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Themes that Thread through Society: racism and athletic manifestation in the African-American community

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ABSTRACT *The purpose of this article is to examine and critically analyze the impact of sport in the African-American community. This critique of the social and behavioral outcomes of sport in the African-American community will include philosophical, historical, and sociological inquiry most affecting the plight of the African-American male in academics and athletics. Data on the perceptions of contemporary African-American men participating in sport in higher education will also add more support to the conclusion that race and sport are socially constructed in society.*

The primary question which now must be asked is what happens to the black athlete between high school and college that seems to totally change how he perceives himself. (Richard Lapchick, director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society, in *Race and Sport*, p. 231)

There is a telling story about Arthur Ashe. He always lunged for every ball, even those clearly out of bounds. When a friend asked him why, he said 'When I played against white players in the early days, the linesmen didn't always call them out. I learned that there was no use complaining, but I also learned that I could win anyway. (Arthur Ashe, former Wimbledon Tennis Champion and civil rights advocate in 'Amazing Grace' section of Collins & Cohen, 1993, *The African Americans*)

We must teach our children to dream with their eyes open, the chance of your becoming a Jerry Rice or a Magic Johnson are so slim as to be negligible. (Harry Edwards, professor, consultant and leader of the 1968 revolt of the black athlete, in the 'Amazing Grace' section of Collins & Cohen, 1993, *The African Americans*).

Do you believe in God? Do you believe that everybody is here for a reason? I believe that everyone has a talent and I believe my talent is sports. So when I was born I was naturally an athlete. So it would be pretty dumb for me to go into science. (Young student-athlete quoted in James, 1995)

Don't like scholarships because they hurt me, nothing but a slave to the university, watch me as I run by you, the coach wants to take me higher. (Rap artist Ice Cube's single *Higher* [from the film *Higher Learning* produced by John Singleton, 1995])

In the realm of sport in society, one of the areas to escape in-depth philosophic inquiry has been the experiences of the African-American male. This particular group has a history of both triumph and tragedy. One's immediate attention is directed at the odds of a sports career coming to reality for most African-American male youth. If the odds are slim and none, then why do many African-American men place all their attention on sports and not education, or why is there not an effort to balance both by the majority of African-American men in sport?

This broad question has many implications, and by using Kretchmar's (1994) table in *Practical Philosophy of Sport* on multiple perspectives (academic inquiry through the lenses of history, physiology, sociology, and philosophy), we can reach some philosophic answers. The areas on which I have framed my article center around three perspectives in the context of sport participation by African-American men.

- (1) What does sport mean to the African-American community (historically and in the present day)?
- (2) What myths affect African-American males in sport?
- (3) What does the future entail for African-American males in sport?

Where Did it All Begin?

When Jack Johnson won the heavyweight boxing title in 1908, African-Americans celebrated this triumph as they instantly perceived sport as 'the promised land'. This, coupled with entertainment, were the only avenues where US mainstream society allowed African-Americans to excel, as there was and still is a mechanism of social control. This taste of highly competitive sport took place in the years immediately following the American Civil War.

Although some black athletes had achieved fame prior to the Civil War, it was not until the conflict came to an end that large numbers of them would realize national and even international acclaim in a wide range of sports. The newly found freedom following the war and the lasting sporting traditions established during slavery created an atmosphere in which blacks were more readily accepted into horse racing, baseball, and other sports popular during the period (Wiggins, 1993).

Other black athletes in this era included Peter Jackson (boxing), Issac Murphy (jockey), 'Major' Taylor (bike racing), and 'Fleetwood' Walker (baseball). While these and other African-American men were excelling in sport, the establishment either shunted aside or pressured them to drop out of their respective sports. The reasons for their elimination from highly organized sport were varied, including the mainstream culture's belief in black inferiority, general deterioration of black rights, and eventual separation of the races (Davis, 1966; Somers, 1972; Lucas & Smith, 1978; Rader, 1983).

