

Fall 2010

## Racism in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools.

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# Racism in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools

by

Michael Landon Nelson

(Under the Direction of Grigory Dmitriyev)

## Abstract

The inquiry consisted of five counties in Southeast Georgia which were Brantley, Camden, Glynn, McIntosh, and Wayne County. The research questions were Is racism and discrimination a part of the hidden curriculum in high school athletics in Southeast Georgia Schools? How and why are student-athletes racially discriminated against in Southeast Georgia high schools? This inquiry is qualitative based and interviews with student-athletes of the six high schools were performed in order to gain information about whether racial issues existed in high school athletics in the area of the inquiry. The findings showed that racial discrimination did occur and still does according to the perception of student-athletes in the area. Four themes emerged from the inquiry which were unawareness of discrimination or denial, specific racial make up of some sports, issues of playing time, and race determines athletic ability.

Index Words: Racism, Sports, High School, Athletics, Race

Racism in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools

by

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B.A., Georgia Southern University, 2004

M.Ed., Troy State University, 2005

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
Georgia Southern University in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Statesboro, Georgia

2010

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December 2010

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanking everybody who made me who I am today would be longer than the dissertation itself. First, I would like to give the praise to Jesus who spent countless hours listening to me pray for help in understanding during the entire doctorate program. To every player that I have played with and coached, thank you! I would also like to thank all my former coaches who coached me and all the current coaches that I coach and have coached with. The experiences I have received from you helped me type these pages that most coaches said could not be done. All my professors in the doctorate program, history program, and coaching program at Georgia Southern helped make me into the scholar that I am today. I would like to thank my family for all that they have done. My parents instilled a desire for an education in me when I was young and it apparently never left. To my wife who has to deal with me during the baseball season and has helped proof everything I have ever turned in, thank you for all your support. Hopefully I can support you in your doctorate program as well as you have supported me. Now that the National Anthem has been played and the home team has taken the field, let's PLAY BALL!

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## **Chapter I**

### Introduction

#### *Context of Study*

I had a personal responsibility to society to conduct the research for this project. Arendt (2003) believed that if somebody or something had the power or the ability to stop injustices in the world, then he/she or it had the obligation to do so. Not getting involved or ignoring the issue makes one just as guilty as the person committing the acts. This is especially true if the person had the ability to stop the action. I love coaching and wish to advance the profession in my tenure of duty on the field. Baseball is my passion and I wish nothing else in my life than to coach the game to the fullest of my ability. However, I do not coach baseball, rather I coach baseball players. It does not matter what knowledge I contain if I do not do a good job teaching this knowledge of baseball to my players. I want them to be good citizens and productive members of society once they leave my baseball program. Through the years, I have witnessed many acts of discrimination against both players that I cared about and players in which there was a personality conflict. Since discrimination in high school athletics was found in the inquiry, I have the ability through this dissertation to take a stand and speak out against discrimination for all student-

athletes, coaches, and members of society. This is a personal obligation I have to society. I have the ability, thus, I have to do it. If I do not, I might as well join the group who discriminates.

Since a freshman in high school, I have dreamed of obtaining a doctorate degree. I have worked hard to be in a situation that would allow me to satisfy my professional goal of earning a doctorate degree. I wish to use this degree to gain credentials in the field of education to either obtain a better coaching position or to possibly become a professor at the university level in the discipline of coaching. The theoretical framework that the dissertation is based on will help me professionally in both my coaching career as well as teaching because it will allow me to better help my student-athletes and general students in the classroom. After successful completion of the doctorate program, I plan to continue researching the topic of racial discrimination and broaden the search through literature reviews and interviews and hopefully turn my research and work into a book that will help fellow coaches identify racial issues on the field.

The United States' society does not like to discuss issues of race. This is why racial healing has not occurred in many areas of the United States and why it has taken so long in those areas that have addressed issues of racism. The Civil War ended

almost one hundred forty five years ago; a time when cars, airplanes, and computers were not invented. If technology has increased exponentially over this relatively short time span, why hasn't society in racial ideology? This dissertation is not the "magical fix" for racial discrimination in the five counties that were included in the inquiry. Yet, if this dissertation makes people think or talk about racial issues it will be deemed a success. For the people who do understand that racial issues are manifest in today's United States' society, they probably do not understand why? Hopefully the theoretical framework proposed in this dissertation will help these individuals understand why racism occurs and will offer suggestions on how to end it.

Throughout the Ed.D. in Curriculum Studies program at Georgia Southern, three major issues were stressed: race, class, and gender, no less significant in multicultural education. I have read a plethora of books on each subject and they have given me an understanding to the influence these issues have had in the past and the impact still felt today in United States' society. Yet, very few curriculum scholars have explored sports in education and the effects of race on the given topic. Athletics in the realm of education is a disregarded subject that scholars do not take seriously. While race is deconstructed in the classroom, it is overlooked on the

playing field. In order to view the entire picture of what goes on in schools today, the issue of race must be analyzed in extracurricular activities. One perspective not taken into account in scholarly work was the student-athletes' point of view at the afore mentioned high schools across Southeast Georgia. DuBois (1989) was a long time advocate for political and social equality among the races. Yet, other authors such as Coakley (1998) have presented theories which advocate that black Americans have excelled more so in athletics because of the oppression placed on them due to social, political, and economic means. Robinson (1995) was quoted as saying "because I was black, I never had it made" (p. I). So how does one bring about equality to student-athletes when society believes that races are not equal? The culture in society must be changed and the definition of race as defined by society must be changed. After all, racism is a belief socially constructed by society. By taking a reconceptualists' viewpoint on education, issues can be discussed in a complicated manner which will lead to changes taking place. My inquiry did help fill an academic void on a subject that affects almost all fields of curriculum studies and the majority of people in a community. Racial issues in curriculum influence politics, economics, and other issues discussed in Pinar (2004). Issues of whiteness, blackness, fear of the other, and others arise due to the impact that Curriculum

Studies has on this topic. A voice must be given to these student-athletes to allow them to have a chance both on and off the field. W.E.B. DuBois (1989) is credited for saying "...that the idea of a free public school system, was after all, a Negro idea." West (2001) also makes the same argument on how there are still racial inequalities in all phases of United States' society today. By using the theoretical frame work of philosophers such as Nietzsche (2006), this inquiry added knowledge to the chapter on race in Pinar (2004) by showing a different perspective on race in education; one seen through the eyes of the student-athlete.

Scholars of a discipline have pride in that discipline at the university level. Members of each discipline also have a sense of snobbery on other disciplines to a certain extent. For example, imagine how a doctoral student in a Curriculum Instruction program views a Curriculum Studies doctoral student for not perfecting the perfect lesson plan that will not work in his or her classroom. Inside the field of Curriculum Studies is no different. This professor is into technology, this one into multiculturalism, and yet another prefers narrative approaches. Why not sports? Curriculum Studies discusses every issue that the United States public does not want to discuss: gay rights, religious issues, class issues, gender issues, racial issues, et cetera. In essence, I could be taken more seriously as an

academic scholar for discussing vampires symbolized in curriculum rather than sports. These scholars have the same mindset as the conservative white male scholar on issues of race in the 1930's. The cultural history of the United States from the late 1800's to present day is dominated by sports. Society is transformed into athletics. So much in the Curriculum Studies program at Georgia Southern University was spent on truth and in search of truth. If scholars were indeed in search of truth, sports would be a relevant sub-field in Curriculum Studies because the impact that sports have on society and people is immeasurable. The socio-economic market in athletics is a globalized market. In the 1950's, Major League Baseball teams used to travel around different geographical areas playing exhibition games to draw attendance and to allow fans the opportunity to see a team play that they would not have had any other opportunity to see. On one particular instance, the New York Yankees were playing in Savannah against the Savannah minor league baseball team in the 1950's. As one fan said reflecting back on his youth in a personal interview, "it was like God came to town." Some people live their lives through sports. They wake up the next morning wondering if Tom Brady is going to be healthy enough from his knee injury to be able to take on the Colts and their quarterback Peyton Manning. Athletes such as Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods have made billions of dollars in

their respective sport entertaining and competing against fellow athletes. Even a thirty second commercial during the Super Bowl costs millions of dollars. Gumbrecht (2006) explains this infatuation we have with athletics and why we praise athletes the way we do. Only perhaps maybe the Christian *Bible* has had a larger impact on the development of society in the United States in the last century other than sports. After all, Martin Luther King Jr. thanked Jackie Robinson for all that he had done to allow King to lead the Civil Rights' Movement. Without Mr. Robinson, King believed that there would have been no King. Curriculum Studies is about freedom in scholarly work. Professors are allowed to develop themselves in Curriculum Studies by talking about themselves. Maybe this is why sports have been snubbed in Curriculum Studies? Maybe there have not been enough athletes, coaches, and diehard fans crash the traditional Curriculum Studies party.

*Statement of the Problem*

The topic of the dissertation is Racism in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools. The problems associated with this inquiry include what issues of racial discrimination in high school athletics were currently occurring in the five counties of the inquiry. Research has shown that racial discrimination in professional and collegiate athletics occurred in the past in every sport. Yet, little research has been

conducted on racial discrimination in sports at the high school level. One reason as to why few scholars have attempted to perform an inquiry on the problem is due to racism in sports being a part of the hidden curriculum in schools. When researching racism in sports and asking complicated racial questions, a person has the tendency to be labeled as a racist. However, if the issues of racial discrimination in high school athletics are not dealt with, then these issues will become inevitable lasting conflicts and could erupt and create new racial problems in the field of high school athletics. These problems and inevitable new problems were reason why to research racial issues in high school athletics besides the attempt to help fill an academic void of knowledge on racism in high school athletics.

#### *Purpose for Research*

The purpose for research was to do an inquiry to find out if racial discrimination was occurring in high school athletics in five specific counties of Southeast Georgia and in what forms and shapes it took place. Not enough sufficient scholarly work had been performed in this area on the given topic if racial discrimination was occurring in high school athletics in this specific area. Since interviewees believed that it did exist, then the issue must be addressed in the schools' athletic departments. There was an academic void as well in the



Curriculum Studies field on knowledge of this topic. Racism has been explored in many aspects of society including education in Curriculum Studies, but not through the experiences of the student-athletes.

#### *Research Questions*

After performing my literature review, I realized that a few questions were lacking, especially within the area of high school athletics. To help bridge this gap in knowledge, the main concerns addressed were:

- Is racism and discrimination a part of the hidden curriculum in high school athletics in Southeast Georgia schools?
- If racism and discrimination exist, then what forms or shapes does it take in these schools?
- If the existence of racism and discrimination are present, then what are some causes of its existence?

#### *Potential Significance*

The potential significance of this project was that it would help increase the scholastic knowledge on a very important area concerning discrimination in education. Since the research found discrimination, the potential significance in the lives of the student-athletes is unlimited. What is the cost of hopefully decreasing discrimination in athletics in Southeast Georgia or possibly eliminating it for these athletes altogether? Hopefully coaches will be able to use this

information to help unite their team in a more non-biased manner and players will come together based on playing ability rather than race. Whenever a community's culture has to be changed, the best way to begin this change is through education. This education and subsequent changes in culture in Southeast Georgia is the potential significance of this project.

#### *Methodological Review*

This project was qualitative based. I do not believe that a number can be placed on racism, classism, and sexism occurring within high school athletics. I could hypothetically say that forty-five percent of students were discriminated against in high school athletics, but what does that really mean? I used different modes of qualitative research when interviewing my subjects. I felt that life history, grounded theory, and case studies yielded the best results when conducting my interviews. Interviewees were high school student-athletes from six high schools in the described five counties of Southeast Georgia. By transcribing these interviews, specific themes began to emerge which helped reveal a larger picture of the issues going on in high school athletics. There was a direct correlation of what was going on in the community transferring over into what was happening on the field. The transcribed interviews were color coded to help illustrate certain distinct aspects of discrimination as well as the emotions, actions, and thoughts by

those involved. When interviewing black participants, I had a black coach or scholar with me to help break the color barrier. This allowed each participant to feel more comfortable and be more willing to give their honest answers and opinions to the questions asked.

My interviews began with short, non-complicated questions to make the interviewees feel more at ease and help to build a trust with them. As the interview process continued, participants encountered more in depth questions and leaned on our newly formed trust relationship to give full and truthful responses. After the defense of the dissertation, I will allow all interviewees who desire, to receive a copy of the dissertation so that they can examine the findings and give feedback as to whether they believe that the results are correct and why.

#### *Theoretical Review*

My theoretical approach to this project was broad based and encompassed many different theories and philosophers. One reason for this is that there is no all encompassing answer to the questions posed in the inquiry. To say that one thing causes racial discrimination is to say that only one thing makes up society and culture within the United States. I began my theoretical research by analyzing the critical race theory used by West (2001) and DuBois (1989). I then implemented Coakley's

(1998) theory on why black athletes tend to become better athletes than white athletes. The majority of my theoretical framework came from Nietzsche's (2006) book "On the Genealogy of Morals." His explanation of who has power in society and what they do with this power is profound and relates directly to the three research questions I answered. Arendt (2003) is an additional philosopher that I drew upon while writing the dissertation due to her contributions made in areas that help in answering the research questions I presented. Theoretical issues that arose include whiteness, blackness, and fear of the other (Derrida, 1995). As I have learned, it does not matter what I observe as a coach on racial discrimination. This knowledge has to be backed by a sound theoretical framework for this dissertation to be respected within the academia. Other philosophers and theories are used as well as themes emerged during the inquiry.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### *High School Racism*

Racial discrimination happens in the classroom as well as on the athletic playing field. In one particular situation, Asian students were discriminated against and physically beaten because of their race at South Philadelphia High School. Up to 3 December 2009, Asian students were constantly reporting instances of physical and mental abuse from the black community at South Philadelphia High School. This school was made up of 70% black students and 18% Asian students. Up to this current date, the school or school board had done nothing to try and protect the Asian students. Racial hatred was fuming from a belief that Asian students received special and preferred treatment at the high school boasting their own special floor with more teachers and better technology to help them overcome the language barriers that they faced. This animosity came to a climax on 3 December 2009, when black students at the school rioted and attacked over 30 Asian students. One particular student, Duong Nghe Ly, even had other black students follow him home and punch him in the face on his door step after the riot. There were an estimated 70 black students involved in the riot, but only 11 of the students were punished. Investigations were brought forth after other organizations became involved and

changes were made beginning with a new principal who was not even certified to be a principal (The Associated Press, Racial violence changes student and his school, 2010). Protests were also held to hopefully begin to try and heal the racial tensions that abounded at South Philadelphia High School (The Associated Press, Asian students protest treatment, 2009). The complaints that were filed with the United States' Department of Justice under the Civil Rights Division are ongoing and no decision has been made up to this point (Zehr, 2010).

One movie that has portrayed racial relations in athletics is *Remember the Titans* starring Denzel Washington and Will Patton. In this movie, a football team comes together at football camp in Gettysburg, PN. They, as a team, break the color line in Alexandria, VA and go on to win the state championship. It is amazing how Hollywood always produces such a pretty picture. However, let us examine another perspective of the story from Coach Yoast.

Yoast begins his story by explaining his childhood history and why he was in a minority opinion through his younger years because he believed in equality throughout the races. As a child, his dad constantly ran away and left his mom, his sister, and himself to figure out how to survive in the Great Depression. To help the family, Yoast took a job picking cotton in Alabama at the age of six. One day in 1936, Yoast had

forgotten his water thermos and the temperature had risen above one-hundred degrees. Sitting at a circle with his fellow black workers during the morning break, Yoast broke the color line for the first time in his life.

They knew that I had been told if you drank water from a black man's cup your lips would fall off. I grabbed the dipper and took my turn. Almost instantly you could detect a transformation had taken place. I was no longer Bill Yoast: white man. I was just another human being trying to get through a lousy day (Sullivan, 2005, p. 5).

At this point he was not considered the average white person oppressing the black community. Now, Yoast was one of them, which allowed him to enter the black world of the nineteen-thirties which changed his framework of thinking and helped mold him into the anti-racist person he became. Another example of racism which bothered Yoast was in Sparta, GA in 1950. "In Sparta, in 1950, if you didn't look like a cream puff you got the short end of the stick, if you got any stick at all. For some reason it made me mad" (Sullivan, p. 15). In contrast to the popular movie, the Titans did not come together as a team at the beginning of the season. One reason is that many of the black members of the football team were hanging out with the local Black Panther group. This created many problems for the Titans. This was especially true for Coach Yoast, since he was

the white coach and one of the defensive stars, Julius Campbell, was a leader of the Panther movement. One thing Yoast noted from the Titan season, however, is that "Racism and hatred don't disappear with a touchdown pass" (Sullivan, p. 55). This is in contrast to what the reader will learn about with Branch Rickey and the Nobel Experiment. Rickey believed that people would cheer anybody as long as they are a winner. Yoast believed otherwise due to his experience.

### *College Football*

Because there was very little information on racism in high school athletics, the literature review contains other examples of racism in sports at the collegiate and professional level. This demonstrates the racism in athletics that has occurred and still occurs at higher levels in the United States and other countries.

College football has always been a sport that has been plagued with racism. One reason for this is that football is arguably one of the two most popular sports in the United States and is the sport with the highest fan attendance at the high school level. Racism has occurred in college football in many different ways. Through coaches' statements, fans' statements, the universities' stances, and through interviews, racism has become an accepted part of the game.



One way to portray white supremacy in college football is to make fun of athletes through interviews. For instance, in the early 1980's, after the Oklahoma State University and University of Oklahoma football and basketball game, radio stations would make up false interviews where they claimed to be interviewing the opposing team's black athletes after the game. One interview went as accordingly:

Interviewer: "Well, Mr. Tisdale, what are your thoughts on the upcoming game?"

Tisdale: "Ugah bugah hoogaloo ugh ugh!"

Interviewer: "Really—would you share your thoughts on your coach, Billy Tubbs?"

Tisdale: "I be, yo be, we be, yo' mama! (King, 2001, p. 9)

Other discriminating remarks have been made by college coaches making degrading remarks about their mascots. Bobby Bowden has begun writing "scalp'em" below his autograph on all memorabilia that he signs. Granted his team is the Seminoles. Yet, this makes the Seminole tribe out to be barbaric and savagery.

In the beginning, black athletes were not wanted on all white college football teams. The first integrated college football team came two years after the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education decision. This team was North Texas State College in 1956. Because of this action, schools in the south refused to play integrated teams and the state of Louisiana passed laws

prohibiting interracial athletic competitions. Before long, many states had these laws. Another instance of black athletes not being allowed to play after desegregation was in Alabama. During the 1964 National Championship run, the Crimson Tide refused to play any integrated football team. Hence, at the end of the season many people made comments about the Tide not playing the best competition. One news reporter was even quoted as saying "So Alabama is the National Champion, is it? Hah! National Champion of what? The Confederacy?" Then in 1969, fourteen black players at the University of Wyoming wished to wear black arm bands during a game against Brigham Young because of the college's Mormon stance on racism and white supremacy. The players were automatically kicked off from the team and their scholarships revoked. Afterwards fans were quoted as saying "We can go all the way even without our niggers and getting rid of them will turn out to be a blessing" (King, p. 28).

These are just a couple of scenarios of what black athletes in college football went through during the era of desegregation. Although some coaches were against having black players on a team, other coaches were willing to take the chance and be one of the first to have black Americans. This chance the coaches were willing to take was not like the Noble Experiment with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Rather, these coaches

understood the concept that a coach either wins or gets fired. If black athletes could help one win, then a coach had to use them for his own advantage over the competition to protect his own job. In one college football game in 1970, Southern California beat perennial powerhouse Alabama in large part due to running back Sam Cunningham who ran for three touchdowns. After the game, Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant was heard muttering "He (Cunningham) did more for integration in the South in sixty minutes than Martin Luther King did in twenty years" (King, p. 111). Gumbrecht (2006) also echoed Bryant's philosophy in his book when he said:

...sports serve the cause of social differentiation and distinction; we gratefully learn from him what we have known all along, that taking up tennis or golf is useful as a tool to accelerate upward social mobility (Gumbrecht, 2006, p. 26).

In agreement, Richard Gruneau was quoted in Adams' book saying "sports, like all culture products, have the capacity to be either reproductive or oppositional, repressive, or liberating" (Adams, 1995, p. 189). This is because major college football in the south is a way of life. Whenever slavery ended at the end of the Civil War, Southerners looked for something that they could again be the best at and that they could build and put pride in. More importantly they looked for something that they

could be better than the northern states at. This one thing came to be football.

### *Major League Baseball*

In the literature review, no evidence of scholarly work performed on racism in high school baseball was evident. Thus, professional baseball was examined in order to understand how racism affected baseball at the professional level.

