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FOREWORD

Sports and extracurricular activities are pervasive features in American higher education with potential for major impacts on student motivation, development, and success. Sports are also highly significant activities in the African American community. Yet these activities have not been widely or systematically studied. This issue examines the role of sport and its historical and contemporary connections to education within the African American community. One article examines some key historical roots of African American participation in professional golf. Other studies in this special issue present analyses that examine how involvement in sports and athletic programs may be associated with and affect (a) academic investment, resilience, and achievement; (b) college choice decisions; (c) student's perceptions of African American athletes; and (d) faculty interactions with African American student-athletes. Each article will stimulate interest and promote further investigation not only of the concerns addressed here but also other issues relevant to African American males.

Jomills Braddock
Guest Editor

Black Males in the College Classroom: A Quantitative Analysis of Student Athlete-Faculty Interactions

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Abstract

Few scholars have examined the social and academic environmental influence on college student-athletes. This study explored the relationship between Black male student-athletes and faculty and the impact of specific forms of student athlete-faculty interaction on academic achievement. Data are drawn from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's 2000 Freshman Survey and 2004 Follow-Up Survey. The sample includes 739 Black football and basketball players attending predominantly White institutions. The findings provided evidence that the impact of the contact is to some extent contingent upon the specific nature of the interaction for Black male student-athletes. For example, faculty who provided encouragement for graduate school had a significant influence on Black student-athletes' college GPA whereas all other faculty interaction measures were not significant in this study. The implications of these findings are discussed among faculty, student affairs leaders, and others who are committed to improving male Black male student athlete-faculty communication, as well as enrich their overall college experience.

Black Males in the College Classroom

The gap between intercollegiate athletics and the mission and philosophy of higher education has widened significantly over the past decade (Eitzen 2003). An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2001) reports that college sports are drifting from their fundamental mission. Instead of enhancing the academic environment, college athletics are clearly limiting student-athletes in revenue generating sports, men's basketball, and football, of a valuable education. College athletics have become more commercialized with a greater urgency to produce winning seasons and secure corporate sponsors at the expense of the student-athlete's academic future (Duderstadt 2000; Eitzen 2003; Jayakumar & Comeaux 2006). Toward this end, universities are challenged with addressing the increasing lack of academic productivity in certain team sports. This issue, compounded by the recent National College Athletics Association (NCAA) Academic Reform Movement, requires new strategies and forms of academic engagement to be explored that challenge student affairs

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leaders to apply student-athletes' competitive spirit beyond the game and into the classroom.

Over the years, several studies have been conducted in an effort to determine significant predictor variables such as demographic and educational criteria that influence academic achievement for college student-athletes (Lang, Dunham, & Alpert 1988; Pacarella 1995; Ryan 1989; Sellers 1992; Simons, Van Rheenen & Covington 1999). Few investigators, however, have examined environmental influences, both social and academic, on student-athletes' educational outcomes (Comeaux 2005; Comeaux & Harrison 2006; Edwards 1984; Sellers 1992). The college environment encompasses all that happens to student-athletes during the course of their educational programs that may affect and influence the desired outcome-- to graduate (Astin 1993a). One potentially important aspect of the environmental experience involves student athletes' interactions with faculty, which too often influences their educational outcomes in negative ways (Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwen 1995; Sailes 1993). In this sense, it has been well documented that male student-athletes generally and Black male student-athletes specifically experience some of the most detrimental stereotypes and negative labels on campus by faculty and others within the college community (Baucom & Lantz 2001; Edwards 1984; Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwen 1995; Harrison 1998; Johnson, Hallinan, & Westerfield 1999; Smith 1988; Thelin 1996). According to Davis, "stereotypes also represent barriers to complete integration of this group [student athletes]" within the college environment (1995: 644). In short, the dual role of a student and athlete becomes more and more difficult to balance with the negative labels and perceptions toward this nontraditional student group.

Drawing from a larger project that explores racial differences in student-athletes' academic integration patterns on college campuses, this work ascertains the effect of specific forms of student athlete-faculty interaction on academic achievement. The author chose to limit the sample to Black student-athletes in the revenue-producing sports of men's basketball and football. Preliminary analysis of data revealed that revenue-generating student-athletes differed from non-revenue student-athletes in graduation rates, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) infractions, and overall visibility in American culture (Coakley 2003; Eitzen 2003). Furthermore, the existing literature regarding Black student-athletes suggests that members of this nontraditional group are victims of negative stereotypes and myths, primarily about their academic abilities (Edwards 1984; Sailes 1993). They are burdened with the insidiously racist implications of the "innate black athletic superiority" myth, and the more blatantly racist stereotypes of the "dumb jock" construct linked to

intellectual inferiority (Edwards 1984). Given the degree and magnitude of these stereotypes, Black student-athletes are faced with educational challenges, which in turn can have profound effects on their access to opportunities to learn, social support as well as complete integration into the college environment (Davis 1995).

Methods and Data of Study

The data in this study are from two surveys within the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP): the 2000 Student Information Form (SIF) and 2004 College Student Survey (CSS). The CIRP is sponsored by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles and the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Although the reliability of the instrument has not been formally measured during the past 30 years the CIRP has generated an array of normative, substantive, and methodological research about a wide range of issues in American higher education (Sax, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney 1996).

The 2000 SIF was administered to first-time college freshmen during orientation programs. Responses were received from 251,232 students at 494 institutions. The CSS was administered to fourth-year students in the spring of 2004, resulting in 38,964 responses from 161 institutions. Of the total students, 14,975 students filled out both the SIF in 2000 and the CSS in 2004.

The primary purpose of the CIRP is to provide baseline data on entering college freshmen so that they may be followed up over time in order to assess how college contributes to student learning and development. The CIRP data set offers an extensive set of longitudinally collected variables with which to answer a variety of questions pertaining to student success and retention patterns in higher education. In addition, a known strength of CIRP is its abundance of student input (demographic and other variables assessed prior to college entry) and environmental variables.

The specific sample used for this study includes Black, male revenue-generating student-athletes attending predominantly White institutions. Because the study limits the sample to those in the revenue generating sports of men's basketball and football, the results should can only be generalized to such individuals on college teams recognized by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) as Division I-A. The final sample includes 739 Black student-athletes attending four-year colleges and universities.

Analytical Approach

This study employs the “Input-Environment-Outcome” (I-E-O) model for studying the impact of college variables on students (Astin 1993a). “Inputs” refer to the students’ entering characteristics. “Environment” is that to which the student is exposed to during college, (e.g., faculty, peers, diverse views, etc.). “Outcomes” are the students’ characteristics after interacting with the environment (Astin 1993a). The power of the I-E-O model is its ability to allow researchers to measure student change during college by measuring outcomes while controlling for input characteristics.

The study used blocked stepwise regression analyses. Each block of independent variables was included in the sequence in which it may have an effect on student outcome. Within each block, variables (significant at $p < .001$) enter the regression equation in a stepwise fashion. The value of using a stepwise procedures design is that it allows for an examination of how regression coefficients change as each variable enters the equation (Astin 1993a).

Variables

The outcome variable in this study is students’ self reported college grade point average, a quantitative measure of academic achievement. College grades were obtained from students’ self-reported grade-point average (GPA). GPA is scored on a six-point scale (A, A-, B, B-, C, and C – or less). The pretest for this outcome is students’ high school GPA (scored on an eight-point scale, from “A or A+” to “D”). The author recognizes that academic achievement encompasses much more than GPA, however given the variables within the dataset, college GPA was the most appropriate measure of academic achievement, coupled with the fact that college GPA is the most common outcome when investigating student achievement in higher education (Astin 1993a; 1993b).

Independent variables are blocked in the following sequence: (1) students’ past achievement, family background, and high school environmental characteristics (inputs); (2) institutional type and control (environment); and (3) college environmental characteristics (environment). Because the primary focus of this study is the impact of specific forms of student-athlete-faculty interaction on academic achievement, independent variables are not limited to those expected to predict a given outcome. Rather, many variables are included because they may shed light on the relation between Black student-athletes and faculty. Independent variables can be classified into the following two categories (some variables may qualify for more than one category):

1. Those that previous research has identified as predictive of any of the outcome measures used in this study.
2. Those included on an exploratory basis because they may mediate the effects of the student-athlete-faculty interaction.

Input Measures

Student background characteristics (Block 1) include measures of past school achievement, family background, and high school environmental characteristics. The coding scheme for these variables is listed in Appendix A. Past achievement measures consist of students' self-reported high school GPA. The importance of high school GPA as a control variable when examining college GPA is well documented (Astin 1993a; 1993b; Sellers 1992).

Family background measures include socioeconomic status (defined as a composite of mother's and father's educational attainment, as well as students' estimate of their parents' income). It was expected that these family characteristics would influence students' expectations about college, as well as their likelihood of interacting in certain college environments (Sellers 1992).

Finally, high school environmental characteristics consist of student-athlete and teacher relationship measures (See Appendix A). The significance of incorporating these measures was to eliminate self-selecting students thereby decreasing the chance of a Type I error (finding a relationship between the environment and the outcome measure when a relationship does not exist). It was impossible to eliminate all possible biasing input variables. However, the goal was to minimize the probability of a Type I error.

Environmental Measures

Measures of the college environment consist of institutional type and control (Block 2) and interaction with faculty (Block 3). Institutional type is defined as university or four-year college while institutional control is defined as public or private. Institution level variables are included to determine whether student-athletes are more likely to interact with faculty in universities or four-year state schools and public or private institutions.

The final block contains the student-athlete-faculty interaction variables. These five measures asked students to respond to the following statement: Faculty provided encouragement for graduate school, faculty provided emotional support and encouragement, faculty provided assistance with study skills, faculty provided negative feedback about academic work, and faculty provided help in achieving professional goals. The importance of

student-faculty relationship is well documented as a valuable aspect of the college experience (Astin 1993a; Milem & Berger 1997; Pascarella, Daby, Terenzini, & Iverson 1983).

Results

This study sought to understand selected faculty interaction measures on academic achievement among Black student-athletes in revenue-producing sports. The results discussed here focus on the relationship between various environmental measures (i.e. student athlete-faculty interactions) and the outcome. The effects of precollege variables on the outcome are presented and discussed only when they appear to influence the outcome.

To appraise the “effect” of selected precollege variables and environmental measures on academic achievement, the standardized regression coefficient (Beta-In) was examined at each step in the regression. The Beta-In (as reported in SPSS-X regression results) is the Beta coefficient a variable would receive if it entered the regression equation at the next step; all variables have a Beta-In irrespective of whether they enter a regression.

Table 1 provides summary tables of simple correlations for the outcome, as well as Beta-In at each step: (1) after controlling for precollege (input) characteristics; and (2) after controlling for measures of the environment. The purpose of this section is to examine the relationship between that environmental measure and the outcome by determining how this relationship changes throughout the regression, without addressing specifically how or why such changes occur (that discussion is saved until the next section)

Relationships Explained by Input and Environmental Effects

While high school grades (input) had a strong positive effect on academic achievement (beta = .31, $p < .001$; see Table 1), adding the college environment to the equation led to generally smaller effects in the relationship between faculty measures and college grades. Of course, the relatively smaller “mediating” power of the environmental block was due in part to the natural correlation between inputs and environments; much of the potential “impact” of the environment had already been accounted for by students’ high school grades. This suggests that high school GPA had the greatest effect on college grades for Black student-athletes. Contrary to past research (Lang et al. 1988), parental status and income, parents’ education had no significant effect on academic achievement.

With respect to environmental factors, only one faculty interaction variable- faculty provided encouragement for graduate school- had a

significant influence on Black student-athletes' college GPA for this study (beta = .20, $p < .001$ (see Table 1). This finding suggests that Black student-athletes who are encouraged to attend graduate school by faculty tend to perform better academically in college. Finally, those attending private schools tend to have higher college GPAs than those attending public institutions (beta= .18).

Table 1: Predicting Academic Achievement (College GPA) among Black Male Student-athletes in Revenue-Generating Sports

STEP	VARIABLE	BETA^ AFTER STEP				
		R	r	1	2	3
<i>Input</i> 1	Entering High School GPA (pretest)	.33	.33	.33	.33	.31
	<i>Environment</i> Entering:					
2	Institutional Control	.39	.21	.20	.20	.18
3	Faculty provided encouragement for graduate school	.43	.24	.21	.20	.20
	Not Entering: Father's Education Mother's Education Parental Income Asked teacher for advice Talking w/ teachers outside of class Institutional Type Faculty provided emotional support Faculty provided assistance w/ study skills Faculty provided negative feedback about academic work Faculty provided help in achieving professional goals					

Data Source: 2000 Freshman Survey (CIRP) & 2004 College Student Survey (CSS), Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA

^ The coefficient for any variable not yet in the equation shows the beta that variable would receive if it were entered into the equation at the next step

Discussion of Findings

The present investigation provides evidence to support the effects of selected demographic and environmental variables on academic achievement for Black student-athletes in this study. We can not ignore that consistent with past literature high school GPA was the strongest predictor of college GPA at least for students and is also a predictor of college GPA for Black student-athletes in this study (Astin 1993a). Such a finding is not surprising since student-athletes are a sub sample of college students. Moreover, because Black student-athletes tend to matriculate from high schools and environments with inferior academic resources and preparation as compared to their White counterparts, these results are useful insofar as they have implications for dealing with Black student-athletes who enter institutions of higher education (Sellers 1992).

With respect to environmental findings, Black athletes in the revenue-producing sports of men's basketball and football academic success is to some extent contingent upon the specific nature of their interaction with faculty. For example, faculty members who provided encouragement for graduate school make a strong contribution to Black student-athletes' academic success whereas all other faculty interaction measures were not significant in this study. A previous study by Comeaux (2005) lends support to this finding insofar as the nature and quality of interactions between student athlete and faculty matters.

In light the aforementioned study, one possible reason that these faculty measures did not enter the regression equation, much less influence Black student-athletes academic success in this study, may stem from the ways in which they perceive and respond to the college environment that might be different from the norms, values, behaviors of their home culture or lived experiences. There is usually considerable social distance and alienation from campus life perceived by Black students on predominantly White campuses (Hurtado 1992; Sedlacek 1987), and they may feel discomfort from their lack of knowledge and experience interacting with students and faculty different from themselves (Allen 1988 1992; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas 1999). Another explanation could be that there is a stigma attached to the Black student-athletes as inferior academically by the college community (Edwards 1984), and as a consequence, stigmatization impedes trust and motivation (Cohen & Steele 2002). In this context, Black student-athletes may feel wary or question whether faculty will view them unfairly, and thus attempt to avoid interactions and communication with these authority figures. For example, an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education reports that Black student-athletes feel that they are marginalized and are not taken seriously by White professors in the classroom and on campus (Perlmutter 2003). The college experiences of Black student-athletes

at predominately White institutions are all too often hindered as a result of feelings of social isolation, racial discrimination, limited support, and lack of integration. In effect, Black student-athletes may choose to spend as little time as possible with White faculty, who comprise approximately 89% of faculty at predominately White institutions, and instead interact and bond with mentors and other support systems off campus where they emphasize feelings of encouragement and acceptance.

Conclusions and Ideas for Change

The findings documented here have important implications for designing program and policies to help Black student-athletes enrolled at predominately white institutions improve their academic performance. This study calls for high schools, colleges and universities to encourage and develop a wide range of communication and learning environments that are responsive to the needs of Black student-athletes (Redmond, P. 1990). Rather than employing a one-size-fits-all approach to learning, the challenge, accordingly, is to establish learning environments and socialization patterns that are tailored to norms, values, and behaviors of the student.

When designing such programs, attention should also be given to the structure, objectives, and practices of the specific academic support programs at hand and the extent to which they can potentially affect Black student-athletes in high school or college with differing educational characteristics. Findings from this study indicate that Black student-athletes tend to increase the likelihood of college academic success to the extent that they show academic promise and worth (e.g. high GPAs) while in high school. It is clear that programs in high schools should focus on developing the academic talents of Black student-athlete for competitive college readiness and also formulating critical strategies to overcome or circumvent any impediments. Moreover, since Black male students typically enter predominately white institution with lower GPAs and less prepared than their counterparts, faculty and student affairs leaders must be well advised to appreciate their situation and work closely with these students in identifying factors that may impede or facilitate their academic talent development and/or self-identity.

Finally, it is clear that there is a need for much more research to understand the relationship between Black male student-athletes and faculty. In the meantime, faculty and others who are committed to creating more equitable educational experiences for all students could benefit from learning about the types of conscious and unconscious prejudices and discriminatory attitudes directed toward Black student-athletes. Mandatory training workshops that provide insights into the nuances and

complexities of race, racism, and cultural sensitivity toward certain groups and that are tailored to the special institutional needs of different campus constituencies and different target audiences are imperative. In that sense, we can begin to work toward creating more inclusive environment and perhaps establishing more meaningful, day-to-day interactions and relationships between Black male student-athletes and faculty.

