 2013, and was sent to prison where he later committed suicide. This was another national headline news story, and the National Football League worked hard to make sure people know that this was the players mistake and this does not reflect on the entirety of this program. These are some players that took the fame and success and did cruel things with what came to that, and sadly like in every sport,

and every profession these won't be the last stories we hear, but they are also not common which keeps hope for those who lose that hope when they hear about the cruelty some of these players express in their time in the National Football League.

There has been many protest in the National Football League over the past few years but the one that has made the most controversy within the past year is the National Anthem protest. This protest was originally started by Colin Kaepernick who I previously mentioned above, who lost his entire career in the National Football League because of it. Players in the National Football League on certain teams are taking a knee, or have been putting up their fist up during the national anthem to prove a point. Racial controversy has always been a problem in the United States going all the way back to when slavery and segregation in our school systems existed. Ever since the Trayvon Martin incident where he was shot and killed by George Zimmerman for wearing a hoodie walking down the street, there has been a movement for “Black Lives Matter”. There are many more situations since that incident that has been brought to light, such as Sandra Bland, and Mike Brown in Ferguson, Missouri where a young black male was essentially “targeted” by the police for no real reason at all. These past and even current events in our world, are the main reasons why the National Football League is going through such trials right now. In 1933 the professional football league actually banned all black players and even said they were doing it because of the players from the south would try to hurt the black players, due to the prominent racism that existed in the southern states, even though it wasn't just those states that faced incredible racism. It wasn't until Kenny Washington in 1948 got signed with the L.A. Rams, making the law of no black players in the league a thing of the past. Most people in the National Football League that are not black such as Colin Kaepernick even understand the

severity of the things happening in the United States. So with that being said, the National Football League protest is a few players from each team taking a knee during the National Anthem. Kaepernick started this protest actually sitting during the National Anthem, but then a veteran of the Army talked to Kaepernick about how fellow servicemen kneel in honor of their fallen brothers, and that's where the kneeling came into place. Kaepernick said "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color," Kaepernick told National Football League Media in an exclusive interview after the game. "To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder." (CBS Sports) As an American a lot of older U.S. citizens and team leaders take this as an offense. The cause is because they believe that if you are a U.S. citizen you should always respect the flag and love your country. They say by taking a knee that you are not proud to be an American, or they believe you are being disrespectful to our nation for not standing. Donald Trump is one of the people who is angry about this movement, he feels that as the president of the United States, that some of these players are disrespecting him personally by not standing. He had meetings with the National Football League commissioner Roger Goodell. They met and our president Donald Trump discussed a plan to force every team in the National Football League to stand for the 2018-2019 season. The plan did not work, commissioner Roger Goodell made a choice to let the teams presidents choose if they will let them take a knee or not. They went back and forth on this decision, but ultimately know that these players have rights as an American, and one of those rights is to stand up for what you believe in, to have a voice. Some teams have enforced the rule where you must stand for our national anthem. After Roger Goodell told the president that he



will let the teams presidents decide, he changed his mind and said that if you do not stand you will be fined. To a player who is making fifty million off of his contract, they will not be bothered by this fine. On the other hand if you are not making this much money you could be losing a large sum of money. A person making an salary of two million a year needs his job and will not be able to keep taking a knee. This means that if a player doesn't have a big contract he will have to stop fighting for what he believes in. Some players who stopped protesting with some of their teammates are being considered a push over by many of their fans and or peers and scrutinized for it. This is not the case for all, most people do not believe that this is a players job and how he should be taking care of his family. To some players that they just love the game and it is just the fact that some police officers and other people high in authority are abusing their positions of power. The National Football League is also getting impacted due to this protest. It is said that the viewers have declined since said protest, "The NFL's viewership will likely drop during the 2018-2019 season, potentially surpassing the 10% decline it experienced last season, which many fans and some pundits wrongly attributed to the controversy over player protests during the National Anthem." (Forbes) They do not think this pattern is going to change much this coming season due to the debate still being highly talked about. These viewers that haven't been watching, are saying this is their little voice in the huge controversy, and that is the only way they can stand up for what they think is right. The National Football League players feel like there are changes that should be made in this country so that we all can move on and get back to the game that we all have come to know and love.

Colin Kaepernick started this movement, he was the one who knew that there needed to be change at that time and did something about it. Throughout this whole ordeal he was strong

and did not give up on his goal and what he knew had to be stopped. Many people shunned him for the things he was doing, and saying that taking a knee during the National Anthem was uncivilized and that he must not be a true American. He has been through a lot, such as losing his starting position for the 49ers. He was a free agent for a long time because of the things he did he still is at the moment but he's not giving up, because he knows this is what he stands for. He did all the small things such as putting his hair in an afro and saying little remarks in all of his interviews to never let the message be unheard. He has gotten his word across on many occasions when he speaks and does advertising with Nike. The Nike advertisement made a lot of people angry and there was protest with that also. The Nike advertisement was a picture of Colin Kaepernick's face saying "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything." This protest by him had people burning Nike shoes and saying that they will not buy them. Although they said that they won't buy the shoes but the Nike stock went up "Our new analysis around the ad campaign's impact suggests a direct net benefit of (about 170,000-plus) additional followers (consumers) on Nike's main Instagram account," he said in a research note. "Indeed, since intense media coverage of the ad campaign broke, daily follower gains to date have roughly doubled vs the previous month." (Investors) The reason this created such an uproar was because some people don't think what he did was technically sacrificing anything, and that what he has done, was his own decision. People believe there are a lot more people that would fit the description of "sacrificing everything", like people in the army, or those who protect and serve citizens everyday and have gotten injured. Some people wondered if Nike thought this advertisement through, but they are a thirty billion dollar company, and they are known for thinking everything through, and this wouldn't be any different. They knew making Colin