One of the first instances of athletes crossing the boundary lines of segregation in athletics is Jackie Robinson. To many people, Jackie is symbolized as the person who broke segregation in baseball and became the first black American to play in Major League Baseball. However, many players played on baseball teams when teams were integrated during the late 1800's and early 1900's. It was not until around 1904 that baseball became segregated and black Americans were not allowed to play in the Major Leagues. Hence, Jackie Robinson is famous for breaking the barrier that had been in place for over forty years. One of the last black Americans to play professional baseball before the color barrier was established was a catcher named Fleetwood Walker. Walker was considered to be one of the best catchers of his time which is an astonishing feat considering that catchers did not wear equipment or a glove. Even though teams were integrated, white players made sure to

exalt their presence. One pitcher, Tony Mullane, who played with Walker on the Toledo team, stated that:

Walker was the best catcher I ever worked with...but whenever I had to pitch to him I used to pitch anything I wanted without looking at his signals. One day he signaled me a curve and I shot a fast ball at him. He caught it and walked down to me. He said I'll catch you without signals, but I won't catch you if you are going to cross me when I give you signals. And all the rest of that season he caught me and caught anything I pitched without knowing what was coming (Rhoden, 2006, p. 81).

A catcher is the leader of the defense. By Mullane not taking the signs from Walker, he was demonstrating his defiance of having a black baseball player in a leadership position. This is just one of the many instances of racism that occurred to Fleetwood Walker in his stint in professional baseball.

After black baseball players were banned from the Major Leagues, black players began to play for independent teams doing what they call barnstorming. Barnstorming meant traveling from town to town to play pickup games with white booking agents controlling the cash flow. Black players did not make as much money and did not control their livelihood because of the white booking agents who were corrupt and would do whatever possible to cheat the black team out of profits. Because of this, Rube

Foster began the Negro Leagues. The actual name of the Negro Leagues was the National Negro Leagues. This league had a specific schedule and rules which the league had to follow similar to Major League Baseball. Foster's dream with this league was that when Major League Baseball decided to integrate, they would not be allowed to pick players here and there to destroy Foster's creation, but would rather be forced to allow entire teams entry into the Major Leagues based on their ability and style of play. Foster's dream never came to pass, however, and after his death, Major League Baseball did exactly what Foster did not want to happen when the Dodgers took Jackie Robinson to be part of the Nobel Experiment.

Jackie Robinson was a unique individual that had the tools that it took to break the color line in baseball. Mr. Robinson grew up on a plantation in Cairo, GA until his father left him and his mother. Afterwards, his mother moved him and herself to California to be with her brother and to try and make a living for herself and her son. While in California, Jackie Robinson became involved in a gang that was responsible for many delinquent acts. Luckily for Mr. Robinson, he separated from the gang and became involved in the church instead. While growing up, Jackie Robinson excelled in sports and soon found himself at a major university lettering in four sports at UCLA. The four sports were track, baseball, basketball, and football.

Athletes understand the tremendous pressure that must have been on Jackie Robinson during those times to excel in four different sports at that level of competition, but Mr. Robinson somehow managed to survive. This would be a building block for the trials that he would face in the future. After college, Jackie Robinson was drafted in the Army and even though he never went overseas, he was stationed at a Jim Crowe Army Base in the Midwest. During his time at UCLA and the army, he met the love of his life in a girl named Rachel.

After he received an honorable discharge from the army due to fighting racial injustices, Jackie Robinson was looking for a job and was presented with an opportunity to play baseball in the Negro Leagues. According to Mr. Robinson, these teams were "...poorly financed, and their management and promotion left much to be desired" (Robinson, 1995, p. 24). Yet, it was a paycheck and Jackie Robinson was thankful to have a job that pays and was something that he liked to do. However, he missed Rachel and was going to quit playing in the Negro Leagues to move back to California to get a "real job" to earn a living and to be with her. This is when the management from the Dodgers began searching for the perfect person to fulfill the Noble Experiment.

The person in charge of the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1943 was Branch Rickey. He was a long time supporter of black Americans

gaining equality in Major League Baseball. During the 1943 season, Rickey searched the world over trying to find the perfect person to implement his Noble Experiment. After many years of trying, he was finally voted permission to be the guinea pig in bringing black Americans into the Major Leagues. To conceal his experiment, Rickey made it out that he was trying to create a new all black league that would be more organized. After searching throughout the United States and Latin America, Branch Rickey finally decided on a young guy named Jackie Robinson. Soon, Rickey Branch had signed Jackie Robinson to a deal with a minor league team in Montreal.

Rachel and Jackie Robinson then married and left to the east coast for spring training. While in the minor leagues, Jackie Robinson faced many obstacles to his being successful. Making it to the Major Leagues is a hard enough task, much less with the pressure that was on him due to racism. Many times on trips, Mr. Robinson would not be allowed to stay in the same hotel as the rest of the team or even eat in the same restaurant with his fellow teammates. Buses would not allow him to travel from ballpark to ballpark and many cities would not allow him to play during the game since integrated games were barred by city or state law.

Sometimes baseball was a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" to Jackie Robinson. At one game in New Jersey, Mr. Robinson walked



off the field to the cheers of the crowd which Mr. Rickey predicted when telling Jackie Robinson that "Color didn't matter to fans if the black man was a winner." Then the next day in Philadelphia, Jackie Robinson would be booed not because of his performance on the field but because he was a black man in white baseball. In Philadelphia, as soon as Jackie Robinson walked on the field fans began yelling phrases such as "nigger son of a bitch" and other derogatory phrases (Robinson, p. 46). Some managers were even skeptical of Jackie Robinson. The coach for Montreal was even quoted as asking the head of the Dodgers, Mr. Rickey, if Mr. Rickey thought that black people were even human.

The International League World Series was the worst time for Mr. Robinson. Playing Louisville in the Deep South was relentless and it placed its toll on Jackie Robinson. He had gone into a slump and could not get his confidence back. Every time he walked on the field somebody would yell "Hey, black boy, go on back to Canada and stay! Yeah...and take all your nigger-loving friends with you" (Robinson, p. 50). Jackie Robinson was not allowed to retaliate, however, because if he would have he would have lost the cause for all black Americans wishing to play in the Major Leagues and the Nobel Experiment would have been over. Finally, the series went back to Montreal where the fans gave Louisville grief due to the treatment of Jackie Robinson. Montreal fans were outraged that Mr. Robinson was

treated the way he was because of his skin color. In the first game back, Jackie Robinson stole home which inspired the team to play hard. They went on to win the series and Jackie Robinson received the batting title for the International League.

Finally in 1947, Jackie Robinson received the opportunity he had been seeking and was allowed to have a spot on the Brooklyn Dodger's roster. In his first game at first base, hate poured from the Philadelphia dugout. Before the umpire had yelled play ball the manager and players from Philadelphia were yelling "Hey nigger, why don't you go back to the cotton field where you belong? They're waiting for you in the jungles, black boy! Hey, snowflake, which one of those white boys' wives are you dating tonight? We don't want you here, nigger! Go back to the bushes" (Robinson, p. 59). All Jackie Robinson could think of was going over and putting a big black fist in a white mouth. But then Jackie Robinson remembered the words of Branch Rickey in that he was not looking for a black ballplayer that did not have the guts to fight back. He was looking for a black ballplayer that had the guts not to fight back. That was the person that it was going to take for the Nobel Experiment to work. Then Pee Wee Reese came over and put his arm around Jackie Robinson and the ballgame finally began. An ironic event occurred, however. Because Mr. Robinson did not fight back, he received sympathy from his teammates and from fans. This helped

unite the Dodgers and they made it all the way to the World Series before losing to the Bronx Bombers.

One particular photo taken of Jackie Robinson shows the split in defiance and acceptance of the color barrier being broken in Major League Baseball. In this picture were Jackie Robinson, Peeewe Reese, and Dixie Walker. Peeewe Reese and Dixie Walker were both Southern born baseball players with the Brooklyn Dodgers. In the picture, both Jackie Robinson and Peeewe Reese look at the camera and Dixie Walker looks away in defiance of the color barrier being broken in Major League Baseball. Here, Peeewe Reese chose to embrace Mr. Robinson because of what he could bring to the team where Dixie Walker chose to defy Mr. Robinson because he was a black Major League Baseball player.

The next spring training camp was especially crucial for Jackie Robinson. When performing their tour in the Deep South, the Nobel Experiment was proving to be a success. Every game Jackie Robinson played in was sold out and even a large number of black members from the community were coming out to see Jackie Robinson play. This was proof that Southerners were beginning to accept black Americans in baseball. Other events transpired afterwards that showed the character of Jackie Robinson. First, in 1948 Mr. Robinson led the league in hits

batsman. In other words, Jackie Robinson had been hit by the pitch more times than any other hitter in the Major Leagues.

The 1949 season would bring new meaning to Jackie Robinson's baseball career. For the first time, Branch Rickey told Jackie Robinson that the Nobel Experiment had been won and that he could defend himself and talk back to racist comments as he seemed fit. Mr. Robinson very quickly noticed that:

I learned that as long as I appeared to ignore insult and injury, I was a martyred hero to a lot of people who seemed to have sympathy for the underdog. But the minute I began to answer, to argue, to protest—the minute I began to sound off—I became a swellhead, a wise guy, an uppity nigger. When a white player did it, he had spirit. When a black player did it, he was ungrateful, an upstart, a sorehead (Robinson, p. 79).

Yet, Jackie Robinson's responses seemed to unite the team because he had the courage to say the things that his teammates wished to say yet did not have the courage to. This changed over time with Branch Rickey leaving and with a new manager. By the end of Jackie Robinson's career, a racist manager was singling Mr. Robinson out from the team and made it where everything he did was portrayed as an act of showboating. This portrayal of showboating was exaggerated even further when Roy Campanella became a part of the Brooklyn Dodgers with Mr.

Robinson. Mr. Campanella was the quite version of Mr. Robinson and felt that he had to be grateful for being allowed to play in Major League Baseball. He did not question race and would avoid the topic. Many times sportswriters portrayed him out to be an Uncle Tom. This was the opposite of the flamboyant Mr.

Robinson. Jackie Robinson took his opportunity in the spotlight to fight against racism and depression. The same comparison could be said of W.E.B. DuBois who would be Jackie Robinson and Booker T. Washington who would be Roy Campanella. With new management, this led to Jackie Robinson being traded to the Giants for approximately thirty thousand dollars. When Jackie Robinson refused and decided to retire, the Giants raised the deal to sixty thousand dollars. People then believed that Mr. Robinson was holding out for extra money and this made Mr. Robinson determined never to play Major League Baseball again. Imagine where athletics would be today without the courage of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier and opening up athletics for black Americans in all sports?

What Jackie Robinson experienced in baseball was not a rare incident but rather the norm. Whenever Bill Yoast was coaching at Sparta, GA, he experienced this incident:

A black baseball team had a game in the park where the class D teams played. The ball field was near the school gym. The showers in their bathhouse didn't work. The

solution was simple. I talked with their coach and told him they could use the showers in the high school. He was hesitant. I guess he knew a whole lot more about racism than I did. He understood the implication of that act. I didn't. I convinced him it wasn't a problem. He told me they didn't need to shower. I now realize he was probably trying to protect me. I took a stand and they got clean. As they walked out of the locker room each ball player made a point of shaking my hand and thanking me. I was surprised because I thought it was no big deal. I was wrong! The next day I was forced to clean the shower with soap and be counseled on being color-blind (Sullivan, 2005, p. 16).

This was the normalcy of the day. This was especially true of the Deep South.

Even though Jackie Robinson was the first Major League Baseball player to break the color line with the Brooklyn Dodgers, each individual team had to relive breaking the color line with their first African American player that was put on the roster. One particular city was worse than others. This city was known as the northern most southern city and was the last Major League Baseball franchise to integrate. This city was Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the team was the Philadelphia Phillies. When Jackie Robinson broke the color line in 1947,

Jackie Robinson was treated worse in Philadelphia than any other city. The verbal bombardments started before the game began. The history of Philadelphia's racial past was no secret in baseball. During the 1920's, many of Connie Mack's great Athletics baseball players were open members of the Klu Klux Klan (Kashatus, 2004, p. 15).

The first African American to break the color barrier in the Phillies organization was an infielder named John Kennedy who played in five games for the Phillies in 1957 at the end of the season (Kashatus, p. 5). This was a decade after Jackie Robinson crossed the color barrier in Brooklyn, NY. The first African American superstar to have a considerable impact in the organization was a young superstar by the name of Richie Allen (Kashatus, p. 3). Richie Allen was a major part of the 1964 season in which Philadelphia went from being the sure pennant winner to missing the playoffs by a game. Their nickname, the September Swoon, is in honor to the biggest baseball collapse in Major League history.

In the spring of 1963, Richie Allen was the highest rated prospect in the Phillies organization. The Phillies showed him their respect of his abilities by giving him a \$70,000 bonus in 1961 for signing with the Phillies. This was the highest bonus giving to an African American player up to this time (Kashatus, p. 39). To help develop Mr. Allen into a Major League Baseball

Player, the Phillies organization sent Mr. Allen to Little Rock, AK to be a part of their AAA team. In Little Rock, Richie Allen was the first African American player to step on the field. Richie Allen was caught by surprise with the situation. The Phillies organization had not warned Mr. Allen about the racial turmoil that would occur with him playing in Little Rock. Rather, they had kept him blind to the consequences of breaking the color line until he witnessed it firsthand. Management knew what Richie Allen would face in Little Rock because it was just after the big incident with Central High School (Roche, 1998, p. 38). While in Little Rock, Mr. Allen experienced racial hatred on a daily basis for the first time. Fans would leave notes on his car and would not serve him in restaurants because of his skin color. Many times after games, Richie Allen would be scared to walk to his car because of the fear that the Klan would be waiting for him with shot guns or that somebody would kill him on his way to the ball park. Despite the racism that he faced in Little Rock, his statistics and playing ability was high enough to give him a chance to play for the Major Leagues in Philadelphia during the 1964 season.

The 1964 Phillies was their first truly integrated baseball team in Phillies' history. The '64 Phillies consisted of Ruben Amaro, Tony Gonzalez, Cookie Rojas, and Tony Taylor from Latin America and Johnny Briggs, Wes Covington, Alex Johnson, and



Richie Allen who were African Americans (Kashatus, 2004, p. 4). Richie Allen even received Rookie of the Year honors in 1964 for his production on the field. The Rookie of the Year award was in honor of Jackie Robinson's courageous 1947 season. Many sports reporters harped on the fact that Philadelphia was one of the last teams to integrate and were behind many other franchises in terms of recruitment because of this. It is also interesting to note that the Philadelphia Phillies have the worst all time record in Major League Baseball. Claude Harrison of the *Philadelphia Tribune* said:

When the great white fathers decided to rip down the barriers and let the Negro athlete take a shot at major league baseball in the late 1940's, some of the senior circuit teams lagged behind in their search for Negro talent.

The Phillies were one of those teams, trying their best not to run across any Negro talent of value. They seemed happy to set their bank accounts hiked by the Negro fans who came to root against them. It was a natural thing for 10,000 to 15,000 non-white fans to stroll into Shibe Park and root for Jackie, Campy and Big Newk when the Dodgers rolled into town. And until this day the 'old timers' still hold a grudge against the Phillies. They still root for the Giants and the Dodgers.

However the Phillies have wised up to the facts of life and joined the 'if you can't beat'em, join 'em club' by bringing up Richie Allen, the hottest thing to hit Philadelphia since William Penn.

While Allen may not win back the old timers for the Phillies, he will surely groom the youngsters for the future. They'll pay the admission price to go out and root for the home club because they'll feel like a part of the team (Kashatus, p. 87).

The 1964 season in Philadelphia was one of the best that the organization ever had and racial turmoil was non-existent in the Phillies' clubhouse. This is an astonishing feat since the entire nation was going through racial turmoil during the mid-1960s. Yet, due to many reasons the Phillies blew apart at the end of the season and missed winning the pennant by one game.

The 1965 season was not as friendly to the Phillies and after a big fight between Frank Thomas and Richie Allen, racial turmoil began and sportswriters made the most out of any little situation. During the incident, Frank Thomas swung a bat at Richie Allen which helped lead to Frank Thomas' release the next day. The manager of the Phillies, however, did not allow Richie Allen to speak to the papers and the only side of the story that the media heard was Frank Thomas' side. Everybody blamed Richie Allen for Frank Thomas being released despite Richie Allen's

pleas to keep Frank Thomas on the team. In the media, however, Mr. Allen was to blame and this began Mr. Allen's downward spiral in Philadelphia with the media and organization. Before Mr. Allen's career in Philadelphia was over, Mr. Allen was frustrated with the Phillies' organization and was trying through any means necessary to get traded to another team. Richie Allen was constantly criticized for everything that he did on and off the field and even had to wear a batting helmet while shagging ground balls in batting practice because fans constantly pelted him with batteries, beer cans, and nickels. This is because Richie Allen wanted to be traded and he decided to force the trade by playing the race card or using any other tool to make the management unhappy. In the present Major League Baseball format, this would not be an issue as Richie Allen could have become a free agent. However, during the 1960's, Major League Baseball was different and Richie Allen set a bad example for an African American Major League Baseball player due to his frustrations with race relations in Philadelphia and his desire to leave the city as quickly as possible.

Many other Major League Baseball teams had a history similar to the Phillies. One team who has been notorious for racial discrimination practices up to the current day is the Boston Red Sox. The Red Sox organization has been an

organization that contains a rich history and heritage in the eyes of its fans despite the racial profile the team has built over the years and not winning very much. Boston had a chance to be a power house in the American League, yet allowed racism to take away potential greatness. In 1945, the Boston Red Sox held a tryout for a young baseball player from the Negro Leagues named Jackie Robinson. The tryout was a joke despite every person at the tryout being very impressed with young Jackie Robinson's ability. The Red Sox never again contacted Jackie Robinson which made Jackie Robinson bitter until the end of his life. The Red Sox organization also sent a scout to look at a young prospect in Westfield, AL. His name was Willie Mays. Once arriving at the field, the weather rained game one out which was scheduled to be replayed the next day. Instead of waiting, the scout from Texas named Larry Woodall declared "I have other things to do...I'm not going to waste my time waiting on a bunch of niggers" (Bryant, 2002, p. 1). Part of this philosophy came from the Red Sox manager Pinky Higgins who told all reporters after the two were overlooked "There will never be any niggers on this team as long as I have anything to say about it" (Bryant, p. 3). Because of the bigotry that the Red Sox organization portrayed, they had passed on two future hall of famers and arguably two of the best players in Major League Baseball history in Jackie Robinson and Willie Mays. If they

would have taken the best players despite skin color, imagine the possibility with Ted Williams, Jackie Robinson, and Willie Mays on the same team. Maybe their rich heritage that does not exist would be a little different in the winning category.

Jackie Robinson broke the color line in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Boston's moment did not come until 1959 when Pumpsie Green entered the game as a pinch runner. This was twelve years after Mr. Robinson broke the color barrier. Boston was clearly behind in scouting and recruiting to get the best players and this was shown by their record during those seasons (Bryant, p. 53). Even into the 1990's this policy did not change. In 1991, Jim Raines was the only black baseball player on the Red Sox roster and word had spread through professional athletes' mouths that Boston was not a place to play for a black person. Most athletes held the phrase stay for however many years it takes for free agency and then get the heck out.

Spring training in the Red Sox organization as well as many other Major League Baseball organizations was terrible. Spring Training took place in the South due to the warmer weather where Jim Crow held his grip the firmest. Even in baseball organizations where black ball players were treated with equality, rules were different in southern towns. In Arizona at the Reds' Spring Training facility, Curt Flood was not allowed to stay with the rest of the team for the entire Spring Training

duration. Flood said "Until it happens you literally cannot believe it. After it happens you need time to absorb it. The black cab took me five miles out of town and deposited me at Mrs. Felder's boardinghouse. When I saw who was there—Frank Robinson and four or five other black ball players—my knees began to knock. Rules had been enforced... Officially and for the duration, I was a nigger" (Bryant, p.10).

It seems that the only instances of racial hatred in Major League Baseball were documented by a small minority group of black players. If a person was not hitting forty homeruns a year, then their side of the story did not matter. Imagine the hatred that went on inside professional baseball at the minor league level. In one instance, a black player in left field in a southern town was told that if he caught the ball that a white player hit he would be shot and killed. This letter was signed by the fan standing behind the left field fence showing the player his shot gun. Yet, no names, cities, or any other information is available about this instance of racial discrimination (Fussman, 2007, p. 81). What happened to Jackie Robinson was a tragedy on a diurnal basis. Yet, this episode here is on another level that I do not believe Jackie Robinson ever went through. Death threats, of course Jackie had those, but to have a fan sit behind him in the stands with a shot gun

pointing at him and telling him that if he got a white player out he would be shot, never!

Not all events in the early part of integrating Major League Baseball were negative. Besides Branch Rickey, there is one case where a manager for the New York Giants supported his team mates regardless of race or color in order to try and win with the best players possible. In 1949, Monte Irvin was brought up by the New York Giants and on his first day at the field, manager Leo Durocher held a clubhouse meeting. In this meeting Durocher said:

Fellas, listen up. We're gonna have a short meeting. This is all I'm going to say about race. I don't give a damn what color you are. As long as you can play good baseball, you can play on this team. We got Monte and Hank here. They got good credentials. I'm sure they'll help us get out of fifth place. We're all one team. Let's go out and play hard, and that's all I'm going to ask of any of you (Fussman, p. 28).

Instances like this showed that the Nobel Experiment would be a success, but that it would take time for wounds to heal and to undue three hundred years worth of American culture and ideology.