Future Research

While the present study produced useful findings and has implications for institutional practices pertaining to student-athletes, as outlined in previous section, it is not without limitations. The lack of causal direction among the environmental measures and the dependent variable were limitations of this study. That is, do student-athletes who interact with faculty, depending on the form of interaction, receive higher grades; or is it because those with higher grades are more likely to pursue interaction or contact with faculty? Also, using CIRP data, this study was not able to fill completely information gaps related to the interaction patterns between Black male student-athletes and faculty. Future qualitative studies that explore Black student-athletes' experiences with faculty inside and outside the classroom might be successful in answering such uncertainties and filling critical theoretical and analytical gaps. Additionally, the voices of Black student-athletes themselves are critical to addressing this issue at both the theoretical and practical level (Benson 2001).

Lastly, the present study focuses on whether selected faculty measures of academic achievement for Black student-athletes, yet it is not known whether faculty members' race/ethnicity, gender, college affiliation, and/or involvement in intercollegiate athletics play a role in the types and magnitude of interaction between Black student-athletes and faculty in this study. For example, the fact that Black student-athletes feel that they are marginalized by White professors on campus, as discussed earlier, may cause the degree of contact to vary dramatically by race. In future studies, it may be useful to control for faculty characteristics to understand better the impact of specific forms of student athlete-faculty interaction to outcomes of college. This information will be most useful to student affairs leaders and others who are exposed to college athletics culture in American higher education.

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APPENDIX A. Student Background & Involvement Characteristics

Block	Variables	Measures
Block 1 (input)	Background measures Average high school grades (self-report) ^a	
	Socioeconomic status (SES)	Mother's education ^b Father's education ^b Parental income ^c
	Interaction with Faculty (high school)	Asked a teacher for advice after class ^d Talking with teacher outside of class ^e
Block 2 (environment)	Institutional type and control (dichotomous measures) Public Private University 4-Year College	
Block 3 (environment)	Interaction with Faculty (college)	Faculty provided encouragement for graduate school ^d Faculty provided emotional support & encouragement Faculty provided assistance w/ study skills Faculty provided negative feedback about academic work Faculty provided help in achieving professional goals

^a Eight -point scale: 1 = "D" to 8 = "A or A+."

^b Eight-point scale: 1 = "grammar school or less" to 8 = "graduate degree."

^c Fourteen-point scale: "less than \$6,000" to 14 = "\$150,000 or more."

^d Three point scale: 1 = "not at all" to 3 = "frequently."

^e Eight point scale: 1 = "none" to 8 = "over 20."

College Athletic Reputation and College Choice among African American High School Seniors: Evidence from the Educational Longitudinal Study¹

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Abstract

This study extends research on college choice, with recent national survey data, by examining what African American students say about the importance of college athletic reputation in choosing which school to attend. We use the Educational Longitudinal Survey to examine the overall distribution of self-reported factors that shape college choices among African American high school seniors who express plans to attend college immediately after high school. We then conduct factor analysis to examine the structure of relations among the diverse factors shaping student preferences and their contribution to understanding variation in the college choice process among African Americans. Finally, to understand the effect of athletic reputation relative to other relevant college selection and access factors, we undertake logistic regression analyses. Our descriptive results show that roughly one out of every three African American respondents report that a school's athletic reputation is at least a somewhat important consideration in determining their college choice. The factor analysis for the full sample revealed five common dimensions--Academic/Career, Economic/Practical, Demographic, and Social. Academic/Career considerations-- representing the strongest factors, with Social/Academic/Career considerations ranked somewhat lower in importance across analysis groups.

An extensive and growing literature on college choice suggests that students' decision about where to attend college can be just as important as their decision to attend (Astin 1965; Choy & Ottinger 1998; Hossler & Gallagher 1987). Research on the college choice process has demonstrated that a student's selection of a college is influenced by supply and demand considerations involving decision-making processes operating at both individual and institutional levels (Hossler & Gallagher 1987). Individual

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decisions occur early as students identify colleges of interest. Institutional decisions occur later when college admissions officers accept or reject applicants according to their institutional needs. While both the supply and demand sides of this process are important, the present study, like most research in this area, focuses primarily on the supply-side in the college choice process—student decision-making. Dembowski (1980) notes three basic decisions a student must make: (1) which colleges to apply to, (2) which colleges, if any, to visit, and (3) which college to attend. We examine student self-reports of how institutional characteristics, and a number of other relevant factors that have been identified in past research, influence their college and university choices. More specifically, this study replicates and extends research examining the importance of college athletic reputation on African American students' college choice by: (1) employing more current national data; (2) examining gender differences; and, (3) studying college choice prospectively among a longitudinal sample of college bound seniors.

Review of Related Research

Carrington and Sedlacek (1975) cite early research on college choice which identifies four general foci of students' decisions: (1) factors internal to the institution (e.g., academic reputation and prestige); (2) factors external to the institution (e.g., location and proximity to student' home); (3) human influences (relatives, friends, counselors); and (4) individual factors (personal and family finances). Along with the earlier research, more recent studies have examined and affirmed the importance of these and other considerations, including: proximity to home (Corey 1936; Reeves 1932; Holland & Richards 1965; Bowers & Pugh 1973; Erdman 1983), cost (Reinhardt 1938; Bowers & Pugh 1973), campus social life (Bowers & Pugh 1973), as well as college athletic reputation (Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman & Lv 2006; Braddock & Lv 2006). Erdman (1983) found that perceived reputation, location, and size are far more important than other factors examined, including cost. Bowers and Pugh (1973) also point out that students and their parents emphasize different factors in the selection process: Parents emphasize financial factors, proximity, and academic reputation, while students emphasize social and cultural factors.

Research further indicates that students also differ among themselves in the relative importance they assign to particular selection factors based on: race-ethnicity (Lisack 1978; McDonough & Antonio 1996); gender (Holland 1958; 1959; Stordahl 1970; Hansen & Litten 1982); academic rank (Stordahl 1970); and socioeconomic status (Munday 1976; Hearn 1984; 1991; Kelpe-Kern 2000). Thus, research over several decades

suggests that college choice decisions are significantly shaped by students' access to information about, and perceptions of, colleges' academic programs, tuition, costs, availability of financial aid, general academic reputation, proximity to home, size, and social life (Comfort 1925; Ripperger 1933; Keller & McKewon 1984; Stewart, et al. 1987; Chapman & Jackson 1987; Braxton 1990; Kinzie, et al. 1998; Hossler, Schmit and Vesper 1999; Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman & Lv 2006; Braddock & Lv 2006).

Research on African American Students' College Choice

Earlier research on the academic experiences of African Americans suggest that there are several reasons why it is important to understand African American student's college choice: (1) investing in higher education represents the major avenue of upward mobility for most African Americans; (2) African American students' ability to obtain access to graduate and professional education largely depends upon the type and quality of their undergraduate education; and (3) both persistence and graduation rates among African American students have been found to vary with attendance at historically white and historically black colleges (Thomas & Braddock 1981; Braddock & Dawkins 1981; Dawkins & Braddock 1982; Dawkins 1989). More recent studies have confirmed the importance of understanding college choice in the higher education experiences of African Americans. For example, Hurtado, et al. (1997) report that although African Americans were about as likely as whites to apply to several colleges, they were significantly less likely than white students to say they were attending their first choice, with similar findings based on American College Testing (ACT) data being reported by Maxey, Lee, and McLure (1995). Therefore, while previous research has examined college choice decisions, with few exceptions (Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman & Lv 2006; Braddock & Lv 2006), the question of whether, and how, a college's athletic reputation may influence high school students' decisions to attend particular colleges or universities has not been examined.

It can be argued that we have limited knowledge about the role of college athletics because educational researchers, in general, fail to incorporate sports into their theoretical and analytic models. However, inattention to this topic is also due, in part, to the fact that most of the national data sets used to examine the college choice process have not included measures of athletic reputation (or related indicators of intercollegiate athletics). For example, the major national college student surveys (e.g., Freshman Norm Surveys collected by HERI, and the Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Study collected by NCES)

have not included athletic reputation or related information among the items in their college choice inventories. However, even when they have been included, the independent influence of athletics has often not been explored. Rather, athletic reputation data, when available, have more typically been combined with other indicators to assess the relative effect of “social” influences on student’s college choice (Hurtado, et al. 1997).

Athletics and Student College Choice

In some respects, the long-standing neglect of athletic reputation in research on college choice is curious since some have characterized intercollegiate athletics as “the front door or front porch to the university (Toma & Cross 1998). The “front porch” metaphor suggests that college sports are what outsiders see and what eventually gets them inside. One of the populations it attracts is prospective students (Toma & Cross 1998). This phenomenon has sometimes been called the “Flutie factor,” referring to a 25 percent increase in Boston College’s applications the year following quarterback Doug Flutie’s “Hail Mary” pass, which enabled Boston College to upset the University of Miami in the Orange Bowl in 1983. Similarly, North Carolina State University reportedly received a 40 percent increase in applications following its NCAA basketball championship in 1983 (McCormick & Tinsley 1987). More recently, following the University of Florida’s 2006 national football championship, and back-to-back basketball titles in 2006 and 2007, early reports suggest the university will reap similar benefits. For example, recent undergraduate applications reached an all-time high (25,000 students applied for fewer than 7,000 slots), and the average applicant SAT score is now 1400 (Garry 2007).

Similar associations between successful athletic programs and student recruitment have also been attributed to HBCU’s. For example, according to Evans, Evans, and Evans (2002), several HBCU’s -- Florida A & M University, Hampton University, and Grambling University—have experienced enrollment gains associated with winning teams. Specifically, they suggest that, over the past five years, winning athletic programs in football, baseball, track and field, and several minor sports at Florida A & M University and Hampton University have helped their enrollments. Grambling University has had greater success in recruiting students when its intercollegiate athletic teams had winning seasons (Evans, Evans & Evans 2002).

Within the higher education community, discussions about the role and value of highly competitive intercollegiate athletics continue to generate considerable controversy. Much of this debate often focuses on what may be considered “value-added” outcomes of successful athletic

programs, such as increased alumni giving (Turner, Meserve & Bowen 2001; Sperber 2000) or enhanced student applicant pools (Tucker & Amato 1993; Toma & Cross 1998; McCormick & Tinsley 1987; Murphy & Trandel 1994), thought to be associated with having successful high-profile sports teams. While alumni giving is clearly an important matter, we consider here only the arguments and research related to student applicant pools. In this regard, studies examining the association between colleges' athletic reputation and student applicant pools provide limited, and somewhat mixed results. However, the more methodologically rigorous studies tend to show results which are consistent with the value-added "applicant pool" benefits hypothesis. These studies have examined either numerical gains in the applicant pool or the quality of the applicant pool.

Quality of Applicants. Economists McCormick and Tinsley (1987) examined the effect of athletics on academics. Based on an analysis of 150 schools (including 63 from major conferences), these researchers found evidence to support the argument that athletics serve as an advertising tool and, consequently, schools with major college athletics have academically stronger undergraduate student bodies than institutions without major college athletics. Therefore, a symbiotic relationship exists between athletics and academics at many universities (McCormick & Tinsley 1987). Furthermore, according to McCormick and Tinsley, critics of athletic success are misguided if they believe that universities will improve academically by elimination of large-scale athletic participation. Rather, such action could have detrimental effects for any particular school. Tucker and Amato (1993) provide some evidence to support this argument by examining the association between schools' high-profile (football and basketball) teams and student quality (as measured by average SAT scores) and finding that a highly ranked football team boosted SAT scores. However, the same study showed that a highly ranked basketball team did not have the same effect (Tucker & Amato 1993).

Applicant Pool Size. Toma and Cross (1998), found that success in intercollegiate athletics (as indicated by national championships in one of the two marquee sports such as football and men's basketball) appears to translate into a sometimes dramatic increase in the number of admission applications received, both in absolute terms and relative to peer institutions. They note that football championships seem to have more profound impact on applications received than basketball, and point out that their finding of positive attention following a championship year (particularly for football), appears to be "somewhat lasting." Likewise, Murphy and Trandel (1994) examined 46 football schools and found that a .25 increase in winning percentage yielded a 1.370 percent gain in applications.

Student Choice. Studies examining student college selection priorities have produced somewhat mixed results. For example, one recent telephone survey of 500 college-bound seniors reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* suggests that “the quality of a college’s sports teams falls far down the list of factors that high-school students consider when deciding on a college” (Suggs 2003). The study found that 73 percent of the respondents said their decision to attend a given college was not influenced by its position in the divisional hierarchy of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. More than a third (37%) said they did not know whether their college of choice belonged to Division I, II, or III (Suggs 2003). These descriptive survey results are provocative but limited, methodologically. This is especially the case with regard to how this study conceptualized the quality of a college’s sports teams. The size and representativeness of the sample are also of concern.

One recent, more methodologically rigorous, study using reports of college choice among students matriculating at four-year institutions arrived at different conclusions. Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS), Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman, and Lv (2006) found that, while “academic” and “economic” considerations had the greatest impact on student college choice, college athletic reputation was the most important among the “social” issues students consider in selecting a college to attend. They also note that the importance of college athletic reputation tends to be emphasized by males, students from higher SES backgrounds, students who participate in varsity intercollegiate athletics, students attending public colleges and universities, and, interestingly, by students who place strong emphasis on college academic reputation. In a subsequent analysis using the African American subsample from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS), Braddock and Lv (2006) reported generally similar results.

The present study employs the more recent Educational Longitudinal Survey to examine further what African American high school senior students say about the importance of college athletic reputation in choosing which school to attend. Like Toma and Cross (1998), our analyses are guided by the conceptual model proposed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987), which considers college choice as a three stage process, including: (1) predispositions, where a student develops an interest in continuing his or her education; (2) search, where a student gathers information on the attributes and values that characterize alternatives among institutions; and (3) choice, where a student decides which institution to attend. Toma and Cross (1998) posit that the growth of intercollegiate athletics and the positive attention it generates has a stronger impact at the search and choice stages,

while also influencing students at the predispositions stage, especially among those who follow sports, in terms of making them aware of higher education from an early age (Toma & Cross 1998). Specifically, we focus primarily on one aspect of college choice—a college's athletic reputation. We first examine, among African American high school seniors planning to attend four-year colleges or universities, the overall distribution of self-reported factors that shaped the selection of their first choice institutions. We then conduct factor analysis to examine the structure of relations among the diverse factors shaping student preferences and their contribution to understanding variation in the college choice process among African American high school seniors. Finally, to understand the relationship between athletic reputation and college choice, with other relevant college selection and access factors taken into account, we undertake logistic regression analysis.

Methods

Data

The data for this study are taken from the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS) conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The base year survey was conducted in 2002 when the students were in tenth grade and employed a two-stage, stratified random sample of nearly 17,000 tenth graders in some 1,000 schools who were followed up in 2004 when the respondents were in twelfth grade. Estimated response rates remain consistently over 90 percent.

The overall sample is made up of Whites (53.7 percent), Hispanics (13.7 percent), African Americans (12.5 percent), Asian/Pacific Islanders (9 percent), and Native American/Alaskan Natives (.8 percent). However, our analytic subsample consists of 2,027 African American high school seniors who reported plans to enroll in a four year college or university immediately following graduation. We utilize the standardized NCES panel weight for this sample in order to approximate the original base year sample and to adjust the data for nonresponse bias.

Measures

College Choice Influences. are measured by a Likert-type inventory consisting of questions which ask the respondents: How much importance does each of the following have in choosing your first choice college or university: (a) active social life; (b) ability to attend same school as parents attended; (c) good record for placing graduates in graduate school; (d) size of school; (e) religious environment; (f) race-ethnic composition; (g) good record for placing graduates in jobs; (h) low crime environment; (i) easy admission standards; (j) strong reputation of school's academic programs; (k) geographic location; (l) chance to live away from home; (m) availability of degree program that will allow me to get a chosen job; (n) availability of specific courses or curriculum; (o) ability to attend school while living at home; (p) low expenses; (q) availability of financial aid; and, (r) strong reputation of school's athletic programs.

The possible responses to these items range from (1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=very important). For the logistic regression analyses, these responses were dichotomized to reflect an assessment of either none or some importance attached to school's athletic reputation. The none category (0) includes (1=no importance) to reflect a lack of importance attached to school's athletic reputation. The some (1) category includes (2=somewhat important and 3=very important) to reflect some degree of importance attached to school's athletic reputation.

Control Variables

Student Gender: 1=male, 0=female.

Family SES: This composite measure of socioeconomic status was constructed by NCES, utilizing parent questionnaire data on: father's education level, mother's education level, father's occupation, mother's occupation, and family income. Quartile scores on this measure are dichotomized where 1= top quartile; 0=second, third, and fourth quartiles.

