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# **A Critical Race Analysis of the Hiring Process for Head Coaches in NCAA College Football**

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In this article, we respond to Singer's (2005) challenge to sport management scholars to consider race-based epistemologies in conducting certain kinds of research in the field, as we use critical race theory (CRT) as a framework to analyze the Black Coaches & Administrators (BCA) Hiring Report Card (HRC) (Harrison & Yee, 2009). The BCA HRC was created as a result of the access discrimination that has historically taken place in college sport (Brooks & Althouse, 2000; Cunningham & Sagas, 2005), which has consequently contributed to the underrepresentation of racial minorities in the head coach position in college football. The HRC places the hiring process of predominantly white institutions of higher education (PWIHE) under public scrutiny, with the ultimate goal of changing the decision-making process when these institutions hire head football coaches. This article utilizes CRT to support and justify the conception of the HRC, and also applies CRT principles to the five grading criteria of the HRC as a way to better understand what has been occurring in the hiring process for head football coaches at PWIHE. Implications for research and practice related to the head coach hiring process in college football are discussed.

In April 1998, the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) aired a special town hall meeting entitled "Race & Sports: Running in Place?" This was the second of two such meetings in a 14-month period (see President Clinton participates in ESPN race town hall, 1998; Roach, 1998). According to Bob Ley, the host and moderator of the meeting, we have reached a time in American sports where racial minorities have become increasingly involved in sports on the field of play, but have continued to lag far behind in regards to access to those jobs where the real power lies and where personnel decisions are made. Since the integration of predominantly white institutions of higher education (PWIHE) in the years fol-

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lowing the historic Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, there has been a huge disparity between racial minorities' access to entry-level and management positions in college sport programs at these institutions (Shropshire, 1996; Smith, 2007). For example, although African Americans are well represented today as athletes on intercollegiate football and basketball teams, African Americans are grossly underrepresented as athletic administrators and head football coaches (Lapchick, Little, Lerner, & Matthew, 2009).

According to prominent sport sociologist George Sage (2007), "The higher levels in organizations of all kinds, where the greatest power, prestige, and material rewards reside, are more insulated from direct scrutiny, so those who control access to the higher levels tend to employ subtle strategies of maintaining discriminatory practices" (p. 10). Sage (2007) suggested the discrimination that has been practiced by those individuals who control access to the coaching and management jobs (these individuals are typically White, able-bodied, heterosexual males; see Fink, Pastore, & Riemer, 2001) has made it extremely difficult for racial minorities to break into these higher paying, more prestigious positions. The issue of access discrimination (i.e., denying an individual access to an organization, job, or profession based on membership in a social category; see Cunningham, 2007; Cunningham & Sagas, 2005) and the underrepresentation of racial minorities in athletic administration and head coaching positions in college sport at PWIHE has been studied and analyzed, and scholars and commentators have reiterated the need for this diversity and inclusion issue to be addressed (e.g., Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010; Anderson, 1993; Brooks, Althouse, & Tucker, 2007; Brown, 2002; Cunningham, 2010; Cunningham, Bruening, & Straub, 2006).

While these above-mentioned writers have offered insight into the issues of access discrimination and the underrepresentation of racial minority head football coaches, organizations such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have also made efforts to address issues related to diversity and inclusion in college sport by creating and promoting initiatives and programs aimed at providing greater opportunities for underrepresented groups to secure coaching and management positions. Despite these efforts, racial minorities still continue to be underrepresented in the major decision-making positions, particularly the head coaching position in college football. This explains why the Black Coaches & Administrators (BCA) has published the BCA Hiring Report Card (HRC) on an annual basis since 2004 (see Harrison & Yee, 2009 for an overview of all the report cards). The goal of the BCA HRC has been to place the hiring process of NCAA Division I-A (Football Bowl Subdivision [FBS]) and Division I-AA (Football Championship Subdivision [FCS]) college football programs under public scrutiny, with the ultimate goal of changing the way that these programs act when hiring head football coaches.

In this article, we respond to Singer's (2005) challenge to sport management scholars to consider race-based epistemologies in conducting certain kinds of research in the field by utilizing critical race theory (CRT) as a framework to conduct an analysis of the BCA HRC. More specifically, the purpose of this article is to use CRT to examine the relevance of and the need for the five grading criteria used in the HRC, and to use CRT as an explanatory tool and method for assessing how and why many of these PWIHE fall short in their applications of these criteria or standards during the hiring process of a head football coach. The goal is not to analyze the actual grades these PWIHE have received over the years; but

rather, the goal is to use a critical race gaze in efforts to help us better understand and explain why some institutions act in certain ways with respect to the decision-making process that goes into hiring a new head football coach.

Because CRT can be used to challenge and interrogate the ways that race and racism impact organizational structures and processes, it is employed as a lens to provide insight into how some college football programs at PWIHE perpetuate racial injustice and inequity during the hiring process for head football coaches. The CRT framework and its major tenets will be discussed below. However, before that a brief discussion of the hiring process for head coaches in college football is warranted.

## The Hiring Process in College Football

The hiring process in most any organization involves the recruitment, and ultimately, the selection of individuals to fill a specific job or position within that organization. As Chelladurai (2006) noted, "Hiring is the process of selecting a person from the pool of qualified applicants gathered during the recruiting process" (p. 170). In many cases, during the recruitment stage of the process a pool of prospective and capable applicants (from outside and/or within the organization) is gathered and these individuals are encouraged to apply for the position. These individuals could enter into the applicant pool in a variety of ways such as through responding to an advertised position, attending job fairs, participating in special programs (e.g., NCAA Football Coaches Academy), employee referrals, and the assistance of a head hunting firm or social justice organization (e.g., BCA).

Chelladurai (2006) described the hiring process in sport organizations as being complicated because there is a need for organizations to forge a fit between the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the individual and the characteristics of the job (i.e., person/job fit) as well as the congruence between individuals and organizational factors (i.e., person-organization fit) (see Mathis & Jackson, 2006). Furthermore, Chelladurai (2006) discussed how even though the job analysis, job description, job specification, and advertisements help to address the issue of person/job fit, they do not capture the essence of person-organization fit, which encompasses the personal needs, attitudes, and values of the individual, and the values and culture of the organization. This, in turn, according to Chelladurai (2006), requires managers to resort to other procedures such as a biographical background check, consideration of reference letters, interviewing the candidates, and using personal judgments in efforts to select the person who best fits the organizational context.

Chelladurai (2006) cautioned that it is these latter processes that have the potential to elicit personal biases in hiring people. Selecting the candidate (regardless of racial background) that "best fits" the culture of a particular organization and the job requirements for a particular position can be a very subjective process. In college football the head coach is viewed not only as a tactician on the field, recruiter and talent evaluator, and mentor to athletes, but also as a public figure who is expected to earn the support of several external stakeholder groups such as alumni, boosters, and season ticket holders. In the current context of college football it is the president of the university or college and the athletic director who typically make the final decision on who to hire as the head football coach.

Moreover, these managers not only base their selection of a head football coach on the “qualifications” of the candidate and recommendation of a search committee, but also on factors such as the power and influence of donors and the alumni base, and/or friendships and associations these decision-makers have with potential job candidates.