### *College Basketball*

In the literature review, no evidence of scholarly work performed on racism in high school basketball was evident. Thus, college and professional basketball was examined in order to understand how racism affected basketball at the collegiate and professional level.

College basketball has been a sport where racism took a more dramatic hold of the game than the previous sports spoken of. One reason for this is that basketball does not have eleven people on one side of the ball or nine men on the field. A team has five players on the court and if three of the players starting are black Americans, then the majority of one's starting lineup is consisted of black athletes. In football, one would still have eight white athletes on the field compared to the three black athletes. One of the myths about white and black athletes is that compared to black athletes, white men cannot jump which is one of the reasons as to why people have stereotyped black athletes as better basketball players. For instance, in 1994 after a tough loss, the Central Michigan University coach, Keith Dambrot, was quoted as saying "We need to have more niggers on this team" (King, 2001, p. 9). To the outside world this is clearly a racist comment and he was fired for these comments. I believe Coach Dambrot was referring to the mentality of his players rather than race. However, that



was not the perception in the media. Now after coaching Lebron James in high school, he is back at the collegiate level as a head basketball coach.

In the globalized NCAA, players are paid in ways not known to the public. This payment comes in the form of scholarships, money, or privileges under the table. Many times college basketball players are given special pencils to make sure that their star athlete passes the exam to be eligible to play. However, these players are unaware of what is happening to them as they make the transition from standout high school athletes to collegiate basketball athletes. At one course presented by Nike, Spike Lee spoke out to try and make these new collegiate basketball athletes aware of the dangers of racism in the capitalist globalized NCAA.

You have to realize, that nobody cares about you. You're black! You're a young male! All you're supposed to do is deal drugs and mug young women. The only reason why you're here is you can make their team win. If their team wins, these schools get a whole lot of money. This whole thing is revolving around money (King, p. 110).

Is it not ironic that Spike Lee spoke of this at a Nike clinic considering the only reason Nike is involved is to make money? Is it also not ironic that even though Spike Lee condemns the process here, this system is the reason that he has made his

millions of dollars? Yet, there is much truth to what Lee told the up and coming collegiate athletes. The issue of desegregation in college basketball began in 1954. Yet, the issue did not become a major crisis until the 1966 National Championship basketball game.

The 1966 National Championship NCAA basketball game was between a team who started five black players in Texas Western against an all white team in Kentucky. This game was also previewed as the white Coach Rupp from Kentucky who was racist in his character and refused to have black athletes on his team against Coach Haskins from Texas Western who challenged his players to fight and stand their ground against racism in the United States. Even before the National Championship game, Rupp was reported as calling the Texas Western team "coons" and making other derogatory comments about the race of the team. Then after the 72-65 loss to Texas Western, Rupp was quoted as degrading Coach Haskins in that he used "players out of the penitentiary and off the streets of New York." Yet, other Kentucky fans were heard saying "We gotta get us some of them." This incident shocked and changed the college basketball world forever. The invincible all white team of Kentucky was beaten by a group of black athletes from Texas Western.

Even though one would think that the white coach from Texas Western would be praised from some parts of the nation for

refusing to let pressure from higher authorities influence him in his decision to be the first to ever start five black Americans in college basketball at a white school, he was ridiculed from every angle. The community in which he lived ridiculed him and made threats to him and his family after they won the National Championship because there was no predominate or even remotely large black community in the town in which the college was located. Coach Haskins received death threats during this time from other white fans of other universities telling him that he would be shot on the court if he let a black athlete step on the court with white athletes in Dallas, Texas. Yet, he was also criticized in the black community. The black community condemned every action he took or the success that he gained because they claimed that he was extorting black people for his own benefit. Condemned by both black and white communities, Coach Haskins was a man with views that exceeded his time.

Coach Haskins style of play was a physical system. He believed in the slam dunk which he would call "flushing it." To him, it intimidated teams and he would use this as well as his players' physical style of play to play with the opponents' minds. Coach Haskins was also a great motivational speaker for his team. Before the 1966 National Championship game, Coach Haskins told David Lattin, his center, "First chance you get,

flush it. Flush it as hard as you can." On the teams second position David Lattin dunked the ball through the outstretched hands of Pat Riley. This changed the tempo of the game and Kentucky never recovered (King, p. 108).

#### *National Basketball Association*

The National Basketball Association has not had the history of Major League Baseball. On and off throughout the decades basketball leagues have been invented and often foreclosed as soon as they were started. Finally in 1949, the NBA was initiated which was the National Basketball Association. During its inauguration year, the NBA was integrated on paper. There were some famous all black teams such as the Rens or the Harlem Globetrotters who were ironically located in Chicago (Farred, 2006, p. 5). This era of segregation came to an end on 25 April 1950 when Boston drafted the NBA's first black basketball player. Charles Cooper, from Dusquesne University was taken in the early second round draft and Earl Lloyd was drafted in the ninth round from West Virginia State. Another first was made in 1966 when the legendary Celtic coach Red Auerbach appointed Bill Russell as a player coach making Russell the first black coach in the NBA. Since, the NBA has become basically an all black league which has lead to many downgrading allegations about NBA basketball players. During the 1970's, the allegations were of illegal drug usage among NBA superstars. Whenever the league

was white, drug allegations were nonexistent. Hence, only when the league became a black league were there drug allegations. Yet, credit needs to be given to Jackie Robinson for there would not have been a NBA symbolized as the black league in the United States if there would not have been Jackie Robinson. Mr. Robinson's success helped lead black athletes to have the opportunity to play in the NBA.

Boston, MA is a great example of a city which had two different professional athletic organizations which went in two different directions with segregation and had two different results. In the mid 1940's, the Boston Red Sox had the opportunity to sign Willie Mays and Jackie Robinson. These two hall of fame players in combination with Ted Williams could have led to the building of a dynasty in Boston for the Red Sox. Rather than choose the best players regardless of race, the Red Sox organization chose to sign only white players. The world of baseball calls it "the curse of the Bambino." I call it "the curse of being a bigot." With Willie Mays and Jackie Robinson, the Red Sox could have competed with the Dodgers, Giants, and Yankees. But the city of Boston was a white city with a white team and the Red Sox would not change their stance. Contrast this stance with the stance of the Boston Celtics. Their organization made a point to get the best players regardless of race. Was race an issue with the Celtics? Of course, just like

with any other team in the 1950's or in any decade of modern day sports. Yet, the Celtics would not allow it to be a factor that hindered winning. Coach Red Auerbach is considered to be one of the best coaches in the history of the National Basketball Association. It is easy to be a great coach when he or she has one of the best players in the history of the league. Auerbach knew the ability that Bill Russell had and he did what it took to get Russell on the Celtics and allowed him the freedom to make the Celtics a dynasty winning many national championships. Even though Russell was black, he was given the salary he desired to sign with the Celtics and Auerbach even made him the first black coach in the NBA in 1966. By taking the Celtics stance unlike the Red Sox, they reaped the rewards of national championships. The Red Sox have not until recently. Even the "curse of the bigots" is no match for steroids.

#### *Indian Mascots*

By now, most people have read or heard about issues in the news regarding the use of Native American images or tribes as mascots for colleges or athletic teams. Even though no teams in the inquiry used Native American names for mascots, the county to the west of Camden County is Charlton County. Their mascot is the Indians. The reason that this is an issue, is because of the lack of truth in the Native American's portrayal or the

symbolic gesture of why they chose this tribe or this image as their mascot leading into misrepresentations.

One of the largest Native American icons in collegiate athletics is the University of Illinois whose mascot is Chief Illiniwek. The University of Illinois became known as the Fighting Illini in the early 1920's. At a pep rally, Robert Zuppke, a football hero, told of an Indian tribe named Illini and that the word "Illiniwek" meant the complete Indian man. This meant that he was complete in intellectual matters, physical matters, and spiritual matters. Hence, to build up the proud heritage of the University of Illinois they would have to be as Chief Illiniwek, complete in all aspects of life. This is how the University of Illinois received its mascot.

Today, many Native American groups question the importance of the Native American at the University of Illinois and the misrepresentations that are given to the Native Americans. According to Native Americans, the costume worn by the mascot today is misleading because it is not a true representation of what the Illini tribe would have worn. One would also never see a chief dancing around as the mascot is seen doing every home game during the half time show. But maybe more important is the perceived image of the Native American which is being damaged. Mascots in athletics are never chosen due to their nice nature or how much of a pleasant image one has. To be a mascot at a

school with tradition, the mascot has to be mean and violent to strike fear in the hearts of the opponents. As a coach, I sometimes find myself making fun of other teams' mascots. Oh wow! We are going up against the mighty ferocious parrots today... Yet, in our traditional colonial belief and thanks to Hollywood's portrayal of the Native Americans, we believe that they are savages and ruthless killers. If the reader recalls, Bobby Bowden even signs under his signature "Scalp'em" as he is the football coach of the Florida State Seminoles. Yet, the scalping technique was taught to Indians by Europeans wishing to kill off their enemies and using the Native Americans to do so. But, by using Native Americans as mascots, what that says about Native Americans is simple. It says that Native Americans are something to fear because they are savages, heathens, and infidels. The United States did the right thing by either exterminating the Indians or by removing them to reservations so that they would not be a deadly threat against the innocent white family on the farms in the rural lying areas of the West.

The Puritans had an interesting way of viewing the Native Americans. Many books have claimed that Puritans wanted to Christianize the Indians. This is complete fallacy. The last thing the Puritans wanted to do was Christianize the Indians. By Christianizing the Indians, it would have made it difficult to rationalize killing the Indians to take their land. It would



have been a lot easier killing the Indians viewing them as heathen infidels of the Devil. And so the Puritans did by sending in blankets filled with diseases such as small pox or influenza to kill the Native Americans. If this did not work, then the Puritans would burn the crops of the Native Americans in the fall so that they would be forced to starve to death in the winter time. So are these the same Native American savages that we are discussing as mascots because of their portrayed image as being ruthless or should we possibly name a team the "Puries" in honor of the barbarism of the Puritans against the Indians. Or should one think about the Battle of Wounded Knee or Andrew Jackson's attack on the Seminoles in Florida? Needless to say, the portrayal of the Native American in athletics is biased and is an issue that needs to be addressed.

#### *Track & Field*

In the literature review, no evidence of scholarly work performed on racism in high school track & field was evident. Thus, professional track & field was examined in order to understand how racism affected track & field at the professional level.

One of the biggest names in track & field is a young man from Alabama by the name of Jesse Owens. Jesse Owens' fame has been on account of two reasons. First, Jesse Owens was a phenomenal athlete that won four gold medals in the 1936

Olympics in Berlin. Secondly, Owens accomplishments allegedly proved to the world the foolishness of the Aryan belief that was going on in Germany through the Nazi political party.

James Cleveland Owens was born on 12 September 1913 in Oakville, AL to sharecroppers named Henry and Emma Owens and was the youngest of ten children. Like most black Americans during this time, he was also a grandson of a former slave. Jesse Owens lived in Oakville, AL for the first nine years of his life and then his parents moved to Ohio to try and produce a better life for their family. This is during the time when many families and individuals moved to the north in the Great Migration. While in Ohio, Jesse Owens attended school and soon caught the attention of the high school track coach named Charles Riley. After watching Jesse Owens run for sometime in middle school, Coach Riley introduced himself to Jesse Owens. Because of the racial attitude that Jesse Owens had witnessed growing up in Alabama; he was scared to hold a conversation with Coach Riley. Very few times did white men ever speak or acknowledge Jesse Owens and when Coach Riley introduced himself to Jesse Owens, the only gesture Mr. Owens could do was nod. Before too long, Coach Riley had become a father figure to Jesse Owens and spent many hours working with the future Olympic champion and spent many hours off the track taking Jesse Owens to AAU and NCAA track meets to allow Jesse Owens to see the more

advanced runners run as well as taking him to movies to allow the kid to have a social upbringing (Schaap, 2007, p. 17).

Jesse Owens attended high school at Cleveland East Technical High School. It is probably not a coincidence that he was a black man in the United States during the 1920's and attended a so called "technical" high school. While in high school, Jesse Owens met a girl named Ruth and before too long Ruth became pregnant at the age of sixteen. Despite Jesse Owens' status as a track runner and signing with Ohio State University, the pregnancy was not deemed as scandalous as it would have been in the white society of the day and Jesse Owens was allowed to continue his track career and enter his college of choice (Schaap, p. 28). The choice of which college to attend was very important to the black press. Would Jesse Owens decide to go to a racially progressive school or would he decide to attend a school that did nothing to promote equality among the races in exchange for better athletics? This is the first time that journalists and the nation tried to use Jesse Owens as a political tool. At this point in Jesse Owens' life, however, he did not concern himself with politics or racial issues. He was a victim of racism and experienced racism on a daily basis, but he himself was not concerned with fighting racism at this point. Jesse Owens just wanted to run track and be the best track star that he could be. Because of his desire to be a

track star, Jesse Owens chose Ohio State University as his college of choice because it was one of the biggest powerhouses in the nation in track & field and Jesse Owens was from Ohio (Schaap, p. 29).

Jesse Owens wreaked havoc in track & field events his first couple of years in college. In many meets, such as Ann Arbor, Jesse Owens stole the show winning every event he competed in and breaking many world records along the way. Before long, every meet he attended was packed out so that people could see the phenom Jesse Owens. Doctors were also studying Jesse Owens to try and figure out if the reason why Jesse Owens was so fast was because of race or because of some special characteristic that he held. Yet, despite all the examinations, no doctors came to the conclusion that Jesse Owens' greatness was because of his race. Examiners even noted some characteristics of Jesse Owens which were supposedly characteristic of the white race and always noted that one of Jesse Owens' great grandparents was white. Interesting to note that all examiners always concluded that race was not the reason why Jesse Owens was so dominant and included ways in which Jesse Owens always mimicked the white race of the day. This was a way for the powerful white race to explain why this supposedly black man was beating every white man the world had. Along with other black athletic superstars in the 1920's, Jesse Owens and others were helping the

progressive movement for equality. In the June 28<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Los Angeles Times* titled "The Submerged Tenth":

Jesse Owens, Negro college student, out-ran, out-hurdled, out-jumped the pick of white scholastic athletes of the country last week. Joe Louis, 21-year-old Negro, out-boxed, out-generaled and out-fought the former heavyweight white champion of the world [Primo Carnera]. Paul Laurence Dunbar, Negro, charmed the world with his Mammy poems.

George Garner is an outstanding tenor among the tenors of the country. The name of Booker T. Washington will live as long as education. The best fighters in the Spanish War were Negroes. [Negroes} are among the most loyal of all Americans. Most of them are quiet, unassuming, wholesome people. They have intelligence, stamina and courage.

Uncle Sam can count on them (Schaap, p. 45).

Of course this article did not appear in Southern newspapers, yet, it shows that some Americans were noticing the accomplishments of black Americans besides the tremendous accomplishments that were occurring in the Harlem Renaissance.

The greatest athletic accomplishments of Jesse Owens' life occurred during the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Germany.

Ironically, United States involvement in this event barely occurred. Since the modern day Olympics resumed in the late 1800's, the United States had been the premier track & field

powerhouse. The United States won more gold medals in track & field than any other country in the world. The issue as to whether the United States was going to compete in the 1936 Olympics rested with the new political organization which had just taken control over Germany. This new political power was known as the Nazi party and its leader was Adolf Hitler. A judge from New York was leading the campaign for the United States to boycott the Olympics since they were being held in Germany. The reason for the disapproval of Germany was because of the anti-Semitism that was roaring throughout Germany. Not allowing Jews to compete on its team was against the Olympic spirit of competition and sportsmanship. This argument as to whether the United States should boycott or compete ranged from the AAU to the International Olympic Committee. Not only was the United States discussing boycotting the event, but many other nations and the Olympic Committee were discussing the issue as well. For much of the world, their eyes were on the United States to see what it did. Would the United States take a stand against Hitler? Or would the United States comply with Hitler and compete? The United States' decision would have a trickledown effect and many other nations would follow the United States. Finally after much bitter debating, the AAU and IOC allowed the United States' athletes to compete after the athletes themselves demanded a chance to compete in Germany.

For black athletes such as Ben Johnson, he did not understand why the treatment of Jews in Germany was such a big deal? Johnson was quoted as saying "The Negro in the South is discriminated against as much as the Jews in Germany.. It is futile and hypocritical that Judge Mahoney should attempt to clean up conditions in Germany before cleaning up similar conditions in America" (Schaap, p. 81). This was seen on the Ohio State's trip to the Big Ten Championship track meet. While passing through Indiana, many racial insults were slung towards the black teammates and many restaurants refused to feed Jesse Owens and others even if they waited outside for one of their white teammates to bring them the food. It is also worth noting that Hitler's example for anti-Semitism began by him looking at the way the United States treated its black citizens. To help rationalize the move by the United States, the American Olympic Committee secretary, Frederick Rubein, began his campaign downgrading the athletic ability of Jews claiming that very few if any had athletic ability to be able to compete in the Olympics. Hence, Hitler was not keeping the Jews out of the Olympics based on anti-Semitism, but rather the Jews were not good enough to compete in the Olympics.

Finally the time arrived for Jesse Owens to compete in the Olympics in Berlin and the first event that Jesse Owens competed in was the 100 meter dash. On the second day of the

festivities, every person who had won had been congratulated personally by Hitler himself. However, after Jesse Owens won the 100 meter dash, Hitler was nowhere to be found and did not meet with Jesse Owens. Jesse Owens was the only Olympic champion who was slighted by Hitler up to that point. To Jesse Owens' personal track coach, Coach Snyder from Ohio State, Jesse Owens was being snubbed despite his phenomenal accomplishments because of his blackness. Newspapers across the world blasted Hitler for snubbing the black American Olympic champion because they believed Hitler snubbed Jesse Owens because of his race. Jesse Owens did not fit the traditional Aryan myth with blonde hair, blue eyes, and intelligence and did not help support Hitler's propaganda machine. To Jesse Owens, it did not matter and he perceived that Hitler waved to him as he passed by after winning the race which was good enough for him. After years of discrimination in the United States for being black, why would Germany under Hitler be any different? After the Olympics had convened, Hitler was quoted as saying "The Americans ought to be ashamed of themselves for letting their medals be won by Negroes... I myself would never shake hands with one of them (Schaap, p. 195). In the Germany newspaper, the winner was hailed as the first white person to cross the finish line. In the 100 meter dash that Jesse Owens won, a picture of the German racer who finished third was thrown on the front of the paper



and praised as the first white person to cross the finish line. The German population did not share with Hitler's views of Jesse Owens, however. Whenever Jesse Owens won an event, the German crowd which averaged around 110,000 fans cheered for Jesse Owens and Jesse Owens was reported as having his right hand cramp towards the end of the Olympics due to so many fans desiring to have his autograph and their picture taken with him. Even during the long jump competition, one of the Germany competitors, Luz Long, befriended Jesse Owens and helped him overcome some anxiety to go on and set the world record for the long jump competition.

Jesse Owens went on to win four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics with the events being the 100 meter run, 200 meter run, long jump, and 4x100 relay. After his record setting runs and extraordinary accomplishments, Jesse Owens switched his emphasis from the Olympics to putting everything into context. The following day after the Olympics, Jesse Owens said "I am proud that I am an American. I see the sun breaking through the clouds when I realize that millions of Americans will recognize now that what I and the boys of my race are trying to do is attempted for the glory of our country and our countrymen. Maybe more people will now realize that the Negro is trying to do his full part as an American citizen" (Schaap, p. 215). This was Jesse Owens trying to show that he cared about the problems

going on in the United States and hopefully that his celebrity status would help try to bring equality to the black community. At this point in his life, Jesse Owens was still a pacifist in the racial movement much like his father was.

Another racial issue that occurred during the 1936 Olympics had nothing to do with Jesse Owens. Two runners on the United States team that was deemed to run in the 4x100 relay were Marty Glickman and Sam Stoller. These two members were Jews on team USA. At the last second, the United States coach pulled the two members from the race claiming that the German team had been sandbagging and had new men to run the event in an attempt to upset the United States and embarrass the team. To help prevent this, the coach inserted Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalfe to help assure the United States victory. After the 4x100 was held, it was clear that Owens and Metcalfe was not needed and everything that the coach for team USA had said was false. Later after the Olympics, it was obvious that Mr. Glickman and Mr. Stoller did not run in the Olympics because of their Jewish background and were not allowed to compete because of politics. This is the major reason as to why the United States considered boycotting the Olympics to begin with. Mr. Glickman and Mr. Stoller should have been able to compete on the 4x100 team based on precedence set forth from the previous forty years of team USA's decision on who ran the 4x100. The United States typically always won

the 100 meter dash and that person was not allowed to run the 4x100 because the United States' team was so strong that the winner of the 100 meter dash running was not needed in order for the United States to bring home the gold medal. Hence, it gave other athletes a chance to bring home a gold medal in the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship in the Olympics. This is just one more time where the United States' hypocrisy can be seen in the treatment of its citizens (Schaap, p. 224).

### *Boxing*

Currently, boxing is not a sport endorsed by the Georgia High School Athletic Association. Yet, I feel that the racial discrimination history in boxing is important because the history revolves around violence in the ring such as the same as football on the field.

