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# Don't Rip Roger Goodell For His Responses To Race In The NFL. Blame His Bosses

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LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - FEBRUARY 05: NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell talks to members of the media as he ... [+] GETTY IMAGES

OK, regarding the NFL on racial issues, let's see if all of this makes sense after going step by step. First, Commissioner Roger Goodell spent Monday in the Raiders home locker room at Allegiant

Stadium in Las Vegas holding his yearly State of the League address before a select group of reporters.

I was among them.

Even though I never got a chance to ask the **\$63.9 million** (at least) per year man my question, others sort of did, and he sort of answered.

Well, Goodell didn't answer, but that wasn't surprising as we continue to go step by step. His bosses are wealthy NFL owners, and since he became their ultimate spokesperson in September 2006, he has put more than a few extra nickels into their bank accounts. According to *Forbes*, the 32 NFL franchises began this season **worth an average of \$5.1 billion**, an increase of 14% over the previous year, and there was “the \$6.05 billion sale of the Washington Commanders—at 11 times revenue—to a group led by billionaire Josh Harris in July.”

Which is why those NFL owners signed Goodell to a three-year contract extension in October that likely wasn't for less money.

Which is why their 64-year-old commissioner who graduated with a degree in economics from Washington & Jefferson College only says what those owners want him to say in public.



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - FEBRUARY 05: NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell waits for the start of a news ... [+] GETTY IMAGES

Which is why, with a slew of touchy issues facing the NFL — ranging from the *Washington Post* reporting on the league’s shaky response to paying former players resulting from a more than **\$1 billion** settlement of a lawsuit to bringing a team and a Super Bowl to Las Vegas after decades of **blasting gambling** — this commissioner’s address was by invitation only.

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There’s also that race thing with the NFL.

It has continued as a significant issue, except on the field, where [nearly 60%](#) of the players are African American.

Here's what I wanted to ask the commissioner: *Roger, there were four minority head coaches hired within the last few weeks, and the NFL now has a record nine minority head coaches. How much of this is related to the Brian Flores lawsuit as opposed to the Rooney Rule or anything else?*

About the [Rooney Rule](#): The NFL owners approved it in 2003, and it has been amended several times. In essence, regarding the hiring of head coaches, teams are required to interview at least two minority candidates in person before they can hire a head coach.

About the [Brian Flores](#) lawsuit: A federal judge declared last summer that she hadn't changed her mind about allowing the former Miami Dolphins head coach and current defensive coordinator for the Minnesota Vikings to bring the NFL to trial over his claims that he faced discrimination along with other Black coaches seeking head coaching jobs.

Others hinted at asking my question to Goodell. For instance, there was the one about whether the NFL believed the Rooney Rule remained necessary — you know, given the recent hiring of minority head coaches around the league. “Not having it be necessary would be a wonderful world for us,” Goodell said. “I personally believe that it's still necessary because I think we want to show the benefits of looking at a diverse slate of candidates.”

Uh, OK.

Whatever that means.



PHOENIX, AZ - FEBRUARY 08: Jim Trotter speaks during a press conference ahead of Super Bowl LVII at ... [+] GETTY IMAGES

And then there was the ongoing question originated by former [NFL Network reporter Jim Trotter](#) during Goodell's two previous press conference. It was the question regarding the lack of diversity (actually no diversity) in the NFL media newsroom, and it was the question that led to the league's firing of Trotter and to Trotter [filing a lawsuit](#) against the NFL.

Even though Trotter wasn't among the league's invited guests to this Goodell news conference, the question was asked Monday by Darren Smith of KLKC: "I know you don't run the NFL media newsroom, but you do run the NFL, and they answer to you as well as the 32 owners. As of this press conference, the NFL Media newsroom still employs zero Black managers, zero Black copy editors, zero full-time Black employees on the news desk, and your only full-time Black employee, Larry Campbell, passed away over the weekend."

Goodell's reply: "Well, I disagree completely that there hasn't been any change. I'm happy to get your data and share it with our people

and make sure that we get an answer for you. I don't have all the data.

“I will tell you that [for] the first time, 51 percent of our employees across the league, across the network, across all of our media platforms, not including players, are either people of color or women. First time ever. So progress is being made. And there are areas where we still need to work and we still need to improve, whether it's offensive assistants or maybe people within our media newsroom. We will continue to do that, and make significant progress, as we have.”

Wait. The question wasn't about “women” or “people of color” or “employees across the league.”

The question was about the NFL media newsroom.

Maybe Goodell didn't understand the question.

Better yet, with his version of a scramble combined with a flea flicker while answering the question, I'm guessing the commissioner with the ever-expanding paycheck was just following orders.

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