Episode #3. NFL players, coaches, team owners unify to protest Trump remarks

Football players, coaches, and some team owners knelt or locked arms during the national anthem before games played last Sunday and Monday night. Their actions followed President Donald Trump’s criticism of the league and players who do not stand for the anthem. Trump’s remarks intensified a controversy that began last year, when several players began kneeling to protest racial inequality.

Trump’s comments came on Friday evening during a rally in Huntsville, Alabama. When a player “disrespects the flag”, he said, “wouldn’t you love to see one of these NFL owners ... say, `Get that son of a bitch off the field right now! He’s fired!'” On Saturday, National Football League commissioner Roger Goodell, issued a statement condemning the president’s remarks; several teams issued statements as well. Three teams stayed in their locker rooms during the national anthem.

Trump continued his criticism of football players earlier this week. On Tuesday, during a joint press conference with Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy, Trump said he felt “ashamed” by the “disgraceful” NFL protests.

Chris: Emily, this is a great example of why I’m critical of President Trump’s response to Hurricane Maria. All last weekend, instead of talking about the crisis in Puerto Rico, all he did was tweet about football players and whether they stand or kneel! Where are his priorities?

Emily: I agree, Chris -- it was extremely poor judgment to not mention Puerto Rico even once while he was tweeting constantly about football players and the National Football League. At the same time -- is it all that surprising?

Chris: You mean, because the national anthem issue is far more likely to matter to his supporters?

Emily: Yes... After all, this started at a rally that was filled with his supporters...

Chris: Still! As of yesterday morning, he had tweeted about the NFL 25 times. Do you know how many times he tweeted about Puerto Rico?

Emily: Tell me.

Chris: 6! ...and, one of those was a retweet! But, the point is, dwelling on this issue is only causing more division.

Emily: It’s unfortunate that things like the anthem and the flag -- which are supposed to symbolize unity -- are now used by our president to divide the country. How ironic...