In this regard, many opponents of the current hiring process for head football coaches at PWIHE have argued that one of the problems with the process is that racial minorities have not been given equal access to the hiring networks that are crucial to a job candidate successfully obtaining a head coaching position. Shropshire (1996) referred to this as the “old boys’ network,” which is essentially a system of social networking among white males in the sport business industry that limits and inhibits the ability of racial minorities to gain access to those positions of power that have been historically (and continue to be) held by white males. The overwhelming majority of college and university presidents and athletic directors that do the hiring of head football coaches today are white males (Lapchick et al., 2009).

From another perspective, in a provocative article in the *USA Today* (Moon, 2009) it was argued that the reason for unacceptable head coach hiring processes and decisions in college football, particularly by Bowl Championship Series (BCS) schools (i.e., 66 programs that constitute the six elite conferences, plus Notre Dame), is because college football is a collection of incumbent interests between conferences, bowl organizations, individual universities, and other stakeholder groups that lacks a powerful controlling authority to act in the best interests of the entire sport. It was further argued that the NCAA has little power to change some of the ingrained practices and prejudices among individual institutions, their alumni associations and booster groups.

Moon’s article highlights the work and efforts of the BCA and how since the publication of the first HRC, the number of racial minority candidates interviewed, as well as the number of racial minorities in coordinator positions, have increased. Moon also reported that the number of racial minorities holding head coaching jobs in BCS schools had actually decreased in that same time period. Interestingly though, since late 2009 a record number of African American head football coaches have been hired and now hold positions at these PWIHE. According to *The NCAA News* (Johnson, 2010), eleven racial minorities have been hired to lead college football programs, with seven being at the FBS level and two each being at the FCS and Division III levels.

Despite the optimism that has been spurred as a result of this record number of racial minority head football coaches in NCAA football programs heading into the 2010 football season, there is still a need to scrutinize the hiring process in efforts to illuminate some of the major forces that have contributed to the slow progress in schools seeking out and hiring racial minorities. Therefore, our goal in this article is to use CRT as an analytic and explanatory tool to further shed light on the hiring process for head football coaches at PWIHE, and discuss some of the potential underlying reasons that access discrimination has been a race-related issue as it pertains to the hiring process in NCAA college football programs. The next section will describe CRT and illuminate its major tenets. We seek to extend the application of CRT into the sport management literature by using it as a lens through which to examine issues of race, racial discrimination, racial privilege, and racial diversity in college sport.

## Critical Race Theory in Sport Management

What is CRT, and why should scholars who are interested in issues pertaining to race and the hiring process in college sport be concerned with it? CRT is a tool through which scholars and researchers can define, expose, and address certain problems in sport organizations because it offers a way to understand how ostensibly race-neutral structures and processes in sport (management) are, in many instances, ways of forming and policing the racial boundaries of white supremacy and racism (Singer, 2005). CRT is a way or system of knowing (see Ladson-Billings, 2000) that encompasses both historical and contemporary assumptions about race and racism. It is a form of oppositional scholarship that challenges the experiences and perspectives of whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences and perspectives of people of color (Taylor, 1998). This scholarship originated in the 1970s from the work of legal scholars (particularly Derrick Bell) who were disenchanted with the absence of attention to race in the courts and in law (Iverson, 2007). These scholars emphasized “the many ways that race and racism were fundamentally ingrained in American social structures and historical consciousness and hence shaped U.S. ideology, legal systems, and fundamental conceptions of law, property, and privilege” (Lynn & Adams, 2002, p. 88).

CRT is a paradigm that is interdisciplinary in nature and that crosses epistemological boundaries—drawing from several traditions such as Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism, liberalism, cultural nationalism, and critical legal studies in efforts to provide a more complete analysis of “raced” people (Tate, 1997). It has several core tenets or principles that emerged from the early work of those legal scholars who were committed to a focus on the socially constructed nature of race and its influence on the economic, social, political, psychological, religious, ideological, and legal systems in American society.

First, CRT scholars have argued that whiteness is a property interest that emanated from the historical construction of race and the role that U.S. jurisprudence played in reifying conceptions of race (Lopez, 1996; Harris, 1995). In this regard, the law has served to protect the racialized elite (i.e., whites) from competition from the racialized nonelite (i.e., people of color; see Coates, 2003). Further, there has been a high premium or value placed on being “white” in American society, and whiteness became the optimal status criterion and standard upon which all “other” racial and ethnic groups are evaluated and judged (see Delgado & Stefancic, 1997).

Second, given the privileging of whiteness in this society and the subordination of “otherness” (i.e., being a racial minority) CRT scholars acknowledge that racism has become entrenched in society, and it is reproduced through routine as well as extraordinary customs, traditions, and experiences that critically impact the quality of lifestyles, life chances, and opportunities of racial groups (Brown, 2003). Our use of CRT acknowledges the persistence of race and racism in college sport and the impact it has had on people of color, particularly African Americans (Brooks & Althouse, 2000, 2007; Davis, 2007, 1999, 1995).

Third, CRT has exposed the limitations of civil rights law, suggesting that laws designed to address racial inequality are often undermined before they can be fully implemented. As it relates to African Americans and sport, in particular, “because of the subtle nature of aversive racism, traditional anti-discrimination laws are of

dubious value in ameliorating its adverse impact on African Americans in sports” (Davis, 1999, p. 2). Davis (2007) asserted that traditional civil rights laws have been a largely ineffective vehicle for protecting the interests of African Americans in college sport because the evidentiary standards that plaintiffs must meet in court cases have limited the utility of these laws.

Fourth, the issue of race is difficult to understand and potentially impossible to remedy because many people (including whites as well as some racial minorities) believe that the impact of race and racism is steadily declining, and becoming less significant in society (cf., D’Souza, 1995; Robinson, 1998; Wilson, 1978). Sage (1998) discussed how conservative voices “have sought to reformulate the debate over the causes of persisting racial inequality with arguments about the ‘declining significance of race’ and ‘the end of racism’” (p. 82) in favor of class-based arguments. While acknowledging the intersections between race and class (and other diversity dimensions), CRT scholars reject these arguments and challenge the belief in the notions of objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy. Instead, they argue one’s adherence to these beliefs has the potential to camouflage the power, privileges, and advantages that whites have gained throughout history, and continue to hold today (Brown, 2003).

Fifth, Derrick Bell’s (1980, 2004) interest-convergence principle—which posits that whites will tolerate or support the advancement of racial minorities particularly when it promotes their own self-interest—is an integral part of CRT and the arguments made above. In discussing the reasons for the abundance of African Americans as players in these athletic programs at PWIHE and their underrepresentation in coaching (particularly in football) and administrative positions, Davis (2007) suggested that the motive to win games and generate revenue is a plausible explanation for why there has been a greater willingness and effort made to integrate college sport at the entry level (i.e., athletes) versus at the management level (i.e., head coaches and administrators).

Sixth, CRT allows people of color and other marginalized people (e.g., women, the poor) to communicate and explain the meaning and consequences of the discrimination and oppression they have faced because of their race and other differences, and this experiential knowledge is considered to be legitimate and appropriate (Brown, 2003). CRT scholars have discussed the importance of “voice,” and explained how the personal narratives and stories of subordinated groups can be used to challenge the dominant discourse and “add necessary contextual contours to the seeming ‘objectivity’ of positivist perspectives” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11).