Kaepernick the face of the company for their thirty year anniversary would make a statement, whether it was positive or negative, their main concern is having their brand out there and being talked about, and that's exactly what this campaign did. While the advertisement caught a lot of negative attention to the brand it also had over forty three million dollars worth of positive feedback. While in the spotlight right now is Kaepernick, another famous football player, Tim Tebow sparked a national protest/debate when he was a player about seven years ago. Tim Tebow was a quarterback for the Broncos, but more importantly to him, he was a hard core Christian. He first started showing his beliefs with putting bible verses on his eye black when he was in college, a practice the N.C.A.A. (The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a member-led organization dedicated to the well-being and lifelong success of college athletes.) has since banned to try to stay away from religious beliefs as a whole. What sparked national attention though, was when he was in an anti-abortion commercial during Super Bowl 45. People were outraged because they didn't believe that religion belonged on the football field, and that his belief system should be a separate part of who he is. He also stood up for his faith doing the "Tebow Bow" after throwing a touchdown which consisted of him, kneeling on one knee and praying. While many were against it, there were also many supporters who believed Tim Tebow, "Tebowing" showed many players at all ages that they don't have to hide their faith in this sport. Being a professional athlete, college athlete, high school athlete and even younger, practicing faith can become tricky, especially when you have so many people telling you what is right, and wrong, and what you should believe in. Having a professional athlete openly talk about, and praise his beliefs was eye opening to a lot of people, and inspired them to reconnect their faith that they may have once shied away from in becoming who they were as an athlete.



(This is the famous, or in some eyes the infamous advertisement that Nike released that started even more controversy with Colin Kaepernick. Many people do not believe like I stated earlier that Kaepernick sacrificed anything, and that it was his decision to kneel, and he knew the consequences.)

## Swoosh! Nike stock surges



(CBS Sports showed that this was Nike's Stock worth once they released the Kaepernick ad for their 30th Anniversary. Their stock originally declined, but then are you can see increased and improved to the highest it's ever been. This is most likely due to the brand being all over social medias, and being the topic of conversation whether it was good or bad.)



(this is a picture of Tim Tebow and Colin Kaepernick kneeling Tebow is kneeling for prayer  
Colin is kneeling for rights)

Superbowl Sunday has become its own holiday in the United States to those who are fans of the National Football League. It is a day most people, even if it isn't the team they've been cheering for the entire season, will sit down and take part of. The Super Bowl is huge, not only because of the game itself, but it has become so well known because of the commercials. These commercials cost millions to get airtime during the superbowl due to the high amount of viewers who will be viewing them. The Super Bowl is also known for its incredible halftime show which they get acts, and singers that can put on a show worthwhile. But, within this past year, many famous people have declined being a part of the Super Bowl and their famous commercials due to these protests, and which sides they are on. A famous comedian, and actress, Amy Schumer

has decided not to let any commercials of her in them, be aired on the night of the Super Bowl. This is because she is on the side of Colin Kaepernick and believes in unity, and standing together. This was her personal decision, just like the singer Rihanna who declined the offer to headline at the Super Bowl during halftime, which is one of the most viewed/televised events in America. It is said that Rihanna has declined this offer due to her also standing with Kaepernick and not agreeing with how the National Football League handled this situation. These famous hollywood names, are in direct correlation with standing with Kaepernick and supporting him. These celebrities are declining on an event that could change their lives, due to popularity, to stand up for what is wrong and what is right, which was Kaepernick's main statement. Unity, and he has created unity, even if it is just a small amount of people, he still has started a movement.

Like I said above, the superbowl is a national holiday to football lovers. One of the most important parts of the Super Bowl is choosing the location, and when choosing this location they consider a lot of variables. A couple of those variables include the stadium, how new it is and how many people it can hold. The weather, they don't want to play somewhere where it is going to be freezing that doesn't have a dome to make it indoors. They also think about the surrounding area and what accomodations can be made. They try to look into the proximity of hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, etc. The cities that apply to hold the super bowl go through an long vetting process until the final few have been selected, and then they have one last fifteen minute presentation to give their last reasons why, and hope to be picked. The NFL works off of volunteers from the city to help pull off this event. With the most recent Super Bowls they have had to hire some temporary paid workers so that they wouldn't end up being short staffed in the event that they needed more people, or if some didn't show up since it is normally a volunteer

basis. They usually have up to four or five years of places secured in advance so that the city can prepare and make sure they will reach all the standards they set in their meetings they pitched. It is a great honor to be a city that can hold the superbowl, it is a lot of work for the city and the people who live their sacrifice more than they are probably aware they do, but they also make an incredible amount of money due to the amount of people that come in from all over the United States. The local business also thrive during this time, due to a lot of the people wanting the experience of the city once they get there. The super bowl for 2019 is going to be held in Atlanta.

