How Political Issues are Affecting Athletes

*By Edwin Reyes*

Do you like sports? According to CBS Sports, 64% of Americans watch sports. For a long time, people used sports to get out of problems, but now political issues are affecting some athletes.

This is also not a new topic though. Michael Jordan and Larry Bird have skipped their team’s White House visit because they did not feel comfortable about the President George H.W. Bush and Reagan. Patriots won this year’s Super Bowl and even before the game, two of their players said they would not go if they won. Now, 6 players will not go and they told NBC Sports, “We don’t feel welcomed, and we don’t care what they think.”

According to TheAtlantic.com, in 2014 Derrick Rose wore a warm up T-shirt that said, “I Can’t Breathe,” the words repeated by Eric Garner as he died while being choked by a Staten Island police. Not too long after that, LeBron James and Kyrie Irving from the Cleveland Cavaliers, among some Brooklyn Nets players, wore the same T-shirt when they played each other in New York. After the game, LeBron told the reporters, “It’s just to understand what we’re going through as a society. I’ve been quoted over and over as far as what's going on, it’s more of a notion to the family. More than anything. As a society we have to do better. We have to be better for one another, don't matter what race you are.”

As I said in the beginning, that for a long time people used sports to get out of problems and now players are publicly showing their opinion on how they think the country is going. An example is Colin Kaepernick, he didn’t stand up for the National Anthem at two games. Kaepernick posted on his Twitter, “It is not a really big deal, but know society has changed and everything that we do is controversial.” After the game, he said that he also has an opinion and that is how he is expressing it.

In conclusion, athletes are public figures and they use that advantage to tell the world how they feel. We have the freedom to express how we feel and that it doesn’t matter if you are young or old, you can make a difference.