



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Roger S. Goodell
Commissioner
National Football League
280 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017

1 December 2014

Dear Commissioner Goodell,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to express our profound disappointment with the recent decision of the National Football League (NFL) not to discipline or apologize for the actions of some St. Louis Rams players who took the field on Sunday using the “hands up, don’t shoot” gesture employed by those deluded individuals who believe that Michael Brown was deliberately shot and killed by Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson. This inaction seems at odds with the usual vigor that the NFL practices on issues of player misconduct or bad behavior.

The contention that Michael Brown was attempting to surrender when he was killed has been decisively proved false. While his death was tragic, it is clear that Mr. Brown was the aggressor and Officer Wilson used reasonable force to defend himself and his own life that August afternoon. Make no mistake—this misconception is a contributing factor in the violence, looting and widespread destruction of property we have witnessed. For NFL players, especially those who call Missouri their home, to perpetuate this inaccuracy is just adding fuel to the fires. The use of the “hands up, don’t shoot” gesture is not supportive of peace and reconciliation—quite the opposite. The actions of these players is deeply offensive to law enforcement officers, any one of whom might one day be placed in a similar situation.

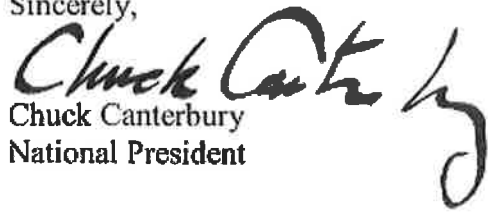
These players would also do well to remember that our officers provide them and the stadiums in which they play with their protection. Our members gave up their Thanksgiving with their families to work extended shifts on the streets of Ferguson and St. Louis to protect the venue, the fans and the players. In October, local police intervened following the Seahawks-Rams game and made two arrests when demonstrators turned violent and attacked fans as they left the stadium. These officers put themselves in harm’s way but the players seem to have lost sight of that fact, choosing instead to express solidarity with those convinced that Mr. Brown was executed by a racist police officer. That is exactly what this gesture means to us, Commissioner, and I find it repugnant and disrespectful.

I hope that the NFL and its players can at least acknowledge the service and commitment of our nation’s law enforcement officers to keep its players, its fans and all of our citizens safe from violence and the fear of violence.

—BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION—

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the FOP, I thank for your consideration of this issue and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Canterbury". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "C" at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that ends in a small circle.

Chuck Canterbury
National President