AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RACE AND SUCCESS FACTORS ASSOCIATED

WITH BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES IN A DIVISION 1 UNIVERSITY

CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This investigation explored perceptions and opinions of Black male student-athletes who were participating in various sports at the Division 1 level, as sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The focus of the investigation was on gathering qualitative information, heretofore not obtained, about factors that Black male student-athletes believed contributed to their success in their sport at the Division 1 level. More specifically, race and its role in sport participation were considered along with the extent to which Black male student-athletes judged their educational and related personal needs as being met in the university context. Twenty-six Black male student-athletes from two NCAA sanctioned Division 1 universities were interviewed, using a semi-structured format, regarding general and cultural influences on their athletic careers and the relationship of these influences to their success. A grounded theory method was used to analyze interview responses. The findings suggest that Black Male student-athletes participating in sports at the NCAA Division 1 level attribute familial influences, environments of origin, and experiences with Black males as being central to their success in the classroom and in athletic venues. Areas of need identified by Black male student-athletes included academic advisement, psychological support, and being able to effectively balance student and athletic identities. Respondents believed that their coaches, academic advisers, and other athletic department professionals contributed to their success in the classroom and in sport settings by being able to meet their needs. Based on the results of the investigation, and as part of this dissertation, educational guidelines were formulated for university professionals who provide services to Black male student-athletes who participate in sports at the NCAA Division 1 level.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE FOR THE DISSERTATION

This study explored the factors that are associated with athletic success in Black collegiate athletes. For the purposes of this dissertation, athletic success was measured by the fact that the subjects, who were collegiate student-athletes, had been able to progress their athletic careers to the Division I collegiate level. Since the status of Division I collegiate athlete is exclusive to the most talented of the pool of high school athletes, it is indicative of a level of both athletic and academic success.

This study sought, in particular, to understand factors that Black male student-athletes, within the context of two predominantly White Division I universities, perceived to have gotten them to this point in their careers. For the Black male athlete in such a context, race was considered as having possibly influenced their athletic development in positive and/or negative aspects. Toward this end, the study sought to gain a better understanding of whether, and the degree to which Black male student-athletes perceived race to be associated with many aspects of their athletic careers, including how race has factored into the sport(s) in which they have participated; how race has maintained their

interest in sport; whether they believe race has facilitated or hindered them in their athletic development; how their relations with teammates, coaches, and others may have been affected by race.

The study also inquired about the athletes' perceptions of how they feel their physical, psychological, cultural, and academic needs were being met as Black male athletes at the Division I collegiate level. Based on the results of the interviews and their subsequent analysis and synthesis, it was also an intent of the dissertation to provide a set of educational guidelines for coaches, support staff, and athletic administrators in meeting the psychological and educational needs of Black male athletes at the collegiate level. The information gathered may also be useful to sport psychologists and consultants who work with Black male athletes in any context.

The research reflects a qualitative approach in nature and scope. Since there is a dearth of literature about Black male collegiate athletes and how race and other factors have affected their personal development and perhaps even their performance, the dissertation was an exploratory study in order to ascertain a better understanding of the experiences of this population of athletes. To effectively analyze the qualitative data obtained from the study, the principal investigator utilized grounded theory methodology to identify and discuss themes among the interviews, and to create the guidelines.

Background of the Current Study

Obtaining information of the nature discussed in this study is relevant for several reasons. One may be inclined to believe that this particular subpopulation, the Black male student-athlete, is such a small fragment of society that it does not warrant such attention. In this respect, it is well known that the number of Black males who attain

college or professional athlete status is a small percentage of the Black population at large, and of the general population of Black male athletes. However, as is the case with athletes of other racial backgrounds, there are many high school athletes, younger athletes, and those who were never admitted to a college, or never finished high school, who may be experiencing race related issues pertaining to their participation, either present or past, in their sport. The information obtained from this research could potentially help to shed light on such circumstances. Furthermore, the positive impact of sport participation has been well documented (Carodine, Almond & Gratto, 2001; Edwards, 1998; Eitle & Eitle, 2002). However, understanding how the positive impact of sport may be mitigated or enhanced by race and culture has not been fully determined, and may provide implications for athletic programs for all ages that serve Black male athletes.

Although Black male athletes are a small subset of the total Black population, their visibility through their constant portrayal in the media has implications for many Black males in general. Black males face many adversities, from everyday microaggressions to blatant racism such as racial profiling, and adding the athletic status to their plight often complicates their lives to a much greater extent (Franklin, 2004).

The study also has relevance for those working with Black male student-athletes because of the procedural guidelines that the author created as a result of this dissertation. Based on the information provided through the interviews, the guidelines could benefit those in frequent, direct contact with athletes, such as coaches, trainers, sport psychology consultants, and other athletic administrators. Additionally, the guidelines may benefit those who have more peripheral contact, or contact outside the athletic context, such as

instructors and academic counselors. These procedural guidelines have the potential to provide a tangible resource to all involved in athletics and other domains. Information regarding how needs are defined, how they may differ across sports and/or ethnic backgrounds, what can be done to ensure that their needs are taken into consideration, and whether those involved are actively meeting these needs is vital in establishing a solid knowledge base of their experiences as student-athletes. This information could potentially be used to construct specific training programs for the aforementioned personnel in handling the complexities that occur when combining the student and athletic identities, with racial and ethnic identities.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Based on the impact of sports on American culture, and the high visibility of

African American athletes, it would seem as though the growing body of research on

sports would include studies about Black athletes, which it has to some extent. It is the

intention of this literature review to provide an overview of the research from multiple

fields dedicated to African American male athletes. The benefit of providing a

comprehensive description of Black male athletes is one of both awareness and exposure.

There is no doubt on the part of this author that most Americans have had some

type of access to Black male athletes, either through personal affiliation or via media.

However, unless one has had the personal contact with a Black male athlete, the only lens

through which these men are typically viewed is within the context of their status as

Black athletes. It then becomes of utmost importance to begin to set the context in which

Black male athletes are to be viewed for the purposes of this dissertation, and to

differentiate this from the way in which society as a whole may understand them.

Facilitating this task is the use of Dr. Charles Maher's (2004) framework for

understanding athletes. Therefore, the literature will be reviewed in conformance with

said framework: Level 1, Athlete as a Person; Level 2, Athlete as a Person who Copes

with Risk; Level 3, Athlete as a Student; Level 4, athlete as a Teammate; and Level 5,

Athlete as a Performer. The use of the framework takes into account each aspect of the

student-athlete's life in a way that facilitates a comprehensive, yet organized and relevant

review of the literature. In essence, the author took each of these levels into account

during all phases of the research, and therefore, it is important to set the context of the

accordingly.

Because of the type of participants recruited and interviewed for the study, it is

important to understand their current context of being Black male athletes at a

predominantly White Division I university and in the context of the sport in which they

participate. Attending this type of university may present additional difficulties and/or

positive experiences for the athlete. The athletes in the study have also come into the

interview with different experiences based on the sport in which they participate. It was

important to examine the differences in patterns of participation by Black males, and to

understand that the sport they play may have an impact on the type of answers they

provide, not only with regard to their current experiences in their sport, but in terms of

their backgrounds and history of participation in their respective sports.

<div align="center">Athlete as a Person</div>

At Level 1, The Athlete as a Person, the athlete is considered as a person without

regard to their status as a student and as an athlete. This level allows for the exploration

of the issues these young men would face if they did not possess the additional status as

athletes. In this respect, it is important to view the participants separate from their

athletic identities to explore the effects that skin color has had on their lives, if any. Should their race and ethnicity have had any kind of impact on them thus far, these issues are potentially brought onto the playing field, and may have a bearing on the history of their sport participation.

Family Structure

In an effort to gain a further understanding of the athlete as a person, examining trends in African American families is paramount. According to the 2000 US Census, 71.8% of African American families made less than $50,000, with more than 25% making under $15,000. According Person and Lenoir (1997) the majority of Black male student-athletes are from single parent (mother-headed) families of origin. They also indicate that 50% of Black male student-athletes who play football and basketball come from families of lower socioeconomic statuses (Person & Lenoir, 1997). The implications of this upbringing on academic performance will be discussed when detailing the athlete as a student below.

Stereotyping

When thinking about the African American male athlete as a person, the image may be subject to negative stereotypes. At the heart of the Black male athlete is the Black male. It is beyond the scope of this review of the literature to address the countless studies that have been conducted on the stereotypes of the African American man. Hall (2001) claims all stereotypes can be categorized as either a brute or a sambo. The characteristics of a brute are "primitive, temperamental, violent and sexually powerful" while the sambo is juvenile and immature (Hall, 2001, p.106). Supporting Hall's characterization, Smith and Hattery (2006) provided a comprehensive history of the

images of Black male athletes in what would be considered the "brute" stereotype by examining the actual and perceived sexual practices of Black male athletes. When speaking of the history of Black male sexuality in the historical context, Smith and Hattery (2006) understood that the current images of Black athletes is a direct consequence of the historical tension between Blacks and Whites. From slavery to today, as a way to invoke fear of Blacks, the uninhibited, impulsive, "brute" stereotype was put forth as a sort of "call to arms" for White men to protect White women from Black men. Although this is no longer an overt attribution to Black men, the Black men who participate in sports, and in general, who have a large stature are subject to invoking this stereotype based largely on their size, which is not always true of White men of similar stature.

Images of Black men being engaged in or becoming victims of violent behavior constantly fill news hours. It is important to understand that the possibility exists that the Black male athlete has experienced some form of stereotyping, especially for those who participate in sports where the typically large athletic stature is necessary. Lawrence (2002) reported that this stereotyping not only triggers negative emotions from their athletic sides, but also denigrates them as Black men. Studies conducted by Anshel (1990, 1990b) also revealed that athletes perceptions of their coach's insensitivities, were highly attributed to their coach not being able to see them as people, separate from their athletic status.

The Athlete and Risk

Level 2, The Athlete and Risk, takes into consideration the athlete as a person who copes with risk. This level is particularly important because it also allows the

researcher to explore the possibility of sport being a way that athletes cope with risk, and the implications for the Black community of the use of athletics in this vein. This level is also pertinent for Black male athletes who sometimes find themselves in risky situations. The consequences of Black male athletes who have failed to deal properly with risk, discrepancies in punishments handed down, and disparate media coverage and portrayal between Black athletes and athletes of other backgrounds are issues relevant to this level as well.

Sport as a Way to Cope with Risk

Take one step into any inner city park, and you will find a basketball court full of little Black boys with big dreams, Black teenagers with the athletic drive, and Black men with infallible technique. What drives Black males, young and old, to the basketball courts, football fields, or boxing rings? Many times for African American males, the driving force behind beginning a sport is avoiding risk. Statistics report that the majority of Black males entering college on athletic scholarships come from poor, urban areas (Robinson, 2004). Sport participation is often held in high esteem as "the ticket out" of the ghettoes of America. Instilling dedication to a sport is oftentimes parents' way to ensure their children are not out "in the streets." A study conducted by Eitle and Eitle showed that 50% of Black male athletes come from a lower socioeconomic status (2002). According to Robinson (2004), researchers at the Center for the Study of Sport in Society reported that a poor Black family is seven times more likely to encourage a male child into sports than their White counterparts.

In environments where academic achievement is not only lacking, but is often discouraged, sport participation can be the avenue to keep children in school. This is the

nature of a heated debate in African American studies. On one hand, there are those that believe the emphasis that Black communities have placed on athletic success comes at the expense of academic success (Edwards, 1998). They believe that sport participation, or at least the way it is presented to Black youth, becomes the desired behavior, and not the positive reinforcement for academic success. The fame and notoriety that comes from excelling on the court or field, overwhelmingly outweighs any attention given because of good grades. It is believed that athletic talent is a more secure route to financial success than education, when statistics show that only 1.6% of all college athletes go on to pursue professional careers (Harrison & Lawrence, 2003).

The opposing view contends that encouraging Black youth to pursue professional athletics is the key to their success. It must be done in a way however, that does not devalue the importance of education. Every Black Kid Go Pro (EBKGP), a theory created by Robinson (2004), states that promoting careers in professional sports is indirectly promoting a college education. It is not the fault of the Black community for encouraging elite athlete status, but the fault of the schools for not providing the appropriate tools for academic success. The frequent practice of passing athletes, regardless of grades, encourages apathy toward academics, and reinforces the belief that academics do not matter. Once athletes participating in revenue sports (football and basketball) enter college the stakes become much higher. Those on athletic scholarships are in an even bigger bind. They are accepted into universities and given money to attend school, under the condition that they participate in sports that will ultimately bring the school money, honor, and recognition. Although his title is student-athlete, one must

question whether being a student is encouraged to be his first priority. This dilemma will be discussed in more detail when discussing the athlete as a student below.