Boxing is a sport different from those previous mentioned due to the violence involved. Boxing has always had a rich history beginning in early human history and evolving into what we call professional boxing today. Man has always strived to be physically superior to another man. This is how athletics were born and one of the first athletes for black Americans was Tom Molineaux. Tom Molineaux was a former Virginia slave who had won his freedom by out boxing a neighboring plantation owner's slave. A significant amount of money had to be wagered on this fight because the plantation owner hired a British sailor to

train Tom Molineaux and Tom Molineaux was beaten whenever the sailor thought that Tom Molineaux was not training hard enough. In any event, Tom Molineaux was given his freedom by winning the fight and traveled to England to take on the English Boxing Champion Tom Cribb. As first, Tom Molineaux was not given the chance to box Tom Cribb until Tom Molineaux proved himself to be a worthy opponent. After knocking out his first two opponents, Tom Cribb agreed to fight Tom Molineaux even though he was black because the English at this time had a tradition of fair play in sport. Tom Cribb would also by custom have to surrender his title if he refused to fight any worthy challenger. This match had racial lines drawn but even more so had class tensions. The poor, lower middle class sided with Tom Molineaux while the upper middle to upper class sided with Tom Cribb. To many Britains, the thought of the championship going to the lowly Americans escalated the tensions even further. The match was held in Sussex, England on 10 December 1810. People who came to watch the event stood in the freezing cold ankle deep in mud to watch the former Virginia slave fight the British Boxing Champion. In Tom Molineaux's corner was Bill Richmond, another former slave from America, who was his trainer and boxing expert. Tom Molineaux was favored to lose 100-1 to Tom Cribb and opened the bout by pummeling the British Boxing Champion. By the 19<sup>th</sup> round, rioters ran into the ring and attacked Tom

Molineaux because of the beating he was giving Tom Cribb. During the episode Tom Molineaux suffered a broken finger. By the 28<sup>th</sup> round, Tom Cribb's trainer realized something had to be done or Tom Cribb was going to be disqualified. At the beginning of the round, Tom Cribb was out cold and could not stand up from his stool in the corner. To distract the referee, Tom Cribb's trainer yelled foul and claimed that Tom Molineaux had bullets in his hands. Once the referee had proven that he did not, Tom Cribb was conscious again and able to get up to fight. This was the turning point of the match and Tom Molineaux could not finish the job. The bout ended by Tom Cribb knocking Tom Molineaux out in one of the first interracial bouts in American history. Weeks later, Tom Molineaux challenged Tom Cribb to a rematch and this time the outcome was much different. Tom Molineaux had fired his trainer Richmond and had not trained hard for the fight. Rather he lazed around and drank alcohol. Tom Cribb, however, trained extremely hard and easily knocked Tom Molineaux out in the first couple of rounds of the match. Even though Tom Molineaux was a celebrity in France and Britain for his accomplishments, only a couple of newspapers mentioned his feat in America. White America did not dare to mention a black man fighting a white man on equal terms in America's mother country. Rather, black athletes who were slaves were mentioned by their master's name for recognition in the

newspaper. Athletics on the plantation was like the Olympics today. Owners got together and held horse races such as the quarter horse and ran many different sprinting events. These slaves were giving preferential treatment on the plantation by both the master and by fellow slaves because of their accomplishments (Rhoden, 2006, p. 52).

At the turn of the century, the white man in America was looking for every possible explanation to help prove or explain why the white man was better than the black man physically. Many times, these white athletes were successful in physically beating black men in the ring. However, from Galveston, TX came a man that drove the white status quo to the breaking point and then pushed further. This boxer was "Papa" Jack Johnson.

Arthur John Johnson was born on 31 March 1878 in Galveston, TX which was the largest city in Texas during the time. His father and mother were former slaves and the only thing his family owned was a small piece of land and a small house in Galveston. This made Jack Johnson a part of the first generation of children from former slaves to be born free (Roberts, 1983, p. 5). Much of Jack Johnson's childhood is up for debate. Despite Jack Johnson's autobiography, scholars have acknowledged how Jack Johnson always painted the truth that he wanted written about himself so very little can be taken as truth. Jack Johnson began his fighting career in Battle Royals

in Galveston. A Battle Royal was a humiliating fight in which young blacks fought other young blacks in front of a white audience while white spectators threw pennies and nickels at the boys in the middle of the ring. These types of events were extremely humiliating for young black boxers and were excellent entertainment for white society because Battle Royals preserved the traditional status quo (Roberts, p. 6). After the hurricane destroyed much of Galveston, life was never the same for Jack Johnson and he traded Battle Royals for Prize Fights.

In Prize Fighting, very seldom was a black fighter allowed to fight a white fighter. This is because if a white fighter slipped up and allowed the black fighter to win, the black community could gain a sense of pride and even for a short time, a sense of equality with the white race. Therefore, Jack Johnson was allowed to fight other blacks in Prize Fights and seldom fought lower level whites in boxing exhibitions. Opportunity to fight in the main event for the World Heavyweight Championship was for whites only. Winston Churchill best describes the feelings of whites when "In 1892 Churchill saw Jackson defeat Frank Slavin at the National Sporting Club in London. Churchill was seventeen at the time, and the match provoked his deepest racial prejudices. The picture he drew of the fight shows an apelike long armed and hunch shouldered Jackson standing over a frail looking Slavin. Churchill called

this curious piece of juvenilia 'Knockout,' but the emotions that produced it were far from innocent. When big men, one black and the other white fought, white jaws tightened" (Roberts, p. 19). Black fighters were always given the derogatory names of big black cat, coons, and were considered to be ape like. Jack Johnson himself was labeled as a "Long, lean, bullet-headed, flat-chested, coon" when compared to Jack Jeffries, the champion at the time (Roberts, p. 21). By being labeled as a black cat, white America was saying that Jack Johnson was lustful, lawless, unfaithful, and destructive. Every action that Jack Johnson took was related back to his color. Jack Johnson was a symbolic figure for the black community in both the black community's mind and in the white community's. Jack Johnson's style of boxing was considered to be defensive rather than offensive. Today, this is just a particular style such as some football coaches place a lot of emphasis on offense and some place a lot of emphasis on defense. Yet, in the early 1900's a defensive style of boxing was considered to be a lazy style which of course related back to Jack Johnson being black. White America saw him as a black man, hence, he was lazy and his defensive style of boxing was a result. White America did not want to understand the truth that black boxers in the early 1900's had to have a defensive style of boxing in order to make money. Good aggressive boxers could



not get a good boxing deal with a white fighter. This is because white America would not pay to see a black man beat up on a white man. Black fighters had to carry the white fighters late into the match and make sure that they did not beat up too bad on the white fighter while at the same time not getting pummeled himself. If a black fighter won the match too quickly, he knew that he would not get any more boxing contracts to fight a white boxer which was where one could make the most money (Roberts, p. 25).

Some boxers, however, would not take the chance of fighting and losing to a black boxer. One such boxer was Heavyweight Champion of the World Jim Jeffries. For many years he successfully defeated every white opponent who had come up before him and had defeated them convincingly. Even though he knew that he was a better fighter than Jack Johnson at the time, he still knew that in a fight, anything could happen so he refused to fight all black boxers. "When there are no white men left to fight, I will quit the business...I am determined not take a chance of losing the championship to a negro" (Roberts, p. 31). Even though Jim Jeffries was offered the largest sum of money in boxing history, he still refused to fight Jack Johnson because he was black. Good to his word, Jim Jeffries retired without ever fighting Jack Johnson and for the first time, the championship belt was left up in the air for a contender to win

it. Eventually it fell into the hands of a boxer named Burns. When asked if he would fight Jack Johnson for the tournament, Burns stated that for \$30,000 win or lose, he would fight anybody anywhere. Burns, a man true to his word did end up fighting Jack Johnson in Australia for \$30,000 and ended up losing the championship to much of everybody's dismay.

One way in which Jack Johnson challenged the traditional status quo was in his choice of women. Mr. Johnson had many women who accompanied him on his trips across the United States as he was searching for places and people to box. After the first few girls he carried with him on these tours, Mr. Johnson made a change and quit dating black girls. He decided that black girls were always trying to take his money. Thus, he started dating white women. To the American public, this went against the very strand of decency that white America stood for. The thought of a black man dating a white woman was enough to get lynched in the Deep South. Many of these women who were with Jack Johnson took the name "The Mrs. Jack Johnson" yet most of these women were prostitutes. Jack Johnson was notorious for always having two or three different women in different hotels as prostitutes who would wait there while he was visiting the city so that he could have pleasure at any time he desired. He was also very abusive to these women if they did not perform certain acts that he desired or if they became jealous of the

other girls Mr. Johnson was visiting during the night. White America was on the breaking point with Jack Johnson beating white fighters and having the Heavyweight Championship of the World. Now with Jack Johnson dating white women, it threw white America over the edge. Many black Americans were also appalled at this as well because to them Mr. Johnson was saying that black women were not good enough. Years later, Jack Johnson married a white woman who was considered to be attractive even though he still carried prostitutes with him on trips from the east coast to the west. Before too long, Jack Johnson's wife committed suicide after her father died due to the loneliness of her life and her husband beating her severely enough to place her in the hospital. She was ostracized from white society because she married a black man and she was ostracized from black society because of the resentment that she took one of their successful black men. Not too long afterwards, Jack Johnson met a white prostitute whom he married after the court proceedings began that he violated the Mann Act otherwise known as the White Slavery Law.

While he was Champion of the World, Jack Johnson felt invincible. He successfully defended his title many times against white opponents and defeated all convincingly. White society was continually searching for a Great White Hope that would return the theory of white dominance. Many times people

would say this is the Great White Hope or this man here is, but none were worthy opponents to Jack Johnson. There were, however, some black boxers who were worthy opponents for Jack Johnson but he refused to fight them. At this point, it is tough to distinguish in Jack Johnson's psyche if he considered himself to be black or pseudo-white. Finally, Jim Jeffries decided to come out of retirement and face Jack Johnson to try and redeem the white race. At this point, however, Jim Jeffries was too old and too out of shape. Jack Johnson easily defeated Jim Jeffries in what was considered to be the fight of the century. Times like these are when Jack Johnson excelled. He loved to be the center of attention. Before the fight took place, the brass band was playing "All Coons Look Alike to Me" and other songs considered to be patriotic at the time (Roberts, p. 103). It is almost as if Jack Johnson enjoyed the ridicule because he was the center of attention and mocked Jim Jeffries throughout the whole fight until Jim Jeffries was knocked out.

The aftermath of the fight, however, had enormous consequences throughout the United States. In Greenwood, SC, whites ran through the streets and beat up any black person they saw. One black man named Charles Williams was celebrating Jack Johnson's victory in Houston, TX and was slashed by a knife from ear to ear by a white man. Two blacks were killed by a group of whites in Little Rock, AK and in other places such as Atlanta,

Washington D.C., and New York City blacks ran around with knives fatally stabbing and killing white people. In San Juan Hill, blacks were locked inside tenement houses and whites caught the buildings on fire in an attempt to kill everybody inside. Most of these riots that followed the Jeffries V. Johnson fight were based on the trend that black pride was soaring and the traditional status quo was not in check that night. More than racism was at play, however, with the riots. All of these riots or attacks were lower class on lower class. Hence, the struggle economically for jobs between the races had spilled over due to the fight (Roberts, p. 109). One article in the Baltimore Times best explains the feelings of the black community after the Jeffries V. Johnson fight:

Amaze an' Grace, how sweet it sounds,  
 Jack Johnson knocked Jim Jeffries down.  
 Jim Jeffries jumped up an' hit Jack on the chin.  
 An' then Jack knocked him down again.  
 The Yankees hold the play,  
 The White man pull the trigger;  
 But it makes no difference what the white man say;  
 The world champion's still a nigger (Roberts, p. 110).

Throughout the nation the boxing film was banned that showed Jack Johnson knocking Jim Jeffries out. Minister's through out the nation clamored that boxing be outlawed or forbidden because

of the violence involved (Ward, 2004, p. 161). At the heart of the issue was that a white man could not beat the black man at this time. Replacing the boxing film at the movies was Thomas Dixon's "Clansman." This movie was based on black men raping white women and the Ku Klux Klan riding in to save the day. This was a slap in the face to the black community, yet was a way for white America to try and get back or preserve the status quo (Roberts, p. 113).

White America could not beat Jack Johnson in the ring, so it figured the second best thing was to figure out a way to keep him out of the ring. One of the easiest ways for this to occur was through trouble with the law. Jack Johnson had always had trouble with the law through his driving or through his attitude with police, but never nothing serious enough where he could not buy his way out. Yet, because of his prostitutes traveling with him across state lines, he was in violation of the Mann Act which was a federal offense. This is the time when his first wife committed suicide and angry mobs throughout the south were yelling to lynch Jack Johnson. Jack Johnson's issue was not that he took a prostitute over state lines which violated federal law. Jack Johnson's crime was that he went against the white status quo. He had married a white woman, had any white prostitute he desired, considered buying a house in an all white neighborhood, and made fun of white society inside and outside

the ring. For this, the United States' government was out for Jack Johnson courtesy of the Mann Act. Even though nothing was ever established to convict Jack Johnson, he was found guilty and sentenced to one year and a day in prison. Rather than go to prison, Jack Johnson left the country via Canada for a life of exile in Europe. While in Europe, he found that Europeans treated blacks much the same, just without the lynchings of the South. He was refused hotel rooms at the nicest hotels and refused food from the nicest restaurants. Most Englishmen were appalled at Jack Johnson and would not attend his shows because of him being a convicted felon from the United States and because of the morals in which he held himself. After World War I began, he found himself in neutral Spain making no money and made a move to Mexico. There due to political turmoil, he was forced to turn himself in to United States' authorities and served his prison sentence of a year and a day. At this point in his career, he had been beaten by a white contender for the belt and was too old to box anymore. Finally, Jack Johnson died in a car wreck on 10 June 1946 after losing control speeding around a corner. To many world class athletes, Jack Johnson was a disgrace to his sport. He continuously degraded champion Joe Louis and could not tolerate anybody saying that another black boxer was better than him. His flamboyant lifestyle with prostitutes, et cetera also insulted many athletes because a

great athlete was supposed to be humble and of high moral character. Yet, without this ego that Jack Johnson carried, he would not have been able to be the boxer he was because of the racism that was placed on him throughout his career. Finally, in the 1970's another athlete came on the stage that had Jack Johnson's attitude and lifestyle. This man's name was Muhammad Ali and without Jack Johnson paying his dues and paving the way, Muhammad Ali would not have been as successful as he was. Throughout many of Muhammad Ali's fights, trainers and managers in his corner would yell "Ghost in the House." This was in reference of Muhammad Ali's mannerism being so closely related to "Papa" Jack Johnson.

#### *Soccer*

Soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in the Georgia High School Association. Yet, no scholarly work was found on high school soccer during the literature review. Instead, racism in soccer was found in books examining professional soccer in other countries. This is important because it shows the racial views of other countries whose students come into the five counties of the inquiry as foreign exchange students and play high school sports.

Soccer is probably the most popular sport in the world. Soccer, however, has not been largely popular in the United States. Baseball originated in the United States around the



time of the Civil War. Yet, a professional soccer league has largely not been in place in the United States until the last decade and even then, it does not get the press coverage or the fan base that all other sports in the United States receive. This does not mean, however, that racism in soccer does not occur in other parts of the world where wars have been fought over soccer games. Take for example, issues of racism in soccer in the professional leagues in Britain.

Soccer in Britain is known as football. This sport is largely white where black athletes have a tremendous time dealing with racism as a player and even a harder time gaining access as a manager or coach. Many interviewed players have witnessed racism while playing soccer in Britain. One soccer player, Tony Francis, recalls one particular game in his career.

I suppose it was at Leeds, not playing for Leeds but playing at Leeds for Portsmouth where you had people shouting for ninety minutes 'shoot that nigger', 'kill that nigger'. I had that at Leeds, I had it for a spell at Portsmouth, and my own fans had a go at me for a couple of games. A minority of them because I was the only black man to play down there for a long time. I had an experience at Crystal Palace where a fan came on and abused me physically, smacked me and I had to let it. (King, 2004, p. 19).

Black soccer players in Britain understand that they have to play the role of the white man. One particular soccer player was told that he had to cut off his dreadlocks in order to be able to play for this one particular team. The player told the coach that he would not because these dreadlocks were a symbol of his history and of his African tradition. The coach then told the player to either cut them off or he would be cut from the team. The player responded that if the coach would lose his Irish accent he would cut off his dread locks. Most white people do not have dreadlocks that play soccer in Britain; hence, the coach was trying to get the player to look white. Most other players also realize that to be successful in soccer they have to act white (Back, 2001, p. 55). In a way, this is the same theory that DuBois (1989) came up with by discussing Double Consciousness. These players are black men who have to relate to black society, but also have to be able to know what is going on in white society and must contain the ability to act white in order to advance in their career.

Black athletes who try to become coaches at the end of their career face the same discrimination. Certifications and tests have become the norm in Britain in order to make sure that only the best qualified applicant is able to gain a position as a coach or manager. On the outside looking in, this sounds like a reasonable request. The league is trying to make sure that

only qualified applicants receive the position instead of the *quid pro quo* system that runs applications many times. Yet, when looking at the statistics of who receives coaching certifications and who does not, one finds that it is just another form of racism. In the United States after the Civil War, many states in the south went to poll taxes or established laws as part of the black codes that said that a person had to be able to read and comprehend the Constitution in order to be able to vote. Voter registration people had the responsibility to randomly choose people to check and make sure that they had the ability to read and understand the basis for American Government. Yet, in the Deep South, only the black registered voters were chosen to see if they could read and comprehend the Constitution. The same goes for the certification tests to be a coach in British soccer. Black coaches are not giving the same opportunity in the tutoring sessions and are discriminated against in many instances to try and discourage the black coaches from gaining licenses. In some instances, black coaches were physically threatened for asking about instances of discrimination in the coaching tutoring programs and were told that investigations took place but found no evidence of wrong doing. English tradition brags about fair play and that everybody should have a chance based on ability. Yet their actions dictate differently.

*National Football League*

Even though there is a minute amount of information found on racism in high school football, the effects that professional football has on high school football is insurmountable. Ray Lewis will stand on the sideline on a particular Sunday afternoon saying "What time is it? Game time!" and the next Friday night every high school team in the nation will be doing the same thing. This is why professional football must be studied in the inquiry.

Race plays a major role in football across the United States. Racial stereotypes have been portrayed at different levels as to where one plays is based upon race rather than ability. For many years, a quarterback was thought to need brains, leadership, and a strong arm rather than being an athlete that could use speed to make things happen. Another example is how many white running backs do you see in the NFL today despite the fact many white NFL players could play running back but have been told that they are the wrong color to run the football? During the early part of American football history, black players did not play quarterback. Many quarterbacks who came out of college with impressive statistics never were given a chance at the next level due to race such as Don McPherson from Syracuse who went undefeated in 1983. Other instances have arised as well including the 1998 incident with Derrick Crudup

Jr. at the University of Miami under Coach Larry Coker. Black quarterbacks have been given the stereotype of being mobile or athletic. White quarterbacks have the stereotype of being intelligent, able to exhibit leadership characteristics, and having great arm strength. Then there are the players who crush these racial stereotypes such as Byron Leftwich who was drafted in the 6<sup>th</sup> round by the Jacksonville Jaguars from Marshall University and Tim Tebow who is the quarterback from the University of Florida with two national championships. Byron Leftwich is the black quarterback who has the traditional white quarterback qualities and Tim Tebow is the white quarterback who has the traditional black quarterback qualities.

Racial stereotypes of players' position began to be torn down when Doug Williams won the Super Bowl and Most Valuable Player award. Florida State University head football coach Bobby Bowden said that "He was the guy that really broke the ice" when putting a black athlete at quarterback. The first NFL black quarterback was Willie Thrower in 1953. Since then, many players have been told that they would have to change positions rather than be a black quarterback in the NFL. In 1993, Charlie Ward decided to play in the National Basketball Association after winning the Heisman trophy in the NCAA due to the fact that he felt he would not be given a fair chance to play quarterback in the NFL due to his race.

The National Football League is still divided along racial lines in many aspects of the game. One of these aspects is minority NFL coaches. Very few teams have minority NFL coaches even though the league is made up of a majority of minority players. "It starts at the top. You've got white owners who hire white people for the front office who hire white head coaches who in turn hire white assistant coaches. Except for the occasional token black, the system is dominated by whites, and as long as the owners are all white, it will always be that way" (Green, 1996, p. 53). Yet, many of the rich minorities in a community have no desire to put their money into a NFL franchise. That is not to say that the money in the minority community is not there, just that interests are tied up in other avenues. The same is true for Major League Baseball organizations.

Players today segregate themselves in the NFL. On busses, sitting at restaurants, and in rooming with other players on road trips segregation can be seen. One possible explanation for this is that players come from different cultures all around the world and different cultures can breed mistrust among the players. Some NFL teams recently have had to require that roommates in training camp and on road trips have an interracial roommate. However, if the players are not open to this idea then usually the experiment is a bust (Green, p. 51).

