



What people were saying

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Comments from industry executives as the story of the Rice investigation played out last week:

■ ***“With the NFL or any league, these kinds of issues are what you consider when you are looking at a sponsorship or renewal. You turn on sports-talk right now, and it’s not about wins and losses, blocking and tackling. They are talking about this. That’s not good.”***

Rick Dudley, president and CEO of Octagon Worldwide

■ ***“NFL sponsors have a right to understand the timeline around this incident and have access to the full, transparent details of the investigation. The investments they make into the NFL, plus media and activation commitments, run into the hundreds of millions. I’m confident they are all under counsel and advisement as to how to best react to this news relative to their affiliation with the NFL and current activations.”***

Michael Neuman, managing partner at Scout Sports and Entertainment, which counsels big NFL media spenders such as Capital One and Geico

■ ***“Frankly, I would not be surprised if he [Rice] came back to the league next year. Remember, everyone got over Michael Vick. [Rice] had a good reputation before this, and while there’s no excuse for what he did, if he gets help and it’s not habitual and it never happens again, I would think people would forgive.”***

Frank Vuono, who once ran NFL licensing and now heads 16W Marketing, which has clients including NFL on-air talent Boomer Esiason and Phil Simms.

■ ***“Sports leagues have a core competency that is a combination of crisis management and damage control. It’s something you have to be good at if you want to run a league. These are the types of things that happen that commissioners have to react to.”***

Ed Desser, media consultant who used to work with the NBA

■ ***“Unless it is proven that Commissioner Goodell absolutely lied about not having seen***

the in-elevator video before Monday morning, I firmly believe the predominance of the owners will support him through this. This league has prospered financially and in popularity in unprecedented fashion during his tenure, and that will not be lost on the owners as they assess the situation. That's not to mention the challenges associated with the owners identifying someone equally qualified to replace him."

Pat Dye Jr., president of SportsTrust Advisors

■ ***"[It's] on some level the nature of the world we live in today, when someone is on top and had to make so many difficult decisions as he [Goodell] has had to, I think there are a lot of people who don't like him for whatever reasons. ... If you are looking at it objectively from afar, and really looking at everything that was available and the decisions he had to make, I think he has actually done a really good job. I respect the fact the he has left no stone unturned, no sacred cows, in terms of trying to make the league better. I respect that quite a bit. He has made the league better in a lot of ways. The game is safer for the players."***

Ross Tucker, media commentator and former NFL player