This would all change with the integration of baseball by Jackie Robinson (1947), and sport would continue to see an increase in color in the years to follow. What is significant in relation to African-Americans in sport, is that most African-American males in sport have little, if any, historical perspective passed on from their forefathers that paved the way for them to compete today. In a panel discussion (1992) on issues related to the African-American male student athlete, Harry Edwards and Arthur Ashe were asked to respond on whether or not (philosophically and practically) African-American men are winners or losers in regard to their experience in sport. Both individuals responded candidly. Ashe: 'Over the last 25 years loser, but before that period winner'. Edwards: 'I think we have both winners and losers and often it is difficult to tell the difference' (Edwards and Ashe, 1992). These statements describe the fate in contemporary society of the African-American community and other communities who believe that sport in itself will lead to success. In previous years, as Ashe stated, African-American males participated in sport to achieve both a quality education and to compete in athletics. At present in society, this is simply not the case. Pointing to Harry Edwards and his response, the potential outcome of the sporting experience for the African-American male is not easily determined, as the goal is simply to play professional ball. In fact, blacks are even more likely than whites (8 to 1) to emphasize sports as a means of achieving prestige and economic success because they perceive more barriers to achievement in other activities.

As African-American males have become increasingly successful in a few highly visible sports, young African-Americans focus their attention on developing skills in the same sports. This has not only contributed to the high proportion of African-Americans in certain sports, but it also accounts for the tendency among many young African-American males to put all their motivational 'eggs' into just a few sport 'baskets' (Coakley, 1994). Because they have not had the chance to see pay-offs connected with education, they conclude that running and jumping offer the best chances for fame and fortune (Coakley, 1994, p. 264). This placement of total identity and self-esteem into sports results in despair and hopelessness for many African-American males.

By not seeing, smelling, hearing, feeling, and even tasting other homogeneous role models (Harrison, 1996a, 1996b) outside of the playing fields, many African-American youths see little reason to try another vehicle for upward mobility. Unfortunately for these youths, occupational opportunities for runners and jumpers are very limited (Coakley, 1994). In many instances the recapitulation that sport is the total answer is constantly signaled to young African-American boys within their own community. Mothers, sisters, fathers, and friends, systematically wearing sneakers, and dressed in professional numerical jerseys, and the exaggerated hours spent on the court and not the classroom, all contribute to a fixation by society as a whole that all the African-American male has to do is play ball and the rest will take care of itself.

As Joe Paterno articulated vividly in 1983 at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) convention, the philosophy must change at all levels for the African-American male:

For fifteen years we have had a race problem. We have raped a generation and a half of young black athletes. We have taken kids and sold them on bouncing a ball and running with a football and that being able to do certain things athletically was going to be an end in itself. We cannot afford to do that to another generation. (cited in Coakley, 1994, p. 239)

Truth or Dare

One of the more obvious myths affecting African-American males is the notion that sport leads to a path of success for many. Without quoting extensive statistics, the average professional sports career is less than 4 years, about one in 7325 (Lapchick, 1991) will make it to the National Football League (NFL) or National Basketball Association (NBA), and nearly 80% of professional athletes will end up having no money by the end of their careers [1].

In the broader context of jobs in society, opportunities for African-American males even within sports are very limited and controlled. Front office, general manager, athletic director, head coach, assistant coach, and other leadership roles in sport are occupied mostly by white American males. This raises the question that if the participants in sport (football, basketball, and baseball) are half or mostly African-American, then why are they not represented more equally in leadership roles?

An ethnographic approach leads one towards an answer to this question. 'You know those junkyards along the highways in Jersey?' said Larry Doby, former baseball professional with the Cleveland Indians and the first Negro ever to play in the American League, and now an insurance salesman in Saddle Brook, New Jersey, 'Well, they have scrap heaps just like that for athletes—most of them black. Black athletes are cattle. They're raised, fed, sold and killed Baseball moved me toward the front of the bus, and it let me ride there as long as I could run. And then it told me to get off at the back door' (Olsen, 1968, p. 168).

In 1987 on the ABC television station's *Nightline*, Al Campanis (vice-president for player personnel for the Los Angeles Dodgers at the time) appeared to have summed up what the prevailing philosophy is in the sporting world. Ted Koppel asked Campanis on the celebration night of Jackie Robinson's breakthrough (1947) why there were no black managers, general managers, or owners? Is there still that much prejudice in baseball today? Campanis answered,

I don't believe it's prejudice. I truly believe they may not have some of the necessities to be, let's say, a field manager or perhaps a general manager. They may not have the desire to be in the front office. They're outstanding athletes, very God-gifted and they're wonderful people ... They are gifted with great musculature and various other things. They're fleet of foot and that's why there are a lot of black major league ballplayers. Now as far as having the background to become club presidents or presidents of a bank ... I don't know. (Hoose, 1989)

Campanis's observations amounted to a complete record of the semi-conscious

values of those who control major sports in the USA. It was all there—the residue of decades of dugout talk, winter meetings, road meals, hotel lobbies, scouting reports, and banquets (Hoose, 1989). Campanis's statements also laid it all bare for examination: blacks can't think. They have no ambition. Don't know how to lead. They have great bodies. They are, as a race, gifted physically but deficient mentally. The philosophy apparently then and now is that blacks do not have the necessary qualities, so why bother to channel them into leading an organization. These traits are only perceived to be possessed by those who control sports, on or off the field.