For example, Kellen Winslow’s personal narrative (as written by him in the foreword to Kenneth Shropshire’s [1996] book) about his failed bid to become the athletic director at his college alma mater is a powerful story of how issues of race and racism may permeate the hiring process in college sport. Although Winslow was approached by the search committee and made the short list of three for final interviews, the Chancellor decided to hire the then-Associate Athletic Director into the position. Winslow questioned how race might have factored into him not being hired; he pointed out how everyone involved in the final decision process was a white male over the age of fifty-five with a background much different from his own. In acknowledging that the individual who was hired could possibly have been more qualified for the position, Winslow speculated, given his own impressive background (i.e., law degree, practical business experience, former student-athlete

status, leadership skills, stellar professional football career), that had he been a white male the job probably would have been his to turn down. In Winslow's words:

What my experiences have taught me time and time again is that race is still, and will be for some time to come, a major factor in the decision-making process for off-the-field positions in professional and college sports. In the world of sports there exist two sets of rules: those for the field of play and those for off the field (Shropshire, 1996, p. xv).

Finally, in efforts to work toward the elimination of racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression, CRT is concerned with both reflection and action (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). This means that there must not only be a commitment to uncovering the ways that race and racism impact people of color, but also an identification of strategies to combat these oppressive forces and acting upon those strategies. In arguing for a moral and ethical activism that moves us beyond the restrictions and limitations of the academy, Ladson-Billings and Donnor (2005) boldly challenged scholars and intellectuals to take on an active struggle against racism and other forms of oppression. They discussed the concept of "political race" (Guinier & Torres, 2002) or this idea that there is a need for cross-racial coalitions and alliances to be formed if we desire to bring about human liberation and justice. In this regard, scholars of different racial backgrounds who are truly committed to social justice must work with organizations such as the BCA, NCAA and other groups to address the problem of racism and the various forms of discrimination (i.e., access and treatment discrimination based on race, gender, and other differences) in college sport.

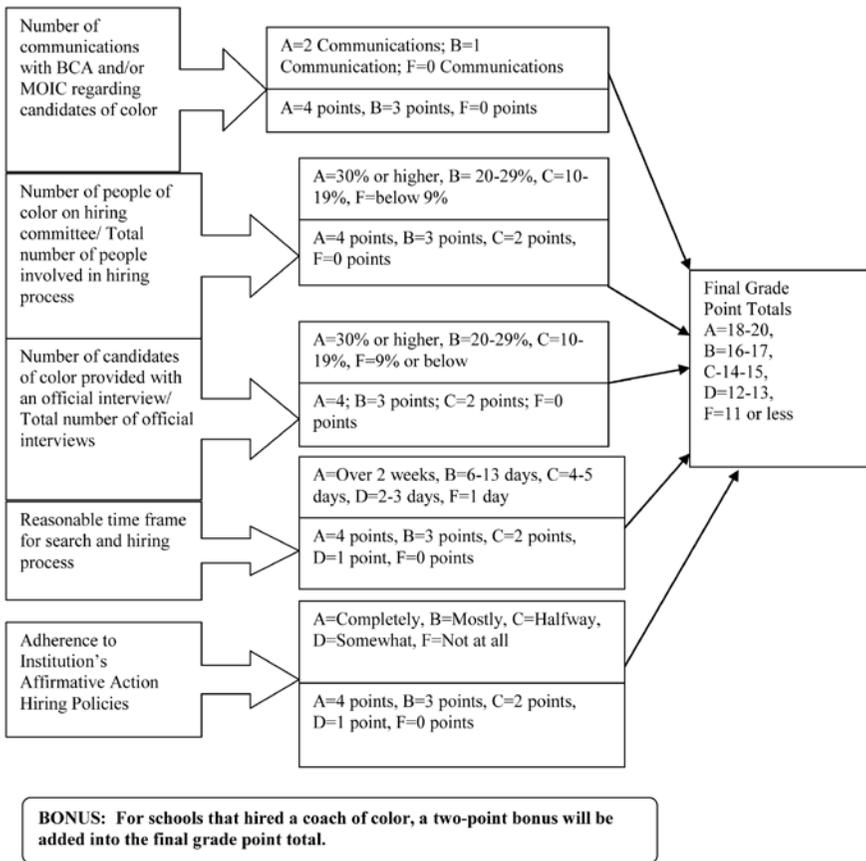
The following two sections of this article will provide an overview of the BCA HRC, followed by a succinct critical race analysis of the five grading criteria used to assess the head coach hiring process.

## Overview of BCA HRC

In 2003, a BCA Task Force (i.e., scholars, administrators and practitioners in higher education and athletics concerned with diversity issues and policies) commissioned the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess to systematically and annually assess the hiring process of college football programs at the FBS and FCS levels. According to Warde Manuel, University at Buffalo Director of Athletics, "the annual release of the BCA Hiring Report Card helps to open the hiring process for head coaching positions in football. Institutions of Higher Learning know that their process of hiring a football coach will be evaluated through the use of known criteria that are shared with everyone in collegiate athletics. This report does not mandate that institutions hire a minority—the report simply measures the process to determine openness to minority candidates" (Harrison & Yee, 2009, p. 44). As explained by Floyd Keith, Executive Director of the BCA, "A positive outgrowth can be seen in the measured increase in inclusiveness and accountability in [college football head coach] searches after 2004. However, despite our persistence and similar efforts by others who embrace this cause; the reality is the problem remains. The numbers speak the truth" (Harrison & Yee, 2009, p. 11).

In terms of measurement, each school was graded on five categories or components: *Communication*, *Hiring/Search Committee*, *Candidates Interviewed*, *Reasonable Time Frame*, and *Affirmative Action*. Each school was asked specific questions for each of the five categories. Each category has a numerical score that was converted into a letter grade. Each numerical score is used in the computation of the final grade (see Figure 1). Schools who hired a coach of color received a two-point bonus to their final score.

Floyd Keith sent a standard package each time there was a documented head football coach opening. Keith contacted the athletic director and president at each of the individual institutions with an official letter via e-mail to inform them that the principal investigator from the Paul Robeson Research Center would evaluate them on five criteria (see Figure 1). A research team at the Paul Robeson Research



**Figure 1** — Research Design Diagram for the Hiring Report Card. © BCA with research analysis and assessment by the Paul Robeson Research Center, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009.

Center collected the data from December through October (or shortly before the release month) from each PWIHE. From March through May, the principal investigator then sent out a follow-up letter that listed the evaluation content and criteria. Thus, all institutions knew what they would be evaluated on and specifically by what criteria. Schools e-mailed, faxed, or mailed in their information to the Paul Robeson Research Center. To encourage consistent participation, the BCA Task Force instituted a policy that schools refusing to participate would receive an automatic “F” grade. While not parallel to traditional methodological response rate methods and traditional “science,” the authors of the current article acknowledge this strength and limitation. It should also be noted that by year five of the BCA HRC there were no automatic “F” grades.

Before the final data analysis was completed, a confirmation letter was sent to each school. The confirmation letter listed the data that were already collected, and was sent to confirm accuracy and verification. Each school had the opportunity to make necessary corrections to the data the researchers compiled. The signature of both the president of the university and the athletic director were required on the confirmation letter. Schools were given a two-week time frame to either make changes or confirm the accuracy of the data. Schools were notified that if they failed to respond before the confirmation deadline, then the data sent to them by the researchers would be included in the HRC.