Standardized Achievement Test Score: is a composite scale measure constructed by NCES based on students' individual scores on reading and math standardized achievement tests. Quartile scores on this measure are dichotomized where 1= top quartile; 0=second, third, and fourth quartiles.

H. S. Athlete: is measured by students' reports of whether or not they participated in interscholastic varsity sports during 12th grade where 1=participant and 0=nonparticipant.

School Urbanicity: is a measure that uses U.S. Census categories to classify the students' school as urban (central city); suburban (area surrounding a central city within a metropolitan statistical area); or rural (outside a metropolitan statistical area). Codes: 1=Urban, 0=Non-Urban.

Results

Descriptive Analyses

Table 1 presents African American high school seniors' responses to each of the 18 original items in the College Choice Inventory (CCI). Among the full sample (left panel), there is considerable variation in the degree of importance attached to particular types of items in the CCI. Not surprisingly, we note that specific items associated with academic and career outcomes (e.g., school's academic reputation, curricular offerings, job placement record, graduate school placements, and specialized degree programs), and financial considerations (e.g., low cost, financial assistance) are rated as much more important than items associated with demographic (e.g., religious environment, low crime) or social considerations (e.g., athletic reputation, social activities).

Table 1: Factors Affecting African American High School Seniors College Choice (N=2027)

	Very Important			Somewhat Important			Not Important		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Academic Reputation	66.6	61.8	70.8	26.8	30.8	23.3	6.6	7.4	5.9
Active Social Life	34.8	39.6	30.5	48.8	47.2	50.2	16.5	13.2	19.3
Financial Aid	75.7	71.5	79.4	18.9	21.8	16.3	5.4	6.7	4.3
Low Cost	52.0	51.6	52.3	35.6	34.8	36.4	12.4	13.6	11.3
Parents Alma Mata	6.6	8.7	4.8	13.2	17.1	9.8	80.1	74.2	85.4
Grad School Placement	60.3	57.7	62.6	30.1	31.5	28.8	9.6	10.7	8.6
Size of School	24.7	23.7	25.6	45.7	46.9	44.6	29.6	29.4	29.8
Religious Environ.	58.4	58.1	58.6	30.2	30.7	29.8	11.4	11.2	11.6
Race-Ethnic Comp.	32.0	32.0	32.0	38.3	38.6	38.1	29.7	29.5	29.5
Job Placement	73.0	72.0	73.9	22.7	23.1	22.4	4.3	4.9	3.7
Low Crime Environ.	52.9	47.9	57.2	33.1	34.4	32	14	17.7	10.7
Easy Admissions	38.8	38.7	38.9	37.9	38.4	37.5	23.3	22.9	23.6
Geographic Location	28.4	28.5	28.3	45.2	44.8	45.5	26.4	26.7	26.2
Live Away From Home	40.3	38.5	41.8	37.8	43	33.3	21.9	18.5	24.9
Live at Home	26.4	26.1	26.6	31.1	33.6	29	42.5	40.2	44.4
Special Degree Program	83.3	79.0	87.0	14.7	18.7	11.3	2.0	2.4	1.7
Specialized Curriculum	73.4	68.1	78.0	22.6	21.5	18.2	4.0	4.4	3.7
Athletic Reputation	26.3	35.6	18.2	29.9	33.7	26.5	43.8	30.7	55.3

Table 1: Factors Affecting African American High School Seniors College Choice (N=2027)

With few exceptions (e.g., athletic reputation, campus safety), the results for males and females in the middle and right panels, respectively, are quite similar. Not surprisingly, only one quarter of African American seniors ranked a college's athletic reputation as "very important" in their decision-making (26.3 percent among the full sample and 35.6 percent and 18.2 percent among males and females, respectively). In contrast, a larger proportion of African American seniors generally ranked college athletic reputation as "not important" in their decision-making (43.8 percent among the full sample and 30.7 percent and 55.3 percent among males and females, respectively).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that roughly one half of our sample of college-bound African American high school seniors (69 percent of the African American males, and 45 percent of African American females) considered a strong athletic reputation to be at least somewhat or very important in their choice of college. In many respects, these patterns are quite similar to those reported for the NELS: 88 African American sample of high school seniors (Braddock & Lv 2006) and those reported for the full multi-ethnic national sample of high school seniors (Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman, & Lv 2006). However, we should note that among African American students, the current data suggest a substantially stronger emphasis placed on athletic reputation among ELS college bound seniors compared to that reported for the NELS college matriculant cohort. Both the current patterns and over-time trends suggest that college athletic reputation should be an important consideration not only for college choice researchers, but also for college administrators and others involved with student recruitment.

Factor Analysis

Principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation was performed on the set of 18 items to examine whether the CCI included more than one dimension. Because previous reports based on the earlier NELS Survey (Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman, & Lv 2006) have identified gender differences in the factor structure of the CCI, we carried out our analyses on the full sample as well as parallel analyses for the male and female subsamples. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were retained. Each factor consisted of the items loading at .50 or above on that factor. All items that received a factor loading of less than .50 were dropped from further analysis. For the full sample, one item was deleted following the initial analysis and additional factor analyses were conducted with the 17 remaining items. For the full sample, varimax rotation resulted in five factors –Academic-Career, Demographic, Economic, Social, and Practical. The specific items are listed in Table 2 according to their factor

loadings and the factors are presented in order of their Eigenvalue ranking, and proportion of variance explained.

Table 2: Rotated Factor Loadings for Four Dimensions of Self-Reported Influences on African American High School Seniors' College Choice (N=2027)

	1	2	3	4	5
ACADEMIC/CAREER (1)					
Job Placement	.786				
Grad Placement	.769				
Academic Program	.742				
Job Degree Program	.617				
DEMOGRAPHIC (2)					
Size of School		.807			
Geog. Location		.782			
Race-Ethnic Composition		.669			
ECONOMIC (3)					
Financial Aid			.786		
Low Expense			.737		
Specific Curriculum			.552		
SOCIAL LIFE (4)					
Athletic Program				.732	
Social Life				.647	
Live Away Home				.627	
PRACTICAL (5)					
Live at Home					.821
Easy Admission					.561
Parents Alma Mater					.536
Eigenvalue	4.394	2.008	1.493	1.168	1.011
Principal Components Extraction/Varimax Rotation					

The factor analysis of ratings on these 17 items produced five factors that were rotated to terminal solution (Table 2). The resulting five factors explained 59.3 percent of the variance in the CCI importance ratings. Factor 1, which was labeled Academic-Career, accounted for 16.3 percent of the variance. This factor consists of four items that describe college choice factors associated with academic, and status attainment concerns. Factor 2, Demographic, accounted for 12.2 percent of the variance. This factor consists of three items--school size, geographic location, and race-ethnic composition. Factor 3, Economic, consists of three items—low costs, availability of financial aid, and specific curriculum--accounted for 10.4 percent of the variance. Factor 4, Social, which is represented by three items—athletic reputation, ability to live away from home, and active social life--accounted for 10.3 percent of the variance. Factor 5, Practical, consisting of three items—live at home, attend parents alma mater, and easy admissions standards--accounted for 10 percent of the variance.

For males, however, varimax rotation resulted in just four factors that were rotated to terminal solution –Academic-Career, Demographic-Social, Practical, and Economic. The specific items are listed in Table 3 according to their factor loadings and the factors are presented in order of their Eigenvalue ranking and proportion of variance explained.

The resulting four factors explained 54.9 percent of the variance in the CCI importance ratings. Factor 1, which was labeled Academic-Career, accounted for 17.6 percent of the variance. This factor consists of five items that describe college choice factors primarily associated with academic, and status attainment, concerns. Factor 2, Demographic-Social, accounted for 17.1 percent of the variance. This factor which combined consists of six items--school size, geographic location, race-ethnic composition, athletic reputation, ability to live away from home, and active social life. Factor 3, Practical, consists of three items—live at home, attend parents alma mater, and easy admissions standards--accounted for 10.3% of the variance. Factor 4, Economic, consists of three items—low costs, availability of financial aid, and specific curriculum--accounted for 9.9 percent of the variance.

Table 3: Rotated Factor Loadings for Four Dimensions of Self-Reported Influences on Male African American High School Seniors' College Choice (N=675)

	1	2	3	4
ACADEMIC/CAREER (1)				
Job Placement	.782			
Academic Program	.754			
Grad Placement	.741			
Job Degree Program	.670			
Low Crime	.545			
DEMOGRAPHIC / SOCIAL (2)				
Size of School		.774		
Race-Ethnic Composition		.666		
Geog. Location		.655		
Live away from Home		.653		
Social Life		.552		
Athletic Reputation		.470		
PRACTICAL (3)				
Live at Home			.822	
Easy Admission			.584	
Parent's Alma Mater			.538	
ECONOMIC (4)				
Financial Aid				.786
Low Expense				.734
Specific Curriculum				.486
Eigenvalue	4.900	1.990	1.369	1.076
Principal Components Extraction/Varimax Rotation				

For females, varimax rotation resulted in five factors that were rotated to terminal solution –Academic-Career, Demographic, Economic, Social, and Practical. The specific items are listed in Table 4 according to their factor loadings and the factors are presented in order of their Eigenvalue ranking, and proportion of variance explained.

The resulting five factors explained 57.9 percent of the variance in the CCI importance ratings. Factor 1, which was labeled Academic-Career, accounted for 15.3 percent of the variance. This factor consists of five items that describe college choice factors primarily associated with academic, and status attainment concerns. Factor 2, Demographic, accounted for 11.9 percent of the variance. This factor consists of three items--school size, geographic location, and race-ethnic composition. Factor 3, Economic, consisting of three items—low costs, availability of financial aid, and specific curriculum--accounted for 10.7 percent of the variance. Factor 4, Social, which is represented by three items—athletic reputation, ability to live away from home, and active social life--accounted for 10.2 percent of the variance. Factor 5, Practical, consisting of three items—live at home, attend parents alma mater, and easy admissions standards--accounted for 9.8 percent of the variance.

Table 4: Rotated Factor Loadings for Four Dimensions of Self-Reported Influences on Female African American High School Seniors' College Choice (N=773)

	1	2	3	4	5
ACADEMIC/CAREER (1)					
Job Placement	.788				
Academic Program	.781				
Grad Placement	.721				
Job Degree Program	.573				
Low Crime	.509				
DEMOGRAPHIC (2)					
Size of School		.801			
Race-Ethnic Composition		.740			
Geog. Location		.734			
ECONOMIC (3)					
Financial Aid			.777		
Low Expense			.737		
Specific Curriculum			.573		
SOCIAL LIFE (4)					
Live Away Home				.701	
Athletic Program				.674	
Low Expense				.639	
PRACTICAL (5)					
Live at Home					.804
Parent's Alma Mater					.552
Easy Admission					.525
Eigenvalue	3.991	1.954	1.604	1.288	1.013
Principal Components Extraction/ Varimax Rotation					

Logistic Regression Analysis

Our analysis employs logistic regression given the categorical outcome measure in our model. We examine three different models where parallel analyses are presented for the full sample, and separately for males and females. Table 5 reports the logistic regression of importance attached to college athletic reputation on gender, SES, standardized achievement tests scores, participation in interscholastic varsity sports, public-private high school attendance, and the importance African American high school seniors attach to academic reputation when selecting a college. The unstandardized regression coefficients represent the net or direct effect of each of our predictor variables on the importance African American high school seniors attach to colleges' athletic reputations. Standard errors are also reported in the tables. The reported Odds Ratios allow us to compare the degree of importance attached to college athletic reputation across categories of the predictor variables.

Table 5: Effects of Demographic and College Characteristics on African American High School Seniors' Rating of the Importance of Athletic Reputation in College Choice (N=2027)

	TOTAL			MALES			FEMALES		
	Odds Ratio	b	SE	Odds Ratio	b	SE	Odds Ratio	b	SE
Male	2.550	0.936 ^a	.117						
Tests	.344	-1.066 ^a	.208	.292	-1.231 ^a	.278	.434	-.836 ^b	.305
Public	1.212	.115	.172	.965	-.036	.285	1.244	.218	.219
Urban	1.083	.080	.114	1.019	.018	.182	1.152	.142	.149
Acad Rep Imp	4.590	1.524 ^a	.245	4.308	1.460 ^a	.314	5.516	1.708 ^a	.422
Varsity Athlete	2.956	1.086 ^a	.125	3.467	1.243 ^a	.185	2.579	.947 ^a	.120
Constant	-2.066	.127	.313	.355	-1.035	.451	.102	2.279	.479
Chi Square	244.930 ^a			94.288 ^a			61.724 ^a		
Cox and Snell R ²	.149			.125			.073		

a. $p < .001$

b. $p < .01$

c. $p < .05$

d. $p < .10$

In Table 5, the left panel reports results for the full sample, the middle panel results for males, and the right panel results for females. First, considering the full sample, we see that gender and standardized achievement test scores both exert significant (though different) effects on importance attached to colleges' athletic reputation. Male seniors are significantly more likely than females to attach greater importance to a college's athletic reputation ($b = .936$, $S.E. = .117$, $p < .001$). Specifically, African American male seniors are roughly one and one-half times more

likely than African American females to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college to attend (Odds Ratio: 2.55). On the other hand, African American seniors with high standardized test scores are less likely than African American seniors with lower test scores to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college, and this difference is statistically significant ($b = -1.066$, $S.E. = .208$, $p < .001$).

Not surprisingly, African American seniors who participate in interscholastic varsity sports are significantly more likely to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college, compared to those who did not participate ($b = 1.09$, $S.E. = .125$, $p < .001$). Indeed, African American high school student-athletes are nearly three times as likely as non-athletes, to attach greater importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college (Odds Ratio: 2.96). African American high school seniors who attended public schools are also significantly more likely to attach greater importance to colleges' athletic reputation, compared to African American seniors who attended private institutions ($b = 1.052$, $S.E. = .307$, $p < .01$). More specifically, African American high school seniors who attended public schools are more than 10 times as likely as those enrolled at private schools to attach importance to colleges' athletic reputation (Odds Ratio: 11.71). In the full sample, the Cox and Snell R-Square is .149, indicating that gender, SES, standardized achievement tests, varsity sports, school sector, and the importance attached to academic reputation, account for fifteen percent of the total variation in the likelihood of African American high school seniors attaching importance to colleges' athletic reputation.

The middle panel of Table 5 reports, for African American males, the logistic regression of the importance of college's athletic reputation on SES, standardized achievement tests scores, participation in interscholastic varsity sports, public-private school attendance and the importance seniors attach to academic reputation when selecting a college. Here, we see that African American male seniors who participate in high school varsity sports are significantly more likely to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college, compared to those who did not participate ($b = 1.679$, $S.E. = .538$, $p < .001$). Indeed, African American male varsity student-athletes are more than 8 times as likely as African American male non-athletes, to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college (Odds Ratio: 9.76). African American male high school seniors who attended public schools are also significantly more likely to attach greater importance to college's athletic reputation, compared to African American male seniors enrolled in private high schools ($b = 2.294$, $S.E. = .544$, $p < .001$). More specifically, African American male high school seniors

who attended public schools are more than 16 times as likely as those at private schools to attach importance to college's athletic reputation (Odds Ratio: 17.81). Among males, the Cox and Snell R-Square is .224, indicating that SES, standardized achievement tests, varsity sports, school sector, and the importance attached to academic reputation, account for twenty-two percent of the total variation in the likelihood of African American male high school seniors attaching importance to college's athletic reputation.

For African American females, the right panel of Table 5 reports the logistic regression of the importance attached to colleges' athletic reputation on SES, standardized achievement tests, participation in varsity sports, school sector and the importance seniors attach to academic reputation when selecting a college. Here, we see that African American female seniors who participate in high school varsity sports programs are significantly more likely to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college, compared to those who did not participate ($b = 1.631$, $S.E. = .565$, $p < .01$). Indeed, African American female student-athletes are more than 7 times as likely as African American female non-athletes to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college (Odds Ratio: 8.32). Interestingly, African American female high school seniors, who consider a college's strong academic standards to be important, are also significantly less likely to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college, compared to those who place less importance on the academic reputation of colleges ($b = -1.968$, $S.E. = .839$, $p < .05$). African American female seniors who give strong consideration to a college's strong academic standards are roughly four and one half times less likely to attach importance to athletic reputation when selecting a college (Odds Ratio: 5.50). Among females, the Cox and Snell R-Square is .087, indicating that SES, standardized achievement tests, varsity sports, school sector, and importance attached to academic reputation, account for roughly nine percent of the total variation in the likelihood of African American female high school seniors attaching importance to a college's athletic reputation.

