

NEWS RELEASE

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NFL Star Wants League to Right Its Wrong Amid Acknowledgement of Failure to Listen to Its Players

Junior Galette Pens Open Letter to NFL Commission Seeking Equitable Treatment



NEW ORLEANS, La. – Junior Galette, a star NFL player who signed with the New Orleans Saints in 2010 as an undrafted rookie free agent then rose to the heights of success with consecutive double-digit sack seasons and a \$41.5 million contract, posted an [Open Letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell](#) seeking equitable treatment of Black players and an end to policies that blackball players who speak out against racism in the league.

Galette’s letter applauds the NFL’s recent statement acknowledging systemic racism and the inequitable treatment of Black people in America. But Galette asks that the NFL go beyond mere words of support for the *Black Lives Matter* movement: Galette calls upon the league to institute policies that bring about real change.

As Galette notes, Black men—including Black NFL Players—in America are seven times more likely to have encounters with law enforcement than are their white counterparts; a startling statistic experts attribute in part to institutionalized racism. Black NFL players are not immune from such adverse interaction with police, but under current NFL policies, a player merely accused of a crime can be suspended from playing even before having the opportunity to appear in court and exercise his constitutional right to prove his innocence.

Junior Galette has firsthand experience with inequitable treatment

Galette played outside linebacker for the New Orleans Saints from 2010-2015 and the Washington Redskins from 2015-2017. With both organizations, Galette’s performance was outstanding: his pressure rate was consistently the best on his respective team and among the best in the league. After four years with the Saints, Galette’s teammates acknowledged his contributions—both on and off the field—by voting him a team captain.

But unfounded allegations of off-field misconduct had a severe impact on Galette’s career: in 2015, while with the Saints, a woman accused him of assault. When prosecutors investigated,

they concluded the allegations lacked credibility and dropped all charges. The woman pursued a civil suit—seeking a “big money” settlement—but Galette refused to settle. Putting his reputation on the line, Galette took the matter to trial—and won. Unfortunately, even though a jury fully exonerated him from any wrongdoing, many didn’t see past the allegation and related suspension by the NFL. By then, it was too late to unring the bell, a fate all too common for Black men in America.

After the Saints released him, Galette signed with the Redskins in 2015. Although injuries kept him off the field for two seasons, he played with passion and purpose for the organization.

Racial profiling derails Galette’s comeback

Undaunted by adversity and committed to his love for the game, Galette rehabilitated his injuries and returned to peak form for the 2017 season. But, once again, an off-field incident in early 2017 scuttled Galette’s plans: while attending the *Biloxi Black Beach Weekend* in Mississippi, Galette found himself in the vicinity of revelers who started fist-fighting. Keenly aware of the repercussions of off-field misconduct, Galette ran to get away. A police officer gave chase, tased Galette, pinned him to the ground, handcuffed him, and took him into custody, booking him with “failure to comply.”

Reminiscent of the 2015 incident, charges against Galette were dropped. But as news of the Biloxi incident gained traction, Galette’s reputation was again unfairly tarnished.

Galette played injury-free for the Redskins in 2017, appearing in all 16 games. Galette’s 2017 performance re-established his spot among the sport’s elite as the third most effective pass rusher in the league, according to Pro Football Focus. After the 2017 season, Galette sought a new contract recognizing his performance, using as a benchmark another Redskins linebacker’s offer for a lucrative contract.

Galette gets pushed out by the NFL

After the 2017 incident from which Galette was exonerated and his elite season, the Redskins made him the objectively-insulting offer of a two-year, \$4 million contract with only \$500,000 guaranteed as a signing bonus. (In comparison, Galette’s teammate, a white man from Stanford named Trent Murphy, who was out for the 2017 season with a four-game suspension for violating the NFL’s PED policy and a season-ending ACL injury, inked a three-year, \$22 million deal, with \$5.25 million guaranteed as a signing bonus.) So Galette complained on Snapchat about what he viewed as pay discrimination. The Redskins withdrew its offer to Galette, and its refusal to even negotiate with Galette spread like an infection throughout the league.

A story that seemed to repeat itself—to Galette’s horror—one team after another initially expressed interest in signing Galette, only to suddenly “go cold.” The Rams, for instance, zealously recruited Galette, flying him to Los Angeles to meet and workout with the team. But, after Galette went into the Rams facilities and passed a physical, a junior-level staffer unceremoniously asked him to leave while he was lacing up his cleats to workout. Galette was

never offered an explanation, and Rams Coach Sean McVay said only “things didn’t work out for reasons we will keep inside.”

So, too, was it with the Seattle Seahawks, who flew Galette in to meet and workout with the team, only to also ask him to leave after he passed a physical and was preparing to work out. Once a shining star in the league, Galette has thereafter found himself unable to get a job even for the veterans’ league minimum for the past two years. What else can he conclude but that because of his history of arrests without convictions and complaints of pay discrimination in the league, he has been unfairly targeted and forced out?

Galette is waiting for an answer

Galette is in the best shape of his life and is ready to continue his career in the NFL. As a Haitian immigrant who has overcome adversity much of his life, he wants to transcend the negativity, contribute to his future team, and play the game he loves. He is ready to tell his story—and be an instrument of change.

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Sourcing:

Letter to NFL Commissioner Goodell:

https://medium.com/@Junior_Galette/open-letter-to-commissioner-roger-goodell-and-the-nfl-4e7b10a582df

TMZ Sports “NFL’s Junior Galette Chased & Tased in Crazy Police Video”, Nov. 11, 2017:

<https://www.tmz.com/2017/11/08/nfls-junior-galette-chased-tased-police-video/>

Police video of Nov 2017 incident: <https://youtu.be/2QK-qm1gQT8rty>

Nov 2017 police video Script: <https://assets.tmz.com/pdf/JuniorGaletteTranscript.pdf>

August 22, 2018 BleacherReport.com: <https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2792154-sean-mcvay-will-keep-reasons-rams-wont-sign-junior-galette-hidden>
