

Former Ohio State Standouts Malcolm Jenkins, Michael Thomas Speak Out Against Drew Brees' Comments



Drew Brees, quarterback of the Saints, garnered criticism from many, including a few former Ohio State players on his team.

Brees said he “will never agree with anybody disrespecting the flag of the United States of America or our country,” in an interview with Yahoo Finance. The former Purdue signal caller made these comments in reference to former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick and safety Eric Reid, who protested police brutality and racial injustice by kneeling during the national anthem prior to games in 2016.

The comments from the quarterback coincide with numerous protests around the world in response to the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis Police officer. Floyd was killed by a police officer who knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. Once the footage of the murder spread, protests against police brutality and racial injustice began to take place across the globe.

After Brees made his comments, many athletes and celebrities promptly called out the 19-year NFL veteran for misinterpreting what Kaepernick and Reid’s protest was all about.

Kneeling for the anthem never had anything to do with the American flag or military – Kaepernick and Reid knelt to bring attention to police brutality and racial injustice.

One person to speak out of those was former Ohio State standout, Malcolm Jenkins, who is also a teammate of Brees.

Jenkins responded to Brees’ comments by posting multiple videos on his social media platforms, but he deleted the first one and left the final video up on his Twitter page. The former Ohio State standout is visibly emotional in the video, hurt by the comments from someone he considered to be a friend.

I recorded a few videos when thinking of how to respond to Drew Brees, I don’t take any of it

back-I meant what I said-I removed the 1st video because I knew it be more about the headlines. I want people to understand how those of us struggling with what's going on feel
pic.twitter.com/T054qt0YEz

— Malcolm Jenkins (@MalcolmJenkins) June 3, 2020

What follows are the comments from Jenkins' video in full:

"The onslaught of the shit that we have to deal with is f***ing crazy right now. Drew Brees, if you don't understand how hurtful, how insensitive your comments are, you are part of the problem. To think that, because your grandfathers served in this country and you have a great respect for the flag, that everybody else should have the same ideals and thoughts that you do is ridiculous. And it shows that you don't know history. Because when our grandfathers fought for this country and served and they came back, they didn't come back to a hero's welcome. They came back and got attacked for wearing their uniforms. They came back to people, to racism, to complete violence.

"And then here we are in 2020 with the whole country on fire, everybody witnessing a black man dying, being murdered at the hands of the police in just cold blood for everybody to see. The whole country's on fire and the first thing that you do is criticize one's peaceful protest that was years ago when we were trying to signal a sign for help and signal for our allies and our white brothers and sisters, the people we considered to be friends, to get involved. It was ignored. And here we are now with the world on fire, and you still continue to, first criticize how we peacefully protest because it doesn't fit in what you do and your beliefs, without ever acknowledging the fact that a man was murdered at the hands of the police in front of us all and that has been continuing for centuries. That the same brothers that you break the huddle down with before every single game, the same guys that you bleed with and go into battle with every single day go home to communities that have been decimated.

"Drew, unfortunately you're somebody who doesn't understand that privilege. You don't understand the potential that you have to actually be an advocate for the people that you call brothers. You don't understand the history and why people like me, people with my skin color, whose grandfathers fought for this country, who served, and I still protested against — not against the national anthem but against what was happening in America and what the fabric of this country is for or stands for. If you don't understand that other people experience something totally different than you then when you talk about being "the brotherhood" and all this other bull***t, it's just lip service, or it's only on the field. Because when you step off this field and I take my helmet off, I'm a black man walking around America and I'm telling you I'm dealing with these things. I'm telling you my community is dealing with these things. And your response to me is, 'Don't talk about that here. This is not the place?' Drew, where is the place, Drew?

"I'm disappointed. I'm hurt. Because while the world tells you that you're not worthy, that your life doesn't matter, the last place you want to hear it from are the guys that you go to war with and that you consider to be allies and to be your friends. Even though we're teammates, I can't let this slide."

Former Ohio State standout Michael Thomas, who is also Brees' teammate on the Saints, spoke up against his quarterback's comments on Twitter. Thomas wrote, "He don't know no better," and "We don't care if you don't agree and whoever else how about that."

He don't know no better.

— Michael Thomas (@Cantguardmike) June 3, 2020

We don't care if you don't agree and whoever else how about that.

— Michael Thomas (@Cantguardmike) June 3, 2020

Brees took to Instagram to issue an apology for his comments:

"I would like to apologize to my friends, teammates, the City of New Orleans, the black community, NFL community and anyone I hurt with my comments yesterday. In speaking with some of you, it breaks my heart to know the pain I have caused," Brees wrote. "In an attempt to talk about respect, unity, and solidarity centered around the American flag and the national anthem, I made comments that were insensitive and completely missed the mark on the issues we are facing right now as a country. They lacked awareness and any type of compassion or empathy. Instead, those words have become divisive and hurtful and have misled people into believing that somehow I am an enemy. This could not be further from the truth, and is not an accurate reflection of my heart or my character.

"This is where I stand: I stand with the black community in the fight against systemic racial injustice and police brutality and support the creation of real policy change that will make a difference. I condemn the years of oppression that have taken place throughout our black communities and still exists today. I acknowledge that we as Americans, including myself, have not done enough to fight for that equality or to truly understand the struggles and plight of the black community. I recognize that I am part of the solution and can be a leader for the black community in this movement. I will never know what it's like to be a black man or raise black children in America but I will work every day to put myself in those shoes and fight for what is right. I have ALWAYS been an ally, never an enemy. I am sick about the way my comments were perceived yesterday, but I take full responsibility and accountability. I recognize that I should do less talking and more listening...and when the black community is talking about their pain, we all need to listen. For that, I am very sorry and I ask your forgiveness."

Thomas' accepted Brees' apology, turning his attention back to the movement.

"One of my brothers made a public statement yesterday that I disagreed with. He apologized & I accept it because that's what we are taught to do as Christians. Now back to the movement! #GeorgeFloyd"

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— Michael Thomas (@Cantguardmike) June 4, 2020

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