

EVOLUTION IN ATHLETES' PROTEST

By: Jack Greiner on August 28, 2020 on graydon.law

On August 26, the NBA temporarily shut down its playoffs and three MLB games were postponed as a result of the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Doc Rivers, the coach of the LA Clippers **[spoke eloquently](#)** of the frustration and weariness felt by so many in the African American community (take a look at the section that begins at :18 and ends at 2:18).

In some respects, this isn't new. A black man is shot by police and many are left wondering why. But in one respect, the reaction - the cancellation of games - seems like a new form of protest. In the past, athletes have used their platform to draw attention to injustice and social ills. In 1968 Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised gloved hands on the Olympic medal stand. More recently, Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the National Anthem. In both cases, it seems to me that the athletes were asking fans to consider a world beyond the field while they watched the athletes perform. But in those cases, the sport itself provided a diversion.

On Wednesday night, it seems to me that the athletes were saying "we won't provide a diversion anymore - don't use sports to avoid facing the hard questions we are facing." This feels different somehow. And admittedly, it was probably more symbolic than real, given that baseball picked back up Thursday, and the NBA will resume as well.

But this new approach may ultimately be a more effective protest than what we've seen previously.