Discussion and Implications

This study examined college characteristics and other factors considered by African American high school seniors when choosing a college. Consistent with prior studies (Braddock & Lv 2006) we find that African American seniors planning to attend college consider a very wide range of issues and college characteristics in their decision-making process. Our analysis focused specifically on whether a college's athletic reputation plays a role in their decision-making. The findings suggest that while college athletic reputation is clearly not among the top factors considered, it does matter to a significant number of college bound African American

high school seniors. Specifically, our descriptive results show that, for the full sample, roughly one-half (56%) of African American high school seniors report that a school's athletic reputation is at least a somewhat important consideration in determining their college choice. Among male seniors, about two-thirds (69%) report that a school's athletic reputation is at least a somewhat important consideration in determining their college choice. In contrast, among female seniors, less than half (45%) report that a school's athletic reputation is at least a somewhat important consideration in determining their college choice. As previously noted, the current data suggest a substantially stronger emphasis placed on athletic reputation among ELS college bound seniors compared to that reported for the NELS college matriculant cohort (Braddock & Lv 2006). While few would expect college athletic reputation to be among the most important considerations shaping African American high school seniors' college choice decisions, the evidence presented here demonstrates that it is by no means a trivial matter. This finding is also consistent with results reported for the full multi-ethnic sample (Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman & Lv 2006).

The results of our factor analysis revealed different factor structures across gender groups. For males, however, varimax rotation resulted in just four factors that were rotated to terminal solution –Academic-Career, Demographic-Social, Practical, and Economic. Among the full sample and for females we found five common factors--Academic/Career, Demographic, Economic, Social, and Practical. This study, like many prior studies (Comfort 1925; Rippinger 1933; Keller & McKewon 1984; Stewart, et al. 1987; Chapman 1981; Chapman & Jackson 1987; Braxton 1990; Kinzie et al. 1998; Hossler, Schmit & Vesper 1999; Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman & Lv 2006), found that Academic/Career issues represent the strongest factor with Social considerations ranked somewhat lower in importance. Nevertheless, not unlike results reported elsewhere for the full multi-ethnic sample (Braddock, Sokol-Katz, Basinger-Fleischman, & Lv 2006), the present study found that college's athletic reputation loads on the Social factor across analysis groups. This suggests that among African American high school seniors who value the potential for an active college social life, a college's athletic reputation is also an important consideration. Perhaps, a number of these students see their college social life centering, at least in part, on their school's sports events.

Our logistic regression analysis revealed several interesting patterns among variables that were related to the degree of importance African American high school seniors attach to a college's athletic reputation when deciding which school to attend. First, we found that students who score

higher on standardized achievement tests give little consideration to college athletic reputation. Not surprisingly, among African American students, males, and varsity athletes (male and female) were found to give stronger consideration to college athletic reputation than females or non-athletes.

While these are important findings, the study has several limitations. Specifically, the present study was unable to account for variations in several potentially important characteristics of four year colleges—e.g., size, quality, location, race-ethnic composition, and the like. Because we do not have access to the restricted data file containing college ID (fice codes), we are unable to merge other data files which contain such relevant information on key college characteristics. For example, we were unable to ascertain whether an African American student's college choices might vary across HBCU's and HWCUs. It will be important for future research to take into account such key institutional characteristics, which conceivably, might influence the impact of athletic reputation in the college choice process among African American students.

Notwithstanding future research needs and study limitations, the results of this study provide insights into the debate regarding the role of strong athletic programs as an important factor shaping college choice among African American high school seniors. This is significant information for consideration by college recruiting and admissions staff, as well as for reflection among faculty and staff interested in the connection between athletics and academics. We believe it is important to caution, however, that these findings should not be narrowly interpreted to suggest that prospective African American students are solely, or even primarily, attracted to institutions with successful programs in high-profile athletics such as football or basketball, or even NCAA Division I athletic programs. The issue of college athletic reputation is much more complex. For example, prospective students interested in highly competitive football may choose Grambling University or Tennessee State University because of their long tradition of excellence in that sport, without either knowing, or caring, that those schools compete in Division I-AA, rather than the more prestigious Division I-A, of the NCAA. Moreover, as Bowen and Levin (2003) suggest, the appeal of strong athletic programs operates as strongly among Ivy League and elite private universities as it does among big-time Division I universities.

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“Athleticated” Versus Educated: A Qualitative Investigation of Campus Perceptions, Recruiting and African American Male Student-Athletes

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative investigation of student narratives (N=167) about the contemporary issue of recruiting high-profile African American male student-athletes. Participants were asked to view a scene on recruiting from the film, *The Program* (1994). Participants were then presented with questions regarding a recruiting trip by an African American football player to a traditionally white campus. Findings indicate that both Black and White students perceived the African American male student-athletes in the film scene to be more “athleticated” than educated. They were also perceived as stereotypical sex-objects.

When athletes (especially male) show up at the school, the program does everything it can to show the athlete how fun it would be to go to school there, i.e., greeted by beautiful women, surrounded by beautiful women and taken to parties with beautiful women. Nothing academic is shown to them (016).²

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2 Narratives are transcribed verbatim irrespective of participant grammar or syntax. Narrative excerpts are indicated by participant number in parentheses immediately following the excerpt.

Introduction

Each year, one of the most visible issues in sports is the recruiting of “blue-chip” recruits to major universities. These recruits are highly visible and known in popular culture as “ballers” (Boyd 2003) and often see themselves as “shot callers” of their own athletic destiny (Boyd & Shopshire 2000). The recruiting trip sets the academic and athletic tone for the student-athlete. Although this issue is visceral to the scholarly community, little has been empirically investigated or tested in terms of a student-athletes’ recruiting inventory or ‘the perceptions of recruiting by the general student body. Entman and Rojecki (2000) articulate that “film is an intricate site of cultural expression about race” (p. 201). One of the more popular films about intercollegiate athletics, social class, and race is *The Program* (1994). The major themes of the film are a good snapshot of fictional and non-fictional realities of college sport. This list of themes includes academic integrity, urban identities, commercialization, booster/alumni influence, campus violence against women, and faculty interaction with student-athletes. Further, the film represents various characters and their personal challenges: quarterback (alcoholism), running back (urban identity and academically challenged), linebacker (illiterate and focused on going to the NFL), a defensive lineman (steroids), fullback (elitist attitude and jealousy of his teammate), a coed (intelligent and beautiful woman that has family pressures about success), and finally a coach (constantly in the gray area of ethical leadership and the pressure to win).

The current study asks the following questions based on one scene from *The Program*: Are the recruiting visit perceptions by students about student-athletes based on stereotypes and athlete biases? How will students respond to images that represent the intercollegiate athletics ritual(s) to sign major recruits in revenue sports (i.e. football and/or basketball)? What type of discussion and dialogue about academics and athletics does the qualitative data (narratives) reveal?

Review of Related Literature

College Sports, Recruiting and Perception

The corruption of college football has received consistent attention from scholars in economics (Zimbalist 1999), American studies (Sperber 1990), and the sociology of sport (Coakley 2001). Many of the empirical investigations relate to some of the problems and variables that stem from intense recruiting such as academic preparation, family education, and standardized test scores (Eitzen 1999; Erwin et al. 1985; Sellers 1992).

The current study investigates attitudes, feelings and perceptions of male revenue sport participants and the cultural practices of recruiting. Both racial stigma (Loury 2002; Russell 1998) and racial media (Entman & Rojecki 2000) theories are the platform to analyze contemporary recruiting issues and the major findings discussed in this paper. This is important to note when considering one noted and former president's perspective on intercollegiate athletics:

One of the most sensitive issues in intercollegiate athletics concerns race. Basketball and increasingly football are dominated by talented black athletes, whose representation in these sports programs far exceeds their presence elsewhere in the university. The separation that exists between athletic programs and the rest of the university can only harm the educational experiences and opportunities available to minority student-athletes (Duderstadt 2000:213).

Shulman & Bowen (2001) describe the athletic recruitment process as "highly complex." These same two authors conducted a major data-based study of several Ivy League schools that has implications for other traditional campuses (public and private). Before discussing the impact of racial stigma on athletic recruitment, we summarize some of their findings below:

1. The relative number of male athletes in a class has not changed dramatically over the past 40 years, but athletes in recent classes have been far more intensely recruited than used to be the case.
2. Athletes who are recruited, and who end up on the carefully winnowed lists of desired candidates submitted by coaches to the admissions office, now enjoy a very substantial statistical "advantage" in the admissions process--a much greater advantage than that enjoyed by other targeted groups such as underrepresented minority students, alumni children, and other legacies; this statement is true for both male and female athletes.
3. One obvious consequence of assigning such a high priority to admitting recruited athletes is that they enter these colleges and universities with considerably lower SAT scores than their classmates.
4. Admitted athletes differ from their classmates in other ways too, and there is evidence of an "athlete culture."
5. Contrary to much popular mythology, recruitment of athletes has no marked effect on either the socioeconomic composition of these schools or on their racial diversity.

This empirical summary is an appropriate foundation to examine how racial stigma influences these issues of recruiting and admission to the university by African American male student-athletes.

Racial Stigma and Athleticism

Racial stigma extends that social stigmas are not static but produced by cultural perceptions and ethnic distinctions based on exposure and contact (Loury 2002). The dominant exposure of African American men on predominantly white campuses is overrepresented in football and basketball compared to the general student-body (Sailes 1993; Sellers 2000). Narrow representations such as these can create oversimplified perceptions:

Generalizations based on superficial physical traits by decision-making agents with the power to create facts— can have politically profound and morally disturbing consequences. But that is only part of the story. We humans are also hungry for meanings (Loury 2002: 57).

Loury (2002) continues to build on Goffman's (1971) notion of a "spoiled" identity. This concept is based on the social reality in the viewers' mind that the image in question is stigmatized. Hence, there are cues, signs and clues of the virtual identity viewed by the masses. In the context of predominantly white institutions that recruit African American male student-athletes in the sports of football and basketball, a racial reputation is built about their academic and athletic status. This athletic status as Loury (2002) contends does not immune them from the effects of racial stigma, and "the perception by non-racist fans that the sport has been 'tainted' by the drug use, violence, or misogyny of a few bad actors may well reflect racial stigma, at least in part" (p. 74). In the context of higher education, images of the "dumb jock" student-athlete have created realities, limiting social and academic integration of student-athletes on campus (Shriberg & Brondzinski 1984, cited in Kirk & Kirk 1993).

Such a portrait of the "dumb jock" is so pervasive that it has found affects on all student-athletes' college outcomes irrespective of their academic abilities (Sailes 1993; Zingg 1982, cited in Kirk & Kirk 1993). Unfortunately, this image is even more pervasive for Black student-athletes at predominantly white institutions (Adler & Adler 1985; Edwards 1984). In other words, Black student-athletes have to deal with campus stereotypes associated with being Black and a student-athlete. I want to suggest that the caricature of the "dumb jock" is more salient with Black males.

Related to this racial stigma phenomenon is the work of Russell's *The Color of Crime* (1998), and the concept of what she coined as "criminalblackman," a link is made to what I call the perception on campus of the "athleticblackman." Both these terms deconstruct the entanglement of education, race, sport, social deviance, and public perception. In short, it is nearly impossible to view the African American male student-athlete on campus without the stereotypes of Black men in America.

Finally, Entman & Rojecki (2000) indicated that "the flow of influence between media content and audience sentiments is reciprocal." They combined qualitative examples with quantitative methods to capture some of the complicated flavor of race images in Hollywood's most popular movies. The present study examines a film with images of race in one of American popular culture's most influential representations--intercollegiate athletics.

Methods and Design

Participants

In the fall of 2001 data were collected from 202 students at a highly selective Midwestern university. All students were enrolled in an introductory survey class. The majority of the sample was female, 69.3 percent and 93 percent of the sample was 20 years of age or younger. The remaining 7 percent of the sample was between the ages of 21 and 24. The racial distribution was as follows: 73.6 percent White, followed by Asian Americans at 13.4 percent, then by African Americans at 9 percent, Hispanic Americans at 3 percent and others at 1 percent. The present study (N=167) focuses on Whites (N=149) and African American (N=18) and the remaining participants in the study (N=35) will be the subject of another paper.

The Photo/Visual Elicitation Technique

This technique may be used with any form of electronic media. Visual elicitation is a technique of interviewing in which photographs are used to stimulate and guide a discussion between the interviewer and the researcher(s) (Curry 1986; Snyder & Kane 1990). In acknowledging the salience of cultural artifacts and images in sport, the use of photographs is pertinent to study the attitudes and meanings people associate with sports (Gonzalez & Jackson 2001). This paper approaches the intercollegiate athletic recruiting issue with a mixed-method design that according to Tashakkori and Teddie (1998) "These are studies that are products of the pragmatist and that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process" (p. 19). The goal of this approach reveals empirical answers that are meaningful, reliable and

solid.

Procedure

The survey questionnaire was distributed to students in one introductory survey class. The students took approximately 30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and the survey was distributed and collected by eight trained graduate students. Before responding to structured items, one film scene was shown and students were instructed to respond in their own words to the meaning of the effigy.³ This process was repeated for each of the three domains, but the present study focuses on only the qualitative aspect and one domain from *The Program*. Students received regular class credit for their participation in the study. The primary researcher was not present in the room at the time of data collection and the class was another instructor's students.

Materials and Instrument

The items for the current study are extracted from a larger study that examines three domains of intercollegiate athletics in higher education through the medium of film. This specific study examines one domain with several demographic items. Demographic variables measured participants' background characteristics such as gender, age, race, and community.⁴

Qualitative Data Analysis

Participants were presented with one question visually regarding a recruiting trip by one African American football player. Participants were instructed to offer an open-ended response for after viewing a scene from *The Program*. After the written responses to the scene were collected, they were transcribed into a hard copy (text) for data analysis.

Hierarchical content analysis, as suggested by Patton, was utilized in the analysis. Following transcription, each investigator read each of the participants' transcripts in order to get a sense of the students' experiences. Each investigator independently identified raw-data themes that characterized each participant's responses. (Raw-data themes are quotes that capture a concept provided by the participant.) Then, the investigative

3 The scene selected from *The Program* depicts a star student athlete (Darnell Jefferson) going on a recruiting trip and the treatment he gets. The bus pulls up and there is an entourage of cheerleaders and band members. Darnell also has a personal tour guide, who shows him the stadium where he is announced like a star and key player. At the end of the scene he thanks Autumn Hailey (played by Halle Berry) for showing him around and kisses her. After the kiss he "struts" as the scene fades to the next scene.

4 Item asked students to describe the community they grew up in. Response choices included; large urban city, small city, suburb, small town and rural community.

team met to interpret and identify major themes. Raw data themes were utilized in conducting an inductive analysis in order to identify common themes or patterns of greater generality. Themes were derived from all of the transcripts and attempts were made to interpret commonalities among the experiences described in each of the transcripts. Major themes and sub-themes were identified across transcripts and support for each theme was located in each of the transcripts.

Finally, utilizing the themes that were previously identified, transcripts were coded and categorized. The meaning units associated with each theme were identified in each of the transcripts in order to determine the number and percentage of participants that responded within each of the major themes (See Tables 5 and 6).

Findings and Results

Demographics: Characteristics of Study Participants

The majority of the students in the sample grew up in the suburbs followed by large urban cities, small cities, small towns and rural communities (see Table 1). Even more interesting is the racial distribution by type of community. Approximately 70 percent of Whites reported growing up in the suburbs, while 40 percent of African Americans grew up in the suburbs (see Table 2). In contrast only 7.4 percent of Whites reported growing up in a large urban city compared to 44.4 percent of African Americans (see Table 2).

The percentage of African Americans present at the participants' high schools also differed by race. While almost 70 percent of Whites reported their high school population to be 10 percent or less African American, only 44 percent of African Americans reported that Black students at their high school made up 10 percent or less (see Table 3). Not surprisingly, a similar pattern was found among neighborhoods. African Americans were significantly more likely to grow up in neighborhoods that were more African American than Whites (see Table 4).

Qualitative Results

The following are the major qualitative themes from viewing one scene from *The Program*. Students then articulated thoughts, feelings and attitudes about the scene.

For African Americans the themes are **Athleticated** and **Sex Object**.

Athleticated. Participants are aware of the privileges and what the recruiting trip entails:

I sensed that athletes get the red carpet treatment when they go to college. And athletes do not get exposed to “classy” girls (020).

I think that the media places too much emphasis on the athletic ability of athletes and not enough on their intelligence. I also think that during recruitment colleges focus too much on “selling” the athletic program instead of the academic programs and treat recruits like royalty (023).

I saw visibly that academics were not part at all of his visit. It was covered up by a pretty girl and visits to the football stadium; what about classes (029).

I think many athletes would not be treated like the one in the movie. It is however likely that many special things are used to get them to attend a school (032).

I thought about how well student athletes are treated on campuses more specifically football and basketball, from watching movies it seems that these athletes get everything; personal tours, the girls, and the attention (054).

They treat the student like he is a superstar. He develops that stigma and also feels that way. He has a strong sense of self worth. He has already jumped to conclusions about his future (068).

Forty-four percent (8) of the African American participants felt that the recruiting process is skewed towards athletic glamorization versus academic building.

