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EDITED BY ROBIN HUGHES AND JAMES SATTERFIELD, JR.

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From Center to Research Center:

Race, Culture and Sport



Cameron State University versus West Texas A&M, Homecoming 1989 Photo Courtesy of C. Keith Harrison © 1989

In 1991, while a second-year graduate student following my scholar-athlete days pictured above (with my favorite jersey number, 51, inspired by Hall of Fame center Randy Cross), my father instructed me to drop whatever I was doing and sit with him in front of the television set. I quickly learned that Dr. Harry Edwards was next up on the iconic show *60 Minutes*, speaking about the topics of race, culture, and sport. I have never been the same human being since watching Professor Edwards drop knowledge on this still relevant topic in American and other global societies.

There is no way I had a vision that I would later meet Dr. Edwards in person at numerous locations and at various events. However, the crowning jewel is that in April of this past year, my father attended Dr. Edwards' lecture and visit to the University of California at Los Angeles. At the pre-reception for the event, my father had the opportunity to "chop it up" with Professor Edwards and Pops informed me that one of my two favorite scholar-activist heroes (Dr. Lapchick, my current chair and boss is the other one so let's not get this mixed up) had informed him how well his son was doing

and that "Keith is a scholar." I will keep it real and very humble. I have not scratched the surface yet in comparison to my two mentors/heroes in terms of scholarship or social change through what I hope someday will become an educational revolution solution, the Scholar-Baller™ movement. That said, when my father told me that Dr. Edwards "gave me 'props'," as I was on the shuttle ride from the Denver International Airport to the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, I had tears running down my cheeks. Life is truly full circle at times.

In terms of our pre-game festivities for this special issue, we begin with an interview several of us set up that was conducted by Keshia Woodie and Brittne Forde in March 2010 at the University of Pennsylvania at its Wharton | San Francisco location, at a gathering of African American scholars. While many of "us" who have come after Dr. Edwards see him as a mentor regardless of our level of contact, it is refreshing and unique to listen to who *his* mentors are (and were). What if Jackie Robinson, Bill Russell, and Jim Brown mentored student-athletes today in the same way that they influenced Dr. Edwards' life? What if we had more coaches like John Thompson and Bill Walsh? The answer to that question might be frightening and/or inspiring, depending on how we view race, culture, and sport in contemporary society. These five innovators/leaders/pioneers, without question, changed the game and influenced Dr. Edwards while he was a scholar-athlete at Fresno City College and San Jose State University.

Let's begin the first quarter of this special issue and kick this thing off. One issue that still permeates the perceptions and assumptions of conventional thinking in our American society is the notion that African American and Black athletes in other nations are "natural" performers and have a genetic or physiological edge—not that they work hard, or that despite structural racism in health, education, jobs, etc. they find a way to excel through mastering their cultural environment. The article *Success, Race, and Athletic Performance: Biology, Belief, or Environment?*, which was the result of an invited session in Nashville in 2003 at the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), addressed this debate with something rarely done in scientific research—a collaborative effort between the sciences. Led by Dr. Robert Carter III and several colleagues, this paper's exhaustive review alone should have exposed factual evidence of what my former colleague, Vic Katch (professor of movement science) at the University of Michigan has been saying for over 30 years: "There are more differences within the races than between the races" (guest lecture to my race, culture, and sport class in 2002, Ann Arbor, Michigan). Instead of avoiding (or compartmentalizing) the academic disciplines concerning the debate on racial differences in sport, anatomy, physiology, and movement science—these authors took the issue head on and validated Dr. Katch's conclusions as an authority and respected scholar in exercise science. This paper carried the legacy

of Professor Emeritus William Morgan (University of Wisconsin) who first organized a tutorial on the topic in 1999 with one of the co-authors of the paper. Professor Morgan's dream was that one day, ACSM and groups like the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) would team up and investigate this "elephant in the room" when it comes to race, sport, and athletic performance. This paper gave the literature many answers and numerous directions to take.

We end the first quarter as mind, body, and soul collide with the institutionalized dynamics of one scholar-athlete, college athletics, and the National Football League (NFL). There is no way I would approach a qualitative article without my trusted colleague (and former softball standout in college), Dr. S. Malia Lawrence. Harrison, Lawrence, Bukstein, Janson & Woodie capture these constructs in *The Myron Rolle ESPN Page 2 Story: A Qualitative Approach to Blog Comments*. By using role conflict theory to better understand Myron Rolle's nationwide discourse and reaction to his missing one half of a football game to interview for his eventual acceptance in to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, we actually gain a better understanding of the role conflict perceptions our public has about student-athletes. Some of the cognitive dissonance expressed by some bloggers about academics and athletics was later validated by some NFL scouts' and organizations' questioning Myron's athletic commitment, due to his intellectual prowess and stellar academic performance. What type of country do we have where someone graduating from college in two-and-a-half years is penalized due to the public perception of his football playing potential because his mind, body, and soul work in concert? What are our expectations of African American males who have the potential to play professional sport *and* also to develop their career options? Myron Rolle impacted the national psyche in November 2008 and literally changed the game with his flight from the Rhodes Scholarship interview in Birmingham, Alabama to arrive at the University of Maryland for the third and fourth quarters of the game.

The second quarter begins with something waiting on more scholarly attention: the intersection of race, gender, sport, and policy. In particular, scholarship on African American women in sport is limited, although there are some voices that have followed Drs. Yevonne Smith, Doris Corbett, and others. In *Ain't I a Woman?: Black Women and Title IX*, Stephanie A. Tryce, and Dr. Scott N. Brooks challenge some of the classic works on gender, women and Title IX in sport. These two authors expose the exclusion and invisibility of sexism and racism intersections in athletics pre- and post-Title IX. This article takes Black women's perspective(s) from *Casper the Ghost* (Black women invisible) to Queen Latifah's *Ladies First* (Black women at the forefront and visible). A team comprised of a legal framework in tandem with a sociological analysis is always worth reading.

Rounding out the second quarter is colleague and co-founder of AERA's

Special Interest Group (SIG) Research Focus on Education and Sport (established 2005), former scholar-athlete at UC Berkeley, Dr. Eddie Comeaux. Prior to Comeaux's leaving UCLA with his Ph.D. in hand, we decided to create a space for higher education and sport scholarship. However, all I did was mention this gap in AERA's culture and "DC" as he is known affectionately to The Scholar-Baller Group,TM took the ball and ran with it. Thanks to his post-doctoral days at UCLA's Ralph Bunche Center, (thank you Dr. Darnell Hunt for your support), and a keen pilot study, *Mentoring as an Intervention Strategy: Toward a (Re)negotiation of First Year Student-Athlete Role Identities*, we learn more about George Kuh's concept of purposeful engagement. Comeaux reminds us that, "while there is a host of research on student engagement related to the general student population, few studies have examined the student-athletes' engagement in educationally purposeful activities and its influence on a set of outcomes" (p. 35). This article is a great starting point for any graduate student considering a career in the professoriate or practitioner side of the building with a passion for intercollegiate athletics and student-athletes. Dr. Comeaux's contribution in this special issue hopefully will ignite student affairs and higher education frameworks to embrace this type of scholarship.

There is no halftime in the grind of publish or perish, so let the third quarter begin. Dr. Brandon Martin, a former scholar-athlete at USC who happened to play college basketball and professional ball overseas, teams up with two colleagues (Harrison and Scott Bukstein) to continue where the freshmen in Comeaux's study left off. *It Takes a Village for African American Male Scholar-Athlete Success: Mentorship by Parents, Faculty, and Coaches* examines the overlooked research area of high-achieving African American male student-athletes (particularly in football and men's basketball) at academically rigorous American universities. A perfect slam dunk to the "alley-ooop" Dr. Comeaux throws preceding this article, Martin et al. (2010, special issue) find that while healthy and positive mentoring occurred for the 27 African American males in the study, by families and faculty, there was little to no support from coaches. The pressure to win (athletically) and the role strain on coaches is a topic that needs more scholarship and structural intervention. While parents and faculty are far from perfect in their mentoring efforts, this quote from one of the student-athletes is indicative of misguided priorities of high-profile sports and by *some* coaches that lead our young men from all ethnic backgrounds: "They're not about academics first. They don't get paid based on whether we do well in class or graduate. They get paid to win games." While this narrative does describe part of the reality in our coaching and player landscape, I have had the opportunity to interact with several coaches, through Scholar-Baller, that demonstrate another reality that truly is a village of support. Tony Samuel (Southeast Missouri State University), Norries Wilson (Columbia University), Aaron Kelton (Williams

College), Dirk Koetter (formerly at ASU, now with the Jacksonville Jaguars), and Mark Henniger (North Carolina Welseyan) are just a few of the people who support academic performance at the same or higher rate than athletic prowess.

Commencing the fourth quarter is another former scholar-athlete who perfected the skill of rebounding while at UC-Irvine as a baller in the Big West conference. Dr. Leticia Oseguera is a brilliant scholar, well beyond her years in terms of understanding the dynamics of retention, matriculation, and educational success models for students of color in higher education. In *Success Despite the Image: How African American Male Student-Athletes Endure their Academic Journey Amidst Negative Characterizations*, Dr. Oseguera challenges deficit notions of Black male student-athletes and disproves claims that cultural and institutional racism is a thing of the past, with this snapshot of her provocative data, that found "While the participants were accomplished students, all had experienced attacks on their intellect from a variety of college personnel including faculty, academic counselors, classmates, and teammates" (p. 51).

In the final analysis, the fourth quarter ends with the research note *Diggin' Deeper into the Culture of Revenue Sports: The Need for the Baller Identity Measurement Scale (BIMS) in Assessing Academic and Athletic Identities in Society*. The concept and identity of the term *student-athlete* has been heavily debated since the NCAA formally began in 1906 and the term means many things to many stakeholders. In this article, Harrison and colleagues continue to build on the scholarship of the AIMS and SAMSQA scales, giving credit to Dr. Britton Brewer and colleagues for the AIMS, and Dr. Gaston-Gayles for the SAMSQA, by challenging the entire research and practitioner community: 1) to grapple with, synthesize, and embrace the urban originated term "baller"; 2) to understand that the term "baller" is more mainstream than a generation ago and that this identity transcends suburban, rural, and other communities; and 3) to embrace the BIMS scale as a systematic measurement tool that has the potential not only to shed new light on academic and athletic identity constructs, but also to assist academic advisors, K-12 educators, and parents in shaping productive and multidimensional human beings.

In terms of overtime we had hoped to receive a commentary from one former African American male student-athlete truly giving voice to all student-athletes. I want to take this time out to encourage readers to learn more about this extraordinary young man, Zaire Taylor, by reading the article titled "Staten Island's Zaire Taylor Goes from Adversity to Elite Status with Missouri," which was written by Roger Rubin for the *New York Daily News* on March 29, 2009.

Lastly, it is an honor, as two of my mentors (Professors Michael Eric Dyson and Todd Boyd) would say, "to put it down on wax" and have your

blood, sweat, and tears recognized through a great team effort that is now a completed academic product. It has been a privilege and personal pleasure to serve as a guest editor for this special issue on Race, Culture and Sport in the *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education (JSSAE)* and I thank all my teammates (co-authors, editors, etc.) for a job well done. I especially thank two of my colleagues who, without question, are two of my higher-education and sport soul mates. Much love and respect to Drs. Robin L. Hughes and James Satterfield, Jr., and a special thanks to Detta Penna and Edna Martinez. To all the readers, scholars, practitioners, graduate, and undergraduate students, I hope you enjoy this topic that needs more attention in the academic and public sectors. Let's all *carpe diem* this academic year and make plays! I end with one of my favorite race, culture, and sport photos of three former NFL players who, more importantly, are also USC graduates (see photo below). Let's keep our scholarship and activism moving!

C. Keith Harrison,
University of Central Florida,
DeVos Sport Business Management Program,
and Scholar-Baller™



Left to right: Curtis Conway, C. Keith Harrison, Brian Williams, and Keyshawn Johnson, University of Southern California Black Graduation, 1996, Los Angeles, California. *Photo Courtesy of Dr. C. Keith Harrison © 1996.*

Dr. Harry Edwards on the Importance of Mentors

Race, Culture and Sport

Interview conducted in person by Dr. C. Keith Harrison, Keshia Woodie and Brittnie Forde at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton|San Francisco Campus.

Note: Edited by Scott Bukstein.

What role have mentors played in your life and career?

I have been extremely blessed to have a wide variety of mentors who have had faith and trust in the legitimacy of the things that I was trying to do. When we announced in 1967 that there should be a boycott of the 1968 Olympic Games over issues of racism and discrimination in sport in American society and over issues of apartheid in South Africa, I think about people like Jackie Robinson. Howard Cosell called Jackie Robinson and asked Jackie if he supported these young African Americans on the west coast who were talking about boycotting the Olympic Games, and why couldn't we do things the way Jackie had done them. Jackie Robinson's response was: "If I were a young Black athlete today I wouldn't do things the way I did them." Jackie and I had some conversations subsequent to that which gave me the faith, strength, and encouragement to move forward with challenging American sport at its very core.

My mentors were people like Bill Russell. There was a picture in *Time Magazine* of Bill Russell and me at a Los Angeles track meet in 1968 and somebody asked Russell the following question: "As Olympian and great NBA star, do you have a problem with Harry Edwards and that group of athletes talking about boycotting or demonstrating at the 1968 Olympics?" Russell's response was that he had a problem with the situation because he wasn't the one who first thought of boycotting or demonstrating at the Olympic Games. Bill Russell was another great mentor in terms of courage, perspective, and vision.

Another mentor was Jim Brown, who showed that you had to be serious about your involvement in sport, especially if you were an African American. Brown was criticized because he came to Cleveland Browns games carrying a briefcase and wearing a suit. A reporter once said "You're a football player, so what are you doing carrying a briefcase?" Brown responded: "Because I'm a businessman. I'm more of a businessman when I put on those cleats and that helmet and those pads than the average guy in a three-piece

suit in a high-rise office building with a briefcase full of peanut butter sandwiches. I'm a businessman and until we begin to behave like businessmen with business interests we're going to be exploited, used up, and cast aside."

Then there is John Thompson, the first black coach to win a NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship. John always insisted upon being respected [regardless] of what people thought about what he did or how he did it. John was a winner, so people had to listen to him. John viewed himself as a coach, not a Black coach. He once said "I realize there is a burden that comes with my race and the position I'm in, and going into these pavilions, and beating all these white coaches, who are all in pursuit of a prize that only one coach can walk away with. I know race transcends over into this struggle and I'm not going to ignore it and act like it's not there just to keep from hurting people's feelings." John didn't mind hurting people's feelings. I took tremendous strength from that. I was always able to say what I thought needed to be said and do what I thought needed to be done.

And finally there were people like Bill Walsh, who brought me into pro football, who understood the things I was trying to get done and why it was necessary to do them. People like Bill Walsh got me involved in establishing programs working with athletes, not just Black athletes but all athletes, which ultimately led to me working with a number of professional sports leagues to deal with the problems and challenges that carried over into sport from society.

I have been blessed to have a great many mentors that kept me on track in terms of the kinds of things that I felt I had to do. I've always been able to say that as a result of that kind of guidance and support, that kind of direction, and those kinds of relationships that I've always tried to fight the good fight. I've always taken tremendous pride in being disliked by the right people. At the end of the day, it is mentors who reinforce and who give you the strength to take that kind of path and hopefully make a difference and leave a footprint.

About the Authors

C. Keith Harrison is Associate Professor of Sport Business Management in the College of Business Administration and is Associate Director of the Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Dr. C. Keith Harrison is also founder and director of the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess established in 1998. Dr. Harrison earned his doctorate in higher and post-secondary education at USC. Dr. Harrison has held faculty positions at Washington State University, the University of Michigan and Arizona State University. Dr. Harrison created the term Scholar-Baller™ in 1995.

Scott J. Bukstein is an Adjunct Lecturer for and the Coordinator of the undergraduate DeVos Sport Business Management Program at the University of Central Florida. Bukstein earned a bachelor's degree in Sport Management and Communications from the University of Michigan, and received his juris doctorate degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Keshia Woodie graduated from the University of Central Florida's College of Business Administration and completed the DeVos Minor in Sport Business Management. She is currently an intern at the Orlando Magic and former research assistant in the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess.

Brittnie Forde is a graduate of the University of Central Florida's DeVos Undergraduate Minor Program in Sport Business Management. Forde was a student intern in the Dean's Office at UCF's College of Business Administration.

Success, Race and Athletic Performance

Biology, Belief or Environment?

Abstract The relative success of athletes with African ancestry in sports such as track and field has been a topic of interest in the popular press and to a lesser extent in the sports science and physiology literature. Historical focus has been placed, to a large extent, on sprinting and, to a lesser extent, on the long jump. More recently, attention has shifted to the success of East African athletes in the middle distance and distance running events. A common question is whether structural, compositional and/or physiological differences between performers of African and European ancestry (most often American Blacks and American Whites) may explain the apparent performance advantage of Black athletes. The purpose of this paper is to examine the limited scientific evidence for or against racial differences, primarily in running performance and other physical outcomes. The available evidence indicates considerable overlap and relatively *small differences* in a variety of biological characteristics between Blacks and Whites, athletes and non-athletes. By inference, observed differences in running success between Black and White athletes are likely related to non-biological factors, which need serious scholarly attention and elaboration. The potential interactions between biological, social, and cultural factors related to performance deserve systematic consideration with this timeless debate of athletic performance. Some empirical research (see Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, & Darley, 1999) supports the concept of Environmental Adaptive Aptitudes (EAA) (Proctor & Harrison, 1999) as a more holistic approach to investigate this issue.

The relative success of athletes with African ancestry in sports such as track and field has been a topic of interest in the popular press and to a lesser extent in the sports science and physiology literature. Historical focus has been, to a large extent, on sprinting and, to a lesser extent, on the long jump. More recently, attention has shifted to the success of East African athletes in the middle distance and distance running events (Pitsiladis, Onywera, Geogiades, O'Connell, & Boit, 2004).

A common question is whether social, psychological, cultural, or biological

(anthropometric/ somatotype or physiology) variation among performers of African and European ancestry explains the apparent performance advantage of Black Athletes. African ancestry refers to countries in Africa south of the Sahara Desert, which has been a major barrier to large scale gene flow or genetic exchange between sub-Saharan and Mediterranean (North African) populations. Focus has historically been on comparisons of American Blacks and American Whites. American Blacks are largely of West African ancestry and American Whites are largely of European ancestry, although there has been considerable admixture between the populations in the United States. The situation is similar for Black and White populations in the Caribbean and parts of Central and South America. Many West Indian Blacks have emigrated to Canada and the United Kingdom. Black populations in Europe reflect, in part, migration from former colonial territories in Africa south of the Sahara Desert. In contrast, East African populations (Horn of Africa) are somewhat different (Pitsiladis et al., 2004). Proximity to the Middle East and the confluence of Europe and Asia has facilitated admixture and in turn influenced the genetic composition of East African populations.

The purpose of this paper is: (a) to examine the data on racial differences in running performance, (b) to review the evidence for biological or non-biological factors as explanatory phenomena, and (c) to determine whether Environmental Adaptive Aptitudes (Proctor & Harrison, 1999), can provide the framework for a better bio-cultural analysis when examining the athletic success of African American athletes in a few select sports. This paper focuses on running performance for two reasons: 1) running speed is a fundamental element for success in most sports, and 2) as discussed formerly by Samson and Yerles (1988), success in team sports is contingent on too many factors to allow meaningful examination of potential underlying racial performance differences. Furthermore, Sampson and Yerles showed that Blacks only dominate a few sports (track and field, football, and basketball) of which running speed is a basic element of success (Samson & Yerles, 1988).

Biological Factors

Social, biological and environmental factors all contribute to the potential for athletic excellence, or by contrast, to lack of athletic excellence. In this section we will consider some of the possible biological factors that could influence performance including structural (anthropometry), biochemical and histochemical (related to skeletal muscle) and physiological factors (cardiovascular and temperature regulation). Because the identification and comparison of candidate genes for sport performance is still a science in its relative infancy (Rankinen et al., 2002), this review will consider only phenotypic rather than genotypic factors.

Anthropometry

Anthropometry was the primary tool for comparing the size and proportions of American Blacks and Whites, followed by osteology, the study of bone morphology and composition. Ethnic variation in somatotype has been studied less often. More recently, advances in body composition technology have added to comparisons of skeletal mineralization and appendicular skeletal muscle mass (Malina, 2005).

Comparisons of the general population of American Blacks and Whites appear in the early 1900s (Malina, 1973), whereas studies of Black and White athletes appear after the 1936 Olympic Games, apparently stimulated by the success of Jesse Owens. An early report, "Race and runners," was an anthropometric, radiographic and biomechanical comparison of Jesse Owens, other athletes and male non-athletes of similar age and size. A good deal of the comparative data was based on an earlier review on the physical characteristics of American Blacks (Cobb, 1934). Shortly after Cobb's papers, several anthropometric comparisons of American Black and White adults appeared (Metheny, 1939). Of interest, the paper of Metheny (1939) highlighted the potential relevance of proportional differences to athletic performance. The early anthropometric studies were accompanied by studies of the motor performances of Black and White youth (Malina, 1988).

The study of athletes participating at the Rome Olympic Games in 1960 is the first detailed comparison of elite Black and White athletes (Tanner, 1964). The primary focus of the study was 137 track and field athletes, although athletes from the British Empire and Commonwealth Games were also included.

Table 1. Olympic gold medals for men's sprinting and distance running events.*

Year	100 m	200 m	400 m	5000 m	10000 m	42000 m
1980	W	W	W	B	B	W
1984	B	B	B	W	W	W
1988	B	B	B	B	W	W
1992	B	B	B	W	W	W
1996	B	B	B	B	B	B
2000	B	W	B	B	B	B
2004	B	B	W	W	B	W
2008	B	B	B	B	B	B

*Years evaluated (> 1980) based on approximate plateau in Black athlete participation (Samson and Yerles, 1988). Women's medals not considered due to inability to resolve gender participation equity among countries. B = Black athlete as defined in this paper, W = non-Black athlete

Natural Black Athlete

(Samson & Yerles, 1988)

Biological Factors

Anthropometry

Black & White
European Athlete
Differences
(Metheny, 1939;
Tanmer, 1964)

Physical
Characteristics
(Cobb, 1974;
Maltin, 1973, 2002,
2005)

Thermoregulation

(Baker, 1958;
Roberts, 1953;
Robinson, Dill,
Patterson, Hill, &
Wright, 1954;
Wyndham et al,
1963)

Cardiovascular Function

Cardiac Function
(Coetzer et al, 2003;
Bejammann et al, 2004)

VO2 max
(Bouchard et al,
1995; Bosch et al,
1990; Kankinen et al,
2002)

Muscle Histochemistry & Biochemistry

Histo Biochemistry
(Noakes et al., 2005;
Simonneau et al,
1995; Ennric, 2000;
Ducy et al., 2009)

Metabolic
(Saltin, et al, 1995)

Snapshot Phenomenon

(Samson & Yerles,
1988; Ennric, 2000;
Larsen, 2003;
Nygaard, 2005;
Fitzgerald, 2005;
Ogoyve et al,
2005)

Stereotype Threat

Steele & Aronson,
1995; Stone et al,
1999

Non-biological Factors

Anthropometric, somatotype, and radiographic methods were used, and the variation between Black and White athletes in the context of performance was addressed. Sample sizes were quite small by event. Nevertheless, this is a landmark study. Subsequent studies of Olympic athletes (Carter, 1984) included participants from different racial/ethnic groups and have generally confirmed the observations of Tanner (1964). Few if any of the more recent studies, however, have systematically addressed the potential role of racial/ethnic variation in anthropometry and physique to performance.

With this brief historical overview as background, trends in the available data are subsequently considered. American Black and White children and adults, athletes and non-athletes, differ, on average, in proportions of limb and trunk and shoulders and hips, while differences in height are negligible or inconsistent among samples (Malina, 1973). On average, Blacks have relatively shorter trunks and longer extremities, and relatively slender hips compared to the shoulders (conversely, proportionally broader shoulders compared to the hips). These trends are evident in the comparison of small samples of American Black and White female athletes by event (Malina, Battista, & Siegel, 2002) as well as among male Olympic athletes (Tanner, 1964). The extremity differences are more distal, i.e., longer forearm and lower leg. Data on the somatotype of American Blacks and Whites are limited, but the data for non-athletes would seem to suggest, on average, greater development of mesomorphy in Blacks compared to Whites. This observation generally holds true when comparing collegiate jumpers, sprinters, and throwers (Malina, 2005). Among elite male athletes, somatotypes (Sheldon, photoscopic) of Black and White sprinters (100m, 200m) are virtually identical, while those of Black 400m runners are more mesomorphic (Tanner, 1964). Detailed comparisons of somatotypes of Olympic athletes of both sexes do not include comparisons by ethnicity (Carter, 1984). The skeleton is consistently heavier and has more mineral in American Blacks than in American Whites from infancy through adulthood (Malina, 2005). Limited data for American Black and White males show less ethnic variation in limb musculature, but after adjustment for height, weight and age, skeletal muscle mass of the legs is significantly larger in American Blacks of both sexes. The ethnic difference also persists after adjusting for ethnic variation in relative leg length. Arm skeletal muscle mass is also larger in American Blacks of both sexes after adjusting for age and weight, and also for relative arm length.

Inferences for performance have been extrapolated from comparisons of the size, proportions, physique and body composition of American Blacks and Whites. Note, however, data for Black and White athletes in the same event are scant at best. Initial observations of Jesse Owens focused on his foot and an exceptionally long calcaneus was hypothesized. Closer examination of the foot suggested that a calcaneal protuberance, when present, was due in fact to the presence of a subcutaneous fat pad (Cobb, 1934).

The relatively longer arms and legs, narrower hips and more slender calves of Blacks were postulated as providing a mechanical advantage. Hence, a Black performer with legs identical to a White performer would have a lighter, shorter and slimmer mass to propel, implying a greater power-to-weight ratio at any given size (Tanner, 1964). The power-to-weight ratio would, in turn, be advantageous in events in which the body is propelled, e.g., the sprints and jumps, events which require relatively short bursts of speed and power rather than prolonged expenditure of energy. On the other hand, the greater weight and density of the Black skeleton would function to offset the proposed advantage suggested by mechanical principles applied to body proportions.

Data for collegiate female track and field athletes (Malina et al., 2002) indicate, on average, inconsistent differences in estimated arm musculature in Black compared to White sprinters, middle distance runners and jumpers; in contrast Black athletes in these three events had, on average, larger estimated calf musculature. Recent DXA and DPA data suggest greater appendicular skeletal muscle mass in Blacks, but do not differentiate between segments within a limb. Whether or not this would be of advantage for a small boned distance runner is possible, but inconclusive (Saltin, Larsen, Terrados, Bangsbo, Bak, Kim, Svedenhag, & Rolf, 1995).