The media is extremely effective at portraying the risky side of sports. This is especially true concerning African American male athletes. All too often the images of "dangerous" basketball and football players are plastered throughout the television, radio, and print. O.J. Simpson, Allen Iverson, Mike Tyson, and Kobe Bryant, provide examples of Black athletes that succumbed to improper coping with risk. Athletes in general must beware of the situations in which they find themselves. The Black athlete, however, has the extra burden of being a Black male, and for those in revenue sports, the burden of being highly visible. Inappropriate responses to risk are more likely to confirm the many negative stereotypes that the public has concerning Black men (Tucker, 2003). At times, this burden becomes overbearing and elicits a response to certain people and places that is likely to place the athlete in precarious situations.

<div align="center">Athlete as a Student</div>

Level 3, The Athlete as a Student, allows for consideration of the athlete in the academic context for this dissertation. At this level, one can understand the intricacies involved in being able to participate on a team. This significant level addresses an athlete's ability to participate in sports through the eligibility criteria. At this level, three propositions set forth by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, subsequently referred to as the NCAA, to maintain the academic integrity of the universities it governs, are discussed. There have been debates about some of the propositions, either that they are too lenient and admit athletes who would not otherwise gain admissions to these institutions, or that they hinder Black athletes who may have come from schools who

lacked the resources to sustain their educational attainment. This section also allows for

discussion of the major problem in the NCAA of low retention and graduation rates of

Black male athletes. The student athlete also faces isolation on college campuses that can

negatively affect his experience. This can be addressed in the current section because it

focuses on interactions of student-athletes with their non athlete counterparts.

Division I

In order to set the context of the dissertation, it is important to have an

understanding of the distinctions between Division I universities and the other divisions.

According the NCAA website,

> Division I universities are those in which there are at least seven sports for both
> males and females. Each playing season has to be represented by each gender as
> well. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as
> scheduling criteria. For sports other than football and basketball, Division I
> schools must play 100 percent of the minimum number of contests against
> Division I opponents -- anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50
> percent Division I. Men's and women's basketball teams have to play all but two
> games against Division I teams; for men, they must play one-third of all their
> contests in the home arena. Schools that have football are classified as Football
> Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) or NCAA Football Championship
> Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA). Football Bowl Subdivision schools are
> usually fairly elaborate programs. Football Bowl Subdivision teams have to meet
> minimum attendance requirements (average 15,000 people in actual or paid
> attendance per home game), which must be met once in a rolling two-year period.
> NCAA Football Championship Subdivision teams do not need to meet minimum
> attendance requirements. Division I schools must meet minimum financial aid
> awards for their athletics program, and there are maximum financial aid awards
> for each sport that a Division I school cannot exceed. (NCAA, 2008)

In summary, the athletic programs of the Division I are the most visible collegiate

athletic programs that are generally afforded more resources, and held to more

restrictions. The pressures and expectations of playing for a Division I university place

more of a burden on student-athletes than in other divisions, due to the high visibility of

these athletes. The likelihood of an athlete attaining professional status significantly

increases when comparing Division I schools to Division II and III schools. Urban

(2000) believed that the goal of achieving professional status and increased demands of

Division I athletics impacts the focus of the athletic programs, making their ability to

successfully make "sports more a part of the college experience than a national stage to

display athletic skills, entertain the masses, and apprentice pros" (p.62) more challenging.

With these added pressures of Division I competition, one can begin to understand the

difficulty associated with balancing the role of student-athlete, as the demands of being

an athlete can overwhelm the obligations of being a student if not appropriately managed.

Eligibility

Of all of the expectations of a student-athlete, none can be characterized as more

important than his eligibility to participate in his respective sport. Eligibility to

participate impacts not only their athletic identity, but could potentially end their

academic identity, since a consequence of not meeting eligibility requirements is a loss of

athletic scholarships. These rules and guidelines were put forth by the NCAA in a series

of propositions describing criteria for initial eligibility (entering college freshmen), which

will be delineated below. Also described below are the conditions for which enrolled

student-athletes are eligible to participate in sports. It is important to understand these

propositions in the context of another rule of the NCAA--that student athletes are allowed

four years of athletic eligibility. For the purposes of this literature review, the way in

which the propositions relate to Division I schools will only be discussed.

- ▪ Proposition 48, passed in 1983, mandated that a student athlete have a combined SAT score (verbal and quantitative) of 700 or composite score of 15 on the ACT and at least a 2.0 GPA upon entrance into college. If a freshman did not meet these requirements, he or she was deemed ineligible to participate in sports during his or her first year, and would therefore lose that year of eligibility (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001).

- Proposition 42, passed in 1989, added an additional penalty to Proposition 48, in that students also lost their athletic scholarship for that year. This includes students who were partial qualifiers, or those who met one of the criteria for eligibility (Howard & Hamilton, 2001). This proposition was later overturned, and student athletes were allowed access to institutional aid, not athletic aid (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001).

- Proposition 16, adopted in 1995, created a sliding scale for academic eligibility. The lower the GPA, the higher the standardized test score must be and vice versa. The lowest standardized test score currently being 400 on the SAT and 37 on the ACT with a corresponding GPA of 3.55 and above. The lowest permissible GPA remains a 2.0 with a corresponding SAT score of 1010 or ACT score of 86 (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001).

- For those student-athletes enrolled in college, the NCAA (2008) states, "To be eligible to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics competition, a student-athlete shall be enrolled in at least a minimum full-time program of studies, be in good academic standing and maintain progress toward a baccalaureate or equivalent degree" (NCAA, 2008, p. 127)

- According to the NCAA bylaws (2008), "good standing" means "To be eligible to represent an institution in intercollegiate athletics competition, a student-athlete shall be in good academic standing as determined by the academic authorities who determine the meaning of such phrases for all students of the institution, subject to controlling legislation of the conference(s) or similar association of which the institution is a member" (NCAA, 2008, p.127)

The NCAA was created as a regulating body to oversee the conduct of sports in institutions of higher education. One of the NCAA's primary goals is maintaining the academic integrity of the member institutions while simultaneously maintaining both the integrity and quality of intercollegiate athletics (NCAA, 2008). There are times however, when keeping in line with this goal becomes increasingly difficult, as one demand, the academic for example, overshadows the other, the athletic in this particular example. These propositions were born out of such a situation.

The controversy surrounding the propositions has been contentious and complex, with different sides having multiple factions that may be at odds with each other. On one

side of the argument would be the academic institutions themselves apart from their

athletic departments. In this group, there exist those who oppose what they would call

lenient standards for entry for the sake of athletic competition (Heck & Takahashi, 2006).

Another group within the academic institution recognizes the benefits of having a strong

athletic component, including but not limited to higher donations and increased

enrollment—more money for the school—and are more accepting of these standards put

forth by the NCAA for the betterment of the school as a whole.

On the other side of the argument would be the athletic departments. Their

primary goal is to recruit high-caliber athletes, engage in high-quality competition, and

win (Heck & Takahashi, 2006). Ensuring that their students adhere to their academic

obligations is also included in their responsibilities. The problem arises when the need

for excellence in athletics trumps the importance of academics. With coaches concerned

about job security, and job security often solely being contingent upon victories, it is not

difficult to understand how this shift in priority can occur as somewhat of a conflict of

interest takes place. Complicating matters, when recruiting for their sport, coaches tend

to be focused on finding the most talented athletes, with their abilities in the classroom

viewed as either a secondary strength or a liability that would impede their ability to

produce on the playing field (Covell & Barr, 2001). Coaches may either have to accept a

recruit who has less talent on the field and more skills in the classroom than a more

talented athlete who is not as sound in the classroom, an essential risk to his or her job

security. Complicating matters further is when race is considered as a factor, especially

for football and basketball coaches. Considering that half of the Black male collegiate

basketball and football players come from lower socioeconomic families, the chances that

these athletes have come from school districts that may have had limited academic

resources significantly increase. One criticism of these propositions is that they unfairly

penalize African American athletes for this reason (Covell & Barr, 2001). Athletic

administrators and coaches however have investment in having academically sound

athletes. Having a reputation for retention and graduation bodes well for the athletic

program and the university.

Finally, and probably least considered is the position of the Black male athlete

specifically. In one sense, a Black male athlete can be rewarded for his athletic talents

with an avenue to pursue higher education, potentially at little or no cost. However, the

particularly harmful downside of this dichotomy is that these same athletes who may

have been given the opportunity to pursue a college education are placed in the position

of having academic responsibilities that exceed their capabilities. Essentially, many of

these athletes are at risk of failing from the moment they enter the college campus. In

addition, once the Black male athlete's four years of eligibility have expired, the NCAA

has no more obligation to fund their education, leading some to leave school without their

degree.

Academic Preparedness

As mentioned in the discussion of the previous level, the academic side of an

athlete's life can be as much a risk as the environment he came from. The college level

tends to be where the most notable discrepancies between the athlete and non-athlete, and

the Black and White athlete, are most apparent. Year after year, the NCAA compiles a

report of graduation rates among their athletes. Year after year, Black male athletes have

the lowest graduation rates when considering multiple demographics of collegiate

athletes (NCAA). At first glance, it may seem somewhat misleading since many college football and basketball players forego their final seasons to enter their respective drafts. However, considering the small number of athletes who actually attain the professional status, this speculation becomes invalidated.

As was eluded to in the section regarding family structure, the neighborhoods in which many Black male athletes are reared are urban, single family, low socioeconomic areas (Person & Lenoir, 1997; Hawkins, 1999). The lack of resources in these kinds of neighborhoods is not limited to individual family circumstances. The schools in these neighborhoods also become the victims of economic hardship. With limited resources, schools in these areas tend to have higher dropout rates, lower test scores, and less students advancing to college (Hyatt, 2003). Teacher to student ratios tend to be higher, giving individual students much less attention than in other areas where ratios may be more conducive to learning (Hyatt, 2003). There is also less money in the home to provide the additional outside academic resources to assist students who struggle or for improving standardized test scores.

Understanding the lack of resources in these types of communities sets the context in which some Black male athletes enter college campuses. In addition to having up to twenty hours per week of athletic obligations, some of these students are entering into situations where they have not been prepared to handle the rigor of the academics. Although on many Division I campuses, the academic resources provided to students are exceptional, they are often not enough to outweigh the educationally damaging primary and secondary school years.

Theories surrounding the consistently low graduation rates of African American males range from genetic inferiority to institutional racism of college athletics. Genetic inferiority, as researched by several researchers, insists that differences between races on measures of intelligence can be attributed to genetic differences (Jensen, 1969; Herrnstein & Murray, 1995). Some have gone as far to imply that spending money on programs that lessen the discrepancy is a futile effort, since genetic differences cannot be altered. On the other side of the debate, people attribute graduation differences between Black male athletes and athletes of other backgrounds to institutional racism. Some view sports as the modern day avenue to oppressing the Black male, by offering empty promises of professional fame. The student-athlete is only valued for the latter part of his title, and is permitted to simply "get by" academically. When the athlete's GPA declines below the academic eligibility criteria, or when his athletic eligibility has expired, the one aspect of his life at which he has excelled is taken away from him. Up until this point, this young man has placed total emphasis on improving his athletic ability. Further complicating the situation is that their academic advising may not be adequate (Parmer, 1994). The athlete is then left in a critical situation with little direction and guidance—a recipe for dropout.

Although the proverbial cards may be stacked against many Black male student athletes, there are strengths that he possesses. When viewing graduation rates more closely, Black male athletes do continually graduate at rates lower than all other subgroups of student-athletes, however, they tend to graduate at higher rates than their Black non-athlete student counterparts (Hyatt, 2003; Snyder, 1996; Watt & Moore, 2001). There may be several reasons for this phenomenon. One, which will be discussed in greater detail below is the impact of academic advising, and its influence on class

selection and majors. Another reason may be the eligibility standards. Student-athletes are required to maintain a certain GPA in order to remain eligible to compete. The external pressure to maintain decent grades, or risk losing the financial aid and possibly leaving school, may be enough to keep these young men on track to graduate. The policy, again by the NCAA, to only allow four years of competition may also play a role in their higher graduation rates. Once their four years of eligibility has expired, athletes are no longer eligible for the aid they received from their athletic departments. The external pressure from the NCAA may motivate these Black males to finish while their education is being paid for.