This, in most cases, is not so for African-Americans, women, people of color, or 'otherness'. Without going too deeply into racial 'stacking' in sports, some realities relate to Campanis's comments. While watching a game, any baseball or football fan can easily see racial stereotypes at work. A scorecard and these two principles will help:

1. The nearer that a position is to where the ball usually is, the less likely it is a black will occupy it.
2. The more responsibility or control involved in a position, the less likely it is that a black will play it. (Hoose, 1989)

Now, by critically analyzing the media, a connection can be made between the false opportunity of sport for African-American men that is visualized through advertising, and the recapitulation and exacerbation of 'brawn' but no 'brains', and the 'natural' athlete notion of African-American men.

The historical belief was that African-Americans were inferior physically. This idea was diffused totally in 1936 when Jesse Owens dominated the Olympics in track and field. Since 1936, the philosophy, theory, and belief by many in society is that African-American athletes are just naturally gifted. However, before critiquing the media, it is important that the race factor be articulated. The following two quotes are from Ted Williams (the only player in major league baseball history to have a 0.400 batting average), a white male, who is considered the best hitter of all time:

People talk about my great eyesight and reflexes as if those were the reasons for my success. That's bullshit. Do you know how I learned to hit a ball? Practice, dammit. Practice, practice, practice, practice! Trial and error, trial and error, trial and error!

On Eric Davis, an African-American male and standout player at the time for the Cincinnati Reds, he said, 'He's a great athlete. He moves well and can run. And those things come from heaven. You don't have to develop it, because it's there' (Hoose, 1989, p. 51).

This interpretation by Williams is fascinating, considering how different his analysis is on the subject of two great hitters. Is race a factor in who is considered the 'natural' athlete? Literature on race and sport suggests that race plays a major role in terms of who gets what type of credit for their performance. Despite the lack of compelling scientific evidence to substantiate these theories, and the lack of evidence to replicate the studies supporting this notion of athletic superiority, the battle over myth and reality continues. Earl Smith (1996) of Wake Forest (depart-

ment chair, scholar) exposes the falseness of the popular belief that a person, either black or white, can be considered a 'natural athlete'. Geography, health, genetics and just plain hard work combine to produce outstanding athletes, from Michael Jordan to André Agassi. Smith also takes to task Martin Kane, the author of a highly visible *Sports Illustrated* article entitled 'An assessment that black is best'. Kane purports that black athletes have longer legs and arms, narrower hips and greater arm circumference than white athletes. He also contends that black athletes relax more than whites, and that blacks are superior athletes because they are the descendants of black slaves who had to adapt to their harsh environments (Kane, cited in Lapchick, 1991, p. 235). Smith counters that Kane gives little attention to the larger and more important question of differences within the races. For example, Bob Beamon and Carl Lewis are both superstars in the long jump but have completely different body types.

Drew Hyland (1990) synthesizes both sides of this debate in his book *Philosophy of Sport*. In short, the same two general directions are revealed by Hyland's thesis: sociological explanations and genetic or physiological explanations. Socioculturally, the accounts are based on the differences that typify the childhood and nurturing of white and black youth. In this context, economics play a role. Blacks are perceived to have struggled for survival, while whites have had it easy. The theory in this regard would say that the competitive struggle by blacks makes them superior in athletics. Conversely as Hyland argues, many white youths have it too easy to become great athletes. Or alternatively, blacks, faced with *de facto* exclusion from many of the standard paths to economic success, recognize early on that athletic success is one of the few avenues to financial success. This validates the 'way out of the ghetto' argument (Hyland, 1990). On genetics, as Hyland points out, claims have been made about differences in muscle fiber, about statistical differences in muscle configuration, and even, at the level of silliness, that blacks have an extra bone in their foot.