Although the preceding comparisons are of interest, translation of variation in proportions, physique and estimated muscle mass to performance is a different matter. There is, nevertheless, more to performance, especially at elite levels, than morphology and its possible influences on biomechanics and physiology. For example, a recent study of elite Kenyan distance runners indicated an over-representation of athletes from the Rift Valley province, who were members of the Kalenjin tribe and Nandi sub-tribe (Onywera, Scott, Boit, & Pitsiladis, 2005). The results suggest ethnic variation within Kenya and a strong running culture in the Rift Valley Province. Racial and ethnic variation in morphology, body composition, and power as a factor affecting specific track and field performances merits further study. Identification and analysis of lifestyle factors specific to cultures or sub-cultures from which athletes emerge also merit examination.

Muscle Histochemistry and Biochemistry

Regional ethnic variation accompanied by an extremely skewed distribution of excellent athletic performances in a certain sector with common ethnic heritage, seems to be a compelling suggestion that 'nature' is more important than 'nurture' for athletic performance. However, there are two other considerations: 1) common ethnic heritage may promote a cohesive culture which in the case of the Nandi in the Kenyan highlands (Onywera et al., 2005) and the

Oromo in the Ethiopian highlands has translated into a strong 'running culture' and the athletic success may be dependent upon the resultant 'nurture' rather than 'nature', and 2) genetic difference does not always find expression in phenotypes, unless there is a gene-environment, or 'nature-nurture' interaction promoting the expression. Potter (2001) has referred to this type of phenomenon (albeit in the context of disease) as a fixed-genotype with a changing phenotype depending on environmental influences.

When biologists consider the 'environment' they are generally referring to factors outside of the organism under study, which are capable of influencing biological phenotypic traits. In the case of athletes three environmental factors commonly investigated are training, climate and geography. Responses to climate will be addressed in detail a bit later in this review. In this section training will be considered as an important environmental factor interacting with the skeletal muscle and metabolic phenotypes of athletes. Although it will only be considered briefly, undoubtedly altitude exposure could be a factor playing a role in the success of the Kenyan runners from the Rift Valley province and the Ethiopian runners from the Arsi and Shewa provinces, since both groups live and train at altitudes around 2000 m above sea level or higher (Saltin et al., 1995). However, it is still unclear what physiological benefit conveyed by training at altitude is critical to the Kenyans' and Ethiopians' success. Indeed, debate rages amongst proponents of various critical factors that may respond to altitude training such as red cell mass, alterations in oxygen cost of exercise (economy), alterations in sensory input to the brain, mitochondrial nitric oxide synthase activity in heart, skeletal muscle capillarisation and enhanced mitochondrial function, among others (Noakes, di Prampero, Capelli, Zaobornyj, Valdez, Boveris, Ashenden, Secomb, Dufour, Ponsot, Zoll, Richard, Messonnier, Gonzalez, Henderson, Favret, Richalet, Eltzhig, Kempf, Nikinmaa, Mackenzie, Wagner, Hashimoto, Miyamoto, Boning, Joyeux-Faure, Beguin, Bouvat, Levy, Yuqi, Katayama, Gardner, Saunders, Pyne, Foster, Lucia, & Ekblom, 2005).

Intuitively one might think that an increased red blood cell mass and additional oxygen carrying capacity, the effects of altitude that should influence maximal oxygen consumption, are likely to be better in Kenyan runners. But VO_{2max} was not a phenotypic trait that could distinguish Kenyan runners from elite Scandinavian runners (Saltin, et al, 1995). Rather their metabolic profiles differed in terms of metabolite accumulation, particularly lactate and ammonia (Saltin et al., 1995). Similarly, in South African black runners of Xhosa descent VO_{2max} is not higher than in their white South African running counterparts, but lactate accumulation during sub-maximal running has been shown to be significantly different (see Table 2) (Bosch, Goslin, Noakes & Dennis 1990; Coetzer, Noakes, Sanders, Lambert, Bosch, Wiggins & Dennis, 1993; Weston, Karamizrak, Smith, Noakes & Myburgh 1999). Are these observed metabolic differences in African runners due to

Table 2. Metabolic and skeletal muscle profiles of South African endurance runners

	Bosch et al. (1990)	Coetzer et al. (1993)	Weston et al. (1999)
Muscle Characteristic	Black vs. White	Black vs. White	Black vs. White
Type 1 fibers (%)		53 vs. 63	49 vs. 67
CS (umol/min/g ww)			28 vs. 19 *
3HAD (umol/min/g ww)			24 vs. 16 *
PFK (umol/min/g ww)			51 vs. 40
Sub-maximal [La] (mmol/L)	1.3 vs. 1.6 *	7.2 vs. 9.5 *	4.8 vs. 7.7 *
VO ₂ max (ml/kg/min)	60 vs. 63	72 vs. 71	62 vs. 65
Peak treadmill speed (km/h)		24 vs. 24	21 vs. 22

genetic difference, or a response to training? Or is it possible that an interactive effect of an underlying genotype exposed to the correct training environment is at work to elicit a phenotypic change resulting in low metabolite accumulation?

Since skeletal muscle is the primary engine that makes movement possible and therefore also a primary influence on the metabolic response to exercise, several of the studies of Black and White endurance athletes have focused on comparing their muscle characteristics. There is prior evidence that skeletal muscle fiber type is partially influenced by genetic factors which have been calculated to contribute to between 40 and 50% of the variation between individuals in fiber type (Simoneau & Bouchard, 1995). Some studies suggest either a much higher contribution or a much lower contribution (Bouchard, Simoneau, Lortie, Boulay, Marcotte & Thibault 1986). Saltin et al. (1995) found no significant differences in fiber type proportions between Kenyan and Scandinavian elite runners, and neither did Coetzer et al. (1993) or Weston et al. (1999) find differences between Xhosa and white South African endurance runners. One difficulty with these studies is the possibility of a type II statistical error because of low subject numbers since the mean values for % type I fibers (indicated for the latter two studies in Table 2) seemed to be somewhat lower in the Xhosa athletes. We therefore still await more comprehensive studies, including studies looking at fiber type conversion in response to training in this cohort.

In contrast, Weston et al. (1999) found that oxidative capacity was higher in the muscle of the Xhosa cohort (see Table 2) and citrate synthase activity was also related to the reduced plasma lactate accumulation (assessed by correlation). Although this finding would seem to point toward enhanced expression of oxidative enzymes in African runners, Saltin et al. (1995) did not find a similar significant difference in biopsies of Kenyan runners vs.

Scandinavian runners. Once again, low subject numbers and possible confounding effects of altitude may have influenced the results and we await more comprehensive studies. Although Weston et al. (1999) matched the Xhosa and white subjects for training distance, these data were gathered by questionnaire and the training habits, which could affect the skeletal muscle phenotypic traits in question, should also be assessed on a longitudinal basis using e.g. heart rate monitoring in combination with training logs to determine the duration and intensity of training. Coetzer et al.'s Xhosa subjects reported spending more time at a higher training intensity than their white counterpart (1993).

There are also possible alternative explanations for the observed lower plasma lactate accumulation during exercise in African endurance runners. Monocarboxylate transporters (MCT1 and MCT4) are found in skeletal muscle membranes and play a role in the export and import of lactate. Since these transporters are symports and require the concomitant transport of a hydrogen ion with each lactate molecule, enhanced lactate transport out of skeletal muscle could reduce an exercise-induced drop in intramuscular pH and delay fatigue. However, increased expression of MCT transporters may also enhance plasma lactate and hydrogen ion re-uptake into muscles engaged to a lesser intensity than the primary movers, where lactate could serve as a substrate for oxidation (Gladden, 2004). If this is the case in African endurance runners it could explain their lower metabolite accumulation, but since expression of these proteins is enhanced by training, such a finding would suggest a 'nurture' rather than a 'nature' basis for their metabolic phenotype. These aspects of skeletal muscle biochemistry and intermediary metabolism, and the interaction with training, remain to be investigated in the cohorts under discussion here.

It is interesting to note that in the altitude debate referred to earlier, Messonnier (2002) argues that the effect of altitude exposure on enhancing red cell MCT1 expression could explain the positive effects of altitude training on endurance performance. This is a particularly promising hypothesis, since time to fatigue (TTF) during high-intensity exercise has been related to the ability of the subjects to exchange and remove lactate and is also a physiological factor that was statistically different between the Xhosa and white South African runners in the studies by Coetzer et al. (1993) and Weston et al. (1999).

Genetic differences in physiological endurance performance (VO_{2max} or sub-maximal TTF) have been suggested in the general population, for example in the HERITAGE Family Study (Bouchard, Leon, Rao, Skinner, Wilmore, & Gagnon, 1995). However, as discussed in the next section in more detail, the response to training is also at least in part, heritable. It will be a difficult challenge for exercise physiologists and geneticists to dissect the 'pure' influence of training on athletic performance, 'nurture', from a

possible enhanced training response due to favorable gene x environment interactions, 'nature-nurture'. However, with the modern biological tools at our disposal, as well as a multidisciplinary approach to the search for the reasons behind athletic excellence (Myburgh, 2003), future updates on this topic are bound to yield further fruitful discussion on the role of 'nature' vs. 'nurture' in world-class athletic performance.

The dominance of black athletes in sprint running events could be explained by more fast-twitch muscle fibers which might afford faster top running speeds by virtue of greater ground forces and longer strides (Weyand, Sternlight, Bellizzi, & Wright, 2000). This is in fact the proposition put forth in at least one popular press publication (Entine, 2000). Some data indicate a greater percentage of fast-twitch fibers and enzymes catalyzing glycolytic and phosphagenic metabolic pathways (in contrast to oxidative pathways) in sedentary West African compared to White non-athletes (Ama, Lagasse, Bouchard, & Simoneau, 1990). The differences were apparent in Type IIa fibers, 48.6% in Blacks and 41.9% in Whites. Of interest, these Black and White subjects did not differ in maximal force of the knee extensors and in total work output in 10- and 30-second tests. A study of fiber types in untrained American Blacks and Whites of college age indicated a similar though smaller difference in the percentage of Type IIa fibers, 40.0% and 36.6%, respectively (Duey, Bassett, Torok, Howley, Bond, Mancuso, & Trudell, 1996; Kostek, Angelopoulos, Clarkson, Gordon, Moynam, Visich, Zoeller, Price, Seip, Thompson, Devaney, Gordish-Dressman, Hoffman, & Pescatello, 2009). As with distance running, a biological explanation for the apparent disproportionate sprinting success of Black Athletes remains uncertain.

Cardiovascular Function

The cardiovascular (CV) system is of primary interest in the context of endurance performance. There are, however, sparse published data comparing CV system capacities of Black and White athletes. Data from the HERITAGE Family Study have contributed to our understanding of familial and racial variation in maximal oxygen consumption ($VO_2\text{max}$). The HERITAGE Family Study investigated adaptations to aerobic exercise training in 484 American White adults from 99 families and 260 American Blacks adults from 105 families (Bouchard et al., 1995). Heredity explained about 40% of the variation in $VO_2\text{max}$ before training and 47% of the variation in the response of $VO_2\text{max}$ to a standardized training program. There was a considerable range of variation in the response of $VO_2\text{max}$ to training within and between families and racial groups, and there were poor, average, and superior responders within in each racial group (Skinner, Jaskolski, Jaskol-

ska, Krasnoff, Gagnon, Leon, Rao, Wilmore, & Bouchard 2001). Racial background was not a significant contributor to the level of VO_2max before training or to the response of VO_2max to training.

Several studies have compared responses of VO_2max to acute aerobic exercise in American Black and Whites. The results indicate lower VO_2max or VO_2peak values in American Black compared to American White athletes (Skinner et al., 2001). In contrast, the best Scandinavian runners have similar VO_2max values as Kenyan runners (Saltin et al., 1995). During a treadmill marathon, Black athletes ran at a higher percentage of their VO_2max than White athletes, but there was no difference in VO_2max between the two groups (Bosch et al., 1990). Based on this rather limited information, the evidence for differences in aerobic capacity between Blacks and Whites is not convincing and does not favor an athletic advantage for Black Athletes.

A study of supine impedance cardiography in 616 American Whites and 446 American Blacks (Snieder, Harshfield, & Treiber, 2003) indicated heritability estimates of 50% and 64% for a resting cardiac index (cardiac output indexed by body surface area) and heart rate, respectively, but no differences in the heritability of resting cardiac index and heart rate between the groups. A genome-wide linkage scan of the HERITAGE Family Study data base for quantitative trait loci linked to submaximal cardiac function (based on the CO_2 rebreathing method) (Rankinen, An, Perusse, Rice, Chagnon, Gagnon, Leon, Skinner, Wilmore, Rao, & Bouchard, 2002) indicated linkages with markers in both Whites and Blacks. However, further analysis is required to determine the contribution of genetic variation in these regions to differences in cardiac function between Blacks and Whites.

Published data comparing cardiac function during maximal exercise in elite Black and White athletes are apparently lacking. Resting and submaximal exercise hemodynamics were compared in Black and White males matched for age (mean age, 22 years) body surface area and VO_2max . CO_2 rebreathing was performed at 50 and 100 watts during cycle ergometry. Blacks had significantly lower heart rates than Whites at rest and during exercise. There were no differences in stroke volume or cardiac output at rest or during exercise between the Blacks and Whites and both groups had similar cardiac output responses from 0 to 100 watts (30% increase for Blacks, 34% increase for Whites). Cardiac function using the Doppler technique was measured during supine maximal graded exercise in 10 year old Black and White boys (Arensman, Treiber, Gruber, & Strong, 1989). Working capacity was similar in the two groups and cardiac index was significantly greater in the White boys at rest, during exercise and during recovery.

A variety of studies have assessed peripheral vascular function in Blacks and Whites with most focus on endothelial function. Nearly all studies of peripheral vascular function are performed with subjects in the resting state, which provides little insight into peripheral vascular function during

submaximal and maximal aerobic exercise. Blacks typically tend to have greater total peripheral resistance and tend to show decreased vasodilatory function in response to pharmacologic and mechanical agonists. Although there is a genetic component to variation in peripheral vascular function, none of the studies has identified genetic variation specific to Blacks and Whites. For example, the estimated heritability of percentage change in flow-mediated dilation (a measure of endothelial function) was only 14% in the Framingham Study (Benjamin, Larson, Keyes, Mitchell, Vasan, Keaney, Lehman, Fan, Osypiuk, & Vita, 2004), and a significant role for racial background was not indicated. Aerobic exercise training improves peripheral vascular function, but there are no data comparing the adaptive responses of the peripheral vasculature in Blacks and Whites.

When elite Black and White South African runners were compared, elite Black runners had higher sustained exercise intensities but lower blood lactate concentrations and a greater time to fatigue during repetitive isometric muscle contractions (Coetzer, Noakes, Sanders, Lambert, Bosch, Wiggins, & Dennis, 1993). These findings may reflect adaptations to higher training intensities in the Black runners who spent 36% of their total mileage per week (50-60 miles) above 80% of VO_{2max} compared to just 14% of the total mileage per week (50-60 miles) in the White runners. This would seem to suggest that differences in cultural factors and/or training techniques, as well as potential biocultural interactions, play a major role in the observed difference in endurance exercise performance between Black and White distance runners.

Thermoregulation

Potential differences in thermoregulation during exercise between Blacks and Whites were introduced more than 50 years ago by environmental physiologists and physical anthropologists (Baker, 1958; Roberts, 1953; Robinson, Dill, Harmon, Hall, & Wilson, 1941; Wyndham, Strydom, Morrison, Peter, Williams, Bredell, & Joffe, 1963). Greater spectrophotometric skin reflectance, more sweat glands per surface area and variation in gland distribution, and larger surface area to mass ratio (less potential heat production per unit potential heat loss) have been indicated as characteristics which contribute to better thermoregulation in Blacks. However, both historic (Baker, 1958; Robinson et al., 1941; Wyndham, MacPherson, & Munro, 1964) and more recent studies (Larsen, 2003; Marino, Lambert, & Noakes, 2004) have failed to substantiate the advantage.

One early study of Southern Black and White sharecroppers of similar acclimatization, diets, and body weights showed slight, but significantly lower rectal temperatures ($\sim 0.7^{\circ}F$) in the Southern Black sharecroppers after

2 hours of heat exposure (Robinson et al., 1941). These findings lead to a sequence of studies throughout the world investigating population differences in thermoregulation. For example, biological anthropologists hypothesized that the small size of tropical people was a morphological adaptation to heat (Roberts, 1953). Accordingly, people who were indigenous to hot environments had a larger surface area/mass ratio than people who are indigenous to more temperate and cold environments. It was further suggested that this inherently larger surface area to mass ratio might be a genetic characteristic of the population (Baker, 1958). However, a series of studies in South African mine workers failed to find substantial differences between racial/ethnic groups in reactions to heat. (Wyndham et al., 1964; Wyndham et al., 1963) Very small differences in rectal temperature and sweating were found between Blacks and Whites with a surface area to mass ratios of 2.8 and 2.6, respectively. Negligible differences were found between Arabs (North African) and Whites (Strydom & Wyndham, 1963) and between Whites and Australian aborigines (native Blacks) (Wyndham et al, 1964) in physiological reactions to heat stress. A series of studies of U.S. Black and White soldiers considered thermoregulatory responses to hot-wet and hot-dry environmental conditions with different clothing configurations(Baker, 1958). No differences were observed in sweat loss, rectal temperature and heart rate when soldiers walked (3½ miles per hour) under hot-wet conditions (~40°C, 50% relative humidity). In the hot-dry (~40°C, 17% relative humidity) conditions while nude, White soldiers had lower heart rates and rectal temperatures than Black soldiers. Less reflectance of darker skin was initially suggested as underlying the observed differences, but was later determined as unimportant for heat tolerance.

More recently and with the emergence of African distance runners, thermal responses to running in the heat (35°C) during an 8 km self-paced performance run were examined in Black South African and White men (Marino et al, 2004). Black runners produced less heat and sweated less (32%) than White runners. However, the White runners were 17% heavier (body mass) than the Black runners. After adjusting for differences in body mass, the differences in sweat loss are reduced to < 1%. The observations thus suggest that a small body mass is one advantageous factor for distance running success in the heat (Marino et al., 2004).

Non-Biological Factors: Environmental Adaptive Aptitudes

The generalized ideology that black athletes are superior was not always a widely acknowledged belief (Baker & Horton, 2003). At the turn of 20th century, Blacks were generally considered second-rate sportsmen. Hoberman (1997) suggests that White and Black scholars questioned physicality

of Blacks until the remarkable accomplishments from Blacks such as Marshall Taylor, Jesse Owens, and Jack Johnson. These timely performances in cycling, track, and boxing, respectively, fueled many scientists and spectators to consider the notion that American Blacks were superior athletes due to physical and perhaps genetic advantages. However, Baker and Horton (2003), suggest that the mere belief that such differences exist creates a psychological environment that can have significant consequences for performance (athletic and academic).

Sociocultural and psychological factors are non-biological variables cited most often as potentially influencing observed performance differences between Black and White athletes. Most of the early historical discussions of these factors focused on American Blacks and Whites. However, recent discussion has surrounded East African runners, which is a relatively recent phenomenon. Hamilton (2000), for example, examined evidence for the East African running success and failed to find a plausible explanation. Nevertheless, he suggested that psychological factors appear to play an important role in empowerment of Black runners and disempowerment in other groups such as Whites (Hamilton, 2000). Evidence is becoming increasingly clear that culture plays an important role (Onywera, Scott, Boit, & Pitsiladis, 2005).

Therefore, Harrison (socio-cultural researcher) and Proctor (exercise physiologist) have previously mapped out the framework and concept of Environmental Adaptive Aptitudes (EAA) (Harrison & Proctor, 1999). EAA posits that systematic analysis and assessment of athletic performance with various ethnic and gender populations in the context of: a) environment (family, peer group), b) coping mechanisms (strategies to perform with individual or institutional barriers) and c) competence and skill (elite performance)--all three of these lead to a more holistic examination of the *process versus only examining the final product (excellence)*. Further, nature and nurture's nexus is *cultural*, and should include a bio-cultural framework per the synthesis of the biological literature previously in this paper.

Environmental Adaptive Aptitudes #1: Snapshot Phenomenon

The popular belief that Black athletes dominate sport may be explained, at least in part, by simple observation bias, but the reality that best explains this observation evades simple interpretation. Although no single analytical approach may conclusively challenge existing beliefs involving Black athlete sports dominance, objective examination of running success offers interesting insights.

Running (sprint and endurance) is a solitary sport. It affords relatively easy to interpret performance outcomes and is seemingly easier to inter-

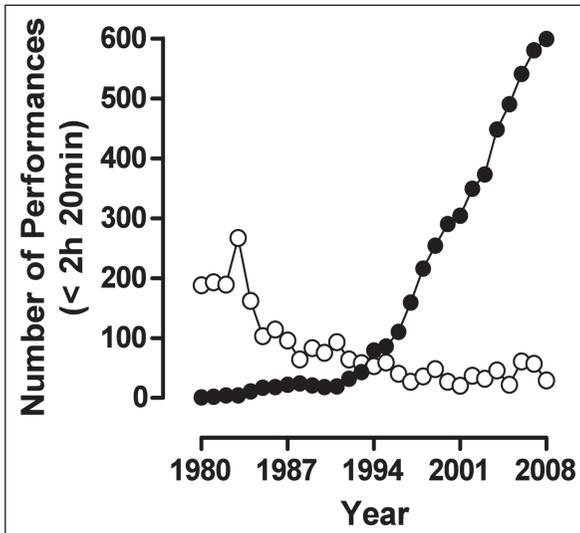


Figure 1. Changing distribution of sub 2h 20min male marathon performances in the United States (open circles) and Kenya (closed circles), 1980 to 2008. *Data courtesy of Dr. David Martin, Georgia State University.*

pret than more confounded team sports (Samson & Yerles, 1988). Moreover, running speed is often a key element of success in a variety of sports. The popular media often focus on running and offer explanations to explain the natural endurance and speed of athletes of East and West African ancestry, respectively (Entine, 2000). In the exercise science community, East African, specifically Kenyan, dominance in distance running is frequently used as a rationale for studying potential biological variation that may underlie this phenomenon. But the evidence of biological explanation for Kenyan dominance, while fundamentally sound, is rather weak (Larsen, 2003). Although nature (ectomorphic physique) or nurture (training) may explain Kenyan advantages in running economy or lactate threshold, VO_{2max} is similar compared to Scandinavian runners of similar ability (Larsen, 2003). It is doubtful that such small advantages could explain more than a fraction of the observed Kenyan dominance in distance running, especially given the complexity of factors that ultimately underlie successful endurance performance (Myburgh, 2003). It is possible that the disproportionate number of Kenyan runners in world rankings and in the winner's circles of almost every major distance race from 5,000 to 42,000 m may have a simpler explanation.

In the United States, the Boston Marathon is a prestigious historical race that has been won by Kenyan runners in 14 of the last 16 years (see approximate crossover point from Figure 1—1993). In each of those years, roughly one-half of the top 10 finishers every year were also Kenyan. Nevertheless, the average first and tenth place times for the race have remained remarkably stable over the past 28 years (excluding 1985) (Fleming, 2005). What changed dramatically over this interval were the talent pool numerators and

denominators for the race. Figure 1 illustrates that the depth of marathon running talent in the U.S. has declined over the past 28 years, while the exact opposite has occurred in Kenya. Kenyan dominance in the Boston Marathon began at the crossover point in Figure 1. The magnitude of the change in depth of U.S. marathon runners is dramatic when one considers that only one U.S. Olympic Trials Marathon runner between 1984 and 2008 has run fast enough to have placed among the top three performers in the 1980 race. Clearly, the *culture* of distance running in the U.S. has declined while it thrives in Kenya (Onywera et al, 2005). Thus, observation without historical context may be biased owing to a snapshot phenomenon that only focuses on the product, not the process of athletic performance.

International world record and Olympic gold medal performances also do not support the idea of innate Kenyan dominance in distance running. Although Kenyans are currently among the top performers from 5,000 to 42,000 m, records have progressed gradually (Hymans, 2003) despite the infusion of extraordinary Kenyan talent. The contribution by Kenyans to Olympic gold medal performances in the marathon from 1980 to 2008 even suggests the absence of any phenomenon (Table 1).

In contrast to distance events, dominance of Black athletes in the sprints is more consistent for both world record (Hymans, 2003) and Olympic gold medal performances (Table 1). There are plausible biological explanations for the dominance of Black athletes in sprinting, such as more fast-twitch muscle fibers (Ama, Lagasse, Bouchard, & Simoneau, 1990) that afford faster top running speeds by virtue of greater ground forces and longer strides (Weyand, Sternlight, Bellizzi, & Wright, 2000). Similarly, there are equally plausible biological explanations for White athlete dominance in swimming, such as greater relative body fatness and buoyancy (in contrast to greater skeletal weight and density in Blacks). Caution in drawing conclusions or inferences are warranted, however, as biological evidence is very limited while culturally-based or bio-culturally based explanations are simpler and no less robust (Samson & Yerles, 1988). Further, EAA is a complex approach and explanation that has the potential to be a rigorous apparatus in the endless debate of biology or belief in terms of perceived Black (male) athlete dominance in certain sports. In the next heading we examine environmental factors in the context of bio-cultural experiments in academic and athletic performance situations.

Environmental Adaptive Aptitudes #2: Stereotype Threat

Scientists, society, and the popular press continue to theorize about factors that may underlie Black and White differences in athletic and academic performance and thus contribute to racial stereotypes (Edwards, 1973; Entine,

2000; Hamilton, 2000; Hoberman, 1997; Lapchick, 1991). Stereotype threat may result, which can be thought of as a situational discomfort that is felt by targets when they are at risk of behaving in a way that will fulfill a negative or positive stereotype about their group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Examples of such stereotypes include African Americans in academics and women in math and the physical sciences. The classic experiment by Steele and Aronson established the notion of stereotype threat as an explanation for differences in standardized test scores between Black and White students (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The experiment demonstrated that situation awareness and pressure to perform in an environment where Blacks are thought to be intelligently inferior to their White peers decreased test performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Perceptions of stereotype threat can potentially have a profound effect on decisions of young athletes regarding athletic participation (Stone, 1999). It has been suggested that youth athletes internalize these stereotypes and base decisions on athletic participation for this reason (Baker & Horton, 2003). It has also been suggested that stereotype threat may help to explain reduced participation of Americans in distance running (Figure 1) with the emergence of the East African runners (Coakley, 2001). Stereotype threat is an important example of social and/or environmental influences that may contribute to the apparent dominance of specific racial or ethnic groups in athletic performance.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that very subtle, but important, biological differences may be beyond the sensitivity of common techniques used to study human performance physiology. Small study sample sizes and large measurement variability also increase the probability of type two errors, which leads to both a statistical and philosophical null finding. These limitations apply most to the conclusion that performance differences of biological origin are absent. But when combined with the proposition that observation bias may explain the appearance of lopsided success in most circumstances, the scientific evidence seems substantiated.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study of racial/ethnic variation in morphology, proportions, body composition and muscle physiology as a factor affecting specific athletic performances has a long history (Kostek et al, 2009). However, data comparing athletes of different racial/ethnic groups within the same sport are actually very limited. Systematic study of non-biological factors affecting athletic

performances has not received corresponding attention. Studies controlling for training and ecological variables as well as factors in the respective cultural environments are emerging in studies of African distance runners. Elite athletes are biologically unique in their capacity to perform remarkable feats of speed and endurance. As such, it is difficult to make inferences from the general population to such select samples of athletes. The presently available evidence indicates considerable overlap and relatively small differences between Blacks and Whites, athletes and non-athletes. By inference, observed differences in sport success between Black and White athletes are likely related to non-biological factors or EAA, which need elaboration. Potential interactions between biological and cultural factors as a source of variation in performance need further study. This calls for a bio-cultural approach to performance. Such an approach recognizes that biology may influence culture and culture may influence biology. Moreover, culture and biology interact.