An analysis of the synergy between CRT and the BCA HRC components reveals that CRT supports and justifies the conception of the HRC and the five grading criteria of the HRC, as well as helps to explain the processes used by, and the corresponding actions taken by, institutions during the first six years of the HRC (2004–2009). When looking at the first six years of the HRC, the following snapshot is painted. On average, schools earned a “C” grade over the first six years of the HRC. The highest percentages of schools, regardless of division,

**Table 1 Final Grade Comparisons of Years 2004 through 2009**

| Division | Year | A  | B | C | D | F |
|----------|------|----|---|---|---|---|
| FBS      | 2004 | 6  | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
|          | 2005 | 5  | 7 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
|          | 2006 | 4  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
|          | 2007 | 9  | 6 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
|          | 2008 | 11 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
|          | 2009 | 8  | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| FCS      | 2004 | 2  | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
|          | 2005 | 0  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
|          | 2006 | 8  | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|          | 2007 | 2  | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
|          | 2008 | 5  | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
|          | 2009 | 3  | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 |

continue to earn an “A” grade. However, this represents only (51) 35% of the sample, which is well below half. However, when combined with the amount of schools who earned a “B” final grade (45) (30%), over half (96) (64%) of the schools earned either an “A” or “B” grade. Conversely, (52) 35% of the schools earned less than a “C” grade, which is below “par” in terms of proactive diversity (see BCA report cards for 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 for a description of “par,” and see Table 1 for a breakdown of the grades received by schools). The final grades received by institutions only tell a part of the story; the institutional processes and practices that led to the grades (particularly the lower ones) also function as powerful tools in analyzing the connection between CRT and the BCA HRC.

## Critical Race Analysis of BCA HRC

One of the stated goals of the BCA HRC is to provide an “objective” measurement that quantifies the five major categories that the BCA has deemed as being important to the hiring process for head coaches in college football (see Figure 1 for details of the research design). These PWIHE are assigned letter grades based on their adherence (or lack thereof) to the criteria that have been set forth (see Appendix A for a description of how these schools are evaluated on the five grading criteria). Each of the five grading criteria of the BCA HRC is necessary and important in promoting racial justice in the hiring process, and, therefore, these criteria are endorsed from a CRT perspective.

Although the research approach used in the six report cards has provided some valuable insight into the hiring process for head coaches in college football, we seek to extend the analysis by providing a critical race commentary of the hiring process. As alluded to at the beginning of this article, the goal of our study is to provide a deeper understanding by illuminating the issue of race (and racism) and firmly situating it at the center of our analysis of the five criteria used in the BCA HRC to assess the openness and fairness of the hiring process. We aim to apply relevant tenets of CRT to the grading criteria in efforts to provide an explanation as to how and why certain PWIHE might fall short when attempting to comply with the components and requirements of the five HRC grading criteria. For example, several broad questions are relevant to our investigation: What factors and potential biases might prevent certain PWIHE from having a diverse initial candidate pool from which a head coach will eventually be selected? Why do some institutions ignore or choose not to adhere to affirmative action guidelines? Why does the time frame for recruiting and selecting a head football coach appear to be flawed in many instances? Why is there a lack of racial diversity on many of the hiring search committees? And why are certain PWIHE reluctant to contact and seek input from the BCA?

This current analysis seeks to answer these and other important questions pertaining to the hiring process for head football coaches at PWIHE. It is also important to note that although we discuss CRT’s application to each of these criteria separately, they are not mutually exclusive. That is, a relationship exists between the five criteria in that each has the potential to influence or be influenced by the other criteria.

## Communication with the BCA

One of the BCA's primary goals is "to address significant issues pertaining to the participation and employment of ethnic minorities in sport in general and intercollegiate athletics in particular" (see [www.bcasports.org](http://www.bcasports.org)). This social justice organization was created as a result of and in response to the systemic racism that has historically existed in American society and in its social institutions (Feagin, 2006), including sport. The BCA has been in existence for over two decades, and has been at the forefront of efforts to enhance the employment opportunities and professional development of racial and ethnic minority professionals. As such, it is appropriate and fitting for football programs looking to fill head coaching vacancies to communicate and work with the BCA and the Minority Opportunity Interests Committee (MOIC) as an important step in the hiring process in particular, and in addressing the issue of access discrimination in college sport in general. But why then would a PWIHE fail to collaborate with this important group during the hiring process?

One plausible explanation rooted in a CRT perspective is that those white elites responsible for hiring head coaches might not think or feel they have a duty or obligation to answer to or consult race-based social justice organizations when conducting their business activities and transactions. This attitude has certainly existed in the minds and hearts of those powerful white elites who have been the decision-makers in various organizational settings and social contexts throughout American history (Feagin, 2006; Feagin & O'Brien, 2003). Some of these decision-makers in college sport have been more concerned with maintaining the status quo by communicating with members of their own well-established social networks—i.e., old boy networks that have historically been used to make inclusion and exclusion decisions concerning who is to be invited into the head football coaching fraternity. And historically, college football on campuses at PWIHE has been a white male dominated enterprise, particularly at the top of the organizational chart. Just as racism has been embedded in the very fabric of American society since its beginnings, it has also been a permanent fixture in social institutions, including higher education and college sport (Sage, 2007, 1998).

From a different perspective, some observers and commentators have suggested these PWIHE might be reluctant to use the BCA and other similar social justice (i.e., race-based) organizations because there are potential drawbacks associated with utilizing such organizations as outside consultants and recruitment mechanisms for head football coaches. For example, from Hatfield's (2008) perspective, "utilization of outside groups, particularly ones with agendas, be these agendas perceived or actual, can mitigate the control the institution and its representatives have over the decision making process" (p. 101). Hatfield (2008) insisted that university presidents and athletic directors might fear any negative publicity that could come if they failed to hire the candidate supposedly endorsed by the outside consulting group. Hatfield (2008) further stated, "By using a group such as the BCA, universities and their search committees might be pressured to give overriding consideration to a candidate's race thereby handicapping their ability to define and choose the best person for the job" (p. 101–102).

While these concerns might appear to be legitimate to some groups and individuals, and therefore, provide a justification for PWIHE to bypass working with the

BCA and MOIC during the hiring process, from a CRT perspective, these rationales hold very little weight. First and foremost, the argument that an affiliation with the BCA during the hiring process could cause search committees and hiring managers to feel undue pressure to factor “race” too much into the decision-making process (potentially at the expense of choosing the “best person for the job”) ignores the fact that race, from the very beginning of American society, has been a significant part of the national narrative, and it continues to matter and be a significant matter (i.e., issue) with which we must deal today (West, 1993). Race is not something that can all of a sudden be erased just because time has passed; race has become too embedded in the very fabric of American society for it to be ignored. Dyson (2007) illuminated this point well when he stated, “race has manifested itself as a criteria-influencing factor. And if race has manifested itself as a criteria-influencing factor, then why not let it account for the person as against him?” (p. 83)

From a CRT perspective, it is not necessarily about the BCA utilizing its social justice and activist agenda to affect the actual outcome of the hiring process or to discriminate against white qualified candidates by forcing these PWIHE to hire a racial minority coach. Rather, the purpose of the BCA being included in the process is to ensure that racial minority head coaching candidates are given a “voice” during the hiring process, instead of continuing to be those “faces at the bottom of the well” (Bell, 1992) in the world of college football. In this vein, hiring managers should not allow the possibility they might be criticized for their hiring decisions (i.e., hiring a white coach over a racial minority coach) to prevent them from engaging in this all important step of the hiring process. Instead, hiring managers, along with the search committees they appoint should take a proactive approach in working with the BCA and other important groups concerned with addressing this diversity issue. The BCA has already done much of the legwork for the schools by creating a database of qualified minority head coach candidates that would perhaps otherwise be invisible to the predominantly white search committees.

