

Salt of the Street Judicial Branch

Court of Opinion

Dissenting Opinion: It's all about sports

Over the last two weeks we have mentioned Colin Kaepernick and ended up running out of time because, if the last discussion we had was any indication, we knew it would take a while. The renewed discussion surrounds rumors that our local football team, The Seattle Seahawks, were considering bringing Kaepernick in for a work out but after asking him about his plan to continue kneeling during the anthem, to which he responded that he wasn't sure, the team pulled out of the work out. This obviously reignited the massive controversy that surrounded him following his initial choice to kneel for the anthem and his inability to obtain a position on an NFL team. This is not exactly the whole story.

It was initially reported by Adam Schefter that the Hawks had postponed and possibly cancelled a schedule workout because of Kaepernick's inability to give the leadership of the Seahawks organization a solid answer as to whether or not he would kneel. This was later partially confirmed by Ian Rappaport, but he claimed that it was not about kneeling, but about "how to handle everything", which I would indeed say is a minute detail but without further information its not something I'm willing to overlook. In a press conference this week

Pete Carroll said that there was still a possibility that he could be signed.

I have heard a couple of different ideas on why the Seahawks postponed/cancelled the workout. The most prevalent obviously is the same as before, that he is being black-listed by the league for his political views and outspokenness, which is at the core of his collusion lawsuit. Another possibility I have heard on Brock and Salk, a part of the daily line up on 710 AM, a local sports talk radio station, is that the workout was cancelled because in a world where things are becoming so political and so divisive and at the same time the Hawks are trying to rebuild, they have gotten rid of players that were outspoken like Michael Bennet and Richard Sherman, possibly in an attempt to help give Russell Wilson better control of the locker room and a better leadership position. To bring in someone like Colin Kaepernick could possibly take away from that if that IS the intent of the Seahawks management, something that makes sense to me.

I have also heard things similar to what I heard the last time Kaepernick was brought in for a work out, on both sides of the spectrum. The people of Washington are split about the man. Some people remember that he brought a team to the super bowl and had, at one point (if he doesn't still possess it today), an immense skill for the game of

football in a style that many argue would fit to be the back up to Russell Wilson. Some people also remember the last games he played in the NFL, which weren't reflective of his previous skill, but taking a small sample size and trying to apply it as a general rule is never a safe bet. There are tons of different ways to look at this situation.

My point really this time, is that I feel criticism of the Seahawks is unfair. First, they have reached out to Kaepernick twice. They were the only team to have him work out last year despite him having an active lawsuit against the NFL, the organization the Seahawks belong to and Kaepernick would be playing under were he to be placed on the roster. I think it is more than fair for the Seahawks to want to know his plans for before the game, what he will say to questions ABOUT what he does before the game, his intentions with the lawsuit, and anything else that could have any effect on his career in the NFL. For him to be considered for what is potentially a leadership role on this team, the existing leadership needs to know where he stands and that he will be capable of acting as one of 53, and not alone which I believe is why Kaepernick has been unable to get a job in the NFL.

Part of what I think makes the situation surrounding this one player so popular is the way it was politicized. I understand that the base of the protest was political, but I mean Kaep not getting a job. To me it isn't about politics, its about sports and it should ever have moved past that. At the end of the day, the Quarterback is the

leader of a team of 53 people. He has to do just that and lead the team. If I was a General Manager of an NFL team, or a head coach or an owner, I wouldn't want a player that I felt acted alone because the base of football is teamwork. The quarterback cannot block for himself, just like the wide receiver cannot throw to himself. The importance of leadership in an NFL quarterback cannot be over stated, and it's in that idea that I think the root of this problem lies. Not in rights, not in political affiliations, not in personal voice or choice, but in the confidence that teams have that the player who should be leading their teams will be bringing them together, not possibly dividing them.