Controversies in the National Football League are common but another one that stuck out recently was Michael Sam. Michael Sam came out to the general public about his sexuality, he is homosexual. The world has been changing as the years have gone on about sexuality. Back in the day being gay or lesbian was very rarely accepted, but nowadays it is a lot more accepted and common in the general public. With that being said, there are still a lot of haters, and people who are demeaning and even cruel to those who come out. Michael Sam was a first team all SEC defensive end in college, and a first round draft pick in 2014. In college he had told his teammates that he was homosexual mid season and to his surprise they all accepted him and encouraged him to be who he was no matter how others treated him. This is how they acted until they went into a football community and they didn't act the same way as they previously had. When his announcement went public, his draft pick went from first round to fifth round in matter of days due to a lot of National Football Teams knowing that being openly gay isn't always widely accepted throughout the nation. His first day at mini camp, which is a camp that rookies and prospects have to go to, it was uncomfortable for him and his teammates made him not feel wanted when he was there. He later went to the Canadian Football League where he was a star.



He thought with his success in the Canadian professional football league things would finally start looking up for him but he was again treated poorly by those who were supposed to be his “football family”.



(This is a picture of Michael sam who was projected a first round draft pick in the draft with his boyfriend waiting for his name to be called.)

Football is a dangerous sport, as we all know that this sport is classified as full contact. A football player can be injured on a lot of ways even in some cases these injuries can cost them their life. Helmet to helmet contact is one thing that the National Football League has to get better at preventing and implementing the rule in place. Most football players hit with their head without thinking twice. This is the most dangerous thing you can do, head injuries in football are

the number one cause of death in football. Spinal injuries also occur with helmet to helmet contact and leave some athletes paralyzed due to the extent of their injuries. “Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker Ryan Shazier underwent spinal stabilization surgery after sustaining a severe back injury against the Cincinnati Bengals on Monday night.” (ESPN). Ryan Shazier is one of the players hurt from a spinal injury due to a helmet to helmet full contact hit. He was hurt from a spinal injury during the game when they were playing the Cincinnati Bengals. He went down on a play when he was tackling the running back Jeremy Hill. The player knew there was a problem when he couldn't move his legs. Ryan Shazier was one of the top linebackers in the National Football League, he led his team in tackles every year since he was a rookie. After this incident happened, the NFL knew that changes had to be made in order to keep their players safe from head injuries and such. This is a big deal in not only the NFL, but colleges, and high school leagues as well. Head injuries luckily are decreasing, slowly and they are learning ways and new techniques to keep our players safe. The sport is full of dangerous things that can be permanently damaging to your body mentally and even physically. One of the main focus points the National Football League is trying to educate everyone on is Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) which is caused by repetitive traumatic brain injuries, which involves concussions. In 1994, the National Football League commissioner Paul Tagliabue created a “Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Committee” It was that committee that in 2002 introduced CTE, and diagnosed former player Mike Webster with it who committed suicide. It was Dr. Omalu who was the first doctor to recognize CTE in American football players. It was then in 2007 when the league held a conference and discussed concussion guidelines. As

concussions were becoming more serious, and the committee has become more aware of the repercussions of not healing completely, the NFL commissioner in 2010 sent out a notice saying, "NFL Commissioner Goodell issues a memo to all 32 teams that warns of possible suspensions for offenders that violate the "playing rules that unreasonably put the safety of another player in jeopardy have no place in the game, and that is especially true in the case of hits to the head and neck." This again, was for the players safety. Even with these protocols more former players were committing suicide and then becoming diagnosed with CTE during their autopsy. They have continued to work hard on protecting these players and even revised the concussion policy in 2016. (CNN) In 2017 there was 291 concussions reported, and treated in the NFL, they are working hard to decrease these numbers with policies, and implementing new tackling rules, like the helmet to helmet contact. With the new policies though it is forcing players and coaches to actually report these injuries, and have them go through the proper steps to be treated before being able to come back to the game instead of just sweeping them under the carpet like they used too.

Celebrations have been in almost every sport and tradition since the first competition was documented. In all sports you can see people who make good plays celebrate, but for a year the National Football League banned celebrations so no player could celebrate their accomplishments on the field, they would get flagged. This made a lot of National Football League players mad they couldn't have fun and celebrate their success in what they love to do. For one whole year we couldn't see Rob Gronkowski spiking the ball and also Antonio Brown doing one of his famous dances in the endzone. "Technically, the NFL made premeditated or choreographed celebrations illegal in 1984, but it was hardly enforced until a crackdown came in

2004. In the two decades before 2004, there were famous group celebrations like the St. Louis Rams' "Bob and Weave" during the team's "Greatest Show on Turf" years." (Sbnation). The celebration rule has been in effect since 1983 but National Football League officials has never been as strict on players having fun and celebrating with their teammates. This rule came about after the Miami Hurricane football players in the late 1980s early 1990s when all of the players would have excessive celebrations and would basically mock their opponents to a point where it was seemed as disrespectful and unprofessional. The National Football League put fines on player who did these such things one of these players were Antonio Brown he did not care he would always celebrate when he knew he did a good job and helped his team be great. All of these rules were put into play is because they were doing inappropriate things that weren't always acceptable for all ages of the audience to see, and offended most people. There were many inappropriate celebrations such as twerking, sexual graphics, and just being ridiculous some coaches thought. We can use Michael Bennet as an example he was one of the guys who was doing these thing such as thrusting his pelvis on the sideline. Some people saw this as being bad for their kids and some people saw this as being childish, but he was just celebrating. "The NFL has routinely docked teams 15 yards and sent large fines to players for launching into celebrations after scoring touchdowns or picking off passes. It's why so many people have routinely referred to the NFL as the "No Fun League." (Complex) The rule was not put into place just so that they can not have fun and enjoy the game, they put it in place so we can keep our viewers safe and keep the reputation of this professional sport as clean as possible. This rule was also set in place because the National Football League has so many young student athletes in college, high school and even younger ages that look up to them, and they know they need to set