## Search Committee Demographics

In applying a CRT analysis to the search committee demographics component of the hiring process it is important to understand the concept of compositional diversity. According to Cunningham (2007), the basic premise of this concept involves the examination of the processes and outcomes of diverse social work groups relative to those of homogenous ones. Therefore, a researcher operating from a CRT lens might ask the question: How does the racial diversity of a hiring search committee influence the decision-making process, and ultimately, who is hired for a particular position? The demographic makeup of the search committee, particularly the racial diversity of committee members, is an integral aspect of understanding and analyzing the head coach hiring process in college football. Further, racial diversity on the search committee potentially speaks to the presence of a diversity of thoughts and opinions that might come from a heterogeneous as opposed to homogenous committee of people from the same racial backgrounds.

The presence of racial minorities on these hiring search committees for head football coaches has the potential to produce what some CRT scholars have termed *racial monitoring* (see Carbado & Gulati, 2009). According to these scholars, the mere presence of racial minorities on these types of committees produces at least

two monitoring effects—a discourse effect and an outcome effect. For example, during search committee meetings the presence of some racial minorities has the potential to temper those (particularly white committee members) who might otherwise be tempted to make arguments against minority head coaching candidates based on racial stereotypes—the discourse effect—and this, in turn, could have an impact on the recommendation the committee puts forth on who to hire—the outcome effect. Moreover, both types of racial monitoring effects could be intensified if racial minority members (as well as white members of the committee who are committed to social justice aims) went beyond just being members of the committee and engaged in affirmative dialogue about the importance of identifying and supporting racial minority candidates.

But it is important to note that active engagement on the part of racial minority committee members who are racially conscious would likely have a stronger monitoring effect than simply the mere presence of racial minority committee members who are not racially conscious. In this regard, the mentalities and mindsets of the individuals (regardless of their racial backgrounds) in leadership positions (i.e., university presidents and athletic directors) who determine the composition of the search committee becomes an important part of the discussion. If these leaders themselves lack a concern for diversity and social justice, this ultimately could have a deleterious influence on the final makeup of the search committee and its recommendations. From a CRT perspective, these leaders might (sub)consciously select committee members who also lack an appreciation for and commitment to diversity, and instead, are more committed to adopting a race-neutral, color blind mentality that leads to the maintenance of the status quo (i.e., white supremacy and privilege) in hiring decisions for the head coach position.

This explains why the “voice” tenet of CRT is so important. An inclusion of the voices of the historically marginalized (and those groups and individuals that support them) on these search committees becomes crucial to the hiring process for head football coaches. If search committees are lacking in the area of racial diversity (i.e., the committee is homogenous, consisting of all or mostly all whites and/or individuals who adopt a color blind, race-neutral perspective), the perspectives and insights of racial minorities as well as whites who embrace diversity, particularly race consciousness, are muted when the search committee is discussing head coaching candidates and making recommendations on which ones to invite for an interview. In addition to analyzing and hopefully changing the overall decision-making process of schools when hiring a new head football coach, it is also important to attempt to alter the decision-making process of schools when forming a search committee (e.g., university presidents and athletic directors should take into account factors other than appeasing boosters and other stakeholders).

### **“Short List” of Final Candidates Interviewed**

In utilizing CRT’s explanatory power to examine this particular criterion it is important to situate the discussion by comparing and contrasting the opportunities these PWIHE have granted racial minorities to “interview” for positions as athletes versus head coaches. Historically, African American and other racial minority college athletes faced overt and institutional racism practices that were in line with a segregated American culture (Shropshire, 1996). This prevented people of color

from participating in college athletics, even in the high-profile sport of NCAA football. Black male football athletes such as Paul Robeson and Fritz Pollard were the exception, not the rule, in the decades before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. But today, college football teams are often dominated by African American males at numerous positions on the field; and African Americans continue to be recruited and selected (i.e., being given athletic scholarships via the signing of the National Letter of Intent) in large numbers to participate in football at these PWIHE. These athletes regularly make the “short list” to be “interviewed” (i.e., being visited in their homes, high schools, and summer camps and tournaments, and being invited to campus for official and unofficial visits), and the outcomes associated with this process has in part led to the large number of African American athletes we see in these positions today.

However, the same pattern has not followed with leadership positions such as the head football coach. A central tenet of CRT is the notion of race as property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and some scholars have applied this concept to black male college athletes (see Donnor, 2005). Ladson-Billings (1998) discussed how historically African Americans, in particular, were constructed as property in the sense that they could be owned by others (i.e., white people). Hence, today black males on the field have been allowed access due to their athletic talents as a physical commodity (Davis, 1995, 1999), but people of color continue to struggle for marketplace value in major leadership roles on campus (Iverson, 2007), including those in the athletics department.

Derrick Bell’s interest-convergence principle speaks to the motives of these PWIHE to invite racial minorities in as football athletes, but not as head football coaches.

Davis (1995) embraced a critical race perspective and Bell’s interest-convergence principle in suggesting that economic considerations were at the heart of the decision (by influential, powerful whites) to end the segregation of college sport participation opportunities, particularly in the high profile, revenue-producing sports of basketball and football. The African American athlete represents roughly half of all athletes participating in major college football today (Lapchick et al., 2009), but has consistently over the years made up less than ten percent of head football coaches at these PWIHE. Although, as mentioned earlier, some noteworthy progress has been made in the most recent hiring cycle (i.e., roughly 12% of FBS coaches going into 2010 season are racial minorities), a clear discrepancy in opportunities to be athletes and head football coaches (and senior level athletics administrators) still exists (see Sanderson, 2010).

According to Davis (1995), African Americans “remain partial participants in the various levels of college sport, such as administration and coaching” (p. 14). Davis (1995) further insisted, “the inequality of access for blacks to the administration of college athletics demonstrates the persistent influence of a particular racial stereotype: the black athlete as inferior to the white athlete regarding intellectual and leadership abilities” (p. 14). What this suggests then is, although there has been an abundance of opportunities for African Americans to participate as athletes in college sport at PWIHE, the “unconscious racism” that permeates college sport today has prevented these racial minority athletes, in comparison with their white counterparts, from parlaying their athletic participation into coaching and leadership opportunities at these institutions.

This point is captured well in the statement made by former and legendary Georgetown University basketball coach John Thompson (an African American) during a 1998 ESPN town hall meeting on race and sport. In his words, “there’s still a lot of people who are able to participate in the cotton field who are not able to be the foreman or not able to be the boss...several kids who are able to play at universities in this country wouldn’t even be considered for a job [as a head coach]” (President Clinton participates in ESPN race town hall, 1998, p. 4). Thompson’s likening of today’s athletic playing fields to the cotton fields black people labored in during legalized slavery speaks to the commodification of the black body, and the devaluation of the black mind.