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About the Authors

Robert Carter III (Major, U.S. Army Medical Service Corps) serves as the Deputy Director for Research & Technology, Medical Systems within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Dr. Carter is a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine (FACSM), and currently serves as the chair of the subcommittee on global health and on the committee for membership and leadership diversity. In 2009, he was appointed to the *Exercise is Medicine* Advisory Board and chair of the subcommittee on underserved populations.

Samuel N. Cheuvront, PhD, R.D., is a Research Physiologist in the Thermal and Mountain Medicine Division at the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Natick, MA. Dr. Cheuvront received his PhD in exercise physiology from Florida State University under the tutelage of Dr. Emily M. Haymes, after which he joined USARIEM as a post-doctoral fellow in thermal physiology. Dr. Cheuvront is now a Principal Investigator in the Thermal and Mountain Medicine Division. His primary research interests include the study of nutritional, biological, and environmental factors influencing human exercise performance.

C. Keith Harrison is Associate Professor of Sport Business Management in the College of Business Administration and is Associate Director of the Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida in

Orlando. Dr. C. Keith Harrison is also founder and director of the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess established in 1998. Dr. Harrison earned his doctorate in higher and post-secondary education at USC. Dr. Harrison has held faculty positions at Washington State University, the University of Michigan and Arizona State University. Dr. Harrison created the term Scholar-Baller™ in 1995.

Larry Proctor is currently the CEO of B.E.A.M. LLC—a preventive health and wellness corporation. Dr. Proctor's research interest investigates the impact of environmental factors such as socioeconomic status and social determinants upon health status. He also investigates the relationship between health disparity and sports disparity of various ethnic groups. Taken together, these two areas of interest examine the socio-cultural influences on biological expression to address specific social justice issues facing underserved populations. These investigations involve testing and measuring biometric, musculoskeletal, body composition and flexibility variables of children, athletes and the general public. He has presented this data at a variety of local, state, national and international meetings. Abstracts and articles of these investigations have been published in peer-reviewed journals.

Kathy H. Myburgh represented South Africa internationally as artistic gymnast for 7 years (1975–1981) and this influenced her choice of scientific discipline: human exercise physiology. Her postgraduate studies were done at the University of Cape Town (UCT). In 1989 she received the Boots Gold Medal Award for best presentation by a Young Investigator at the Biannual South African Congress of Sports Medicine and in the same year received her PhD. She did postdoctoral work at Stanford University and at the University of California at San Francisco. In 1991 she became a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine (FACSM).

Michael D. Brown, Professor and Chair in the Department of Geology at the University of Maryland earned his PhD from the University of Keele, U.K. His research interests include: High-*T* metamorphism, crustal anatexis and melt segregation, ascent and emplacement; granulites and HP/UHT metamorphism; the *P-T-t-d* evolution and the tectonics of metamorphic belts.

Malina M. Robert, Professor. PhD, FACSM, Professor Emeritus, Department of Kinesiology and Health Education, University of Texas at Austin, and Research Professor, Department of Physical and Health Education, Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas, USA.

Myron Rolle's ESPN Page 2 Story

A Qualitative Approach to Blog Comments

Abstract There is limited research into the effects of blog communication in the area of sport. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore public blog comments to Jemele Hill's *ESPN Page 2* article titled "Choosing a Rhodes Scholarship over the NFL? Now that's admirable" (January 15, 2009). Applying role conflict theory in the context of student-athletes, Myron Rolle's plight in the world of academics and athletics serves as an extraordinary case example. Content was qualitatively coded from all 164 comments posted on the blog, which were authored by individuals (bloggers) who read Hill's article. Bloggers engaged in dialogue about the value of academics and athletics through the lens of Myron Rolle, the quintessential scholar-athlete. Four major themes emerged from bloggers' comments: *Amazing Accomplishment & Opportunity*, *Emphasis on Education in Sport*, *Negative Blog Comments*, and *Role Model*. Future implications and recommendations are offered in regard to the 21st century student-athlete and related research.

According to several studies (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Lally & Kerr, 2005; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005), student-athletes experience role conflict. This experience of role conflict can decrease the well-being of these student-athletes, which is why many scholars in the field of psychology have studied athletic identity issues in regard to collegiate athletes. Myron Rolle, a 2008 Rhodes Scholar, is an exemplary example of a scholar-athlete who directly contradicts the findings of Engstrom and Sedlacek (1991). The authors found by virtue of their identity as athletes, they are somewhat lacking in academic ability and motivation. Lally and Kerr (2005) found that student-athletes toward the end of their college careers discarded their athletic career aspirations and became more invested in their student roles and as a result their student identity became more prominent. Brown and Hartley (1998) suggested student-athletes may invest in both the athlete and student role identities simultaneously and that investing in the latter may allow the exploration of non-athletic career opportunities. Myron Rolle, a former African American college football player, demonstrated that he is *the* quintessential scholar-athlete and was able to invest in both his athletic and student identities.

Settles, Sellers, and Damas' (2003) main findings indicated student-athletes who experienced less role interference reported more positive levels of well-being. This only appears to be the case for those student-athletes who view the two roles as distinct. However, Settles et al. found no relationship between level of interference and well-being for student-athletes who view being a student and an athlete as being a single role. They also suggested that future studies should explore topics of role involvement and role importance as predictors of role interference. Yopyk and Prentice (2005) found tasks that favor one identity over others may increase the salience of the favored identity. This process enables people to shift rapidly from one identity to another in response to task demands. It may be precisely this process that has enabled student-athletes to excel at both academic and athletic endeavors (Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). According to Yopyk and Prentice (2005), minority status is often linked to negative academic stereotypes and due to the stereotype threat which African Americans face there needs to be more research in this area. Therefore, current researchers focused on Myron Rolle, who is an African American scholar-athlete that successfully integrated his student and athlete roles.

Rolle is from New Jersey and graduated in five semesters at Florida State University (FSU) while playing intercollegiate football. He was able to balance his academics with his athletic endeavors and proved to be very successful in both arenas. If he had turned down the opportunity to study for a year at Oxford University, he would have been drafted in the NFL as a cornerback. Rolle made a critical life decision and went to Oxford to study for a year on an academic scholarship. He earned a graduate degree from Oxford and eventually plans to pursue a career in medicine. While a scholar-athlete at FSU, Myron did not experience role conflict. However, he was faced with structural tensions, institutional pressures, and commitments. For example, he had to make a decision to attend his interview for a Rhodes Scholarship or to play in a football game. Ultimately, he missed half of his football game to interview. And now Myron is an aspiring neurosurgeon with a very bright future.

Role Conflict Theory: The Student-Athlete

Individuals experience conflict due to the discrepancies that exist between societal expectations and individuals' personal values. These discrepancies can result in individuals perceiving or experiencing incompatibility in their role expectations (Sage & Loudermilk, 1979). Role conflict plays a vital part in the lives of student-athletes where there are many expectations. Individuals' behavior expectation in one group often conflicts with the expectations for another group, for example when students belong to academic groups in addition to being involved within a sports team (Lance, 2004). Many examples

of role conflict involve multiple group memberships including sports and outside activities such as family or work commitments. Some scholars contend that commercialism diverts student attention away from educational pursuits and contributes to role conflict among student-athletes (Lance, 2004).

The existing literature primarily focused on the concept of role conflict from a sociological context (Merton, 1957; Turner, 1962; Spreitzer, Snyder, & Larson, 1979). While there is research which addresses role conflict in sports (Allison & Butler, 1984; Coakley, 2009; Lance, 2004; Sage & Loudermilk, 1979; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1983; Stein & Hoffman, 1978), it is clear that student-athletes continue having difficulty coping with their roles associated with being a high status athlete and a student simultaneously (Stein & Hoffman, 1978; Coakley, 2009; Sage, 1979).

The Term Student-Athlete

The term student-athlete has become widely adopted within the United States and refers to athletes who participate in tertiary education (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005). In general the average American sports fan associates student-athletes with a number of positive functions. Literature suggests that the term *student* was strategically placed prior to the term *athlete* as a way to encourage athletes to focus on their student role (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005). There are however, inherent problems that can arise in reference to the term which need to be addressed. All too often, college athletes feel the need to identify themselves with the student-athlete status in order to enhance their self-worth. As suggested by Adler and Adler (1991), student-athletes experience a series of role strains and conflicts; such pressures often lead to an abandoning of the student-athlete ideal with a pure focus on the athlete perspective. Finally, having the term *student* in front of the term *athlete* does not eliminate the issues surrounding educational practices among college athletes, but rather masks the need for serious structural changes (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005).

Methods

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) claimed qualitative research involves an *interpretive and naturalistic* approach: "This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). Current researchers first read the *ESPN Page 2* article written by Jemele Hill, which covered Myron Rolle and his success story. Next, researchers acquired all of the blog comments (164) from the *ESPN Page 2* internet blog. The internet blog contained many individuals' comments and reactions to Hill's article. Finally, the blog comments were collected and analyzed.

Data Analysis

The blog comments from the *ESPN Page 2* website were transcribed into a Word document for data analysis. An investigative team was formed which consisted of four individuals trained in qualitative research methodology, two of which were the primary researchers. This investigative team was utilized throughout the data analysis process. All of the members of the investigative team examined the entire data set.

Following transcription, each investigator read each of the bloggers' transcripts line-by-line in order to get a sense of the bloggers' comments. This process is referred to as line-by-line coding (Glaser, 1978). Next the process of "open coding" was utilized in which investigators identified potential themes by pulling together real examples from the text (Agar, 1996; Bernard, 1994). This process is also often referred to as identifying raw-data themes. The raw-data themes are quotes that capture a concept provided by the blogger (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The third reading of the comments by the investigators involved a *memoing* technique, which is utilized to record relationships among codes and/or raw data themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). There are three types of memos that could be employed. Code notes is the type the team used. Code notes were formed by the investigators attempting "to summarize his or her ideas about what is going on in the text" (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 783).

After code notes were recorded, the investigative team met to discuss the comments. The primary purpose of this meeting was to interpret and identify major themes. During this meeting investigators shared and discussed their code notes with the group. There were few incidences of inconsistent categorizations among investigators, which were resolved by engaging in discussion with all investigative team members. Final decisions were made that would accurately reflect the comments and saturate the themes. Themes were derived from all of the transcripts and attempts were made to interpret commonalities among the thoughts described in each of the transcripts (Patton, 2001). Primary researchers identified major themes, across comments and support for each theme was located in each of the transcripts (Patton, 2001).

Finally, utilizing the themes that were previously identified, transcripts were coded by the primary researchers. Codes are assigned to contiguous units of text and act as tags to mark off text in order to later retrieve and index (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Codes associated with each theme were identified in each of the transcripts in order to ensure the accuracy of the themes. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), computer-assisted programs offer assistance in coding qualitative data. The ATLAS software program is a powerful software package utilized for qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual data. ATLAS was utilized to verify and assist with the accuracy of determining the major themes. The ATLAS data analysis was consistent with the investigative teams' coding procedures.

Results

This study is specifically focused on the main figure Myron Rolle in Hill's *ESPN* story. The scope was on bloggers' comments that focused on the content of the story. Bloggers also posted comments based solely on the author Hill and the way in which *ESPN* distributed the story, however, this study solely focused on the blog discourse related to Myron Rolle and his story. Due to the large amount of comments (164) there was plenty of variety within the bloggers' discourse. The length of comments ranged from a couple of sentences to a short paragraph. Each of the comments included several key concepts, which coincide with the studies' major themes. Very few bloggers' comments exclusively coincided with only one major theme. In the following section bloggers' quotes are offered to support each of the major themes. Four major themes emerged which are descriptive of the bloggers' comments to Hill's *ESPN* Myron Rolle story: *Amazing Accomplishment & Opportunity*, *Emphasis on Education in Sport*, *Negative Blog Comments*, and *Role Model*. The titles of some of the major themes are directly from the participants' words, which is a technique termed "in vivo coding" (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Amazing Accomplishment and Opportunity

The major theme *Amazing Accomplishment & Opportunity* represents bloggers' perceptions on Rolle's awesome achievement of being awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. Bloggers' also acknowledged the great opportunity Rolle had to study at Oxford University. Consider the following three comments:

(Blog) This kid is amazing and I commend him for seeing beyond the game and beyond the money, and seeing a need and an opportunity and applying himself, even at the risk of his college football career and his professional football career.

(Blog) Congratulations Myron Rolle. What you have managed to accomplish is simply amazing. I applaud you in your choice to hold off on your NFL dream in order to pursue two dreams. And while your story certainly doesn't provide the controversy to catch the average reader's attention, it certainly is refreshing to read more positive articles about what athletes are doing off the field. Good job!

(Blog) What Myron Rolle has accomplished in his life on and off the field is simply amazing. To debate that to any degree is simply ridiculous.

Emphasis on Education in Sport

The theme *Emphasis on Education in Sport* involved bloggers' comments that there needs to be more of a scholastic focus in intercollegiate athletic departments. This also includes the idea that athletes need to develop their skills in academic areas. Bloggers' perceived that Rolle has a different set of priorities than his colleagues. Consider these examples from bloggers:

(Blog) As both an FSU and Oxford alum, I have been a fan of Mr. Rolle since he came to FSU and announced that his primary goals were academic. I am quite proud for Mr. Rolle for demonstrating priorities different from most student-athletes, and am glad that he well represents the highest aspirations a student-athlete can pursue.

(Blog) I commend Rolle for his determination and focus for juggling D-I football AND being an Academic All-American. He truly is an inspiration and best of luck at Oxford and wherever else your mind will take you!

(Blog) Always keep in mind that ur intelligence and the impact is has will far outlast ANY accomplishments u have on the football field.

(Blog) Academics must become more strict in the NCAA (football especially), before this becomes the norm (as it already is at many top BCS schools). To end this with my favorite part of college football, I would like to mention that Notre Dame Football has a 98% graduation rate (first with Navy and BC) and has a bevy of prestigious academic programs for students, but ALSO has the most Nat'l Champs, Heisman Winners, 3rd most wins all-time, AND the most NFL players of any school. So at least we know there are some truly great institutions that set the gold standard.

Negative Blog Comments

The major theme *Negative Blog Comments* represents bloggers' negative comments and their concern about the state of the social environment in the country. Bloggers' also acknowledged the great amount of uneducated posts on the blog. Consider the following three comments:

(Blog) What's with the unnecessary stab at Mickey Andrews. The article is great, then it throws a college football legend under the bus...and 90% of these posts are 95% ignorant. I came in reading with high hopes, and left frustrated and confused about this country's social environment.

(Blog) hey cleee899... what was your gpa in college?... did u even go to college?.. cause ur comments are pretty dumb and prolly shouldnt b spoken outloud... ppl mite think ur an idiot or something...

(Blog) It's unbelievable how many negative comments are on here. People today cannot take good news at face value, they must find something to rip apart. If you are one of those people, shame on you!

Role Model

The theme *Role Model* involved bloggers' comments that Rolle is a great role model for today's youth. Bloggers' reported that Rolle encourages other student-athletes to be exemplary students. Consider these examples from bloggers:

(Blog) I think Rolle serves as a good role model for young student-athletes in high schools around the country.

(Blog) I wish him all the best and hope that future athletes look to him as a role model for their own careers.

(Blog) AND THIS IS NOT THE MAIN ARTICLE ON ESPN.COM WHY???? I truly admire Myron Rolle, he is a real role model for the youth of this country, best of luck in his future no matter what it be.

(Blog) If you want a role model, ladies and gentlemen, I present you Myron Rolle.

Discussion and Conclusion

Some scholars who advocate the role conflict theory have claimed student-athletes need to separate their roles in order to experience well-being and success (Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Lally & Kerr, 2005; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2003; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005; Wininger & White, 2008). Myron Rolle's achievements are counter to this line of research. For example, Settles et al.'s (2003) findings indicated a positive association between role separation and well-being with student-athletes. Also, based on the empiricism of their data set, they claimed, "this only appears to be the case for those student athletes who view the two roles as distinct. No relationship between level of interference and well-being was found for student athletes who view being a student and an athlete as being a single role" (Settles et al., 2003,

p. 580). Hence, this finding fueled the present study and demonstrated that not all scholar-athletes must separate their roles.

Other empirical investigations, such as Harrison, Stone, Shapiro, Yee, Boyd, and Rullan (2009) found male student-athletes performed significantly better on more difficult test items when only their athletic identity was primed before the test. Another set of researchers, Winger and White (2008), suggested a strategy for decreasing stereotype effects among student-athletes is to encourage them to make their identity as an athlete less salient when in the classroom. Once again, the investigation of Myron Rolle and his navigation of his dual identities (i.e., academics and athletics) suggest otherwise.

Hodge, Burden, Robinson, and Bennett (2008) claimed some Black student-athletes place much emphasis on sport pursuits with little attention given to academics and imposed the following questions: "What is academic achievement? What is an achievement gap between racial groups?" (Hodge et al., 2008, p. 216) Hodge et al. (2008) postulated the importance of highlighting the academic successes of Black student-athletes as often as their athletic accomplishments, which is exactly what the current researchers have done by analyzing blog comments about Myron Rolle's scholar-athlete identity.

Bloggers confirmed the importance of academics in the major theme of *Emphasis on Education in Sport*, which coincides directly with Hodge et al.'s (2008) suggestions. Also, bloggers commended Myron for his awesome accomplishments in the major theme of *Amazing Accomplishments & Opportunity*. Many of them advocated for Myron's story to be publicized more often and in additional venues. The theme of *Role Model* indicated the salience of Myron being an extraordinary example for all athletes. Hodge et al. (2008) advocated for highlighting both positive athletic and non-athletic Black role models. They stated, "Black student-athletes must come to know that accomplishments outside of sports are valued and respected" (p. 219). Myron can inspire other Black student-athletes to excel in academics and athletics and to pursue non-athletic careers. The theme of *Negative Blog Comments* consists of participants who fail to recognize the accomplishment of Rolle. They discredit the significance of his accomplishments. The reinforcing negative comments by the bloggers indicate that some sport fans believe that academics and athletics do not go together. This ultimately indicates that some sport fans may not understand the plight of a student-athletes' structural dilemma with academics and athletics.

The following is the current researchers' contribution to the literature. This study examined a real life example of the possible role conflict that student-athletes can experience. There has been much debate about whether student-athletes need to separate their roles or view their roles holistically in

order to be successful. Myron Rolle is an example of a student-athlete who negotiated both of his identities and was able to succeed in both roles as a student and an athlete. Myron's actions cultivated a different dialogue about being a student-athlete versus a scholar-athlete. Rolle set an example and allowed other student-athletes to realize the possibility of excelling in both areas. He can serve as an inspiration to other student-athletes as well as athletes on all levels. The significance of publicizing his story cannot be underestimated. His story can motivate and inspire student-athletes to aspire to non-athletic careers and have alternative plans to "going pro."

Researchers acknowledge limitations in regard to the current study. The scope was on only one sport of football and it would be valuable to explore various other sports. Also, the focus was on only one athlete's success story and his academic and athletic behaviors. There was a lack of information concerning the bloggers, especially in regard to their basic demographics such as gender, race, age, and socioeconomic status.

Future studies should examine sport fans' perceptions in regard to identity issues among student-athletes in other sports. We need more research on sport fans discourse about student-athletes in general and also the way in which student-athletes are portrayed through the media. Scholars should explore public perception in regard to athletics in higher education and the salience of social justice issues related to sports. Most importantly, future research should investigate scholar-athletes that project new paradigms, discourses, and representations about successfully balancing academics and athletics.

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About the Authors

C. Keith Harrison is Associate Professor of Sport Business Management in the College of Business Administration and is Associate Director of the Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Dr. Harrison is also founder and director of the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess established in 1998. Dr. Harrison earned his doctorate in higher and post-secondary education at USC. Dr. Harrison has held faculty positions at Washington State University, the University of Michigan and Arizona State University. Dr. Harrison created the term Scholar-Baller™ in 1995.

Suzanne Malia Lawrence is an Associate Professor in the Department of Innovative Educational Technology and Physical Education at Azusa Pacific University. Dr. Lawrence's research interests include media representation of student-athletes, stereotypes surrounding athleticism, and academic achievement of student-athletes. Dr. Lawrence encourages self-confidence, teamwork, and leadership with her students. She is also an active member of the School of Education Diversity Committee.

Scott J. Bukstein is an Adjunct Lecturer for and the Coordinator of the undergraduate DeVos Sport Business Management Program at the University of Central Florida. Bukstein earned a bachelor's degree in Sport Management and Communications from the University of Michigan, and received his juris doctorate degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Neza K. Janson received her Bachelors of Physical Education Degree from the University of Otago, in New Zealand and her postgraduate diploma in Science, Exercise Rehabilitation from the University of Auckland, also in New Zealand. She will be graduating from the DeVos Sport Business Management Program at the University of Central Florida, in 2011.

Keshia Woodie graduated from the University of Central Florida's College of Business Administration and completed the DeVos Minor in Sport Business

Management. She is currently an intern at the Orlando Magic and former research assistant in the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess.

“Ain’t I a Woman?”

Black Women and Title IX

Abstract Black women’s concerns and plight remain an afterthought in American law and politics. Title IX, like traditional antidiscrimination law, fails to remedy gender equity for Black women to the same degree as White women in terms of the quality and diversity of participation opportunities. This article examines the impact of Title IX for Black women athletes, coaches and administrators and illustrates the challenges of true gender and racial equality in athletics.

“Ain’t I a Woman?” was the question asked by Sojourner Truth in 1851 at the Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio. Ms. Truth queried further, “If my cup won’t hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn’t you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?” The question appeared again in the title of bell hooks’ 1981 book *Ain’t I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism*, which suggests that the convergence of sexism and racism during slavery was a contributing factor to Black women having the lowest status and worst conditions of any group in American society. This article asks the question, again; however, this time in the context of Black women’s participation in sports after the passage of Title IX and their historical invisibility in the eyes of traditional anti-discrimination law.

In 1972, Title IX was passed and since has been hailed as a monumental achievement for women’s progress and equality. This civil rights statute reads in pertinent part, “*No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . .*” After much litigation, it was determined that Title IX would apply to athletics. There is no question that the participation rates for women as a whole increased dramatically. Prior to Title IX, some 30,000 women participated in collegiate athletics and in 2008, over 180,000 females were intercollegiate athletes (Paule, 2008; Carpenter & Acosta, 2008). Nevertheless, has Title IX provided both access to opportunities and outcomes for quality and diverse participation in athletics by Black women to the same extent as it did for White women?

Black women in America have a unique history, which affects their present circumstances. They suffer the unique harm created at the intersection of their race and gender; they are neither fully women (White), nor

fully Black (men). This position, betwixt and between, has significantly influenced Black women's life chances socially, economically, and politically (Davis, 1981). In essence, Black women concerns and plight remain an afterthought in American law and politics. As with affirmative action law, should Title IX's success or failure as it relates to Black women be measured in terms of *equality of opportunity* or *equality of outcomes*? From the standpoint of equality of outcomes, Title IX, like traditional antidiscrimination law, fails to remedy gender equity for Black women to the same degree as White women in terms of the quality and diversity of participation opportunities. This article examines the impact of Title IX for Black women athletes and illustrates the challenges of true gender and racial equality in athletics. Last, it offers a direction for policy.

The virtual invisibility of Black women in discussions of women's sports (except to identify them as deviant, e.g., Williams sisters) and equal protection law persists. Allen Guttman's text, *Women in Sports* (1991), reads, "Blanket statements about the pre-nineteenth-century exclusion of women from sports are commonly uttered in blissful ignorance of the historical. (One purpose of the present study is to make such ignorance less blissful.) Statements about exclusion from the 'male domain' of sports take into account neither the distinctiveness of times and places nor the complicated ways in which gender has interacted with social class and with the stages of the life cycle. Except for a brief discussion of sports in the ancient Near East, my investigation is limited culturally to what I define broadly as the 'West' (I include Australia and New Zealand). I have repressed the temptation to do more than mention Asian and African sports because the materials available for women's sports in non-Western civilizations are largely inaccessible to scholars limited to European languages" (1991: 1–2).

Interestingly, Guttman claims that others have been blissfully ignorant in their exclusion of women and then narrows women experience to gendered and classed experiences, and does not include the exclusion of women by race (and sexuality). This is reinforced by his *repression* (his words) of Asian and African sports history. His claim is that the data is simply not available. This also rings of the justification for not hiring a protected minority: "there aren't enough *qualified* women, Black women (and other women of color), or Black men (and other men of color)." Guttman implicitly offers that studying Asian and African sports is not worthy, not worth the work. At the same time, sports, then, are defined by European language speakers and do not include others.

Similarly, Mariah Burton Nelson writes in the Introduction to Lisa Smith's *Nike Is a Goddess* (1998): "Women's liberation begins with women's bodies. It encompasses such corporeal issues as birth control, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, pornography, rape, battering, breast cancer, breast enlargement, dieting, cosmetic surgery, abortion, anorexia, bulimia, sexual-

ity ...and sports." While Nelson clearly speaks of exigent issues, race is noticeably absent and therefore Black women are again rendered invisible. In both texts, the treatment of Black women is as a subcategory of White women. Like old history books, key figures and "Black firsts" are given a paragraph or repressed and not mentioned at all, except in track and field and basketball. They miss the opportunity to improve their analysis and offer a more complete story. There are no discussions of racial exclusion at country clubs, which make being a Black woman in tennis or golf even more remarkable. What about Black women's labor and exclusion during WWII when White women could play baseball momentarily? The precedents set in law and discussions of women in sport suggest that inequality for Black women is either resolved by racial or sexual protection law. However, there is little recognition of their special place, experiences, and status at the intersection of both.

History of Black Women in Sports Prior to the Passage of Title IX

There is a dearth of historical documentation of Black female participation in sports, which serves to underscore the Black female's athletic invisibility. African runners, "Aethiopians", as they were called by the Greeks, were known as strong, swift runners. Africans sold into slavery and brought to America, brought their love of running with them (Ashe, 1988). Enslaved Africans and African Americans engaged in athletic pursuits, especially foot races, during the evenings, holidays, and on Sundays. Enslaved girls also participated.

During the mid-nineteenth century, at a time when Victorian notions of femininity drove middle and upper-class White women away from athletic pursuits and into their homes, Black women carried on with the physical demands of working and living on farms and plantations. While the demands of work and home offered Black women little time, if any, to compete in sports, Black women continued to be participants and spectators of sport (Dees, 2004). By the late nineteenth century there was a feminist movement afoot and White women reemerged as sport participants, albeit limited to socially accepted sports such as tennis, archery, croquet and figure skating, often offered at private colleges (Woman's Sports Foundation, 2001). The racist nature of American society precluded Black women from having access to either the classrooms or sport participation opportunities offered by these institutions.