Other NFL players today face racism off the field like many others have done in the past. Some black NFL players have stated how humiliated they have felt when trying to rent an apartment in a city that they have just been traded to and the feeling of being rejected because their race was black. The most common excuse is that the property is no longer for rent. These black National Football League players have more money than ninety-nine percent of the population, yet land lords do not trust their money since they are a black man (Green, p. 52).

#### *Theoretical Foundation*

One philosopher that my dissertation's theoretical framework is based upon is Hannah Arendt (2003). Arendt was a Jew that fled Germany during the Holocaust after having an affair with a Nazi officer. Arendt's arguments are relevant because she examined the problems with the Nazi government and their relationship to the Holocaust and the rest of society. This discrimination against the Jews relates to the discrimination being performed on minorities in the United States since the arrival of Europeans at Jamestown in Virginia. After all, Hitler received his inspiration for the Holocaust from the lynchings and racial discrimination that was occurring in the United States, especially in the Deep South. Racism is the belief that a race is inferior because they are a particular race. Racial discrimination is the actions taken based on

racism. During the Holocaust, Germany exhibited racism and racial discrimination on different races. The Jews took the blunt end of the German racial discrimination acts which in most cases led to death. Arendt asks the important question who is responsible for what, after World War II, in Germany? Obviously one cannot blame the Jews for the Holocaust as many did during the event. Yet, Arendt asks the question; do you blame the German people who left who would not have any part in the Holocaust or do you blame the German people who stayed? Arendt argues that the German people who left are more at fault than the German people who stayed because they did nothing to stop the racial discrimination from occurring. The German people who left took a selfish approach to the situation in order to please their own souls by saying "I did not do it." They left and did not care what was happening to the races discriminated against. To the German people that stayed, Arendt says they can argue "We who appear guilty today are in fact those who stayed on the job in order to prevent worse things from happening; only those who remained inside had a chance to mitigate things and to help at least some people; we gave the devil his due without selling our soul to him, whereas those who did nothing shirked all responsibilities and thought only of themselves, of the salvation of their precious souls" (Arendt, 2003, p. 34). Thus, are the German people who left to be blamed since they did



nothing to stop the racial discrimination or are the German people who stayed who tried to help out in small ways while still executing people? The same question could be asked of racism in the United States. Are the people who ignore racism that they know blatantly exist or is occurring just as responsible as the people who are committing the racial acts? According to Arendt's belief, the answer would be yes based on her theory. Arendt believes that if a person has the ability to stop racial discrimination, then he or she has the responsibility to stop it. Of these past events that we as scholars and historians examine, how much can we judge? For example, two theories which try to help explain responsibility when horrific events occur are the intentionalist theory and the functionalist theory. The intentionalist theory is that the event that occurred was intentional and on purpose. In the Holocaust, according to the intentionalist theory, Hitler knew what he was doing from the very beginning to oust the Jews. Recent evidence of this is the blueprint findings of Auschwitz which include an extermination room in the blueprints. Hence, everybody who helped build Auschwitz including the designers and higher authority knew that people would be killed intentionally at these facilities. The functionalist theory says that no individual is to blame for these horrific events that take place. The entire system or society is to blame instead. After

World War II, many German philosophers believed in the functionalist theory because it did not indict themselves or their Nazi friends. To a doctor working in a concentration camp that made the decision to either keep or exterminate a prisoner, he or she would not be guilty because he or she did nothing wrong. Rather, society was wrong and the doctor was an innocent product of society. However, Arendt believed that there was no such thing as collective guilt. When horrific events occur, individual guilt must occur in order to have individual responsibility (Arendt, p. 47). To help answer the question of can we judge past events, Arendt says that we should judge past events despite what the society was like and that we must judge past events in order to learn from their mistakes and protect the future (Arendt, p. 35). This philosophy of responsibility by Arendt can be used to examine guilt and responsibility of present racial events that are occurring in high school athletics. When interviewees were asked the question during interviews "Did you do anything to stop the racial discrimination act from occurring? If not why?," Arendt's philosophy of responsibility was engaged to show that by not doing anything to stop the discrimination acts, then one is just as guilty as the oppressor.

Racial ideology in athletics played an important role in the theoretical foundation of this dissertation. One particular

author, Coakley (1998) was used as to his explanation as to why some racial groups seem to be physically superior to others in high school sports. In essence, racial ideology influences everyone when it comes to sport participation and what position one plays in that sport. Very few coaches at the high school level take an objective view when it comes to evaluating players to play at the position that will best help the team. This includes the black athlete, whose racial ideology has seemed to hinder and make superior as a result. The hindrance and boost of racial perceived superiority is explained in the results section of this dissertation.

To help answer the question as to why black athletes in many places are typically better athletes than whites, the reader needs to examine Coakley's (1998) chart in which he shows how social conditions can lead to athletic superiority.

Coakley's (1998) chart says:

When these four social conditions are added together: A dominant racial ideology promoting stereotypes of black male physicality, a long history of racial segregation and differential treatment that limits socioeconomic opportunities for black men, the sense of desperation that comes with the feeling that life chances are limited, and widespread opportunities and encouragement to develop skills and excel in a few sports. The intermediate result

is this: a segment of the African American community believes that it is the biological and cultural destiny of black men to be great athletes in certain sports and young black men are motivated to use every opportunity to develop the skills they need to fulfill that destiny. The hypothesis is it is the sense of destiny, combined with continued motivation and opportunities to develop certain sport skills, that leads to outstanding performances among black male athletes in selected sports (p. 257).

Under the discriminatory conditions of the past and present, black citizens have been given very little opportunity for advancement in the United States. Statistics (Bradburn, & Sikora, 2002) show that today's black men with the same credentials make less than the equivalent white man. It is human nature to try and succeed in something. Whenever the black man was hindered socially, academically, and economically in the United States, he turned to athletics to try and rise above the limitations placed on his race. This gave the black man motivation and a hunger to succeed that the white man in athletics did not have. For example, during my high school days, I was the only white athlete at the school that lifted weights. Most white kids were working jobs with their dad in order to take over the family business one day. Most black kids' fathers did not own a business so they were in the weight

room trying to get bigger and stronger to get an athletic scholarship to make something out of their lives since their parents did not have the money to send them to college. In this example, tell me who the better athlete will be by their senior year?

Another part of the theoretical framework will be the concept of the other by Derrida. To begin the concept of the other, the gift of death must be explained. Derrida (1995) believes that death is a gift to human society. Without death, people would not have importance.

Death is very much that which nobody else can undergo or confront in my place. My irreplaceability is therefore conferred, delivered "given," one can say, by death. It is the same gift, the same source one could say the same goodness and the same law. It is from the site of death as the place of my irreplaceability that is of my singularity that I feel called to responsibility. In this sense only a mortal can be responsible (p. 41).

Nobody can take someone's place and be the exact same person. This makes people irreplaceable or important. "The other in its relation to infinite alterity, one who regards without being seen but also whose infinite goodness gives in an experience that amounts to a gift of death" (Derrida, p. 3). Alterity is the idea that you are very different from any one else. The

notion of the other is referred to somebody who is marginalized. Othering somebody is like ostracizing them. Yet, if people are irreplaceable, how can you other somebody? This can not happen which is exactly what has occurred in the history of the United States in regard to race and especially in professional athletics.

Besides the idea of the other, Derrida also philosophizes about the idea of deconstruction. Deconstruction is not something that one can define or give a few words defining what it means. Deconstruction is actually a discipline of philosophy on its own accord. It allows a person an openness to question everything. In Caputo's book, deconstruction is described symbolized by a nutshell. Society or communities place norms and roles inside a nutshell which encapsulates a nut inside. The purpose of deconstruction is to squash the nutshell on the outside and to let the nut out. It saves a discipline from itself and reopens systems not allowing them to close. Words, for example, can not have set meanings. Whenever words have set meanings they die. The same is true for life. Life must run through all obstacles and when it does not, then a person might as well be dead.

In the same thought Derrida, in Caputo (1997) believes that it is the impossible that makes the possible possible (Caputo, p. 31). An example would be that when the Declaration of

Independence was written in 1776, it declared that all white people living in the 13 British colonies to be free from rule of the king in Britain; not all people such as slaves. Slaves, however, were seeking the impossibility of freedom and equality during and after the Declaration of Independence. Currently, gays and lesbians in the community are seeking the impossibility of equality beginning with the legal concept of marriage in most states. Every generation has an impossibility that it faces as its new horizon to make the possible possible. Today's students are becoming open minded about homosexuality, but are close minded about learning which will be the future generation's impossibility.

Many times Derrida has said how he loves reading the classics, such as Plato, because every time he reads them it is like he is reading them for the first time. Because of this he has been giving the reputation of not being conservative. Derrida contradicts this belief, however, saying that he is very conservative of a different type. He would like to go back to the classics and old traditions of philosophy because over time they have been folded by tradition. Deconstruction would unfold these ideas and discover something new of old. In other words, take the same discipline and make it new in a different way never done before (Caputo, p. 37).

Derrida also says that human nature is always waiting on the messiah. By messiah, I am not referring to Jesus Christ or the one to come that the Jews are anxiously waiting. Rather, it is a belief based on the Old Testament that a person awaits anxiously on something. In fairy tales, the fair damsel waits on her messiah which is a knight in shining armor. For many young kids, they wait on their messiah days in advance before Christmas in which they get to open Christmas presents. This object, event, or person that is the messiah is something that is so different from ourselves, that we cannot understand, but we must constantly seek understanding. Human nature knows that we will not know or cannot possibly understand, but we still seek this understanding of the other.

Society believes in issues of community rather than issues of hospitality. Hospitality is where somebody loans someone something without the idea or expectation of returning the object. Deconstruction is the idea of hospitality. Hospitality welcomes with open arms the other without knowing what the other is or expecting anything in return from the other. Communities, however, build up walls and use force to keep the other out. "Such nationalist identitarianism does everything it can to prevent the other from crossing over our borders, from taking our jobs, from enjoying our benefits and going to our schools, from disturbing our language, culture, religion, and public



institutions (Caputo, p. 106). Communities are stuck on traditions and cultures that say that "I am better than you and if you try to come into my community I will kill you with force." On traditions, however, Derrida in Caputo says "A tradition is not a hammer with which to slam dissent and knock dissenters senseless, but a responsibility to read, to interpret, to sift and select responsibly among many competing strands of tradition and interpretations of tradition" (Caputo, p. 37). Many times white communities will make racist comments such as "once one black person moves into the neighborhood we'll be infested by them. They multiply like cockroaches." Members of other ethnic groups make the same comments about other races or ethnic groups as well when they are in the overwhelmingly majority of an area. This is because society today is a community (Caputo, p. 51). To Hitler the solution was simple. Annihilate any other that was different than what he wanted. However, Derrida in Caputo says that "a state in which there would be only unum would be a terrible catastrophe" (Caputo, p. 15). This is because "there is no society without faith, without trust in the other" (Caputo, p. 23).

Nietzsche is famous for saying "What does not destroy me, makes me stronger" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. XI). Yet, his philosophy was very useful in the inquiry of this dissertation. One issue that Nietzsche discusses is what is good and who

determines what is good? Many times the answer to these questions are taken from the *Bible*. The *Bible* says blessed are the meek and the humble and discusses the problem that rich men have when trying to enter heaven. The *Bible* also discusses what is good and what is bad. Many people derive their morals from this book, yet Nietzsche says that in society it is the opposite. What is good and who are defined as good are determined by the people with power according to Nietzsche.

The judgment 'good' did not originate among those to whom goodness was shown. Much rather has it been the good themselves, that is, the aristocratic, the powerful, the high-stationed, the high-minded, who have felt that they themselves were good, and that their actions were good, that is to say of the first order, in contradistinction to all the low, the low-minded, the vulgar, and the plebeian (Nietzsche, p. 3).

One of the biggest misconceptions is that intellectuals are incorruptible. Arendt (2003) also said that intellectuals can easily be led into crime like anybody else. Throughout history, how many times have the people with power found to be corrupt? Hence, what is society's definition of good may not be entirely correct. Like James (1978) believed, truth is only relevant to the individual. What was good in the 1950's in the United States in regards to racism was designed according to the white

male in charge. The black man had no voice in what was good. Because of the actions taken against the black man in the United States, according to Nietzsche, "there can exist no happiness, no gladness, no hope, no pride, no real present, without forgetfulness" (Nietzsche, p. 30). Yet, if we forget what happened, it is a disservice to humanity because the human race would not learn from past events. If humanity forgets, there will be no guilt and no responsibility. By receiving a voice, however, there could be hope and pride without forgetting. This was one of Malcolm X's ideologies during the Civil Rights Movement. Another part of Nietzsche's philosophy discusses healing after people have been done wrong. For people who have been a part or have been the direct result of racism in the past, how will their attitude be towards society? Nietzsche suggests they may take the stance that it is everybody else's fault for their problems or for the way they feel.

All sufferers have an awful resourcefulness and ingenuity in finding excuses for painful emotions; they even enjoy their jealousy, their broodings over base actions and apparent injuries, they burrow through the intestines of their past and present in their search for obscure mysteries wherein they will be at liberty to wallow in a torturing suspicion and get drunk on the venom of their own malice—they tear open the oldest wounds, they make themselves bleed from the

scars which have long been healed, they make evildoers out of friends, wife, child, and everything which is nearest to the... (Nietzsche, p. 95).

During the inquiry, this feeling became evident as a theme because of racial events that occurred in the past.

One of the key concepts of Nietzsche is the concept of *amor fati*. In Babich (2006), Nietzsche believes:

"To teach the love of the world, to teach the love of life, *amor fati*, one must first learn how to love, as Nietzsche reminds us. And loving, loving anything at all, is an acquired art. To love the past and to call it good is to see that everything of what was is wholly necessary, is equally needful, and that one is not apart from but a part of, an intrinsic piece of the whole. This love of fate does not make tragic suffering any less tragic" (p. 158).

*Amor fati* is the love of life and fate. This love is not a science, however, rather an art. In life, good and bad things happen to individuals. The key to *amor fati* is to accept the bad things along with the good and not to reject or become angry when bad things happen. This is especially true when bad things happen to what one deems a good person. The problem with anger is that anger can lead into victimhood. Tragic things in life are just part of life and just because something bad happens does not mean that one is a victim. When bad things happen,

embrace the bad circumstance or fate because it is the only chance at this situation. The reason that it is the only chance at this situation is due to the Nietzsche belief of the eternal return of the same.

Nietzsche believes in a concept called the eternal return of the same. What this means is that if a person is given the exact same opportunity to do things over again, the person would make the exact same choice as he or she did the first time. In Babich (2006), Nietzsche say:

"This is the teaching of the eternal return of the same and it is something commentators find seemingly more cruel: an affirmation of pain and violence as not only inevitable but necessary, of age and death and change all as necessary and as a reconstitution of the becoming that brings such change, absolved in itself as innocent, without fault.

Commentators have supposed that the sheer promulgation of the doctrine of the eternal return of the same affirms ever event in history" (p. 91).

However, one can not have certainty in life. Certainty kills or stifles art and life. Kind of like standardized tests and zero tolerance policies in public schools do. The love of fate must be done through the arts which is a source of imagination and creativity rather than through science. This brings out the affirmation of life. In the affirmation of life Nietzsche tries

to be happy and joyful in all things, even through experiences of tragedy and pain.

Nietzsche felt that Germans were tragic because they did not embrace fate in their lives. Because they did not embrace all things, they did not achieve all that they should have achieved. In this critique, Nietzsche believes that Germans were not living their lives because they did not embrace tragedy. Because they did not embrace tragedy or *amor fati*, they did not grow and this did not allow them to achieve. In *amor fati*, tragedy is not just something one gets over. This grief and pain is felt for a life time, but is a natural thing such as the nature of life. An example of this pain and grief lasting a life time is young parents losing a six month old baby due to disease. Thus, in life, according to *amor fati* tragic things will occur. The key to achieving in *amor fati* is the reaction that one makes to tragic events. The key is to not make a tragic situation more tragic.

Throughout the course of history, thinking has been a dangerous concept that scares people with power. In Babich (2006), Nietzsche states:

"If it is to think about what provokes thoughtfulness with respect to the range of what is dangerous to be thought about—from truth to love, beauty, and grace—to think about such thinking invites reflection on danger itself, on the

danger as such: it is to engage in thinking about danger”  
(p. 13).

As soon as a person begins thinking or speaking on concepts such as truth or love, a person becomes a menace to society and is dangerous. Joan of Arc, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, et cetera have all be found guilty of thinking in society and have all paid for it with their lives such as Socrates. Thinking has the possibility to bring about change that the community does not want. Thinking is more hospitable rather than community. This is why W.E.B. DuBois was seeking the talented tenth to receive a liberal arts education that focused on the ability to think to lead the Blackman out of inequality rather than Washington's vocational education which did not teach a person to think for him or herself.

*Ressentiment* as Nietzsche describes acts as a lynch mob going after somebody or something. The whole time the mob is yelling “we’re going to get you.” This *ressentiment* is a deep hatred and is a self hatred, too. In life, humans crucify others in daily life and in the media. People also crucify themselves and their own groups. Fans, parents, and community members can have *ressentiment* about their team that they support because of an action that the team commits. My great grandmother taught me how to be a true Atlanta Braves fan from the time I was born. Even through the bad times, I loved the

Braves and wanted them to win. However, when they traded a good friend, Adam Wainright, to the St. Louis Cardinals organization my desire because of my anger towards the Braves was for them to lose every game in the upcoming seasons. Even though I was a Braves fan, I had self-hatred towards my team because of an action that they made in the off-season. This continues in society. If a person feels that he or she did not get a job because they were a certain race, he or she could hold deep self-hatred for being that particular race which would turn to *ressentiment*. An example of self-hatred leading to *ressentiment* is Popsy Jack Johnson, the boxer. Historians and psychologists have argued over whether Jack Johnson thought of himself as white or black because of the *ressentiment* he had due to self-hatred of his black race.

Sometimes *ressentiment* is viewed as karma. In other words, what goes around, comes around. The difference between hatred and *ressentiment*, however, is the level of the hatred. In karma, people traditionally say that this person is a bad person so they are going to get their "come upings" one day. Whatever that may be? In *ressentiment*, the hatred of the other is so deep that people will try to ruin or destroy something of another's just to destroy it so they do not have it anymore even though it does not benefit the destroyer by destroying it in the least. If a person is jealous that his next door neighbor has a



pet goat, then that person will go kill the goat just so his neighbor does not have it anymore. Killing the goat will not benefit him in the least. If I cannot have it, then nobody should have it. People with *ressentiment* have no life and souly focus their life on what they have grievances about. In the world of coaching, parents sometime exhibit *ressentiment* about a coach not playing their child or in a position that the parents think their child should play. Three years later, the parents are still writing letters in the newspaper trying to damage the career of the coach or trying to cause as many problems as possible. Maybe the child just was not good enough? Parents do not see this reality and would rather destroy the coach in a display of *ressentiment*.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

#### *Hypothesis*

In the literature review, I found many instances of racial discrimination that have occurred at the collegiate and at the professional level. The United States has always been a culture based on racism, even before the arrival of 20 African indentured servants in 1619, with racial issues of white men and native people. Based on the knowledge that racial discrimination has occurred at the two levels above high school athletics and almost all other aspects of society, I predicted that racial discrimination would be found in the five counties of Southeast Georgia where I conducted my inquiry. I also predicted that racial discrimination would be found to be occurring currently in most high school athletic programs in these five specific counties since racism is still a considerable obstacle in the United States.

#### *Methodology to Literature Review*

To begin my literature review, I searched through literature in hopes of finding journal articles on racial discrimination in high school athletics. Instead of finding articles on racial discrimination in high school athletics, I found a few articles on racial discrimination in collegiate athletics and in professional sports. I also found articles on

racial discrimination in high schools in general. However, in terms of volume and useful information, these articles were minimal in scope and number. I then went to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and did a book search for athletics/sports and race. A few titles matched my search criteria and were on topic. I analyzed their bibliographies and ordered the books that were offered. What I came to realize early on in my literature review is that only one book was available that pertained to high school athletics in terms of racial discrimination. This was Bill Yoast's autobiography from the movie "Remember the Titans." This let me know that it would be a difficult topic to approach given the unique standpoint of examining racial discrimination at the high school level, but that this standpoint was both justifiable and needed to fill the void in academic knowledge.

One of the most profound books that I read was Robinson's (1995) autobiography. I never realized the torment and pain that Robinson went through by breaking the forty year old color barrier in baseball. Robinson risked his life and had to change who he was as a person in the beginning of his baseball career to make it possible for others of his race to have the opportunity to follow in his footsteps. In his book he frequently remarked, "because I was black, I never had it made." That was an understatement for the adverse treatment he received. By reading this book I gained a better understanding

of the historical impact and significance race has had in athletics. It allowed me an opportunity to experience past experiences of racial discrimination in sports which introduced me to issues that did occur in my inquiry. Yet, Robinson's autobiography or any of the other readings did not elaborate on the questions of why this occurred nor did they propose a plan to resolve the issues of racial discrimination in athletics. Coakley (1998) would be the exception to this as he explored why racial discrimination occurs in athletics. These readings helped me come up with my three basic research questions being that only one of them was discussed at some level in the review. Not being able to find an answer to why racial discrimination occurs, I turned to research books by black scholars in the field and books that discussed racial discrimination. Though these books had nothing to do with athletics, I felt that the reasons for discrimination are similar. After rereading the works of DuBois (1989), West (2001), and Takaki (1993) I began putting the overall picture together which helped me to further my possible theoretical framework for the dissertation and to narrow down my three major research questions.