The Portrayal of African-Americans in Sport by Mass Media [2]

In the context of racial representations in the sports media, the diversity of opinion on whether the skills of the African-American in sport are 'natural' or attained leads me to believe that the media has taken one side. Studies of stereotyping of African-American athletes have focused primarily on male athletes. Rainville & McCormick (1977) found that white American players received more praise and less criticism than African-American players in the NFL commentary. Media coverage implies that there is a relationship between race and ability to control one's own sport performance. Rainville & McCormick (1977) further suggest that the NFL announcers they studied believe performances by African-Americans are due to uncontrollable external forces while performances by white Americans are due to controllable internal forces.

Murrell & Curtis (1994) found the performances of both African-American and white American quarterbacks in American football attributed to internal forces. However, the internal force for white Americans was controllable 'hard work' while

the internal force for African-Americans was uncontrollable 'natural ability'. The media often reinforce the stereotype that African-Americans are 'natural athletes'.

This stereotype positions white athletes as clearly disadvantaged relative to black athletes, who are seen as having superior physiology (e.g. Edwards, 1969; Staples & Jones, 1985; Harris, 1993). Many in the media echo commentator Billy Packer's observation, 'There just aren't many [whites], to be honest, in terms of pure athletic ability' (Hoose, 1989, p. 15). The media portrayal of African-American athletes depends not only on negative stereotypes, but also on stereotypes that appeal to a white American audience. Much here relies on stereotypes of African-American athletes as 'hip' and 'cool'. Seiter (1995) studied commercials that feature children and had this to say:

Most commercials which use African-American children today feature a rap theme and/or some reference to sports. The presence of African-American children in a commercial is used to define the product as 'cool', modern, up-to-the-minute. They are set up as more lively, more cool, more fashionable, more with-it than whites. Thus, their presence verifies the product's fashionability'. (p. 104)

In general, the message to African-American male youth is that sport is the food you should eat, sleep and drink. Advertising such as 'The Dream Team' (primarily African-American male basketball players), or 'Life is a sport (parody with innuendo and subliminal meaning that sport is bigger than life)', and the various commercials that sell shoes by marketing an African-American athlete, condone narrow-minded thinking and a neglect for educational pursuits.

The Past and the Future

Historically, Earl Ofari Hutchinson in his recent book *The Assassination of the Black Male Image* (1996), questions how far the African-American male in sport has come since breaking into organized competition. Hutchinson's thesis (chapter titled 'From slavery to the sports arena') is that comments like Jimmy 'the Greek' Snyder made in 1988 that blacks dominate major sports because they were 'bred to be that way by the slave owner', only bring to the surface what many of the men who make the decisions in the sports profession really think about black athletes.

Hutchinson reminds us that during plantation days, the slave masters would round up their friends and arrange a little sport. They would select two of their biggest, brawniest, blackest men and toss them into a makeshift ring. The masters would guzzle gallons of whiskey and rum, crack jokes, and make big wagers while the two black men banged each other to a pulp. How much and to what degree has this model changed?

In terms of myths and the media, African-American males suffer from being perceived, placed, and constructed in a monolithic art form (Hurt, 1996). They also suffer theoretically from the belief systems of those in control of their sporting experience. They view the black athlete as dualistic—not holistic. The inference drawn in this racial context is that they are therefore probably inferior intellectually.

This is where sport clichés such as ‘white men can’t jump’ (considered to be less athletic) evolve from, and ‘black men can’t think’ (considered not capable of leading in any genre). Few will publicly articulate the latter phrase, but one need only look at socialization patterns of the African-American male in education and sport to find validity.

The problem with this misguided logic is that it contributes to the self-fulfilling prophecy that black males are more likely to do well in sports than in academia. It also ignores the complex social mechanisms that are responsible for African-American male participation and success in sports in the first place. In fact, as stated earlier, this social construction of blacks as naturally superior in sports is a stereotype based on racism. Black youth, however, do not see racism as the underlying factor here. They seem to reason that racism is not a factor in so far as they are able to gain respect and recognition with something that they do well or even better than their white peers. They do not conceptualize racism in structural or institutional terms (James, 1995). For most, racism is evident in individual attitudes and actions, something that they can overcome by being good students, and beating whites in sports.