In the early twentieth century, it was estimated that less than five percent of Black women were "heavily" involved in sports (Dees, 2004). Historically Black colleges and universities ("HBCU's") offered Black women broad access to the classroom and athletic participation, though mostly in track and

field and basketball. Black female educators of the time, joined the Amateur Athletic Union ("AAU") and growing grassroots efforts in its support of highly competitive athletics for women. By the late 1940s into the 1950s, African American women were the dominant force in track and field. Track and field was considered mannish; which was consistent with the perception that Black women were not feminine, stereotypes which developed during slavery. Sadly, these stereotypes continue today and are a contributing factor in why Black women are routed to track and field.

Women, Sports and Stereotypes

Sports, like other institutions, have been a means to reinforce stratification and White male hegemony. Generally, discussion of sports is a discussion of men's sports. This is rooted in sexism. Men are considered *real* athletes and athletes are special because they are superior to others physically. They are stronger, run faster, jump higher, throw farther, catch better, etc... There is a sense of awe that is given to an athlete. Women can't be athletes because they can't beat others (read normal non-athlete males) in athletics. They don't fit the special class. Thus, men are the standard and an athlete can beat men at their sport and probably many other physical activities.

Beyond performance, females are socialized to be women. Gender socialization begins early with naming, colors schemes, treatment by others, and play (Thorne, 1993). Gender is a structure and reference group and girls are not to be like boys and vice versa (Connell, 1995). Horseplay, roughhousing, loud talking, and testing physical strength are considered male behavior. Boys are taught to be competitive, dominant, aggressive, assertive, territorial, and destructive. Socialization for girls is about protecting femininity, an image of chastity, grace, decorum, and nurturance (Messner, 2002). Sports is no different. Girls are not expected to expend themselves the same way – exhaustion, sweat, high competition, and pain is unnecessary. Women need not weight lift for fear that they become more man-like. Therefore, while women are not *real* athletes because they don't play like athletes they are also encouraged against doing the kind of things that would improve their performance according to masculine standards. A woman who doesn't abide by norms of femininity even in sport performance is deviant and presumed to be lesbian or like a man.

This general discussion on women and sports, replicates the traditional, implicit discussion on sports where athlete is a proxy for male athlete. Here, women does not refer to Black women (or other women of color), it is centered on the experiences of White women. Black women and sport is peculiar because Black women are neither Black (meaning Black men) nor women (meaning White women) and their experiences cannot be captured by one

or the other or simply adding the categories together (if this were possible). Instead, considering Black women, inside and outside of sports, requires a different analytical lens (Collins, 1990). Being Black in America has meant being subhuman and being a subhuman woman is even lower. Yet, there is something special about the designation of Black woman: women carry and deliver offspring and have value beyond themselves. During slavery, Black women were super slaves because they were treated as laborers and producers of more labor. Labor didn't end with a Black woman's death (if she were delivering a baby or had children); a slave master owned her children without an additional cost. This also was very different than the experiences of White women who were put on a pedestal, socialized to be chaste, social with other White women, and deferential only to White men. They were special as producers of other White people and were to be taken care of. In this way, Title IX seems simply a contemporary demand by White women for White men to meet their needs/wants and provide legal protection for those needs/wants. By contract, historically, Black women (and other women of color) have not been protected by the spirit of the law.

The Invisibility of Black Women in Law

The law attempts to speak for all people, and in doing so silences the voices of its disenfranchised and marginalized population. Professor Angela P. Harris' *Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory* (1990) cites James Boyd White's remarks about the voice that speaks in the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence, "We the People" and the preamble of the Constitution. White describes the voice of these documents as "unanimous", "unified" and "direct", addressing a universal audience. Professor Harris uses this concept of a unitary voice to describe what she calls "gender essentialism – the notion that a unitary, "essential" woman's experience can be isolated and described independently of race, class, sexual orientation, and other realities of experience" (Harris, 1990). The result of gender essentialism, according to Harris, is that some voices outside of the mainstream legal voice are silenced in order to privilege others. Among the voices that have historically been silenced are the voices of Black women. Let us examine the historical efficacy of traditional anti-discrimination law in redressing claims of race and gender discrimination, which may be available to claims specific to athletic participation.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act provides a "prohibition against exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of and discrimination under federally assisted programs on the grounds of race, color or nation origin." It is clear from the plain language of the statute that Title VI provides no protection against sex discrimination. Therefore, Title VI would be useless in address-

ing claims alleging the compound discrimination of gender and race, as the legal redress for gender discrimination is separate from the legal redress for race discrimination.

Title VII prohibits unlawful employment practice and states, in pertinent part:

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer –

1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex or national origin;

or

2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way, which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

What happens when we direct the question, "Ain't I a Woman?" to the historical treatment of Black women's claims under Title VII? The theoretical framework developed by Kimberle Crenshaw can help explain the answer to this question.

Crenshaw (1988, 1989) contends that traditional anti-discrimination law does not account for the harm created at the intersection of gender and race, either acting concurrently or sequentially. It instead analyzes the discrimination one dimension at a time. For example, in *Degraffenreid v. General Motors Assembly Division*, the court, in not permitting the plaintiffs to allege discrimination based on the confluence of race and gender, reasoned that

The legislative history surrounding Title VII does not indicate that the goal of the statute was to create a new classification of "Black women" who would have greater standing than, for example, a Black male. The prospect of the creation of new classes of protected minorities, governed only by mathematical principles of permutation and combination, clearly raise the prospect of opening the hackneyed Pandora's box.

It would be fair to conclude from the court analysis that Congress either did not take into account that Black women could be discriminated against as Black women or that it did not intend to provide legal protection against such discrimination. Either way, the outcome is that the voices of Black women are silenced, their invisibility secured and the answer to the question, "Ain't I a Woman?" remains "No."

One of the first decisions to challenge the *Degraffenreid* rationale was

Jefferies v. Harris. In this case, the Fifth Circuit accepted the plaintiff's multi-dimensional claims of sex and race discrimination by using the "sex-plus" approach. This means that the employer discriminates by combining a protected factor "sex" with a non-protected factor, "marital status." The *Jefferies* court used a "sex-plus-race" analysis. The court recognized that discrimination against Black women could occur even when there is no discrimination against Black men or White women. While this analysis provides Black women with some visibility in the eyes of the law, it is clouded at best, as it requires Black women to subordinate their race discrimination claim to that of gender. Furthermore, it relegates discrimination based on race, a classification explicitly protected under Title VII, to the positions of non-protected classifications like weight and marital status. Lastly, the "sex-plus" approach limits claims of discrimination based on gender plus one additional characteristic only.

As we moved into the 1990s, there are other cases, which demonstrate a trend toward the visibility of Black women, and other women of color in the eyes of the law. The Ninth Circuit in *Lam v. University of Hawaii* rejected the district court's separate treatment of race and sex. It reasoned that an antidiscrimination framework that examines racism "alone" or sexism "alone" is impoverished. The federal trial court in *Anthony v. County of Sacramento*, relying on the decision in *Lam*, put forward the idea that a plaintiff may allege compound discrimination based on race and sex when bringing an equal protection claim under Section 1983 of the United States Code. Notwithstanding the promising trends in court decisions subsequent to *Degraffenreid*, Black women's ability to have constitutionally recognized claims of multi-dimensional race and sex discrimination remain uncertain until the Supreme Court of the United States speaks definitively on the issue.

The Effect of Invisibility on Participation Rates Post Title IX

The law of gender equity has developed principally in the realm of amateur athletics sponsored by educational institutions and non-educational institutions i.e. recreation leagues. These systems, like the greater society had been racially segregated, leaving Blacks, male and female, with little access to opportunities to participate in sports at either White colleges or higher level non-educational amateur systems until the World War II era outside the South and Civil Rights Era in the South (Mathewson, 1996). Notwithstanding the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregate education systems some fifty-five years ago, educational systems are becoming more segregated by race and residential neighborhoods, with its marked socio-economic characteristics, and remain segregated as well. What does this mean for Black female sports participation after the passage of Title IX?

No one can deny that Black women have made gains with Title IX at first glance, however, the invisibility of Black women is still reflected in Black women participation today. The rate of increase in participation for Black women is misleading; any positive change is significant because they make up less than 5% of all high school athletes; less than 10% of all college athletes; less than 2% of all coaches; and less than 1% of all college administrators (Lapchick, 2009). Title IX has yet to address the intersectional barriers to athletics posed by race, gender and class, including how persistent public education inequalities affect and interrelate with sports.

There are barriers to participation at the community and household level for girls living in poverty (Brake and Williams, 2004). With poverty, the rate of single mother headed households increases. Men and fathers hurt a family's household income because of welfare regulations that cap monthly payments based upon available wage earners. When mothers have to work to sustain their families, the responsibility of childrearing and care falls to older siblings and most often to girls. Boys are allowed to be "boys" and in "the streets" (Jones, 2009). So poor girls are socialized to be in the home and take care of the household, rather than participate in athletics. Coaches for girls are more often parents who are concerned about their child/children and have disposable free time. However, poor families have less disposable free time to give to coaching sports, particularly for girls.

Aside from household poverty, disparities in public education are another hurdle for Black girls living in the poorest neighborhoods to overcome in order to participate in athletics. The school structure itself is often in poor condition. Schools in poor neighborhoods also lack basic classroom resources. If books and toilet paper are luxury items, where does the money come from to fund athletic programs. Reliance on local property taxes to fund the school systems will assure the poorest conditions for our poorest population (Yarbrough, 1997). In light of these basic challenges, is athletic participation even relevant?

Aside from the resource barriers, there exist cultural barriers for Black female participation in athletics. Sport has been concerned with defining and developing masculinity. Therefore, girls who participate in sports must cope with the realities of being perceived as "gender transgressors." This is particularly important for Black women, as they must also combat the stereotypes, which grew out of slavery and Jim Crow that we spoke about earlier in this article. Black girls must balance their athletic prowess with accepted cultural characteristics of Black femininity. Moreover, gender socialization deemphasizes girl athleticism, while overemphasizing boy athleticism. Girls give up sports earlier in big numbers because it's not "lady like" and the big payoff – fame and fortune that comes with being a professional athlete – is even more unlikely for women. Sadly, while high school athletics is a significant masculine marker for boys, it holds little value for girls (Yarbrough, 1997).

When Black girls and women are on high school and college teams older forms of discrimination are still at play, as stacking and steering. Coaches push Black girls to play particular sports, positions, and are advised not to play in particular sports and positions based upon racial stereotypes and coaching prerogatives. In one study, an athlete reported that her coach said she could never pitch because she was not blonde or blue-eyed; because of her race, she would always be a "thrower" (Lawrence, 2005: 103).

In addition, when Black girls venture into sports outside of basketball and track and field, they are in isolation, one of few on a team. This often leads to more discrimination, limited playing time, specialization, and a lack of cultural openness and awareness by the coaching staff and other team members.

Generally, proportions are used to suggest disparate situations. If Black women are not participating in athletics at a high rate, they need not be represented as coaches and college administrators. However, proportionality is not appropriate as an analytical lens. White male overrepresentation is the standard against which claims are made for racial and sexual discrimination. Thus, the tendency, which reflects continued racial and sexual discrimination, is for Black (men) to be represented in "Black" sports where they supervise Blacks primarily. Likewise, White women coach women across race, class, and sexuality. Again, Black women do not fit squarely in either category.

Conclusion

Is Title IX Capable of Providing Equality of Process and Outcomes?

Title IX is hailed as a great civil rights achievement for women. In sports, it has created new and more opportunities for girls, young women, and women. However, some research has shown that wide disparities in terms of resource allocation for men's and women's programs remain when considering "cash sports" like basketball (Hattery, Smith, & Staurowsky, 2008). Moreover, the participatory outcomes for women of color show that vast inequality persists. This is not simply a numbers issue (as there are greater numbers of White women in the total population). Instead, the implementation of Title IX, distribution of resources, and the creation of opportunities have had a particular effect – increasing and improving the life chances of White women. This has been less significant for non-White women. An increase in opportunities for White women, in sports that whites traditionally have access to and participate in, means real improvement and change for White women. Accordingly, it follows that qualified coaches for women's handball, field hockey, lacrosse, and swimming, for example, will most likely be White. Schools that add teams in these traditionally White sports are not simply offering new opportunities, they are offering particular opportuni-

ties for people who would be interested, have the time and resources to take advantage of these new possibilities. This is not race or class neutral. Aside from grass roots efforts and changes in athletic administration policies, could Title IX hold the answer to increasing not just the equality of process but the quality of outcomes for Black women after all? In, *The Heart of the Game: Putting Race and Educational Equity at the Center of Title IX* (2008), Deborah Brake and Verna Williams suggest that the Title IX statute itself possesses substantive equality aspects that seek to remake institutional structures which can ease inequalities.

Title IX's goal is to have equal treatment of males and females in educational institutions receiving federal funds. Brake and Williams state that substantive equality is greater than formal equality's focus on equality of process and instead focuses on the equality of outcomes. Equal treatment leads to unequal outcomes because of differences between men and women. Applying this theory to our focus on Title IX's impact on Black women, equal treatment leads to unequal outcomes because of differences between White women and Black women. Therefore, using substantive equality, consideration can be given to the differences between White women and Black women in an effort to undertake the inequalities between the two groups of women. It is suggested that this type of equality is inherent in the three-part test for measuring an educational institutional compliance to provide equal participation opportunities to male and female students. This three-part test allows institutions to show (1) the percentage of female athletes is close to the percentage of female students at the institution, (2) they have a history and continuing practice of addressing the needs of the underrepresented sex; or (3) that they otherwise are fully accommodating the athletic interests and abilities of the school's female students. According to Brake and Williams, the compliance test does not presuppose females are naturally disinterested in sport. Furthermore, the compliance test focuses on the structures that have resulted in different levels of sports participation and requires school to build opportunities so that girls can develop interests. Brake and Williams acknowledge that the inequities in public education directly influence Title IX ability to reach its stated goal for girls of color. However, with a focus on public elementary and secondary schools and a broad reading of traditional anti-discrimination law, including Title IX, perhaps the entwined discriminations of race and sex can be adequately addressed, at last.

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About the Authors

Stephanie A. Tryce holds a juris doctorate from Temple University School of Law, is a Masters Candidate in Sport Management from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and has a B.S. in Business Administration from Drexel University. Ms. Tryce has taught Introduction to Sport Law, Amateur Sport and the Law and Professional Sport and the Law in the Sport Management Department of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. At The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, she has also taught Intro-

duction to Law and the Legal Process and The Sport Industry. Ms. Tryce has presented at the annual conferences for the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport and the Sport and Recreation Law Association, for whom she most recently served as an abstract reviewer. Currently, Ms. Tryce is an Assistant City Solicitor for the City of Philadelphia in the Major Tax Enforcement Unit; however, her research interests remain at the intersection of race, gender and sport.

Scott N. Brooks is an associate professor of sociology at the University of California-Riverside. He is an ethnographer concerned with how people go about meeting the demands of daily life. He does fieldwork and gathers data intimately by observing, listening, participating, and taking on the role of his subject(s). Professor Brooks' book, *Black Men Can't Shoot* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), is based on his experiences coaching young Black men in South Philadelphia for four years. This work describes how young men's fashion their basketball careers and manage reputations, networks and opportunities to become known, or publicly recognized, basketball players. Professor Brooks' current project explores the dynamics of coaching and the relationships Black coaches have with parents and kids.

Mentoring as an Intervention Strategy

Toward a (Re)negotiation of First Year Student-Athlete Role Identities

Abstract This pilot study explored the complex negotiations of student-athlete role identities in the context of a faculty mentor intervention strategy. The sample included 19 first-year male revenue student-athletes who were surveyed in fall 2006 and spring 2007 at a large Division 1-A university. Focus group sessions were also held with participants during the academic year. Findings revealed positive influences of a formal faculty-student mentoring program on first-year student-athletes' academic and future goals. Student-athletes rated themselves as having more balanced academic and athletic identities over the course of their first year. New directions for future work to build on this pilot study are discussed.

The first year of college is a period marked by social and academic adjustment for student-athletes. Reliable indicators of daily life—family, childhood friends, community organizations, high-school sports programs—often give way to unfamiliar faces, large lecture halls, stringent schedules, and an athletic subculture that more closely resembles a business model. Some student-athletes are able to adjust to their sport demands and intellectual challenges, or even to attain their desired educational outcomes: to matriculate and graduate. Others, however, find that striking the proper balance between their academic and athletic lives is, at best, challenging and stressful (Eitzen, 2009). Student-athletes thus continually encounter, occupy, and negotiate multiple contexts, both inside and outside of college, all of which influence their first-year transitions.

At most, if not all, big-time Division 1-A sports programs, college coaches exert an incredible amount of control over the lives of student-athletes. They occupy a large part of the students' time with practices, travel, team meetings, and competition schedules. Student-athletes devote more than forty hours a week to sport-related activities, not to mention the mental fatigue, physical exhaustion, and nagging injuries that plague those who participate in college sports (Eitzen, 2009; Wolverton, 2008). As a result of the tremendous demands imposed by their sport, student-athletes have considerably less time available for their academic pursuits and other educationally productive activities. This athletic subculture is particularly troublesome for student-athletes in the men's revenue-generating sports of basketball and

football who continue to show lesser forms of academic success (outcomes) than their counterparts (Eitzen, 2009; NCAA, 2008). While coaches and academic support services for student-athletes have the potential to serve as change agents through innovative and purposeful engagement activities designed to enhance the academic and social experiences of first-year students, there are serious shortcomings. Adler and Adler (1991) found that male revenue student-athletes transition into college life with feelings of optimism about their desired academic goals; however, within one or two semesters, student-athletes begin to devalue the academic role because of sport requirements and demands that structurally inhibit their academic presence on campus. These impediments, coupled with the strong commitment that many student-athletes have to their athlete role, make it easier for them to focus on becoming an elite athlete at the expense of their academic futures. Subsequently, these student-athletes are counseled to take less demanding courses, choose majors held in low repute, and take courses with selected faculty who are "student-athlete friendly" or are willing to give the student-athlete "special" considerations in the classroom (Adler & Adler, 1991; Eitzen, 2009). Such behaviors not only speak to the misplaced priorities of colleges and universities, but also the possible role conflicts of transitioning first-year student-athletes (Gerdy, 2006).

Student-athletes continuously negotiate the dual roles of student and athlete. These two roles, each consisting of a myriad of demands and expectations, have different levels of significance for the student-athlete. Consequently, many experience role conflict when the demands of one role make it difficult to meet the demands of the other (Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Goode, 1960). For example, a student-athlete's over-consumption of the athlete role, whether by choice or as the result of influence from the athletic structure, can make it difficult to perform or meet the demands of the student role. This indeed underscores a central problem facing college athletics.

Snyder (1985), on the other hand, posits that the dual role of both student and athlete may be able to co-exist. Snyder sets forth a theoretical understanding of student-athletes' role identities, highlighting four types of students based on their relative commitment to each role: the *scholar athlete*, the *pure scholar*, the *pure athlete*, and the *nonscholar/nonathlete*. The *scholar athlete* shows a high degree of commitment to both the academic and athletic roles. In this sense, the two roles are not in conflict; instead, the student-athlete is able to perform or meet the demands of both roles. The *pure athlete* identifies with and is primarily committed to the athletic role, with minimal commitment to the academic role (Brewer, Raalte, & Linder, 1993). In this case, the student-athlete experiences role conflict and, therefore, reduces involvement in the academic role. As a result, *pure athletes* are more likely to suffer from involuntary withdrawal from the college or university. By contrast, the *pure scholar* demonstrates opposite role identities to the

pure athlete, where the commitment to the academic role leaves minimal energy for athletics. Lastly, the *nonscholar/nonathlete* is not committed to either the student or the athlete role. Snyder reported that these individuals often engage in other extra-curricular activities within the college environment, neglecting both sport and academics.

In light of Snyder's framework, it appears that academic and athlete roles can be compatible to the extent that there is a high degree of commitment to each role. However, considering the demands and expectations of the athletic subculture, the various ways in which student-athletes are able to actively perform and maintain this compatibility is not well understood within academic support services. While several scholars have appropriately initiated this conversation (e.g., Comeaux, 2007; Harrison & Boyd, 2005, 2007) by demonstrating how pedagogies of inclusion can help student-athletes create compatible and affirming identities as both students and athletes, there remains a dearth of scholarship on the relationship between role identities and interventions that contribute to more favorable learning environments and outcomes for transitioning student-athletes. In particular, scholars have yet to thoroughly understand how interventions within academic support services for big-time athletic programs affect the ways in which transitioning student-athletes negotiate their role identities. Such insights are critical for forging deeper and more authentically responsive intervention strategies for student-athletes. This pilot study attempts to close these gaps by exploring the complex development of student-athlete role identities in the context of an intervention strategy. Specifically, this study employs a faculty-student mentor program and in turn explores how male student-athletes in the revenue sport of football change in the first year with respect to their self-rated academic and athletic identity. In addition, this study seeks to understand how student-athletes' self-concept (e.g., drive to achieve academically, intellectual self-confidence, degree aspirations, etc.) and aspects of the college environment (e.g., faculty interactions, classroom experiences, studying, etc.) change over their first year. Because inquiry regarding the relationship between student-athlete role identities and intervention strategies is scant, this work addresses a gap in the student affairs literature and has implications for student affairs leaders who work with this special population of students.

Research on Student Engagement

Researchers have produced an extensive knowledge base on the relationship between student engagement and a series of outcome variables (Astin, 1993; Hu & Kuh, 2002, 2003; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Such work appropriately underscores

the fact that participating in educationally purposeful activities has a direct influence on student learning and personal development. Purposeful activities include, but are not limited to, preparing for class, reading and writing, meaningful interactions with faculty, and collaboration with peers on problem solving tasks (Kuh, 2001). Chickering and Gamson's (1987) "Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," lends further support to this concept by defining several educationally purposeful activities that influence student personal and academic talent development. Such principles promote student-faculty interaction, task orientation, cooperation among students, opportunities for communication, active learning, respect of diverse talents and ways of learning, and prompt feedback.

While there is a host of research on student engagement related to the general student population, few studies have examined the student-athletes' engagement in educationally purposeful activities and its influence on a set of outcomes. As such, evidence concerning the positive influence of student-athlete and faculty contact is somewhat limited (Comeaux, 2005). While the benefits derived from the relationship between faculty and student-athletes are to some extent contingent upon the specific nature of contact, Comeaux (2005), using data drawn from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, found that academically-oriented interactions with faculty account for modest significance in student-athlete academic success as compared to informal/social interactions; for example, student-athletes receipt of assistance from faculty in achieving their professional goals was positively associated with academic performance. Furthermore, Umbach and colleagues (2006), using data from the National Survey on Student Engagement, found in part that student-athletes do not differ from their non-athlete peers on participation in effective educational practices such as interaction with faculty. More recently, Gaston-Gayles and Hu (2009) examined factors related to student-athlete engagement in educationally sound activities. Using a dataset from the Basic Academic Skills Study, Gaston-Gayles and Hu revealed that the extent to which student-athletes interact with faculty did not significantly influence a set of desirable outcomes. In fact, the authors found that on average student-athletes interaction with students other than their teammates had positive impacts on personal self-concept and learning and communication skills.

Academic Support for College Student-Athletes

Student-athletes are a unique subset of most student populations in the higher education community, requiring support for their personal and academic needs. They face incredible demands and expectations, challenges, and stresses outside of the classroom as result of their participation in sport.

As such, almost all athletic departments in colleges and universities have developed and expanded their support services for college student-athletes over the past three decades. Support services have focused primarily on three main areas—academic scheduling, academic tutoring, and time management (Shriberg & Brodzinski, 1984)—with the ideal goal of creating an environment where all student-athletes can improve the skills necessary for academic, athletic, and personal growth and success.

In 1975, the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A) was established to serve as a liaison between academic and athletic communities at colleges and universities. With members consisting of academic support and student services personnel, their stated purpose was “to assist the student-athletes in *maintaining their eligibility* [emphasis added] and achieving a viable education leading to graduation” (N4A, 2010). While addressing the academic and counseling needs of college student-athletes, N4A’s efforts have led to the development of other specializations such as sport psychology with a concentration on performance enhancement, and mental health counseling (Chartrend & Lent, 1987; Miller & Wooten, 1985; Pettipas, Buntrock, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 1995).

Despite the developments and stated goals of academic support services for student-athletes, the reality is that they do not increase graduation rates, much less enhance the academic and personal talent development among student-athletes (Comeaux, 2007; Hinkle, 1994). Instead, many support centers, as indicated by N4A’s stated goals, focus on maintaining academic eligibility, which clearly creates an athletic subculture of low academic expectations, thus reducing the possibilities for developing high achieving student-athletes. This issue, combined with the fact that most student-athlete academic support services are located in the athletic departments of colleges and universities, is another concern. Separate support services reinforce the notion that student-athletes’ lives revolve around the athletic department. For example, student-athletes generally study only with other student-athletes in designated study halls, and are counseled and tutored by personnel hired and controlled by the athletic department. This kind of setting not only creates conflicts of interest between hired personnel and the athletic department when the eligibility of “blue-chip” student-athletes is at stake, but also limits the types and degree of interactions that student-athletes have with the broader college community (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2006; Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Consequently, student-athletes, particularly those in revenue-generating sports, have been subject to academic violations as a result of receiving “special” assistance from academic tutors in the form of writing papers and taking exams (Eitzen, 2009; Finger, 2003). Too often, these unscrupulous behaviors are in conflict with efforts undertaken by campus leaders to promote student learning. Relevant interventions designed for colleges and universities to

enhance student-athlete personal and learning development are discussed in the next section.

CHAMPS/Life Skills Program

In 1991, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Foundation initiated efforts to create a total developmental life skills program, which would address the student-athlete as a whole person. Through collaborative efforts between the NCAA Foundation and the Division 1A Athletic Directors' Association, the CHAMPS (Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success)/Life Skills program was established.

The program was designed to (a) promote student-athletes' ownership of their academic, athletic, career, personal, and community responsibilities; (b) meet the changing needs of student-athletes; (c) promote respect for diversity and inclusion among student-athletes; (d) assist student-athletes in identifying and applying transferable skills; (e) enhance partnerships between the NCAA, member institutions, and their communities for the purpose of education; (f) foster an environment that encourages student-athletes to effectively access campus resources; and (g) encourage the development of character, integrity, and leadership skills (NCAA, 2009).

CHAMPS is a well-rounded program for all student-athletes to develop the skills necessary for life after sport. The program is divided into six components: (a) the Academic Commitment; (b) the Career Development Commitment; (c) the Personal Development Commitment; (d) the Service Commitment; (e) the Athletics Commitment; and (f) the Program Administration (NCAA, 2009). To assist participating institutions with initiating the CHAMPS/Life Skills program, each member institution receives a needs assessment instrument, program administration guide, online guides with established program models, and supplemental materials such as books, DVDs, and posters. Since 1994, over 40 participating member institutions and conferences have joined CHAMPS Life Skills each year.

