

Ole Miss basketball players confront racism

written by Steven Ceci
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Eight Black basketball players with the University of Mississippi (“Ole Miss”) team took a knee during the playing of the national anthem before their game on Feb. 23 in protest of a pro-Confederate rally that was held near the arena where the game was played.

Initially, six players knelt during the start of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” By the end

of the anthem, however, two more players had taken a knee in solidarity with their fellow teammates.

All of the players that took a knee during the anthem were African American and, unfortunately, a great opportunity to show solidarity with the Black community was missed by the fact that none of the white teammates took a knee.

In describing what moved the Black players to take a stand, Ole Miss player [Breein Tyree](#) said at a press conference after the game: "The majority of it was just that we saw one of our teammates doing it and didn't want him to be alone. We're just tired of these hate groups coming to our school and portraying our campus like we have these hate groups in our actual school."

The Mississippi players' act of resistance is a recognition of Colin Kaepernick's protests while playing in the National Football League. These were protests over racism and police brutality that have led to an array of athletes protesting against racism and injustice.

Since Colin Kaepernick first knelt for the national anthem during an NFL exhibition game over two years ago, that courageous act has now evolved into a broader clarion call against social injustice and oppression. High school teams have [used the gesture](#) to stand in solidarity against racism. Notre Dame students invoked it as [an expression of faith against racism](#). And Jewish students in South Africa even did it during Israel's national anthem to stand in solidarity with [Palestinians](#).

