FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 9

This file contains additional readings from earlier editions of *Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies,* and some extra materials provided by Jay Coakley. These have not been included within the book as much of the content is explicitly focused on the USA, but users of the book may find these readings useful and interesting. Please feel free to send your feedback and/or suggest additional readings to us at jcoakley@uccs.edu or e.pike@chi.ac.uk.

Topic 1. Knowledge about race today (PBS)
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Topic 1. Knowledge about race today (PBS)

Looking Beneath the Surface: Current Knowledge about Race
    Many social scientists have studied the idea of race. Recent research has produced new knowledge about race and the racial classification systems. This knowledge challenges many assumptions that people continue to accept uncritically as they discuss race in society. There are many questions about human physical variation that remain to be studied, but at this time most scientists who have studied race agree on the following ten points:*

1. **Race is a modern idea.** Ancient cultures classified people by religion, status, class, even language, but not by physical characteristics. The word 'race' was not used in English until the 16th century.
2. **Race has no genetic basis.** No single trait or gene provides a basis for distinguishing people in one so-called race from all people in other so-called races.
3. **Human subspecies don't exist.** Human beings have not been on earth long enough and they have not been isolated enough to evolve into separate races or subspecies. Compared to all other animals, humans share more biological similarities than other species.
4. **Skin color really is only skin deep.** Genes that influence skin color are not related to genes that influence other physical traits, physical skills, or intellectual abilities. To identify someone by skin color tells you nothing else about the biology of that person.
5. **More genetic variation occurs within, not between, what many people believe to be "races."** Two people from China may be as genetically different from each other as either of them is different from an Italian or Norwegian. Over 85 percent of all genetic variations can be found within any single local populations, and variations in one local population, such as Kurds, are no greater than variations between that population and other local populations, such as Korean or Navajo.
6. **Slavery predates the idea of race.** Slavery is not a recent invention. It existed in many ancient societies, but slaves were members of conquered populations or people indebted to others. People were not enslaved because of their physical characteristics or beliefs about their natural inferiority. The U.S. was the first society to base slavery exclusively on the shared physical characteristics of the slaves.
7. **Race and freedom evolved together in contemporary history.** Despite a commitment to the notion that "All men are created equal," the economy of the early United States was built largely on slave labor. This inconsistency was rationalized by a racial ideology that established white supremacy and black inferiority.
8. **Race has been used to justify social inequalities as natural.** Over time racial ideology and the idea of white superiority became accepted as "common sense" among white U.S. citizens. Ideology was used to justify slavery, the extermination of "Indians," laws that excluded Asian immigrants, and the use of military force to take land from Mexico. Despite a commitment to democracy, racial ideology was built into the organization of American society and served as a basis for whites to claim privileges denied to others.
9. **Race isn't biological, but racism is a social reality.** The idea of race has had a powerful impact on who has access to resources, power, and opportunities in the U.S. and around the world. This has affected the lives of all Americans, even if they are not aware of it.
10. **Colorblindness will not end racism.** To pretend that race does not exist does not create racial equality. Ideas and beliefs about race have shaped the organization of American

society. The influence of race and racial ideology must be understood and acknowledged before we can eliminate the deep cultural and structural processes that continue to create racial inequalities.

As these 10 points come to be widely understood and used when thinking about human physical variation and when interacting with others, it will be difficult to maintain previously dangerous and destructive ideas and beliefs about race. Research suggests that we will never be able to neatly classify all human beings into biologically-based racial categories. For now, "human being" is the only biological category that makes racial sense.

The title of the 10 points are worded exactly the same as they are listed in "RACE - The Power of an Illusion" produced by California Newsreel in association with the Independent Television Service (ITVS). **© 2003 California Newsreel. All rights reserved.** The explanation of each point and the introduction and conclusion are by Jay Coakley.

Topic 2. Media coverage of Joe Louis

Whites in the United States and other colonized areas used racial ideology to justify the physical mistreatment of African slaves. Later, they used it to explain the success of African American boxers and other athletes in the early part of this century. According to dominant racial ideology, black males were believed to have unique physical stamina and skills; however, white people also believed that those physical attributes were grounded in an absence of deep human feelings and intellectual awareness. In fact, many whites even thought the skulls of black people were so thick that they could not be bruised or broken by a white man's fist. Thus, when black boxers were successful, this race ideology was used to explain their success.

For example, after Joe Louis, the legendary black heavyweight boxing champion, defeated Italian Primo Carnera in a heavily publicized fight before sixty thousand people in Yankee Stadium in 1935, sportswriters in the United States described him as "savage and animalistic." A major news service story sent all over the country began this way:

Something sly and sinister and perhaps not quite human came out of the African jungle last night to strike down and utterly demolish ... Primo Carnera. ... (cited in Mead, 1985).

Noted sportswriter Grantland Rice referred to Louis's quickness as "the speed of the jungle, the instinctive speed of the wild." Before another Louis fight, *New York Times* sports editor Paul Gallico wrote a nationwide syndicated column in which he described Louis in this way:

...the magnificent animal....He eats. He sleeps. He fights. ...Is he all instinct, all animal? Or have a hundred million years left a fold upon his brain? I see in this colored man something so cold, so hard, so cruel that I wonder as to his bravery. Courage in the animal is desperation. Courage in the human is something incalculable and divine.

Despite hundreds of these stories, Joe Louis remained dedicated to representing black Americans as an ambassador of goodwill to whites. But although he trained hard and presented himself as a gentleman, he was still described as *"a natural athlete ... born to listen to jazz ... eat a lot of fried chicken, play ball with the gang on the corner and never do a lick of heavy work he could escape"* (from a story in a New York paper, cited in Mead, 1985). Racial ideology can be powerful; it can shape what people see and how they interpret the world in black and white.

Published descriptions of Joe Louis, the famous boxer in the 1930s and 1940s, and other African American athletes capture dominant racial ideology as it was applied to sports in the United States in the middle of the twentieth century. But prior to these racist sports stories, whites used other methods of making themselves feel comfortable with their beliefs about their own superiority. For example, over the past two centuries, many whites in Europe and the U.S. have had difficulty accepting the idea that they might be physically inferior to people of color. Many whites have not believed Darwin's notion that brains are always superior to muscles, but the ancient Greek idea that strong minds and strong bodies come together in the same package. This has led them to wonder: Could it be that dark-skinned peoples are superior in some way to light-skinned people? Many whites have worried about this. In fact, they have worried so much at certain times that they have accepted a number of myths designed to restore faith in their own racial superiority.

A classic example is the myth of "Tarzan, King of the Jungle"-the African jungle. In 1914, Edgar Rice Burroughs wrote Tarzan of the Apes, the first of his twenty-four Tarzan novels, which constituted the biggest-selling series of novels of the century. His stories then found their

way into comic books and movies read and seen by additional millions of people, including millions of children, and especially white children who were forming their ideas about race.

According to John Hoberman, Tarzan stories were very popular through much of this century for many reasons. One reason was that white people in Western industrial societies found it very comforting and exciting to read about a white man with aristocratic British ancestry who used a combination of physical strength and intelligence to become "king of the African jungle," ruler of the "noble black savages" and physically imposing beasts living in "uncivilized" colonized territories on the "dark continent".

This white Tarzan was a real model and cultural hero for whites who wanted proof that they deserved their racial privilege. In physical appearance, he resembled a combination of a Roman gladiator and a Greek god, and even though the fictional Tarzan was raised and socialized by apes, he eventually exhibited inner, "in-born racial qualities" that enabled him to not only survive but even rise above the "primitive" and "uncivilized" conditions in Africa. Therefore, those who read about Tarzan could conclude that whites really were "naturally" superior to people of color.

Burroughs did not intend to contribute to the formation of racial ideology when he wrote his Tarzan novels. He mainly wanted to convince sedentary Englishmen living off the fruits of colonialism and imperialism to change their ways and get in good physical condition lest they become weak and vulnerable as a military force. But his stories caught on and became popular partly because his white readers lived in countries whose economies had been built on colonialism combined with slavery, and they had deep fears and insecurities about people of color and about white privilege.

Fears about racial differences are not dead; nor is white privilege. Race logic and racial ideology are still with us. In fact, some have suggested that the increasing importance of sport in North America has gone hand in hand with curiosity and myths about racial differences. White people in the 1920s and 1930s admired Tarzan as a "great white hope," and some whites in the 1960s and 1970s followed in their footsteps by looking for great white male athletes.

The search for white athletes may be less prevalent today, but efforts to reaffirm racial ideology now take other forms, such as giving excessive attention to black athletes who fail to live up to social expectations. If enough attention can be focused on the moral failures and character weaknesses of O. J. Simpson, Mike Tyson, Allen Iverson, and other black athletes who have excelled physically in sports, there will be no need for Tarzan myths or great white hopes. These new strategies can preserve racial ideology and white privilege.

Note: This section was partly inspired by Hoberman, J. 1992. *Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport*. New York: The Free Press.

Topic 3. Racial ideology in sports.

Some people, including Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder, a former sports analyst for CBS, have combined genetic and experiential factors to seek explanations for the success of African American athletes in certain sports. In 1988 Snyder suggested that African Americans make good ball carriers in football because blacks were "bred" during slavery times to have big, strong thighs. Snyder conveniently ignored millions of African Americans with skinny thighs, and he was ignorant of the historical fact that the control of white slave masters over sexual behavior between black men and women was never extensive enough to shape the genetic traits of even a small portion of the U.S. African American population. In fact, so many white men forced black women into sexual intercourse during the slave era that many African Americans today have a white ancestor somewhere in their past. How do these "white genes" figure into biological explanations? Is this the reason African Americans are better football players than blacks from many other countries? And what other silly things might race logic lead some people to say?