With so much sport on television, scholarship on race/ethnicity and the sport media needs to expand and move beyond current research analysis. Sport media coverage that reinforces the American Dream has effects on all African-Americans. Suggestions that most African-Americans have achieved economic success or that African-Americans who have not achieved economic success have moral failings only reinforce white Americans’ image of themselves and their country’s social structures and culture as free of racism (Andrews, 1994; Cole & Andrews, 1996; Cole & Denny, 1994). Such messages discourage the pursuit of changes that would benefit people of color and thus help to perpetuate racial inequality.

In the final analysis the investigation of the statistically enormous participation in athletics and involvement of blacks in the major revenue producing sports appears intellectually fascinating, potentially important to our understanding of human beings, yet politically delicate and even dangerous (Hyland, 1990).

Qualitative and Ethnographic Data on Race, Sport and Social Construction [3]

In Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s *White on Black* (1992), she states that it has often been observed that ‘race’ is not a reality but a social construct. The construct of sport has allowed blacks to manifest themselves on the field, but not off it. The achievements of African-American athletes who have challenged ‘white supremacy’ and of African-Americans in the Olympics are all breaches in the myth of racial inferiority (Pieterse, 1992). Pieterse eloquently captures the covert and overt manifestation of African-Americans as inferior beings:

The role of black performers is too complex to show a constant pattern over so long a period, from the ‘Nigger Minstrels’ to Miles Davis, from Bessie Smith to Jessye Norman, but there are some general tendencies.

Entertainers do not threaten the *status quo* but embellish it. Emotive, 'feminine' expression by blacks is permitted, conforms to the rhythm myth, the stereotype of musicality. Over the past century or so, and especially since the 1920s, blacks have become musicians, dancers and buffoons of Atlantic culture, just as gypsies with violins occupy a similar niche—romanticized and marginalized—in central Europe. Also most images of blacks which prevail now in everyday western society are images of entertainers. The imagery of the popular media in which entertainment provides the sole positive role-models for black youth, and social reality, in which entertainment and sport are gilded doors out of the ghetto, together form a vicious circle of stereotyping. (p. 148)

The integration of sport is part of overall black integration. But it is also a limited kind of success. For blacks there is a place in the circus, as gladiators. Their success seems to confirm one of the stereotypes of the black as bestial brute, the 'all brawn and no brains' kind of athlete. Besides, new racial myths have been created to 'explain' the sports achievements of African-Americans. At first the story was that African-Americans were inferior to whites in every respect, physically as well, and therefore unfit to compete with whites (Pieterse, 1992, p. 149).

Page Smith in *Killing the Spirit* seems to agree with Pieterse and her thesis:

One of the most conspicuous bizarreries of modern academe is the fact that the majority of the big sport athletes and virtually all of the 'stars' are black. On every campus I visit I see a little band of black students. There are the mammoth black students—basketball forwards and centers, the football tackles, linebackers, and defensive ends—and the small black students—the fleet backs and pass receivers. They mix very little with white students. They are the classic black entertainers. It is for their exploits that arenas of white students shout themselves hoarse. The cultural discontinuity is staggering, the irony beyond articulation (Smith, 1990, pp. 15–16).

In a study by Harrison (1996) 50 African-American male student-athletes at two predominantly white institutions were surveyed. The focus was on their experiences while on athletic scholarship. This was done qualitatively, primarily with open-ended inquiry. Two questions asked by Harrison in the study parallel the theoretical frameworks by Pieterse and Smith, as well as this text as a whole. As one reads the quotes, it should be kept in mind that the reactions, feelings and ethos in this particular study parallel the notion of African-American male student-athletes buying into exactly the racist myths that so dominate the sports industry. The following is a summary of two of the questions asked, the student-athletes thematic responses (with author interpretation and clarification in parenthesis), and the percentages of their responses.

