

After Nixing National Anthem for First 13 Games, Mavericks' Owner Cuban Agrees to Comply With NBA Edict

Only one day after Dallas Mavericks' owner Mark Cuban confirmed to *The Atlantic* that his team had ceased playing the national anthem before home games and had no plans to play it going forward, the National Basketball Association released a response. It came in the form of a statement saying the league would require all teams to play the anthem "in keeping with its long-standing policy," several news outlets report. And the Mavericks' administration has now agreed to comply with the edict.

The Mavericks did not play the national anthem at its previous 13 preseason and regular games, but the team did not publicize the fact. After Cuban, the team's highly controversial owner, met with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver Monday and informed him of the decision, NBA Chief Communications Officer Mike Bass released a statement on Wednesday that mandated all teams to play the anthem prior to their games, Fox News reports.

"With NBA teams now in the process of welcoming back fans into their arenas, all teams will play the national anthem in keeping with longstanding league policy," Bass said in the statement.

The Mavericks said the national anthem would be played prior to Dallas' game Wednesday night against the Atlanta Hawks at American Airlines Center.

Cuban told *The New York Times*: "We are good with it."

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz got in a heated debate over the issue on

Twitter, with Cruz saying:

I love @HoustonRockets & have rooted for them my entire life. I happily cheer for the Spurs & Mavericks against any non-TX team.

But @mcuban the NBA is engaged in a concerted effort to (1) insult their fans & (2) turn every game into a left-wing political lecture. That's dumb.

– Ted Cruz (@tedcruz) October 6, 2020

Cuban and the Mavericks only made their initial decision known when *The Athletic* reached out to the team after realizing the anthem wasn't played before Monday's game with the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The NBA's rulebook requires players to stand during the national anthem. But, as reports, "Silver has declined to enforce that rule, particularly as kneeling during the anthem became a popular way to protest social injustice in recent years. The vast majority of NBA players and many coaches kneeled during the national anthem during the NBA's restart last summer in Orlando, Florida, when the league incorporated messaging supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and other social justice causes in the court design and other ways."

Cuban's decision to nix the anthem drew fervent reaction on social media, including one in support of the long-standing NBA policy from faith leader and evangelist Franklin Graham. Conservative influencer Josh Holmes also tweeted out his support:

I'm glad to see the @NBA release a statement this afternoon saying the national anthem will be played at games in keeping with their policy for years.

– Franklin Graham (@Franklin_Graham) February 10, 2021

Imagine thinking that playing a sport in an empty arena is more important than your allegiance to the country.

– Josh Holmes (@HolmesJosh) February 10, 2021

Other tweets agreed with Cuban's earlier decision not to play the national anthem:

Have covered sports all over the world. The US is an outlier when it comes to the pre-game national anthem. Would have more resonance as a rarity instead of being the rule.

– Christopher Clarey (@christophclarey) February 10, 2021

I love this. I really hope this spreads and we see leagues phasing the anthem out altogether.

– Jason Ward (@JasonWardNY) February 10, 2021