Snyder's explanation of the achievements of African American football players is as ridiculous as saying that Californians are great volleyball players because their ancestors migrated west in covered wagons and all those who were not strong enough or couldn't jump up on the wagons died during the tedious journey. Therefore, California was settled by great white jumpers! Is this the reason U.S. volleyball teams have been dominated by white Californians who have great vertical jumps and amazing "hang times"? This question is beyond silliness. But it is very similar to questions and explanations about the relation of slavery to success in running, boxing, football, and basketball. Let us ask some questions of our own. Did Africans survive being chained on shelves during the long journey on slave ships because they could run fast and jump high? Did slave owners breed slaves to be fast runners and high jumpers? And wouldn't the fastest runners and best jumpers have escaped the slave traders in West Africa? Racial ideology often leads people to overlook such questions.

<div style="text-align: right">Jay Coakley</div>

Another example of racial ideology in sports

Consider the winners of the 2000 Boston Marathon:

The winner of the women's wheelchair race was Jean Driscoll, a white American woman who won the Boston Marathon for the eighth time. In the 1997-1999 marathons she had placed second behind Louise Sauvage, a white Australian woman who placed second in 2000. The winner of the men's wheelchair race was Franz Nietlisoach, a white man from Switzerland who also won in 1997, 1998, and 1999.

As I followed the media coverage and listened to people talk about these winners and their amazing feats, there were no references to their whiteness or even to their country of origin, although people sometimes mentioned the country in passing. In other words, nobody made a big deal out of the "facts" of skin color and country of origin in their comments about the winner or their interpretations of why they won. Nobody asked questions about how skin color might be related to underlying genetic traits that would account for such unbelievable records and the fact that whites have been winning wheelchair marathons for many years. Nobody looked at these white winners and wondered if all whites might have a genetic ancestry or racial traits that could be related to their success. The racial ideology that they used influenced them not to "see" skin

color and to assume that the success of these racers was due to hard work, efficient training, and individual biological, psychological, and cognitive characteristics that made them winners.

In a sense, whiteness was not noticed because it is the assumed norm according to the race logic used by many people; it was not a "fact" that led to further questions and inquiry. Certainly nobody was ready to fund a study of whiteness, national origins, and success in long distance wheelchair races.

On the other hand, the winners of the men's and women's running race were Elijah Lagat and Catherine Ndereba, both dark skinned people from Kenya. Each won the Boston Marathon for the first time, although Ndereba has won a many other distance road races since 1996. As I followed the media coverage and listened to people talk about these winners there were frequent references to the "fact" that they were from Kenya. Nobody mentioned the "fact" that they were "dark skinned" although this was assumed in their reference to Kenya as the runners' native country. Kenya was important in the coverage and the discussions of the race. The number of other Kenyans among the top 10 finishers was mentioned often.

The "fact" of Kenyan success in distance racing has attracted much attention and study since the 1960s when they first started winning medals in international races. People have wondered if there is something about the biology of Kenyans that contribute to their success, so they began to study Kenyan racers and distinguish them from other athletes in terms of physical characteristics and athletic potential. Studies indicated that Kenyans had physical characteristics that could account for their success, that these characteristics were genetic in origin, and that Kenyans were different from other people of color from other regions of Africa and from white Europeans.

The interesting thing about these studies is that they were initiated in connection with hunches and questions about the genetic characteristics of dark skinned people from Kenya.

Expressions of dominant racial ideology come in a variety of forms. For example, the emergence and success of Kenyans and Ethiopians in distance racing has been discussed and explained in terms grounded in long held stereotypes and forms of racism that are common in both North America and Western Europe. The idea of the "natural" black athlete is deeply ingrained in what has become a form of global racism in predominantly white societies. People simply ignore the obvious fact that black athletes, like white athletes, are culturally produced. Instead of jumping to genetic conclusions, we must examine the racial myths that surround explanations of sport performance among black athletes. For example, in the case of Kenyan athletes, we must recognize that running is an integral part of a Kenyan body culture that we can understand only in the context of colonialism, the globalization of high-performance sports exported from predominantly white societies, and the history of and current conditions in Kenya itself.

Jay Coakley

Topic 4. Native Americans and team mascots.

Darken Up, Asshole: Reflections on Indian Mascots and White Rage
By Tim Wise
Published on *Counterpunch*, www.counterpunch.org, 8/10/05; see also,
www.lipmagazine.org/~timwise/darkenup.html (used with permission from Tim Wise)

All I wanted was a lousy beer. OK, a few lousy beers. Is that too much to ask?

Of course, I suppose it was partly my fault. After all, I had taken my laptop with me into the bar, having just come from the library, where I'd spent the day doing research for a new book. Computer in hand, and being a writer and all, I naturally flipped it open to type in a few random thoughts for a column: not this column, actually. This one emerged from what happened next.

Computers in brewpubs are like steaming piles of shit in a field full of flies: guaranteed to attract attention from the regulars. And so it happened, when a guy who'd gotten a four or five pint head start on me, asked what I was working on.

I could have lied. Maybe shoulda'. Didn't, though.

"I'm a writer, just making a few notes," I answered back.

I hoped that might be the end of it, but I sorta' knew it wouldn't be.

"You a songwriter?" he asked. Made sense, seeing as how this was a bar in the heart of Nashville, just four or five blocks from Music Row: a street lined with recording studios and record label offices.

Once more, I could have lied. Maybe shoulda'. But then again, tell someone you're a songwriter in this town and you'll have to listen to their latest song, which they'll whip out, on an already recorded demo, hoping you know someone to whom it can be passed along.

I didn't have time for that bullshit, so I just told the truth.

"Nope, I'm a political columnist. I write mostly about racism, economics, a few other social issues."

Now here's the thing: Up to this point, I've remained purposely vague, not tipping off my newfound bar mate as to my political stripes, or where I might be coming from when it comes to race. But here's the thing too: I'm white, and so is he. And there is an unspoken understanding among white folks, especially white men, it seems -- and especially, perhaps, in the South -- and that understanding goes roughly like this: when people of color aren't around, it's perfectly acceptable to talk badly about them.

As such, I knew what was coming, or at least that something was, though the form it would take was to remain a mystery, at least, that is, for the next three or four nanoseconds; that being the time it would take for the guy on the neighboring stool to formulate his next thought. And here I am using the term "thought" generously.

Apparently, ESPN had just announced that the NCAA had decided to sanction schools that continue to use demeaning, stereotype-laden mascots of American Indians for their athletic teams. This, as it turns out, was not sitting well with the aging frat boy here, and he figured, I guess, that I would agree with him. It never crossed his mind that I might support the decision; indeed, think the NCAA had let the dozen or so schools in question off lightly. After all, they had only barred them from hosting NCAA tournament games, or displaying their logos at such events, in the latter instance not even until 2008, and all of this, only in basketball.

"What's the big deal?" he huffed. "There's nothing racist about a mascot. Talk about some oversensitive bullshit!"

Easy for him to say, I thought. Folks like us rarely have to worry about being objectified, and turned into dehumanizing caricatures. When people like you run the country and every institution therein, "sticks and stones" takes on a much more truthful ring than it does for anyone else.

Knowing I had an obligation to respond, yet wanting to do so in a way that wouldn't get me thrown out of the bar, I asked if he thought it was really appropriate for those of us who weren't Indian to say what was and wasn't offensive to those who were.

"What?" he replied, clearly not expecting to have been challenged in such a way.

I repeated the question, at which point he suggested that not all Indians found mascots offensive. He even had some Indian blood, he insisted, way back in his family line: a claim that single-handedly proved what little he knows of indigenous culture. After all, the notion of "Indian blood" and blood quantum, were largely concepts created by the white ruling class to limit the scope of land settlements with Indian nations. Indians were not, with a few notable exceptions, biological determinists.

"Take the Seminoles," he thundered. "They actually support Florida State calling themselves that!"

True enough, the official Seminole nation of Florida is on record as supporting the use of their name at FSU. But of course, there are other Seminoles in the region who feel differently, not to mention the black Seminoles who have been all but disowned by those who consider themselves "true" representatives of the tribe. Indian politics are complicated, as it turns out; much more so, in fact, than the average white guy at a bar, who is nothing if not predictable.

"Understood," I replied. It was at that point I offered what seems, to me, the only logical compromise on the matter: one which, if this guy really felt as though Indians supported mascots, he'd be quick to accept.

"So," I said, "How about we just let Indian folks vote on it. But just Indians, and just those who are either tribally enrolled or otherwise clearly identified and active in Native communities, culture or politics? In other words, let's stay out of it, you and me, and let those who are directly affected make the call."

He didn't like that much, as was made evident by how quickly he changed the subject.

"What about Notre Dame?" he shot back. "The Fighting Irish. What about that? My ancestors were Irish," he continued (ah yes, one of those Irish Indians), "and it doesn't bother me one bit!"

Of course, the comparison was utterly unconvincing. To begin with, to be called a fighter is not the same as to be called, or typified visually as a "savage." There is a qualitative difference, made all the more evident by the history of this nation: a history in which fighting Indians were slaughtered, and for whom their willingness to fight back at those who sought to exterminate them, provided their murderers with what the latter thought the ultimate justification for the perpetration of a Holocaust. Fighting Irishmen, meanwhile, got to be viewed as perfect candidates for the Union Army, or for your local police force.