a good example. College football even has a rule set in place they will get flagged and yardage taken away if they celebrate excessively. High school student athletes usually don't celebrate "excessively" so it isn't as big of a deal in those leagues but since they are the viewers that are impressionable the National Football League is trying to keep everyone in line. The rule is basically put out so they can teach the youth good sportsmanship. Some athletes are self centered and believe that the team revolves around him. This is one thing teams and coaches want to get rid of because those are the players who cause controversy for their teams. Celebrating is one thing but being excessive is one thing that changes how the National Football League looks as a whole, and they want to remain a highly regarded business.

Cheerleading in the National Football league is changing with almost every team having a cheer team, not only in professional football, but high school and younger leagues too. Some people say that the cheer teams are exciting to watch during halftime show and on the sidelines. They say that the uniforms are simpler and the people have that 'model' look, which brings a lot of attention to the sideline. They try to keep a similar physique to attract people, "The history of NFL cheerleaders goes back to the 1960s when the Baltimore Colts (now the Indianapolis Colts) had formed their very own cheerleading squad. It was the first team to have an official cheerleading squad out of all the other NFL teams. A few other teams decided to have their own cheerleaders as well. NFL cheerleading was nothing like it is today but when the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders came around in their revealing outfits and dance routines, cheerleading became incredibly popular in sports entertainment." (streetdirectory). Cheerleaders have been around since 1954 starting with the Baltimore Colts. They were the first team to allow the women to start cheering for the team, they started with the small things such as dance routines

and uniforms. Some teams started to put models out on images to promote their teams for a good image, they also did this in hopes that it would attract more than just men to the league, but also show females had some part in this league as well. The Dallas cowboys also agreed with the Colts at this time, they knew that the cheerleaders could play an important role the the National Football League. They felt like the models would be good for the audience to look at during this time. Although it sounded like a good idea at the time, the models couldn't survive in the heat on the sidelines at first and some would even pass out. Although this happened the Dallas Cowboys still wanted to make this concept work. So the Dallas Cowboys manager thought of an idea for the women to perform sideline routines to get the fans hyped up but possibly try different uniforms to accommodate the health of the women. He started of by bringing in women and holding auditions for dancers who knew the basic routines to try to make it a uniform sport, and he did. "NFL cheerleaders were no longer just dancers on the field but also participated off the field to heighten the public image of the NFL teams." (Streetdirectory) Just like the professional football players, these cheerleaders in this day and age have this career as their full time job. They work hard, and actually help the team advertise more than a lot of people would think. While this is a profession for the women, the people who are in charge of them, and hire them have been facing some backlash as some former, and current cheerleaders have been speaking out about their treatment while employed for the National Football League. A former cheerleader for the Dallas Cowboys, who was one of the first teams in the league to hire cheerleaders says, ""They own you," says Debbie Kepley, a personal trainer in Los Angeles who performed as a Dallas Cowboys cheerleader during the boom years of 1976 to 1978. "Even though they wanted you to be a representative of the Cowboys, you were still just an accessory—a sideline

accessory. It's like being a Miss America—you will do anything they say to be a part of all of the glitz, the glamour, the cameras, the excitement and hope. That's where they take advantage of people.”” (Vanity Fair) Now this isn't always the case for every cheerleader, and a lot of them will speak out saying they did nothing but enjoy their time as a professional cheerleader for a professional team, but others have similar stories, even now in this day and age. In just 2018 there have been various allegations of poor treatment towards the women that are supposed to be cheering on our NFL players, these allegations include, “ Over the past year, the N.F.L. has faced a rash of lawsuits and ugly allegations over its treatment of cheerleaders. Five former members of the Washington Redskins squad say the team flew them to Costa Rica in 2013, stripped them of their passports, and required them to pose topless before wealthy fans. In March, former cheerleader Bailey Davis sued the New Orleans Saints for firing her over an Instagram photo she posted of herself in a lacy bodysuit. And in June, six former cheerleaders filed a federal sex-discrimination suit against the Houston Texans, alleging they were paid less than the state's minimum wage and relentlessly body-shamed by the squad coach, who called them “jelly bellies” and “crack whores.”” (Vanity Fair) While this is something that the individual teams deny, and the National Football League claims they do nothing but support fair employment practices, this is something that does happen. The National Football League has been working diligently to resolve any problems like this though, because they know just like the players, young boys and girls look up to these cheerleaders, and have hopes and dreams to be like them too one day. They know that this entire league is looked at under a microscope by all ages, and they want nothing but a positive look, which every company strives for.