The CHAMPS program shows great promise and has many important qualities, but participating colleges and universities should consider designing assessment and evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of such intervention on student-athlete participants. In doing so, participating institutions would advance their knowledge base on the impact of the CHAMPS program on the behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs of transitioning student-athletes.

Moreover, such a thorough understanding of the CHAMPS program would also help participating institutions continue to improve educationally purposeful engagement activities for student-athlete career transition.

Scholar Baller Paradigm

The mass appeal of the hip-hop culture and sport in the lives of youth has led Harrison (1995, 2002) to consider the pedagogical possibilities of the intersection of these realms with formal schooling contexts. In 1995, while exploring a variety of disciplines and theoretical influences, Harrison introduced the Scholar-Baller (SB) paradigm. SB was a response to the discouraging perceptions of college student-athletes and the increasing challenges that they had with negotiating the complex dual roles of student and athlete. To address these concerns, the SB team—consisting of educators, practitioners, researchers, professional athletes, and entertainers—works with participating colleges and universities to help student-athletes create compatible and affirming identities as both students and athletes. Curriculum training, pre-test and post-test evaluations, and supplemental materials (i.e., reward incentives for academic excellence) are provided to participating college and universities.

The Scholar-Baller curriculum was designed for student-athlete academic support services, and as such, it considers the experiences, values, and cultural orientations of student-athletes in order to foster more positive learning environments and desirable outcomes. For example, the unit on “Self Identity and Social Identity” seeks to assist student-athletes with developing stronger levels of self and social identity throughout their college experiences and beyond. In this unit, student-athletes engage in various self-exploration activities, in part through popular culture texts and hip-hop culture—music, video, fashion, language, and other mass media artifacts. The use of popular culture increases student motivation, but more importantly, enables them to reflect meaningfully on their lives and engage in consciousness-raising discussions. The point of such activities is to use popular culture as part of a larger process of connecting student-athletes to relevant issues and giving them ownership of their learning, as well as including student-athletes in liberating activities that will help them develop critical and analytical skills. Indeed, this approach, using popular culture, affords student-athletes from various backgrounds opportunities to accept and affirm their own cultural identities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). As a result, Scholar-Baller has produced more favorable outcomes in student retention and academic achievement.

Faculty-Student Mentor Program

There are a growing number of colleges and universities that have developed and now offer mentor programs for both student-athletes and students in the general population. This is due in part to the positive benefits that effective

mentor programs have on desirable student educational outcomes (Levin, 1991; Greene & Puetzer, 2002). Mentor programs have been designed generally to enhance the academic and social integration of students (Campbell, 2007; Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Marchese, 2006), increase retention of first-year students (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Johnson, 1989; Wallace & Abel, 1997), and to disrupt students' feelings of marginality while enhancing their self-concept (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989; Rendon, 1994).

According to Strommer (1993), effective first-year programs have the necessary elements to provide students with the possibilities of learning and personal development. Such components include, but are not limited to, mentoring programs, placement testing, academic advising, tutoring, life skills building, orientation, supplemental instructions, and clinical counseling. It is clear, however, that to meet the needs of first-year students sufficiently, these intervention programs must appeal to their experiences, values, and orientations (Colton, Conner, Shultz, & Easter, 1999). For example, mentor programs have been designed to provide students with encouragement, approval, constructive feedback, information about career possibilities, and support, but in order to develop meaningful relationships between the mentor and mentee over time, there must be mutual respect, trust, caring, and a willingness to learn from each other. Cohen and Steele (2002) note that "when trust is warranted, students are best served if they can feel certain educators believe in their potentials and care about their welfare" (p.304). Thus the level of reciprocal trust and understanding between the mentor and mentee can determine the extent to which the relationship will be a success.

While the necessary components of a mentor program—such as in the types and degree of mentor/mentee contact, interactions, activities, and characteristics of the mentor and mentee—can vary by institution, faculty and student-athlete mentor programs can typically serve multiple purposes. The goals of such programs can range from improving the tenuous relationship between faculty and student-athletes to increasing student-athlete educational aspirations. Indeed, helping first year student-athletes with their transition to college is critically important.

As a result of the concern for transitioning student-athletes, academic support service professionals at a large Division 1-A university provided a faculty-student mentor intervention strategy. The faculty-student mentor program was designed to allow faculty members to serve as mentors to first-year student-athletes. The primary motivations for developing the program were to (1) enhance student-athlete satisfaction with the college experience; (2) increase the likelihood of student-athlete persistence; (3) foster a better understanding of the roles of college student-athletes among faculty; (4) expose student-athletes to the larger college community; and (5) expose faculty to the athletic subculture. With these goals in mind, the faculty mentor

and transition student-athlete met face-to-face at least one time per week for a two hour period to discuss personal, academic, and professional issues.

Method

Participants

Participants in the study consisted of 19 freshman student-athletes in the sport of football from a large university in the western part of the United States. This university is a Division 1-A school within the NCAA with a history of academic prowess and athletic success. Graduation rates at this university are higher than the national average for both student-athletes and the general student population.

Instrumentation

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed. Two focus group sessions were held with student-athlete participants during the academic year. All student-athlete participants were encouraged to attend and participate in the focus group sessions, and in fact, all participants attended the session. Several core topic areas, including the nature and quality of their interactions with faculty mentors, were covered during the sessions. Participants were able to guide the discussion given the nature of these groups.

Furthermore, both pre- and post-test questionnaires were developed by the principal investigator and administered to the participants. The pre-test, administered at the start of the academic year, was a three-page questionnaire addressing several aspects of the first year experience, including: academic and personal experiences, life goals, degree aspirations, experiences with campus faculty, and measures of academic and athletic identity. The post-test, administered at the end of the academic year, addressed similar aspects of the first year experience except there were additional items included to assess the participants' experiences with their faculty mentors. Additionally, the post-test contained an open-ended question regarding participants' thoughts on the overall mentoring program.

Procedure

Academic support services personnel and the mentor program coordinator identified 93 potential faculty mentors to recruit for the mentoring program at the beginning of the academic year. The mentor coordinator then created eligibility requirements for faculty mentors: Faculty mentors had to be willing to work with student-athletes, attend an initial two-hour training session, make a one-year commitment to the program, spend a minimum of eight hours per month one-on-one with a student-athlete, attend mentor/

mentee social events, and communicate regularly with the mentor program coordinator. After contacting each potential faculty member and explaining the eligibility requirements, the mentor coordinator and academic support personnel selected 19 tenured, non-tenured, and adjunct faculty members to serve as mentors to first-year freshman student-athletes; there were also 4 alternates that agreed to serve as mentors, if necessary. Of the 19 faculty members, there were 14 males and 5 females.

There were separate training workshops for both student-athletes and faculty mentors to provide a basic understanding of the mentor program and participant roles and expectations. Student-athlete participants were required to attend a two-hour orientation and training session that offered helpful hints about academic and social integration on campus and provided necessary training for their role in the mentor program. During a segment of the training, the mentor program coordinator discussed the intended program goals, student-athlete roles and expectations, the benefits of quality faculty-student interactions, and the benefits of mentoring. The mentor coordinator administered the pre-test questionnaire to the student-athlete participants several days after the training session.

Similarly, the mentor program coordinator and several academic support services personnel met with participating faculty mentors to discuss a range of issues and provide an in-service training. The two-hour orientation and training session focused on (1) the intended program goals; (2) mentor roles and expectations; (3) the college athletic subculture; (4) the role identities of student-athletes; (5) effective strategies for engaging student-athletes; (6) issues of confidentiality; and (7) mentor/mentee selection criteria. The program coordinator was also accessible for ongoing support and supervision, if needed. Moreover, faculty mentors were informed of optional support sessions where they could share their challenges and seek their colleagues' support to find creative and practical solutions to common difficulties.

After the completion of training, both the student-athletes and faculty mentors attended a series of interactive social events during the academic year. These events were designed to gather candidate screening and matching information. Subsequently, a committee was convened to match the faculty mentors and student-athletes, taking into account the background and common interests of faculty and student participants. Once each potential suitable match was determined, academic support personnel and the program coordinator contacted each participant to ensure that there was a mutual interest between both the mentor and mentee. If all agreed to move forward with the match, the student-athlete then initiated the first meeting with his faculty mentor within the first month of the academic year. Faculty mentors were required to define and clarify goals and establish priorities and focus for each weekly face-to-face meeting.

Academic support services scheduled social events throughout the aca-

ademic year to expose faculty mentors to the athletic subculture and create spaces for meaningful interactions between the faculty mentors and student-athletes. Additionally, faculty mentors attended select team practices and dinners to foster a better understanding of the roles of student-athletes and coaches in intercollegiate athletics. Toward the end of the academic year, support services held a final appreciation day event with the mentors and mentees to talk about the academic year and the designed and future direction of the mentoring program. The mentor coordinator also administered the post-test questionnaire to the student-athlete participants several days before the appreciation day event.

Analysis

A team of two researchers trained in qualitative research methodology (one of whom was the primary researcher) conducted the data analysis. Both researchers independently coded the qualitative focus group data for relevant themes. The researchers then came together for a group coding session to allow for discussion and arbitration of disputes between the coders in order to more fully develop the properties of the overarching categories for the individual codes (Patton, 2001). The qualitative data obtained in the focus groups was helpful for understanding student-athlete attitudes toward their faculty mentors and the overall mentoring program.

The pre-test and post-test questionnaire data were tabulated and a cross tabulation was performed to understand the extent to which student-athletes' self-rated academic and athletic identities changed over the first year of college. Likewise, a series of cross tabulations were conducted to understand how student-athletes' self-rated college environmental aspects and self-concept changed over time. Lastly, frequency distributions were calculated to understand the student-athlete participants overall satisfaction with the mentoring program.

Results

The mentoring program was designed in part to assist student-athletes with creating compatible and affirming identities as both students and athletes. As such, the recurring themes that emerged from the focus groups included the benefits of career transition knowledge and a feeling that student-athlete participants were more focused academically as a result of their faculty mentors. During one of the focus groups, one student-athlete participant stated, "I think the faculty mentor program is great because you can build a relationship with them for future aspirations. They help us understand what

Table 1. Academic and Athletic Identity Self-Rating in the First Year of College, Revenue Student-Athletes 2006-2007 (Percentages)

Self-Rating	Fall 2006 Pretest %	Spring 2007 Posttest %	Difference %
Student first	0.0	21.1	+21.1
Student-athlete balance	42.2	52.6	+10.4
Athlete first	42.1	26.3	-15.8
Total N=19			

Table 2. Self-Rated GPA in the First Year of College, Revenue Student-Athletes 2006-2007 (Percentages)

Self Report of GPA	Fall 2006 Pretest %	Spring 2007 Posttest %	Difference %
B-, C+ (2.25 - 2.74)	15.9	21.0	+05.2
B (2.75 - 3.24)	36.8	47.4	+10.6
A-, B+ (3.25 -3.74)	36.8	31.6	-05.2
A (3.75 -4.0)	10.5	0.0	-10.5
Total N=19			

they need as professors and give us the inside track to keep us on top of our schoolwork. They are great resources." Some student-athletes were pleased by the extent to which they were able to benefit from information their mentors shared about career possibilities beyond their undergraduate programs of study. Many participants expressed that they were more focused and less stressed because of the personal and academic goals and priorities that they established collectively. Some participants, however, felt that because their mentors were not former student-athletes, they could not always relate to their challenges. Nonetheless, of the 19 student-athletes who participated, 15 (79%) reported that they were satisfied with the program.

Table 1 displays student-athletes' self-rated academic and athletic identities by pre-test and post-test questionnaire. Student-athletes' self-ratings showed an increasingly balanced student and athlete identity over the first year of college. In the fall pre-test, 42.2% of the student-athletes considered their academic and athletic identity as balanced, relative to 52.6% at the end of the academic year. Moreover, participants reported "student first" identity was significantly higher over the first year of college, with 21.1% of student-athletes in the spring post-test, as compared to 0% of them in fall.

The self-reported cumulative grade point average (GPA) among first-year student-athletes is presented in Table 2. Student-athletes in this study showed a slight decline in cumulative GPAs of "A" to "B+" over the first

Table 3. Likelihood of Discussing Career Plans with Faculty in the First Year of College, Revenue Student-Athletes 2006-2007 (Percentages)

Self-Rating	Fall 2006 Pretest %	Spring 2007 Posttest %	Difference %
No Chance	0	0	0
Some Chance	36.8	21.1	-15.7
Good Chance	63.2	78.9	+15.7
Total N=19			

year of college. In fall 2006, 10.5% of student-athletes, for example, reported an overall GPA of "A," as compared to 0% in spring 2007. Moreover, among the student-athletes entering in the fall, 36.8% reported cumulative GPAs of "A-" or "B+," relative to 31.6% in spring 2007. Thus, while the self-rated "student-athlete balance" identity improved over the first-year, the cumulative GPAs of "A" to "B+" actually declined over the same time period. It is also worth noting that 52.6% of student-athletes in the fall reported that they intended to obtain a Master's Degree.

Rates of self-concept and environmental experiences over the first-year of college for student-athletes were revealed. Student-athletes were more likely to report their intellectual self-confidence was "above average" (42.1%) or "highest 10%" (36.8%) in the fall, and this self-concept remained constant over the academic year. Similarly, among the student-athletes entering in 2006, 57.8% rated themselves "above average" in academic ability, which is identical to their ratings at the end of the year. Furthermore, most self-reported their drive to achieve athletically as "highest 10%" in both the pre-test (68.4%) and post-test (63.1%). Student-athletes were also more likely to report their drive to achieve academically was "above average" (52.6%) or "highest 10%" (26.3%) in the fall pre-test, and this self-concept remained constant over their first year.

Self-rated college environmental aspects showed changes over the course of the student-athletes' first year. In the fall, 63.1% of student-athletes, for example, reported studying between one and eight hours per week, as compared to 52.6% of them in the spring. Table 3 displays student-athletes' self-rated interaction with faculty members by pre-test and post-test questionnaire. Among the student-athletes starting college in 2006, 63.2% of them begin the reporting there was a "good chance" that they would discuss career plans with faculty relative to 78.9% of student-athletes at the end of the year. Moreover, student-athletes reported a "good chance" (52.6%) that they would communicate regularly with faculty outside of class as they started the year, compared to 57.9% of them at the end of year. And lastly, student-athletes reported "some chance" (52.6%) that they would work on a research project with a professor, and this self-rating remained constant over the same time period.

Conclusions

Intervention strategies designed to engage and reengage first year revenue-generating student-athletes in the learning process, and ultimately enhance the possibilities of compatible academic and athletic role identities are among the pressing issues facing academic support service professionals. Student-athletes in high profile sports such as basketball and football have consistently performed less well in the classroom than their counterparts in the general student population (Adelman, 1990; Eitzen, 2009). Results of this research demonstrate that mentoring as an intervention strategy for first-year student-athletes with potential role conflicts positively influences their academic and future goals. The student-athletes who participated in this research, have a host of demands, expectations, and challenges, and yet they revealed feeling more academically focused over the first year of college because of quality interactions with their faculty mentors that consisted of goal setting and prioritizing tasks. Moreover, some student-athletes were more optimistic about their future trajectories, evidenced by a willingness to discuss their career aspirations with their faculty mentors while receiving substantive mentor feedback. In these cases, the mentors and mentees were able to develop mutual trust and a willingness to learn from each other, which lends support to prior work by Cohen and Steele (2002).

Furthermore, faculty-student mentoring programs are the kinds of educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired educational outcomes (Astin, 1993; Hu & Kuh, 2002, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The fact that results reveal student-athletes in this study benefited from engagement in an educationally sound activity—interaction with faculty—is encouraging and consistent with previous research (Comeaux, 2005; Comeaux & Harrison, 2006, 2007; Gaston-Gayles & Hu, 2009; Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, & Hannah, 2006); the concept of student engagement is similar to Astin's (1984) involvement theory which suggests that students experience positive gains in learning and personal development by becoming involved on campus.

Cross tabulations indicate changes in self concept and college environmental aspects among study participants. Between the time these student-athletes began college and the end of their first year, they rated themselves as having more balanced academic and athletic identities. Moreover, most self-reported college environmental aspects such as "discussing career plans with faculty" improved over the first year. These findings are promising considering previous work which found that student-athletes who did not receive an intervention were experiencing academic detachment within one or two semesters of college because of role conflict (Adler & Adler, 1991). Findings from this study suggest otherwise and perhaps lend support to the argument for interventions that contribute to more compatible and affirming identities for transitioning student-athletes.

While this pilot study attempted to understand the complex negotiations of student-athletes' role identities in the context of an intervention strategy, the interpretation of these findings must take into account methodological limitations. While the limited scope of the study does not allow us to draw conclusions about whether the mentoring program directly influenced student-athletes' role identities, future research—with a control group and larger sample sizes—can assess this phenomenon studying greater depth. For now, we are limited in the generalizations that may be made about the affects of this intervention strategy on student-athlete role identities.

Moreover, although it appears that mentoring offers mutual benefits to both the faculty mentors and student-athlete participants, it is not clear precisely how faculty mentors benefit from their engagement with student-athletes and exposure to the athletic subculture. Future research is needed to explore this issue longitudinally on a broad range of outcomes. In addition, future research should address the impact of a program that matches faculty members who, themselves, were once student-athletes with current student-athletes. The extent to which former college student-athletes who are now scholars can play a more supportive and meaningful role than their non-athlete counterparts is unknown. Nonetheless, in spite of the shortcomings, the present pilot study provides a foundation on which to build, and points to important new directions for future work on the relationship between first-year student-athlete role identities and intervention strategies.

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About the Author

Eddie Comeaux is currently an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky. His primary research interests include college student engagement; intercollegiate athletics; and multicultural competence and leadership in student affairs. Dr. Comeaux teaches courses in the Sport Leadership Graduate Program. He is also the former Co-Chair of the SIG, Research Focus on Education and Sport for the American Educational Research Association.

“It Takes a Village” for African American Male Scholar-Athletes

Mentorship by Parents, Faculty, and Coaches

Abstract The purpose of this study was to explore the influences of mentors on African American male scholar-athlete success. Participants (N=27) consisted of high achieving African American male student-athletes from four academically rigorous American universities. Participants competed primarily in revenue-generating sports (i.e., men’s basketball and football) and were interviewed to obtain a deeper understanding of the role various mentors play in relation to their academic success. By utilizing a phenomenological approach, three major themes emerged: *My Parents Always Had High Expectations, I Have Healthy Relationships With My Professors, and No Support From Coaches*. Mentorship theories and relevant literature are examined through the African American family influences on sport mobility (Oliver, 1980; Harris, 1994), faculty interaction with African American male student-athletes (Harrison, Comeaux & Plecha, 2006; Comeaux, & Harrison, 2007) and coaching role strain (Edwards, 1973; Coakley, 1994) and interpreted with the findings. Recommendations for faculty, student affairs professionals, athletic administrators and other stakeholders are suggested.

There is a small but emerging body of research that has purposely investigated an area that is sadly lacking when it comes to considering what contributes to African American male student-athlete academic success (Martin & Harris, 2006; Harrison & Boyd, 2007; Harrison, Stone, Shapiro, Yee, Boyd & Rullan, 2009; Hildenbrand, Sanders, Leslie-Toogood, & Burton, 2009; Martin, Harrison, Stone, & Lawrence, 2010). It is critical that researchers understand that this issue is multifaceted and that several questions remain regarding the factors impacting this population. In considering African American male student-athletes competing in revenue producing sports (i.e., men’s football and basketball), one key question has not entirely been addressed, which is what role does family play in terms of academic success? Scholars have confirmed the academic hardships associated with stereotyping student-athletes. However, there is very little documented evidence that takes a holistic approach to this issue by including vital aspects such as culture and family mentoring relationships (Donnor, 2006).

The current paper addresses issues and strategies that allow scholars to better understand the importance of family to those individuals’ academic

success, and it may offer a critical piece to the enigma of serving the African American male student-athlete as a college professor or coach. As Benson states, "Future research should continue to investigate student athletes' experiences and perspectives so as to add to the body of descriptive literature that may help redesign educational practices" (p. 242). A large amount of research focused on the African American male student-athletes' academic achievement that has provided the most interesting and less deficit perspective has mostly been qualitative in nature (Benson, 2000; Donnor, 2005; Godley, 1999; Harrison, 1998; Lawrence, 2005). Therefore, the current investigation followed a phenomenological approach to determine if any major themes emerged when taking into consideration the relationship between African American male scholar-athletes, parents, university faculty, and coaches, and whether these groups positively impacted the scholar-athletes' academic success.

Theoretical Framework(s)

Mentoring

Mentoring refers to the process of engagement in which an inexperienced person is guided by one of experience and expertise, and as a result a committed relationship forms that facilitates the achievement of specific goals. Martin, Harrison, Stone & Lawrence (2010) emphasize the important role that educators, coaches, and other sport leaders need to take in mentoring student-athletes. Additionally, such mentors can assist Black male youth in understanding that accomplishments outside of sport are highly valued and respected (Martin, Harrison, & Stone, Lawrence, 2010). The next three sub-headings synthesize relevant literature that parallels the findings to be discussed later in the paper, as well as contextualize the influence of parents, faculty and coaches.

African American Families, Education (and Sport)

The evidence from past research suggests the dominant notion of the deficient minority family (Moynihan, 1965; Eitzen and Zinn, 2004). However, today even though this notion may still exist, there is evidence by McCubbin, Thompson, and Futrell (1998) that has questioned this negative stereotype, proposing instead that African American families often demonstrate substantial strength and resilience. In a recent study of young African American women, Hanson (2007) found that African American families provide their daughters with considerable encouragement in regard to education and academic success. Moreover, Martin (2005) confirmed the importance of African American fathers on academic achievement. Participants in his study spoke extensively about how their fathers celebrate scholastic awards

more than or at least equal to their All-American athletic honors. Thus, their fathers underscored reasons why performing well academically is vital to their long-term career aspirations. The reality is that most African American men are not professional athletes or entertainers so fathers need to continue to push their sons academically. According to Smith & Hattery (2007) "Few Americans are aware that there are only 1,600 or so African American men making money playing professional sports, but there are 1,700 African Americans who earn a PhD every year, and there are more than 41,000 African American medical doctors—25 times more than the number playing professional sports" (p. 186).

Faculty Interaction with Student-Athletes

Curtis (2006) emphasizes the importance of encouraging student-athletes, questioning why do faculty members encourage and motivate the development of student-athletes rather than athlete-students. An advisor's role is to assist student-athletes in ignoring the negative cognitive pressures of failing in the classroom and rather treating them in the manner that they are used to by their coaches, that is encouraging them to concentrate on the task at hand—positive academic achievement (Curtis, 2006).

Furthermore, some scholars have examined whether a difference exists between student-athlete/faculty interaction outcomes between male and female student-athletes, and in fact they do vary (Comeaux & Harrison, 2007). While there remains a paucity of research that focuses on the effect of involvement on achievement for specific groups, the few studies that considered traditional students clearly indicate the importance of the student-faculty relationships as a predictor of academic success (Allen, 1988: in Comeaux & Harrison, 2007). Moreover, the previous authors contend that although there is research that includes a selective group of students, there is a need for studies that also investigate whether environmental influences impact student-athlete academic achievements. Comeaux and Harrison (2007) suggest that future qualitative research should explore student-athletes' experiences both on and off campus in order to best serve this population. They also argue that institutions should encourage faculty communication and mentoring that is tailored for individual student-athlete needs. While it seems that some researchers in general advocate faculty involvement for student-athletes, others suggest that African American student-athletes are not receiving this support. Melendez (2008) found that African American football players expressed a lack of acceptance and understanding from their classmates and professors. This idea is further supported by Johnson (2007), who found that African American student-athletes typically reported a reduced "sense of belonging" in their college environment. These feelings of not fitting into a culture of a university often result in deleterious academic and social outcomes for this population (Harrison, 1998). This lack of

connection would lend one to assume that coaches and athletic participation would be the environment where there is consistent support. The next section examines the role of coaches as mentors to student-athletes.

Coaches and Role Strain

The coach/player relationship dynamics and pressures were exposed in the popular press in 2009 with the resignations and firings of three head football coaches. Texas Tech (Mike Leach), Kansas (Mark Mangino) and University of South Florida (Randy Leavitt) were all let go or forced out for mistreatment of their players, Black and White. The pressure to win in concert with other priorities is challenging but must be addressed in a positive way by coaches as leaders of young men. Coakley (1994) extends this concept of role strain by summarizing a sociological view of what many coaches experience as, "the role strain they experience is the result of being in a job in which it is necessary to interact with people in many different positions" (p. 194). Figure 1 is from Coakley's 1994 illustration of how different relationships may have an effect on the role behavior of high school and/or college coaches. The role strain on coaches nearly 20 years later with this model as a framework has intensified with the commercialization of college sports. Furthermore, Melendez (2008) conducted a study that used a qualitative approach to explore the social experiences of a small group of Black football players attending a predominantly white institution. Results revealed that Black players felt isolated and rejected not only by their peers but also by their coaches and other representatives of the campus community. This issue of isolation is consistent with other research (Harrison, 1998; Lawrence, 2005) and based on role strain it is clear that some coaches are disconnected from the needs of their players.

Methodology

A phenomenological approach is a form of qualitative inquiry, which focuses on human experience. The primary goal of this approach is to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context-specific settings (Patton, 2001). Due to the sensitive nature of the study and the aim of the researchers, a phenomenological interview was employed to collect data. One of the purposes of this study was to explore participants' academic experiences through phenomenological interviews (Thomas & Pollio, 2002) in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the role family and mentors in relation to the academic success of student-athletes. The aim of a phenomenological interview is to obtain a first-person account of some specific domain of experience (Thomas & Pollio, 2002; Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). The interviewer attempts to capture the perceived experience of the

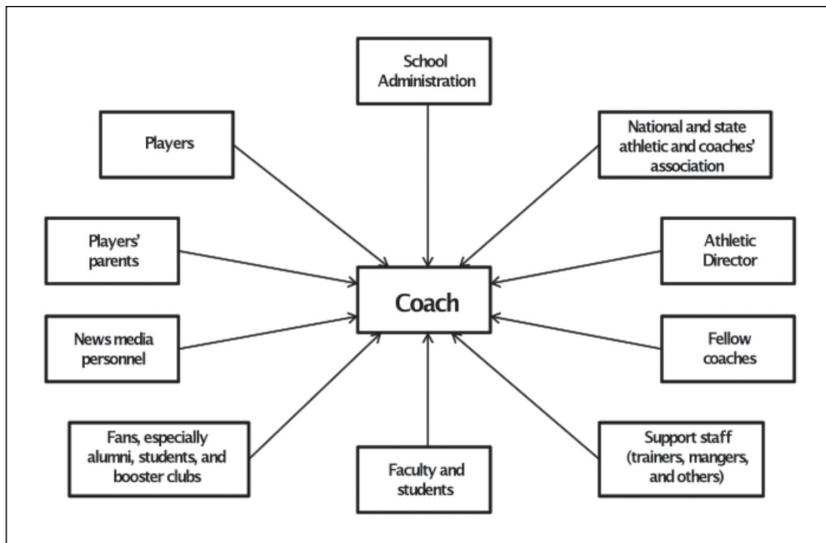


Figure 1. *Role Strain and Coaches* (Source: Coakley, 1994)

person interviewed in his or her own words. Researchers aimed to provide participants an active and dominant voice. A phenomenological interview gives the participant control without predetermined structured questions (Patton, 2001). Typically the interview utilizes a probing statement, which is not equivalent to a question. This process allows the participants to share solely what is central to their experiences (Patton, 2001).