In other words, one group of fighters had to be eliminated, the other, assimilated. If we can't discern the yawning chasm between these two things, well, we really should stop drinking, be it at the local brewpub, or anywhere else.

Secondly, indigenous persons, unlike Irish Americans, continue to be marginalized in the United States. A substantial percentage have been geographically ghettoized and isolated on some of the nation's most desolate land, while those off the rez have largely been stripped of the

cultures, languages and customs of their forbears by a boarding school policy implemented against their families, which policy's stated purpose from the 1800s through much of the twentieth century was to "Kill the Indian and save the man."

To be Irish American is to be a member of one of the largest white ethnic groups in the nation, and one of the most accepted and celebrated at that. It wasn't always that way, to be sure, but it is now. For Irish folks to be stereotyped as fighters simply doesn't have the same impact, given the power and position of the Irish in this society, as when stereotypes are deployed against subordinated groups. Objectification only works its magic upon those who continue to be vilified. For those on top, it can become a source of amusement, laughter--a good time.

"Yeah," I responded. "But when Notre Dame chose to call themselves the Fightin' Irish, the school was made up overwhelmingly of Irish Catholics. In other words, it was Irish folks choosing that name for themselves. How many Indians do you think were really in on the decision to call themselves 'redskins,' or to be portrayed as screaming warriors on someone else's school clothing?"

Again, silence, and again a changing of the subject.

"Yeah but what really galls me," he continued, "is that a bunch of these schools are just trying to honor Native Americans. They're just trying to pay respect to the spirit of the Indians. It's like nothing we can do is ever enough for those people."

Aside from how calling indigenous folks "those people" jibes with a true desire to honor them (let alone his claim to be one at some remove), this particular nugget -- offered by far more than just one drunk guy at a Nashville bar -- has always struck me as especially vile. If schools wanted to honor first nations people, after all, they could do it in any number of more meaningful ways. They could establish Native American studies programs and fund them adequately. They could step up their recruitment of Indian students, staff and faculty, rather than retreating from such efforts in the face of misplaced backlash to affirmative action. They could strip the names off of buildings on their campuses that pay tribute to those who participated in the butchering of Native peoples. Here in Nashville that process could begin by renaming, without delay, any building named after Andrew Jackson, of which there are several.

Perhaps most importantly, we could begin by telling the truth about what was done to the indigenous of this land, rather than trying to paper over that truth, minimize the horror, and, once again, change the subject. You know the kind of people I'm speaking of: the ones who refuse to label the elimination of over ninety-five percent of the native peoples of the Americas "genocide."

Folks like conservative author Dinesh D'Souza, who, in a debate with me at Western Washington University in May, insisted that terming the process genocide was absurd. It was, to him, merely an emotional appeal on my part, devoid of content; calculated to gain applause at the expense of honesty. To Dinesh, genocide was an inappropriate term because most of the Indians who perished died from diseases, not warfare waged by whites.

That Dinesh has never read the definition of genocide, readily available in the United Nation's 1948 Genocide Convention, certainly was no surprise. But had he done so, he would have seen that in order to qualify as genocide, one does not have to directly kill anyone per se. Rather, genocide describes any of the following acts, committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting conditions calculated to bring about the group's destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, or forcibly transferring the children of the group to another.

In fact, each of these categories has been met in the case of American Indians. And had it not been for conquest, those diseases to which Indians had no resistance -- and which colonists praised as the "work of God," clearing the land for them -- wouldn't have ravaged the native populations as they did. To imply that such deaths were merely accidental or incidental would be like saying the Nazis bore no responsibility for the 1.6 million or so Jews who died of disease and starvation in the camps, rather than having been gassed or shot. But try saying that at your local neighborhood synagogue and see how far you get, with good reason.

Once again I suggested that if Indians thought mascots were a form of flattery and tribute, then surely they would vote that way in an Indian-only plebiscite. So, I repeated, why not just let them vote on it, and keep out of their way? After all, that would be honoring them too: trusting the wisdom of Indian peoples to prevail, one way or the other.

"But this is America," he shot back. "And I've got a right to my opinion too! I shouldn't be disallowed from having my say on it, just because I'm white. That's reverse discrimination."

Ah yes, reverse discrimination. Not being able to turn other people into a cartoon for your own enjoyment is now to be seen as a form of oppression. One wonders, indeed, how white folks can stand such a burden placed upon our shoulders.

Just as I was about to respond, he pulled out some money to pay his bar tab. And as he slapped down his bills upon the bar -- twenties as it turns out -- and I had the occasion to glance down, my eyes fixing on the eternal gaze of this nation's pre-eminent Indian killer, I wondered out loud, why it is that white folks get more upset about taking offensive Indian imagery down, than we do about the normalization of white male imagery like that on this particular greenback? Why do we not find that image, on one of our most common monetary denominations enraging: an image that we're supposed to revere; a man we're supposed to praise; a "hero" we're supposed to view as a national role model of sorts.

In other words, why do we allow ourselves, as white men, to be turned into a caricature too-- into a stereotype?

I'd like to think that most white guys are better than Andrew Jackson. I'd like to. But on days like this, I just don't know.

ASA News: American Sociological Association Calls for the Discontinuation of the Use of Native American Nicknames, Logos, and Mascots in Sport

Press release: March 6 – Sujata Sinha, American Sociological Association

Research shows the use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots reinforce stereotypes
WASHINGTON, DC — As part of its mission to promote sociological research findings for the benefit of society, the American Sociological Association (ASA) recognizes that racial prejudices, stereotypes, individual discrimination and institutional discrimination are socially created phenomena that are harmful to people of color.

Recent social science research and scholarship have shown that the continued use of Native American nicknames, logos, and mascots in sport reflect and reinforce misleading stereotypes of Native Americans in both past and contemporary times. Such usage also communicates implicit disrespect for spiritual and cultural practices.

In continuing with ASA's mission to eradicate racism, ASA calls for the discontinuation and elimination of the use of Native American nicknames, logos, and mascots in sport.

ASA member Laurel R. Davis-Delano, who researched the basis for the resolution, said upon release of the official ASA statement, "Native American sport mascots reinforce racial stereotypes of Native Americans, and have negative psychological, educational and social effects. Negative psychological outcomes for Native youth include lowered self-esteem, lowered views of one's future potential, and more negative views of one's own Native people. In terms of educational effects, these mascots create a hostile school environment for some Native children, and teach all children stereotypes rather than realities about Native people. In terms of wider social effects, the stereotypes reinforced by the mascots create barriers to real understanding of Native peoples, and this limited understanding hinders the development of policies and practices that help rather than harm Native Americans."

Statement by the Council of the American Sociological Association
on Discontinuing the Use of Native American Nicknames, Logos and Mascots in Sport
March 6, 2007

WHEREAS the American Sociological Association comprises sociologists and kindred
 professionals who study, among other things, culture, religion, media, sport, race and
 ethnicity, racism, and other forms of inequality;
WHEREAS the American Sociological Association recognizes that racial prejudice, stereotypes,
 individual discrimination and institutional discrimination are socially created phenomena that
 are harmful to Native Americans and other people of color;
WHEREAS the American Sociological Association is resolved to undertake scholarship,
 education, and action that helps to eradicate racism;
WHEREAS social science scholarship has demonstrated that the continued use of Native
 American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport reflect and reinforce misleading stereotypes
 of Native Americans in both past and contemporary times;
WHEREAS the stereotypes embedded in Native American nicknames, logos and mascots in
 sport undermine education about the lives of Native American peoples;
WHEREAS social science scholarship has demonstrated that the continued use of Native
 American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport harm Native American people in
 psychological, educational, and social ways;
WHEREAS the continued use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport shows
 disrespect for Native American spiritual and cultural practices;
WHEREAS many Native American individuals across the United States have found Native
 American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport offensive and called for their elimination;
AND, WHEREAS the continued use of Native American nicknames, logos and mascots in sport
 has been condemned by numerous reputable academic, educational and civil rights
 organizations, and the vast majority of Native American advocacy organizations, including
 but not limited to: American Anthropological Association, American Psychological
 Association, North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, Modern Language
 Association, United States Commission on Civil Rights, National Association for the
 Advancement of Colored People, Association of American Indian Affairs, National Congress
 of American Indians, and National Indian Education Association;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL
 ASSOCIATION calls for discontinuing the use of Native American nicknames, logos and
 mascots in sport

Bibliography for ASA Resolution on Native American Sport Mascots
Compiled by Laurel R. Davis-Delano, Springfield College

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Topic 5. Samoan men in college and professional football, including a 2007 series of articles in *ESPN—The Magazine*

In 1997, Western Samoa amended its constitution and changed its name to Samoa, as it had been named when it joined the United Nations in 1976. However, the residents in the U.S. territory of American Samoa resisted this change and continued to use the name Western Samoa and Western Samoans to identify themselves as well as the independent State of Samoa and its inhabitants. Today, the two Samoas use the same language and have the same ethnicity, but their cultures have diverged. The American Samoans generally emigrate to Hawai'i and the continental U.S. and identify with U.S. culture, including the sports of American football and baseball. The people of Western Samoa, on the other hand, usually emigrate to New Zealand and give priority to the sorts of rugby and cricket.

