English

https://everyonesanauthor.tumblr.com/post/632618731756027904/conversation-athletes-activism-and-allyshipt’s not just that the stands are empty because of the pandemic (although they are). Pro sports stadiums, ballparks, and arenas are sporting a very different look this year for another reason: social messaging. Four years ago, NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick was essentially “cancelled” by the league for his quiet protest; today, every uniform, every scoreboard and playing field bears names and slogans meant to convey anti-racist messages. League management and team owners are all on board now, but athletes are the ones leading the way. This Conversation explores athletes, activism, and allyship from four perspectives. First, an essay by Dave Zirin in the Nation examines corporate posturing. Next, Detroit Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford shares a personal narrative of his feelings about football and politics from the Players’ Tribune. Comedian Larry Wilmore interviews soccer star Megan Rapinoe for his TV show, Wilmore. And finally, Pew Research Center senior writer and editor John Gramlich reports on Americans’ attitudes towards professional athletes speaking out on political issues.We suggest you read/watch all four pieces before responding to any of the questions.QUESTIONS1. According to Dave Zirin, Naomi Osaka’s message “could not have been clearer.” What was her message? State it briefly. Why might Osaka have thrown the question back at the reporter rather than simply answering it? What is Zirin’s point in contrasting Osaka with the NFL? Does he make his point effectively? Explain your reasoning.2. Matthew Stafford relates a very personal narrative, disclosing feelings and experiences in an open and humble way; towards the end of his essay he shifts from his first person account to directly address readers who may have backgrounds similar to his or those who want athletes to “just shut up and play football.” What does he want those readers to do? Do you think his narrative would persuade many of those readers to follow his suggestion? Why or why not? Is it persuasive for you? Explain your response.3. The genre of celebrity host interviewing celebrity guest is a familiar feature of US television, and the format is remarkably stable, nearly formulaic. Larry Wilmore interviews Megan Rapinoe for the first episode of his new show, Wilmore, and he spends more time giving his own opinions than hosts generally do in that kind of interview. Is that a good rhetorical strategy on Wilmore’s part? Do you wish he would have talked less and given more space to Rapinoe? Why or why not? Since Rapinoe and Wilmore basically agree about the topic, did it really matter which one of them expressed the ideas? Why or why not? Explain your responses.4. The opening paragraph of John Gramlich’s report based on Pew Research data makes two statistics-based statements. What are they? What conclusions can you draw from the relationship between these two statements? Explain your reasoning. Gramlich’s report was published in October of 2019; how different would you expect the results to be if the same questions were asked today? Would people be more accepting of athletes’ political statements? Less accepting? Why do you think so?5. Let’s look at a few similarities between Rapinoe and Stafford: both White, both well-known and successful professional athletes, both using their personal voices and platforms to make a public stand in support of dismantling racism in the US. The two pieces we present here take very different forms and approaches—one very personal and heart-to-heart and the other very public and boisterous. Think about switching them around. What might Stafford want to emphasize if he were interviewed on Wilmore? Which elements of Stafford’s narrative might Wilmore want to ask him about? Which experiences or observations might Rapinoe share if she were writing a narrative for Players Tribune? Explain your choices.