Patton's (2001) strategy of *purposeful sampling* was employed. The purpose of this strategy is to select information-rich cases for in-depth study. The sample size is contingent upon the study's scope and purpose. According to Patton (2001), decision of sample size depends on the following factors: a) what the researcher wants to know; b) the purpose of the study; c) what is at stake; d) what will be useful; e) what will have credibility, and f) what can be done with available time and resources. In this study, the following criteria were utilized to purposefully select participants: a) student-athletes who attend Research I and Division I universities in the Western region of United States; b) cumulative grade point average at or above a 2.8; c) African American male student-athletes who participate in the intercollegiate sports of football, men's basketball, track and field or soccer; and d) African American male student-athletes who are on schedule to graduate in five years or less.

Participants

Twenty-seven participants were selected in 2004-2005 as eligible African American male undergraduates who had competed in football, basketball,

track and field, and soccer. Participants were from four Research I institutions. The universities are located in the Western region of United States and are as follows: Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California. These institutions are similar in terms of size, academic rigor, geographic proximity, and athletic conference. Collectively, the universities enroll 72,239 undergraduates, with 3,502 (4.9%) African-Americans. The enrollment of African American students ranges from 3.7% to 8.8% at the selected institutions. In addition, nearly 31% of the African American students at these institutions are men. Two universities are public and two are private.

Procedure

An initial consultation with the athletic administrators and counselors from the universities took place to introduce the goals of the study and to identify all African American male student-athletes who were eligible for participation. The required criteria for participant selection were conveyed to athletic administrators and athletic academic counselors at the universities. Initially, approximately forty African American male student-athletes were recruited for this study, and twenty-seven participants actually completed the study. Due to limitations in regard to criteria and availability the participant pool was condensed. The participants contributed to this investigation on a voluntary basis. Prior to the interviews, participants read and signed the informed consent form. Next, the primary researcher participated in a bracketing interview in order to identify his biases, assumptions, and the role of family and mentors in relation to the student-athletes academic success. Bracketing means to suspend one's theoretical presuppositions prior to engagement with the phenomenon under investigation (Van Maanen, 1983). The aim is to utilize purposeful bracketing of one's preconception in order to understand phenomena from the perspective of those who experience it (Van Maanen, 1983). The interview is performed to sensitize the interviewer to conceptual biases that might serve to change his or her interpretive vision (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Thomas & Pollio, 2002). After completion of the bracketing interview, the initial and follow-up interviews were conducted with each participant.

Interview Protocol

The interview stage included two unstructured audio-taped interviews – an initial interview, followed by an analysis for theme development, and a follow-up interview. Interviews were conducted in a private, quiet room located at the participant's university. The initial interview lasted one hour and the follow-up telephone interview approximately 15-20 minutes. The use of open-ended statements allows the interviewer to gather the data be-

ing sought without making the dialogue exchange inflexible and restrictive (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). During the initial interview, participants were asked to explain their academic expectations from parents, relationships with faculty, and speak about the academic messages that they receive from coaches. The primary researcher made an effort to make the interviews as conversational and exploratory as possible, which allowed participants to be comfortable with expressing their perceptions, expectations, and values regarding their academic experiences.

Following the initial interview, the audiotape was transcribed, and a copy of the transcript was given to the participant. If the participant felt some aspect of the contents needed revision, he so indicated and then returned the transcript. A follow up interview was conducted with each participant via telephone. Themes were developed through the use of an interpretive research group prior to the follow-up interview that was conducted with each participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This process will be detailed in the data analysis section. During the follow-up interview, a summary description of the themes for each transcript was given to the participant. The purpose of this interview was to obtain clarification and offer the participant an opportunity to add any other information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). All participants confirmed the accuracy of their individual transcripts and offered agreement concerning the themes for each transcript.

Data Analysis

According to Patton (2001), phenomenological analysis seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people. Similarly, Creswell (1998) posits phenomenological data analysis occurs through information reduction, analysis of relevant statements, identification of common themes, and a search for all possible meanings emerging from the data.

An interpretive research group, which consisted of four individuals trained in qualitative research methodology, one of which was the primary researcher, was utilized throughout the data analysis process. Initially, the interpretive research group read the transcripts of each participant separately to get a sense of the whole of each transcript. Moustakas' (1994) recommendation of finding statements from the interviews about how the participants experienced the phenomenon was utilized by interpretive group members. They listed significant expressions and thoughts in the margins and treated each statement as having equal worth. Next, the researchers organized and sorted key phrases using NVivo, a qualitative data management software program. This process resulted in the identification of 23 invariant constituents, which did not vary more than 84.7% of the time (Moustakas, 1994). The invariant constituents were later clustered into thematic categories.

After the 23 invariant constituents were identified, *textural descriptions* (what the academically driven student-athletes experienced) and *structural descriptions* (how the participants had experienced the phenomenon) were written for each of the 27 participants. These summaries were then used to generate accurate descriptions of how the phenomenon was experienced. A combination of 27 textural and structural descriptions, coupled with the 23 invariant constituents, produced three major themes that captured the true essence of the participants' shared experiences.

Results

Qualitative themes were derived from participants' responses to the three open-ended interview statements previously mentioned. Three major themes emerged from the participants' experiences of academic achievement: *My Parents Always Had High Expectations, I Have Healthy Relationships With My Professors, and No Support From Coaches*. Participants were assigned pseudonyms, which are indicated at the end of their quotes. The institution the participants attended was also listed at the end of their quotes. The titles of the themes are directly from the participants' words, which is a technique termed "in vivo coding" (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

"My Parents Always Had High Academic Expectations"

The participants overwhelmingly discussed how their parents played a significant role in their attitudes and approaches towards academics. The participants indicated that attending college was not a choice, but an expectation. Stanford student-athlete Jon Base noted:

My father definitely let me know at an early age that college was not an option for me. I was for sure going to college regardless of the cost or location. I guess I just bought in to that at an early age.

Other participants recalled their parents threatening them about the decision to attend college. One UCLA student-athlete commented:

When I was in junior high school my mom threatened to kill me if I did not go to college. She said that if I did not enroll in somebody's school, I had to get up out of her house. At that point I knew I had to get myself together.

Many of the participants discussed the pressures that their parents put on them to perform well academically. This pressure suggested to them that in no way could they devalue the importance that education would have in their lives. Consequently, this reinforcement confirmed for the student-athletes that academics would always supersede their athletic commitments. Tom Lough Stanford student-athlete added,

My parents kind of stayed on me about doing well in school and for that same reason, I felt like that just made me conscious of wanting not only to be a good football player, but also being the best student.

Other participants talked about receiving punishments and suffering consequences from their parents for academic underachievement. At an early age, this prompted them to perform well on spelling tests, reading quizzes, and other academic tasks in primary school. Sam Reese asserted,

If I ever got a C, I did not want to go home. I knew there would be some type of punishment. I got tired of not being able to go outside and play with my friends, having to stop running track, and not being able to go to school dances. I figured out a way to do it right the first time.

Although both parents valued and understood the importance of academic prowess, fathers played an even more notable role in influencing the participants' approaches towards academic achievement. Several of the student-athletes spoke extensively about the relationship between their academic accomplishment's and their fathers' scholastic achievements. The participants expounded on how their fathers' success motivated and inspired them to not be average students. Stanford student-athlete Matt Taylor commented:

My dad has his master's and doctorate degree in Political Science. He's always been big on academics.

USC student-athlete Andre Woodert expressed similar views related to the effect his father had on his academic success.

My dad has two master's degrees and a Ph.D. It seems like he has always been in school. He definitely inspires me to be the best student that I can be.

Other participants explained how their fathers put them on academic "game plans" as far back as elementary school. They discussed how these plans consisted of not only writing down specific academic goals, but also having a systematic approach on how to achieve those goals. Several of the participants mentioned that having attainable academic goals at an early age allowed them to gain confidence in themselves as students. Berkeley student-athlete Simon Mosley concluded,

I feel that I can compete with any student, because I have a plan. My plan has been in effect since day one. I don't have any self-doubt about myself as a student.

The participants who discussed their academic game plans for achievement gave their father's credit for their successes as students. As one UCLA student-athlete noted,

I owe all that I am and will be to my father.

"I Have Healthy Relationships With My Professors"

Professors played a significant role in the academic accomplishments of the participants. Faculty from a wide range of disciplines supported the student-athletes' immediate and future academic aspirations. All of the participants communicated that in no way did their professors extend any feelings of disrespect toward them as students. Instead, the professors admired and supported the participants' desires to be successful at performing dual roles of both students and athletes. Without question, professors were highly instrumental in enhancing the quality of the academic experiences of the participants in this study.

To understand the participants' relationships with their professors is to primarily note that all of the student-athletes expressed an eagerness and zeal to learn new concepts, explore different philosophies, and challenge themselves academically. Coupled with the participants' motivation to grow as students, they all expounded on the importance of proving to professors that performing well in their classes was a priority. It was clear that the participants wanted to separate themselves from other student-athletes who did not take their roles as students seriously. As USC student-athlete Sam Warton commented,

From day one, I let my instructors know that I'm here to learn and get an A in their class. After the first lecture, I go and introduce myself to my professors and set up an appointment to talk to them during office hours. I want them to know that I will do what it takes to do well in their classes.

Almost all of the student-athletes talked about their efforts to participate in class discussions. As one student student-athlete asserted:

Even if I don't totally understand some of the material from the lectures or assigned readings, I try to add a few comments during the discussion period, just to let my professor know that I have done the readings and that I value the course.

In addition, several participants maintained that they always tried to ask meaningful and thought-provoking questions after lectures and in individual meetings with professors. The participants explained that this was a way for them to not only to display their knowledge of the subject matter, but also served as a chance to develop meaningful relationships with their professors.

The participants spoke at length about how their professors have

“opened doors for them”—connecting them with contacts for graduate school, proving them with research opportunities, sponsoring them to attend professional conferences, and introducing them influential administrators on campus. It was evident that the student-athletes appreciated all of the opportunities and exposure that the professors provided for them. A USC student-athlete explained:

Dr. Fox just looked out for me. I never knew so much existed in terms of research and grants. I’m assisting Dr. Fox right now on a grant that he is going to submit next year. I’m learning so much.

Jeremy Jones, a student-athlete at the UCLA, compared his relationship with his basketball coach to the bond that he had with his history professor.

I’m cool with my coach, but the interaction is limited. He gives me different tips on how to be a better player like different post moves and stuff like that, but with Dr. Smith it’s different. We can ‘hang out.’ He shows me the ropes not only in terms of being a better student and how to network on campus, but on how to be a man in general. The things that I learn from him will be with me for the rest of my life. Hopefully one day I can pass down some of the knowledge that he is giving me.

Similar to Jeremy’s remarks, Matt Tyrone reflected upon the relationship that he has with his Political Science professor at Stanford:

Sometimes I go over Professor Parker’s house to have dinner and to just get away from campus. We talk about all kinds of stuff. We talk about politics, religion, race issues, and sometimes the headaches that I have with women. Every time I’m with Dr. Parker I learn something new. He makes me look at the world from a different perspective. I appreciate him as my mentor.

It was encouraging to hear how faculty had positively affected the lives of the participants. Participants valued having someone to provide direction and guidance outside the realm of athletics. It was clearly apparent that these student-athletes revered, trusted, and appreciated their professors in a special way.

“No Support From Coaches”

“They’re not about academics first. They don’t get paid based on whether we do well in class or graduate. They get paid to win games.” One USC student-athlete shared these remarks and the other participants overwhelmingly agreed. The student-athletes in this study all talked about how coaches frequently addressed the need to excel in the classroom, but how their actions were incongruent with their words. As one student-athlete noted,

There's no teeth behind what they are saying. To be honest, I think a lot of these coaches are full of shit.

In addition, the participants referred to high graduation rates as being all about the "bonus." They explained these bonuses as the extra incentives and perks that coaches receive for graduating a high percentage of their players. As one student at UCLA commented,

If my coach's salary was based on how many players graduated on my team, he would starve. All of his talk about academics is a front.

Being eligible for athletic competition was commonly expressed as the way in which coaches viewed academic success. The participants noted that as long as they met National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) standards for competition, coaches were satisfied with their academic efforts. One participant from Stanford explained,

I don't feel coaches have had much effect on my academic achievement. The only way coaches get involved is if a player starts to slack off academically or if someone is in jeopardy of losing their eligibility. That's the only way coaches are concerned about academics.

Another participant from Berkeley expressed similar remarks regarding his coaches' perceptions of academic success.

Let's be real. These coaches are here to win football games. They get handshakes for making sure that we graduate, but get paid millions of dollars for having winning seasons. It's all about the money.

Some participants maintained that their coaches often ridiculed them when they did not make a play on the field or had a costly turnover in a game. The coaches would associate their devotion to academics with their occasional poor athletic performances. One Stanford student-athlete commented:

Last year in the Cal game, I played terribly. After the game, I remember my position coach singling me out, saying that if I spent as much time in the film room and lifting weights as I did studying biology, I would be a damn good football player. He went on to say that my performance was awful and that the following week, I would lose my starting position.

One participant from UCLA talked about how his coaches discouraged him by saying that he would never be a starting player on the team because academics was more important to him than committing himself to additional workouts with the team. The student-athlete explained:

I told my coach that I had to take extra courses in the summer to stay on track for graduation. I told him that I could workout with the

team three times a week, but working out five days would conflict with my summer class schedule. He yelled at me and said that I would never be the player that he wanted me to be. He said that I just didn't want to put the work in to be a major contributor to the team. In other words, my chances of moving up in the depth chart were slim.

Although they did not support the participants' academic commitments, coaches would often use them as models for achievement in the classroom. The participants expressed being "put on display" when recruits and parents would visit the campuses. This not only infuriated the student-athletes, but also made them feel uncomfortable about misrepresenting the true facts surrounding the academic monitoring of the programs. One student-athlete from USC stated,

When recruits come on official visits, my coaches brag about me and say that I'm the smart guy on the team; that I'm majoring in philosophy; and that I work hard in the classroom. It's all about the perception of me being African American male football player that's clean cut and does well in school. This really works with the parents.

It was evident that the participants respected their coaches for their athletic knowledge and ability to teach and motivate them athletically. However, we concluded that the participants did not admire the coaches for anything else, particularly for their lack of academic attentiveness and emphasis. In some instances, participants expressed disdain for the coaches' overall character. As one student-athlete asserted,

I don't plan on speaking to my coach after my eligibility is completed. He's a coward.

These by far were some of the more emotionally charged reflections offered by the participants.

Discussion

Parents/Families

As mentioned earlier, there is a dearth of research on the influence of African American parents on the educational achievements of their African American male scholar-athlete children (Oliver, 1980; Harris, 1994). The present study found that the parents of the African American male scholar-athletes always maintained high academic expectations by putting pressure on their sons to perform at a high level in the classroom. Other participants talked

about receiving punishments and suffering consequences from their parents for not doing well in the classroom. Fathers played an even more notable role in influencing the participants' approaches towards academic achievement. Other participants explained how their fathers put them on academic "game plans" as far back as elementary school. These findings parallel the work of Donnor (2005) with his major finding regarding "the centrality of parents to the education of African American male student-athletes" (p. 159).

Specifically, the student-athletes in Donnor's study expressed how their parents viewed education (high academic achievement in particular) as key to improving a student-athlete's overall quality of life. Donnor (2005) also validates other contributions by the current study that is apparent in his study--theoretical and methodological. Theoretically, *positive* mentoring by parents and faculty from our qualitative data through interviews challenges deficit viewpoints of African American male scholar-athlete success. Further, in-depth qualitative methodological approaches allow the voices of African American male participants in athletics to be heard which contributes in unique ways to our understanding and perceptions of their realities in American higher education (Lawrence, 2005; Martin & Harris, 2006; Martin, Harrison, Stone & Lawrence, 2010).

Faculty

Faculty from a wide range of disciplines supported the student-athletes' immediate and future academic aspirations. All of the participants communicated that in no way did their professors extend any feelings of disrespect toward them as students. Instead, the professors admired and supported the participants' desires to be successful at performing dual roles of both students and athletes. Without question, professors were highly instrumental in enhancing the quality of the academic experiences of the participants in this study. These findings are supported and differ from previous literature. In terms of the current study's contributions by extending the literature, Comeaux and Harrison (2007) found evidence that pre-college characteristics and the college environment affect White and Black student-athletes' college GPA in a slightly different way. Their study also found that for White and Black student-athletes in revenue-generating sports that academic success is to some extent dependent on the specific nature of the interaction with faculty. Conversely, Baucom and Lantz (2001) examined faculty attitudes and stereotypes of athletes at a NCAA Division II school. Their findings suggest that faculty harbor prejudicial attitudes toward both revenue and non-revenue athletes in the areas concerning out of class achievement, admission to the university, reception of full scholarships, and expanded tutoring services for athletes. Previous literature in the area of faculty interaction with students or student-athletes indicate that the nature and *quality* of the interaction is key to the academic success of the individual. The state-

ments by the African American male scholar-athletes in our study support this notion by professors and faculty that empower the college environment with their leadership.

Coaches

Edwards (1973) contends, "there is a potential for 'natural' tensions to arise between coaching staffs and faculty members affiliated with established academic departments" (p. 152). This tension has been theoretically referred to as role strain (Edwards, 1973, Coakley, 1994). "To the degree that sport is an instrumental system of collective action focused on tangible goal attainment, it will be strongly constrained to move toward emphases on universalism, achievement, affective neutrality, specificity, and collective interest. But the total sport system also contains powerful influences which tend to produce the contrary emphases" (Edwards, 1973, p. 163). In terms of the qualitative data and candid statements by the African American scholar-athletes in the current study suggest that the role strain of coaches at these four institutions in the Pac-Ten is overwhelming and unhealthy for the players. The statements by the players also support previous analysis, research and theories about institutional and structural limitations on academic success (Sellers & Chavous, 1997). In other words, the academic and athletic divide (Bowen & Shulman, 2001) influences how student-athletes navigate their various role identities, which impact their relationships with coaches who are systematically facing role strain. While parents and faculty contribute a great deal to the welfare of the student-athlete, without coaches supporting players—it will be challenging for them to adjust on campus and excel academically, athletically and socially.

Conclusion and Future Research

During Fall 2009 one of the authors of this paper had a brief conversation with the parents of NFL player Justin Durant about how their son has consistently remained balanced throughout his athletic and academic career. Mrs. Durant replied, "If he did not get good grades and do well in school, he was not going to play football. Period" (personal communication, 2009). This quote echoes the sentiments of the parents and families in the present study. Therefore, what ultimately does our study contribute and in what direction should other scholars take this line of research? As some scholars have suggested based on theory and empirical data, intercollegiate athletics have benefits, not just drawbacks (Hildenbrand, Sanders, Leslie-Toogood, & Benton, 2009). The present study echoes this assessment and buttresses this same pattern with unique and rich qualitative data on the success of African American male student-athletes, a topic with limited focus in the academy

(Martin & Harris, 2006). We must continue to use qualitative and quantitative methods to assess factors that predict behavior as well as examine non-cognitive influences such as mentors that impact the success of *all student-athletes in all types of sports*. It will take a village of parents, faculty and coaches to facilitate the success of African American male scholar-athletes.

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About the Authors

Brandon Martin joined the University of Oklahoma Athletics Department in June 2010. His duties include supervision of the men's basketball, soccer, rowing, and strength and conditioning programs, NCAA Legislation and Certification, Risk Management, and other administrative duties. He previously served in a similar role at the University of Southern California. Coupled with his athletic duties and pursuits, Martin was an Assistant Professor of Clinical Education in the USC Rossier School of Education for five years. Additionally, he served as a faculty member for the African-American Male Student Retention and Success Community of Practice, which is governed by the International Center for Student Success and Institutional Accountability (ICSSIA). Martin served as a Research Affiliate for the Center for Urban Education in the USC Rossier School of Education, the USC Division of Biochemistry and Physical Therapy, and the University of Kentucky Department of Kinesiology and Health Promotion.

C. Keith Harrison is Associate Professor of Sport Business Management in the College of Business Administration and is Associate Director of the Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Dr. Harrison is also founder and director of the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess established in 1998. Dr. Harrison earned his doctorate in higher and post-secondary education at USC. Dr. Harrison has held faculty positions at Washington State University, the University of Michigan and Arizona State University. Dr. Harrison created the term Scholar-Baller™ in 1995.

Scott J. Bukstein is an Adjunct Lecturer for and the Coordinator of the undergraduate DeVos Sport Business Management Program at the University of Central Florida. Bukstein earned a bachelor's degree in Sport Management and Communications from the University of Michigan, and received his juris doctorate degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Success Despite the Image

How African American Male Student-Athletes Endure their Academic Journey Amidst Negative Characterizations

Abstract College athletics are at the forefront of higher education. Consequently, student-athletes are visible figures on campus. Given this visibility, coupled with the overwhelmingly negative characterizations of student-athletes, the objective of this paper is to examine the extent to which images (both positive and negative) affect a Black student-athlete's academic experience on campus. Utilizing Scheurich and Young's (1997) four levels of racism schema, the academic experiences of 17 successful Black student-athletes at Division I institutions on the West Coast are chronicled and analyzed. The participants were selected not only because of their success in their respective sport but more importantly, because they demonstrated success in the classroom. The primary research questions guiding the study are: How do academically successful African American male student-athletes experience and perceive their academic journey amidst negative characterizations? Can student-athletes' racialized incidences subsequently be classified according to the four levels of racism schema? While the participants were accomplished students, all had experienced attacks on their intellect from a variety of college personnel including faculty, academic counselors, classmates, and teammates; attacks they felt were consequences of the negative images of Black student-athletes and nothing they had personally created for themselves. The implications of these findings should be discussed among coaches, faculty, student affairs leaders, and others who frequently interact with student-athletes and are committed to creating more equitable educational environments for all students.

Americans share a common historical and cultural heritage in which racism has played and still plays a dominant role. Because of this shared experience, we also inevitably share many ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that attach significance to an individual's race and induce negative feelings and opinions about nonwhites. To the extent this cultural belief system has influenced all of us, we are all racists. At the same time, most of us are unaware of our racism... a large part of the behavior that produces racial discrimination is influenced by unconscious racial motivation (Lawrence, 1987, p.322).

Intercollegiate athletics has been touted as an important conduit for socio-economic and educational mobility among African American males.¹ In 2009, African Americans constituted 13% of the U.S. population, yet they made up 18% of the student body population at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I higher education institutions (NCAA, 2010). Furthermore, African American males are under-represented in multiple and varied high socioeconomic status positions in the workforce but they are significantly over-represented in professional football, baseball, basketball, and boxing (Coakley, 2004; Sellers, Chavous, & Brown, 2002). While both intercollegiate and professional athletics are viewed as providing educational and economic value for African American males, they are simultaneously criticized for reinforcing stereotypical images of Blacks as athletically superior and intellectually inferior, perhaps a result of America's long history of racism and the lingering effects of unconscious perceptions detailed in the opening quote.

Still, Davis (1995a), Sellers and colleagues (2002), and other scholars maintain that although the involvement of Blacks in many social institutions (including Division I higher education institutions) is severely restricted, the color of an athlete, specifically, a college student-athlete, is frequently overlooked when success in sport is highly valued by members of the dominant society. Participation by Blacks is differentially encouraged and sanctioned by those who support and control teams associated with particular institutions. As a result, sport has been praised for its role in integrating Blacks into the mainstream of the dominant society (Brooks & Althouse, 2007). However, stereotypes and theories of African Americans' athletic superiority but intellectual inferiority abound (Conchas, 2006; Conchas & Noguera, 2004; Edwards, 1984; Harrison, 1998; Lapchick, 1996; Sailes, 1993).

Despite tremendous gains made by African Americans and African American athletes in institutions of higher education, the overrepresentation of Blacks in specific sports perpetuates racialized stereotypes of intellect and athletic ability (Harrison, Azzarito, & Burden, 2004). Some scholars speculate that the desire to create winning teams and generate more sports revenue and not a moral imperative was the motivation for integrating athletic teams post-*Brown* (Davis, 1995b; Reese, 1998). Researchers cite lower college completion rates of African American student-athletes compared to other racial and ethnic groups and specific egregious athletic academic scandals as evidence of African American's lower intellectual aptitude (Adler & Adler, 1991; Sellers et al., 2002). Further complicating this misperception is the unfortunate reality that some Black student-athletes are admitted into higher education institutions with academic credentials that are lower than the regularly admitted student body (Bilberry, 2000; Donner, 2005). Thus, African Americans' participation in sport has also been criticized for fostering prejudice, discrimination, and segregation.

Still, others challenge negative characterizations and offer competing reasons for lower Black student-athlete academic success including the negative stereotypes themselves, unconscious racism, lack of role models, and poorer secondary school preparation (Davis, 1995b; Sailes, 1991; Steele, 1999). Hutchinson's (1996) and Rada's (1996) evaluations of news and sports commentator descriptions of Black and White athletes document that White players are generally described as industrious, smart, and hardworking while Black players are described as having unteachable, raw, animal-like instincts, thus further perpetuating the stereotypical image of Black athletes as athletically superior and intellectually inferior.

Today, within the same sport setting, even though a Black student is encouraged and permitted to play the role of intercollegiate student-athlete, he often experiences subtle or overt acts of segregation, discrimination, or racism, similar to those he encounters in other social institutions (Davis, 1995a; Donner, 2005; Harrison, 1998; Singer, 2005a). Both Black and White authors have noted this differential interaction between members of the dominant and minority group (Edwards, 1979; Lapchick, 1996; Sellers, 2000). Again, higher education institutions are no exception. Hodge, Harrison, Burden, and Dixon (2008) chronicle numerous historical cases where Black students and Black student-athletes were excluded from predominantly White institutions and facilities including access to lecture halls or dining halls on the basis of erroneous notions of Black inferiority and downright resistance to social interactions between the races. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that resistance to integrating college sports teams lessened (Reese, 1998). Despite empirical evidence to counter claims of intellectual inferiority of Black student-athletes, Lawrence (1987), Singer (2005a), and others remind us that stereotypes and negative perceptions still infiltrate the psyche.

What is missing in discussions of racialized, stereotypical assumptions and Black student-athlete talent is how the Black student-athlete himself experiences these stereotypes. Of particular interest are Black student-athletes who excel in the classroom—those that would be labeled as the exceptions instead of the norm. It would be instructive to examine more closely the extent to which these stereotypes surface in our institutions of higher learning and how these views ultimately affect a Division I African American student-athlete's experience at a research I university college campus; arguably the most visible and well-funded campuses for intercollegiate athletics (Padilla & Baumer, 1994). Using Scheurich and Young's (1997) four levels of racism schema—a framework that describes multiple layers of racism including individual, institutional, societal, and civilizational racism—this work seeks to evaluate academically successful Black student-athletes' scholastic experiences. With a long history of discrimination and stereotyping of African American athletes, have educators, students, and institutional personnel of today been able to rid themselves of these perceptions, especially in their

interactions with Black student-athletes? Analyzing academically accomplished Black student-athletes is important as it can contribute to a better understanding of persistence and degree attainment as well as inform discussions on the racial gaps in academic achievement between Black and White students.