Sex Object. Since slavery, the Black American male has been stigmatized and typecast as hyper-sexual (Boyd 2003). To some students viewing the scene they were asked to respond to, this image is still reproduced and perpetuated in popular media:

It’s a dream come true for a black to go to college and be a star on the field, yet this also shows that girls are one more thing on their mind. Girls and how many they can acquire ranks high on the list (072).

The black athlete’s astonished response to the sight of the stadium was very typical. And his pursuing manner and language for the girl were somewhat typical as well. Athletes are very direct with girls, etc. (171).

Athlete consumed with his own athletic performance. Used

to girls wanting him and not used to girls playing hard to get. Excited about future, doesn't really think of not playing. Students, staff, media support give a lot attention (189).

Twenty-two percent (4) of the African Americans in the study felt that males are highly recruited and that the process of a trip to campus fulfills lifelong dreams that include women and sports. For White Americans the major themes are **Athleticated**, **Sex Object**, **Media Stereotypes**, and **Unrealistic Depiction**.

Athleticated. Students had broader applications of the scene they were shown and perceive the modern day college athlete in big-time sports to be larger than life:

I think it shows all the positives to the school and only the athlete aspects but avoid the actual academics that the schools have to offer (001).

That's just about right on the jock stereotype, which in my experience holds very true. Jocks, or student athletes as they are sometimes called, are very callous and tactless individuals who are also usually morons. They believe themselves to be God's gift to women, but if you remove them from the context of a football field they are pretty much worthless (003).

Student athletes are catered to the environment they live in is surreal with people helping them with trivial matters (academia) while they concentrate on the important things (sports). If college athletes are legally allowed to be paid, I believe they would be very rich indeed. Trillionaires probably; maybe more (006).

This scene made it seem like the most important part of college is its football team and that it is even more important which players they get. Although this is sometimes the case (008).

Seventy-four percent (101) of the participants felt the privileges that male student-athletes in high-profile sports are afforded and that they are academically unprepared for the intellectual climate of a large college institution.

Sex Object. As mentioned earlier, sex, race and sport are intertwined for the Black male. Further, attitude and sexual behavior seem to coincide with how the male student-athlete is perceived:

Shows athletes as charmers and heroes. Darnell was a bit self-obsessed in the scene in the stadium and quite sure of himself when hitting on his tour guide. It seemed as though

he believed the world centered around him. I think that maybe some athletes are like this, but not all—it is often a stereotype pinned on them though (009).

Colleges do all they can to entice a young athlete to join their team. Showing him the stadium, cheerleaders waiting outside the bus; also this character thinks that he can put the moves on this girl right away because he is going to be a star athlete, and of course everyone wants to date an athlete; too much self confidence (010).

Colleges will do just about everything they can do in order to get the recruits to play for their program. They sugar coat everything until an athlete commits, then they treat them just like any other athlete who wasn't heavily recruited (011).

This scene depicts the athlete as a god-life figure. People are cheering at his arrival on campus, the stadium is shown as this amazing atmosphere of glory, and you feel even the woman showing him around is instantly attracted to him because of his athletic ability because there doesn't seem to be many other characteristics of him shown. He comes off as arrogant and everyone else seems to worship him. (012).

Schools seem to do anything to win over an athlete for their school. They make him feel like he is the most important person there. They don't even mention academics just that his name will be in lights on the scorecard. This is usually what I feel that happens with star players (018).

Eleven percent (16) of the participants felt that the Black male recruit was overconfident and sexually coded by the scene's representation.

Media Stereotypes. The communication literature has built on the concept of racial cues (Entman & Rojecki 2000) and clearly to some of the students in the study there are cues that activate racial attitudes and feelings about black male athletic participants:

I think the bandana and hitting on the first girl he sees highlights the stereotype that student athletes are cocky. I really had shivers on my arms during the feel good moment when the athlete threw his arms in the air in the football stadium (015).

The scene portrayed black athletes and how they are concerned with two things; sports and women. The portrayal was negative since he made a move on her even though they had just met. It also showed the special treatment that athletes get at schools. They had the cheerleaders come out and welcome him (041).

Nine percent (14) of the White Americans felt that media stereotypes both cultivate and create negative perceptions of student athletes, especially African American males.

Unrealistic Depiction. This theme was one qualitative narrative and theme away from equaling the theme media stereotypes (see above). What is interesting is that while the students that believe that the scene they viewed is far-fetched, they also are fearful that it may actually be a reality:

I honestly don't think that any school would go through that much trouble to recruit an athlete, at least I hope not. It seemed very unrealistic that everyone (cheerleaders, marching band) would bend over backwards to welcome a prospective football player like that (027).

That was really fake. I don't think cheerleaders and the marching band greets all new athletes to campus. Not to mention he gets the girl in the first few hours. He was also the stereotypical African American arrogant male strumming around, into himself. I didn't like that, and it didn't fit into the movie well (33).

In my opinion this shows an incredibly inaccurate depiction at the campus visit by a student athlete. The cheerleaders and practical rolling out the red carpet approach for the football player while effective seemed overblown and unrealistic (042).

Nine percent (13) of the White Americans felt that the scene was **Unrealistic**. In the next section I will discuss some possible reasons for this last theme and perception differences between Blacks and Whites.

Discussion

The demographic data indicates that most of the students in the study grew up in the suburbs, followed by a portion of the African American students growing up in larger and more diverse cities. In the present study, there are over 70 percent of the White students growing up in the suburbs; nearly 70 percent attending high school with 10 percent or less of African Americans; and over 73 percent growing up with 10 percent or less of African Americans, some empirical assertions are implied. Based on previous arguments made in this paper about the formation of racial stigmas in the public's psyche, Entman and Rojecki (2000) provide further support for the demographic patterns in the current study. While this sample is not representative of the general population, the findings suggest that some of the attitudes and feelings may be representative of students at predominantly white campuses who have few diverse experiences and may

have a narrow view of African American male student-athletes in revenue sports. The sample size reflects the demographics of African Americans and Whites in predominantly white settings. Thus, it is important to interpret the attitudes of Whites when viewing an “out-group” image (Allport 1954; Entman & Rojecki 2000).

According to what they viewed about academic and athletic life, African American students perceive all the hype and glamour to be closer to reality. In other words, the myth of “majoring in eligibility” and using athletic talent as a pawn for victories and profit were highly salient to the African Americans and White Americans in the present study—a significant finding considering that this topic has been discussed at length in the research and public literature (Childs 1999; Davis 1996; Duderstadt 2000; Edwards 1984; Lapchick 1996; Lapchick 2001; Kirk & Kirk 1993; McMillen 1992; Morris 1992; Rooney 1980; Sailes 1998; Shopshire 1996; Shulman & Bowman 2001; Smith 1990; Sparks & Robinson 1999; Sperber 1990; Wetzel & Yaeger 2000; Wilson 1983; Wolff & Keteyian 1991). As was demonstrated earlier in the related review of literature sections, admitted athletes differ from their classmates in other ways too, and there is evidence of an “athlete culture,” and contrary to much popular mythology, recruitment of athletes has no marked effect on either the socioeconomic composition of these schools or on their racial diversity. If this continues to hold true in the 21st Century for the African American male student-athlete, then what is the purpose of a selected population gaining access for athletic prowess without academic development? How does recruiting impact this socialization process while on campus and what are the effects once their athletic scholarship and eligibility are finished? The answers to these questions will no doubt continue to examine academic and athletic cultures on campus and the best practices to shift these cultures into powerful change agents for actually altering the demographic and upward mobility patterns of minority groups accessing the collegiate system of higher education. Research will continue to guide our intuition as to how student and student-athlete perceptions co-exist as a culture. That was a major purpose of the present study and the three research questions posed at the beginning of the paper helped to frame all of the findings in the results section.

The qualitative themes indicate the pervasiveness of racial stigma and preconceived notions about African American male football and basketball players on predominantly white campuses. The two major themes for both ethnic groups in this study were consistent: **Athleticated** and **Sex Object**. For the African American male student athlete, there is still the prevalent idea that black s are not just stereotyped athletically but

also racially. This is what Edwards (2000) coins as the “entangled web of contradiction.” He poignantly states:

Black student-athletes from the outset have the proverbial ‘three strikes’ against them. They must contend, of course, with the connotations and social reverberations of the traditional ‘dumb jock’ caricature. But black student-athletes are burdened also with insidiously racist implications of the myth of ‘innate black athletic superiority,’ and the more blatantly racist stereotype of the ‘dumb Negro’—condemned by racial heritage to intellectual inferiority (p. 126).

There are similarities between Blacks and Whites based on the rigorously coded narratives. In terms of the similarities, both ethnic groups expressed their discontent with the “privileges” and “treatment” of student-athletes. Both groups perceived the recruiting process to be mostly about athleticizing not educating African American male student-athletes.

Implications

Future studies should replicate this study’s design but incorporate images that represent women, sports other than football and/or basketball, and other people of color that participate in sports. Specifically by examining “whiteness” as a color (Dyer 1997; Lipsitz 1998), film scenes should be elicited that probe at the behaviors of White Americans based on both individual and group pathologies of the social and political category of “White.” This research approach would parallel, at least methodologically, the paradigm of racial knowledge and racial thoughts about African Americans and other non-status quo groups’ behaviors. This type of design examines the White image in the White mind, and little empirical investigation has been focused on mainstream attitudes about mainstream behaviors in sport or society. In short, visual/photo elicitation as a design cultivated empirical data of dominant narratives with different worldviews of African Americans and White Americans that grow up in homogenous environments. Furthermore, the present study attempts to fill a void in the literature according to DeBrock et al. (1995):

Many studies have devoted attention to the issue of graduation rates. With a few notable exceptions, however, most of them have used the particular student’s underlying academic qualifications as the explanation for different graduation rates. This approach has an inherent assumption that failure to graduate reflects some underlying lack of ability on the part of the student in question (p. 533).

In the final analysis, this paper fills a void in the literature on race,

sport and recruiting using a qualitative method to compile narratives about African American male student-athletes on recruiting visits. As stated by the character of Don Haskins in the movie *Glory Road* (2006), “if you want to win you have to recruit. That’s how the big boys do it.” Our nation and American higher education must examine on a deeper level what type of student we recruit for competitive athletics and is this recruitment process one that cultivates perceptions about African American male student-athletes becoming more athleticated or educated?

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TABLES

Table 1: Type of Community Growing Up⁵

Community	Percent	N
Suburb	63.9	129
Large urban city	15.8	32
Small city	11.4	23
Small town	5.9	12
Rural community	3.0	6
Total	100	202

Table 2: Type of Community Growing Up by Race

Community	White Percent (N) ⁶	African American Percent (N)
Suburb	70.3 (104)	38.9 (7)
Large urban city	7.4 (11)	44.4 (8)
Small city	12.8 (19)	11.1 (2)
Small town	6.8 (10)	0 (0)
Rural community	2.7 (4)	5.6 (1)

⁵ This table does not control for racial differences

⁶ Some sample sizes in Tables 2, 3, and 4 may not equal the total for whites (n=149) and blacks (n=18) due to missing responses from participants on various demographic items.

Table 3: Percent African Americans at Participant's High School by Race

African Americans at Your High School							
	0% (N)	10% (N)	20% (N)	30% (N)	50% (N)	75% (N)	100% (N)
African American	16.7 (3)	27.8 (5)	0.0 (0)	5.6 (1)	16.7 (3)	27.8 (5)	5.6 (1)
White	31.5 (46)	37.7 (55)	13.7 (20)	6.8 (10)	9.6 (14)	0.7 (1)	0.0 (0)

Table 4: Percent African Americans in Participant's Home Town by Race

African Americans in Your Home Town							
	0% (N)	10% (N)	20% (N)	30% (N)	50% (N)	75% (N)	100% (N)
African American	5.6 (1)	22.2 (5)	0.0 (0)	5.6 (1)	33.3 (5)	27.8 (5)	5.6 (1)
White	27.2 (40)	46.3 (68)	10.9 (16)	8.2 (12)	4.8 (7)	2.7 (4)	0.0 (0)

Table 5: Qualitative Themes for Black Program Participants (N=18)⁶

Coded	Example	Number	Percentage
Athleticated	I saw visibly that academics were not one part at all of his visit. It was covered up by a pretty girl and visits to the football stadium; what about classes	8	44.4%
Sex Object	It's a dream come true for a black to go to college and be a star on the field, yet this also shows that girls are one more thing on their mind. Girls and how many they can acquire ranks high on the list.	4	22.2%
Athletic Identity	He (the student athlete) comes off as cocky and confident about himself. It looks like he was more focused on the girl then the surroundings of the school, which seems a little unlikely.	2	11.1%
Unrealistic	The cheerleader scene was unrealistic.	1	5.5%
The Man	Feeling of admiration for the student athlete - all the attention he receives, media publicity, and gets to kiss Halle Berry. He's a stud.	1	5.5%
Balancing Priorities	Athletes face a lot of external pressures by playing sports. Sports are taught to be their most important concern, eliminating the importance of other social factors.	1	5.5%
Cultural stereotype	I think the beginning opener with the marching band and cheerleaders was little unrealistic, but the point was to show how student-athletes get special attention when coming to the university for the first time. I do believe that the coaching staff goes out of their way to accommodate new recruits. The athlete had no idea what the university had in store for him, but he was a bit problematic because he used crazy vocabulary words and was from the inner city – a common stereotype	1	5.5%

⁷All theme categories are included to report the continuum of relevance rather than truncate the thematic findings.

Table 6: Qualitative Themes White Program Participants (N=149)

Coded	Example	Number	Percentage
Athleticated	I think it is unlikely that the whole cheerleading squad and marching band will come to greet one prospective athlete. Shows how they are treated far above everyone else, but I don't think that's the case in reality.	101	74%
Sex Object	That was really fake. I don't think cheerleaders and the marching band greets all new athletes to campus. Not to mention he gets the girl in the first few hours. He was also the stereotypical African American arrogant male strutting around, into himself. I didn't like that, and it didn't fit into the movie well.	16	11%
Media Stereotypes	This film clip focuses on how being on a varsity team in college is the most important thing. I never thought that athletics were more important than an actual education, and I think that portraying that in movies only make children think that.	14	9%
Unrealistic	In my opinion this shows an incredibly inaccurate depiction at the campus visit by a student athlete. The cheerleaders and practical rolling out the red carpet approach for the football player while effective, seemed overblown and unrealistic.	13	9%
Positive	The clip made athletics seem very glorious and rewarding. The player was so excited to see the football field and he could envision himself being a star player. I think sports is exiting and rewarding because it is a form of self-expression and catharsis.	4	3%
Unprepared	Same kind of shock when I first walked into the Big House my first game. He seems almost too smooth with girls he has just met, though. School might be more than he bargained for.	1	.0067%

1 Some sample sizes in Tables 2, 3, and 4 may not equal the total for whites (n=149) and blacks (n=18) due to missing responses from participants on various demographic items.

The Black Golf Caddy: A Victim of Labor Market Discrimination

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Abstract

For generations, country clubs and the Professional Golf Association (PGA) Tour featured white golfers crossing manicured fairways, followed by black caddies carrying their bags. Now most clubs rely on golf carts; and pros on the PGA Tour are attended by highly paid white caddies. The transformation of the golf world has mirrored larger shifts in the American workplace, in which the increased status and increased earnings of skilled work have been accompanied by a de facto “push out” of black workers. In the 1960s, the Professional Golf Association (PGA) Tour began being more popular and more profitable. Many observers credit this development during this period to Arnold Palmer’s charismatic, swashbuckling style of play and to the growth of televised golf. The increased popularity of the sport involved wide scale marketing of golf’s big three – Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Gary Player. By end of the 1960s, Lee Trevino was added to the mix, making the big four. Golf caddying was becoming a respected profession, as the caddies for the big four became famous in their own right. These caddies were Ernest “Creamy” Carolan, Angelo Argea, Alfred “Rabbit” Dyer, and Herman Mitchell, caddies respectively for Palmer, Nicklaus, Player, and Trevino. Since at the time most caddies were black, it is not surprising that two of the four – Dyer and Mitchell – were African American.

The 1960s and 1970s launched the glory years for caddying, as caddies benefited from the increasing popularity and hence increasing money prizes available in professional tournament golf. In fact, Alfred Dyer, Gary Player’s caddy, was able to send a son to Princeton University (Sailor 2003), a financial feat unheard of among caddies before the 1960s. However, as the status of caddies increased, the presence of African American caddies steadily decreased.

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Historical Background

When golf and country clubs were established in the United States in the late 19th century, caddying was a menial low-paying job typically reserved for poor African American youth, some of whom were only eight or nine years old. Into the early 20th century, black boys caddying merely exemplified wide spread use of child labor, like the armies of children working 14 to 16 hours per day, six days per week in mills and coal mines. Often, black boys filled the caddying ranks because they were not allowed in the dangerous, but slightly higher paying mills and coal mines with white youth (Sinnette 1998). Most caddies were males, until recently, when a few white females began caddying on the PGA Tour. Currently, these females are most often the wives or daughters of the professional golfers. There is no record of a black female caddy who has worked regularly on the PGA Tour.