There are many players acquired in the National Football League through different leagues and other countries leagues to the American National Football League. Players can be from all over the world, and there are other football leagues that players can play in other than the main league in the United States. The second best country, and professional football league, is in Canada. Many players from colleges who did not make it directly into the National Football League or a scouting program for the NFL, go play in this Canada to try to make a career and livelihood in their league. Although these players don't make it in the United States, they can go continue their careers in Canada and if they do good enough they will get another chance to play in the National Football League by being scouted back to America. One of the main players in the NFL who played in Canada for the BC Lions was Cameron Wake. Cameron Wake is a starting defensive end for the Miami Dolphins. He was the most outstanding rookie in his first season with the BC Lions. "I was really unemployed, and I wasn't doing anything," Wake told ESPN.com this week. "I was working out. Then, I'd come home and wait by the phone. It kind of got to that point where I'm literally doing nothing. I'd see my mom and dad come home from work, and I'm a 23-year old, perfectly-able guy. I got my sisters at work, my mom and dad, and I'm sitting at home all day. I feel like I should be doing something."(ESPN). He got his shot when he received a phone call from the team in Canada and that gave him the opportunity to continue his football career, with also having an income and being able to help provide for his family. He thrived in this league, and within two seasons he got a call from the Miami Dolphins, and he was headed back to the United States to make his debut in the National Football League. He has been with the Dolphins for ten years now. Most of the players in the NFL do not last more than two to three years with one team, but he has managed to play for one for so long, due



to his dedication and hard work. There are also many new leagues coming out within that United States so that many players can get that chance they are looking for without going out of the country. The Alliance of America Football league and the XFL are new leagues that can put players on the map to be scouted by NFL teams. The XFL is a league that is started by Vince McMahon who is the successor of the previous XFL which was started by WWF World Wrestling Federation. "The new XFL is an exciting opportunity to reimagine America's favorite sport," said McMahon in a statement. "As we move towards kickoff, we look forward to listening and implementing innovative ideas from players, coaches, medical experts, technology executives, the media and most importantly football fans." (cbssports). This league will begin sometime in 2020 McMahon says and he is looking forward to making it exciting and competitive. Some people say that this league will get a lot of players hurt due to the old league when there wasn't many rules, but McMahon hopes to mock the NFL closely to prevent this league from becoming like the last one. Scouts say that many of these players will probably be no good if they even get a chance to play in the NFL. They are also claiming if you are lucky to be picked up by an NFL team, these players will probably have many injuries. "The vision is clear: Keep the good times flowing in the late winter and spring with a league run by serious football people while learning from the failed attempts that came before it. "If it's good football, it will sell itself," Polian said."(espn). The AFL is so that viewers and fans can have entertainment in the spring time, since the NFL ends their season in early February after the Super Bowl. By the time of year when the NFL draft comes around the AFL season will have come to an end, which means that the players from the AFL still have a chance to get drafted for the NFL. The AFL holds tryouts during the winter of each year, although you can be drafted

for these teams if you do good at these tryouts you will have a spot on the AFL team. There are many teams within this league, a few examples are the Orlando Apollos, who are close to Steve Spurrier who was the head coach of South Carolina, the Atlanta Legends, and the Arizona Hotshots. These are a few of the many teams that players get scouted from to get to the NFL, especially the teams that are at the top of the league, get scouted and it makes them one step closer to reaching their dream to play for the NFL. Most of these team are coached by people who were previous college coaches and did well with their schools. Like Steve Spurrier, who I mentioned earlier, was the coach at South Carolina, Duke, Florida, and the Washington Redskins which is an NFL team. Spurrier was the Heisman trophy winner back in 1966 when he played at the University of Florida where he is now also the ambassador of athletics for the school. The Heisman Memorial Trophy, is awarded annually to the most outstanding player in college football in the United States whose performance best exhibits the pursuit of excellence with integrity. This just proves that Spurrier was a very qualified coach. With a coach like this teaching you the fundamentals of football you have no choice but to become a great football player. This is also good because some NFL scouts believe that some of these athlete are not yet ready to play at the highest level of football, and with someone who is so qualified, it makes them see they are learning under someone that is respected within the sport.

Trades and free agents are also a way that scouts get players to play for their teams. Many football programs have that guy that is a really good football player but he can't stay consistent. These players are either traded or become free agent players that get traded all over the league. They're either traded for picks in the draft or another player from a different team, or a different free agent. Players can also ask to be traded if they feel like they aren't getting the playing time

they think they deserve. Players like Dante fowler who played for the Jacksonville Jaguars and is now with the Rams did just this,"The Rams reportedly outbid the New York Jets and Green Bay Packers for Fowler's services just 30 minutes before Tuesday's trade deadline, NFL Network Insider Ian Rapoport added. The Jaguars were initially asking for at least a second-round pick and change for their former high selection."(NFL). Dante Fowler was a third round pick 2015 and was the nations top pass rusher in this draft, which made him a highly regarded player to get. Although he is a really good player he wasn't consistent enough to keep his position with the team. Players like him that are not needed for their previous team but can be a good asset into another system and team become desirable when they are on the free agent list, and most likely will get re-drafted by another team fast. The rams desperately needed a pass rusher for their defense to be complete in his position. Some other players will become a free agent, and stay a free agent for a long period of time, and sometimes that forces them into retirement depending on their financial situation, and what they ultimately want out of life. There are some players who played years ago who get the chance to come back and play a little while longer after training individually, not being a part of the National Football Leagues. One of these players was Josh Gordon he was suspended in 2015 for failure to pass a drug test. Because he couldn't pass his drug test he couldn't play football for three years. He played for the Cleveland Browns who knew that, and didn't want to trade him because they knew how good of a player he was. The Browns also had no reciever who would go out and make plays because they had to release one of their best rookies, Corey Coleman. Coleman was one of the nations top picks in his class, he was drafted in the first round of the 2016 National Football League Draft, with players such as Will Fuller. He was one player who requested for trade because he felt like he could do better