Majors and Academic Advising

In November of 2008, USA Today published a two-part series detailing a phenomenon occurring on many of the campuses of Division I universities concerning student-athletes (Steeg, Upton, Bohn, & Berkowitz, 2008). Clustering, the practice employed by academic advisors of encouraging student athletes into certain majors in order to maintain their academic eligibility, is becoming especially prominent around high profile football and basketball programs. Many of these particular majors are seen as less rigorous, in some instances with faculty and staff in place that are "sympathetic" to the plight of the high profile student-athletes. Choosing these majors becomes appealing to student-athletes as the work load may be less, and may allow the student-athlete to then focus more time on his or her sport. The downside to clustering is that many of these majors have questionable reputations, and often leave the student athlete without much in the way of qualifications upon graduation (Steeg et al., 2008).

The authors of the series researched the statistics of athletic programs to determine whether certain majors were more or less represented among student-athletes in general and on specific teams at schools throughout the NCAA. They found that of 142 Division I schools (120 in the Football Bowl Subdivision and 22 schools with top basketball programs based on rankings over the last few years) 83% of the schools had at least one team with 25% or more of the juniors and seniors in one of the clustered majors; 34% of the teams had at least one clustered major. More than half of the clusters were deemed "extreme", meaning that 40% or more of the juniors and seniors on a team were in a single major. Additionally, the majors that were well represented among student-athletes would typically represent a significantly smaller percentage of the general student population, making the statistics appear even more dramatic. After interviewing graduates of these clustered majors, some students reported having an increased difficulty finding employment in their respective majors. Many of these former students conveyed similar sentiments in terms of feeling a sense of coercion regarding their choice of major, and not believing that they had a fair choice or a sense of control in deciding the path their careers would take (Steeg et al., 2008).

Although the aforementioned article highlights a particularly disturbing view of academic advising in collegiate athletics, it should not go without mention that athletic departments often have their own academic advisors, with individual teams often having one or more advisors specifically dedicated to their team. These academic advisors are able to provide student-athletes with more individualized and personalized advising (Watt & Moore, 2001). This also allows the student-athletes an opportunity to know their advisors, and seek their consult in times of academic difficulty. Athletic programs also

provide student-athletes with extensive services to assist them with their academics, including tutors knowledgeable in specific subjects, writing instructors, and mandatory study hall hours, among other benefits. These academic amenities provide a considerable buffer against the detrimental time constraints that are par for the course of participating in sports at the collegiate level.

Predominantly White Universities

Hawkins (1999) explains that Black male athletes many times come from communities where African Americans are the majority. They then attend universities where they are not only in the minority, they are a small subset of the minority, with a whole host of expectations and pressures to which other Black students are not exposed. Person and LeNoir (1997) found that one out of every nine African American students at a four year predominantly White institution of higher learning is an athlete. Many of the Black male student-athletes come from predominantly Black communities, making the adjustment to college, which is often difficult for any student or student-athlete, more complicated by race and ethnicity. Hawkins (1999) found that the transition into predominantly White universities may be particularly challenging for some, as it may be the first time that these Black males are made aware of their minority status, and may not have the resources to handle such a realization.

Isolation

In addition to the academic ambiguity that Black male student-athletes experience, they also have to deal with entering a new social environment. The student-athletes are often absent from class due to competition, which not only affects their academics, it also impedes their ability to interact with other students. Their obligations

to both academics and athletics leaves them with fewer opportunities to socialize with other students outside of their teams, either because they are not on campus, or because they may have practice or other sport related obligations during "high traffic" times when regular students may be interacting or socializing. Student-athletes are also limited in their ability to become involved in campus activities outside of the sport, again for similar reasons as mentioned previously.

Feelings of isolation and alienation are not uncommon with Black male athletes, which can have an adverse effect on their academics (Hyatt, 2003). Until 1991, coaches and other athletic administrators believed it in the best interest of student-athletes to keep them together, usually in separate dorms near the athletic facilities. In an effort to ameliorate the isolation of student-athletes, the NCAA mandated that no dorms have a population of more than 49% of athletes (Watt & Moore, 2001). This concession has not transformed into the classroom, however. There are many instances in which athletes may comprise the majority of the students in a particular class, either due to "clustering" or because the time is convenient to athletes' practice schedules. Even when they do not comprise the majority, it is still very common that student athletes are in classes together, and will tend to group themselves together (Watt & Moore, 2001). This again limits their opportunities to meet and interact with students who are not student-athletes.

In instances where the opportunity to meet and interact with the general student body exist, these situations can vary in the degree to which they are pleasant experiences. On college campuses, the athletic department is often a source of pride and entertainment for students when the teams are successful. Student-athletes are often revered for their feats on the playing field. They may have access to many students eagerly desiring

affiliation with potential professional athletes. Black male student athletes can be some of the most visible and most "popular" students on college campuses.

When teams are not successful, however, students can often take out their frustration on the athletes with verbal assaults and ridicule. In addition, the controversy around eligibility is not information to which only student-athletes are privy. In many cases, the stereotype about student-athletes, in particular, Black male student-athletes is that they are not up to collegiate standard in terms of their academics (Watt & Moore, 2001). Those student-athletes participating in "high profile" football and basketball programs are especially susceptible to this stereotype (Snyder, 1996). They are also sometimes thought to have a lot of concessions made for them (e.g. tutors do their homework and write their papers, they do not have to come to class, they get answers to tests) making students perceive some inequity in the treatment of students versus student-athletes. Interaction between student-athletes and non-athlete students can be hindered by these perceptions and can disrupt efforts to integrate athletes into the general student population.

In conclusion, the Division I Black male student-athlete is faced with mounting difficulties as he enters his college athletic career. In addition to leaving the comforts of their communities of origin, they are also embarking on a journey into an intense, rigorous form of collegiate competition, some with the goal of achieving professional status at the end of their journey. It is at this level that the student-athlete faces many challenges both in the classroom and on the playing field. The next level, athlete as a teammate and performer discusses the athletic context in more detail.

Athlete as a Teammate and as a Performer

Levels 4 and 5, The Athlete as Teammate and as a performer, consider the athlete as a teammate, taking into account how he interacts with his team, the athletic department, and the system; and as a performer, which specifically relates to his performance on the playing field. This level is of utmost importance in the context of the dissertation as the athletic identity is oftentimes most salient, especially for Black male athletes. It is this identity that the study intended to most address. It is important to understand this context of the athlete, because many of the subjects will be dealing with the pressures associated with this level. The subjects will also be analyzing the factors in their lives that have led them to be in the position as performers, yet they may also have faced some of the challenges associated with being athletes. In this section of the literature review, some qualitative studies will be reviewed, as this methodology and context is most relevant to the current study.

Athlete as a Teammate

When examining the Black male athlete in the context of his team, it is important to understand the factors associated with this interaction. Anshel and Sailes (1990) conducted a study examining the discrepancies between Black and White collegiate male athletes' psychological needs and perceptions of their present sport environment. Participants were given a 73 item questionnaire designed to acquire information about athletes' perceptions of their relationship and feelings toward coaches and athletes, mental preparation, personal needs and perceptions of the sport environment, and causal attributions of performance outcomes. With regard to their relationships to teammates, results showed no significant differences in beliefs about how to interact with teammates,

and the quality of these interactions. An interesting finding with respect to causal attributions was that Black athletes tended to attribute the outcome of the competitions to more personal characteristics. They tended to feel more accountable for both wins and losses, and were more likely to attribute losses to low ability.

Based on previous research conducted by Anshel (1990), Lawrence (2002) decided to conducted a qualitative study on African American male athletes to investigate the African American athletes' experiences of race in the context of their athletic careers. The author used four subjects who had participated in a combined total of five sports (baseball, basketball, boxing, football, and track). Lawrence was able to identify four major themes from the data. Their experiences of race (racism or discrimination may have better defined their experiences) could be categorized as outrage, being hurt, being empowered, and team togetherness. Participants recalled instances where they had been referred to by racial slurs, been physically attacked (i.e. spit on by opponents and fans, rocks thrown at them), humiliated, and experienced an overwhelmingly intense bout of anger. The "being hurt" theme could be described as feelings of sadness and pain when having an encounter, or feeling as though they were being stereotyped because of their race and/or athletic status. "Being empowered" was another type of coping response that the athletes employed after an encounter, which could be characterized as feeling as though the negative circumstances were learning experiences that made them stronger. The fourth theme, "team togetherness," is a feeling of responsibility for one another among team members after experiencing a negative event.

The relationship with the coach is an important aspect of being a part of the team. Several studies have examined the relationship between player and coach, and the impact

of race on the nature of the relationship. Jowett & Frost (2007) found that although

Black soccer players were able to form relationships of mutual respect with White their

coaches, they believed that had they had Black coaches, these bonds would have been

more intense in part because the Black coach would have had a personal understanding of

what it is like to be a Black soccer player. Anshel and Sailes (1990) found that with

regard to their White coaches, results showed that Black athletes tended to have more

mistrust of their White coaches; thought that race played a significant role in their starting

status; tended to be less dependent on their coaches instruction; exhibited more

discomfort in response to negative feedback; and were more likely to respond with anger.

     Anshel (1990) conducted a follow-up study, using only African American college

football players to determine African American male athletes' feelings about racial issues

as a competitor to offer considerations for sport psychology consultants working with

African American athletes. Using a structured interview, Anshel inquired about the

players' interactions with their (White) head coaches, unique behavioral styles and needs

of Black versus White athletes, the extent to which these needs were recognized and met,

and the effect of their sport environment on skilled performance. Results showed that

with regard to their relationships with coaches, many of the participants reported feeling

as though their coach was insensitive to their cultural needs, and often did not take

cultural differences into consideration when interacting with his team. They also tended

to feel that their coaches held a degree of racism and generally, a lack of sensitivity and

support of their psychological needs. An additional overarching theme reported was that

they often found it difficult to keep these difficulties with their coaches from affecting

their performance, but that it was necessary to do so to maintain a high level of

competitiveness. Based on his findings, Anshel suggests that sport psychology consultants be aware of cultural differences, but avoid hypervigilance, as these cultural issues may not be as salient for all African American male athletes in different types of sports. He also suggested consulting to coaches of all races to educate them on cultural differences, and the importance of taking it into consideration for the betterment of relations amongst players, and with coaches and administration.

Athlete as a Performer

It is as a performer that Black male athletes receive the most positive reinforcement. For many student-athletes, their identity as a performer is more central to them than their race, ethnicity, or gender (Brown, et al., 2003). For Black male athletes this is especially true. In many cases, it is in their respective sports where they have received the most attention, praise, and adoration. For many Black males, sport is their entry into the acceptance of mainstream America (Boyd, 2003). Sport has been seen as one of the few mechanisms with the ability to transcend race (Lapchick, 2000). Those who believe in its power, assert that race does not matter in athletics, especially in sports where African Americans dominate, which also happen to be the most popular sports in America. The confirmation rests with the popularity of basketball and football in the United States. Opponents of this idealistic view of sport claim that high profile athletics are another form of exploitation of Black men (Boyd, 2003). Especially at the professional level, and at the college level to a slightly lesser degree, White men are "getting rich" at the expense of the Black athlete.

It has been a point of contention in the field as to the source of African American males' purported athletic superiority, especially in sports in which they have dominated,

such as football and basketball. Countless studies have been conducted trying to determine a genetic basis for their "natural" athleticism, whether it is higher levels of testosterone (Hall, 2001), or heavier bone masses in Black males (Sailes, 1991). Using Darwin's theory, some researchers have claimed that only the strongest Africans survived the middle passage, accounting for their superiority. Others, using the eugenics ideology, contend that it is because slave owners "bred" only the strongest of their slaves to maximize the efficiency of their slave force (Sailes, 1991). Whether survival of the fittest or selective breeding is the mechanism, genetic superiority is at the heart of both of these arguments. Although it sounds as a positive characteristic, genetic superiority in the physical sense can be seen as the justification for genetic intellectual inferiority. The dichotomy of brains versus brawn is apparent. The stereotype is that for their physical superiority, Black men cannot possibly possess the intellect to match. This dichotomy was created as a mechanism of control, a way to assure that the quality that was of utmost importance, intelligence, was still attributed to those in power.

<center>Limitations in the Current Literature</center>

Conducting a literature search on Black male athletes yields significant results. There are countless articles, book chapters, and entire books dedicated to examining the history of race in sport, the debate about the Black community's involvement in the perpetuation of athletic stereotypes, educational concerns, the societal context of African American involvement in sport, and other broad issues that frame the world of the Black athlete. The information one can obtain from a basic search is useful in providing a foundation of knowledge about the plight of the Black male athlete. However, when

attempting to conduct a more specific search regarding the experiences of Black male athletes, the literature becomes deficient.

