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

C. Keith Harrison[1]
University of Central Florida

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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1 Please address all correspondence to C. Keith Harrison (kharrison@bus.ucf.edu).

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

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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 commonalties 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 athleticating 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 move *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 Up[5]

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)

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[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%

[7]All 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 strumming 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%

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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.