Beginning in the 1990s, U.S. universities have recruited football players from the area of Western Samoa, and a disproportionate number of these athletes have gone on to play in the NFL. This phenomenon was first noted by ESPN writer Bruce Feldman in 2002 (see below), and in 2007, ESPN published an informative series of stories about Samoan men in the NFL. The links to those stories are these:

ESPN. 2007. Samoan football players in the NFL. *ESPN—The Magazine* (May 28): online, http://espn.go.com/gen/s/2002/0528/1387810.html

Feldman, Bruce. 2002. Rock star. *ESPN—The Magazine* (November 26): online, *http://espn.go.com/magazine/vol4no24fonoti.html*

Feldman, Bruce. 2007. A recruiting pitch of another kind. *ESPN—The Magazine* (May 28): online, http://espn.go.com/gen/s/2002/0527/1387550.html

Lapchick, Richard E. 2007. Asian American athletes: past, present and future. *ESPN—The Magazine* (May 1): online, http://espn.go.com/gen/s/2002/0430/1376346.html

Miller, Ted. 2007. American football, Samoan style. *ESPN—The Magazine* (May 28): online, http://espn.go.com/gen/s/2002/0527/1387562.html

Garber, Greg. 2007a. The Dominican Republic of the NFL *ESPN—The Magazine* (May 28): online, http://espn.go.com/gen/s/2002/0527/1387626.html

Garber, Greg. 2007b. They might be giants. *ESPN—The Magazine* (May 28): online, http://espn.go.com/gen/s/2002/0527/1387627.html

Topic 6. "Racial stacking" in team sports

We can see the impact of racial ideology in sports in the patterns of positions historically played in team sports by athletes from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Between 1950 and 2000 certain position patterns on racially mixed sport teams have clearly reflected racial stereotypes about the abilities of white players and black players.

One of the general patterns was that black athletes seldom played the so-called "thinking positions" in major team sports in the United States, and in some other countries where sport was previously racially desegregated. It seems that in the years immediately following racial desegregation, the white people who controlled sport teams (recruiters, coaches, administrators, and owners) believed that blacks were especially good at running and catching footballs, but they could not be expected to play positions that demanded thinking skills or leadership. They thought that blacks were good at running and jumping, but not suited for strategy positions such as quarterback and offensive guard in football; pitcher, catcher, and shortstop in baseball, or center and point guard in basketball.

Remnants of these patterns still exist in professional baseball and football, although they have shifted to reflect changes in coaching strategies and associated changes in responsibilities for players in different positions. For example, quarterbacks in college often run the ball more now than they did in the past, and they seldom call their own plays in the huddle; shortstops in baseball rarely make decisions about where outfielders should play for certain hitters; guards in basketball no longer call plays when they dribble the ball up the court. In all team sports in recent years, coaches have taken over many of the thinking tasks, such as calling plays and setting offensive and defensive formations. This has affected the extent to which racial ideology is expressed in player position patterns.

Research on stacking

Sociologists have long been interested in these patterns and how they conform to racial ideology in particular cultures. Since the early 1970s, these patterns have been identified in numerous studies. When players from a certain racial or ethnic group are either over- or underrepresented at certain positions in team sports, it was said that *racial stacking* existed.

Because discussions of stacking can be confusing for anyone unfamiliar with positions on certain sport teams, I've taken data from 1974 and 1996 and provided summary information and illustrations for two major professional spectator sports in Tables 1 and 2 and in Figures 1–4. We can partially summarize research on stacking patterns in these and other sports over the past thirty years as follows:

- Black players on major league baseball teams were traditionally concentrated in the outfield positions; white players were concentrated in the positions of pitcher and catcher, and in all the infield positions except first base.
- Black players on college and professional football teams were most likely to play safety, cornerback, and end on defense and running back and pass receiver on offense; whites were overrepresented at quarterback and guard on offense, and in the past, at one of the middle linebacker positions on defense.
- During the 1950s and 1960s, blacks in basketball were clearly overrepresented at forward; whites were overrepresented at guard and center. This pattern was less evident in the 1970s and generally disappeared in the 1980s, as basketball itself changed dramatically.

- In women's intercollegiate volleyball in the United States, blacks were traditionally overrepresented at spiker and whites at setter and bumper (Eitzen and Furst, 1988).
- In Canadian hockey, French Canadians were overrepresented at goalie, and English Canadians in defensive positions (Lavoie, 1989).
- Black West Indians and black Africans in British soccer were clearly overrepresented in the wide forward positions, whereas whites were disproportionately found at goalie and midfielder (Maguire, 1988; Melnick, 1988).
- Aborigines in Australian rugby were overrepresented in the wide positions, whereas non-Aborigines were over-represented in the central team positions (Hallinan, 1988).

Why have stacking patterns existed in team sports?

This question generated discussions that often referred to the racial ideology that is widely accepted in the society as whole. Racial stacking patterns, when they exist, generally correspond with popular beliefs about skin color and such traits as intelligence, leadership and decision-making abilities, dependability, motivation and emotion, running and jumping skills, and what many people refer to as "instincts." The thinking and dependability positions were generally *stacked* with white athletes; the speed and physical reaction positions were *stacked* with black athletes. Even when white athletes played the "speed positions," they were described prior to the early-1990s by many coaches and announcers as dependable and smart, and when black athletes played the thinking and dependability positions, they sometimes were described in terms of their "natural" physical attributes and "athleticism." Although this was not always the case, the patterns clearly existed.

Over the years, stacking patterns in Canadian hockey have corresponded with dominant ethnic ideology and ideas about the characteristics of French Canadians (Lavoie, 1989); in British soccer they have corresponded with prevailing ideas about black West Indians and Africans (Melnick, 1988; Maguire, 1987); and in Australian rugby they have corresponded with prevailing ideas about Aborigines (Hallinan, 1988). The stacking of Latino players in U.S. baseball has also occurred, but little research has been done to identify whether patterns reflected the application of national and ethnic stereotypes, processes of recruiting and signing players from outside the U.S., or other factors (Gonzalez, 1996).

Of course, when people from a particular racial or ethnic group come to make up the majority of players in a certain sport, and especially when they are hired as coaches, stacking patterns become less obvious. However, stacking patterns have been maintained and sometimes even intensified when the members of a racial or ethnic group become aware of how their futures in sport might be improved or hindered if they play certain positions. For example, young black athletes playing the thinking and dependability positions on all-black football teams in high schools during the 1960s through the 1980s sometimes chose to try out for the speed and physical reaction positions in college so that they would not be overlooked by the scouts and coaches of professional teams, who they suspected might use traditional racial ideology as they evaluated them. These players chose to conform to stacking patterns, but they did so to cope with the consequences of racial ideology. Actually, self-stacking is very similar to self-segregation: it is a response to discrimination. This is how racial ideology is expressed in everyday life and then is perpetuated in certain sports. It is a case of ideology becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Stacking patterns have always been expressions of racial ideology, and racial ideology has always differed in content and application from one culture to another and from one sport or situation to another in the same culture; it also changes over time, as noted in the data in Table 2

(below). Research in the 1990s indicated that the process through which people come to play certain positions on sport teams has always been complex and ever changing (Lavoie and Leonard, 1994; Melnick, 1996; Melnick and Thompson, 1996). It reflects a combination of factors, including (1) historical traditions related to ethnic relations in society as a whole; (2) the history of a minority group's involvement in a particular sport; (3) the proportion of minority- and majority-group members in a sport and on particular teams; (4) the ethnic backgrounds of team coaches, general managers, and player scouts; (5) the degree to which different positions in a sport involve different skills and responsibilities; (6) the ways that positions are defined in connection with current offensive and defensive strategies; and (7) the perspectives used by those who identify and assess player skills and recruit players for teams. For example, as player recruitment has become increasingly international in scope, the connections between race or ethnicity and the positions played on sport teams now reflect global processes of labor migration combined with the racial ideologies, racial dynamics, national stereotypes, and ways sports are organized in different countries that import athletes (Chappell, Jones, and Burden, 1996; Maguire, 1991a, 1993, 1994).

Racial Ideology and Jobs in Coaching and Administration
At the time when dominant racial ideology in the U.S. turned black male bodies into entertainment commodities in certain sports, it also restricted the entry of black men into management positions in sport organizations (Anderson, 1993; Lapchick, 1996). Arthur Ashe noted this in 1992 when he said, "The crazy theories of black intellectual inferiority are alive and well. ...[Coaches and] managers have to think, and the conventional wisdom among sports' ruling elite is that...blacks don't think as well as whites." As the data in Table 2 shows, the proportion of black men in top management and head coaching positions has never been close to the proportion of black athletes in the major professional (or college team sports) in the United States.

Apart from general racial issues in sports, the under-representation of blacks and other minorities in coaching and administration jobs has been one of the most widely publicized topics in sports since the mid-1980s. This issue is discussed in chapters 9 and 10 in the current edition of *Sports in Society,* but here it is important to see how this pattern has fit with a combination of racial ideology and stacking patterns in team sports. For example, coaches and managers have frequently been former athletes who played the thinking-leadership-dependability positions in their sports, i.e., the positions that were central in the team's organizational structure (Kjeldsen, 1980; Loy et al., 1978; Loy and Jackson, 1990; Melnick and Loy, 1996). Athletes who played less central positions—the positions calling for speed and physical skills more than leadership skills—were seldom selected as coaches, because they did not show how bright and dependable they were when they played their positions. Unfortunately, this pattern underlying the recruitment of coaches worked against many black athletes who were stacked into the latter positions, and thus had had few chances to demonstrate their leadership abilities in ways that caused athletic directors and team owners to regard them as good prospective coaches.