Qualitative research with African American athletes is limited. With the exception of journals dedicated to sport psychology, empirical research concerning the psychological development of Black male athletes has been minimal. Education, to some extent, has addressed some psychological aspects of athletics, but mostly as it relates to the poor academic performance of Black male collegiate athletes in terms of graduation and retention rates (Beamon & Bell, 2006; Eitle & Eitle, 2002; Hawkins, 1999). The extant literature focuses primarily on describing the environment and circumstances of the African American male athlete, but the literature does not encompass their perceptions of their athletic environment, and how race has been an influential area for them. Having actual accounts of successful Black male athletes can help to clarify their sentiments about their athletic environment, and whether their needs are being met. Also lacking in the literature has been research regarding patterns among athletes about the types of sports they chose, reasons for choosing their sports, perceptions of the impact of race on their participation, and perceptions of racism pertaining to their sport.

The literature also focuses primarily on sports in which Black males comprise the majority (e.g. football, basketball), but does little to address the circumstances surrounding those participating in sports not dominated by Black males. It would seem logical that these Black male athletes may have a drastically different experience in how they were influenced to play their sport and the needs that they value as Black male athletes.

Research Questions

Based on the trends in the current literature, and the areas in which the literature becomes less expansive, the current study sought to acquire a better understanding of the Black male athlete through a qualitative method of investigation. The following research questions were the foundation for the current study:

1. What do Black male collegiate athletes perceive as having led to their success?

2. What factors have contributed to their participation in their particular sports?

3. Has race been a factor in their athletic careers?

4. Are there differences in the degree to which race is a factor depending on sport?

5. How have they perceived their experience of being Black and participating in their particular sport as it relates to competition and interacting with the athletic system?

6. What do Black male collegiate athletes perceive as their psychological, cultural, and academic needs?

7. How does the athletic system understand or demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of Black male athletes?

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Participants

Twenty-seven subjects participated in this study. One subject did not complete

the interview protocol due to unforeseen time constraints, and this subject's data was not

used in the analysis. The participants were Black male student-athletes from two NCAA

Division I universities in the northeast region of the United States. The student athletes

represented the following seven sports: football (11), basketball (11), baseball (1), track

and field (1), soccer (1), swimming and diving (1), and lacrosse (1). Each of these

athletes was academically and athletically eligible to compete in his sport in both the

previous season and upcoming season.

Measures

Demographics Sheet

This one page sheet (see Appendix B) gathered information regarding

participant's age, racial and ethnic identification, sport affiliation, and years participating

in this particular sport. (See Table 1)

Table 1
Demographic information

Age	18 N=1	19 N=4	20 N=10	21 N=7	22 N=4				
Race/Ethnic Identification	Black N=4	African-American N=14	Black/ African-American N=1	Jamaican N=1	Jamaican/ African-American N=1	African/ Italian N=1	Black/ Samoan N=1	Dominican/ African American N=1	Black/ African N=1
Current Sport	Football N=11	Basketball N=10	Diving N=1	Soccer N=1	Lacrosse N=1	Baseball N=1	Track N=1		
Years of Participation	2-4 N=4	5-6 N=2	7-8 N=5	10-11 N=5	12-13 N=5	14-17 N=5			

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol (see Appendix C) consists of a set of open ended

questions, created by the author of this dissertation, based on a review of the literature

regarding participants' experiences of being athletes, and also being informed by Maher's

(2004) four level sport psychology framework. Prior to reviewing the literature, the

researcher created a list of questions which warranted answers relevant to the nature of

the study. The questions that remained unanswered after the literature review became the

basis for the questions in the interview protocol. The questions also represent feedback

from the pilot interview and a participant in the early part of the study. The questions

required participants to reflect on the history of their participation in their sport; cultural,

racial, ethnic, and familial influences (if any) and their impact; factors of their success;

their experiences at the collegiate level; assessment of their needs and whether they have

been met; and suggestions for coaches and administrators who work with Black male student-athletes.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

The recruitment of the subjects from the first of the two universities can be divided into three separate components that occurred simultaneously. In the first component, a contact of the researcher permitted her to present the research project to a course in which most of the members of the class were Black male student athletes, in an effort to recruit student-athletes directly. After presenting the information to the class, a sign-up sheet was circulated, and interested participants provided their contact information. Three of the subjects were recruited from this presentation.

In the second component, the researcher obtained the contact information for the head coaches of the non-revenue generating sports[1] and asked for permission to interview members of their teams for the purpose of the dissertation. After receiving affirmation from all of the non-revenue coaches, the researcher utilized the university's athletic website to visually obtain the identities of the Black male student-athletes in these non-revenue sports. Using the public student directory of the university, the email addresses of the student-athletes were acquired, and an email introducing the study, along with the contact information of the researcher was sent. Five of the subjects were recruited in this manner.

The third component involved utilizing the athletic support staff of the revenue generating sports[2]. The sports medicine physician, who has frequent contact with the entire athletic community, was informed of the study. Several of the directors of team

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[1] These are sports that do not generate capital for the university. For this dissertation all sports other than football and basketball were considered non-revenue
[2] These are sports that generate capital for the university, namely football and basketball.

affairs for the football and basketball teams were contacted by the researcher, after they had been informed of the study through a mutual contact. The directors gave this information to the academic advisors of the two teams. The academic advisors contacted the researcher to gather more information about the requirements for the study, and for scheduling purposes. The academic advisor for the football team invited eight student-athletes to participate based on the eligibility requirements of the study, and designated time for the interview in their daily schedules. The academic advisor for the basketball team utilized a similar process, but invited all six Black members of the basketball team, who were present over the summer, to participate.

A social contact of the researcher was closely connected to the athletic program at the second university. Through this contact, the head coach of the basketball team arranged to have the researcher interview all six of the Black players on the team during a workout day. On the day of the interview, one of the players had a family emergency and was not present.

The principal investigator conducted all interviews on the campus of the universities. The interviews ranged from approximately 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Interviews were digitally audio recorded to contribute to the authenticity of the study, and were downloaded to a secure computer and were password protected for additional security measures. Participants were assigned a case number which was the only identification used on response materials and audio recordings. No names were attached to the demographics sheet, audiotapes, or transcriptions. All digital recordings were transcribed solely by the researcher. Any tape recordings, transcripts of interviews, or other data collected from the participants was securely and confidentially maintained by

the investigator in a locked file cabinet for three years after the completion of the study. After three years, the principle investigator will destroy all research material.

Prior to the commencement of the interview, participants reviewed and signed the informed consent (see Appendix A). Participants then completed the brief demographics form (Appendix B) which indicated their age, racial and ethnic identity, sport affiliation, and number of years participating in the sport. Participants were then interviewed using the semi structured interview questionnaire (Appendix C).

A pilot interview was conducted to assess the relativity, appropriateness, length, wording, and flow of the interview. A personal contact of the researcher identified a contact who met all qualifications of the study, except for the eligibility criteria. This person had used all athletic eligibility during his four years at a Division I university. Each of the steps of the procedure was conducted; however, the participant was informed prior to the initiation of the interview that the researcher would be asking for constructive feedback on the aforementioned aspects of the interview at its conclusion.

Feedback regarding protocol

The feedback from the pilot prompted the researcher to change the wording of two questions in the protocol for clarification purposes. The questions "During the past six months, what has been an experience that you have had of which you have been proud as a Black collegiate student-athlete? Why?" was changed to "During the past six months, what was something that you did both as a student and as an athlete that you were proud of? The opposing question, asking participants to reflect on an experience of which they had regretted, was also reworded. Subjects were asked "During the past six months, what was something you did both as a student and as an athlete that you wish

you could have changed?" The pilot stated that use of the word regret may have been too pejorative, and may not have allowed participants to fully engage the question.

One of the questions in the protocol required all participants to reflect upon the interview itself, and whether there had been issues that had not been raised in the interview, but were relevant to the nature of the dissertation. One suggestion was valuable, and was not represented in the interview protocol. The eighth subject of the study suggested asking "What would you be doing without your sport?" as a way to assess the positive impact sport has had on their lives. After reviewing the questions and responses until that point, the researcher deemed this both as a missing component of the interview, and the phrasing as an appropriate way of assessing for this information. Therefore, subjects 1-7, or the first third of the participants were interviewed utilizing the initial protocol, while the remaining respondents, 8-26, answered all questions in the initial protocol with the question suggested by subject 8 incorporated.

Protection of subjects

To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the coaches were not informed of who participated in the study, nor of the content of the interviews. For their assistance however, the author of the dissertation provided the coaches with a written report of the findings of the dissertation. The identities of the student-athletes were disguised in order to protect the confidentiality of the subjects.

Written consent was obtained from all participants in this study. They were informed of their rights as participants before the interview commenced, including being able to withdraw from the interview at any time, refrain from answering questions that may induce discomfort and stop the tape during the interview. Confidentiality was

explained to the participants before the interview, informing them that their names would not be published in any document, and would be disguised on all research materials.

The informed consent (Appendix A) also outlined the highly unlikely event that the participants might have an emotional reaction to the experience of discussing many potentially sensitive topics. The participants were also informed that the researcher was an advanced doctoral student in clinical psychology who had training in how to deal with emotional situations, and was knowledgeable of clinical techniques. Therefore, if a participant appeared to be distressed in any way during the interview the researcher would stop the formal interview to discuss his or her reaction. If necessary, appropriate referrals would be made by the researcher for psychological treatment. By the end of the data collection, no participants reported psychological distress as a direct result of the interview.

Interviewer's Background

The researcher conducted all interviews. The researcher/interviewer was a twenty-four year old African American female. This was not discussed with the participants unless asked. However, the personal appearance of the interviewer may have lead to assumptions about her race, ethnicity, and age, and may have interacted with the process of the interview. This interaction could not be predicted as each participant may have created expectations based on their own personal psychological backgrounds. The protocol did assess for this possible interaction with one of the last questions, asking "How was it speaking to a female about these issues today?" which will be discussed in the results section of this dissertation. The researcher also held a Masters of Psychology

degree from the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology from Rutgers University, and was a continuing doctoral candidate.

Data Analysis

At the completion of the data collection, the data was analyzed utilizing Grounded Theory Methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This methodology required the researcher to compile answers from all participants noting similarities and differences in their answers. The researcher then identified, analyzed, and discussed themes throughout the interviews and their implications for further research. Based on the information provided by the data analysis and trends in the literature, the principal investigator created a set of guidelines for coaches and other athletic administrators for working with Black male athletes.

Utilizing grounded theory required three coding processes: open, axial, and selective. To most effectively apply the theory, all interviews were transcribed in their entirety by the researcher. The goal of the first of the two steps in this coding process was to dissect and categorize discrete thoughts and concepts according to the distinct phenomena they represented (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After the data had been dissected and labeled, comparisons among the data were observed to both group together similar concepts and to label the overarching concepts for the phenomena they represented (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding was the second of the three coding procedures, and required the researcher to defragment the data by making connections between categories and subcategories, allowing the overlapping themes from the subjects' interviews to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The themes created in this step tended to be broader than those postulated during open coding, however these categories were

more refined and common throughout the interviews, and allowed the examination of underlying conditions among the common themes. During the third and final coding procedure, selective coding, the main themes and categories were selected. Those categories that required further refinement and development were expanded (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Coding for Content

An independent coder was used to assess inter-rater reliability. The coder, a psychology doctoral student enrolled in a Psy.D program was involved in the study only for the purpose of acting as a second coder. The coder was given a copy of the transcriptions of the interviews, and asked to follow the principals outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) for grounded theory research. The coder independently coded each of the 26 interviews.

Upon the coder's completion of the analysis, the researcher and coder discussed the agreements and discrepancies among the data. When discrepancies arose, the researcher and the coder referred back to each set of the results of the open coding procedure for the individual questions. The nature of the discrepancies was discussed until consensus was reached regarding the nature of the category. An 89% agreement level was achieved between the researcher and the coder. It is expected that there will be some variability between coders when coding interview materials because distinct words of an informant can be interpreted in different ways. Hence, it was important to follow the procedures of grounded theory, so that the nature of each category could be traced back to the data that inspired it.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS I: GENERAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON SPORT
PARTICIPATION

The following results represent the data regarding general and cultural influences

on sport participation. In many instances, subjects' shared experiences allowed for the

derivation of specific themes. Grounded Theory Methodology was to analyze the data

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The results are categorized by general and cultural influences,

and will described by discussing each of the questions utilized in the interview protocol.

The major themes emerging from the first set of results are the influence of family, the

importance of Black males and relating, and the influence of being Black on sport

participation[3].