In their eagerness to earn as much money as possible, a caddy at a country club would walk as many as three 18-hole rounds per day, that is 12 to 15 miles, often carrying two bags, each weighing between 30 and 50 pounds.

Since golf was seen as an idyllic exercise and as another position for the black servant class (Sinnette 1998), and also because it was not as dangerous as factory and mining jobs, national campaigns against child labor excluded child caddies, most of whom were black. Consequently, black youth labored on, making very little money. In the 1920s and 1930s, a caddy could work all day for \$1. By the 1950s, the wages increased to \$2 for carrying a single bag for 18 holes, about 50 cents per hour, and \$3 to carry two bags of golf equipment.

Without child labor laws protecting them, black youth dominated the field into the 1940s and 1950s; many starting when they were less than ten years old. Alfred "Rabbit" Dyer started at nine in the 1940s. He and his father worked at the same country club in Louisiana; his father caddied for Gary Player in the 1960 New Orleans Open. Rabbit then caddied for Player in the 1962 New Orleans Open (CaddyBytes 2007). Jerry Osborn, another black former Tour caddy, started at eight years of age, as did Freddie Burns, the long-time caddy for Hal Sutton.

Currently, most caddies at country clubs are teen-agers; some are older men, especially in the South. As young black caddies aged, they became experienced adults at country clubs and on the PGA Tour. Because the Masters Tournament was hosted by the Augusta National Golf Club, this club launched many caddies who became fixtures on the Pro Tour. Since

all participants in the Masters Tournament had to use local caddies, pro golfers became familiar with them and sometimes brought their favorite caddies onto the PGA Tour.

Because of the Masters Tournament, Augusta National Golf Club was the source of many caddies who became fixtures on the Pro Tour. Several of the Augusta National caddies were legendary. There was Willie “Pappy” Stokes, the godfather of caddies at Augusta National, having won five times as a Masters caddy with four different players between 1938 and 1956. He is credited in caddy circles at Augusta National as the man who taught most of the “name” caddies there how to read the undulating greens. Mostly, the star pros kept the same caddy at the Masters through the years. Willie Petersen won five Masters caddying for Jack Nicklaus. Nathaniel “Iron Man” Avery won four times with Arnold Palmer; O’Bryant Williams won three times with Sam Snead; Fred Searles won twice with Byron Nelson; and Carl Jackson won twice with Ben Crenshaw. Even Augusta National member and avid golfer President Eisenhower had the same caddy through the years—Willie “Cemetery” Poteat (Clayton 2004). As regular caddies for star players over the years, the top Augusta National caddies were instrumental in establishing the role of regular professional caddies.

Caddies on the PGA Tour did not have it easy. Of course, most of these golf servants were black. Until 1961, when the PGA Tour was forced to discontinue its practice of barring African Americans from playing on the Tour, the players were all white and most of the caddies were black. In the 1950s and early 1960s, black caddies traveled from event to event across the country on greyhound buses, segregated to the back of the bus, and changing their clothes in the woods or in the parking lot (Caddy Bytes 2007).

As caddying on the Pro Tour began to rise in status, another significant development occurred in caddying. In 1983 Augusta National Golf Club stopped its practice of requiring players to use club caddies in the Masters Tournament. Players then began to choose their own caddies for the Masters and they were mostly white. This practice reduced the participation of the famed Augusta National caddies, and affected a long-standing tradition at the Masters—white players with black caddies in white coveralls. As Rabbit Dyer explained, “White caddies did not come out on tour until the early 60s – it was below them to caddy back then” (CaddyBytes 2007). Although a 1961 ruling decreed that the PGA Tour could no longer bar African Americans in the Tour, all players were white and most caddies were black, with the exception of Lee Elder who was admitted to the Tour before 1975. He was admitted to play in the Masters

Tournament in 1975.

Advent of the Professional Golfer

The professionalization of golf caddies followed the professionalization of golfers by several generations. Professional golfers were not a privileged group in the early part of 20th century America. Until Walter Hagen established professional golf by making more money playing golf than teaching it (Smart 2005), the main role of the golf pro was “giving lessons, supervising the pro shop, overseeing the care of the course grounds, and building and repairing golf clubs. He did the bidding of the golf club members, who were from the upper class, and was treated the same way as butlers, chauffeurs, and maids” (Clavin 2005: 37).

Hagen started as a caddie at the Country Club of Rochester and became a club pro in 1912, receiving \$1,000 for eight months' work. During this time, few pros at country clubs averaged more than \$50 per week. By 1913, Hagen was 20-year old head golf pro, yet he had to beg his employers for time off to play in the 1913 U.S. Open at The Country Club in Boston. This was the historic tournament won by Francis Ouimet, a 20-year old amateur and former caddie at The Country Club who defeated the British golfers Harry Vardon and Ted Ray. Vardon was golf's first superstar and Ray was the reigning British Open champion. Ouimet's victory changed the American perception of golf from a sport for rich foreigners to a sport that everyday people could play.

Walter Hagen finished third in the 1913 Open. He was then sponsored by members of the Country Club of Rochester and won the 1914 U.S. Open at Chicago's Midlothian Country Club. There, for the first time, golf pros could enter the clubhouse. Hagen initiated this practice by marching into the locker room instead of changing shoes in the parking lot as pros had previously been compelled to do (Gabriel 2001). Not only was Hagen the first American professional touring player, he was also a key participant in the creation of the Professional Golf Association (in 1916). After winning the 1919 U.S. Open, Hagen left his club job and become the first golfer to earn his livelihood completely from tournament incomes and endorsements.

Table 1: Total Purses on the PGA Tour by Decade

Year	Number of Events	Total Purse
1938	38	\$ 158,000
1950	33	459,950
1960	41	1,335,242
1970	55	6,751,523
1980	45	13,371,786
1990	44	46,251,831
2000	49	157,000,000

Source: J. Luft. 2000. http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/statitudes/news/2000/08/28/tigermoney_statitudes/

Professional golf grew steadily during the first decades of the 20th century, with sharp increases in status and earnings after 1950. In the 62-year period between 1938 and 2000, purses grew 1,000-fold (See Table 1). The huge increase in total purses between 1995 and 2005 is credited to the impact and popularity of Tiger Woods, who joined the Tour in 1996.

Professional Caddies

The role of the professional caddy goes beyond carrying the bag and handing the player a club. A good caddy who knows the game of golf can play a major role in the success of his player. Caddies prepare for competitive rounds by walking the course, checking yardages, and finding trouble spots on the course. They may be involved in crucial decisions during play. For example, they advise the pro on club selection, a decision influenced by estimated wind speed and direction and the terrain of the golf hole. They also assist with “reading the greens,” determining the effect that undulations in the green will have on the path of putts.

The early caddies on the PGA Tour were a “ragged crew of itinerant African-Americans who, like their pros, followed the sun from one tournament to the next, eking out a living as they lived on the edge of society. These ‘professional’ caddies were the last in line when it came to respectability” (Babbles 2007). With the increased status of the PGA Tour and the increase in tournament purses in the 1960s, more players began to have regular caddies; and of course, since most of the caddies were black, caddies on the Tour tended to be black.

Caddies are paid according to the earnings of the professional golfer. Caddy pay is a closely held secret and the pay formula varies slightly between golfer-caddy teams. However, the typical formula is widely reported. Caddies on the Tour are generally paid \$1,000 for each tournament played, plus at least five percent of the player's earnings. If the player finishes in the top ten places, the caddy gets seven percent of the player's earnings, and if the player wins the caddy gets 10 percent. Thus, as the prize money for tournaments rose, caddies began earning more as well (See Table 2).

Table 2: Earnings of Leading PGA Tour Money Winners by Year, with Corresponding Estimates of Caddy Earnings

Year	Earnings of Leading Money Winners*	Estimated Caddy Earnings
1955	\$ 63,122	\$ 6,176
1965	140,752	13,773
1975	298,149	29,174
1985	542,321	53,066
1995	1,654,959	161,938
2005	10,628,024	1,039,955

*Source: L. Rubenstein and J. Neuman. 2006. *A Disorderly Compendium of Golf*. New York: Workman Publishing.

The calculations of the 2005 estimated caddy earnings in Table 2 were based on the typical formula—10% for wins, 7% for top ten finishes, and 5% for non-top tens—applied to Tiger Woods' tournament by tournament earnings in 2005, as he was the leading money winner that year. The resulting caddy earnings rate—9.785% of the pro golfer's winnings—was applied to the other years, 1955 to 1995, for the respective estimated caddy earnings.

Currently, about 70 caddies on the PGA Tour make \$100,000 or more for about 30 weeks' work, as few golf pros play in more than 30 weekly events per year.

Steve Williams, caddy for Tiger Woods, has even started a charitable foundation with some of the millions he has made carrying Tiger Woods's bag.

Caddying has established itself so well in recent years that there is a professional association, the Professional Tour Caddies of America (PCTA) which includes some 130 full time PGA Tour caddies. The majority of PGA Tour players are said to employ PTCA caddies. To qualify for membership, a caddy must have worked a minimum of 15 PGA Tour tournaments. The PTCA advocates for caddies by working "closely with PGA Tour Officials

and personnel to assure policies and communications between the PGA Tour and PCTA Tour caddies is accurate and positive” (PCTA 2007). The PTCA operates a mobile restaurant and gathering place for all caddies that is set up at many Tour venues.

Disappearance of Black Caddies on Tour

The professionalization of the role of the caddy has come at the expense of blacks. In 1998, only one of the top 50 golfers on the PGA Tour employed an African American caddy: Freddie Burns, caddy for Hal Sutton. As Burns tells it, “In 1981, there were twice as many black caddies as whites. Now [in 1998] I’m the only one carrying a top-50 bag” (Sailor 2003). In 1998, 55 PGA Tour players earned over \$1,000,000 in prize money, which meant that 54 white caddies earned at least \$100,000, with only one black caddy, Freddie Burns, earning as much (Benet 2002). In 2007, with Sutton past his prime and no longer playing the PGA Tour, the figure has moved to zero. No player in the top 50 and virtually no other player employs a black caddy on a regular basis. Not even Tiger Woods employs a black caddy.

What Happened?

Clearly, African-Americans were prominent among the professional caddy ranks when caddying was first established as a “profession.” However, African Americans are no longer at the top levels of their profession. What happened? Several developments undoubtedly affected the status of African Americans as caddies. One was increasing use of motorized golf carts which have replaced caddies at the majority of golf courses. Nationally, only 7.3 percent of the 16,398 golf clubs in the United States with at least 18 holes offer caddie services (Fowler 2007). Another development was the growth in employment options for black youth, along with a growing disdain for such a subservient-appearing job as caddying.

Although the widespread use of golf carts and poor image are relevant to the radical decline in numbers of black caddies, it is critical to note that the position of “the caddy” remains a fixture of golf tour. Only the color of these caddies has changed. African American caddies have been the victims of a process that journalist William Rhoden calls “the Jockey Syndrome” (Rhoden 2006).

Similar “Push out” Scenarios

African Americans dominated the jockey ranks from the era of slavery up through the end of the 19th century; and they represented an overwhelming majority of professional horse trainers. Former slaves who worked closely with animals naturally continued to work with horses.

Many gained considerable status as winning jockeys and trainers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, horse racing grew in the United States. However, the emphasis was more on the horse than on the jockey. Between the end of the Civil War and 1900, the status of the jockey increased substantially, with leading jockeys earning between \$5,000 and \$6,000 per year, seven to ten times the income of the average worker of that time (Rhoden 2006). The leading jockey of this era, African American Isaac Murphy, earned more than the entire payroll of the leading major league baseball team during this period. However, by the turn of the century, as horse racing grew in status and in financial rewards, whites became increasingly visible as jockeys, quickly pushing blacks out of their former occupation.

Jimmy Winkfield, the last of the great black jockeys, won the Kentucky Derby in 1901 and 1902, but was forced out of the country to find work as a jockey, as it became extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to be hired to race. He moved to Russia in 1904, where he became the most celebrated athlete in the country (Hotelling 1999). With the elimination of Winkfield, the pushout of African American jockeys was complete. This process had actually started in 1894 when a racing “union,” the Jockey Club, was established by several prominent thoroughbred owners and breeders. Headquartered in New York City, it became the administrative arm of the horse-racing industry. Among its tasks was the licensing of jockeys. The practice of not licensing black jockeys, combined with the growing reluctance of white horse owners to hire black riders, were driving forces in the demise of black jockeys in America (Rhoden 2006).

This “push out” scenario reflects broad labor market discrimination dating back to the 19th century. For example, up to around 1820, a large proportion of the artisans in Philadelphia were free blacks. However, the number of these black artisans had declined significantly by 1837 after the influx of European immigrants and the concomitant “push out” of black workers in skilled trades (Darity 1990).

Other push outs from skilled trades occurred later in the century in the United States in general and in the South in particular. At the end of the Civil War, there were five times as many black skilled artisans as whites in the United States. Many slaves who had been trained in skilled trades became urban contractors; a combination of former slaves and freed blacks dominated the skilled trades (Hine, Hine, and Harrold 2005). Consequently, skilled trades were seen primarily as “black jobs.” However, throughout the latter third of the 19th century, black skilled artisans steadily lost ground. By 1900, while there were twice as many black skilled artisans

(most of whom lived in the South), as there had been in 1865, blacks represented a rapidly decreasing proportion of the skilled labor force. As southern white workers began crowding into cities and competing with blacks in the traditional skilled trades, the emerging trade unions restricted and eventually prevented the employment of blacks in the transportation service, new mills, and construction, where new techniques and skills were being introduced (Moreno 2006). “Racial discrimination was undoubtedly a major factor in the decline and eclipse of the [black] skilled worker” (Darity 1990:108).

Conclusion

In golf, as in horse racing and skilled trades, as occupations gained status, African Americans were pushed out and replaced by whites. While the golfing establishment did not organize and use unions to exclude black caddies, as had been done in horse racing and skilled trades, black caddies have been the victims of systematic labor market exclusion. The process by which this has occurred may very well be explained with macro-economic principles described by Deidre Royster (2002):

...economists’ concern with formal institutional arrangements, such as contracts, property rights, laws, regulations, and the state, have tended to downplay the potential importance of the ways in which informal norms and networks affect how institutions “act” economically (p. 30).

This perspective argues that white workers continue to engage in customs of black exclusion despite laws and regulations designed to prohibit such action. Royster (2002) described social “networks of inclusion” and “networks of exclusion” that operate to produce racial inequality in labor markets.

The disappearance of black caddies on the PGA Tour—as well as the Champions Tour and the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour—is a recent example of a phenomenon that has happened several times in African American history: blacks dominate the ranks of an occupation until whites are attracted to it. This attraction is often the result of the work’s increasing in status, which is associated with increased remuneration for the work. Money and status attract whites, who move into the occupation and push blacks out.

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Joe Louis and the Struggle of African American Golfers for Visibility and Access

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Joe Louis in stimulating greater interest in golf among African Americans during his reign as world heavyweight boxing champion (1937-1949) and in joining the fight to end discrimination in golf after his retirement from boxing. During his boxing career, Louis promoted golf by participating in golf tournaments as an amateur player, employing black golf professionals as his personal golf tutors, organizing his own national tournament, and creating opportunities for interracial golf competition. Failing to achieve success in creating access for black golfers to play in the prestigious, all-white, PGA golf tournaments, Louis became more aggressive in these efforts and joined the movement to end racial discrimination in the sport. While achieving limited success, Joe Louis is credited with contributing to the initial steps in removing racial barriers in golf, which eventually led to removal of the infamous “Caucasian-only” clause from the PGA constitution, thus, paving the way for Charlie Sifford and other African Americans to attain full PGA membership.