Another discouraging fact was that Latinos who played central positions on baseball teams were less likely than white players to be hired as coaches, even though they were *more* likely to play the central positions from which coaches have traditionally been recruited. Apparently, playing central positions and demonstrating leadership skills on the field were not the only issues when it came to defining minorities as good coaching prospects (Gonzalez, 1996). Other issues

were involved, and they seemed to have been related to race and ethnicity in complex ways that were seldom studied.

Because coaching abilities cannot be measured as objectively as playing abilities, the subjective feelings of those doing the hiring traditionally come into play when coach candidates are assessed (Lavoie and Leonard, 1994). An interesting fact is that the blacks or Latinos who have been hired as coaches had "longer and more productive careers as players" than the whites who have been hired (Rimer, 1996). In other words, the whites who were hired as coaches have generally had mediocre or unimpressive playing careers whereas minority athletes with similar careers are routinely passed over as coaching candidates.

Most people in the sociology of sport discontinued their documentation of stacking patterns in the mid-1990s. The patterns had begun to fade, although they had not completely disappeared. Attention in the sociology of sport was turned to other issues related to race, racial identities, and sport participation.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1. Percentage of blacks and whites in positions on NFL and major-league baseball teams, 1974–75.

Sport	Positions	Black (%)	White (%)
NFL (1974–75)			
	Total Players	67	33
	Offense		
	Quarterback	4	96
	Running back	91	9
	Wide receiver	91	9
	Center	0	100
	Guard	15	85
	Tight end	27	73
	Tackle	27	73
	Defense		
	Cornerback	85	15
	Safety	56	44
	Linebacker	8	92
	Defensive end	48	52
	Defensive tackle	37	63
Major-League Baseball (1974)			
	Total Players	17	62
	Pitcher	*	*
	Catcher	4	96
	First base	50	50
	Second base	39	61
	Third base	17	83
	Shortstop	0	100
	Outfield	52	48

*Pitchers were not included in the analysis; however, blacks constituted less than 5% of all pitchers during this season.

Source: Dougherty, J. 1976. Race and sport: A follow-up study. *Sport Sociology Bulletin* 5 (1): 1–12.

Figure 1. The football data from Table 1 are portrayed here. The percentages of African American players in each of the offensive and defensive positions during the 1974–75 NFL season are depicted by the black areas. African Americans were overrepresented in positions defined as requiring speed and quick physical reactions. Whites were overrepresented in positions that required leadership, decision-making skills, and dependability.
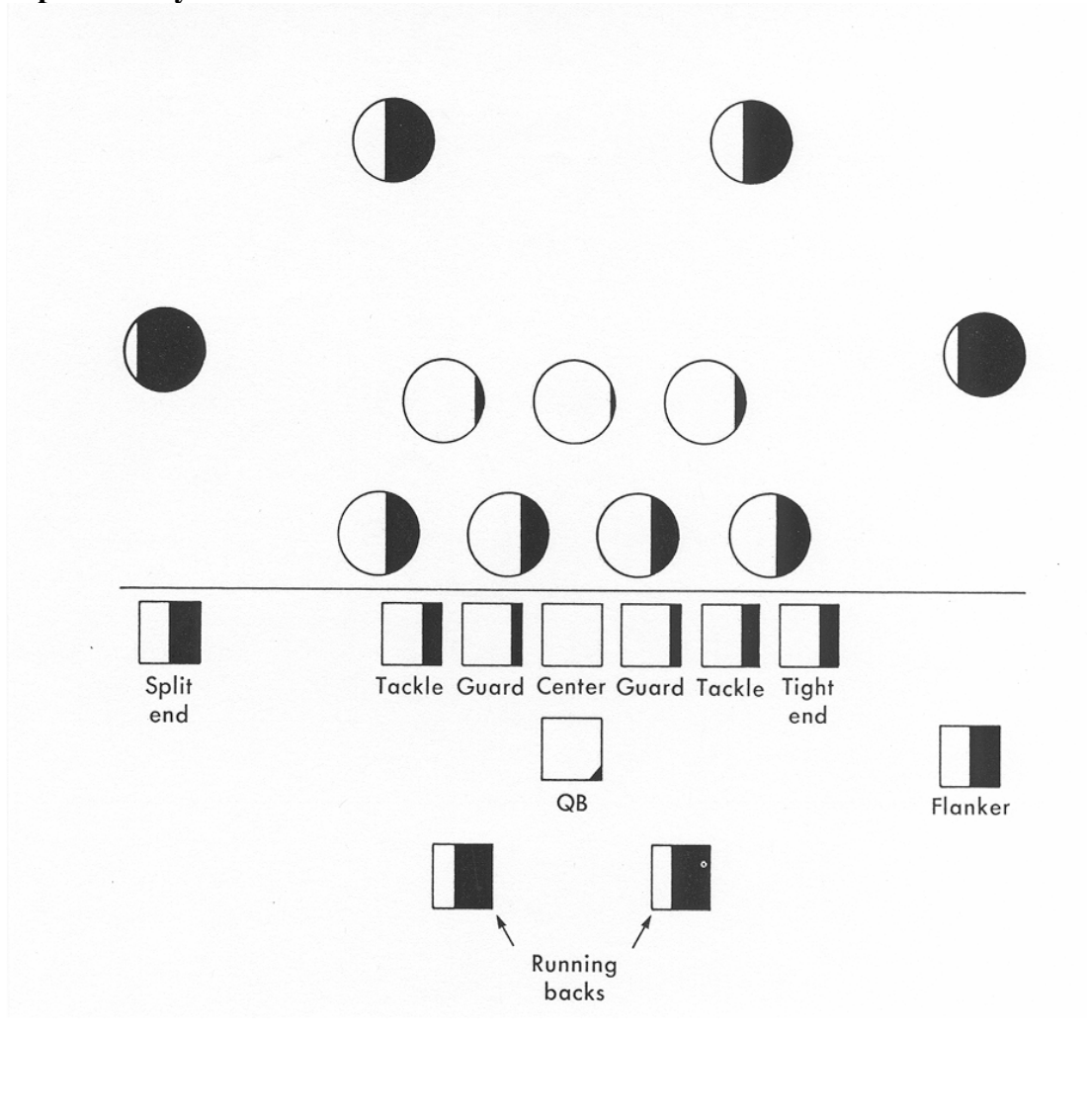
Figure 2. The baseball data from Table 1 are shown here. The percentages of African American players in each position during the 1974 season are depicted by the black areas; the percentage of whites is depicted in white. African Americans were clearly concentrated in the outfield positions, whereas whites were overrepresented in the positions of pitcher and catcher. Latinos were not included in the studies of stacking at this time.
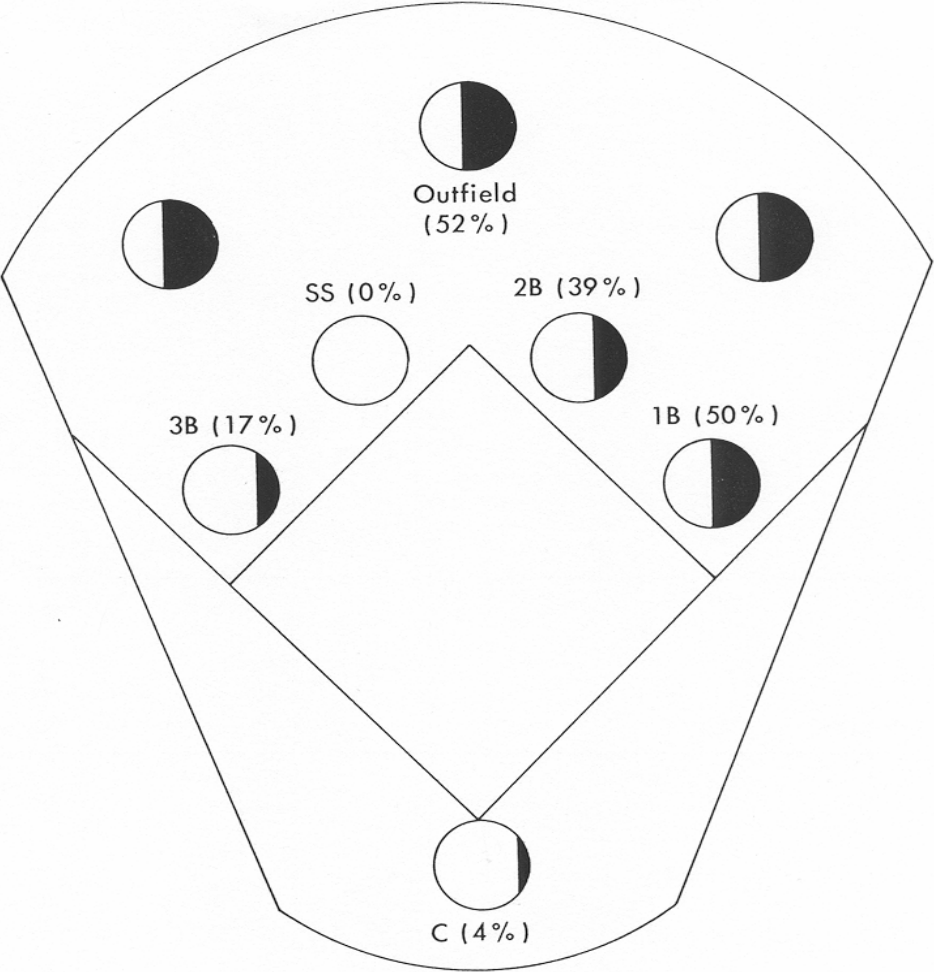

Outfield
(52%)

SS (0%)   2B (39%)

3B (17%)   1B (50%)

C (4%)

Table 2. Percentage of blacks, whites, and other players in positions on NFL and major-league baseball teams, 1998.

