

Report: Former Raven Says Four NFL Players May Come Out as Gay

Free agent linebacker **Brendon Ayanbadejo** said four National Football League (NFL) players were considering coming out as **gay**, the Baltimore Sun reported on Friday.

Ayanbadejo, who was cut by the Baltimore Ravens earlier this week after winning the Super Bowl with the team in February, told the paper in an interview that the groundwork was being laid to reduce the pressure on such a player.

"I think it will happen sooner than you think," Ayanbadejo was quoted as saying on the paper's website ().

"We're in talks with a handful of players who are considering it. There are up to four players being talked to right now, and they're trying to be organized so they can come out on the same day together."

"It would make a major splash and take the pressure off one guy. It would be a monumental day if a handful or a few guys come out."

There is still not one openly gay player in any of America's major professional sports leagues and nowhere has the issue become hotter than in the **NFL**, the most macho of pro sports.

"Of course, there would be backlash. If they could share the backlash, it would be more positive. It's cool. It's exciting. We're in talks with a few guys who are considering it," the former Raven said in the article.

"The NFL and organizations are already being proactive and open if a player does it and if something negative happens. We'll see what happens."

Gay Rights

The comments from Ayanbadejo, a three-time Pro Bowl selection, came shortly after he suggested in an interview with Newsday that his activism for **gay rights** led to the Ravens' decision to cut him.

Ayanbadejo later tweeted that he was misquoted and the Ravens denied that the player's advocacy for gay rights was a factor in the decision to release him.

In the days leading up to this year's Super Bowl in New Orleans, San Francisco 49ers cornerback Chris Culliver told reporters he would not welcome a **homosexual** teammate into the locker room. He later retracted his comments.

On Thursday, the NFL said its investigation into allegations that at least one team inquired about the sexual orientation of a prospective player at this year's scouting combine will not result in any penalties.

The NFL launched a review after a player who attended the February combine in Indianapolis said during a radio interview that he was asked about his sexual orientation, which the league says is against the rules.

"Our review has not established any specific violations, but we have made it clear to our clubs what is acceptable when interviewing potential players and other job candidates," the NFL said in a statement.

Reporting by Frank Pingue in Toronto; editing by Ken Ferris.

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