The mention of this racial reality is not to suggest, as Smith (2007) correctly noted, that just because African Americans have the skills to be elite athletes that this automatically qualifies them for head coaching and other leadership positions. However, given that the majority of college football coaches are former athletes who played the sport (at least at the high school level, if not the college and/or professional levels), these organizations should, at the bare minimum, be willing to recruit and offer the many qualified African American coaching candidates (those who are former athletes as well as those who are not) the opportunity to interview for head coaching vacancies.

While some commentators might be suspicious of a short list of final candidates that includes racial minorities—suggesting that these PWIHE are not really serious about racial minority candidates and are only granting them “token interviews” to appease the critics of the current hiring practices in college sport—it still could be argued that it is important for these candidates to participate in the formal interview process. Why do we argue this? For one, providing the opportunity for members of historically marginalized racial groups to interview and showcase their talents and abilities might actually compel hiring managers at some of these PWIHE to strongly consider offering them the job. For example, although Turner Gill (former University of Buffalo head football coach, and current University of Kansas head football coach heading into the 2010 season) was not offered the job in the multiple head coaching positions for which he interviewed before being hired as head coach at Buffalo and Kansas, respectively, he discussed (during his time at Buffalo) how those interview experiences prepared and better positioned him for future opportunities. According to Gill, “I got a chance. People need to hear who you are, what you are and what you have to offer. It’s just getting the opportunity to interview that’s so important” (Weiner, 2007).

From a CRT perspective, allowing racial minority candidates such as Turner Gill (in 2008 with Auburn) and Sylvester Croom (in 2003 with Alabama) the opportunity to engage in the interview process—even though each lost out on those particular jobs to white candidates that were arguably not as qualified—is an important facet of the social justice project in college sport. Even in instances such as these two well publicized ones where the hiring managers chose, for whatever reasons (legitimate or not), not to hire these qualified racial minority candidates, the inclusion of them in the interview process helped to further illuminate the issue of racial minority hiring in college sport, and allow for the interrogation of the hiring process and the final decisions that stem from it. The continued critical examination (by scholars, journalists, fans, and other stakeholders of college sport) of the process and those decisions that flow from it could eventually lead to a change in the hiring practices of these PWIHE.

## Reasonable Time Frame

In critically examining the time frame component of the BCA HRC, a look into the hiring process for head football coaches at the professional level in the National Football League (NFL) provides potential insight into what we are seeing and experiencing at the college level today. During the ESPN town hall meeting on race and sport, the moderator asked Carmen Policy (the president of the San Francisco 49ers of NFL at the time) to discuss the hiring practices in professional football, and his level of satisfaction with what the league is (was) doing to recruit and hire racial minority head coaching candidates. In response, Mr. Policy expressed that team owners would be willing to select a racial minority as head coach if they felt the person was the “best candidate.” However, he did offer somewhat of a critique of the hiring process in professional football. In his words:

“But I think the process by which we go about selecting our head coaches and the time frame into which it’s squeezed is so flawed that we don’t have the opportunity to reach out, go through the kind of barriers that are there and find that talent pool that’s available—and should be available—to make our business a better business and make our sport a better sport” (President Clinton participates in ESPN race town hall, 1998, p. 6).

What was Mr. Policy implying when he stated that the time frame in which the selection of head coaches is “squeezed” is “so flawed”? To what degree might this “squeezed” and “flawed” time frame manifest itself in the hiring process for NCAA head football coaches?

Perhaps an answer to these questions lies in the words of Terry Bowden, former Auburn University head football coach and son of retired legendary Florida State University head coach, Bobby Bowden. In an article entitled, “Uneven Playing Field,” Bowden (2005) offered a scathing indictment of the dearth of racial minority head football coaches at the Division I-A or FBS level, and criticized the major decision-makers (i.e., college presidents and athletic directors) for being too hasty in the hiring process. According to this white coach, “There is too much of a rush to hire football coaches—to quickly get the hottest name to help in recruiting. A program will not be made or broken in the first three weeks of December. We need to allow the process to take place” (Bowden, 2005). Similar to the sentiments offered by Carmen Policy, yet more explicit, this former college head football coach’s comments indeed speak to a flawed time frame that prevents the decision-makers from really being able to seek out, identify, and interview a diverse pool of head coaching candidates that includes racial minorities.

One of the major trends in college football in recent years is the short window of time in which schools fill head coaching vacancies. Before the first year of releasing the report card (in 2004) and efforts by the BCA Task Force to conceptualize objective grading criteria, it was found that two FBS schools had filled their head coaching vacancies in 2003 after only one day (Washington and Washington State). As another example, in 2007 another major program (Texas A&M University) fired their coach on a Friday and introduced the new head coach at a press conference the following Monday. What this indicates is that the hiring managers really had no intentions of engaging in an open and fair hiring process; they already had their guy pegged for the head coaching position. From a CRT perspective, the hiring process at schools that achieved low and failing grades on this component is rooted in a

system that reproduces the privilege that whites have historically held (and continue to hold) in the ranks of head football coach. This flawed time frame produces unfair outcomes, as quick hiring decisions limit and inhibit the ability of racial minorities to gain genuine opportunities to engage in the interview process, and potentially earn head coach positions. While certain schools may have a legitimate need to move quickly in terms of hiring a new head coach (e.g., to prevent interruptions in recruiting and to maintain program continuity), the BCA and other organizations have made readily available lists of qualified minority head coach candidates that should be considered. As mentioned earlier, this is why communication and contact with the BCA plays such a significant role in increasing the openness and fairness of the hiring process.

### **Affirmative Action**

Of all the BCA HRC grading criteria, the evaluation of the level of documentation these PWIHE have in regards to affirmative action hiring policies and procedures is the area where schools have been consistently average to below average in the grades they have received. Interestingly, although it is mostly powerful white male elites who are credited with the creation of affirmative action programs in efforts to redress past discrimination against racial minorities in particular, it appears that many of the powerful white male elites in college sport (i.e., hiring managers) today are reluctant to embrace these programs. In their qualitative study with about one hundred upper-income powerful white men from various professional backgrounds, Feagin and O'Brien (2003) explored these men's views on race and issues such as affirmative action, and discussed how during the civil rights movement it was powerful white male elites who responded to the protests of African Americans and other Americans by creating civil rights laws and remedial programs such as those called "affirmative action." According to these authors:

"When President John F. Kennedy issued his Executive Order 10925 in the early 1960s, he was the first leading white official to use the then uncontroversial term 'affirmative action', which referred to positive action by government aimed at creating better opportunities for workers of color and white women in the hiring processes of government contractors" (p. 190).

Feagin and O'Brien (2003) further discussed how Kennedy's successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, issued executive orders that were much more extensive and required government contractors to act affirmatively to desegregate the formerly all-white, or all-white male, job categories in their workplaces.

Feagin and O'Brien (2003) discussed how within a decade after the inauguration of affirmative action there was already growing opposition to the various programs surrounding it; and this opposition only grew and intensified over the intervening decades. Today, many white males (as well as other people in America from various racial and ethnic backgrounds) in politics, law, academia, media, and other realms of American society view it as a form of "reverse discrimination" against whites and "racial preference" for minority groups (see Cohen & Sterba, 2003 for detailed discussions and debates). Buzz words such as "racial quotas," "token hires," and "unqualified racial minorities" have found their way into the dominant discourse or way of knowing as it relates to the topic. This is why there

is a need to use CRT's explanatory power to counter such thinking, and expose the hypocrisy that exists in this discourse.