with another team. “I mean, it’s the Browns. It’s hard to blame Coleman for wanting to get as far away from that sad sack franchise as humanly possible, even if it means having to live in Buffalo for the foreseeable future.”(dead spin). He was mad that they had not been winning and in the previous years the Browns only had won one of seventeen games. Not to mention that him and the head coach Hue Jackson, who really wanted to get him out of the program was one of his biggest critics. The Browns thought that since they had Josh Gordon coming back this same year that they would be fine, and could improve their brand. This was not true although Josh Gordon was a great player after three games they felt like he lost his edge and wasn’t up to the standards of everyone else. So they did what every other team would’ve done and the Cleveland Browns traded wide receiver Josh Gordon to the New England patriots. They felt like he was also not producing so they traded him for picks in the draft to try to improve for the next season. This happens all over the NFL players are not producing so changes where needed to be made. What some people don’t know is that unlike basketball where you can go right from high school to the National Basketball Association, you have to play three years of college football before getting a chance at the National Football League. The reason for this is the difference between a high school strength football player, versus a man who has been training with the National Football League for years, could severely hurt someone. They need to learn at each level before making it to the national level for not only their safety but so that they don’t end their careers before they were even started. This also helps players be able to learn the fundamentals, and get those mastered before trying to compete with the elite players in this sport. These players either do good with the next team they have been signed with or they do not perform to the standards that they need to in the National Football League. Some continue to play in smaller leagues or they

retire and move on to coaching.



(This is a picture of Donte Fowler making a play for the Rams his first game in Los Angeles.)

Many rules have been implemented this season one rule to talk about is the body weight rule. This rule basically states that when sacking the quarterback you can not fall on top of them, with your complete weight. This rule has a lot of players mad about it because trying to prevent

the quarterback from getting hurt they can also hurt themselves, by not going full force like they were taught to tackle. One player who disagrees with this rule is William Hayes, of the Miami Dolphins. He was trying to follow this rule and while doing so he tore anterior cruciate ligament, which in football, or any sport really can be a career ending injury. Tearing your anterior cruciate ligament is a nine month to one year recovery, and a bunch of physical therapy. With this injury once you tear it once, you have such a higher chance of re-tearing it or tearing the other sides ACL which could ultimately end your career. Coaches and athletic trainers also know the risk of re-tearing the same one, or even tearing the other one and some don't want that liability of a player on their team anymore. All of this happened to William Hayes because he was trying not to protect the quarterback, which is ultimately his position to tackle the quarterback. As a defensive end one of the main jobs is to put pressure on the quarterback, and make the sack. Many defenders are upset about this rule because a clean hit is still being counted against the body weight rule, just because of their stature. Clay Matthews, who is a defensive end for the Green Bay Packers, had three flags on him, because of the body weight rule. One cost his entire team the football game. What was a normal hit in previous seasons, and our eyes as fans, was flagged by the referees. Most fans say that this is not the football they grew up watching and playing and is making them not want to watch and take part in the NFL like they used too. They are complaining and saying why change this nations game that everyone has come to love. Being physical is the main aspect of this sport. This sport is not meant to have such ridiculous rules the fans say. When the sport first started there was not much protection and rules the former NFL players say. They say that If they are able to live a long life and didn't have injuries that they should be fine. This is not the case back when they played the rules were different and they didn't

have much knowledge about the damage it put on your body. The rule is not meant to keep players from playing the commissioner just feels like quarterbacks are more vulnerable than anyone else on the field.



(This is a picture of William Hayes tearing his ACL trying to protect the quarterback.)



(On Sunday November 28, 2018 Alex Smith the quarterback for Redskins was tackled by the Houston Texans defense. His right fibula and tibia was broken due to this tackle. This just proves it is important to have these rules implemented in the league, but doesn't always protect them completely. This was a season ending injury for Smith and he will have to get surgery to repair the breaks. -ESPN)

The National Football League has a standard uniform policy. The uniform policy has been in effect since the game first started. There has been many rules that a player in the NFL must follow when it comes to what to wear. When the game first started the uniforms were made out of wool and canvas since it was so heavy to be used for some protection. Most teams wore black, brown or navy. It wasn't until the 1960's where the colorful jerseys and logos came out. The first helmets were made of leather, and then they incorporated plastic helmets, but those



were shortly banned due to them shattering upon impact. There are protocols a player must follow in order to be protected and not get fined on game day. A player must have on the gear that was given to them by the team. Their socks must cover the knees, their uniform, hair bands, gloves, cleats all must follow the teams colors. There is one exception to this rule in all of the football leagues which is in October players can wear pink in support of breast cancer awareness month. Each National Football League's jersey are sponsored by Nike. Although all the teams are sponsored by Nike, players themselves are allowed to be individually sponsored, which means that any player can wear Adidas, Under Armor, Reebok, etc. with their uniforms. So they can advertise for the company they are sponsored by, by wearing that brand's gloves, cleats, etc.