There were many aspects of the topic that were missing in the literature review. First, only one of the authors in the literature review focused on racial discrimination at the high school level. Authors discussed what racial discrimination acts

were occurring outside the high school level, but avoided the issue of why this inequality was taking place. Secondly, no author made an attempt to say how this discrimination could be stopped; they would say this person called Jackie Robinson a "jungle boy" or another discriminatory term, but never would make a suggestion on what Jackie or society could have done to fight this racial injustice. Due to the lack of information in two areas of my literature review, I made sure to include these two issues as main research questions for this project.

The history of racial discrimination in the United States is very well documented. From the book of *1,000 Lynchings in the South* to other novels wrote by many scholarly authors, the documentation for racial discrimination is very prevalent and shown in almost all situations and events. I used the information gained in this part of the literature review to make assumptions for my hypothesis. Since all other aspects of society have to deal with issues of race, so do high school sports in the five specific counties that are in the inquiry.

#### *Subjects and Sites*

The sites where this inquiry occurred were five surrounding counties in Southeast Georgia. I chose them because they surround my hometown which is Brunswick, GA. I have lived my entire life in Brunswick with the exception of the time I spent in Statesboro, GA while I was attending Georgia Southern

University. I was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Team All American out of high school playing baseball at shortstop and possess a valued interest in the athletic communities in this area. After receiving my bachelor's degree at Georgia Southern University, I returned to Brunswick and taught history while coaching baseball, football, and softball for three years at Brunswick High School. I then transferred to Brantley County High School where I have been the head softball coach for four years and the head baseball coach for three years. While at these two schools, I have witnessed many events of racism between student-athletes and between coaches and players. I have also seen the community threaten boycotts if a particular color coach was not hired for a particular position. On one specific road trip to Appling County, the head baseball coach that I was under at the time yelled at the only black player on the team while we were passing through a cotton field "feel at home Heron." Instead of Heron, he used the player's name. I knew from that point I had to do something about the injustices and this is the reason for the inquiry into racial discrimination in sports in Southeast Georgia Schools. This is the area I am from and I owe it to the people who live here. The substance of this study will be based on the experiences of student-athletes in these high schools and specific instances of racial discrimination that occur.

The first county is Brantley County. It is a small county in Georgia that has only two red lights and one high school which is Brantley County High School. Brantley County High has a demographic breakdown of 980 students with 95% white, 4% black, and less than 1% coming from all other ethnicities (GreatSchools.net, 2008). This places Brantley County High School in AA classification according to the Georgia High School Association. The larger the number of A's in a classification, the higher the classification. Out of all high schools and counties that will be examined, Brantley County High School is the most predominately white school. According to statistics, 46% of students are on free or reduced lunch. In 2008, Brantley County High School scored above state average on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests in all subjects except Social Studies. This high school also scored below state and national average in all areas of the ACT test used for college admittance (GreatSchools.net, 2008).

Brantley County is the least developed county that will be analyzed in this study. The only fast food restaurant in the county is Dairy Queen and very little industry exists in Brantley County. Most residents who live in Brantley County must leave the county to work in other counties because there are not enough jobs in the county. However, the higher paying jobs in Brantley are held by employees who live out of county so

the tax base in going to another county. This hurts the educational funding for the county and is one of the major reasons why students in Brantley County are the lowest funded per student in the study.

According to the United States Census, it is estimated that 15,735 residents lived in Brantley County in 2006. Of this population, 94.3% is considered to be Caucasian. In the population, 72.5% had a high school diploma and 6.2% of the population has a bachelor's degree. One interesting statistic is that the average commute time to work for citizens of Brantley County is thirty-four minutes. This is the average time to put citizens of Brantley about fifteen miles into one of the neighboring counties.

The county to the north of Brantley is Wayne County. Wayne County High School is a AAAA classification school according to the Georgia High School Association and has a school population of 1,464 students with 72% white, 22% black, 4% Hispanic, less than one percent Asian, and one percent deemed as unspecified. Wayne County High School also has 48% of its students qualify for free and reduced lunch. On the Georgia High School Graduation Test, Wayne County High School scored below state average on three of the four exams (GreatSchools.net, 2008).

Economically, Wayne County's economic structure is beginning to decline like the rest of the nation. In the last



year, two major car dealerships (Ford and Chevrolet) have closed down and pulled out of Wayne County due to lack of sales. Other businesses have also closed down recently because of the county finally allowing Wal Mart to come in which was rejected for many years. Wayne does have some major industry still employing workers, however. One of these major industries is Rayonier. Rayonier is a paper plant on Highway 301 just north of Jesup which employs many of the higher paid workers who live in the county. This industrial sector of the county gives the educational system a huge tax base which allows Wayne County to attract better teachers and coaches because they pay more. Wayne also has a large agricultural sector in the community even though it is declining in size.

Wayne County's population was estimated to be 28,895 in 2006 which is 78.6% Caucasian, 19.7% black, and 4.3% Hispanic (field workers). High school graduation rate in Wayne County is 70.1% and people who hold bachelor degrees are 11.6% of the population. Mean travel time to work is 26.2 minutes which means more people are working in county rather than out of county ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008).

The next three counties that were analyzed lie on the coastal areas of Southeast Georgia starting on the Georgia/Florida line and working northward. Camden County is located on the Georgia Coast at the southernmost tip of Georgia

next to Florida. Like the previous two counties discussed, Camden County only has one public high school in its county and it is a AAAAA classification school according to Georgia High School Association. The student population of Camden County High School is 2,932 with 63% being white, 28% being black, 4% being Hispanic, one percent being Asian, less than one percent being American Indian, and 3% being unspecified. Thirty four percent of the high school's population also qualifies for free or reduced lunch. On the Georgia High School Graduation Test, students at Camden County High School scored above the state average on all four exams (GreatSchools.net, 2008).

Camden County is different from the other counties in the study because of the navy base located at King's Bay. This allows Camden County High School to have enormous amounts of funding that the other counties do not receive. When looking at athletic facilities, Camden County is above most colleges in the Southeast part of the United States. Both their baseball and football fields have won state awards for nicest facilities in the state and they have just built a state of the art weight room for the high school that houses over forty different workout stations, ten speaker surround sound system, and a full size drop down movie screen. This facility has over 28,000 lbs of weights and is larger than most school's gym

([www.camdencountyfootball.com](http://www.camdencountyfootball.com), 2008). Without the Navy base, none of this would be possible at Camden County due to funding.

The estimated population of Camden County in 2006 is 45,118 with 75.2% being white, 20.6% black, 2.8% Hispanic, and 1.4% Asian. Educationally, 83.3% of all residents have a high school diploma and 16% of all residents have a bachelor's degree. The poverty rate in Camden County was 11.1%. One interesting statistic that shows Camden County High School's funding is that federal funding in Camden County was \$523,326,000 in 2004 ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), 2008).

The county to the north of Camden and east of Brantley and Wayne is Glynn County. Glynn County is the only county in the study which consists of two public high schools. These two schools are Brunswick High School and Glynn Academy. The first school took the place of the historically black high school and continues this pattern with a vocational curriculum while the other high school is the college preparatory school. Even today, the community threatens to boycott the school system if a white coach or a black coach is hired at a particular school. The last instance of this occurring was in the spring of 2008 when Brunswick High School hired a new football coach. Quoted in the newspaper and on numerous online discussion boards were residents of the county threatening to boycott if a black coach was not hired.

Brunswick High School is an AAAA classification school according to Georgia High School Association and has a student population of 1,832 with 54% being white, 42% black, 3% Hispanic, one percent Asian, and less than one percent American Indian with 42% of the population qualifying for free or reduced lunch. On the Georgia High School Graduation Tests, students at Brunswick High scored below state average in all four (GreatSchools.net, 2008).

Glynn Academy is a AAAA classification school according to Georgia High School Association and has a student population of 1,808 students with 59% being white, 36% black, 4% Hispanic, less than one percent Asian, and less than one percent American Indian. Glynn Academy also has a free or reduced lunch rate of 33% (GreatSchools.net, 2008).

Glynn County is the most industrialized county in the study and is also the largest county by population in the study. Glynn County is home to some major corporations such as Colonel's Island where the majority of cars for BMW, Jaguar, Porsche, and Volkswagen enter the United States on the east coast. Other major corporations or employers in the area include Sea Island Corporation, Hercules, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Cellulose, and many more businesses and industries that employ hundreds of workers. The tourism industry is also very lucrative for Glynn County. Millions of

dollars are made each year with visitors coming to Glynn County to enjoy the life on the beach at Jekyll Island, St. Simons Island, Little Saint Simons Island, and Sea Island. Glynn County has a complex system of infrastructure as well. Through Glynn County runs Highway 341 and Highway 82 which connects Glynn County to all parts of west Georgia and the Macon area as well as Interstate 95 which connects Glynn County with areas as far south as Key West and as far north as Maine. The railroad system throughout Glynn County connects to cities such as Atlanta, New Orleans, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, Kansas City, and New York City. Glynn County has two deepwater warm water ports located at Colonel's Island and the Mayor's Terminal in downtown Brunswick which was once used to build Liberty Ships during World War II. Glynn County also includes two major air ports on St. Simons Island and a former Naval Air Station in Glynco Jet Port that is so long that the president's plane routinely lands there when the president stops to visit the Golden Isles and is the second back up spot for the space shuttle to land due to its size. Because of the money brought into Glynn County through tourism and industry, many private schools abound throughout the county. One of the largest private high schools is Frederica Academy which houses over a thousand students of Glynn County's wealthier residents. Many other private schools exist as well which pull from the public school system.

The county to the north of Glynn County is McIntosh County. McIntosh Academy is a AA classification school according to Georgia High School Association with a student population of 579 students with 55% being black, 43% white, one percent Asian, less than one percent Hispanic, and less than one percent American Indian. This is the only school in the study that is a majority black school and is also the smallest school in the study. The free or reduced meal rate of students at McIntosh Academy is 65%. On the Georgia High School Graduation Tests, students at McIntosh Academy scored above state average in all subjects with the exception of math (GreatSchools.net, 2008). Close to 75% of all residents living in McIntosh County are black. This county makes an interesting comparison because even though the racial lines are reversed, the results could possibly be the same as the other four predominantly white counties.

McIntosh County is a mixture of rich neighborhoods and poor trailer parks. McIntosh has many rivers and marsh areas that line the coastal areas of the county that allow residents to build large deep water homes which help the tax base for the county school system. McIntosh also has an island located off its coast called Sapelo Island, but unlike St. Simons Island which has been developed, Sapelo Island is extremely rural with many former slave families living on the island with characteristics of Gullah still being spoken on the island. One

of the largest industries in McIntosh County is the shrimping industry. A huge festival is held every year at the water front called Blessing of the Fleet which is held at the beginning of the shrimping season. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are brought into the county through this business yearly with fresh wild shrimp. Many of the other wealthier residents in the county work in either Savannah, Georgia or in Glynn County and commute back and forth (www.census.gov, 2008).

When performing a qualitative inquiry, one has to be careful not to generalize the population, but rather to develop an in depth ideology of what is occurring. To help best develop and understand the events that are occurring, I purposefully chose individuals to interview who have experience with high school sports in these five specific counties. By choosing individuals who are involved in high school sports in these areas, it helped me be able to explain the phenomenas which have occurred. Of the people that volunteered to be a part of the research topic, I made sure that the people were of a mixed racial class as well as both male and female. With students, I asked the athletic directors how many current athletes he or she had. I then made that many number of copies for the school to pass out and of the ones that volunteered, the athletic directors randomly chose ten student-athletes from each school

of mixed racial classes and sexes to be interviewed on the day assigned.

*Respecting the Rights of Participants*

Ethical considerations are always a factor regardless of the project one is working on and the phrase "do no harm" is extremely important. The most significant ethical concerns I had dealt with causing my subjects mental harm. Bringing up bad memories of the past can sometimes be depressing to subjects or cause them to relive a painful experience from their past. Hopefully, the subjects were able to see that I was trying to help progress their cause and were excited about the project and the impact that it had. There were also political considerations to keep in mind while working on this project. Anytime the topic of race is discussed, politicians run and hide because it is a serious topic that many people are scared to talk about based on the consequences of different interpretations by people within the community and media. My professional goal is to be a head baseball coach at a high school that is a state perennial powerhouse. Keeping those goals in mind, it is possible that publishing this project could have political consequences for my personal and professional goals. It is naïve to think that in many places in Georgia, small town politics do not exist or play a role in job selection along with other factors including "who you know" and racial



characteristics. In my current teaching situation, I do not foresee a black individual ever being hired as a head varsity athletic coach at my high school. If individuals in the community see that I am trying to further the cause of the black community, I would be viewed as a trouble maker and as a race agitator. In essence, there is a strong possibility that my coaching career at that high school would be cut short very quickly. No one wants to hire an individual that they know is going to try to "rock the boat." When discussing racial issues however, the boat will be rocked severely. This could also occur at the collegiate setting and to think otherwise is ignorant. Professors are black listed based on their thoughts and beliefs and there is very little academic freedom at some universities today. Therefore it is my belief that political implications linked to this project could severely help or hinder my personal and professional goals in Southeast Georgia and surrounding areas in the South.

My study was approved by the IRB for safety measures and all documents and parent / subject consent forms were approved by the IRB to protect the individuals being interviewed. I also took into consideration to honor the research sites that I went to. I considered myself a guest at each high school and went by the sayings "out of sight, out of mind." I maintained minimal

disruption to the events that were occurring at the high schools during my interviews.

I made it a point to report my research in entirety and all honesty as well. If no findings showed issues of racial discrimination in high school sports, I would have reported this fully and in all honesty disproving my original hypothesis that issues of racial discrimination in sports are occurring at the five specific counties in Southeast Georgia.

#### *Grounded Theory Constructivist Design*

The design of this inquiry was based on a grounded theory research design. This belief is not interested in gathering facts or describing events that took place. Rather, this theory is interested in the individual's views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies (Creswell, 2008, p. 439). The number of racial events that take place in a given year cannot be measured like the number of times a car drives down a particular road. Racial discrimination can be performed openly and in hidden tones. If an individual believes or assumes that he or she has been discriminated against because of race, who is to tell this individual that he or she is wrong? If a person believed that he or she was discriminated against, then as a researcher I believed that the event or act took place. Sometimes acts of racial violence or discrimination can be described and these were definitely taken into consideration in

the inquiry. However, nothing was allowed to obscure the experiences of these individuals based on research methodologies. Conclusions from this research method were suggestive rather than conclusive. James (1978) did not believe in absolute truth, rather that absolute truth was relative to the individual. This type research theory draws on this belief and allowed me to make suggestions at the end of the inquiry based on findings and experiences.

#### *Collecting Data*

The first task in collecting data was to gain access to the sites and subjects in the inquiry. I did this by first gaining Institutional Review Board Approval. I received approval from the IRB in December of 2008. This had to be completed since I was interviewing people in my research. After gaining approval from the IRB, I emailed principals in all of the high schools involved in this inquiry for permission to conduct the interviews and research at their respective high school. With principals' approval, I was able to sign in at the front office with one weeks' notice to be able to interview students at times that were of convenience to my schedule.

Information that was collected were personal interviews with students of the high school's athletic department which begin as a basic questionnaire during the first interview and lead to a more in depth interview during the second meeting in

order to further develop trends and themes from the first meeting. Any type of documents given by the interviewee was also collected at this time. All interviews were audio taped in order to be transcribed at a later date as to insure that no part of the experience was missed.

#### *Limitations*

There were many different limitations when conducting this inquiry. One was the lack of literature on specific high school athletic teams in the literature review. Questions were raised in the literature review for discrimination mostly in professional and collegiate athletics, but not high school athletics. Another limitation was getting the minority community in Southeast Georgia to speak out and talk about the issues that they have gone through and still continue to go through. In being the minority, some felt as if everything they said would be held against them by their teammates and they could possibly receive adverse treatment as a result. Another limitation was that the student-athletes themselves do not understand what racial, class, and gender discrimination means. They have been immersed in a culture where discrimination is the norm and where using the "n" word is a part of diurnal life that nobody thinks differently about. The last limitation that I witnessed was that of being an outsider asking questions that many people do not want to talk about even amongst themselves.

Even though I am a white male with a shaved head, I am not a native of four of the counties and small rural communities look down on outsiders stirring up controversy or asking thought provoking questions such as necessary for this project. Even more importantly is the change that will be needed and implemented after the information on discrimination in Southeast Georgia is known and understood.

For this project, I had a fellow black coach to help me interview candidates in the black community. When I speak, I have a southern drawl and being a white male with a shaved head, I fit the description of a typical Klansman. Individuals who look and sound like me discriminate against minorities on a daily basis. Hence, by myself I was limited in how much a minority interviewee would be willing to tell me about racial events. With a black coach helping me interview, this limitation was broken quicker rather than interviewing members from the minority student population who do not know me or trust the white man.

#### *Data Analysis Methods*

After the interviews were transcribed, I organized them by storing them in file folders for each respective high school. This allowed me to keep the five counties separated and allowed me to see if any trends developed in some counties or high schools that have not developed in others. After coding, I made

a spread sheet that showed the high school, sex, ethnicity breakdown of the interviewee and the themes that came about during their interview so that I could make quick reference back to the transcribed interview while performing the inquiry. Any documents that I received from interviewees were also put in the spread sheet and filed to its respective high school. Duplicate copies of the information were kept in another locked filing cabinet in case something happened to the original as to not lose information.

Data was coded based on experiences and themes that developed during the interview. This was color coded and evolved during the course of the interviews. Themes were further developed during the second series of interviews. Coding during the interviews was based on setting and contexts, perspectives held by participants, participants system of thinking, activities, and relationships or social structures in the respective community. These codes also helped build themes throughout the inquiry.

At the end of the inquiry, the qualitative research data were interpreted and the findings reflected in chapter five of the dissertation. The interpretation of the knowledge gained during the inquiry was based on personal experiences during the research inquiry as well as based on the literature review that was conducted before the interviews. Findings of the inquiry

were compared to knowledge gained during the literature review and the correlations between the two, then used to draw conclusions to my research questions

## Chapter IV

### Results

#### *Introduction*

When conducting the study of Racial Discrimination in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools, four themes emerged from the interviews of student-athletes. These four themes include: student-athletes unawareness of discrimination or denial of racial discrimination, specific racial makeup of specific sports, issues of playing time being directly related to the perception of racial discrimination, and current racial stereotypes of athletic ability based on society's social construction of athleticism. These four themes will be further analyzed.

#### *Unawareness of Discrimination / Denial*

When interviewing student-athletes at the six high schools in Southeast Georgia, a theme emerged as common to all schools. Very few interviewees mentioned observing racial discrimination as an eye witness and even fewer mentioned being racially discriminated against. When asked the question "Do you feel that you were ever discriminated against at anytime while playing because of your skin color?" The answer of the interviewees a clear majority of the time was "no." This is not surprising as a trend has emerged in high school athletics that



the coaches that win the most normally put the best players, without regard to discriminatory issues or favorites, on the field to win games. The five counties involved in the study field championship caliber teams in more than one sport yearly with the expectations from their coaching staff to reach one's full potential and win or find a new job. Camden County High School has won the football state championship at the highest classification in Georgia the past two seasons in a row.

However, the surprising statistic is that every student-athlete interviewed believed that it happened at the other schools.

When asked "If you did not witness any discrimination, do you believe that it occurs at other places?" Every person in the interview said "yes." What are the odds of only a few of the student-athletes witnessing racial discrimination and one hundred percent of student-athletes interviewed believing that it exists at other places?

This raises the question. Are student-athletes in high schools of the five counties included in the study in denial of racial discrimination that has occurred at their school or are they unaware of what racial discrimination really is? One particular student-athlete when asked "Do you feel that you were ever discriminated against at anytime while playing because of your skin color?" The student-athlete answered "Yes I have, coach was racist and didn't like me and play me because I was

poor." What does not liking poor people have to do with being a racist? This shows that many of the student-athletes did not understand what the term racism or racist truly meant.