General Influences

Age at Initial Participation

As a way to understand the duration of the impact of sports on the lives of the

participants, they were asked their ages when their participation began. Fifteen percent

began playing between the ages of 4-6, while 35% began playing between the ages of 7-

10. Twelve percent began playing between the ages of 11-13. Surprisingly, nearly a

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[3] All names of schools, companies, and people have been changed to protect the identities of the subjects.

quarter, 23% of the participants began their sport participation in high school, from the ages 14-16.

Contributing Factors to Sport Participation

In an effort to gain a better idea of factors that contribute to participation in sport, subjects were asked to describe the circumstances around their initial participation in athletics, without specific mention of any racial or ethnic determinants. When the subjects were asked to identify the factors that contributed to their initial participation, 69%, or 18 of 26, identified family members as their primary motivation to begin playing any sport. Of these 18 participants, 55% identified a male relative as having influenced the decision, while 28% identified a female relative as having played a role. Three participants identified either parents or family as one of the primary contributing factors.

There was a particular subset of these respondents who, in addition to saying that family played a role in their initial sport participation, also indicated feeling as though they had to play, indicating either that it was their duty to play to follow the family legacy or out of other obligation. For example,

> "They were a big sports oriented family. I saw my cousins growing up so it drove me to play football. It was almost like I was forced, but not like that you know. My cousins used to always be like "R come outside and play football" or I would be right there when they would be working out. I would come along with them. Yeah just watching them. I had cousins that said play football. I had a few that actually played football. I had a lot that played basketball. So I had to pick both of them. Yeah I just had to play a sport."

Another participant mirrored these sentiments more emphatically.

> "It's in my blood. It's in my genes. My whole family plays. I have aunts, uncles, cousins. So I guess it was picked up through always being around it when I was younger. But I guess if you see them doing it and they're good at it and so many people in your family do it then you just automatically adapt."

In a similar manner, 73% indicated that their environment was conducive and encouraging of sport participation. Television was one source of shaping the behavior. Four of the subjects indicated that their families frequently watched sports on television, and that their motivation to play came from a desire to emulate their sports heroes. Another way in which the environment was conducive was the idea that there were many children participating in sports in these particular neighborhoods. One participant stated, "That's all kids did around my neighborhood." For this participant and those who responded in this manner, the sentiment was that participating in sports was simply what one did without questioning why, almost as a natural progression. This sentiment does, however, appear to be mitigated by geographic location.

> "Well I grew up in Florida. So that's what everybody did down in Florida. They used to play it out in the streets when I was younger. The next thing you go do is play Pop Warner. That's basically how I got started."

Following a similar trend, 35% cited social reasons for beginning to participate. Some of the subjects recognized the value in participating in sports as a way to connect with others socially. Others described being told by parents or relatives of the social benefits of sport participation, and that these social benefits kept them involved in sport participation early on in their careers. Fifty-six percent of those who cited social reasons for their participation stated that it was their friends who convinced them to play sports.

There were many other reasons that people cited for initiating their athletic careers. Of the respondents, 27% cited their "natural ability" as their reason for beginning to participate, with approximately half of those stating that they were either exceptionally tall for their age or were larger in stature than most children their age, making them appealing to their particular sports. These respondents also indicated that

the messages they received from those in their environment distinctly turned their

attention to athletics, again making participating in sports part of their natural

progression. Other reasons included having access to coaches, either in the family or in

the neighborhood who encouraged them to play, and using sports as a way to learn

something new, express anger, keep busy, and stay out of trouble.

Influential Persons in Sport Participation

When asked to describe who was involved in their initial participation, an

overwhelming majority of the subjects (84%) cited members of their family as having

been involved. Fifty-four percent of those who cited family specifically mentioned their

parents, while another 54% mentioned other family members. Thirty-one percent who

mentioned parents specifically mentioned their fathers, while 23% specifically mentioned

their mothers. Six respondents mentioned their older brothers, five respondents

mentioned their cousins or their uncle(s) each, and two respondents mentioned their

aunt(s). Other people mentioned as being involved in their initial participation were

friends (15%) and coaches that they knew (12%). One person mentioned a sports role

model from television as having been involved in his initial participation.

When looking further at this data, it is clear that the family members are

important, but less clear is the importance of male family members and males in general.

Of the participants, 85% cited a male as having played a role in their involvement versus

31% citing a female influence in their involvement with sports. Male family members

tended to be more involved in their initial participation because they were either currently

participating in sports, or coaching teams.

Sports Participation History

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the breadth of the influence of sports, subjects were asked to describe the number of sports in which they participated, which sports they were, and how they went about deciding to limit their participation to their current sport. Only one respondent did not play any other sports besides his current sport. On average, the remaining subjects participated in two other sports at some point in their lives. Of the remaining subjects, 46% identified one of the other sports in which they participated as being basketball, 38% identified one of the other sports in which they participated as being baseball, 30% identified one of the other sports in which they participated as being track and field, 27% identified football as one of the other sports in which they participated, and 15% identified soccer as one of the other sports in which they participated. The other sports that were mentioned by only one subject each included tennis, lacrosse, swimming, wrestling, cricket, martial arts, volleyball, and rugby.

The reasons that the participants cited for their participation in these other sports fell into two categories. The first was simply that their parents enrolled them in different sports, and they continued to participate in the ones that they enjoyed. The other reason was that they were encouraged to participate in other sports to assist in the physical conditioning and strength building of their primary sport. This second type of participation happened mostly in the late middle school and high school years, when it seems coaches were beginning to shape these players into collegiate caliber athletes. This type of participation was especially apparent (87%) in football players who were encouraged to run track to enhance their speed for their particular positions.

The reasons that subjects made their decision to terminate their participation in other sports fell primarily into three categories. The first reason was simply that their enjoyment of the other sports diminished, and did not compare to the enjoyment of their primary sport. The second reason was that as they began to participate in organized sports in the schools, the sport seasons began to conflict. For example, the subject who ran track in college began to find it difficult to try to participate in baseball concurrently. Basketball and football are often seen as the more time consuming and demanding of the sports, especially once in the high school age range (Brown, et al., 2003) and participating one of these sports while trying to participate in another sport at the same time became virtually impossible according to the subjects. Their deciding point on which sport to choose then became based on the aforementioned reason for termination, or lack of enjoyment, or the third reason, career opportunity. One subject's response summarized the dilemma in a clear and coherent manner.

> "I played baseball, basketball and track. I was playing basketball since I was real young probably like four or five. All my brothers played basketball, so it was the hoop dream. I had been playing baseball for 4 years prior. Track, I kinda just fell in the mix of it in middle school. I just started running track. But my brothers, we used to run around the block. We used to have races in the street. So if you wanna call it ghetto track and field, we were doing that. I wasn't able to play baseball because of track. And I wasn't able to play basketball, because they talked me into wrestling. But it was all fun. All the sports overlapped so I couldn't do it."

The majority (68%) stated that their primary reason for discontinuing their participation in other sports was career based. They stated that if they perceived their opportunities for college scholarships to be greater in one sport than the other, then they ceased their participation in the other sport. This phenomenon was not only seen for those that may have had scheduling conflicts due to concurrent sport seasons, but also in

those who could have feasibly participated in two sports, but decided to "focus" on the one that would help them get farther in their athletic careers. One respondent expressed concern that participating in another sport could be risky.

> "I tried out for every sport, but I didn't really play any other sports besides football and track. Football was always the most important thing, like track was helping football. That's how I saw it. Like I made states and everything but I just stopped, because I didn't want to risk it."

Another respondent indicated a clear decision to cease participation because of educational opportunities.

> "I played basketball and I ran track. Well I played basketball 7th and 8th grade, and I ran track when I got to high school. Yeah but I played basketball until my junior year then I stopped playing basketball. I ran track for 3 years so I started running track my sophomore year. Yeah, basketball was from 8th grade to junior year and track was from sophomore year to senior year. I don't know honestly. I started off with football, and as the years went on I excelled in it. And I started to get all these letters from D-I schools, so I figured that was my best shot at going to college. Track also, but my thing was I couldn't do both. It was either football, or track, or basketball. And at the time basketball wasn't really going anywhere. My team wasn't really good in high school so I figured stick with track and stick with football. One of those is gonna pay off. Yeah, but for the most part, I never got offers from D-I or D-2 (from track). Most of my offers came from football. That's the reason I stuck with football."

Based on the information provided in the early portion of the interview, the influence of family becomes very clear. Based upon the data, all but one subject participated in another sport, other than their current sport. The data also reveals that the half of the participants began playing before the age of 10. For many participants, family was the primary reason that they began playing, and appeared to be actively involved in their participation. Although the cultural influence was not specifically queried during this time, it can be deduced that there may exist a link between familial influence and cultural influence. The subsequent section will directly address these influences.

Cultural Influences

Based upon the literature, it was evident that the environment played a large role in sport participation (Eitle & Eitle, 2000). With this in mind, it was important to understand the types of neighborhoods from which the participants came, the types of schools they attended, and the types of teams on which they played through a racial, ethnic, and cultural lens. It was also important at this point to gain a better understanding of cultural influences in the family and the environment.

Racial/Ethnic/Cultural Makeup of Neighborhoods

Subjects were asked to describe their neighborhoods when growing up, particularly when they began playing sports. For most of the participants, they remained in the same neighborhoods throughout their lives. For those that did not, their particular situations will be discussed in more detail.

The participants were asked to describe the racial and ethnic makeup of their neighborhoods. Forty-six percent identified their neighborhoods as being predominantly Black with another 12% stating that their neighborhoods were predominantly Black and Latino. Fifteen percent identified their neighborhoods as being "evenly mixed" with no ethnicity or race predominating. Of the participants, 23% stated that their neighborhoods were predominantly White. These participants identified their neighborhoods as having very little racial and ethnic diversity. Two (8%) subjects made the distinction between being predominantly White and being "predominantly White, but being very mixed." These subjects stated that although the White population dominated in their neighborhoods, the remainder of the population was so diverse that one could not pick out a majority.

Racial/Ethnic/Cultural Makeup of Schools

Subjects were asked to classify in terms of racial and ethnic diversity the schools which they attended, particularly when they began playing, and also (if different) when they made their decisions to cease other sports and focus on their current sports. These results are separated into two parts. When asked specifically about their schools when they began playing sports, the respondents' answers were almost identical to the diversity of the neighborhoods, with the exception of two participants both of whom relocated soon after beginning to play. This indicates that the schools they attended when they were younger were generally representations of the neighborhoods from which they came.

The results of the same question, but specifically asking when they decided to focus on their primary sport varied a great deal from the results regarding the neighborhoods. (For those subjects who did not endorse deciding to "focus" on one sport, the question was asked "Were your schools always this way? If not when did it change, and what did it change to? All subjects who answered this iteration of the question responded that the makeup changed in high school). Generally this question was further queried to obtain a more comprehensive grasp of this particular phenomenon.

Subjects cited a number of reasons for this change. One reason in particular that was endorsed by several (7 of 26) of the subjects was that they changed schools during their high school years either because of educational concerns, safety reasons, or athletic advancement. One particular subject came from a suburban middle class family, but his school zoning regulations sent him to an inner-city school, where violence was rampant.

His parents decided to enroll him in a private school in order to keep him safe and

provide him with better educational opportunities.

> "Halfway through my 8th grade year I transferred to Catholic school, and I went to high school in Catholic school. Because I was in a school that was—it was a public school that was pretty bad with violence and stuff. And I was in a situation, and I didn't really have anything to do with it, but I almost got into a serious fight. And like the people that I almost got into the serious fight with had weapons, and my mom was like, "I ain't having that." It (public school) was predominantly Black. Then I went to Catholic School. Well predominantly White, but my graduating class was—I was in a smaller Catholic school, so there were like 25 people. And actually in my graduating class most of the kids were Black. So they were middle, high, upper class Black kids."

Several of the participants changed schools with the primary motivation being

athletic advancement. These athletes' talents were noticed early enough that someone

consulted with their parents and urged them to put them in positions that would increase

the likelihood of athletic exposure to colleges, and opportunities for scholarships. In a

few (3) of these particular situations, students received scholarships to attend these

expensive private and preparatory schools. In all of these cases, students went from

attending highly diverse schools, some with ethnic minority students comprising the

majority, to attending predominantly White schools with little in the way of ethnic

diversity. One participant lived in a predominantly White neighborhood, but attended a

predominantly Black public school. When asked how this was so, he explained that there

had been a push in his city to diversify the schools, so students from the inner city were

bussed to his district to ameliorate the perceived lack of diversity.