Avery Williamson, a player for the Tennessee Titans, wore cleats to remember the tragedy of 9/11 in 2001. He was the only one to have a pair of cleats to wear. There is also Odell Beckham and Victor Cruz the players also had a pair of cleats but chose not to wear them in order to not be fined. This should tell you how strict the National Football League is when it comes to uniforms and how a player must wear them. The rules have changed a little over time like the sock rule is not that bad anymore. The players are now allowed to wear their socks pulled up or down not covering their knees. These rules are to make sure the league looks professional at all times, and that the players represent their team colors instead of having crazy colors on that could end up being a distraction.



(This is a picture of Avery Williamson cleats the NFL would not let him wear.)

Players and teams are under a lot of scrutiny when they play in the National Football League, especially if they are successful. One of the most recent players and teams that is continuously under the microscope of the league, and its fans is Tom Brady and the Patriots as a franchise alone. One of the first big controversies that Tom Brady was a part of was “Deflategate”. Tom Brady was accused of deflating game balls before they played the Seattle Seahawks in Super Bowl XLIX. They also said they deflated the balls in the AFC championship game. They accused the team of doing this saying that this makes the ball easier to grip, therefore easier for Tom Brady, who is the quarterback, to throw the ball. Tom Brady was suspended for four games of the next upcoming season, and the team was fined one million dollars, and lost two draft picks. These punishments came after a long investigation where they

ultimately found the Patriots guilty. The team to this day, and their coach still say they had no idea this happened, and the investigation even at one point blamed the ball boy saying it could've been his doing, from a higher up telling him to do so. Ultimately the team has been under scrutiny ever since and just recently a very well known player, Julian Edelman was suspended four games after failing a drug test, with a drug that the National Football League could not identify but came up as a positive result. The team, and Edelman himself tried to appeal his suspension but ultimately lost again. He again said he was not sure what drug he took that came up positive, while the league said “for violating the NFL's policy on performance-enhancing substance” The very first controversy the Patriots were accused of was Spygate back in 2007 when the Jets accused the Patriots of filming their defense signals, to get ahead. Back in 2007 the Patriots were an upcoming compelling team, but nowhere near as well known and successful as they are now. This is just one team that has been under scrutiny a lot lately, and a lot of people, fan and not fans believe it is due to their fame and success. Bill Belichick has the record for the most wins in the superbowl with five, and the most appearances at eight as a head coach.

Another player who got scrutinized by the National Football League themselves was Marshawn Lynch. One of the players requirements as a professional athlete in the National Football League is to have “Media Days” and do interviews with the media. Marshawn Lynch of the Seattle Seahawks in 2015 got fined multiple times because he did not want to take part in the interviews that his contract required him to go to. So for the Super Bowl Media day, he went up to the podium for an exact four minutes and fifty one seconds and answered every question he was asked by saying “I’m just here so I don’t get fined” and even though he did show up, and he technically did answer the questions with at least one word the National Football League still

fined him 500,000 dollars, and this is something that they do have the power to do, and they take it out of his contract earnings. While earlier in the year he was fined 50,000 dollars for violating the media contract. It is said that his entire career he has always hated being apart of the media aspect of the sport, “Lynch has a unique history with the media—failing to show up for press conferences, getting fined and choosing a word or a phrase to repeat ad nauseum rather than responding to questions from reporters. He’s chosen terse replies like “yeah,” “nope” and “maybe,” as well as short phrases like “Thank you for asking,” “I appreciate it” and “I’m thankful.”” This is just another aspect of the players lives that they must abide by due to their contract, but they don’t always agree with it. While they may not agree to it personally, it was somewhere embedded in their contracts, and that's how the National Football League gets away with these rules, because even if they did hire a legal team before signing the contract, they don’t necessarily go over every single thing and nit pick it.

Football and charity work are the twin pillars of the National Football League, they go hand in hand and the organization works really hard to keep that character up. Where the players, coaches and or the owners, give back to their community or special organizations that are close to their hearts. The NFL strives to give back, “The league and its teams are committed to implementing consistent and thoughtful responses to societal issues by educating the NFL family, instituting transparent league policies and actively engaging and supporting communities to positively impact society.” (NFL Community) they want to show society it is not just a bunch of men hitting each other, and trying to be the best. There is a lot more to football than most think, and the NFL tries hard to get the world to see that. One of the organizations the NFL has come up with is “Crucial Catch” and they have teamed up with American Cancer Society, which

is one of the biggest fundraising organizations for cancer. This specific organization has worked hard to raise money for awareness and early detection of cancer” (NFL Community) While the National Football League has been under a lot of scrutiny for players involved in domestic violence, they have started the National Domestic Violence Hotline. Their mission is to shift relationships to have the people to have power. They have answered over 4 million calls, and are making a brand new headquarters in Austin Texas to keep improving their efforts. One player that has made a big difference is Michael Bennett who started the Bennett Foundation, that's mission is “The Bennett Foundation’s mission is to improve the health and well-being of children and their families.” They are also working with kids young to highschool to raise awareness,”In Schools programs where we work with students ranging from early childhood education to high schoolers to bring age appropriate nutritional and health education.” (The Bennett Foundation) . Michael Bennett foundation has improve the lives of families all over the country. His foundation taught children about good health and nutrition. He knew that schools around the country did not have the funds to get their students good food with nutrition, since when he was growing up he didn’t have access to them. There is also Chris Long who we mentioned earlier, who gave his entire 2017 season salary worth over one million dollars to educational charities. A lot of players give back to charities that are close to home to them. He did this since it was his 10th year playing for the National Football League and he believes ““Educational opportunity and equity are the best gateway to a better tomorrow for everyone in America.”” (USA Today) . The NFL tries to improve those impressionable lives they know are viewers as well so they have a youth foundation for young players. The Youth Foundation has improved the lives of hundreds and thousands of lives all over the country. This foundation helps

kids get physically fit, learn the game of football and become mentally tough. This foundation helps kids by having camps, all throughout the summer and keeps them physically active, and busy when they're not in school. They also help kids stay busy and out of trouble. Helping kids stay out of trouble with football. Football helps change a lot of the National Football League players lives when they can give back, and help those kids that they see, were once in their position themselves. Many players say that even when they were down and out they knew they would always have football. That's why it was important for the National Football League to start a foundation that helps these young athlete progress and live a healthier life.