Literature Review

This review begins broadly with African Americans in sport more generally and then transitions into the research on intercollegiate athletics specifically. Throughout American history, various theories have been introduced to explain African American athletic superiority. In a review of existing literature, Hodge, Burden, Robinson, and Bennett (2008) identified researchers who advanced anthropometrical (Spurgeon & Meredith, 1980), psychological (Worthy & Markle, 1970), and physiological (Samson & Yerles, 1988) theories of African American superior athletic abilities. Sailes (1991) and Harrison (2001) offer similar reviews highlighting numerous accounts of research that is intended to substantiate claims of athletic superiority. Two of the more salient accounts that are highlighted are the "survival of the fittest" theories and "selective breeding" theories advanced in the literature. Beliefs about the physical prowess resulting from a long legacy of slavery still pervade society. That is, only the fittest and healthiest slaves survived the rugged trip from Africa in the disease-infested ships. Thus, today's African American athletes are descendants of those survivors who were physically superior (Johnson, Hallinan, & Westerfield, 1999; Sailes, 1991). Sailes (1991) also documents reports stating that the body builds of the African American athlete gives them specific advantages in sport, making them more of a natural athlete, yet these myths were disproved by Leonard (1989) who showed no demonstrable differences between Black and non-Black athletes. A second myth that was advanced by a popular news commentator was that selective breeding was occurring on plantations in the South that led to physically larger and stronger slaves to work the fields and that today's superior African American athletes are descendents of these selective breeding practices. Adolf Hitler also used these biological and racist claims during the 1936 Olympics in Germany, as a means to explain Black superiority in sports. Again, these claims were unsubstantiated by research (Sailes, 1991, 1998a).

Throughout the twentieth century, there remained similar theories and accounts of Black athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority that served to perpetuate stereotypical assumptions of the Black-athlete (Harrison, 2001; Hodge et al., 2008). Consequently, stereotypical thinking has permeated the mind of the U.S. population and, arguably, tends to go unquestioned by many. The American public, who include higher education personnel, have

come to view African American athletes at all levels, scholastic, intercollegiate, and professional, solely as performance machines. Groups are labeled subordinate to justify discrimination against them. These primitive views coupled with persistent unconstructive stereotypes serve to reproduce the existing negative positions of African American athletes generally, and African American intercollegiate student-athletes, specifically. Few researchers have examined the intellectual contributions of the African American student-athlete.

One notable researcher that does not attribute African American's lack of success to intellectual inferiority is Claude Steele. Steele (1997) introduced the notion of stereotype threat, which is the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype. Steele asserts that beyond class, something racial is depressing the academic performance of African Americans (Steele, 1997, 1999). Steele argues that social structures and stereotypes shape the academic identities and performance outcomes of large segments of society. He does not advance positions that serve to perpetuate negative stereotypes of African American success within higher education institutions. However, contemporary stereotypes prevail despite empirical evidence that challenges deficit assumptions (Edwards, 1984; Davis, 1995b; Sailes, 1991, 1993). Today, while we continue to see research advancing the notion that Black student-athletes are intellectually inferior to other student-athletes, Steele's work and others like it must continue to reach the forefront if higher education institutions ever want to combat centuries of negative stereotypes and misperceptions.

In examining research on African American athletes specific to higher education institutions, one major area of concern is the exploitation of athletes. The exploitation of athletes has been studied extensively on college campuses (Edwards, 1969, 1984; Lapchick, 1996; Sailes, 1993; Sellers, 2000). Two main areas of exploitation include: first, student-athletes being excluded from head coaching positions and other leadership positions (Brooks & Althouse, 2000, 2007; Harrison, 2004; Lapchick, 2003) and second, academic exploitation (Anderson & South, 2000). Academic exploitation includes practices that perpetuate inequitable academic outcomes such as discouragement from enrolling in "tough" majors or placement in courses that do not advance students toward a degree. A recent example is the academic scandal facing Florida State that alleges that academic support staffers supplied answers to tests and wrote papers for 61 athletes in the 2006 and 2007 academic years (Farrey, 2009). Additionally, there is speculation that student-athletes are being labeled learning disabled to avoid having to meet "regular" curriculum standards at the University (Farrey, 2009). These practices further the negative images of college student-athletes as non-scholastic in nature.

While the experiences of African American experiences are chronicled through the perspective of scholars and the media, much of this research lacks the voices of the student-athletes themselves. Examining the qualitative experience of African American student-athletes is gaining in popularity. Lawrence (2005) examined the experiences of African American male student-athletes, three of which had participated in intercollegiate athletics, to better understand how race factored into their athletic careers and found race to be a salient factor in all of her participants' experiences. Her participants identified four main settings where they were racialized: game/practice settings, school settings, hotel/restaurants, and public settings. The reactions by the athletes fell along two negative and two positive themes: 1) outrage and 2) hurt, but also 3) empowerment, and 4) team togetherness, as they did not allow others' ignorance to derail their self-esteem. Lawrence (2005) documented a number of instances of discrimination when the athletes were traveling for competition including chicken bones being thrown, being spit at, and being called derogatory names.

Singer (2005b) examined African American football players in a predominantly white institution (PWI) in the Midwestern United States to better understand how student-athletes experienced racism throughout their intercollegiate athletic experience. Singer identified two main themes: first, that the African American student-athletes felt that African Americans were excluded from key leadership positions on the field and from major decision-making roles such as quarterback; and, second, that there was different treatment for the Black athletes compared to the White athletes including class scheduling and even consequences for poor judgment and behavior such as driving while under the influence, in that a White student-athlete would receive minimal sanctions.

Using the experiences of 533 student-athletes across 21 Division I sports programs, Brown et al. (2003) quantitatively examined the experiences of both Black and White student-athletes to determine the extent to which athletes perceive racial and ethnic discrimination. Brown and colleagues found little difference between White and Black student-athletes and their attitudes about racial discrimination no longer being a problem in the United States. In fact both groups of athletes mean was close to two on a scale from one to six, where one is "strongly disagree" indicating that an awareness of racial and ethnic discrimination is on a student-athlete's radar. That is, student-athletes are conscious that racial and ethnic discrimination remain a problem in the U.S. This research substantiates further research to better understand how student-athletes respond to the racial and ethnic discrimination they encounter.

In addition to investigating broad perceptions about discrimination, the authors also explored the relationship between racial identity, athletic identity, and discrimination. Specifically, Brown and colleagues (2003) examined

the extent to which student-athletes' racial identities would be trumped by athletic identity as other researchers have argued that athletic participation is one area that can be colorblind and raceless because of the emphasis on teamwork, cooperation, and the sports ethos (Jefferson, 1998; Widmeyer, Carron, & Brawley, 1993). Brown and colleagues (2003) found significant differences between Black and White student-athletes and the centrality of their race to their self-concept. That is, Black student-athletes tended to report that race was central to their self-concept regardless of their athletic identity. Only White student-athletes with a strong athletic identity reported that their race was important to their self-concept. This works suggests continued attention to African American student-athlete self-perceptions.

Donner (2005) calls for the attention of African American male student-athlete voices by examining the legal literature and specifically, legal challenges to the education of African American men in college athletics, most notably, *Taylor vs. Wake Forest University* and *Ross vs. Creighton*. He argues that these legal decisions perpetuate the exploitation of student-athletes. Specifically in *Taylor vs. Wake Forest University*, the plaintiff, a former football player, informed the coach that he would not be participating in athletics until he raised his grade point average. In his junior year, Taylor left the football program to concentrate on raising his 2.40 grade average but his athletic scholarship was subsequently rescinded. Taylor sued, alleging breach of contract. The court ruled that because he met the university's minimum grade point average expectation of 1.85, he was not in compliance with his contractual agreement to participate in athletics.

In the other legal case, *Ross vs. Creighton*, the plaintiff sued for alleged educational malpractice. Despite his low academic preparation to enter college, the plaintiff argued that it was the institution's responsibility to ensure he be properly educated on campus since the institution had admitted him with full knowledge that he was academically underprepared. The case was dismissed on the grounds that educational responsibility should be borne by both the student and institution with the outcome essentially shifting the onus of education almost solely to the student's shoulders, since the court ruled that the institution had provided academic support services. These cases, while unsuccessful, illustrate the attempt to hold higher education institutions responsible for the education of all student-athletes that enroll on their campuses. Donner (2005) and other critical race scholars contend "American jurisprudence has historically played and continues to play a determinate role in much of social inequality that exists among racial groups" (Donner, 2005, p.57). Arguably, racial inequities and discrimination are sanctioned.

While the literature is growing with respect to our understanding of the African American male student-athlete experience, one shortcoming is the lack of attention to the simultaneous exploration of a student's academic

performance in college and stereotypical assumptions.² For important exceptions, see Martin & Harris, 2006; and Martin, Harrison, Stone, & Lawrence, 2010). This study's importance lies in the fact that academically successful student-athletes were targeted for inclusion to better understand their collegiate experiences. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of an individual's perceptions of particular experiences (Glesne, 2006; Moustakas, 1994). This paper addresses the important link between student-athletes' perceptions about race and academic success.

Theoretical Framework

Despite scholars' attempts at debunking negative stereotypes of Division I African American student-athletes, the available research evidence continues to suggest deficit thinking dominates athletics. As such, a useful framework to situate this study is Scheurich and Young's (1997) four levels of racism schema. Scheurich and Young (1997) describe multiple levels of racism that can be extended to explore the academic experiences of student-athletes. These levels include *Individual Racism* that can be overt or covert; an organizational level, or what they call *Institutional Racism*; a social level or *Societal Racism*; and *Civilizational Racism* which is a deeper, broader level that necessarily encompasses elements of the three categories described above. Although Scheurich and Young utilize these concepts to discuss epistemological racism (i.e., ways of knowing that researchers employ), their ultimate position is that the ways of knowing that are sanctioned in the academy are racially biased. This assertion can be applied to whether or not higher education personnel employ ways of knowing and ways of thinking that are racially biased.

Racism is typically understood at the individual level. When one engages in public, conscious, and intended acts of discrimination or prejudice that are racially based it is said to be overt racism (Scheurich, 1993; Tatum, 1992). The authors offer the example of a college professor making a racial slur during a lecture as overt racism. Typically, though, overt racism is socially unacceptable behavior. The second type of individual racism is covert racism. Covert racism is similar to overt racism, except that covert racism is simply not public. Additionally, individuals engaged in covert racism will create socially acceptable reasons for their decisions and choices (Scheurich & Young, 1997). For example, a White college president may not want an African American hired as head coach of the basketball team and may pass up hiring that coach for a less qualified White coach, and then justify it on the grounds that the White coach had other qualities that made him a more acceptable choice. The next level of racism is institutional racism.

Institutional racism exists when "institutions or organizations, including

educational ones, have standard operating procedures (intended or unintended) that hurt members of one or more races in relation to members of the dominant race" (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p.5). Institutional racism can also be extended to symbols, rituals, or norms if they have the same biasing effect (Scheurich & Young, 1997). For example, policies that disadvantage certain racial or ethnic groups over the dominant group can be said to be institutional racism. An example of this can be extended to Proposition 48 and Proposition 42, NCAA policies mandating athletes to obtain a 2.0 grade point average, and score 700 or greater on the SAT to be eligible for athletic scholarships, implemented in 1986 and 1989, respectively. Sellers et al. (2002) highlight empirical evidence that "African American male student-athletes are excluded disproportionately (in comparison to White male student-athletes) as a result of initial eligibility requirements" (p.137). Sailes (1998b) also documented this inequity. The next level is societal racism.

Societal racism is similar to institutional racism but it has a broader effect. Scheurich and Young argue that societal racism receives even less attention than institutional racism and that it generally arises during periods of social conflict or major social events such as the civil rights movement. Societal racism exists when "prevailing societal or cultural assumptions, norms, concepts, habits, expectations, etc. favor one race over one or more other races" (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p.6). Societal racism typically includes the privileging of one view over others, and in the U.S. context, this most often is a White, middle class standard (Hill, 1972; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). The final layer is civilizational racism or the deepest level of the culture of people.

Civilizational racism refers to presumptions about "the real, the true, and the good" (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p.6). It is deeper than societal racism because it extends beyond the U.S. context. While different civilizational racisms exist, this is said to be the deepest level because understandings of the world become unconscious, how one views the world appears natural, and one tends not to question the usual order of business. Civilizational racism occurs because we understand knowledge that has been ingrained in us as fact, without considering how or why it became knowledge, and worse, if it was constructed in racially biased ways. Scheurich and Young, employing Stanfield (1985), argue that when one group dominates over another group for hundreds of years, the inhabitants construct their knowledge in a particular biased way and this knowledge becomes deeply embedded so that it is not questioned, and is often seen as the appropriate norm rather than a social construction.

Together, these levels of racism offer a framework that contextualizes the experiences of communities of color. Specifically, this work situates the experiences of Black, male student-athletes by examining whether any of the levels surface during student-athletes' discussions of their athletic and

academic experience on campus. It is important to note that this framework does not suggest that there is a racial conspiracy by dominant groups to subordinate others but that individuals' unconscious (or conscious) acceptance of the historical and social context under which they operate perpetuate racial attitudes about inferiority.

Methods

The research questions guiding this study are: 1) How do academically successful African American male student-athletes experience and perceive their academic journey amidst negative characterizations? 2) Can student-athletes' racialized incidences subsequently be classified according to the four levels of racism schema?

Sample Selection

To address the research questions guiding this study, interviews with African American male student-athletes were conducted. The sample was limited to male student-athletes in order to control for the effects of gender as prior research has demonstrated differential outcomes and experiences for female student-athletes compared to male athletes (Lapchick, 1996). The sample was also limited to athletes from public, research I universities on the west coast in order to control for the effect of different campus sizes and NCAA division status on the student-athlete's experiences as Division I student-athletes tend to be more visible on campus and in public than other collegiate athletes (Padilla & Baumer, 1994). Division I schools generally have larger budgets and a greater number of athletic scholarships as compared to Division II and III campuses (Padilla & Baumer, 1994). The athletes in the sample were graduating seniors or had graduated from their respective institutions within a five-year time period. A variety of sports and majors were represented. The sample was also limited to scholarship athletes. In total, 22 interviews with African American student-athletes were conducted, 17 of which are evaluated in this study. Five interviews were omitted from the analyses as the athlete interviewed had not played all the years on the same campus, had not attended a college on the west coast, did not maintain higher than a "B" grade average, or had not attended a Division I public university.

Former student-athletes (or graduating seniors) were interviewed in the spring of 2001 via structured face-to-face and phone interviews. The athletes had all graduated within five years of the time of the interview (i.e., between 1996 and 2001). Student-athlete inclusion was purposeful; that is, the participants were selected not only because of their success in their respective sport but more importantly, because they demonstrated success in

the classroom. Participants were identified via a snowball sampling technique. Typically, student-athletes' grade averages are not readily available nor are former student-athlete whereabouts. Snowball sampling technique is useful when respondents are difficult to find or identify (Nardi, 2006). In this work, Black student-athletes who had graduated with solid academic standing were identified for inclusion.

The principal investigator had contacts with three major research I universities on the west coast and initially approached current coaches and academic support staff who were former student-athletes themselves to participate in the study. This yielded an initial seven participants. The original seven participants were asked to extend an invitation to former student-athletes who had graduated from a Division I school on the west coast and who had maintained a B average while participating in intercollegiate athletics. The former student-athlete was asked to contact the investigator if he was interested in participating in the study. There was no compensation for the study except for an invitation to sit for breakfast, lunch, or dinner after the interview. Using this technique yielded close to 30 inquiries from former student-athletes but 8 were not interviewed as scheduling conflicts did not permit sitting for an interview.

The interviews were conducted over the phone and in person over a span of seven weeks. Ten structured, face-to-face interviews were audio recorded, two face-to-face interviewees declined to be recorded, and the remaining five were done by telephone. In the interviews that were not recorded, extensive notes were taken during the interviews. Detailed memos were written immediately following the interviews. In order to ensure that the perspective of the athlete had been accurately captured, after the interviews were transcribed and/or notes typed, the interviewee was asked to review the transcript or notes to ensure their accuracy, including those participants who declined to be audio recorded. In addition to allowing the interviewee to evaluate his notes, member checking with four members was employed. Creswell (2009) defines member checking as moving beyond providing raw transcripts but rather taking back parts of the polished product including such things as themes and interpretations. Once themes were identified, the principal investigator allowed the participants to comment on the accuracy of the coding and preliminary interpretations.

Table 1 provides descriptive characteristics of the final sample. The final sample included one soccer player, two baseball players, three track and field athletes, five football players, and six basketball players. The represented majors included one Humanities major; three Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) majors; four Business/Communications majors; and nine Social Science majors. While all 17 of the student-athletes were U.S.-born and self-identified as African American or Black, five of the 17 student-athletes identified one or more parents as an immigrant to the

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Sample (N=17)

Participant*	Sport	Grad.		Major	Grade Avg.	Parental Status	Parental Education Background	Current Position
		Year						
Aaron	Football	1999		Sociology	B	Non-intact	Both parents some college	Sales Representative
Andre	Track	2000		Communications	B	Non-intact	Neither parent attended college	Sales Representative
Charles	Basketball	1997		Biochemistry	B+	Intact	Father graduate degree, mother bachelor's degree	Pharmaceutical Representative
Chris	Football	2000		Sociology	A	Intact	Neither parent attended college	Coach/Graduate School
Edward	Baseball	1996		Political Science	B	Intact	Mother graduate degree, father bachelor's degree	Graduate School
Jackson	Basketball	1998		Economics	A/A-	Single mother	Mother did not attend college	Graduate School
Jamal	Basketball	1998		Business Administration	B	Intact	Neither parent attended college	High School Athletic Director
Jim	Track	1997		Communications	B+	Non-intact	Neither parent attended college	Sales Representative
Kevin	Football	1996		Sociology	B	Non-intact	Neither parent attended college	Athletic Marketing
Khalid	Basketball	1996		Social Sciences	A-	Intact	Both parents bachelor's degree	College Academic Coordinator
Martin	Soccer	1999		History	B	Intact	Neither parent attended college	High School Teacher
Omar	Football	1996		Physiology	A-	Intact	Mother graduate degree, father bachelor's degree	College Teaching
Richard	Track	1997		Engineering	A	Intact	Both parents graduate degrees	Engineer
Roberto	Football	2001		Political Science	A	Non-intact	Father bachelor's degree, mother some college	Coach
Shaun	Basketball	1996		Criminology	B/B-	Intact	Both parents bachelor's degree	Police Officer
Steven	Baseball	1996		Business Administration	B/B-	Father deceased	Mother bachelor's degree	Real Estate Sales
Tony	Basketball	2001		Sociology	B	Intact	Mother graduate degree, father bachelor's degree	Coach/Teacher Credential Program

* Table organized alphabetically by pseudonym

U.S. Seven of the student-athletes were first generation college goers, that is, neither parent attended postsecondary education while ten reported having at least one parent with some college education. The participants self reported their letter grade average at graduation, six reported "A" range averages and 11 reported "B" range averages.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol consisted of 15 neutrally framed questions that broadly addressed the academic experiences of the student-athletes. Interview questions were guided by Scheurich and Young's (1997) framework as well as existing literature on student-athlete experiences, and centered on academic experiences to better understand the academic lives of student-athletes. Interview questions were constructed to elicit Black athletes' reactions and responses to generalizations regarding their "Black student-athlete" status within the university.

The respondents were asked various questions regarding their experience as athletes on the college campus. The questions centered around interactions with institutional agents (e.g., faculty and administrators), athletic staff, teammates, and peers; groups whom the student-athlete would typically interact with during the course of the academic year. They were asked to identify any instances (if any) in which they were stereotyped. If they did report instances of stereotypes, they were asked how they responded to these characterizations. They were also asked if their experience in the classroom changed from freshman to senior years. In addition to this, they were asked how these stereotypes affected their motivation and ability to do well in the classroom. While the majority of the questions were geared toward exploring how pervasive negative stereotypes of African American student-athletes were, questions were constructed in a way that student-athletes could also report positive or neutral experiences with campus personnel. One final question was included that asked if they felt that all athletes experienced similar stereotypical imaging in college. The questions were necessarily broad and allowed the interviewee to voice his experiences both positive and negative.

Data Analysis

Data analysis follows Creswell's (2009) six steps in data analysis and also applies Strauss and Corbin's (1998) constant reassessment of themes strategy. After each interview, data is coded and re-evaluated in relation to previous interviews. The six steps in Creswell's (2009) qualitative analysis include 1) organizing and preparing the data, 2) reading through all of the data, 3) coding the data, 4) using the coding process to generate categories or themes for analysis, 5) advancing how the themes will be represented in the write-up, and 6) making an interpretation of the meaning of the data.

Creswell's suggestion of, "developing codes only on the emerging information collected from the participants" (Creswell, 2009, p.187) was adhered. Only after themes were identified were they then organized under Scheurich and Young's (1997) framework.

Findings

The findings are organized in two parts. First is an overall summary of the findings followed by the major themes that surface. In the second part, these themes are further organized under the four levels of racism framework.

Of the 17 student-athletes interviewed, all were in good standing with their institutions and earned baccalaureate degrees from their campuses. Nine of the 17 student-athletes expressed an interest in a professional athletic career (i.e., NFL, NBA, or international competition), yet all of them, except one athlete, had an alternate plan for life if the professional athletic career did not come to fruition.

Across all of the student-athlete participants, despite having repeatedly demonstrated success in the classroom, all had experienced personal attacks on their intellect from a variety of college personnel including faculty, academic counselors, classmates, and teammates. Every student-athlete reported they had experienced multiple stereotypical characterizations throughout their careers as student-athletes, experiences which can be classified as racial microaggressions via interactions with faculty, coaches, classmates, and peers. Attacks they felt were consequences of the negative images of Black student-athletes and nothing they had personally created for themselves. Racial microaggressions have been defined by Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, and Wills (1978) as "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs' of blacks by offenders" (p.66) and by Davis (1989) as "stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of white superiority and constitute a verification of black inferiority" (p.1576). Racial microaggressions are incessant and cumulative assaults on Black self-esteem and often go unnoticed by the White majority. These forms of discrimination can be harmful to a Black athlete's self-esteem, development, motivation, and intellectual aptitude. Other researchers have also documented the negative impact of racial microaggressions on Black students' educational experiences (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

While the majority of the student-athletes felt they did not receive persistent overt messages, they nonetheless felt they received messages that implied assaults on their intellect stemming from preconceived notions of what Black student-athletes were capable of accomplishing. Following are the major themes that arose from the interviews and then a more detailed account of how these experiences can be further classified under Scheurich and Young's (1997) four levels of racism schema.

The three recurrent themes directed at an athlete's academic identity

and capabilities include: (1) Black student-athletes as *academic frauds*; (2) Black student-athletes as *intellectually challenged*; and (3) Black student-athletes more aptly treated as *athlete-students*. Black student-athletes as academic frauds includes participants' repeated voicing that few people believed they were in college based on their own academic merit. Black student-athletes as intellectually challenged includes numerous examples of repeated attacks on one's intellect from multiple campus personnel and peers as well as the need to consistently challenge academic support staff's recommendations for coursework. Black student-athletes as athlete-students includes the sentiment that participants in this study felt they should be termed "athlete-student" because that is how most people viewed and treated them. Many expressed frustration that in the eyes of others, the academic and athletic identities of Black student-athletes seemed to contradict rather than complement one another. These multiple identities could not seem to be reconciled in others' mindsets.

The three main characterizations described above are further organized into the four levels of racism schema to demonstrate the depth of negative characterizations. See table 2 for an overview of selected findings organized by Scheurich and Young's (1997) levels of racism schema.

Individual Racism Accounts

A recurring theme that surfaced in this work that has been identified in other research is the loneliness that the student-athletes experienced. Peers wanted to hang out with them only to have access to parties and often college girls. Moreover, many of the student-athletes described how friends and classmates felt student-athletes had it easier on campus than non-athletes and that a student-athlete's life is privileged. "This is just ignorant," recounts Edward.³ "If the typical student had to endure our schedules . . . long training days or long travel days and still maintain high academic standards, most would fail [at that]. They think we have it easy but it is anything but that" (Edward, baseball player).

Though rare, all participants could vividly recall particular incidents of individual, overt racism from other college students. One participant recounted hearing two classmates discussing athletics and academics on campus and one student said "[the] monkeys are only let in because they jump really high" (Jackson, basketball player).

Other examples of individual racism, and subsequently racial microaggressions, occurred with group projects and classmates. Eleven athletes reported feeling ostracized in class and would overhear classmates grumbling if they were assigned to work together. "I guess they have been burned by athletes, or maybe they also buy into the stereotypes, but I didn't come to college to skate by. I did my work, but it *always* (emphasis on always) took a lot of trying to convince other students I would do the work. I mean, come on,

Table 2. Selected Findings Organized by Theme and Racism Level (N= 17 participants)

Theme	Individual Racism Level Examples
Academic Frauds	Professor believes that missing class time indicates student-athlete is not a serious student; Professor discourages student-athlete from particular majors
Intellectually Challenged	Insidious attacks on intellectual ability from peers; Peers do not want to work on group projects with student-athletes
Athlete-Student Status	Others' perceptions that student-athletes have it easier on campus; Peer interest in student-athlete because of the status that comes from being an athlete on campus
Theme	Institutional Racism Level Examples
Academic Frauds	Professors' incomplete assessment of student-athlete responsibilities i.e., choosing sports over academics
Intellectually Challenged	Student-athletes directed into easy majors
Athlete-Student Status	Messages to student-athlete that athletics come before academics; If a student-athlete maintains minimal eligibility, he is left alone
Theme	Societal Racism Level Examples
Academic Frauds	Contradictions between living up (or down) to stereotypes
Intellectually Challenged	Differential treatment for Black and White athletes
Athlete-Student Status	News and media reports of student-athletes only dreaming of professional athletic careers
Theme	Civilizational Racism Level Examples
Academic Frauds	Automatic expectations of lower performance of student-athletes
Intellectually Challenged	Negative image of athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority pervasive; Coaches' messages that student-athletes are on campus to play sports, not be educated
Athlete-Student Status	Not norm for student-athletes to do well academically

other students slack, we just have this image as the ultimate slackers, and it makes the whole academic thing tiring" (Shaun, basketball player). Richard, a track and field athlete, recounts that, for him, things were more difficult first because he was an athlete, and he was also a minority in an engineering major. "Classmates are cliquish and I was outside of the group...most people had doubts that I'd make it through." His experience was echoed by many of the respondents in this study. "Professors tried to talk me out of it [majoring in engineering], the majority of the athletic personnel were resistant to it, and only one or two people on campus were encouraging. Most of my support came from my dad who had a math degree from college and two White guys who were also engineering majors...My dad already prepared

me for the resistance I would get." What is additionally problematic about this account is that the student shared with me that he was an outgoing and social person but that he made few friends in college. This sentiment was echoed by 12 other respondents who felt that classmates were inauthentic, and not concerned about genuine friendships, but wanted the "status" of being friends with athletes.