Racial/Ethnic/Cultural Makeup of Teams

In an effort to understand the role which race, ethnicity, and culture have played

in relation to sport, subjects were asked to describe the makeup of the teams on which

they have played. They were asked to distinguish between the teams of their current

sport and those of the other sports in which they had previously participated. Thirty-five

percent (9 of 26) of the participants stated that they had participated on teams that had

been predominantly White. Of these only three (approximately 12% of all subjects or

one-third of this subgroup) respondents currently participated on a team that they

considered to be predominated by White males. Thirty-eight percent (10 of 26) of the

subjects had participated on a team that they considered mixed evenly in terms of race

and ethnicity. Of these participants three (approximately 12% of all subjects or 30% of

this subgroup) were currently on teams that they considered to be evenly mixed. Results

also indicated that 80% (21 of 26) of the subjects had played on a team that was

predominantly Black. Of these subjects, 95% (20 of 21 for this subgroup; or 76% of all

subjects) currently played on teams that were predominantly Black.

When looking at the data further other trends can be observed. None of the

interviewees indicated that they had only participated on teams that were considered

predominantly White. Of the 38% of subjects who endorsed having participated on a

team they considered to be evenly mixed racially and ethnically, just one had only

participated on teams that he considered mixed evenly. Fifty-seven percent of the

subjects who indicated that they had participated on teams that they considered to be

predominantly Black, had only participated on teams of that nature. These findings

indicate that through sports, all participants had been exposed to some amount of racial

and ethnic diversity apart from their families of origin, even those who were raised in

predominantly White neighborhoods and attended predominantly White schools.   To

determine whether the inverse is true, one must look at the four subjects who may have

had least amount of exposure to White peers, or those who were both raised in

predominantly Black neighborhoods and attended predominantly Black schools. Three of the four only played on teams that were predominantly Black. It appears from the data, that the opposite is not necessarily true, since sport participation did not appear to increase the chances of exposure to White peers.

Another interesting phenomenon occurred when observing the data. There were four subjects, two football players from university 1 and two basketball players from university 2, who did not agree with the rest of their teammates when considering the racial and ethnic makeup of their current teams. The majority of the participants on these particular teams would describe the team as predominantly Black, while these two groups of subjects would describe the team as evenly mixed. In order to determine the accuracy of the description, the number of athletes on the team was divided by the number of minorities on the team. In these two instances, these teams would be considered predominantly Black since the number of Black athletes on the team exceeded 50% in both instances. However, this phenomenon does raise the issue of the importance of the perception of the athletes when understanding complicated matters of race and ethnicity.

Role Models

To gain more information on what may have influenced sport participation, subjects were asked to identify any role models they had when growing up. Although respondents identified a variety of people as having been role models to them, 81% of the them ultimately identified a Black male as having been a role model for them in their lives. This 81% can be broken down into five different categories.

Professional or College Athlete

Fifty-four percent of the student-athletes identified a professional or college athlete as their role model. Subjects generally provided the name of the athlete voluntarily. When they did not initially provide the name, they were specifically asked the name(s) of the athlete. For those athletes where the race of the athlete was not obvious, the researcher utilized online resources to determine the race (and ethnicity if possible). In each of the 14 responses in which a college or professional athlete was mentioned, the athlete was a Black male. In each of the 14 cases, the participants mentioned a player in their particular sport. A football player made the following comments:

> … And then watching the NFL games and the NBA games you tried to look up to one of those guys. Um, for the most part it was Priest Holmes and Ray Lewis. I looked up to those guys because I play those positions running back and linebacker. So I looked up to them. And basketball it was Kobe Bryant because I know he has an Italian background. He's been to Italy a few times, so he was my motivation.

The participant who played baseball stated the following:

> I always wanted to be Ken Griffey, Jr. I guess any Black kid wants to be Ken Griffey, Jr., who wants to play baseball. So I just wanted to be him. He was awesome. And he was one of the best in his time, before he started getting hurt.

The participant who played lacrosse expressed these sentiments.

> Well when I found out what lacrosse was, the first person who caught my eye was this guy Kyle Harrison. He's actually a Black lacrosse player, and he played for Johns Hopkins. He was a freshman, a blue chip freshman. And I watched him play, and I was like this guy is really good. And my best friend, he plays lacrosse. He's a Black guy. He plays lacrosse at C****** now and his favorite lacrosse player was Kyle Harrison's biggest rival this guy Johnny Christmas. He was a Black lacrosse player at VA. And these are like the 2 biggest lacrosse schools. So the fact that they had these two Black lacrosse players, I was like Oh man. So I always wanted to be Kyle Harrison and my best friend always wanted to be Johnny Christmas. So like the way I play now is based off of this guy. Everything that I do I've learned from just watching him over and over again.

People like watch their favorite basketball player. Like they'll watch Michael Jordan and then go out and practice like that. Like I took my stick with me everywhere because I swore I was Kyle Harrison. He was an All-American his last 2 years in college. And I was like that's what I want to do. And that's pretty much been my motivation.

The participant who participated in swimming and diving stated the following.

When I was growing up, there was this Black dude named John who dove [in college]. And John was f****** nice. And he was like me. He grew up around where I grew up. And I used to be like "Oh s***, this n**** is nice." I used to follow him around and s***. Yeah. I think even if I don't know it, maybe he really had a lot to do with me diving. Because I used to look at him and be like yo that n**** is nice. I used to be his shadow, and he would be like leave me alone. But I always used to follow him, but I was a little kid. Maybe he had a lot to do with the s***. Yeah, in my life, John was definitely one of my role models.

The statements by these three participants are especially important because these are not sports the literature (Hodge et al., 2008) considers to be dominated by Black male athletes. However, these subjects also indicate the importance of being able to identify with regard to gender and race with someone in their sport.

Fathers

Fifty-eight percent of interviewees indicated that their parents were role models in their lives. While two subjects did not specify a parent, 54% of the remaining subjects who indicated a parent (twenty-seven percent of all subjects), indicated their fathers specifically as a role model. (Mothers' influence will be discussed below). Reasons for fathers being role models included being tough, being able to handle adversity, and former athletic prowess.

Family Members

Nineteen percent of the participants (5 of 26) indicated male family members as having been role models. The reasons given for family members being role models are similar in content to those given for fathers. Participants indicated that they saw these

particular family members as having athletic talent, being very supportive, and demonstrating leadership. The following is a response from a football player:

> That's the thing. When I was growing up, my cousins were my role models. They did the right things. And to this day my cousins that I looked up to, they graduated college. I don't think…As you grow up that you have dreams of playing in the NFL and all that stuff. I think that gets overlooked by the role models that you probably have sitting right there in front of your face. Yeah. I mean they really stood by me you know, because I'm the oldest of 4. So when I had to look at people I had to look at my cousins…

Civil Rights Leaders

Two of the subjects identified civil rights leaders, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr as a role models. These subjects expressed an inspiration to achieve based on the accomplishments of the leader.

Coach

One respondent indicated that his Black coach was his role model. The relationship between the subjects and their Black coaches will be discussed at length in a subsequent section.

Mothers

Twenty-three percent of the participants (6 of 26) stated that their mothers were role models. Four of the six student-athletes specifically mentioned that their mother's perseverance and strength despite being single parents made them role models. All of the participants (6) who cited their mothers as role models, endorsed them because they were hard-working single mothers, who provided for them, despite struggling financially.

> Well my mom was a big role model. Because I come from a big family. I have 3 brothers and 3 sisters. And she's a single parent. So I always looked up to her for raising us by herself. That's basically it, my mom…

Other

Other people mentioned as having been role model included mothers, coaches without the mention of race, and other female family members, and themselves.

<div align="center">*The Role of Parents and Family*</div>

In order to begin to assess the influence of culture, participants were asked to describe the role of their parents and family in their sport participation. All subjects indicated that they saw their families' role as one of support. The types of support can be broken down into three types, *moral, environmental, and logistical.*

Moral Support

Sentiments characterized as moral support were by far the most endorsed by the subjects. Seventy-seven percent of the subjects specifically stated that their parents and families provided them with encouragement and support. Subjects did elaborate on the ways in which their parents and families provided them with support. Thirty-five percent indicated that their parents and families came to their competitions to show support. The following was stated by a football player:

> She [mom] was very busy working. Until later like my junior year she really didn't come to the games as much, but she really helped out a lot. She would cook me a good meal the night before the game. And then whenever she would come to the game that would just really help my self-esteem. So she really played a big factor especially when I got older. So she was always there to support me.

A basketball player mirrored these sentiments.

> My mom was just supportive of me with that. At first she was working two jobs. No matter what she was doing so she was at my games. She would run into practice. She would stay up late to make sure that I got in. If there was anything I needed for basketball she was there. She's been to quite a few games.

In addition to coming to games, 27% of the subjects indicated that their parents provided motivation to continue in sports, and praise regarding their performances.

Environmental Support

Six subjects endorsed sentiments characterized by this author as environmental support. Environmental support indicates a conscious act to make the environment more conducive to sport participation. Subjects described their parents and/or families as having steered them toward athletics, or having surrounded them with athletics. Another way in which subjects received environmental support from their parents and families was by taking them to athletic events. The following sentiment was expressed by a football player, regarding his uncle:

> But he would always say stuff mentally. He would take me to do registration. He would take me to sports events all the time. Like cause he has 4 girls. He doesn't have any boys. So we were like his little boys. And he would just always have me around football games, baseball and basketball. He wanted to see us doing something. He would always have me in the right place to play a sport.

Logistical Support

Eleven subjects endorsed sentiments characterized by the author as logistical support. Those who endorsed this sentiment spoke to the logistics of participating in sports as the way in which their parents and families played a role in their participation. For instance, one subject stated that the way his parents supported his athletic career was by financing his participation. Another subject referred to his mother as having made sure he got to and from his games and practices. Another participant described his parents as having found camps for him to enhance his athletic skills. One subject thought it important to mention that his mother would always prepare a big breakfast for him on the day of a game to make sure he had adequate sustenance to effectively compete. One respondent described how they changed his school so that he could compete at a higher caliber high school.

Other ways in which parents and families played a role in sport participation included encouraging strength in academics in order to prepare themselves and make themselves more appealing to colleges. Interestingly, four subjects stated that their families actually discouraged sport participation at one point in their careers. One subject stated that his parents did not understand his choice of sport, lacrosse, and questioned why he would want to play this versus something "more sensible" like basketball or baseball. Another participant stated that his mother did not like his participation in football for fear of injury.

Motivation to Continue Participating in Sports

In order to assess both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for continuing their athletic careers, participants were asked to identify their motivation for continuing to play. Subjects were asked the question, "What's kept you playing?" Emotional and financial reasons were cited for continuing to play their sports.

Emotional

Sixty-nine percent (18 of 26) stated that their motivation to continue playing was in part due to having a genuine love and appreciation for their sport, competing, and winning. Eight of these subjects specifically stated that they considered themselves to be highly competitive. Six participants stated that their relationships with their teammates had been a primary motivation for continuing to play their sports. Another six subjects cited their success at their sport as a motivation to continue.

Financial

Seven subjects stated that one of their sources of motivation to continue playing was because they were on athletic scholarship, indicating a sense of feeling without

choice. It should be noted, however, that each of these participants who expressed this sentiment, also stated that they genuinely had a love for the game as well. Eight subjects cited a desire to play professionally as their primary motivation for continuing to play their sport.

Other reasons for continuing to participate in sports included not knowing what life would be like without sports (4), family (3), not being a quitter (3), a desire to improve (3), considering sports an escape or release (2), understanding that participating keeps them focused (2), and the life lessons learned through sport (2).

Discouragement from Participating

To assess any hardships that Black male athletes may encounter during their athletic careers, subjects were asked to describe any instances when they were discouraged from participating in sports, and who helped them through these instances. Four subjects stated that they had not ever been discouraged from participating in their sports.

Participants provided a number of reasons for being discouraged including but not limited to injuries (3), burnout (3), questioning sport chosen (4), discouragement from parents, as discussed previously (4), and poor performance (5). Parents were overwhelmingly cited as having helped get them through these difficult times. Twelve subjects reported that their parents helped them, with eight specifically mentioning their mothers. Others mentioned as having assisted them through included coaches, teammates and themselves.

Experiences with Coaches

To begin to assess the racial experiences of Black male athletes, subjects were asked to reflect on their interactions with coaches, both of similar racial backgrounds and different racial backgrounds. This series of questions helps to gain a better understanding of how Black male athletes perceive the influence of race on their sport by examining their relationships with coaches of similar and differing backgrounds.