The answer to the question are student-athletes in denial of racial discrimination that has occurred at their school or are they unaware of what racial discrimination really is can be both simple and complex. In society today, thinking is thought of to be bad and people are taught to just go with the flow of society. Society is supposedly colorblind and so should we according to society. Yet, being colorblind is a form of racism. To not acknowledge the differences in race and culture is the same as saying there are no differences. If there are no differences, where does truth come from? Where does tradition come from? And who defines the culture of the community? Nietzsche (2006) contradicts the biblical teachings of the New Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches blessed are the meek. Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the humble. For it is harder for a rich man to get into heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. According to Nietzsche, blessed are the rich. The ones who are rich have power and they will be the leaders of the community. The leaders of the community decide what is good and bad. In interviews, student-athletes mentioned stereotypical racial positions in sports. One student-athlete said "The best athlete should be playing running

back and that is black. The smartest athlete should be playing quarterback and that is white." Bad is a black kid playing quarterback on the football team. Good is a white kid playing quarterback on the football team. When a coach goes against the leaders of the community, it is time to run the coach off. This has happened in the past in three of the high schools of the inquiry. In one particular situation, a high school coach started a black freshman at quarterback over the senior white quarterback. Even though the team won the football game, the Klu Klux Klan went to the coach's house that night. This even occurred in the mid 1990's in one of the five counties of the inquiry. Another coach who I spoke to informally was coaching quarterbacks at a high school in the inquiry and asked about starting a black kid at quarterback. The head coach told the quarterbacks coach in the 1980's, "you can't put his type at quarterback." Coach Yoast experienced this when he allowed the black players to shower in the white locker room in Roswell, GA.

I have spoken with many different coaches in informal settings who coach in the five counties of the inquiry. In these discussions, every coach perceived that they had been racially discriminated against at some level or another in their current coaching position. One coach in 2007 was told that the reason he did not get a promotion to become a coordinator was that "The community was tired of having a white offensive coordinator and

wanted a black man to have a shot at offensive coordinator.” This was coming from a school that had a black defensive coordinator and a black head coach. If the coaches are witnessing racial discrimination, then why are the student-athletes not experiencing discrimination? One possible explanation is that the student-athletes do not want to think about tragic events that are occurring. One of the basics that professors teach in psychology class is that if a chair is in front of me and if I do not perceive that it exists, then it does not exist. If I do not perceive that racial discrimination is occurring, then it does not exist. I do not want to perceive that it exists because it is a bad or tragic occurrence and I do not want to have to deal with it. Remember the majority when asked “Do you feel that you were ever discriminated against at anytime while playing because of your skin color?” The answer was “No.” William James (1978) says that there is no absolute truth, rather only truth of the individual. If a teacher says killing is bad, that does not necessarily mean that I have to take that as truth because my truth may be different. To add to the issue of responsibility, Arendt (2003) says that there are two types of theories of who is responsible of guilt for tragic events such as racial discrimination in high school athletics. The intentionalist theory applies because the individual has to take responsibility for there to be individual guilt. The

functionalist theory applies because it is an issue of society and society is to blame for this taking place rather than an individual. To these kids who are unaware or in denial, they are saying it is not my fault that racial discrimination takes place. Rather, it is societies' fault. One black female athlete said that the reason that racial discrimination takes place in high school athletics is "because the culture in society allows it." There is racism in society, thus there will be racial issues in athletics. However, under this approach of thinking, nobody is able to take responsibility as an individual for the action. If there is no individual responsibility, nothing will ever change and the tradition of the community will continue even though it is wrong. Arendt (2003) says that individual guilt must occur in order to have individual responsibility.

Yet, student-athletes have to learn to take an *amor fati* approach to life. Nietzsche (2006) says that one must take the good and bad in life and accept it and be happy. Nietzsche constantly criticizes Germany because he felt that they had not lived life to the fullest by embracing tragedy. By not doing so, they did not achieve everything they were capable of. The same could be said for these student-athletes. They are not embracing tragedy and are therefore not living life to the fullest. In interviews, student-athletes who witnessed racial discrimination said that they did nothing to stop the injustices

because they did not want to start any trouble. That is not the *amor fati* approach to life that Nietzsche discusses. Only one white female student-athlete gave a reason as why she did nothing to stop the discrimination. When asked "Did you or anyone else try to do something to stop this injustice? Why or why not?" She responded by saying "I was scared. The other boys were a lot bigger than me and I thought I would get hurt." Most other student-athletes who had witnessed racial discrimination replied "I don't know. I didn't know what to do." to the same question.

To the student-athletes who witness discrimination yet choose to do nothing about it. They are more at fault for the tragedies that are occurring than the ones who are unaware that it is taking place. Arendt would ask the question, for the racial discrimination that is occurring in high school athletics, who is at fault? It is not the person who is being discriminated against because they are a victim. The student-athletes who go into denial and say that it does not exist when they know that it is occurring are more to blame for the tragedies of racial discrimination that occur because they have chosen to stay in denial and believe that it does not exist in order to save their own soul. They say, "I did not do it so it does not involve me." In essence they say, "I do not care about your hurt or what happens to you, only about what happens to

me." Is denial of the situation just as guilty as committing the acts themselves? The answer is "yes." If a student-athlete has the ability to stand up and stop the racial discrimination that is occurring, then it is his or her responsibility to try and stop the racial discrimination. Of the few student-athletes who noticed that racial discrimination was occurring to somebody else, not one of them decided to do anything about it. Most said "I don't know. I didn't know what to do." That is an unjustifiable excuse. If a person is inside a house and it catches on fire, the person runs outside of the house. They may not know what to do, but they do something that they feel is right. Many reports have been made of rape victims in the urban city that people walked by while he or she was being raped. While the person was screaming for help, the people passing by decided not to do anything because they did not want to get involved. Only one girl said she did nothing because she was afraid. When asked why she was afraid, she said "I'm a small girl that only weighs one hundred and fifteen pounds. These guys were six foot three inches or bigger and there were four of them. They all weighed over two hundred pounds and I was scared that they would hurt me." Of course, this brings about the question does it change the fact if a person does nothing if it is due to the fact that they did nothing out of fear rather than

out of selfishness? The fact remains that nothing was done to the aid of the victim.

Then, of course, there were the student-athletes who said that they witnessed racial discrimination occurring and did nothing about it because they did not know what to do. Every one of them commented that if they could go back and do it over again that they would have done something different. According to Nietzsche (2006), however, they would not have. Nietzsche (2006) believed in the principle of the eternal return of the same. This says that if a person has a chance to re-do the situation that they would make the same choice in opportunity number nine hundred and eighty seven as they would have done in their first opportunity. One would not have had the knowledge to make a different choice and would have done the same thing as what was done the first time the second time. Thus, these student-athletes that commented that they would have done something different about the situation, if they had it to do over again would have done absolutely nothing the second time due to the eternal return of the same.

In sports today, there are very few leaders. Leaders are people who come up and say "this is what we are going to get done, follow me and I will show you how. I can teach you how to get to the glory land." If there are no leaders, however, student-athletes sit around waiting on somebody else to take the



initiative to get something done. We call these players "E-R-W's." They "Eat" with the team, "Ride" the bus to the game, and "Watch" from the bench. They are always waiting on something to come. These student-athletes are in denial and refuse to do something about the racial discrimination that is occurring in high school athletics in Southeast Georgia and they are waiting on their messiah to come to lead them to the promise land. They claim to be unaware of the situations that are occurring so that they do not have to receive any guilt for these actions or take any responsibility for what has been done. They are functionalist in theory. However, waiting on the messiah is just another example as to why racial discrimination is occurring in high school athletics. Remember that one hundred percent of student-athletes interviewed believed that it occurred in other places, just not at theirs. Let us wait instead for somebody else to do something about the situation so we do not have to think about the situation or get involved.

For these student-athletes, standing up to society or their friends due to peer pressure is impossible. They do not have the ability to stand up for what they believe in because it is easier to meander downstream rather than go against the current. Derrida (1995) says that the impossible makes the possible possible. In the 1770's, black Americans had no rights in the United States except for the right to be a slave. This was

during the decade when the United States ratified the Lee Resolution saying that the country is free from the rule of Great Britain and showed the document to the public two days later in the form of the United States' Declaration of Independence. Some may argue for naught because black Americans still do not have full equality in the United States, but the equality that black Americans currently have would be the impossible to black Americans or black property in the 1770's. The same goes to the student-athletes who do not see racial discrimination or are in denial of racial discrimination that occurs in Southeast Georgia high schools. This impossibility of awareness of racial discrimination is what will make the possibility of awareness of racial discrimination possible in the upcoming generations. Knowledge is power and student-athletes will focus on this phenomenon in the future.

It has been said many times that the issue with the twentieth century is the issue of the color line. Movies have been made about this concept, books have been written, and even some standards in high school U.S. History classes have included the concept of the color line. Yet, with this information about what the color line is, why do students not pick up on issues of racial discrimination? One white female athlete recognized "her" color line when she said "racial discrimination occurs because white people come from good families and black people

come from bad families and from the projects." Student-athletes have a perverted definition of racial discrimination. Some student-athletes made comments such as "this person is racist because they don't like poor people." Student-athletes have the concept that any type of discrimination is racial. In popular culture movies that student-athletes watch today, such as *The Longest Yard*, *Glory*, and *Remember the Titans*, racism occurs in very obvious forms that most people can see. They will have a white redneck looking dude dressed up like a hillbilly yelling the "N" word at a couple of black people walking down the street. Or they will have a white guy turning down a black guy for a job smiling at him saying "We do not have any type of employment for your type around here." Other movies, such as *A Time to Kill*, *Forrest Gump*, and *Oh Brother Where Art Thou*, show shots of the Klu Klux Klan lynching black people and causing havoc throughout the community. This definition of racism, defined by Hollywood and popular culture, has perverted the minds of student-athletes. What student-athletes today need is a class on deconstruction of racial discrimination taught by Derrida. Actually, student-athletes today probably would not understand Derrida. But maybe a class on deconstruction of racial discrimination based on the concepts of Derrida. To deconstruct racism would be to take the defined meanings away from racism and open up a whole new category of racial

discrimination. Besides, race is a social construction. It is not Truth. For many years in the United States, immigrants were not considered to be white in ethnicity. Irish immigrants who worked in the factories of Boston marked other for ethnicity. Today, they are considered to be white. Ethnicity classifications change through the course of history because race is a social construction. Student-athletes are very bright individuals and when allowed the creativity to make a new racism and get out of the nutshell, the awareness of racial discrimination that occurs in high school athletics in Southeast Georgia high schools would drastically increase and the denial of racism that occurs would decrease.

#### *Racial Makeup of Specific Sports*

When performing the inquiry of Racial Discrimination in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools, an interesting phenomenon developed in the racial makeup of teams in the five counties of the inquiry. Many of the sports in the study had racially segregated themselves in their respective sports. Baseball, fast-pitch softball, tennis, soccer, golf, and cross-country were known among student-athletes to be white sports. In other words, the majority of players in the sports were white. Track, football, and basketball were known to be black sports in which a clear majority of the players on the team were black student-athletes. There were very few minorities, who

were not black or white, in the study due to their low statistical population in the area, but they played the sports soccer and tennis. These racial consistencies of the athletic teams in the area are well known among the student-athletes. One student-athlete said "White sports are baseball, soccer, golf, and tennis. Black sports are basketball, football, and track." They recognize the typical racial stereotypes of race based sports and were the first to mention in the interviews that baseball was a white person's sport and basketball was a black person's sport. When I mentioned that Major League Baseball's homerun leader was black and one of the most valuable player's off of the University of North Carolina's National Championship basketball team was white, the student-athletes showed low interest to it. Their response was still the same: these first sports were "white" sports and these second sports were "black." In their defense, for example, they were saying, "How can one not say baseball at Brantley County High School is not a white sport? They have an all white coaching staff and they do not have one black student-athlete or minority in the entire program at the high school or at the middle school." Of course, Brantley County is a different situation in student population demographics because Brantley County High School is 96% white. A school that is going to be that lopsided demographically is going to have skewed statistical racial

numbers in certain sports. However, at Brunswick High School, they are always close to being within ten percentage points of having equal racial statistical numbers between black and white student-athletes, and they still have an all white coaching staff and only one black player in the baseball program. In boys' basketball at Brantley County High School, a larger percentage of black student-athletes are in the program than in any other sport. At Brunswick High, the boys' basketball program is practically an all black student-athlete program.

Coaching staffs at these high schools in the study follow current racial trends. At Wayne County High School, there is only one black male teacher at the high school. This black male teacher is also the head boys' basketball coach. It is not a coincidence that one of the sports that is portrayed as being a black sport is the only one with a black head coach? The majority of basketball coaches in this inquiry were black while all but one baseball coach in the area was white. In conversations I have had with a former black head football coach at a school in the inquiry during the mid 2000's, he found that it is tough being a black coach and becoming a head football coach in Georgia. Most schools would choose a white head football coach before they chose a black head football coach.

Numerous articles have been written on the topic and the NFL and NCAA have tried on paper to make strides towards

equality in the number of minority head coaches in both the National Football League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In the study of the six respective high schools, only one school had a black head football coach, which was Brunswick High School and only two of the six schools have had a black head football coach in the history of their athletic program. These two schools are Brunswick High and McIntosh Academy. McIntosh Academy's one black head coach was a former Brunswick High head football coach. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Brunswick High School has had only one white head football coach and he only lasted one year. This was in the early 1980's. The black community formed a boycott on the season because a white head coach was in place and the coach left after his initial season in the program. Even recently when the last football coach was hired at Brunswick High School in 2008, racial tensions flared with the white community asking for the best candidate to be hired despite race and the black community asking for the best black candidate to be hired because of race. The following dialogue was posted in 2008 between a black adult in the Brunswick High community and a white person in the Glynn Academy community over the hiring of a new football coach at Brunswick High School in 2008.

"Black member - The Activist is watching this Brunswick situation close. Very close.

White member - Can I ask exactly what you mean by that?

Black member - Yeah, Brunswick = Risley High. Get my drift.

White member - So does that mean you don't want the most highly qualified candidate for the job?

Black member - The Activist says why are you speaking in code.

White member - How am I speaking in code? Simple question, do you want to have the most highly qualified candidate available?

Black member - Most highly qualified candidate available is code word for white. The Activist and his followers will not be subjected to this sort of dirty trick. Troops organize now.

White member - Activist still hasn't answered my question. Do you want Brunswick High School to hire the most highly qualified candidate available? Who cares about the color of the skin. Wake up, smell the roses, times have changed. The kids deserve the best.

Black member - We will do what we have to in order to continue the high caliber of coaching at Brunswick High School" ([www.gavsv.com](http://www.gavsv.com), 16 March 2008).

In other quotes on the website blog containing controversy over the hiring, the same person is quoted as saying "The Activist's pet peeves: A community not willing to fight for what is right.



You got to fight for your right to party. That is why I am watching the coach search closely. Just waiting for somebody to give me a reason to organize the troops. The Activist will lead a crusade to change the Brunswick school colors to Black. Just black. When that day comes then my song lyrics will be: Today was a good day I didn't have to use my AK" ([www.gavsv.com](http://www.gavsv.com), 16 March 2008) and "The Activist says whatever we have to do we will do. We will not allow tradition to change. Calling for the best candidate is code and all of you know what the Activist is saying. The Activist says just because someone has won State Championships and sent players to college each year does not impress. The Activist is not worried about wins and losses. The Activist is watching...make the right choice or else" ([www.gavsv.com](http://www.gavsv.com), 16 March 2008).

When talking with the student-athletes in interviews, another interesting theme appeared. When asked the question, what sports are more prevalent to racial discrimination? Members of the same race gave the same answer almost over ninety percent of the time. If the student-athlete was a white person, the sports more prevalent to racial discrimination were basketball, track, and football. If the student-athlete was a black person, the sports more prevalent to racial discrimination were baseball, golf, soccer, tennis, and swimming. What emerged was that student-athletes said "my sport is not racist." Even

though all who play my sport are just like me. Rather, it is the other sports that have members of the team who are not like me that are racist. One white male student-athlete said "The sports that are the most racist are basketball, football, and track. That is why not as many white players play those sports." Members of each sports team were playing the blame game for why racial discrimination is occurring.

Another philosophical answer to the theme of racial make-up of specific sports in the five counties studied is Derrida's issue of the other. On these sports teams, student-athletes who are the only black person on the team or the only white person on the team feel a sense of alterity. According to Derrida (1996), alterity is the idea where one is way different from anybody else. Despite what a coach does or players do to make the only white or black person on the team feel like a part of the team, that one player is always going to feel different from everybody else in some shape or form. How would a Muslim feel on a United States' soccer team whenever the team huddled and prayed to Jesus before a game? He or she would feel a sense of alterity which is what these student-athletes feel who go against the norm and play specific sports where they are the clear minority racially on the team. Many times, players feel fear when comparing themselves to the other. Because of a fear of the other, student-athletes are coming up with every reason

possible as why not to play a specific sport. During interviews, black student-athletes proposed explanations of the history of race relations in the United States and the way that the white man kept the black man oppressed throughout the decades. If they came out and played for the white team, the same thing would happen to them. White student-athletes, along the same lines, expressed interest in not wanting to play on the all black team or with a black coach because they would not get the playing time they deserved or had earned because they were not black. The black kid would get more playing time just because he or she was black. This goes along with stereotypes of athleticism which is another theme to be discussed. These issues are not only at the high school level. Many high school coaches, who I informally conversed with, mentioned that college football teams will take a chance on a black student-athlete way before they would take a chance on a white student-athlete. One coach in particular, who spoke of this in 2009, still holds many records at Valdosta State University as a white student-athlete playing the positions that are normally reserved for black student-athletes. As a student-athlete growing up, the player is going to have a desire to succeed. Athletics today have become tough enough with the specialization in each sport and with student-athletes becoming bigger, faster, and stronger than ever before. Racial hindrances are an obstacle that student-

athletes do not want to add to the chance of their failure and thus, they marginalize themselves by playing the sports in which they feel that they will have the opportunity for the most success. Of the five counties in this study, white players will have a tendency to play baseball, soccer, golf, tennis, and softball where black players will have a tendency to play football, basketball, and track because of these perceptions of racial norms in their athletic programs. In some instances, economic factors do play a significant role in what a student-athlete plays, however. Track is a lot cheaper to participate in than golf.

Parents also have a tendency these days to try and live their life through the life of their student-athlete. For example, pretend that I was not a good basketball player but I loved the game of basketball. So, since I have a young son I am going to make him practice basketball and do whatever it takes to make sure that he is a great basketball player because that is what I wanted to be. Then if he does not turn out to be a great basketball player, I have failed or it is because the coach was not good enough to make him into a good basketball player and he or she has failed my son. Reasons why some races play certain sports can be traced back to *resentiment*. When Jackie Robinson played for the Brooklyn Dodgers, he went through more acts of racial hatred towards him and his family than

probably any other Major League Baseball player. This is one of the reasons as to why he quit baseball when his career with the Dodgers was over rather than be sold or traded to the New York Giants. Later on in life, when his son was of the age to play sports, does one think he would lead his son to play baseball or another sport such as track and field? Issues of *ressentiment* lead to a great hatred of certain sports or certain sports in certain areas. This *ressentiment* or obsession with the issue or wrong doing that the person felt that they were done will lead into parents forcing their kid to play certain sports. Consider Brunswick High School and Glynn Academy football. Brunswick High School has always had a black head football coach with the exception of one school year and Glynn Academy has always had a white football coach. Some parents in the past have had such an issue with *ressentiment* of a particular racial class that they forced their son to attend the other high school that he was not zoned for just to make sure that he played for the certain race of a head coach. This issue of *ressentiment* and forcing of the child to attend another high school because of the racial status of a head coach helps lead or make strict racial lines between the sports of certain high schools rather than integrating sports for the betterment of all student-athletes involved. In the interviews, one student-athlete spoke out that he was forced to change schools because of the race of a particular head

coach. "I had to play at Brunswick because the head coach was black and dad wanted me playing for a black football coach." Student-athletes who play for an either all white team or all black team are being given a disservice of their cultural education for the rest of their lives. Themes of that issue are found in the Critical Race Theory and to reasons as to why *Brown V. Topeka Board of Education* overturned the *Plessey V. Ferguson* decision.

The racial makeup of these athletic teams demonstrates the racial tension that exists in high school athletics at the six high schools in the inquiry. Student-athletes are hesitant to play other sports because of the fear of the other and because they feel as if they will not get the playing time that they deserve because they are of a different race.

#### *Playing Time*

To many coaches in high school athletics, playing time is a curse word. No other two words can give a coach more problems on and off the field with board members, parents, and administration as the issue of playing time. During interviews, the issue of playing time resulted in more reports of discrimination than any other topic. If a coach puts a white person at quarterback, the black student-athletes say it is because the quarterback is white according to racial stereotypes. If the coach puts a black person at running back,

the white student-athletes say it is because the running back is black according to racial stereotypes. Even the latest popular culture movie, *The Longest Yard*, starring Adam Sandler and Chris Rock make comments regarding racial stereotypes and playing time when the person playing the character of Caretaker makes the comment "If you want speed, you gotta get the brothas."

Student-athletes believe what popular culture feeds them and apply it to their own lives. In interviews, student-athletes mentioned racial stereotypes leading to playing time discrepancy. One male black male football player said "the most athletic player is going to play running black and that's black."