The athletes were asked if these assaults on their intellect lessened as they entered upper division coursework and more specialized coursework. All 17 felt that they were still stereotyped but they felt the degree to which they were stereotyped lessened. After a good exam or solid paper, the professors and TA's were generally supportive of their endeavors. Still they received multiple comments from their professors about their commitment to their academics since their competition schedules necessitated missing classroom seat time.

Institutional Racism Accounts

Experiences that highlight institutional bias are included in this section. The respondents felt they should be named athlete-student since their experiences in sport more appropriately fit this context. "Coaches always expect us [student-athletes] to be athletes first and students second. Coaches get paid to make sure that their players maintain eligibility. They are not concerned about us [athletes] meeting graduation requirements. Sometimes it doesn't matter what athletes do in their off time, as long as they are there for practice, meetings, weight-lifting, etc." (Omar, football player). This account highlights how structural arrangements at the institutional level served to reproduce the image of a racialized athlete first, student second. A more poignant example is the attitude the participants invoked with respect to the coaches' roles in ensuring academic success. The student-athletes in this study did not hold the coaching staff responsible for the negative images they encountered. While the student-athletes would have liked for the head coach to value their academic identity, they understood that his job was based on his win-loss record. Thus, none of the student-athletes directed much frustration at the coaches for not caring about their academics but more at the system. Many relied on their position coaches for academic support.

While criticisms of missing class were voiced by professors and included under the individual racism level, this experience is also placed under institutional racism. The student-athlete is constrained by the fact that he has to travel with the team and he understands that as a scholarship athlete, he has to maintain his commitment to his sport. This responsible attitude is still viewed negatively by outside members who do not understand the complexity of the student-athlete experience. Faculty expected that if a student were serious about his academics, he would sacrifice playing time. This dilemma was unavoidable and positioned the athlete poorly in the eyes of his professors.

Another incident of institutional racism is the fact that there are low expectations for an athlete's academic performance and the academic support staff sanctions this. The participants in this study described how athletes are left alone if they maintain at least a "C" average and they conclude that people have done their job if students are maintaining eligibility. "Average is the highest expectation that people have for us. It is sad, but I learned to speak up for myself. Unfortunately, young guys don't even realize they are being taken advantage of with this system. At the time, they are satisfied with it because they don't know they should be outraged. I'm fortunate to have had my parents to push me because people at [my college] weren't doing it" (Omar, football player).

Societal Racism Accounts

Students are aware that there are low expectations for their academic performance as a result of societal messages from news and media reports. As one student-athlete recounted, "I get sick of hearing reports in the news and on the television about how bad athletes are and how all we do here is party and dream about the NFL" (Chris, football player). Interestingly, though, while many of the student-athletes interviewed did not feel they should be stereotyped, they, nevertheless, commented that they did interact with athletes who lived down to these negative expectations so they were not entirely shocked at the treatment they received from non-athletes. For example, Jim, a track and field athlete, stated, "I guess there is a Black athlete image. A lot of problems that occur for the Black athlete are not misunderstood. It's the case. We allow ourselves to be stereotyped."

While Jim has identified with societal images, he later states that similar behaviors by the "regular" student body or by the White majority students are not viewed in a similar manner. "Many of the students here drink, party, skip classes, but it is not talked about... the system has been broke for a long time." This student has internalized negative images of athletes and almost excuses the poor treatment of Black student-athletes despite his awareness that similar behaviors are interpreted differently for non-athletes. These experiences fit under societal racism because the student-athletes appear to normalize the stereotypes and accept the privilege of one viewpoint over another.

Edward, a baseball player, further described how the stereotypes do not affect all sports equally because of the typical racial make-up of particular sports. "In baseball, we had a horrible graduation rate, but do people make a big deal about that? It's because most of our team were middle-class White kids." The athletes felt the favoring of one group at the expense of others was problematic treatment, but that it was witnessed regularly. In fact, all 17 athletes felt that there was different treatment between Black athletes and White athletes, a finding confirmed in Singer's (2005b) research on Black

and White football players. A related finding was that even among Black student-athletes, the students felt there were tougher stereotypes and expectations by sport, regardless of race. Martin, a soccer player, and Edward and Steven, both baseball players, as well as Andre, a track and field athlete, felt that the “really” negative images were mostly directed towards the higher-profile sports, i.e., basketball and football.

Civilizational Racism Accounts

One can argue that the Black student-athlete image as underperforming academically is pervasive and viewed as the norm on college campuses. As such, the image and the subsequent treatment student-athletes receive can be defined as civilizational racism. It is deep and broad and is an automatic response by many of the institutional actors on a college campus. While sport researchers like Edwards (1984), Lapchick (1996), and Harrison (1998) seek to dismantle these negative characterizations, they continue to pervade society.

Jackson, a basketball player, suggesting that stereotyping is not limited to the U.S. context, stated “everywhere since the beginning of time, people expect us to be athletically superior but intellectually inferior. If we do well, it is hard for anyone to believe.” It is not the norm for Black student-athletes to do well academically, and this was stated in the account of an end-of-course progress report by a faculty member who wrote, “he was the best student I ever had—and he was an *athlete* (emphasis on athlete) and from the U.S. too” (Jackson, recalling his intro to economics course instructor). According to the student, the introduction to economics course was filled with immigrants, mostly immigrants of Asian origin, who had the reputation of doing well in that particular economics course. The professor was surprised that the student was an athlete first and a domestic student, second.

Richard recalls an incident of enrolling in an introductory math course needed for his major. When he approached his professor, the professor stated that other athletes had attempted to coast through his course but he failed them and he would probably fail Richard too. Richard was upset that the professor did not take the time to review his academic record or even wait to see how he would do on the first assignment. He ended up receiving one of the highest grades in the class. He ended by saying, “I never did receive an apology, but I hope [this professor] rethinks his assumptions about student-athletes... It was satisfaction enough that he made a halfway attempt to encourage me to take more courses with him in the future.”

Another example of civilizational racism can be applied to the coaching staff's demeanor. While only two athletes recounted times when their coach made overt disparaging remarks about their academic intellect, many of the athletes nonetheless felt that attitude present and perhaps more covert, “we are never classified as dumb jocks but it was there...it is sort of like they

make comments that imply that we wouldn't be here if it weren't for our [athletic] ability (Roberto, football player).

Strategies for Success

Despite these incessant and recurring negative generalizations, these athletes nonetheless successfully navigated the system. The reactions or strategies employed by the athlete varied, but generally a reaction echoed by the majority of the athletes fell into one (or more) of four categories: (1) disguise athletic identity; (2) distrust higher education personnel and peers; (3) refuse academic assistance; and (4) avoid courses with other student-athletes.

Disguising athletic identity included an attempt to hide one's athletic status. Fifteen of the seventeen student-athletes reported that they tried to avoid coming to class wearing their athletic attire. Many felt that this was just another easy target for professors and students who already did not take their academic status seriously. One baseball player further noted that while he did not wear the attire, he imagined it was difficult for those student-athletes engaged in high profile sports (i.e., football and basketball) to use this tactic as they were highly recognizable figures on campus.

Many felt they were always on guard, and questioned the motivation of staff and others who encouraged particular coursework or particular instructors. The student-athletes in the sample became distrustful of academic personnel's advice. Many felt that the academic support staff did not necessarily want to make them better students, they wanted to keep them eligible. The respondents reported being discouraged from taking tougher academic loads that would take away from practice time.

Some athletes refused to seek additional academic help because they felt it might perpetuate the negative ideas that Black student-athletes did not deserve to be on campus. While some respondents were loathe to accept it, the participants also reported that there was a wealth of resources available to student-athletes in terms of tutoring services and writing help if they needed academic support. They reported that having resources readily available to them on road trips and during study hall served to enable their success. This finding was counterintuitive, as many expressed the tension between accepting academic assistance and being stigmatized for seeking out that assistance.

Many refused to take classes with high student-athlete enrollment. Nearly all seventeen reported trying to avoid the classes in which multiple student-athletes were clustered. "I tried to take classes without other athletes enrolled. For some reason, any time there was a group of us in the same class, you could just tell that the TA's and professors didn't take us seriously as students" (Andre, track and field athlete).

While the overwhelming response to Black student-athlete status was negative, there were also positive interactions reported. The majority of the student-athletes in this study recalled one or two main supporters. Many named a particular faculty member who took a special interest in their development and that this person was encouraging inside and outside of the classroom and also helped them consider academic tracks to pursue post-baccalaureate graduation. In light of previous work (e.g., Comeaux, 2005; Comeaux & Harrison, 2007), the nature and quality of student-athlete faculty interactions are positively associated with educational outcomes. Eleven of the seventeen respondents reported that they identified a core group of friends with whom they could study. Half of the participants also reported that they had a girlfriend who was instrumental in helping with their studying. This lends support to the work of Gaston-Gayles and Hu (2009) who found that that on average student-athletes interaction with students other than their teammates had positive impacts on personal self-concept and learning and communication skills.

Discussion

This work sought to explore the academic experiences of academically successful student-athletes. Unfortunately all of the respondents felt continued attacks on their intellect despite demonstrating success in the classroom. It was disturbing to see how easily the Black student-athletes in this study recalled instances in which they were negatively stereotyped and encountered racial microaggressions. It was even more surprising to see that those committing the infractions were individuals that the athletes often worked closely with but that generally the respondents excused as just doing their job. This unconscious attitude verifies the racism that Scheurich and Young (1997) allude to in their racism schema. Additionally, the student-athletes experienced these negative beliefs about themselves and their ability quite frequently; a finding identified in other research on student-athletes and stereotypes (Harrison et al., 2009; Martin et al., 2010). Another disturbing reality is that so many could easily recount experiences that overlay onto multiple institutional schema levels. While the athletes were not explicitly asked about the multiple levels of racism, their daily experiences reflected continued discrimination at the individual level all the way through the civilizational level. Another disturbing fact is that all of these student-athletes maintained solid academic records but their stereotypical image trumped their academic record. It was expected that high achieving student-athletes might be shielded from the negative characterizations as all reported high grade averages in high school.

Fortunately for this group of students, they had a handful of positive

influences and strong self-images which helped them to overcome the negative characterizations. This finding complicates Scheurich and Young's (1997) framework and suggests additional information to consider—namely how individuals succeed despite negative ascriptions. All except two athletes empathized with Black student-athletes who were not more successful in the classroom. While they acknowledged a student's responsibility to do well in the classroom, they also acknowledged a larger system's responsibility where people set high athletic goals for student-athletes but low academic goals. The successful athletes in this study acknowledged that the system fails many athletes and does not adequately highlight the positive contributions of college student-athletes. Today, unfortunately, many negative stereotypes of Black athletic superiority accompanied by intellectual inferiority still exist. The participants in this study were all accomplished athletes but equally accomplished students. Unconscious (and sometimes conscious) perceptions, however, would have us believe otherwise. Fortunately, these negative stereotypes did not deter the participants in this study from attaining their goals. One can speculate, however, as to how much more successful these athletes could have been if there were more positive attributions toward their intellect and encouraging people along their journey. They have succeeded in an arena of battle.

Limitations and Future Research

While this work provided voice to Black student-athletes' experiences, a number of limitations should be highlighted. First, participants provided self-reports of their academic grade point average. Transcripts were not obtained to triangulate whether the self-reports were accurate or not. Since the emphasis was on academically successful athletes, future researchers might also secure university transcripts as a way to identify participants. Second, the students in this sample represented a variety of sports and different campuses so the findings could be more characteristic of particular curricular and co-curricular spaces. It is possible that experiences would differ if students were being instructed under different coaching systems. Additionally, students on different campuses are exposed to diverse faculty and academic personnel who may have varied interactions with student-athletes. Future researchers should control for institutional type and sport played, as this work produced some evidence that even between sports, African American student-athletes are stereotyped differently. Last, students are providing retrospective accounts of their intercollegiate experiences and for a handful of students, there was a long time period between the interview and the student-athlete experience; this could have affected the way student-athletes remembered their actual experience. One suggestion for future research is to examine the responses of academically struggling Black student-athletes

and academically average Black student-athletes to compare their experiences and perceptions of the campus and their coping mechanisms.

Conclusions and Implications

The findings in this work are problematic, especially as the participants were accomplished academics. Indeed there is a cost associated with their so-called success. This work serves to remind us that our unconscious responses to decades long negative characterizations continue to find their way into college athletics. It begs the question, if we enroll student-athletes already expecting problematic behavior and low academic success, could this contribute to the persistent racial gap we see between Black and White student-athletes? Until we rethink our assumptions of student-athletes and provide more rigorous expectations and avenues for success, negative characterizations and negative press are all likely to ensue.

Every interviewee demonstrated that he had to fight constantly to prove himself as a student. While this work cannot be generalized to the entire African American student-athlete experience, from these interviews it is clear that these African American student-athletes experienced regular racial microaggressions. One hopes that other African American student-athletes will be able to overcome these negative characterizations and that they will persist against these infractions. Student-athlete lives are filled with enough obstacles along their academic journey. They do not need the added insults of low expectations and misperceptions about their abilities in the classroom. Until we can dispel the myths of the African American student-athlete, these students will continue to experience hostility within higher education institutions. As witnessed, people seem ready to form conclusions about issues and people that they know relatively little about. Higher education personnel as well as the public should reevaluate their opinions about African American student-athletes within higher education institutions. Perhaps many are not more successful because we expect them not to be successful and we even tell them that they are not going to be successful!

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Notes

1. African American and Black are used interchangeably in this manuscript and represent individuals of African descent who were born and raised in the United States.
2. In this work, academic performance is defined as maintaining a “B” or better grade average as grade average is a prerequisite for other academic pursuits such as post-baccalaureate study. Moreover, institutions typically use a “B” average minimum for awarding academic awards and scholarships.
3. Pseudonyms are used for all participants.

About the Author

Leticia Oseguera is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Policy Studies at The Pennsylvania State University and is also a Research Associate at the Center for the Study of Higher Education. She received her PhD in Higher Education and Organizational Change from UCLA. She is also a former Division 1 scholar-athlete. Her research focuses on access to and retention in postsecondary education for underserved populations.

Research Note

Diggin' Deeper into the Culture of Revenue Sports

The Need for the Baller Identity Measurement Scale (BIMS) in Assessing Academic and Athletic Identities in Society

Abstract Athletic identity measurement scales have been addressed in the sport psychology (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993) and to a lesser degree in higher education sport research areas (Gaston-Gayles, 2004; Harrison & Lawrence, 2004). The purpose of this research note is to build on the work of the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) and Student Athlete Motivation Survey and Questionnaire (SAMSAQ) by examining theories of expectancy-value and self-affirmation with the development and refinement of the Baller Identity Measurement Scale (BIMS) (Rasmussen, 2009). Future research directions and implications with the BIMS are sketched via theoretical and practical synergy for scholars and practitioners that have interest in pre-college, college and professional athlete population.

"Athletic identity" is a common term used in the sport psychology field to analyze and explain the psychological, emotional, and behavioral components of an athlete's self-identity. Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder (1993) defined this term as "the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role" (p. 237). Brewer et al. (1993) developed a 10-item Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) in order for practitioners to assess an individual's athletic identity. Previous research has been conducted with the goal of creating a clearer picture about the development of athletic identity as well as understanding how various team experiences impact athletic identity (see Gaston-Gayles). One area with a great deal of public attention is the popularity of football and men's basketball. In terms of social science, few have examined the in-depth identity differences between those participating in revenue versus non-revenue producing sports. This line of research parallels the notion that "jock" is different from "athlete" in the mindset of youth and young adults (Miller, Melnick, Farrell, Sabo, & Barnes, 2006; Miller, 2009; Miller & Hoffman, 2009; Wininger & White, 2008). The current research note highlights the cultural dynamics of the term "baller" as a label that resonates across urban, suburban and rural identities (Harrison & Boyd, 2007).

The term "baller" can function as a noun, verb or adjective. We hypothesize that "baller" is a term that resonates with the self-concept of college football and men's basketball players who compete athletically at the highest level (Harrison, 2002).

Based on this line of inquiry, current research note proposes a new measurement scale termed Baller Identity Measurement Scale (BIMS). This scale is adapted from the AIMS while also building on the SAMSAQ. Both scales have implications for understanding academic and athletic identities that might connect with motivations for performance. The difference that the BIMS acknowledges is that a "baller" is thought to be more salient with those normally recruited for high-profile, revenue-producing sports (Boyd & Shropshire, 2001; Harrison, 1997; Gaston-Gayles, 2004). Both scales have implications for understanding academic and athletic identities that connect with motivations for athletic performance. One difference between these two scales and the BIMS is that the BIMS acknowledges that a "baller" is thought to be more salient with those normally recruited for high profile, revenue producing sports (Harrison, 2002; Harrison & Boyd, 2007). By acknowledging this aspect, the current research note attempts to divide groups and individuals into two groups: those in "revenue sports" and those in "non-revenue sports". The "baller identity" measurements will be compared between these two groups. The ten subordinate measurements of the scale are grouped into four higher-order factors (i.e., social identity, exclusivity, positive affectivity, and negative affectivity). It has been noted that further research needs to be conducted to test the higher-order factor structure of the AIMS, from which the BIMS was derived (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). This is another goal of the BIMS in terms of assessing the reliability and validity of the instrument.

The current research note builds on the AIMS similar two approaches used by Visek, Hurst, Maxwell, & Watson II (2008) and also the implications of Li (2006) study of Hong Kong athletes which states "to understand the cultural influences on Hong Kong athletes' identities, future researchers may want to include a psychometrically sound measurement of self-construals (e.g., the Self-Construal Scale; Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey et al., 1996; see also Moneta, 2004) in future studies. Such an approach will allow researchers to obtain current information on cultural orientations and related constructs of Hong Kong athletes. This tack, along with further development of a Chinese version of the AIMS, with possible additions of new factors and items, may help us gain a much more comprehensive picture of Chinese athletic identity than we currently have" (p. 157-158). In the next section, this concept of culturally relevant measurement tools is thoroughly explained with further rationale for the BIMS and the need to dig deeper into the identity constructs that are salient to revenue-producing sport participants in society.

Participants, Measures and Methodological Approach

A Cross-Cultural Psychometric Approach with AIMS and the connection to the BIMS

The degree to which an individual identifies with the role of “Baller” was considered when developing the Baller Identity Measurement Scale much like the AIMS’s steps with the “athlete” role (BIMS; See AIMS Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). The BIMS requires participants to respond to 10 items designed to assess aspects of identification (e.g., social identity, exclusivity, positive affectivity, and negative affectivity) with the baller role on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (See Table 1). Participants’ baller identity is measured by a total composite score generated by a summation of the scores for the 10 items (See Figure 1). Higher BIMS scores indicate stronger identification with the baller role. The 10-item BIMS is an

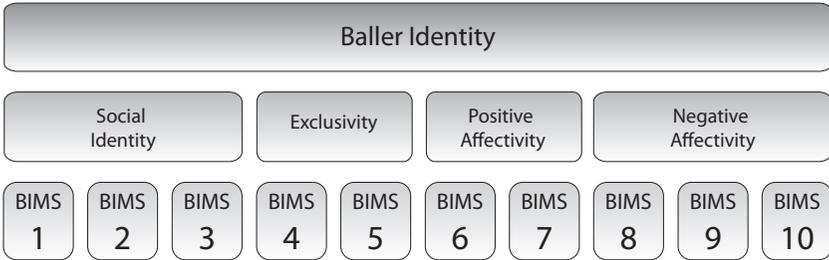


Figure 1. Baller Identity Measurement Scale (BIMS). First order factors and corresponding items.

Table 1. BIMS First Order Factors and Corresponding Items

First Order Factors	BIMS Items
Social Identity	BIMS 1 I consider myself a Baller.
	BIMS 2 I have many goals related to being a Baller.
	BIMS 3 Most of my friends are Ballers.
Exclusivity	BIMS 4 Ballin’ is the most important part of my life.
	BIMS 5 I spend more time thinking about being a Baller than anything else.
Positive Affectivity	BIMS 6 When I play Ball, I feel good about myself.
	BIMS 7 Other people see me mainly as a Baller.
Negative Affectivity	BIMS 8 I feel bad about myself when I do poorly when I don’t Ball out.
	BIMS 9 Ballin’ is the only important thing in my life.
	BIMS 10 I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not play Ball.

Source: Harrison, 1997; Harrison and Colleagues (2010)

adapted, expanded version of the 7-item AIMS (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). Brewer and Cornelius reported the 7-item AIMS as a sound psychometric derivative of the 10-item measure (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993) with an internal reliability coefficient of .81. The AIMS was further validated by using a sample in Hong Kong to extend the instrument to other cultural and ethnic populations (Li, 2006). The BIMS follows this research line by extending the legacy of the AIMS to other cultural and ethnic populations with the expectation of similar internal reliability coefficients that will enhance the interpretation of expected findings and outcomes.

SAMSAQ and the connection to the BIMS

Gaston-Gayles (2004) SAMSAQ scale is an important contribution when examining motivation as a nontraditional measure to understand the complexities of academic and athletic motivation. Her (2004) work parallels this issue of athletic identity and self-motivation. Specifically, few studies have examined motivation in the context of educational performance (Beamon & Bell, 2002; Center for the Study of Athletics, 1988; Sellers, 1992; Simons, Van Rheenen, & Covington, 1999; Rasmussen, 2009; Snyder, 1996).

Snyder (1996) found that at Division I institutions, African American athletes demonstrated more affinity with the desire to play at the professional level in comparison to White athletes, indicating that the professionalism culture of revenue-producing sports at specific institutions of higher learning impact certain athletic identities in terms of motivation. Further, Beamon & Bell (2002) also concluded from their study that African American male athletes (more so than White American male athletes) had a statistically significant different professional sport aspiration.

Another important study to note when teasing out revenue-producing sport identities was conducted by Simons et al. (1999) found "males had a larger percentage of failure-avoidance than females, revenue athletes had a larger percentage of both failure-avoidance and failure-acceptance and fewer success oriented athletes than non-athletes, and African Americans had a larger percentage of failure-avoiders and fewer success-oriented athletes than non-African American athletes" (Gaston-Gayles 2004, p. 319).

Discussion: Expected Findings and Outcomes

"Revenue sports" is a term that is often code for football and men's basketball and is commonly used to label and stereotype the African American male student-athlete—especially those male student-athletes from urban origins (*i.e.*, family, friends, neighborhood, K-12 socialization) (see Edwards, 2000; Harrison, 2000; Lapchick, 2000). As Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) continue to recruit student-athletes from these cultural contexts, the cultural

identities must be assessed and addressed academically, athletically, socially and lastly, their cultural identities of these individuals must be assessed and addressed academically, athletically and socially, and their career aspirations must be investigated as tied to the aforementioned three areas.

Recent work by Rasmussen (2009) indicates some key findings with respect to the academic and athletic motivations and the career aspirations of Black and White college football student-athlete. Black male football student-athletes in Rasmussen's (2009) study reported significantly higher career athletic motivation than Whites. In addition, no significant difference was found on academic motivation as Blacks' academic motivation and Whites' academic motivation was similar. Collectively, Whites reported lower academic, athletic and career athletic motivation than Blacks. These findings support the conceptual framework of the BIMS to investigate deeper into cultural identities in revenue producing collegiate sports such as football and men's basketball. In order for college faculty, team coaches, teammates and peers on campus to effectively interact with student-athletes, accurate definitions of self-concept and self-motivation must continue to be analyzed.

By developing and using the BIMS with pre-college, college, and also professional athletes we may come closer to systematically investigating athletic identity on a deeper and *more cultural level* that is needed in interdisciplinary research with athlete populations (Harrison, 2002). The last section concludes this research note with broader implications and future directions for systematic investigation using the BIMS scale and other instruments with respect to culture and gender.

A study was conducted by Hildenbrand, Sanders, Leslie-Toogood, & Benton (2009) which compared the academic performance between athletes and non-athletes at a Division 1 institution. It is often assumed, likely due to the media's portrayal, that athletes get a free ride through school to do as they please in and out of the classroom. The study found that athletes actually perform better in the classroom than their non-athlete counterparts. It found that athletes had a higher graduation rate than non-athletes and also had a slightly higher GPA than their non-athlete counterparts (Hildenbrand, 2009). The purpose of the BIMS is to dig further into this issue to see whether the academic performance, and thus engagement and identity, would differ when comparing revenue sport athletes to non-revenue sport athletes.

Li (2006), noted in his dissertation that as an athlete was given more attention, in terms of training quality, resources, facilities, equipment, and professionalism, the more it made one "feel like an athlete". The professionalism aspect was interpreted by many of the athletes as a sense of respect and made them take their role more seriously. As college athletics have become more and more commercialized, the athletes are receiving more and more media attention. This attention is generally reserved for those athletes that participate in revenue generating sports. These athletes also get more

attention in recruiting and “benefits”. They are also equipped with much better facilities and equipment than their counterparts in the non-revenue generating sports. This attention is given to these athletes because they bring in money to the Universities. In a way we are pampering these young adults and giving them a sense of entitlement. The BIMS assigns these pampered athletes in the role of ‘baller’ and looks to discover whether or not they think differently about their role as an athlete and as a student when compared to athletes in non-revenue sports.

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

Data collection with the BIMS is currently in progress with men’s and women’s sports at the pre-college, college and professional sport levels (Harrison et al., 2010 in press). While the BIMS approaches collegiate football and men’s basketball as its primary participants, certain control group sports may indicate overlap with revenue-producing identities. Examples could include women’s basketball, softball, track, and volleyball. The term “baller” is in no way limited by gender (Harrison, Walker and Sweet, 2007; Arizona State University Softball Team). However, the cultural dynamics of the term that link to positive affect such as confidence, competition, and extrinsic motivation. This may have the potential to transfer to competing in the classroom for positive academic performance (Harrison & Boyd, 2007).

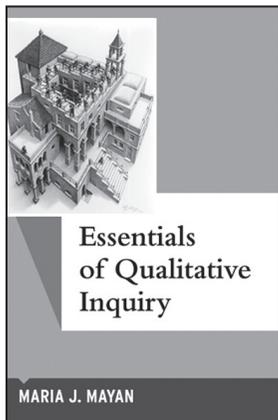
Other researchers such as Hildenbrand, Sanders, Leslie-Toogood, & Benton (2009) echo this claim of the culture framework. Simons, Rheenen & Covington, (1999) found that the values that lead to athletic success (e.g., hard work, self-discipline, perseverance, determination, concentration, and the ability to stay focused) also seem applicable to academic success. Public attention may be an important factor in discussions of what motivates athletes. Simons, Rheenen, and Covington (1999) found that student athletes who experienced public anonymity were more motivated to succeed in the classroom than college athletes who attracted attention from other students and the media” (p. 45-46). What are the implications of this analysis in relation to the BIMS? Why is the term student-athlete not as relevant to student-athletes in revenue sports and perhaps non-revenue sports as well?

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