Sport	Positions	Black (%)	White (%)	Other* (%)
NFL (1998)				
	Total Players	65	33	2
	Offense			
	Quarterback	8	91	1
	Running back	87	13	0
	Wide receiver	92	8	0
	Center	17	83	0
	Guard	29	67	4
	Tight end	42	55	3
	Tackle	55	39	6
	Defense			
	Cornerback	99	1	0
	Safety	91	9	0
	Linebacker	75	24	1
	Defensive end	79	19	2
	Defensive tackle	66	31	3
Major-League Baseball (1998)				
	Total Players#	15	59	25
	Pitcher	5	74	20
	Catcher	4	66	30
	First base	16	67	17
	Second base	15	41	44
	Third base	7	70	23
	Shortstop	13	53	34
	Outfield	48	30	22

Source: Center for the Study of Sport in Society (1998 Racial Report Card compiled by R. E. Lapchick and Kevin Mathews).
*In baseball, this includes Latinos from many different national and cultural backgrounds. In the NFL, this includes Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and Asian Americans.
During the 1998 season 1% of the players were Asian.

Figure 3. The percentages of African American players in each of the offensive and defensive positions during the 1998 NFL season are depicted by the black areas. African Americans remained overrepresented in positions defined as requiring speed and quick physical reactions. Whites remained overrepresented in positions that required leadership, decision-making skills, and dependability.
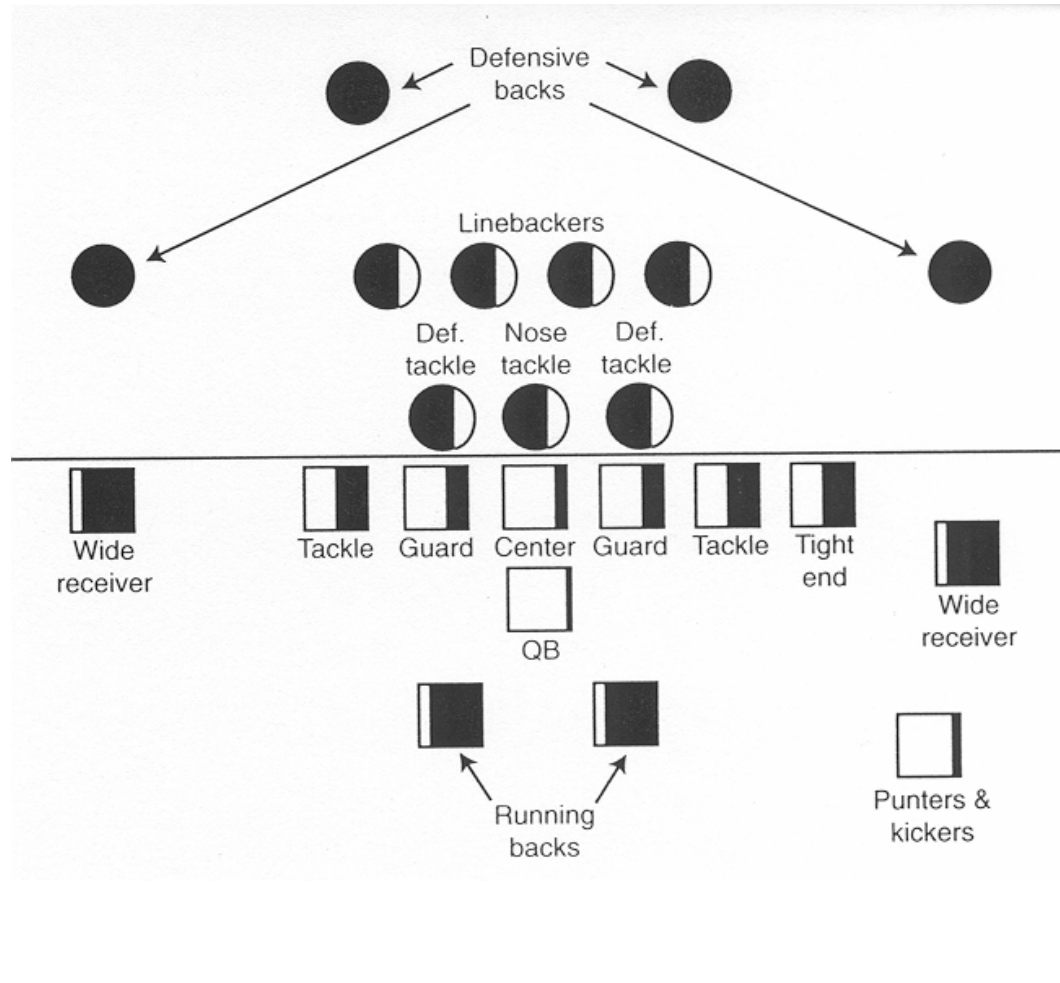
Figure 4. Major League Baseball data from the 1999 season are shown here. The percentages of African American players in each position are depicted by the black areas; the percentage of whites is depicted in white. African Americans remained concentrated in the outfield positions, whereas whites remained overrepresented in the positions of pitcher and catcher. The addition of Latinos to the data have created interesting changes in some of the patterns.

Outfield
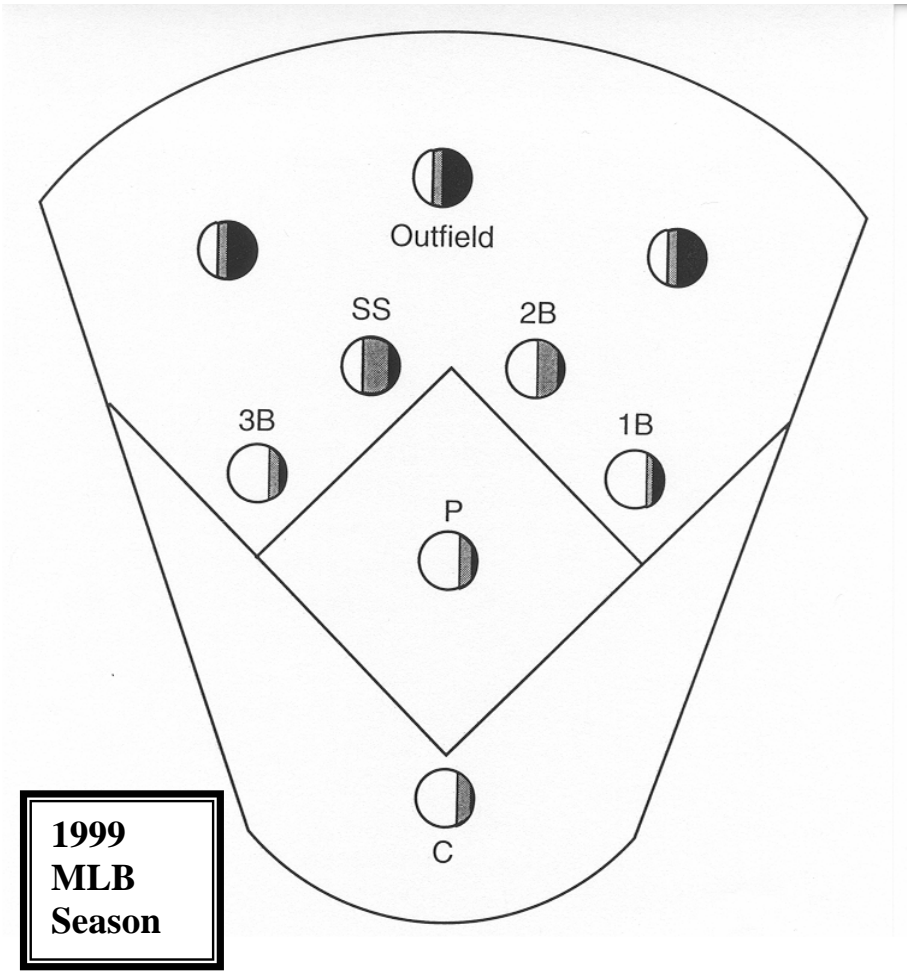SS   2B
3B   1B
P
1999 MLB Season
C

Table 3. The Legacy of racial ideology in sports: the percentages of blacks in the position of player, assistant coach, head coach, and upper management in the NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball, 1996.

League	Black Players	Asst. Coach	Head Coach	Upper Mgmt.*
NFL	67	23	10	8
NBA	80	41	20	10
MLB	17	18	11	3

Note: Eleven NFL teams hired new head coaches during 1997; none hired a black coach even though experts agreed that 4–6 black candidates were qualified to be head coaches. This pattern also exists, in varying degrees, in women's professional basketball and intercollegiate football and men's and women's basketball. Changes have occurred in men's basketball, but they have come slowly.
Source: 1996 Racial Report Card, Center for the Study of Sport in Society.

Topic 7. The profit motive and desegregating sports

Money and winning can be powerful forces in sports. People generally believe that if revenues can be increased or win-loss records improved, change is worth it—even if the change is inconsistent with patterns of race relations. The history of desegregation in American sports clearly shows that when a winning season is necessary to generate money and profits, there is a tendency to recruit and play the best athletes, regardless of skin color. When sport team owners discovered they could make large profits in baseball, football, and basketball, they and their coaches abandoned their traditions of racial exclusion in favor of making money. Although some teams tried to remain competitive without recruiting black players, they dropped their policies when they discovered that winning could be difficult when they ignored the talents of skilled athletes.