Black Coaches

Participants were asked if they had ever had any Black coaches in any of their athletic experiences, and to describe these experiences. One subject indicated that he had not ever had a Black coach. Another subject indicated that he had not had a Black coach in his current sport, but had a Black coach in another sport in which he used to participate. In all, 25 of the 26 subjects indicated that they had played for a Black coach in their lifetime, with 24 subjects reporting that they had a Black coach in their current sport, but not necessarily for their current teams.

When asked to describe their experiences, all of the subjects responded in a manner that portrayed positive experiences with their Black coaches. The subjects' responses can be separated into five different categories: redefining the role of a coach, being like family or friend, relatability, being a good person and coach, and higher expectations. Although each of these separate categories has overlap with other categories, it is important to distinguish them because each has unique characteristics that should be explored separately.

Redefining the role of a coach. When speaking of their experiences with their Black coaches, subjects indicated the idea of their Black coaches redefining the role of a

coach. Subjects made statements such as "He went above and beyond what a coach is required to do." Subjects who responded in this manner, indicated a gratefulness to their coaches for not only recognizing the needs of certain of their players, but responding in a manner that provided assistance. An example of this sentiment was indicated by a football player when describing his Black coach.

> A pretty good experience to me. Good like—growing up I didn't really have a father figure, and he like kinda filled that role. He took—he went far and beyond what a coach should do. He really made me a good person, the person I am today. He helped mold me into the person I am today. Times when like my mom was at work, he would come help out and bring food. He would come over and cook. Cause like I was pretty much raising my brothers and sisters because my mom was always at work. So I was doing all that cooking and cleaning by myself. He would come through and help like bring food or something like that. Or like on Saturdays after games, he would take me and my brothers out. Just take us out… Yeah it was like 4 of us [on the team] who he really helped out. It was a good experience.

Another subject indicated similar sentiments.

> …He was like a father to us. He was like the father best friend. He just wanted us to succeed with whatever we did. Like me and my best friend Mike he called us his sons, [he was] the other Black kid. He would give us extra attention because he knew that there's not a lot of us in the sport. He was like there's not a lot of us so we need to stick together. So he helped us out a lot. So he was like a father figure.

Both of these subjects indicated a feeling of these men presenting as father figures to them. The first participant discussed a relationship with his Black coach in which financial support was provided, as an example of a father figure. The relationship described in the second response is slightly different. In particular, the second subject participated in a sport that was not dominated by Black men. As implied in his response, the student-athlete specifically mentioned the coach providing him and his other Black teammate with extra attention for that very reason. This response also provides data to

support the second and third categories of responses, being like family and/or friends, and

relatability.

　　Being like family/friend. Similar to the previous category, subjects indicated that

they considered their coaches to be part of their families or close friends. This sentiment

was expressed in the context of some of having interactions with coaches prior to

beginning the coach/athlete relationship. Subjects also indicated recognizing that the

relationship may have changed for the better after the coaching relationship ended.

Subjects discussed speaking regularly, some as much as daily to their former Black

coaches, and now seeing them as people who will be lifelong friends. The following

comment is from a soccer player of African descent:

> …It was real good. My mom and I were talking about me graduating, and she
> was like I'm going to call him [his HS coach] up. She still thinks those people
> were like important in my life. Yeah and some of the guys on the team, I mean
> they're gonna be friends my whole life. So like those guys, they're [his coaches]
> always gonna be important. Because they were more than just coaches, they were
> like family.

　　Relatability. The ability to relate to the subjects was another of the reasons

subjects characterized their experiences with their Black coaches as positive. Subjects

indicated that their experiences with their Black coaches were positive because they

believed their coach was able to relate to them because they came from similar

neighborhoods, had prior interactions with them and therefore knew them, and because

they, as Black male athletes themselves, knew what they were going through. The

following is a statement made from a diver regarding his coach. The name of the coach

was changed to protect the identity of the subject.

> …Yo me and Greg were definitely tight because we came from the same place.
> Like me and Greg grew up in the same hood. He had to deal with the same s***.
> He would be like yo make sure you get this s*** done. He basically got me into

college. He just really took me under his wing. When two people come from the same places, you're gonna look out for them more. And if it wasn't for him, and how he took care of me, I don't know where the f*** I would be right now. He really, really took care of me.

A football player expressed similar sentiments.

…We all lived in a rough neighborhood, so that helps because he would give me rides home and stuff. So that helped. The other coach he came late. He wasn't really my [position] coach, but I did spend some time with him talking about football and certain things. So we just have a better connection for the fact that we are Black, and they know what we go through. We have for the most part, we have similar adversities and situations that we go through. So they really know what I'm going through. So that helped out.

The majority of the subjects (4 of 5) who endorsed this category of response came from predominantly Black neighborhoods, but attended more diverse high schools and even predominantly White high schools. When taken in this context, these Black coaches may have been understanding what these athletes were going through off the field in terms of navigating culturally unfamiliar schools. In this sense, relatability becomes more salient, and understandably more critical in contributing to the success of these athletes.

Higher expectations. Subjects indicated that they perceived their coaches to have had higher expectations for them either individually or collectively as Black athletes, often pushing them harder than they may have desired. However, the consensus among respondents who expressed such sentiments was that this was an indication of coaches' caring, and ultimately their pushing helped to make them better young men. The following quote was taken from a football player regarding his experience with his Black coaches:

See I was mostly at White schools, so most of the coaches were White but I had two Black coaches actually. The thing about the Black coaches especially being on a White team, you build more of a relationship with the Black coaches, and

they seem to push you more 'cause they want to see you do so much better than everybody else. So that was a good thing for my first few years, because that helped me out the next years. They were on top of me a lot.

Similar sentiments were expressed by another football player, but indicated that this treatment was not limited to just him, but to all of the other Black players as well.

…And then in basketball my freshman year of high school we had a real good coach who was Black. And he was like a role model to Black kids, because we were in a predominantly White school. He went to the school and he graduated in 92 and he's said when he graduated he was the only Black kid in the school in the senior class. So I think he was really tough on a lot of the Black kids that were on the team academically wise and athletically wise. So he was a real good person in my life to just look up to.

Both of these respondents shared similar sentiments regarding their coach, and the similar context of attending predominantly White schools. Subjects (4) who responded in this manner were all from predominantly White schools, indicating a possible trend in the way Black male athletes perceive the behavior of their Black coaches in this context.

Coach being a good person and good coach. Subjects also described their Black coaches positively by indicating that they were good people and good coaches. "Good coach" according to the student-athletes meant providing them with motivation, being positive role models, indicating that they cared about their players, among other positive characteristics. Subjects who responded this manner indicated feeling supported by their coaches and recognizing that they were role models to them.

White Coaches

Participants were asked if they had ever had any coaches of races and ethnicities different from their own in any of their athletic experiences, and to describe these experiences. Subjects indicated having only interacted with White coaches, and no other

race or ethnicity is represented in these findings. All subjects indicated that they had played for a White coach in their careers.

When asked to describe their experiences, unlike when describing Black coaches, responses were of both a positive and negative nature as determined by the researcher, with the majority of the responses being positive. The subjects' positive responses can be separated into two different categories: being a good coach and having a good relationship. The subjects' negative responses can be separated into two categories: style of coaching and ways of relating.

Being a good coach. Subjects provided a total of 15 positive responses. Of these responses, 12 related to perceiving their White coaches as displaying different characteristics of a good coach. These characteristics include but are not limited to being good teachers, provided good constructive criticism, being passionate and professional, pushed players hard, and saw potential in players. The following is a response that is fairly encompassing and representative of the other responses regarding sentiments about good coaches:

> My HS coach was really good. He was another guy who took to me right away. He took a lot of time out to teach. He was the type of guy where if you wanted to put in the time, he would be there at his own convenience. So a few of my teammates would drive out to his house. He was a private instructor on the side, so he had batting cages in his backyard. He would take the time out to hit with us. He really was a teacher. He really liked to teach at the same time. So I really like that. He was hard on us, but looking back on it, that's what we needed. And I appreciate that because he really pushed me and he saw my potential and he pushed me until I began to play at the level that I was capable of. So I really appreciated that.

Good relationship. Five subjects indicated that they experienced good relationships with their White coaches as well, and considered them to be friends. The following is a quote from a football player.

Now with the White coaches it was almost the same thing as with the Black coaches, except that we built a relationship on the better I became. So I don't know if we built a relationship based on my skill or my character. But all I know is that we have a good relationship now. We still talk like twice a week twice every two weeks. I have a great relationship with all of my coaches, JV and varsity. The coaches will come to the games to support me. They'll call me up. They'll take me out. I go over their houses, so we have a great relationship.

Another participant mirrored these sentiments.

…All my coaches that I've had throughout my life, I'm still really close with. My HS coach, like I go back and hang out with him. They've all been really good to me and just helped me out a lot.

Styles of coaching. Of the participants who endorsed negative aspects of their

experience with White coaches (46%), approximately half indicated issues with the style

of coaching. Of the perceived problematic techniques were "unnecessary directness",

lenient discipline, and a sense of the coach only being in the profession for the money,

and not caring about the growth of the athlete.

Ways of relating. Subjects (3) also indicated taking issue with the way in which

their White coaches related to them. Subjects described having an experience with a

White coach who was not as personable or with whom they had a distant or no

relationship. Other ways of relating specifically implicated race as a factor. One subject

stated that he felt that the coach was closer with the White members of the team, while

another indicated that he believed the White coach feared Black athletes, and therefore

treated them differently.

I saw a lot of guys that took advantage of them, or tried to. My coach, my basketball coach, Coach P, like he was from Mississippi, so he really disciplined us (this is a Black coach). You would see the same guys on the basketball court be disciplined and not act out of line, but when we go turn over to football and we had the White coach, it was just a difference in how they acted. I think it was a little fear from my Black coach. I don't know why. He was—yeah he definitely disciplined us. Honestly I think it's the White coaches, their lack of discipline,

and their fear of Black athletes. They hold them up too high. They baby them. I don't know why but that's just how it is to me. If that makes any sense.

Another sentiment expressed by a second participant.

But Phil also cares about what he's doing. I mean he's very passionate about what he does. If he wasn't he wouldn't be a good coach, but he's just not as personable as my coach from back home. And I don't know why. Maybe it's because there is a race barrier, but he's just not. I do feel like I've gotten better here. And I feel like I could have gotten better if there was a relationship there, but I'm not going to complain because I'm still doing me. I still wish—I still feel there's a vibe, and there's a distance. And sometimes I realize that my coach is closer with some of the White people on the team…

He goes on to say more about his interaction with his White coach.

But maybe it is that I'm Black. I know there's a difference. I know when I first came in there was a difference in the way that he dealt with me. But he really tried not to but— No, no, he tried not to make it like he—You could tell he dealt with me differently, but after awhile he just started realizing that I'm just like everybody else. I don't know. He just always felt like he had to tell me what to do. Or that he always had to be on top of me about s***. Like "Yo _____ do this do that." I just felt like he dealt with me different. He stayed on top of me more than he did anybody else. I mean I guess it was a good thing, because I did f*** up in school. But I was like, "Leave me alone."

Trends. Participants were explicitly asked to compare and contrast differences and similarities between their experiences with their White and Black coaches. However when doing a comparison between the participants' responses about their experiences specifically with their Black and White coaches, there were a few trends that stood out. The first was that for both Black and White coaches, subjects generally had positive experiences. Participants indicated an ability to establish positive relationships with both sets of coaches. Subjects also indicated a sense of believing that based on their experiences, both Black and White coaches were generally good coaches, who provided them with support, motivation, and pushed them to reach their potential. The most notable differences were that there were no negative experiences reported with Black

coaches, but there were with White coaches, although not endorsed by many subjects. There was also a difference in the description of the positive relationships with the coaches. Several respondents described an ability to relate as being an important aspect of their positive relationship with their Black coaches; a component that was not described by any subject when discussing their White coaches.

Comparing and Contrasting Experiences with Black and White Coaches

Subjects were explicitly asked to compare and contrast their experiences with their Black and White coaches, as a way of understanding if these athletes perceived any general trends in their experiences.

Of the 26 participants, eight (31%) stated that they generally saw no difference in their coaches. Four interviewees specifically stated that they saw the coaching styles being the same regardless of the race of their coach. It should be noted that of the eight subjects who stated that they generally saw no difference, all but two went on to cite potential differences. The reasons this may have happened can be speculated upon, however, based on the responses, it seemed as though these subjects generally believed there were no differences, but were able to speculate themselves as to what some differences might be, even if said differences were not relevant to them. For example, a baseball player stated the following:

> I don't think it was any different for me. I guess some of the other Black players probably related to him more. But for me I can't pinpoint one difference or another. I mean his coaching style could be compared to any White coach I had. The way he related to the players was pretty much the same, except for calling kids "dawg" instead of "kid" or "son". But other than that I can't pinpoint any monumental differences.