- (1) Why do you feel that one study revealed that 4% of white male student-athletes think that their first paying job will be in professional sports, compared to 51% of black male student-athletes (percentages come from a study done by

Lapchick, 1991)? (Some 90% felt that racism and the media play a big role in this perception). Themes and responses:

—‘Whites are taught to balance both, we are taught the easy way out.’ (Channelization of blacks in labor-oriented endeavors);

—‘Blacks are more athletic.’ (Timeless myth that blacks have more musculature and less cognitive skills, i.e. bell curve rhetoric);

—‘Whites have “the hook up” (good ol’ boy network, family, institutional access), we only have sports.’ (Access and opportunity is perceived to be limited);

—‘Whites are geared for minds, blacks for hands.’ (Internalization of racist myths);

- (2) Why do you feel that African-American male student-athletes feel isolated on predominantly white campuses? (100% felt that the environment of this ‘white sea’ was inhibiting to their performance on and off the field.) Thematic responses:

—‘Everything is white, only sports for blacks.’ (Stereotypes internalized by black males);

—‘Everyone around us perceives us being there only for our physical talents.’ (Knowledge of campus construction in higher education at traditionally white institutions);

—‘We are like employees on strike with no pay, but must work.’ (Knowledge of collegiate commercialization, and pontificating of amateur athletics in higher education);

—‘We are not prepared to face the challenge.’ (Self-doubt of abilities and student-athletes are passed through the system—in many cases beginning at the pre-school level);

—‘We are told too late to take responsibility.’ (Exploitation realized by the individual);

—‘How do you feel comfortable with people that you can’t trust.’ (Racism acknowledged).

Conclusion

Clearly, social construction is a major factor in the retention, graduation, and matriculation of the African-American male in sport and society. More open-ended studies must be done to assess the needs of this group that fills stadiums and arenas across the country every fall, winter, spring, and summer. These studies must address not only the perceptions of African-American males, but all of society that interacts with these young men. As was stated at the beginning of this text, we can reach some philosophic answers by critically assessing historical and sociological factors that impact on patterns of sport from the African-American community.

Previously, too much time has been spent on physiological arguments for African-American male involvement in sport. This inquiry and analysis leaves much to be desired, and perpetuates historical racist beliefs about ability levels of African-Americans in general. The future of the African-American male in education and

sports appears to be denying more young black people (especially males) academic futures. This problem is not new. The stereotypical myths believed by the institutions and African-American males themselves (as seen in the data collected in my study) continue to preclude the psyche of our nation and world for that matter.

Exclusionary portrayals of African-Americans in society stagnate the focus and understanding of this particular group of people. This manifestation of marginal images has not changed radically, nor have the patterns of African-American males in sport over the last few decades.

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All reviewers receive my deepest appreciation for their valuable input.

Notes

[1] Interview with intercollegiate athletics representative on Tom Osborne's (coach of the University of Nebraska football program, which is highly successful) lecture to athletic program and kids on education and sport. His citing was from the yearly NFL census report.

[2] Frequently, white and black athletes are portrayed differently in mass media. For example, Cal Ripken Jr, of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team is seen in true value hardware commercials affirming work ethic of mainstream individuals. Black athletes are seen and linked with sub- or super-human characteristics, such as Gary Payton is quick like a bee, Michael Jordan can fly like a bird. These perpetuate 'natural' athlete notions.

Bill Russell (former Boston Celtic great, first African-American head coach in basketball) in his memoir addresses the myths and stereotypes that the media reinforce and construct. His case and point refers to a study in the 1970s by a team of Miami researchers on possible bias in television sports broadcasting. They assembled a test group of elderly blind people who knew little about football and asked them to listen to games on television. The blind people tried to guess the race of a player whenever they heard one described on the air, and their guesses turned out to be correct an overwhelming majority of the time. When a receiver was described as having 'blazing speed', they said black. When they heard about a man 'who knows how to get open', they said white. A player who had 'poise' and 'a head on his shoulders' was white, whereas a player who was 'hot', or 'amazing' or 'intimidating' tended to be black (cited from Russell, 1979, p. 103).

Earl Ofari Hutchinson found similar codes and themes. Hutchinson has watched every 'Monday Night Football' game since 1970 starting with the Cleveland Browns in September of that same year. Over the years he has compiled words from the sports chatter of the announcers: white player (heady, good work habits, cagey, disciplined, a project, fearless, courageous, aggressive, a hustler; black player (a burner, speedster, or 'can motor', moody, a head case, erratic, raw talent and doesn't live up to his potential, hears footsteps, a real animal (cited in Hutchinson, 1996, p. 55).

[3] HBO special on the African-American athletic experience in America interviewed respected sport historian Gerald Early. Early's insights pointed out during the show that in the early 1900s it was believed by many white Americans that blacks were going to die off and not survive.

Parentheses within the respondents' ethos are to clarify the author's interpretation of the study. It also serves to illuminate the data for further linkage of my study to the literature on education in the context of race and sport.

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