Desegregation is a complex process grounded in a combination of social, legal-political, and economic forces. It usually occurs gradually and is promoted and restrained by many factors. This is certainly true in the case of U.S. sports. But because money is such a powerful motivator in capitalist societies, it is not surprising that desegregation first occurred after the Civil War in the revenue-producing sports of horse racing and boxing, and then in the other major money-making sports in the middle of the twentieth century. In the U.S., black jockeys were plentiful before the turn of the century, but a racist press, a white jockeys' union, and laws making segregation mandatory (Jim Crow laws) forced blacks out of the public eye in horse racing and back into the less prestigious and less visible roles of trainer and stable attendant. Horse owners did not resist this change, because there were plenty of white jockeys, and because a race is won more by the horse than by the jockey.

In boxing, however, the individual fighter was solely responsible for victory. Segregation existed, but there were notable (and newsworthy) exceptions. White promoters and boxing managers saw blacks as potentially big money makers because they were box-office attractions. Given the race logic used by many whites through most of the twentieth century, even the rumor of a fight between a black man and a white one would sell newspapers, and an actual fight would generate ticket sales bringing handsome profits to white promoters and managers.

Desegregation was also financially motivated in professional and college team sports, where people other than the athletes themselves could make money. Desegregation started slowly, but as soon as powerful people in sports realized that black athletes could help them win games and boost profits, they questioned and changed traditions of racial exclusion. This is part of the reason the non-revenue-producing sports in U.S. colleges and universities seldom have black team members, and part of the reason 81 percent of all black men receiving athletic scholarships in the 305 Division I universities during the mid-1990s played basketball or football, the two college sports with the biggest revenue-generating potential. Ironically, the scholarships received by many white athletes from well-to-do families (in such non-revenue-producing sports as gymnastics, golf, swimming, tennis, soccer, and volleyball) are sometimes subsidized by revenue-producing teams whose success is due partly to the hard work and efforts of black athletes from lower-income families. This results in a form of "reverse sport welfare" in which relatively poor students subsidize their wealthier white classmates in college sports! Even though white scholarship athletes in non-revenue sports seldom think of their athletic grants in this way, this is one of the reasons intercollegiate sports were desegregated.

If black athletes had not improved winning records and increased profits for those who controlled sports and sport-sponsoring organizations, the policies of exclusion that had restricted black participation for so long would not have changed as rapidly or as completely as they did in certain sports. When sports have made little or no money for their sponsors, there has been little interest in recruiting blacks or making opportunities to participate available in predominantly black neighborhoods. This fact, combined with a lack of opportunities in the job market, has led many young blacks to pursue opportunities in those few sports where they exist. "Hoop dreams" are powerful when there is little else to dream about.

Perceived opportunities and the development of sport skills
Those who control sports are not the only ones influenced by financial factors and the desire for success. These things also influence all young people with athletic potential, and blacks are no exception. In fact, blacks are even more likely than whites to emphasize sports as a means of achieving prestige and economic success, because they perceive more barriers to achievement in other activities (Harris, 1994).

It is also important to note that blacks in the United States have excelled in sports requiring little expensive equipment and training. For example, basketballs are inexpensive, and the best coaching is widely available in public school programs. Furthermore, outdoor basketball courts are inexpensive to build and maintain. No grass is needed, and they can be squeezed into confined spaces. This is the reason basketball has come to be known as the "city game," and the reason it is the sport of choice among many black youths growing up in low-income urban areas where resources are scarce and opportunities to be noticed in other activities are rare.

Anthropologist Robert Sands, who has studied sprinters on college track teams, suggests that most sprinters today are black because black children growing up in urban areas run constantly. For black children, more than for white children, speed becomes play: "speed is everyday life, speed is the cultural password leading to success in sport participation and the possibility of future financial success". In other words, being fast is one of the traits needed to seek one's destiny as an athlete in sports such as boxing, track and field, basketball, and football.

As black men and women have become increasingly successful in a few highly visible sports, young blacks have focused their attention on developing skills in the same sports. This not only has contributed to the high proportion of blacks in certain sports, but also accounts for the tendency among many young black males to put all their motivational eggs into just a few sport baskets. Because they haven't had the chance to see payoffs connected with education, they conclude that running and jumping offer the best chances for fame and fortune. Therefore, many of them dedicate themselves to being the best runners and jumpers around. Unfortunately, outside of a couple of sports, occupational opportunities for runners and jumpers are very limited.

Topic 8. Sports as sites for transforming racial attitudes

Are sports contexts in which personal prejudices can be broken down, dominant racial ideologies challenged, and intergroup relations improved on both personal and institutional levels?

Research shows that contact between people from different racial and ethnic groups can lead to favorable changes on a personal level when members of each group

- have equal status
- pursue the same goals
- depend on one another's cooperation to achieve their goals
- receive positive encouragement for interacting with one another in supportive ways

Even though these conditions exist in many sports, there are at least three reasons to be cautious before concluding that interaction in sports reduces prejudice:

1. When people are in the habit of using racial and ethnic ideologies to explain what happens in their worlds, they resist changing those ideologies.
2. Contact between members of different racial and ethnic groups in sports is often so superficial that it fails to break down prejudices, or challenge ideologies, or change people's behaviors, especially off-the-field behaviors.
3. The competition that occurs within and between teams may aggravate existing prejudices among players and spectators and lead them to perpetuate hostile and destructive ideologies.

Racial and ethnic ideologies resist change

When people use particular sets of ideas to interpret what goes on in the world, they often go to great lengths to defend and preserve those ideas, thinking that without them, the world would not make any sense. In sports, players from one racial or ethnic group may ignore players from other groups and selectively tune out information inconsistent with their preexisting ideas about race and ethnicity. When forced to interact with players who challenge those ideas, they may define those players as exceptions—not like other blacks, or whites, or Hispanics, and so on. This allows them to preserve negative racial ideologies while they play sports with teammates from other groups. When information clearly challenges ideologies, they just reinterpret the information so that it supports their negative stereotypes.

Social contacts in sports are superficial

Despite what many sport fans think, teammates don't have to be friends with one another to play well. Many teams with serious interpersonal problems among players have won championships. Success requires knowledge of teammates' playing abilities, but players can gain this knowledge without close personal interaction. In other words, people from different racial and ethnic groups don't become friends just because they are teammates.

When U.S. sports were first desegregated, black athletes led lonely lives. They coped with the racism and cautious acceptance of spectators, teammates, and coaches. Off-the-field contacts with teammates were rare, and there were few opportunities for blacks and whites to share experiences and feelings. As the number of black athletes has increased in certain sports, friendships between blacks and whites have become more common, but patterns of racial separateness and self-segregation still exist. These patterns are most likely when whites have little awareness of race-related issues and problems, and when whites or blacks lack the

experiences and the support that would make them feel at ease among people from different racial backgrounds.

Relationships depend on personal communication, and communication depends on acknowledging the reality of other people's experiences. Unless people are ready to listen to others, share their perspectives, and accept as valid what others say about their experiences, relationships don't happen. Sports provide opportunities for communication and forming relationships based on racial and ethnic awareness, but athletes don't seem to take advantage of these opportunities in a way that makes them more likely than other people their age to have friends from different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Social life in some U.S. schools involves little social mixing between students from different racial and ethnic groups, and sometimes even involves hostilities and conflicts. Sharing membership on a school team may override this pattern within the special sphere of the team itself, but it doesn't seem to override it when team members are in nonsport settings.

Competition often subverts intergroup cooperation

Competition in sports can destroy the common goals needed to challenge racial and ethnic prejudices. When athletes from different racial or ethnic groups are opponents, sports even can become sites for the creation or intensifying of stereotypes and negative ideas about race and ethnicity. This is the case for spectators as well.

This should not be surprising. Social psychologists long have used competition to create hostility and negative attitudes between groups in their experiments. They knew that competition consistently evoked negative feelings, and that when competitors were from different racial or ethnic groups, existing negative feelings would be intensified during competition.

These patterns also exist in sports. Sport competition can intensify emotions and generate hostile intergroup behavior during events. As one black student-athlete wrote in a paper on race and sport, "in the heat of sport competition, restraint gives way to raw emotion, and racism takes the place of sportsmanship." He noted that his statement was based on his experiences through years of sport participation. Race relations expert Richard Lapchick, director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University, has noted that when black and white athletes meet in sport, they often carry "a great deal of racial baggage ... [and] prejudices are unlikely to evaporate with the sweat as they play together. ...Any display of negative behavior is likely to reinforce existing biases." When this happens, games may be defined in racial terms and even become racial battles.

The effects of competition are not always limited to the members of opposing teams. When teammates from different racial or ethnic backgrounds compete with one another for starting positions and other honors, their personal rivalries may be defined in racial or ethnic terms. When this occurs, coaches are faced with the challenge of defusing potentially dangerous situations. They serve as the mediators for what may be intense racial dynamics among players. For this reason, coaches in many sports need diversity training.

Note: References for this section may be found in Chapter 9 of the 6th edition of *Sport in Society*.

Topic 9: Why haven't all sports been desegregated?

Desegregating any activity or organization is a complex process. In sports, desegregation has been influenced by the organizational structure of sports and sport teams, the payoffs associated with eliminating policies of exclusion, and the motivation among blacks to take advantage of opportunities to develop certain sport skills.

In discussions of race relations and sport, it is important not to equate desegregation with the elimination of bigoted racial ideologies or with the achievement of true racial integration. Desegregation involves opening doors; true integration occurs when there are unqualified invitations to come through the doors and join all the activities going on inside, regardless of where they are happening or who is involved. Integration depends on deep changes in racial ideology.