The phenomenal success of Tiger Woods, as the lone golfer of African American descent currently competing on the Professional Golfers Association Tour (PGA Tour), has also stimulated interest in race relations and the sport of golf (Sinnette 1998; McDaniel 2000; Kennedy 2000; Dawkins and Kinloch 2000; Dawkins 2003). Much of this interest has focused on the historical impact and cumulative, long-term effect of overt and institutionalized discrimination to explain why, with the exception of Woods, no African Americans are playing on the regular PGA Tour today. Particular attention has been given to the pioneering role of black golfers who competed at the professional level during the era of Jim Crow segregation in America but were formally excluded from participating in PGA events. For example, Charlie Sifford, the first African American to

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gain full PGA membership, described the racist treatment he experienced as one of a few black professional golfers attempting to play in segregated, all-white golf tournaments during the 1950s and 1960s (Sifford and Gullo 1992). Only after social and legal pressure forced the PGA to remove a long-standing clause in its constitution restricting membership to persons who were “Caucasian only,” did Sifford gain full PGA membership in 1964. Although little coverage of golf’s discriminatory past can be found in the literature on the history of golf in America (Graffis 1975; Barkow 1974), the struggles faced by black golfers during the Jim Crow era received wider treatment after Arthur Ashe (1988) briefly covered their experiences as part of a larger project examining the history of black athletes in America. The exclusionary treatment faced by African Americans who attempted to participate in mainstream golf activities extends back to the earliest appearance of golf in America during the 1890s, through the establishment of the Professional Golfers Association in 1916 and the institutionalization of discrimination in 1943, when the PGA inserted the “Caucasian only” clause into its constitution. In response to discrimination, African Americans developed their own organizations such as the United Golfers Association (UGA). The UGA, which was established in 1926, developed golf activities that paralleled the PGA, including the development of a national championship golf tournament, the “Negro National Open,” held every year from 1926 (except during World War II) until the late 1960s. The UGA and many local black golf organizations were also viewed as launching pads that would propel accomplished black golfers into the world of “mainstream” golf. Some of the black professional golfers of the Jim Crow era held the hope of one day gaining access to PGA sponsored tournaments and participation in other mainstream golf tournaments controlled by whites (Dawkins and Kinloch 2000).

An especially hopeful period for African American golfers who held aspirations of wider participation in the sport at the professional level was the decade of 1940-1950. As they witnessed the racial barrier being broken at the professional level in the major sports of baseball, football and basketball, their hopes were given a boost during this period when boxing hero, Joe Louis, became a major figure in the world of black golf. However, few accounts have documented the efforts of African Americans to break through the racial barrier in golf during the 1940s and early 1950s and the role that world heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis played in this struggle (Dawkins and Kinloch, 2000). In this paper, we focus on the role of Joe Louis in: (1) raising the level of interest in golf among African Americans, (2) promoting interracial contact between black and white professional golfers, and (3) joining forces with others to resist discrimination and push for greater access to white-controlled golf tournaments.

While much has been written about the “hero” status that Joe Louis held for millions of African Americans whose hopes and aspirations for overcoming racial oppression were lifted, at least symbolically, as he achieved success in the boxing ring, little attention has been given to his involvement in golf. Although biographical accounts of Joe Louis’s boxing exploits have received widespread attention, the few treatments of his golf activity tend to suggest that golf was pursued only as a form of leisurely relaxation and escape from boxing (Mead 1985). However, as we shall see, a closer examination will reveal that Joe Louis was a catalytic force in stimulating participation in golf by blacks, generally, and promoting interracial play among golfers at the professional level. During his reign as world heavyweight boxing champion (1937-1949), Joe Louis also devoted serious attention to his development as an amateur golfer.

Shortly after his retirement from boxing, Louis became more forcefully involved in efforts to break through long-standing racial barriers to golf tournament entry. This view of Louis as an activist in pursuit of social justice for black golfers also suggests a need to correct a widely held image of Joe Louis as uninformed, non-radical and accommodating on racial issues.

The Hero Status of Joe Louis in Boxing And Golf

Among the biographical accounts of the life and career of Joe Louis, Mead’s (1985) critically acclaimed biography of Louis provides the enduring image of a hero in the black community during the highly discriminatory period of the Jim Crow era in America. By carrying the hopes and aspirations of the entire African American community with him each time he entered the boxing ring, the success of Joe Louis as a boxing champion accorded him the status of “black hero in white America” (Mead 1985). While his boxing exploits are well documented, few biographical accounts have been given of his role in the advancement of black golf in America. Instead, the few accounts of Joe Louis’s involvement in golf during his boxing career suggest that he pursued golf only as a hobby, encountered criticism because golf distracted him from competing effectively in the boxing ring, and was only marginally successful as a golfer. For example, Ashe (1988) notes that some observers attributed the lost suffered by Joe Louis in the initial fight with German boxer Max Schmeling in 1936 (before winning a return match in 1938) to the distraction of spending too much time engaging in his golf hobby. Throughout his boxing career, golf was a target for criticism whenever his performance in the ring was less than spectacular. For example, after a lackluster performance against “Jersey” Joe Walcott in 1947, where he was knocked down twice by the challenger before winning a disputed verdict, Louis was criticized for using time

needed for fight preparation engaging in his golf “hobby.” Subsequently, Joe Louis was voted “biggest disappointment” of 1947 by the nation’s sports editors in the annual year-end poll conducted by the Associated Press (*New York Times*, January 17, 1948, p. 13).

Despite such criticism, after gaining the world heavyweight boxing championship in 1937, Joe Louis increased his interest and activities in golf and became highly visible in the world of African American golf. However, unlike his success *in* the boxing ring, the success of Joe Louis *off* the golf course earned him the reputation of being an “ambassador” for black golf and should accord him the status of “golf hero.” He launched his own national golf tournament, “The Joe Louis Open,” in 1941, promoted interracial competition between black and white golf professionals, and supported black professional golfers by hiring them as his personal golf tutors, while encouraging other black athletes and celebrities to follow his example. Far from being a hobby, golf was a passion for Joe Louis during his boxing career and after he retired from the ring. His passion extended beyond enthusiasm as a player to a determination to seek visibility and social justice for the many good golfers among the ranks of African American golfers excluded from participation in the mainstream golf activities in white America. Therefore, the golf “heroics” of Joe Louis are related less to his talents as a player and more to his activities in stimulating greater interest in golf among African Americans and seeking interracial playing opportunities for talented black golfers.

The Joe Louis Open Golf Tournaments

Following his victories over Jim Braddock for the heavyweight boxing title in 1937 and Max Schmeling in a return match in 1938, the mass appeal of Joe Louis as an American boxing hero received wide press coverage in the general popular media (cf. *New York New Times*, June 23, 1938, p. 14; *Look*, May 7, 1940, p. 50; *Life*, June 17, 1940, pp. 48-56; *Time*, September 29, 1941, pp. 60-64). However, only in the black press did his rising popularity as a boxing champion *and* novice golfer receive significant coverage. Such national black newspapers as the *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Chicago Defender* and *Baltimore Afro-American* provided detailed accounts of his boxing career and growing recognition as a serious golf enthusiast. By 1940, Louis was playing as an amateur and had begun to enter golf tournaments sponsored by local and regional affiliates of the UGA. He was particularly drawn to the local, public golf course (Rackham) in his hometown, Detroit, Michigan. According to Bernard O’Dell, Louis was persuaded by local black professional golfer, Bob Seymour, to initiate his own tournament, “The Joe Louis Open Golf Tournament,” which would become one of the major annual events in black sports, nationally

[personal interview, 1998]. Between 1941 and 1951, eight “Joe Louis Open” golf tournaments were held in Detroit and attracted the top black golfers from around the country, while providing greater exposure for them and the sport of golf throughout black America. O’Dell served as tournament director for five of these tournaments and indicated that, while the idea for the tournaments was Seymour’s, Louis enthusiastically lent his name to the event [personal interview, 1998]. Since there was only one national tournament for black golfers (the UGA’s Negro National Open), the Joe Louis tournament served as a second, and equally attractive, tournament for the best black golfers in the country, while offering a larger purse than the UGA national tournament. The mass appeal and media coverage of Louis as world heavyweight boxing champion was expected to increase the visibility of African American golf to the public and raise prospects of a black golfer being eventually selected as a “break-through” player in all-white, professional golf tournaments. Ironically, this would become a reality during the 1940s in the popular sport of baseball, when Jackie Robinson broke into the major leagues in 1947, six years after the first Joe Louis golf tournament was held.

The Joe Louis Open Tournaments as a Showcase for Talented Black Golfers

Joe Louis was enthusiastically involved in the initial tournament and saw it as an opportunity to showcase the talents of black golfers as serious competitors. He put up the \$1,000 prize money and stated: “I think this tournament will prove conclusively to our white friends that we have some [Walter] Hagens and [Gene] Sarazens in our group” (*Baltimore Afro-American*, March 15, 1941, p. 21); further noting that “It is my aim in giving this tournament to promote and introduce our leading Negro golfers into the golfing world. We have a number of golf pros playing ‘par’ and ‘below par’ golf who are not known to the general public... [and] have a right to their place in the world of sports” (*Pittsburgh Courier*, July 12, 1941, p. 17).

Throughout the decade between 1941 and 1951, evidence indicates that the Joe Louis Open Golf Tournament did, indeed, provide a showcase for talented black golfers and increased their national visibility through coverage in the black press. The first Joe Louis tournament was held at Detroit’s Rackham golf course in 1941 on August 12, 13 and 14, the weekend before the annual UGA national championship, which was already scheduled for August 19 through the 22nd in Boston. The date of the tournament was strategically selected to lure the best black golfers throughout the nation, who would normally attend the UGA championship but could now attend the Joe Louis Open, first, and then go directly to the

UGA championship the following weekend. More than 250 entrants were anticipated as the black press gave extensive coverage, with the *Baltimore Afro-American* calling it “the largest of its kind ever sponsored by colored people” (*Baltimore Afro-American*, March 15, 1941, p. 21) and “the richest tournament among colored golfers” (*Baltimore Afro-American*, July 19, 1941, p. 20). The lure of Joe Louis’ name (*Richmond Afro-American*, August 16, 1941, p. 21) produced the greatest amount of attention that had ever been given to black golf as amateurs and professionals throughout the nation made plans to be a part of this history-making, double-dose of black golf extravaganza (Dawkins and Kinloch 2000).

The enticement of \$500 top prize for the winner in the professional division and the greater visibility than in any previous year were factors which generated even greater interest in the Joe Louis tournament than the UGA annual Negro National Open championship, where the tournament winner had become traditionally regarded as the “champion” of black golf. Among the notable black stars expected to compete at the first Joe Louis tournament, the leading contenders included past UGA national champions Robert “Pat” Ball, John Brooks Dendy, Howard Wheeler, Edison Marshall and local (Detroit) professionals, Clyde Martin, Bob Seymour, Ben Davis and Eddie Jackson. Another local golfer, Dr. Remus Robinson, who was the reigning national amateur champion, was among the favorites to capture the first Joe Louis Open amateur crown (*Pittsburgh Courier*, August 2, 1941, p. 17). Chicago pro, Pat Ball, was given the inside track by some observers who expected him to win because he won the UGA National Open championship when it was last held at Detroit’s Rackham course in 1934. Others felt that Clyde Martin, who was Joe Louis’ personal golf instructor at the time, was the favorite (*Pittsburgh Courier*, August 9, 1941, p. 16). In recent practice rounds on the Rackham course, Martin shot a 69, two under par, and was continuing to blister the course (*Pittsburgh Courier*, August 2, 1941, p. 17). However, tournament director, Bernard O’Dell, noted that the large field of challengers included long shots among the outstanding black professional and amateur golfers from the Far West, the Atlantic Seaboard and the Deep South (*Baltimore Afro-American*, August 2, 1941, p. 21). Many of the 68 pros and 118 amateurs scheduled to play were less known, nationally, but considered outstanding golfers in their local communities and welcomed the opportunity for wider exposure which participation in the Joe Louis tournament would bring. Included in this group were Jerry Hood (Chicago, IL), Tup Holmes and Hugh Smith (Atlanta, GA), Landy Taylor and Walter Stewart (Norfolk, VA), Joe Roach (New York, NY), Lonnie Shields (Seattle, WA), Pleasant Goodwin (Washington, D.C.), Sam Shephard (St. Louis, MO), and Mac Dalton (Milwaukee, WI) (*Pittsburgh Courier*, August 16, 1941, p. 17).

The first Joe Louis Open Golf Tournament lived up to its billing as a headliner in black sports and attracted the major black amateur and professional black golfers throughout the country. The excitement generated by the wide publicity given by the black press was matched by the sterling performance of black golfers at this first Joe Louis tournament. As Dawkins and Kinloch (2000) describe, the competitive play in the final round of the tournament was clear evidence of the high level of skillful performance indicative of black professional golfers. The winner in the pro division was not decided until the last few holes as Clyde Martin started the final 18 holes with a one stroke lead over challenger, Calvin Searles. Earlier in the round, Searles claimed the lead for the first time and tried unsuccessfully to maintain it. As approximately 1,000 spectators followed the golf stars around the course, Martin was two down going into the seventh hole. Searles took seven on the par-5 seventh hole, while Martin had a birdie to recapture the lead. Although Martin appeared to be in the driver's seat, up by three going into the last nine holes, Searles had evened it up again by the 12th and jumped out in front on the par-3 thirteenth hole when he scored a birdie. However, Martin evened it up again on the fourteenth hole, when he took a five and Searles a six. Martin shot par golf from the fifteenth through the eighteenth hole to close with a two-stroke margin (292 total for the 72 hole event) over Searles (294), who finished one over par on the 15th and 18th holes (*Pittsburgh Courier*, August 23, 1941, p. 17). Although Searles finished second, he was tied by Zeke Hartsfield of Atlanta, who came on with two rounds of 69, the best two rounds in the tournament, on the final day. Four golfers finished at 301, including Theodore Rhodes, who would become the next pro to tutor Louis, Ben Greene of New Orleans, along with local favorites Ben Davis and Bob Seymour of Detroit. Howard Wheeler finished in eighth place at 302, while Solomon Hughes of Gadsden, Alabama and Eddie Jackson of Detroit shared ninth place with 303 totals (*Chicago Defender*, August 23, 1941, p. 25).

The success of the first Joe Louis Open golf tournament in 1941 gave a tremendous lift to the hopes and aspirations of black golfers. However, the boxing feats of Joe Louis in 1941 may have overshadowed interest in the white press of covering his eventful golf tournament of the same year. In 1941, Louis successfully defended his boxing championship five times from January to May in what some called the “bum-a-month” campaign, leading to a historic 6th fight in June against Billy Conn and a record 7th defense against Lou Nova in September (Capeci and Wilkerson 1983). While the first Joe Louis Open tournament was a rousing success, plans were cut short for the 1942 staging of what were now regarded as the premier “twin” events in black golf, the Joe Louis Open in Detroit and the

UGA National Open scheduled for Washington, D.C. The United States' entered World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Joe Louis, himself, joined the military as both the Joe Louis Open and UGA Negro National Open golf tournaments were canceled until the close of the war in 1945. However, the resumption of the tournament in 1945 and subsequent tournaments between 1946 and 1951 continued to produce exciting play for recognized veterans and emerging "stars" of black golf. A list of champions (professional division) of Joe Louis Open Tournaments held between 1941 and 1951 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Joe Louis Open Golf Tournament Winners, 1941 – 1951

Year	Winner (Professional Division)
1941	Clyde Martin
1942-44	(No Competition-World War II)
1945	Solomon Hughes
1946	Theodore Rhodes
1947	Theodore Rhodes
1948	Theodore Rhodes
1949	Theodore Rhodes
1950	Al Besselink
1951	Howard Wheeler

Among the most notable emerging stars showcased at the Joe Louis tournaments were Bill Spiller, Ted Rhodes and Charlie Sifford. William "Bill" Spiller, a member of Los Angeles' Cosmopolitan Golf Club, won the Joe Louis Open amateur championship in 1946 (*Pittsburgh Courier*, August 3, 1946, p. 28) and began playing as a professional in 1947. Later, Spiller would become one of the forceful black golfers in the push for PGA entry. By 1946, Theodore "Ted" Rhodes of Nashville had ascended to the top as the most highly regarded black golfer nationally. Ted Rhodes had become the most consistent winner in tournaments that he entered and became Joe Louis's private teaching pro. Louis, in turn, supported the career of Rhodes, who was one of the best hopes for black pros to break through the PGA race barrier. Rhodes not only won in 1946, but dominated in following years, winning four consecutive Joe Louis Open championship titles from 1946 to 1949. Charles "Charlie" Sifford was another participant in the Joe Louis tournaments whose recognition was continuing to grow. Originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, Sifford came up through the caddy ranks and moved to Philadelphia, where he was influenced by Howard Wheeler and other established golfers. In 1948, Sifford was rated by his peers as the

most improved pro golfer on the tournament circuit and the main reason for the success of Teddy Rhodes, who had to go all out to top him. Sifford's short game was described as being very good with iron shots true to the pin and a putting touch that was equally true, leading tournament director, Bernard O'Dell to predict that "with more experience, [in] about two years, Sifford may become Negro golf's top man" (*Pittsburgh Courier*, July 31, 1948, p.15).