In his book, *Speaking Treason Fluently: Anti-Racist Reflections from an Angry White Male*, Tim Wise (2008) offers a brilliant counterargument against claims by whites that "racial preference" (for minorities) originated with affirmative action programs. In this provocative work, he takes other whites to task by arguing that racial preference has actually had a long and very white history, dating all the way back to the beginning of American society. Wise (2008, 2010) and others (e.g., Foner, 1995; Katznelson, 2005) discussed how affirmative action for whites is something that stems from centuries and decades of laws and policies that were created to benefit whites (particularly males) and disadvantage racial "others" in the areas of housing, education, employment, criminal justice, politics, and business. In other words, given the many unearned benefits and advantages that whites have accumulated as a result of centuries and decades of discrimination against people of color, they are the "real face of racial preference" (Wise, 2008, p.239).

This argument is certainly applicable to the college sport context and the issue of affirmative action in the hiring process for head football coaches. White people today might not be guilty of the discrimination that has been visited upon racial minorities in the past, but because they continue to benefit, they certainly have a responsibility to address the issue. This is why it is still important for leadership of these PWIHE to take serious the affirmative action hiring policies and procedures during the hiring process for head football coaches. As Wise (2008) put it, "So long as those privileges remain firmly in place and the preferential treatment that flows from those privileges continues to work to the benefit of whites, all talk about ending affirmative action is not only premature but a slap in the face to those who have fought and died for equal opportunity" (p. 243).

## Discussion and Implications

In this article we applied tenets of CRT to the five grading components used by the BCA HRC to assess the hiring process of college football programs from 2004 to 2009. Broadly speaking, our analysis revealed that "race" indeed does matter and that it is an important consideration as we attempt to understand and address the dearth of racial minorities in the head coaching ranks of NCAA college football programs at the FBS and FCS levels. Our research builds upon and extends the important work that has been done on the underrepresentation of racial minorities, particularly African Americans, in head football coaching positions. For example, while scholars such as Davis (1995, 1999, 2007) and Agyemang and DeLorme (2010) used aspects of CRT to examine and make sense of these racial disparities in leadership positions at PWIHE, and Cunningham's (2010) recent work provided a useful multilevel framework for understanding the macro, meso, and micro factors contributing to this underrepresentation, and how, why, and when these factors exert their influence, our application of CRT to the five grading criteria of the BCA HRC—communication with BCA, time frame, search committee demographics, candidates interviewed, and affirmative action policies—allowed us to critically examine and interrogate the actual hiring process for head football coaches at NCAA member institutions.

Although the actual grades these schools received were not the focal point of our research, our general reference to these grades, and our examination of the measures used to evaluate the hiring process, offers a unique theoretical and methodological contribution to the study and analysis of this important issue in college sport. Using the tenets of CRT to analyze the grading criteria allowed us to garner a more lucid understanding of how *process* racism (see Asante, 1988), which refers to the procedures that generate racially disparate outcomes, plays itself out within the context of the hiring process for head coaches in college football. While our focus was on the hiring process, not the outcomes per se, our use of CRT as an explanatory tool allowed us to begin theorizing about how and why we continue to see the outcomes that we see today. To be sure, as mentioned earlier, the record number of African American head football coaches at PWIHE heading into the 2010 season has created optimism among some people, but football programs still have a long ways to go to address the racial disparities that continue to exist.

In the following sections, we discuss the research and practical implications our analysis has for the field of sport management, particularly in the context of intercollegiate sport. We then conclude with some final thoughts.

## Research Implications

From a research perspective, there are several avenues scholars should consider to advance the literature on race in college sport. First, it would be very appropriate to merge the CRT literature with the organizational justice literature in studying the hiring processes and other managerial issues in college sport. Several sport management scholars have studied distributive justice (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994a, 1994b; Mahony, Hums, Andrews, & Dittmore, 2010), but very few have studied procedural justice, the former focusing on the outcomes that individuals experience in organizations, and the latter focusing on the processes that lead to certain outcomes and decisions in organizations (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Folger, 1987; Whisenant, 2005). Very little, if any of this research, has focused specifically on race or has taken an inductive approach to the study of issues of justice in sport organizations. In this regard, CRT's connection to the qualitative research methodology allows for a powerful approach to the study of this topic (see Parker & Lynn, 2002).

Second, given that there has been a major focus on issues of diversity management in organizations in general (Gilbert, Stead, & Ivancevich, 1999; Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006), and sport management scholars have proposed and embraced various diversity management perspectives and frameworks (Cunningham, Bruening, & Straub, 2006; DeSensi, 1995; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Fink & Pastore, 1999; Fink, Pastore, & Riemer, 2001), there are numerous opportunities for scholars to inject issues of race into research and the discussions regarding the management of employee and other stakeholder diversity in sport organizations. More specifically, scholars could build upon this work by embracing a critical race approach in studying and attempting to address those injustices and inequities found in athletic organizations that operate in cultures that value similarity as opposed to diversity. Moreover, applying CRT to the study of diversity management in college sport also allows scholars to critically examine and scrutinize those organizations that

supposedly operate in cultures that value diversity in efforts to better understand the extent to which they actually do (as an example, see Iverson, 2007)

Third, critical race scholarship is congruent with the participatory action research (PAR) approach that has been promoted by sport management scholars in recent years (see Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Heber, 2005). For example, sport management scholars and other scholars interested in issues of diversity and social justice in college sport could partner with racial minority coaches and athletes who might aspire to enter the coaching profession (see Cunningham, 2004; Cunningham & Singer, 2010) in efforts to conceptualize, design, conduct, and interpret research aimed at bringing about change in those organizational structures, processes, and practices that discriminate against people of color and other marginalized groups. CRT's emphasis on providing a voice to the voiceless has the potential to provide those important counter-narratives that could combat the master narratives that have continued to perpetuate some of the negative outcomes for these groups.

Fourth, qualitative case study approaches (e.g., Lawrence, Harrison, & Stone, 2009; Singer, 2009) also provide potentially fruitful opportunities for sport management scholars to understand, scrutinize, and interrogate issues of race and racism in college sport because they allow researchers to use thick description, observations, interviews and other techniques to document various organizational dynamics; further, narratives that emerge from such research allow scholars to build a case against racially biased and racialized organizational structures, policies, and practices, and the knowledge generated from such studies could potentially be applicable to, and ultimately useful for, other sport organizations with similar issues.

Finally, future studies regarding the BCA HRC could analyze the trends regarding the grades received by PWIHE and whether certain factors might influence whether a certain institution is more apt to receiving a high grade. For example, this research could attempt to illuminate the extent to which whiteness was the standard norm that contributed to the disempowerment of African American head coach candidates throughout the hiring process. It is essential to further study how issues of whiteness affect the hiring process, and why problematic institutional processes and practices (which typically result in receiving low grades on the HRC) continue to exist at many colleges and universities.