(This is a picture of Michael Bennet with some kids from his foundation.)

Pernell Mcphee is one of the players who grew up with nothing and football was all he had. He grew up in the middle of swamp land florida with his mother and four of his siblings. He was given a chance to play football through these camps which got him an offer to play football at a junior college in Mississippi. While playing at this junior college he was one of the best players in the country and also got himself plenty of offers but chose Mississippi State College would be the college he would attend. While there he was deemed one of the best defensive lineman in the country and was picked in the fifth round of the National Football League draft to the Baltimore Ravens. If this foundation help to change his life it would help others. These are just very, very few of the organizations that the National Football League has helped raise not only money for but awarness in their efforts to help others. The National Football League knows they have a strong following and know that they can be very influential, so their main goal is to try share the good around the United States with that.



(This is a picture of Pernelle McPhee who was playing with the Chicago Bears at this time.)

There are many ways you can make a roster in the National Football League. Many athletes get looked over during their regular college career, for reasonings like playing time, or having a player that is just that much better in front of them, or being at a small school etc. There has also been people who never played in an actual college football game to even get a chance to show them what they are made of, so they go to these Pro Days to have their chance. It's hard to prove your position in college when you don't always get the opportunity to play at your best. This is because anyone who is on a college team can do a Pro day at any school as long as they're a junior or a senior. There are many players who have only played special teams in a college game, and did a pro day and got drafted from their special teams film and their pro-day



statistics. Special teams don't always get to prove their ability since they are not on the field for longer than a play or two at a time, and they only get to go on the field sporadically. This is why Pro Days are extremely important to players and their careers because it gives them even more exposure of their athletic ability to their scouts. On top of Pro Days there are Bowl games you can get invited to, and there are so many different ones, but the one most college football players strive to get invited to is the one in Alabama. The Reese's Senior Bowl is for the most prestigious players in college football. This is the bowl that most players try to make it in these are the best college football players. The bowl is played in early February in Mobile, Alabama at the South Alabama stadium. This is the only bowl that is coached by National Football League coaches themselves and have mostly every NFL team at the entirety of the bowl. These bowls have many scouts from all 32 teams. These teams are at the practices and watch the players do drill and compete with each other. The bowl have been used all over you can make many bowl games in the country when ex football players have come together to make bowls for players who are not on the map or played at smaller schools. Everyone who is in the Reese's senior are also most likely to get invited to the National Football League combine. The National Football League combine is the top combine to showcase your athletic ability it's basically like the pro day except every team is accounted for and not just a few of them. When you are invited to the NFL Combine it is very likely you are one of the top prospects to be drafted in the upcoming draft for that year. It's televised nationally and it takes place over three to four days. Players from all different schools showcase their skills so they can make a team and have a chance to play in the National Football League or at least make it to a camp. These camps are so they can show the team that they're are not going to do poorly under pressure, while playing against elites

as well. They show they have what it takes to be able to compete in the National Football League which to most of these players has been a lifelong dream they have dedicated most of their life too. Most and other player can come from different leagues and also be drafted. Getting invited to these football bowls is an incredible honor, and it is your pathway to the National Football League.

Overall the National Football League is not just sport that these decide to play it becomes their whole life. These players have worked hard since they were kids all up to their adulthood. These players have dedicated not only their entire career to become the player they become in the National Football League but their entire life as well. They depend on this tradition that has become so popular in the United States to be their future. From the beginning of professional football becoming a sport that most weren't aware of in the early 1900's all the way to it being one of the most televised professional sports in the entire United States has come a long, successful, way. There are many aspects of the National Football League, from the cheerleaders, to the players, to the coaches, owners, and higher ups like the commissioner. This is a real professional franchise that has worked hard to get to where they are today. Many people have sacrificed not only their hard work, and time but their money as well to keep the National Football League up to the standards it should be up too. Their contracts are performance based and they know that they have to oblige by these contracts they sign. These contracts are their livelihood and this is how they will provide for themselves and their families. Players do advertising with popular brands to also increase their yearly income and revenue. The players sacrifice their health more than a lot of people even realize and more than they even realized at the beginning of it. People didn't realize the mental health and the actual brain damage these

players subject themselves too on a daily basis. While a lot of the players role models for young athletes, some are also the face of controversy that have played in the National Football League. Like we talked about Colin Kaepernick he did his best to use the National Football League as a platform to share his message. He is a role model to the kids and helped a lot but some people thinks otherwise. American Football has become larger and greater than ever expected especially after having to compete with america's favorite past time, baseball, but that is exactly what its done. The National football League has competed to become a household favorite, and hold a place in the lives of americans.

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