The Joe Louis Open Tournaments as a Context for Interracial Golf Competition

The Joe Louis golf tournaments also became a staging ground to promote interracial golf competition. From the outset, Louis was able to arrange an exhibition match between well known white professionals and noted black pro golfers. The purpose of these matches was to demonstrate how well African American golfers performed against established white golf pros. In these matches, black golfers accorded themselves well against white competitors. For example, in the first Joe Louis tournament in 1941, an exhibition match was arranged between two white pros, brothers Emerick and Chuck Kocsis, and two of the outstanding black pros, Clyde Martin and Howard Wheeler. In fact, it became the highlight of the tournament drawing close attention to how well African Americans performed in direct competition with white pro golfers. Emerick Kocsis was the current state PGA champion, while Chuck was a former American Walker Cup star and leading pro. Martin and Wheeler were logical choices for Louis to select to represent black pros. Louis thought very highly of Martin, who was his personal golf instructor, while Wheeler was a three-time UGA National Open champion. Wheeler was also a gallery favorite, known for his colorful play, such as an unorthodox, cross-handed grip which produced long drives from a tee made of paper match boxes. The exhibition match became even more of an attraction when a friendly side bet of \$400 on the white pros against "Joe's pros" was put up by a group of white golf enthusiasts in attendance. The thrilling match was clinched by Wheeler and Martin (3-2), with the deciding shot made by Wheeler as he exploded from a trap for a birdie on the 380-yard fifteenth hole. Veteran golfers who witnessed the shot called it "one of the best of the season" (*Baltimore Afro-American*, August 23, 1941, p. 22). The Kocsis brothers were gracious in defeat, stating that "it was the first time that they had played against colored golfers, but they had enjoyed the match and would like to play again... [further noting that] the colored golfers should be real proud of Joe Louis who was the finest sport they had ever met" (*Richmond Afro-American*, August 30, 1941, p. 22). The Kocsis brothers also commented on the performance of Clyde Martin, who won the first Joe Louis Open tournament championship in 1941, stating that "Clyde would be among the first twenty [golfers] in the

country if given a chance in big-time company” (*Richmond Afro-American*, August 30, 1941, p. 22).

By the end of the decade, Joe Louis expanded efforts to promote interracial play through invitations extended directly to white golfers to enter the regular field of entrants to the Joe Louis Open tournament. For example, at the 1949 Joe Louis Open, white golfers were invited to enter and a major press conference was held to announce to a national audience that black golfers would play in direct competition with their white counterparts. Also in that year (1949), the UGA championship and Joe Louis Open tournaments were being held in the same city on back-to-back weekends. Therefore, the press conference announcing the coming of the 1949 UGA and Joe Louis tournaments to Detroit generated significant attention. The press gathering was held at Detroit’s Gotham Hotel, with the governor of the state of Michigan, G. Mennen Williams, donating trophies for the two events. Many of the state’s leading dignitaries stood alongside the governor at the press conference. Also on hand to lend his support to the two tournaments was world renown golfer, Walter Hagen, one of professional golf’s pioneers, who held many championship titles including a record 4 PGA championships in a row from 1924 to 1927. Joe Louis increased his sponsorship purse to attract stronger interest than in previous tournaments in hopes of promoting interracial participation. The cash prize of \$4,000 provided by Louis was the largest amount ever offered by a private individual sponsor, even surpassing the \$3,000 that Bing Crosby annually provided for his Hollywood Open tournament. Both tournaments were also scheduled to be aired over the recently instituted medium of television (*Pittsburgh Courier*, August 20, 1949, p. 24).

The 1949 Joe Louis Open Golf tournament was won by Ted Rhodes, as he had done in the three previous years, but he set a record by also winning the UGA title six days earlier (*Pittsburgh Courier*, September 3, 1949, p. 22) to become the only golfer to win both of these titles in the same year (*Pittsburgh Courier*, September 10, 1949a, p. 18). While Rhodes turned in his usual sterling performance, the tournament took on added significance as the runner-up was a white, Michigan PGA pro, Mike Dietz, who tied for second with Robert McCockrell of Newark. Dietz was one of several whites who were invited by Joe Louis to play in the tournament. Another white golfer, Elmer Priskhorn, shared a fifth place tie with Charlie Sifford (*Pittsburgh Courier*, September 10, 1949a, p. 18). At the event’s closing, televised interviews were held with Louis, Rhodes, Dietz, and amateur champion, Emmet Hollins, who were all congratulated by Detroit’s mayor, Eugene Van Antwerp (*Pittsburgh Courier*, September 10, 1949b, p. 18).

The efforts by Joe Louis to promote interracial competition finally appeared to be paying off as expectations were rising that the showcase of black talent displayed in the 1949 twin black golf championship tournaments provided convincing evidence of the competitiveness of black professional golfers. Adding to this atmosphere of rising expectations for African American golfers who held aspirations of entering the PGA were two earlier events. The first event was the racial breakthrough in the sport of baseball, with the signing of Jackie Robinson to the major league's Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. The second event was an out of court settlement reached in 1948 in relationship to a suit filed against the PGA by black golfers Bill Spiller, Ted Rhodes and Madison Gunter. Spiller, Rhodes and Gunter, who were denied entry to the PGA sponsored Richmond Hills Open Golf Tournament in California, were persuaded by their lawyer to drop their law suit in exchange for a promise by the PGA to review its "whites only" provision (McRae, 1991; *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 24, 1948, p. 9). The stellar performance of African American golfers at the 1949 Joe Louis Open Golf Tournament, especially in direct competition with white professionals, was the final signal that the timing was right for a racial breakthrough in golf. Despite high expectations generated by these events and continuing efforts by Joe Louis and others to promote interracial golf competition, the decade of the 1940s ended without any progress in the struggle of African American golfers to gain access to tournaments controlled by whites.

Joe Louis and the Push for PGA Entry

Although the Joe Louis tournaments were successful in stimulating greater interest in golf among African Americans and promoting interracial competition, they failed to open up opportunities for black professional golfers in breaking through continuing racial barriers in the sport. In the early 1950s, Louis became involved in more aggressive efforts to fight the continuing exclusion of blacks from all-white golf tournaments. For example, as law suits were filed against cities that maintained segregated public golf courses, Joe Louis joined in protesting against such discriminatory practices. Louis commented forcefully in 1950 when black golfers were not permitted to enter the Bing Crosby and Long Beach Open golf tournaments in California. He wrote Mayor Burton Chase of Long Beach and blasted the exclusion of blacks from the Long Beach Open, stating that "prejudice and discrimination have no place in sports" (*Pittsburgh Courier*, June 28, 1950, p. 21). The Long Beach mayor's response became a typical answer to such charges during this period. He pointed out that the Long Beach Open was co-sponsored with the Professional Golfers Association which sets all rules and regulations. Therefore, the matter was out of his hands or those of the local sponsor, the Long Beach Lions Club (*Pittsburgh Courier*, June 28, 1950, p. 21). The PGA continued to maintain its exclusionary

“Caucasian only” policy, which was clearly inconsistent with the times as baseball and other sports began to reverse their policies and practices of racial exclusion.

Although black golfers were not permitted to participate in PGA co-sponsored events, a few non-PGA golf tournaments allowed them to enter. For example, black golfers could enter the annual Los Angeles Open tournament and pit their skills against many leading white golfers. African American golfers were also invited to play in the All American and World Championship tournaments at the Tam O’Shanter Golf and Country Club near Chicago. These tournaments were organized by the Club’s flamboyant president, George May, and, while providing an opportunity for black golfers to demonstrate their skills against some of the leading white pros during the 1940s and early 1950s, the Tam O’Shanter tournaments were not regarded as mainstream, since May introduced golf patrons to a carnival-like atmosphere. Nevertheless, by the early 1950s several of the top black golfers, including Ted Rhodes, Bill Spiller, Howard Wheeler and the young Charlie Sifford, were able to demonstrate through participation in these events that they were primed for PGA entry. These black golfers, and others, felt that they could continue to elevate their game if opportunities for expanded play with stiffer competition were available. However, the PGA continued to use race as the basis for excluding them from PGA membership and participation in its events. Nevertheless, Joe Louis was determined, as Chester Washington of the *Pittsburgh Courier* noted, “to keep punching until old jim crow is counted out in golfing circles” (*Pittsburgh Courier*, January 28, 1950, p. 21).

As Dawkins and Kinloch (2000) note, the opportunity for a “return match” with the PGA came in 1952 in a well publicized confrontation between Joe Louis and the PGA in relationship to a co-sponsored golf tournament in San Diego, California. Joe Louis and black pro golfers, Bill Spiller and Eural Clark, applied for entry to the \$10,000 San Diego Open. The local sponsors of the tournament, San Diego Chevrolet Dealers, at first welcomed their application and invited them to compete, but then told them that the invitation had to be rescinded because of a PGA ruling that did not allow blacks to participate in PGA sponsored events. Joe Louis’ reaction and the ensuing battle became national headline news and received coverage in the country’s leading newspapers. The *New York Times* carried a blow-by-blow account of the golf fight leading up to and during the week of the tournament (January 15-20, 1952). Louis’ initial response to the PGA-invoked ban on their participation was that this battle was the “biggest fight of his life” and, in making an analogy between the PGA and its president, Horton Smith, and the Nazis at the time of his 1938

boxing match with Max Schmeling, He “want[ed] the people to know... we got another Hitler to get by” (*New York Times*, January 15, 1952, p. 31). The *New York Times* article was accompanied by a photo of Louis, who was now retired from boxing, in full golf attire holding a raised golf club in his hand with the caption heading “The Brown Bomber Fights Again.” Realizing that Louis was galvanizing national support for his fight against the discriminatory PGA policy, Smith immediately called a meeting of the seven-member PGA tournament committee and the co-sponsors to seek a face-saving resolution to the ordeal. In the meantime, Bill Spiller and Eural Clark as pros were allowed to play qualifying rounds, where Clark fell short of qualifying by two strokes (79-77 for a 156 total), while Spiller just made it with a 152 total. Since Louis was an amateur, he did not have to play a qualifying round. The PGA tournament committee decided to approve the invitation for Joe Louis to play as an invited amateur under a rule that permitted local sponsors to invite ten amateurs exempting them from qualifying. However, despite his performance in the qualifying rounds, the PGA committee declared that as a professional golfer “the PGA bylaws and other qualification rules could not be waived in the case of Spiller except through changes in the PGA constitution” (*New York Times*, January 16, 1952, p. 30). This action drew criticism from some groups which saw the PGA as attempting to maintain its historic practice of golf bias. For example, the top national officers of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) adopted a resolution which called for the PGA to end its ban on black players entering its professional tournaments. The CIO pointed out that admitting Joe Louis to participate while excluding Bill Spiller served only to emphasize the discriminatory PGA policy (*New York Times*, January 19, 1952a, p. 19). Since Horton Smith predicted that the PGA would take up the non-Caucasian rule at its next annual meeting with an eye toward its removal, Louis reluctantly agreed to play in the tournament. However, Louis made it clear that he would continue the effort “to eliminate racial prejudice from golf, the last sport in which it now exists” (*New York Times*, January 16, 1952, p. 30). Joe Louis, therefore, became the first African American to play in a PGA co-sponsored tournament.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the decision by the PGA tournament committee to continue the ban on black professional golfers, Bill Spiller re-appealed for an explanation of his ineligibility and threatened to sue the PGA, as he had done four years earlier before agreeing to an out of court settlement when the PGA promised to review its “Caucasian-only” policy in 1948. A truce was reached on the issue generated by the 1952 San Diego Open affair whereby PGA president Smith he would seek PGA tournament committee approval of an “approved entry clause,” which would permit the tournament committee to circumvent the PGA constitutional restriction

by devising a supplemental list of black golfers to compete in a PGA tournament provided the names were approved by the local sponsor and the host club of a city (*New York Times*, January 18, 1952, p. 31). Under the plan, a special committee of black golfers would screen their own players with the aim of selecting one professional and one amateur to play in each PGA sponsored tournament. The proposed screening committee would be co-chaired by Joe Louis and Ted Rhodes with Eural Clark, Bill Spiller and Howard Wheeler as other members (*New York Times*, January 19, 1952, p. 19).

As the San Diego Open reached its final day, the fate of the proposed plan rather than the golf action itself received top billing by the *New York Times* which carried an article with the heading “P.G.A. Committee Votes to Ease Tourney Ban on Negro Players” followed by the subheading “Action to Help Admit Them to Co-Sponsored Events Effective at Once, Smith Says” and finally a second subheading “[Ted] Kroll’s 206 Leads in San Diego Open” (*New York Times*, January 20, 1952, p. S1). Kroll eventually won the San Diego Open, his first major golf tournament victory, after holding off the pressure applied by veteran Jimmy Demaret (*Miami Herald*, January 21, 1952, p. 1-D). Also, hardly noticed was the elimination of Joe Louis earlier in the week as he finished the first 36 holes with a score of 158, eight strokes over the 150 needed to qualify for the final 36 holes of the tournament (*New York Times*, January 19, 1952b, p. 19).

While the historic plan was characterized as a lifting of the PGA tournament ban on black golfers, the door to participation could still be closed at the discretion of local sponsors or clubs. PGA president Horton Smith expressed the desire that these groups would invite blacks but was careful to note in describing the details of the plan that the “P.G.A. actually is a guest at wherever tournaments are played and must necessarily be governed by rights of local sponsors, and clubs” (*New York Times*, January 20, 1952, p. S1). Co-sponsors of PGA tournaments held in the South or, for that matter, any place that wanted to maintain its traditional practices of racial discrimination could do so without facing pressure from the PGA or sponsors in other cities. Critics of the plan in the African American community argued that “no committee was named to pick Jackie Robinson to play with the Brooklyn Dodgers, nor Marion Motley to play [football] with the Cleveland Browns. Each was judged on his ability” (*Chicago Defender*, January 26, 1952, p. 19). Therefore, while the confrontation of 1952 in San Diego initiated by Joe Louis (and Bill Spiller) drew national attention to the ongoing battle to end the PGA’s Jim Crow policy, the result of these efforts represented partial removal rather than complete destruction of the racial barrier to full black participation in PGA events. This “crack” in the racial

barrier, nevertheless, enabled African American golfers to begin playing in PGA tournaments for the first time in 1952 when “invited” by the PGA (provided that local sponsors did not oppose). Only a handful of black golfers were able to take advantage of this “opportunity,” given the lack of resource support needed to sustain “touring” black players and other risks associated with such an undertaking. The immediate effect of the new policy was that black golfers were permitted to participate in 10 PGA tournaments in 1952 and 15 in 1953; however, none of these tournaments were held in the South (McRae 1991). Charlie Sifford was the only African American golfer who played on a sustained basis in PGA co-sponsored tournaments beginning in 1952 as an “invited guest.” Despite not having the sponsorship support of most white touring professional golfers and facing racial threats, Sifford embarked on this long journey, which eventually led him to become the first black golfer to gain full PGA membership in 1964 and, in 2004, the first African American to be inducted into the prestigious World Golf Hall of Fame. Joe Louis can be seen as a major catalyst, who paved the way for the assault on the PGA “Caucasian only” policy and its removal under social and legal pressure in 1961 leading to Sifford’s achievements (Dawkins 2003).

Conclusion

In this paper we examined the role of world heavyweight champion boxer, Joe Louis, in stimulating greater interest in the sport of golf among African Americans and participating in efforts to end discrimination against black golfers during the period of his national prominence, especially in the 1940’s and early 1950’s. Unlike many of the early black golfers whose initial exposure to golf came through caddying at exclusive white country clubs, Louis was attracted to the sport after excelling in boxing. However, his enthusiasm and passion for golf matched that of those blacks who rose from the caddy ranks to become recognized golfers throughout black communities in America. At the height of his recognition as world heavyweight boxing champion, Joe Louis became a serious golfer, who not only pursued an amateur career but also supported the careers of other black golfers. He also expanded playing opportunities and promoted interracial golf competition by creating his own tournament which became an instant national success. The Joe Louis Open tournament was a showcase for displaying the talents of African American golf stars, increasing interest in golf among blacks generally and providing a staging ground for the promotion of interracial contact and cooperation in golf. Therefore, Louis became an “ambassador” of black golf, a role which was expected to break the long standing racial barrier to greater access to playing opportunities for blacks. Failing to produce these results, however, Louis turned to a more aggressive approach, using his notoriety to draw

national attention and outrage to the PGA's denial of access by blacks to PGA sponsored events. Although the more militant stance produced limited initial results, these efforts coincided with the rise in direct actions attacking racial exclusion growing out of the civil rights movement of the 1950's. Louis, therefore, helped to draw attention to golf discrimination and opened limited opportunities which increased the chances of a few black golfers to play in PGA events as non-touring players. Another consequence of Louis' involvement in golf was the impact of his activities on increasing the coverage of black golf in the media, especially the black press. The overwhelmingly greater coverage of baseball by the black press during the heydays of the Negro leagues of the mid 1940's yielded a bit as Louis attracted attention to golf through his travels and involvement in golf tournaments and informal play. Finally, this paper reveals that Joe Louis played an active and sometimes aggressive leadership role in pursuit of social justice for African American golfers, suggesting a need to correct the image that is often presented of Louis as non-radical and accommodating on racial issues.

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