## **Practical Implications**

From a practical standpoint, our study has some important implications. Since the inception of the first BCA HRC, a trend (i.e., succession trend) in college football coaching has taken place. That is, PWIHE with athletic teams are now naming the coach to succeed the head coach years in advance and well before a vacancy (cf., Muschamp to take over Texas when Brown retires, 2008). Is this practice a smart and savvy strategic decision aimed at securing a valuable, rare human resource, and avoiding a disruption in athlete recruitment and fan loyalty? Is it a practice that will continue to deny racial minorities with access to head coaching positions? The data so far indicate that nearly all the "coaches to be" are white, with a few exceptions. Therefore, this is certainly a diversity management and social justice issue that hiring managers in college sport should be mindful of and take seriously.

Although civil rights case law and related legislation in today's racialized society have had limited utility due to the subtle nature of aversive racism and the

difficulty plaintiffs have in meeting the evidentiary standards to be successful in court cases, the issue of utilizing Title VII legislation as a tool to encourage diversity among NCAA head football coaches has garnered attention in recent years (see Wieberg, 2006). Insistence by the BCA, along with other advocacy groups and individuals, that Title VII legislation (as well as potential adoption by various states of a college version of the NFL Rooney Rule) has similar potential as Title IX to bring about equity in college sport is something that hiring managers in college football must consider.

## Conclusion

In the final analysis, the topic of the hiring process that football programs at PWIHE engage in will continue to be on the radar of various stakeholders in intercollegiate athletics. Following the 2008 college football season, four African American head coaches were hired at the FBS level (Eastern Michigan University, Miami of Ohio University, University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University) and one at the FCS level (Yale University). And seven African American head coaches were hired during or after the 2009 college football season; five of the seven African American hirings that occurred during or after the 2009 season were at the FBS level (East Carolina University, University of Kansas, University of Louisville, University of Memphis and University of Virginia), and two of the hires were at the FCS level (Portland State University and Western Kentucky University). It should also be noted that Mike London, former head football coach at the University of Richmond (a graduate of and former player at the same institution) and current head coach at University of Virginia, won the FCS national championship in his first year as head coach at Richmond.

These are all positive steps in the right direction and are a part of the counter storytelling that CRT elucidates. That is, it is success stories like those of Coach London that serve an important purpose in combating the master narrative that historically prevailed for many decades (i.e., racial minorities lack the “qualifications” to lead college football programs) and that perhaps still exist in the minds and hearts of some of those individuals who still maintain power and privilege in society and college sport.

In conclusion, given that race is arguably one of America’s, as well as sport’s, most complicated and complex topics (due in part to the history of racism in this country), CRT’s focus on the elimination of racial oppression as part of a larger goal of the elimination of all forms of oppression is an important principle that we as sport management scholars, educators, and practitioners should reflect upon as we decide on and carry out our research agendas, and attempt to educate, enlighten, and challenge ourselves and our students, and lead people and manage the affairs of our sport organizations. If we are truly serious about addressing the openness and fairness of the hiring process for head coaches in NCAA college football as well as the myriad of other diversity and social justice issues with which we are faced in the sport industry, it is crucial that we continue to engage with critical race scholarship and other bodies of literature that could help us address our problems in sport. In addition, we should also build upon the momentum that was built during the historic 2008 presidential election in efforts to create cross-racial coalitions and alliances that might lead to meaningful and positive change in how

things are done in sport and sport organizations. Institutions of higher education must lead the way.

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## Appendix A: Explanation of the Five Grading Criteria

### Measurements

Each school was graded on five categories or components: Communication, Hiring/Search Committee, Candidates Interviewed, Reasonable Time, and Affirmative Action.

### Communication

Each school is measured on the number of direct telephone communications with the Executive Director of the Black Coaches & Administrators (BCA) and/or the Chair of the Minority Opportunity Interests Committee (MOIC). If an institution

has two or more communications, they earn an “A.” If there is one communication, they earn a “B,” and no communications results in a “F.” Once the letter grade is determined, it is coded into a numerical score, which corresponds as follows: “A”=four, “B”=three, and “F”=zero. These numerical scores are used to compute the final grade.

## Hiring/Search Committee

The Hiring/Search Committee (some institutions called them advisory boards) measurement consists of two components. The first component is the number of people of color on the search committee. The second component is the total number of members of the hiring/search committee. The number of people of color is divided by the total number of members on the search committee. That ratio is converted into a percentage by multiplying it by 100. After the percentage of people of color on the search committee is determined, it is then converted into a letter grade which adheres to the following grading scale: “A”= 30% or above people of color on the search committee; “B”= 20–29% people of color; “C”=10–19% people of color; “F”= nine percent or less people of color on the search committee. Once the letter grade is determined, it is coded into a numerical score, which corresponds as follows: “A”=four, “B”=three, “C”=two, and “F”=zero. These numerical scores are used to compute the final grade.

## Candidates Interviewed

The Candidates Interviewed category is measured similarly to the way the Hiring/Search Committee is measured. The numbers of candidates of color who earn an on campus interviews are recorded. This total is divided by the total number of candidates, yielding a ratio of candidates who are people of color to total candidates with on campus interviews. After the percentage of people of color in the candidate pool is determined, it is then converted into a letter grade which adheres to the following grading scale: “A”=30% or more of people of color in the candidate pool; “B”=20–29% of people of color; “C”=10–19% of people of color; “F”= nine percent or fewer of people of color in the candidate pool. Once the letter grade was determined, it was coded into a numerical score, which corresponds as follows: “A”=four, “B”=three, “C”=two, and “F”=zero.

## Reasonable Time

The duration of the search and hiring process is recorded and graded. This measurement is made objective by examining previous patterns of head coaching hiring decision time frames by experts in the hiring process of head football coaches. The grading category for a reasonable time is as follows: “A”= two weeks or longer to make a final decision, “B”=six to 13 days, “C”=four to five days, “D”= two to three days, and “F”=one day or less to make a decision. When more time is allowed during the search process, more potential applicants become aware of the open position and the search committee has the chance to seek out additional candidates. Thus, a longer hiring process can help to ensure that the most qualified candidates are able to apply, which is why longer time frames earned higher grades.

## Affirmative Action

The affirmative action hiring policies and procedures for each institution were requested. Researchers critically evaluate the level of documentation of affirmative action hiring policies and procedures the institution has. Since the evaluation of the policies and procedures is open-ended, double-blind evaluations are conducted to ensure accuracy and prevent biases. Each institution earn a letter grade for their *documented* compliance with the affirmative action policies and procedures based on the following grading scale: “A”= highly detailed level of documented policies and procedures; “B”= a more than standard statement documenting the policies and procedures for affirmative action; “C”= a standard policies and procedures document that said the institution does not discriminate; “D”= a somewhat detailed documentation of the policies and procedures; “F”= no documentation of the policies and procedures at all.

## Final Grades

Once the letter grade is determined for each institution, it is then converted into a numerical score based on the following scale: “A”=four, “B”=three, “C”=two, “D”=one, “F”=zero. These numerical scores are used to compute the final grade. The final grade is computed by summing all of the numerical scores for each of the five categories. The higher the numerical score (a total of 20 final numerical score points was possible), the better the letter grade. Once the final numerical score is calculated, it is converted into a letter grade. The final grading scale is as follows: “A”=18–20 final points; “B”=16–17 final points; “C”=14–15 final points; “D”=12–13 final points; “F”=11 or less final points.