**The uneasy confluence of sports and politics**

LAURA SULLIVAN, HOST:

A new book outlines the uneasy confluence of sports and politics. It's easy to remember famous athletes during the civil rights movement or the Vietnam War making their views known. Sometimes, those views isolated them from fans. But sometimes, what athletes said led to real change. But for the past 10 or 20 years now, it's difficult to think of many athletes talking about anything other than gym shoes and soda. Some say those endorsement deals make sports stars gun shy about speaking their minds.

Dave Zirin's book is called "Game Over: How Politics Has Turned the Sports World Upside Down." And Zirin thinks he's seen evidence recently that taking a public stand is coming back into vogue for sports figures.

DAVE ZIRIN: Well, there's been a big change in the world of sports since roughly 2008. And one of those changes is athletes becoming more sophisticated with tools like social media and going beyond the sports media that they largely do not trust to speak to fans directly about the issues that they care about. The other issue is that since 2008, there's been a lot of crisis, both in this country and around the world. And as one athlete says - and I quote him in the book - he says, "Look, it's not like athletes have our own CNN channel that we watch. We're part of this world too. And when we see things, we want to respond to it."

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