During the interviews of the inquiry, many student-athletes expressed interest in the concept that he or she did not get playing time or that another student-athlete did not get playing time that he or she deserved because of race. Yet, remember in theme one, most student-athletes stated that they had never witnessed racial discrimination or had experienced it themselves. Students-athletes were found in interviews to use any reasonable alibi to explain their lack of playing time. White student-athletes who did not get playing time on the all white baseball team with the all white coaching staff made excuses such as "it was because coach did not like me, my family did not have enough money, or my dad did not suck up to the

coach." Some white players during interviews were honest, however, because they said "I was not as good as the other players." However, nine out of ten white players who played for a black coach gave the alibi "I did not get playing time because I was a white kid playing for the black coach." The same was true for black student-athletes. When asked the question, do you feel that you were ever discriminated against at anytime while playing because of your skin color? One black student athlete who had a white coach responded "In basketball, another kid started over me because I was black. He was white, but when I showed my potential I started playing over him." When the follow up question was asked "Do you think you were not getting to play due to issues of race or due to issues that you were not producing at the time? The student-athlete responded to the effects of "I'm black, I'm supposed to start over the white kid in basketball." This same young man also mentioned that he had experienced others being racially discriminated against in practice because a white coach would call them dumb or stupid. I followed up with the question "Would the white coach say the same thing to the white players?" He said "yes they would." Then I asked "if a white coach calls black and white student-athletes stupid, how is it racial discrimination?" The player responded that "White coaches could not talk to black players like that." So I asked "Is it wrong for a black coach to yell



at a white player and call him stupid and take him out of the game for missing a block that hurt the chances of the team to score on the play?" The answer was "That is ok because the player should not have missed the block." This student-athlete had a bad complex of alterity and felt that he was way different from everybody else because he was black and there were white coaches on staff and white players in the program. This is also a prime example of reverse racial discrimination that I witnessed in some of the interviews from minority students.

Some players, such as the one quoted before, mentioned his lack of playing time due to his thoughts of him being racial discriminated against and others pursued in that mindset. One white baseball player said in his interview that he felt that football and basketball are mainly black sports. "You know...white coach, black kid don't play. Black coach, white kid don't play." Another black male football player said that "I thought he should play running back more because it was his senior year. I guess he didn't play because he was black."

According to Arendt (2003), her intentionalist theory says that every event that occurs is intentional or on purpose. The reason as to why these events must be on purpose or intentional is so there can be individual blame, guilt, and responsibility for punishment for the person committing these acts rather than blaming the tragedy on society

Playing time is defined as the amount of time a particular player spends on the field in game time situations. There are many issues that go into deciding how much playing time a particular player receives. When playing time is deconstructed, issues of ability, team concept, size, strength, speed, grades, discipline in school, et cetera come into play as to decide who plays in certain situations. Key matchups, between opponents, are also considered in order to capitalize the most in order to win. If student-athletes would take a deconstructed approach to analyze playing time, then issues associated with playing time would be kept to a minimal if the deconstruction performed was in a non-biased objective manner.

Today's society tries to make student-athletes feel special. Students in high schools do not like to fail or be criticized so teachers, coaches, and fellow students make an attempt each day to make sure the students know how special they are and how great they are. One explanation as to why some student-athletes believe they have been racially discriminated against, due to lack of playing time, is because for the first time they play, they have somebody telling them how great they are. Parents, family members, society, and even sometime coaches are constantly lying to student-athletes telling them how wonderful of a player they are. In the words of Colonel Sanders from the movie *Water Boy*, "Well folks, momma's wrong

again...." By being told how great a player one is overtime, players begin to believe this and an arrogance or cockiness comes over the player. However, when a player does not get the playing time because somebody is better than him or her, confusion sets in and he or she does not know how to rationalize the situation. High schools today are modeled after a factory in that teachers put in facts for students to regurgitate a finish product on high stakes testing. Thinking is considered to be wrong and harmful to society because it can go against the status quo and many student-athletes do not have the ability to think rationally about issues of hospitality or community and to think about the difference between racism, sexism, and other types of discrimination. It is a coach's job to judge student-athletes in order to decide the starting lineup. Student-athletes do not accept this, however, and come up with other explanations as to why somebody gets to play over them. One of the easiest ways to explain why one is sitting the bench is to use the race card. Coach "does not like me or play me as much as the other kid because I am white or because I am black."

Personality conflicts between players and coaches throughout the course of the season may also affect playing time. The problem occurs when a coach allows a personality conflict to come between playing a player and not playing a player. A coach has the responsibility to the program to put

the best players on the field despite personality conflicts. Just because a coach does not agree with the thoughts or personality of a player, does not mean that the player should be benched. Not playing a player due to personality conflict can easily be directly related to racial discrimination. Many coaches have rules about players' hair length and if it is longer than a certain length then the player will not be eligible to play in his or her program. Coaches call this "respecting the game" and "representing their school in an upmost fashionable manner." However, define fashionable? Define respecting the game? In the white community, fashionable is usually defined by the people with power. That means clean shaven, well groomed, and normally with short hair. To propose the definition of fashionable according to the white community on black student-athletes is unjust. A black student-athlete should not be held to those standards. Just like a white student-athlete should not be held to the same standards of the black community. All student-athletes are different and should be respected and not held to strict social standards. Rather, the coach must come up with standards not based on racial standards in order to use these standards to inflict loss of playing time.

Nietzsche (2006) says that one cannot forget history or there would be no guilt or responsibility. Some parents have

experienced racial discrimination when it comes to issues of playing time and other student-athletes, college athletes, and professional players have experienced racial discrimination leading to a boost or decline in playing time. The key is that society must take an *amor fati* approach to the issue in order for it not to become *ressentiment*. Society must embrace tragedy and allow it to aid in the growing process. By embracing this tragedy, it will allow student-athletes to reach their full potential.

#### *Race Determines Athletic Ability*

Athletic history has shown that certain races are considered to be superior to other races at different times. Since the beginning of the United States, white athletes were considered to be superior to all others with the exception of horse racing. Horse racing was considered to be a black man's sport since many of the black racers were the caretakers of the horses for master's plantation. This tradition continued up to the late 1800's to early 1900's when Native Americans in the United States were considered to be the best athletes. During this time, many colleges and professional teams chose Indian mascots or chose mascots with some resemblance to Native Americans because of the pseudo dominance in athletics that they were supposed to have and because of their pseudo savage

behavior to civilized white society. In the late 1900's, this racial dominance is now portrayed on black athletes.

I asked one student-athlete "What factor led to racial discrimination in high school athletics?" He answered "athletic ability." What this student-athlete meant is the racial stereotypes that society has placed on athletics. One white female soccer player said "In track, African Americans are deemed to be faster or they run more races." This is a stereotype rather than truth. One interviewee said "Whenever you look at most other basketball teams other than ours, you usually see more blacks than whites on the team which could just be the population of the school, but most people generally believe that black players are better than white." Another black male football player made his comment even more specific to race and athletic ability by position. "Most athletically will play and that's black unless quarterback and then it's mostly white." Other student-athletes portrayed similar messages. The stereotype that popular culture has given student-athletes today is that black means fast and strong. White means smart and fundamentally sound. When I first came to Brantley County High School to coach, many student-athletes that I coached would make outlandish statements such as "black people are faster than white because they have extra tendons in their legs." Or "black people are faster than white people because

their heels are extra long." When asked "What moron told them this?" They would reply, "Their mother." Great, first week on the job and I had already crossed mama's law. Regardless of where this racial stereotype originated from, the fact remains that it is alive in athletics today. After failing efforts to try and give other reasons as to why many times black athletes have the perception to be better than other races, it all comes back that many student-athletes believe black is athletic. After all, movies today all portray the best skill athletes in all positions to be black.

This past baseball season, spring 2010, I took a white male baseball player to a tryout at Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College in Tifton, GA. At the tryout, there were other high school baseball players there that were trying out with my player. One was a big tall athletic looking black baseball player and the other two were little straggly looking white baseball players. Mine was furiously trying to get out of the black player's group when running the sixty yard dash because he said that "I did not want to look stupid running against the black kid." Ironically, this happened because on the way to the tryout, we were discussing my dissertation and I was trying to explain to him that race has nothing to do with athletic ability. Of course, he knew more than I did. So it ended up when they ran that my player ended up running by himself and the

two straggly looking white kids ran with the black player. When the gun shot off, the black student-athlete turned a 6.7 second run in the sixty yard dash. That is fast by any standard. The two little straggly white student-athletes turned in a 6.4 second run and the other turned in a 6.5 second run leaving the tall athletic looking black kid behind. My player could not believe it. For the next week, all he talked about was how fast those two white baseball players were. Sadly, however, because of how much racial stereotyping the media has pumped into the minds of student-athletes today, he still did not have a clue as to what I was trying to teach him.

Coakley (1998) tried to explain the issue of why black athletes seemed to be better than white athletes as a whole. He makes sure that the reader does not take this as a whole; there are exceptions in every situation. Coakley (1998) says that social conditions can lead to athletic superiority in sports. Hence, it is not a racial superiority, but that certain social conditions help lead to athletic superiority. Many times in this dissertation, it has been shown how black Americans typically make less than their white counterparts when performing the same job with the same qualifications. This places black Americans in the lower socio-economic classes. As explained in the theoretical foundations section of chapter two of the dissertation, Coakley gives an alternative reason as to



why certain races seem to be more dominate in athletics than due to genetics.

Most movies seen on television today about sports portray some sort of racial stereotype. In the movie *Major League*, the outfielder who played for the Cleveland Indians, who was famous for his speed, was a black player and the outfielder who hit for power was also a black player. Yet, the pitcher was white and the catcher who was used for his brains was white. In the movie the *Longest Yard*, starring Adam Sandler, the skill players who were supposed to be athletic were all black, but yet the smart quarterback was white. Student-athletes have been brainwashed into believing these racial stereotypes. Yet, they believe without thinking. Coakley (1998) says it best when he states that "People simply ignore the obvious fact that black athletes, like white athletes, are culturally produced" (p. 260). He also says that "...humans are so deeply immersed in their cultures that they often accept without thinking the ideologies that color their views of the world and the people in it" (p. 261). The definition of race in society is defined the same as race in high school athletics. Both are a social construction. Maybe one day the student-athletes will think for themselves rather than rely on society and popular culture for facts of life.

## Chapter V

### Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### *Discussions*

During the interviews, one black female student-athlete said that "Racism is not a problem in athletics at my school. Rather it is a problem in the school and community." What she meant by this is that whatever is going on in society or the community is also reflected at the local high school. If one of the problems of society in a local community is homophobia, then there will be homophobia problems at the district high school. Students learn about these problems from family, friends, and the media, and then discuss it with everybody else. When members of the community are dealing with issues of race, the school will be dealing with issues of race. When the school deals with issues of race, the student-athletes bring it into the locker room and it enters into the realm of high school athletics. Coaches, players, parents, administrators, and members of the community do not have the power to keep cultural trends out of high school athletics. Coaches and players need to be aware of these cultural trends as they occur because the effects of these trends can help or destroy one's athletic program.

Student-athletes are exploited in different ways. Coaches exploit student-athletes for their own personal gain by making

coaching decisions that could possibly hurt the student-athlete in order to win the game to help a coach's record or resume. During the past baseball state playoffs, one particular coach of a team threw his pitcher ten straight innings for game two of the second round series. Of course, there was speculation as to how many pitches the kid really threw. Some people say the kid only threw one hundred and thirty pitches and some say as high as one hundred and sixty pitches. I was at the game and know the truth that the player threw over one hundred and ninety pitches. This does not include warm up pitches and pick-off attempts which were performed quite a bit. In round three, the player did not pitch game two because his arm was still sore. Pitching a teenager that much is blatant exploitation and since the player could not pitch again in round three, the coach threw the other pitcher ten innings that day instead just to get the win. Of course, there will be every excuse imaginable from the coach. Yet, coaches have a responsibility to their players to protect them from harm or injury to the best of their ability. The same goes for a coach putting a player back in who has a known knee injury that could hobble or cripple the player for the rest of his or her life with the wrong contact or movement. Yet, this is done just to win a ball game. The act of winning at all costs is wrong and is blatant exploitation of these young student-athletes. At that point, a coach is not teaching

student-athletes how to win, rather a coach is teaching student-athletes that you win despite the long term effects that it has on people. Racism in high school athletics is the same. Players, coaches, members of the community, et cetera focus on getting what they want at the exploitation of the student-athlete and do not care about anything else. I heard a head football coach make the comment one time when speaking with the president of the NAACP after a football game in 1998 that "As long as I'm the head football coach here, I'll make sure that all athletic scholarships go to black football players." This was minutes after putting a white football player back in the game with a broken collarbone at middle linebacker to make the game winning stop only to re-fracture the collarbone and have to go back to the hospital and have it reset again.

On these teams where a student-athlete is the clear minority, the player goes through massive amounts of isolationism. Culture and conversations in the locker room and on the practice field many times will exclude this minority from the rest of the team. A player who is a minority can come from a different neighborhood and bring with him or her a different culture. Interests can be different. Activities in spare time can be different. And possibly every other aspect of a teenage lifestyle can be different singling the player out because he or she is different than the rest of the team forcing the player

into isolationism. The player feels alone all the time on the field and receives no help from the coach who is only focused on fundamentals and the aspect of success for the program. Coaches who are deemed by society to be successful put the program before individuals. Yet, it should be the other way around. Individuals should be put before the program. Coach Stallings, who was one of the most winning coaches in all of college baseball, taught me that one does not coach baseball. Rather one coaches baseball players. Because of this I try to do my part and I make it a part of the coaching staff to make sure that all players are welcomed on a daily basis and that we take interest in all players in the program. We find out their interests and likes and even if we do not care to talk about it with the player, we do it anyway so that they do not feel isolated in the program.

#### *Conclusions*

In conclusion, the research from this inquiry showed that racial discrimination in high school athletics did exist in the perception of the student-athletes in the five counties of Southeast Georgia. Even though some student-athletes proclaim to never have witnessed racial discrimination in their sport, one hundred percent agreed that it occurred in other schools or to other student athletes. When looking back at the history of the United States and of the world, discrimination has been a

major influence of events since the book of *Genesis*. United States' history is filled with discrimination and the issue of the color line has still not been completely solved today. The issues of the color line have created a *ressentiment* mentality among many members of society and many innocent people have died as a result.

During the interviews, four themes were found to be prevalent in the inquiry of Racism in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools. These four themes were unawareness of discrimination and denial, racial makeup of specific sports, issues of playing time, and the myth that race determines athletic ability.

Of the interviewed student-athletes, very few would admit to being discriminated against or experiencing racial discrimination. Yet, everybody agreed that this was occurring at other places. After further questioning, findings showed that many students could not distinguish the difference between racial discrimination, gender discrimination, or socio-economical discrimination. One of the reasons being is that students, today, do not like to think or think about complicated issues. One reason for this is because society has taught students that thinking is actually an institutional evil. Students are to be able to regurgitate useless facts and do

whatever they are told. They are not to think for themselves or make decisions based on rationale.

Many teams were found to have specific racial make ups. Baseball, golf, soccer, tennis, and swimming were known among student-athletes to be white sports and football, basketball, and track were known to be black sports. The student-athletes recognized these trends and the racial makeup of the coaching staff for each of these sports and picked which sports to play accordingly. The student-athletes also mentioned that the sport that was the other was the one where racial discrimination was more likely to occur. Most white student-athletes said that football and basketball were where racial discrimination was more prevalent and most black student-athletes said that baseball or soccer was more where racial discrimination was more prevalent. In the inquiry, white student-athletes did not desire to play basketball because it was known as a black players' sport and black student-athletes did not desire to play baseball because it was perceived as a white players' sport.

Playing time is very controversial in the realm of coaching high school athletics. Every parent believes that his or her "baby" should be playing the position that he or she wants when he or she wants it. Because playing time is such a controversial topic, it is easy for parents and players to use racial discrimination as an excuse as to why a player is not

playing or is not playing the position that he or she desires. But with the issues of playing time, interviews in the inquiry showed that sometimes, players would be limited playing time because of racial cultures being held as strict standards for the way of living. It is not fair for a black student-athlete to have to uphold the white cultural standard for what is right or wrong and it is not fair for a white student-athlete to have to uphold the black cultural standard for what is right or wrong. Rather, the team rules for the particular team should be non-biased according to cultural traditions so that all players receive the opportunity to benefit from the sport to the fullest extent possible. The inquiry also showed that players were put into specific positions because of race rather than based on ability. When a white baseball player comes out for football, chances are he goes to quarterback. When the black baseball player comes out for football, chances are he is placed at running back. These racial attitudes are social constructions that popular culture has helped build in the athletic departments across the United States. Then when a player crosses the racial lines for what he or she is supposed to stereotypically be, he or she is considered to be an athletic freak. Take for example, Tim Tebow and Brian Leftwich. One is a white quarterback for the University of Florida with two national championships that is known for athletic ability and



running the football which is a black stereotype. The other is the black quarterback with great leadership qualities from Marshall University who was the former quarterback of the Jacksonville Jaguars who was a finesse quarterback with a strong arm. These are stereotypical white qualities.

According to popular culture and the definition of athletic ability constructed by society, to be black is to be athletic. Students do not understand the concept that race is a social construction. In the minds of the student-athletes, certain races play specific positions in athletics. The thought that athletic benefits go to certain socio-economical classes is foreign to the student-athletes. There are many theories and suggestions as to why certain socio-economical classes are possibly more athletic than others in general. For this dissertation, the theory from Coakley (1998), and others was used. For many of the student-athletes in the interview, to be black is to be athletic where white is to be smart and fundamentally sound.

#### *Recommendations*

In the field of coaching, coaches are told to win or be fired. It does not matter what one has done in the past for a program, but rather what has one done for the program lately? Coaches are given the responsibility of raising these student-athletes to become model citizens for society while playing by

board members, administrators, and parents' rules. Yet, one area in which coaches must not neglect to pursue is to teach their student-athletes the issues of race in sports and society. A coach has the ability to discuss issues that are important in society to student-athletes off the field or court that would be extremely valuable to the student athletes in the long run. Hopefully this would be an eye opening experience for the student-athlete and one that they can use in the future to recognize issues of race and the proper way to respond to these issues. One of the first steps to healing the wounds of a community is that the complicated conversation has to begin. Unfortunately, the conversation of race has been silenced in the United States. With the complicated conversation comes pain at first, then healing. By having an *amor fati* approach, this healing can be achieved and student-athletes would learn about issues of race. With knowledge, they would have a reason why when they stood against and fought against the racial discrimination that they were experiencing or witnessing.

Coaches should also actively pursue members of the opposite race to participate in his or her athletic program. There were four themes found in the inquiry of Racism in Sports in Southeast Georgia High Schools. Of the four, if a coach would actively recruit members of the opposite race, then baseball would not be considered a white sport and basketball would not

be considered a black sport. The sports would be integrated and players would gain the most from playing athletics because players would be gaining a cultural education as well as an athletic education.

In the coaching profession, teams who are close have more relaxed boundaries when discussing issues of race and other things that players joke around about with one another. Coaches must make a conscience effort to never joke around about issues of race because even if what the coach says is not racist to the coach, the player's perception may take it as racist. Everything that is said today can be taken out of context. A coach needs to make sure to never allow racial remarks to be taken out of context with his or her players. Student-athletes today are extremely intuitive in reading coaches and knowing if the coach has the best interest in the players or not. One particular football coach at my current high school has already been labeled a racist by many of the football players because he uses the term "boy" all the time when talking to players in a degrading manner. Of course only the coach knows whether he is or not. But the fact remains that by using a term that he may not be perceived as racist, the players' perception is the opposite.

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**Appendix A***Fall 2009 Initial Questionnaire*

- What is your age?
- What is your sex?
- What is your race and ethnic background?
- Did you or do you play athletics?
- If so, what sport(s) did you play?
- What position did you play in these sports?
- Did you receive any awards for excellent play?
- What was the racial make up of your team and what was the racial make up of your school/community?
- Do you feel that you were ever discriminated against at anytime while playing because of your skin color?
- Did you witness anyone else being discriminated against while playing for reasons you believe to be linked to their skin color?
- What derogatory remarks were made or what names were the individuals who were being discriminated against called?
- If so, why do you think you/they were discriminated against?
- How did it make you/them feel that they were discriminated against based on race?
- Did you or anyone else try to do something to stop this injustice? Why or why not?



- If you did not witness any discrimination, do you believe that it occurs at other places?
- What sports do you believe are more prevalent to racial discrimination? Why?
- What issues do you feel are responsible for racial discrimination in high school athletics?
- Any other thoughts, comments, or feelings?

Thank you for allowing me to conduct this interview. Once all first round interviews are completed and have been transcribed and translated, I will set up an appointment at your earliest convenience to perform a follow up interview in the spring of 2010 to expound upon emerging themes that came up in the initial interviews.

## **Appendix B**

### *Spring 2010 Follow Up Questionnaire*

- During the first set of interviews, very few student-athletes had witnessed or experienced racial discrimination. Yet, everybody believed that it existed at "other" schools. Why is that?
- Why do certain races tend to gravitate towards particular sports?
- What do certain races tend to play specific positions?
- Is racism in high school athletics an athletic problem or a society / community problem?
- What is the difference between racial, gender, and socio-economical discrimination? Can you give me an example of each one?
- Is a particular race superior to others in athletic ability? If so, why is that?
- Do you think that socio-economical issues can affect athletic ability?
- Do coaches sometimes make you feel unwelcomed if they are different than you are? If so, how?
- Is playing time directly related to race? Why or why not?
- Any other thoughts, feelings, comments?