Jackie Robinson, the first black man to play in modern major-league baseball, recognized the differences between desegregation and true integration when he once remarked that some of his racist teammates on the Brooklyn Dodgers tolerated him as a fellow athlete only because he "could help fill their wallets." He knew that those teammates never fully accepted him as a human being either on or off the field. The door to sport was opened for Robinson, but he knew there were no unqualified invitations to participate in everything going on inside sports, or in the rest of life outside of sports (Robinson, 1972).

Many things have changed in the fifty years since Jackie Robinson signed his first major-league contract, but racial bigotry still exists in sports. The mere fact that blacks have been accepted as athletes in certain sports does not mean that skin color has lost its relevance in all sports, or in the rest of society. It's one thing for people to say nice things about black athletes who run around football fields, basketball courts, and Olympic tracks, but it is quite another thing for them to be comfortable with racial integration off the playing field and across a wide range of social situations.

Topic 10. Christian sport organizations (with activesport ministries)

The number of Christian sport organizations has been increasing very rapidly. When I put together a list a few years ago, I found the following organizations.

Coordinating Umbrella Organizations
International Sports Coalition (ISA)
Sports Outreach America

Major Organizations
Athletes in Action (AIA)
Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
Pro Athletes Outreach (PAO)
Sports Ambassadors

Other Organizations
Athletes for Kids
Baseball Chapel
Beyond Victory Ministries
Champions for Christ
Christian Bowhunters Association
Christian Surfers Australia
Cowboys for Christ
Epistle Sport Ministries
Fellowship of Christian Anglers
Golf Fellowship
Hockey Ministries International
Motorsports Ministries
New Life in Sports
Pro Athletes for Christ
Professional Skiers Fellowship
Sports Association for Jesus
Team Jesus-Cycle Crusade
The Tennis Ministry

Note: This is a partial list; there are dozens of similar organizations in North America.

Topic 11. The "Total Release Performance"

In his Handbook of Athletic Perfection, Wes Neal (1981, Milford, MI, Mott Media) explains that the complete "Christian athlete" has a will "bound to the command of his coach." In discussing his own success in sports, Neal reveals that he always wants his actions "to be the instant and complete response" to his coach's desire for him. He believes that "by being obedient to my coach, I [am] also being obedient to God."

Neal also explains that a Christian athlete's goal is to achieve what he calls a "Total Release Performance (T-R-P)." This goal can be achieved only when athletes accept the sacrifice and pain involved in training, give a total effort at all times, and dedicate their sport lives to Jesus Christ.

This may sound like a worthy set of goals to Christians, but pursuit of them makes athletes easily controllable by coaches. According to Neal, this is desirable. In fact, he says that when an athlete becomes a true bond-servant of Christ, his "will is bound to the command of his coach, [so] if his coach yells 'jump!' the [true Christian athlete] doesn't waste time asking 'why?' He puts everything into the jump immediately!"(p. 194).

It is not difficult to see why some coaches would see such an orientation as valuable and why they might encourage athletes to focus on "Total Release Performance." However, I see this orientation as potentially dangerous because it gives coaches ultimate control over athletes.

Topic 12. Combining religion and sport participation

Note: When this op-ed piece was published in a newspaper it evoked hundreds of responses. I learned that the topic of religion is not readily discussed in an analytical manner. People's religious beliefs and the passions underlying them are very deep. However, the article did generate considerable discussion among students in my sociology of sport course. Here it is:

Sports do produce jobs and they bring people together to share events and experiences involving cooperation and emotional unity. Sport teams can serve as symbols of groups or ideologies (like national flags do). But in another sense, sports involve occasions and experiences created for their own sake, for the simple pleasure of participation in and of itself. It is this dimension of sports that provides individuals with opportunities for new experiences and allows them to engage in experimentation leading to self discovery and development.

Sports are unique because they're not part of the world of necessity; they're engaged in voluntarily, and they consist of freely chosen action. Because of their purposelessness they open the door to experiencing oneself and one's relationship to the rest of the world in new ways. In fact, they are perfect settings in which to experiment and explore new dimensions of self. These are the things that make sport unique as a part of our human experience.

In societies where many resources are devoted to sports, where bond issues are passed to build multi-million dollar arenas, where the budgets of college sport teams are often greater than the budgets of colleges and schools within major universities, where church services are rearranged to accommodate spectator interests in football playoff games, where high school students are ceremoniously rewarded for athletic achievements and highlighted in the news media, there seems to be a tendency to continually "invent" and "re-invent" reasons why sport is worthwhile. In societies where massive resources are not spent on sports, there is no need to invent these reasons. This is why the link between "character" and sport participation is so often discussed in the U.S., and why many Americans become upset when athletes engage in behaviors that call into question these beliefs. The people who believe that sports build character reject "wayward" athletes as exceptions to their beliefs and call for punitive and disciplinary action to rid sport of these "bad apples" before they spoil the rest of the "character-filled bunch." For a sociologist, this is an interesting phenomenon.

A similar process occurs when individuals dedicate most of their lives to highly specialized forms of sport. How do they justify their expenditure of personal resources to themselves? How do they explain giving up the relationships and experiences taken for granted as part of growing up by their peers? How do they explain why their families have been disrupted or why so many family resources have been spent on their participation? How do they deal with the uncertainty and explain the pain and injuries that are a part of highly competitive sports? How do they deal with the fact that if they don't win they may not be allowed to continue playing or allowed to move to higher levels of participation?

Sport participation, especially at high levels of competition, is a tremendously self-indulgent activity; it is driven by a spirit of self- promotion. What would a coach at a major university say to players who were just as concerned with the feelings and fates of their opponents as they were with their own feelings and fates in the competition? Most coaches I know would call in the psychologists to treat this "sickness." Competitive games are largely grounded in self-promotion; athletes don't turn the other cheek.

What does a person do whose life is lived within the context of playing games? This is not a problem for most children, but it can be a problem in the lives of adults. Some people might say that sports are simply fun whereas others might use external rewards like money or fame or a desire to achieve social acceptance as justifications for playing games. Some people might use sports as platforms for engaging in community service and other good works whereas others might use spiritual justifications grounded in religious beliefs to justify and even "sanctify" their participation. Of course, all these justifications could be used at once.

But whenever so many personal resources are devoted to a self-centered development of physical skills exclusively applied to a highly specialized athletic event, and when participation in a sport has generally ceased to be fun and enjoyable, a person needs to come up with a system of justification. This may be the reason why religion is combined with sport participation by so many athletes in highly competitive sports in the United States. According to many Christian athletes an added benefit to this combination is that religion often helps them control anxiety in the face of the uncertainty and danger of competition. In other words, it helps them do their best. And as my coaches often told me: "if you do our best, you can win."

Can any behavior be done for "the glory of God"? Are the content and consequences of behavior unrelated to its value as a form of "Christian witness"? What would a Christian say if a prostitute said a prayer before a night of hard work and proclaimed her actions on a Friday night to be offered as a form of Christian witness? Most Christians would stand back in shock and disbelief, or simply laugh at the ridiculous nature of her use of religion. But what if a boxer said a prayer before going into the ring to punch another human being into senselessness and submission, killing (perhaps not intentionally) brain cells in the process? And what if the boxer dedicated his athletic career to Christ and proclaimed it a form of Christian witness?

Interestingly, many Christians have no problems with this! And even fewer have problems with football players dedicating behavior that regularly injures teammates and opponents as a form of Christian witness. Of course most football players don't intend to injure others, but that benign intent does little to heal the cartilage and bones of fellow players in traction or on crutches as a result of their "loving hits". How are the "hits" causing these injuries part of the life that Jesus described in the gospels?

Do Christian pitchers throw brush back pitches to intimidate batters? Do Christian base runners slide into second with their spikes up to break up the double play? Do Christian basketball players use their elbows to keep opponents away from rebounds? For many reasons, some related to distorted definitions of masculinity, these actions have become accepted as part of highly competitive sports in this country. But how have they become accepted as forms of "Christian witness" as well? This is tough to explain, and as a sociologist I'm very interested in any theology that would sanctify this behavior. Such a theology is one that I would fear rather than embrace. Its impact on our world is potentially devastating.

It is only when the freedom and voluntary aspect of sport are minimized, and when the control of the experience leaves the hands of the participants themselves that we "make" sport into something other than a personal experience open to a variety of personal meanings. For example, the widely believed notion that sport builds character was developed during the early part of this century when schoolmasters took control of student sport teams and activities and incorporated them into the formal structure and curriculum of the school. How could this sponsorship of fun and physical activity be justified in a culture that emphasized the work ethic to the point that it was believed that work was a basis for eternal salvation? How could money be

spent sponsoring activities that were done for their own sake, because they were fun and young people simply enjoyed them?

Spending money on fun for its own sake was not something that could be explained at a school board budget meeting. So those who wanted to control student activities outside the classroom and those who saw the potential for activities allowing students opportunities to experiment and explore new dimensions of self came together in an uneasy alliance and created a "justification" for school sponsored sport. They explained that sport built "character," moral character. Once this link was made it opened the door for defining sport participation as a morally legitimate activity, one that could even be sponsored by church organizations that shunned such physical frivolity in times past. On an individual level sport participation came to be defined as a form of "witness" expressing one's religious values in addition to one's character, regardless of the kinds of behaviors involved in sport participation. This is an interesting aspect of our complex culture.

Jay Coakley