Participants described similarities between their Black and White coaches. In terms of the role of being a coach, of subjects who discussed this aspect of their coach,

half of them saw similar coaching styles and equal knowledge of the game in the

experiences of Black and White coaches. The student-athletes endorsed being able to

have positive relationships with Black and White coaches. Subjects also indicated that

for both types of coaches, they were able to establish close family-like relationships with

their coaches. One subject described having a good relationship with both types of

coaches, and feeling as though, in his experience, both types of coaches were willing to

help.

> I had a great relationship with all of my coaches. I couldn't really say anything
> bad about it. Yeah they were willing to help you out. Always there for you,
> always wanted to know how things were going. To this day when I go back they
> always wanna know how things are going. You can't really –but I don't know if
> that's just my personality or…

Two subjects also indicated a sense that regardless of race, their coaches cared

about their players. A quote from a basketball player captures this sentiment.

> If they are really good at their jobs they care about their players. Coach J cares
> about players more than I've ever seen a coach care about players. That's
> because he's a compassionate person. My high school coach cared about me too.
> And he was White. My middle school coach cared about me too and he was
> White. I just feel like if the coach really loves the game of basketball—the reason
> coaches coach is to coach young men. So if they're really passionate about their
> job and they all will really act the same. Well different coaches have different
> coaching styles. But as far as the way the treat people I haven't seen any
> differences. Like I said if they're good at their jobs they shouldn't. But I haven't
> experienced any coach that didn't care about me.

This subject specifically chose caring behavior as the gauge of determining

similarities or differences, however in this particular case, he also mentioned a difference

in coaching style, but did not attribute this to race. This particular passage reflects also a

feeling of whether there *should* be a difference in their experiences of their coaches based

on race of the coach and player, with many expressing the sentiment that ideally race

should not matter.

Subjects overwhelmingly (23 of 26) cited differences in their experiences with their White coaches and their Black coaches. These differences generally focus on styles of relating.

Black coaches' styles of relating. When asked to describe any differences in their experiences with their Black and White coaches, subjects described aspects of their coaches' ways of relating to convey these differences. Forty-eight percent of the subjects who indicated differences between their experiences with Black and White coaches stated that they felt that the Black coach could relate to them better. Relating better was nuanced for different subjects, but a general definition that encompasses the central idea behind the concept would be that a Black coach could "understand" them better because of his own personal experiences. Having similar backgrounds, included, but was not limited to similar neighborhoods and socioeconomic statuses, similar family circumstances (single mothers, absent fathers), similar life and athletic goals. The following sentiment was expressed by a football player:

> Honestly, Black coaches can relate to Black athletes more. I don't think that's a surprise. I think that's common sense. I mean they probably come from the same backgrounds we come from. Same nontraditional family and whatnot. I just think they can relate to us more. That's mostly at a younger age, because when you're young you don't really know who you are. You might want to go against the rules, or you might be one of those people who just follows the rules. So when you're confused, I think Black coaches can put you in your place more. But now it doesn't matter. Race doesn't matter in college, because it's too much on the line. They could easily put somebody in your spot so. I just think Black coaches can relate to Black athletes more. Fear like I'm scared? Yeah. I know that's kind of a bold statement. I just think they're [White coaches] scared. Coaches do not come from where Black coaches come from. I know it's some coaches that come from cities, but generally speaking it has to do with where you came from and the experiences you had. And because they didn't have the experiences I had—It's like they deal with me, but then they go back home and they probably deal with their little kids, and they gotta discipline us two different ways. And the fact that a lot of Black athletes and Black males in general grow up without a father it's like what makes you think I'm gonna listen to this guy. They don't understand.

They haven't experienced it. It's better to relate to somebody when you went through what they went through. They haven't been through what their athletes have been through…

Another football player expressed similar sentiments, however, he adds in the dimension of personal comfort on the part of the Black athlete in relating to their Black coaches.

With the Black coaches you could be more of yourself. You could talk about real life situations that are affecting you….But, I'd rather have some of the Black coaches because you can talk to them about real life situations, and they've been through it just for the fact that their Black. You're more comfortable and it's just easier to discuss…With the Black coach it was like right off the bat we're gonna look out for you. I don't care if you suck, if you're good, if you're going to a division one school, or a division three, we're gonna look out for you just because it's a White school and you may have troubles already.

What is also apparent in this previous exchange is the idea of the Black coaches "looking out for" the Black athletes. "Looking out", based on the data, refers to a mentoring relationship of sorts, whereby the coach takes an interest in the athlete both within the context of the sport and outside of the sport, academically and personally. Based on reports, these coaches would provide these athletes with advice and encouragement to continue their education and sporting careers.

Along similar lines regarding personal comfort, two subjects specifically mentioned feeling more comfortable or feeling "better" opening up to a Black coach.

When I talk to my head high school coach it's more like check up, how are you doing, like business. But when I talk to my high school coach, it's like my boy. He knows I'm a grown man now. So he gives me that respect, and I give him that respect. It wasn't really too much of a difference. It was more like one understood me more than the other. One grew up in the same background as me. Other one didn't but he was open to what I had to say and how my lifestyle was. He couldn't relate to it, because he never lived it, but he was open up—he opened up that side of me. He let me open up to him. But it felt better when I opened up to someone of the same background. Cause he knows. He grew up in the same neighborhood. He was from my town. He played football. He made it, got a degree and all that stuff. He knew what it was like so it wasn't nothing too hard to

get over. Coach knew what's going on in my life. His mother was a single parent. It wasn't that hard to open up to him. [not just because Black, but…] Also because he was from the same neighborhood.

Six of the subjects who described the relationship between themselves and their Black coaches as differing from that of White coaches discussed having relationships with their coaches that resembled family and/or that they considered themselves to be friends with their coaches. An example of this phenomenon was provided by a basketball player regarding his relationship with his previous coach.

> …But going back to high school, my assistant head coach--he was Black and the head coach was White—to this day I still talk more to the assistant coach than to the head coach. I don't know if it's the color of our skin or what, but we always had a tighter relationship. He probably wants me to be his kid's godfather. And the head coach, I'm cool with him. I call him sometimes and talk to him. But I wouldn't go to his house and spend the night or something. I could do that with my assistant coach, 'cause that's my man…

Subjects also reported feeling as though their Black coaches pushed them harder, yet cared about them more than their White coaches. These sentiments both stem from the idea that these athletes perceive these coaches to be able to relate to and understand them better, and that the pushing comes from a recognition, based on having a better understanding of the Black male athlete, and/or from their personal experiences, that these athletes need to be pushed harder to get the best out of them. This sentiment was by a track and field athlete in the following quote:

> The Black coach I think they care more, but I think it's kind of like I don't know, more of a connection there. I think he really cared. Like you really want me to do this, to be my best. I just remember one day I wasn't working that hard and I was making up excuses, and he just basically said if you don't want to do this then don't waste my time and he just went and sat in his car. And at that time I was like – I don't know. I was just like let me just do this. For some reason all my White coaches were named Matt. They all seemed kind of strange to me. Generally they were good people but I can't really say. Maybe it was a lack of knowledge of the sport, I don't know though. I think there's always-- the relationship between an athlete and a coach is very important. To have that

connection to believe in what they're telling you, you have to trust them. And sometimes that connection isn't there. The chemistry isn't really there. And I think that's vital, like that's very important.

When specifically asked to compare and contrast their relationships with their Black and White coaches, 21 subjects reported positive experiences with their Black coaches. The ability on the part of the Black coach to be able to relate was seen as critical in establishing and maintaining a positive relationship with their Black male athletes. Participants reported feelings of being more comfortable with their Black coaches (3) and believing that they had a better understanding of their experiences (11). Generally subjects did not discuss any differences in terms of ability to coach.

White coach styles of relating. Subjects who discussed their interactions with their White coaches, overwhelmingly (72%) discussed an inability on the part of the coach to be able to relate to their players. However, it must be noted that those who responded in this manner did not indicate that this was done with any sort of malice or ill intention. The inability was simply a byproduct of the athletes not believing that these coaches in particular had the personal experience to be able to relate, due in part to the color of their skin, but also a result of not believing they had similar life experiences. The following was expressed by a diver regarding his interactions with his coach:

> And Frank like—He's just not as—me and him don't come from the same place. And it's just different. Yeah, and it's just not that connection there. It's just not. I'm not sure what it is. Yeah I think it's---it could have to do with both [race and background]. I really don't know. Like I don't want to say it is [race], but I think it definitely plays a role. Because I feel like as a Black person, you come in down in your chips. Like you gotta come in and prove yourself to somebody, because you're Black and people have certain preconceptions about who you are and what you can do. And I felt like that's how it was for a little bit. But once he got the idea of who I was, that I'm not what he perceived me, that I don't fit in the mold that he thought Black people fit into. Because I don't think he really dealt with a lot of Black people before.

A football player mirrored these sentiments, but also provided another explanation about

the consequences of not being able to relate.

> [Mentioned White coaches being scared] Not like really scared, like we're gonna
> beat them up, but I would say there's some fear. Because they never know.
> Because they haven't been through what we've been through. They have thoughts
> in their heads. I just think the streets make you a tougher person. That's not
> everybody. But if you grow up in the streets, and you've been in a lot of fights
> and whatnot. I'm not saying that all Black athletes have been in a lot of fights.
> The streets are rough, whether you've been in fights or not. And like me, I haven't
> been in a lot of street fights, but I have 2 older brothers and they were rough with
> me. White people could be rough too, but it's just something about the Black
> athlete that make them a little rougher than the White coaches. Like thoughts that
> surround fear. I don't know. Maybe the fact that they know they don't know how
> to relate to us, that builds the fear. Like I don't know how to calm him down.
> What am I gonna do? And then they just kinda lose it.

Another football player highlighted the general sentiment that the differences may

not be completely attributable to race alone, and that other factors may also impede these

relationships from developing in a similar manner to the Black coaches.

> I guess like naturally we're more comfortable around the Black coach, because he
> knows more of where we come from and that kind of thing. Yeah and it's real
> easy to talk to him. He [*White coach*] doesn't know exactly where we're coming
> from, but he tries at least. It's just harder to talk to him. Like it's hard to explain
> because you wanna talk to him because he's a coach and everything but it's like
> it's a lot easier when he's Black. I don't know. It would probably be like the
> Black and White thing. Because it's like the background thing if there weren't
> any skin color involved it will probably be the background thing that like he's
> easier to talk to. Like, because of my background all the coaches know my
> background. So then he can relate to it easier because he knows what I'm talking
> about.

Some (eight) of the participants had experienced negative interactions with their

White coaches, and expressed these frustrations during their interviews. For example,

one participant indicated that he believed his coach had a better relationship with the

White players on his team. Another participant expressed the sentiment that he believed

that he needed to fight stereotypes, and prove himself to his White coach moreso than

other White players on his team, and in comparison to his experiences with Black

coaches. Another player expressed the sentiment that White coaches used and exploited

Black players more than Black coaches did. Another subject stated that he perceived his

White coach to be disrespectful to the Black players on the team, and that it became a

"running joke" on the team that all the Black players consistently got into trouble.

Not all of the feedback regarding White coaches was negative however. Subjects

(three) reported feeling as though their White coaches were family, as they did with

Black coaches. One subject reported that in his experience with White coaches, their

tendency was to be more effective at building an athlete's character. Based upon the

results, however, it is clear that the subjects generally had more positive experiences with

their Black coaches than their White coaches.

Role of Race in Their Sport Participation

Participants were specifically asked, "Does being Black play any role in your

participation in your sport, in the past or currently?" This question was administered in

order to assess if and how participants perceived their racial and ethnic identity to have

influenced their participation in sports. Twelve subjects (46%) stated that race did not

play any role in their participation. However, as was the case with the previous set of

questions regarding their interactions with their coaches, half of them (6 of 12) then went

on to cite the reasons that it either could have or did influence their participation.

Thirteen (50%) subjects stated that race did play a role in their participation in their sport,

while one subject stated that he did not know whether race played a role.

The nature of the question allowed for varied responses from the participants.

Forty-two percent of the participants (11 of 26) cited their race in the context of their

environments. It should be noted that each of the participants who responded in this

manner self-identified his neighborhood of origin to be predominantly Black. These

responses can be separated into three different categories. The first, and the most salient

would be the influence of growing up in predominantly Black neighborhoods.

Approximately half of the participants described their experiences this way. These

subjects described having access to Black athletes in their neighborhoods, and being

influenced to participate by seeing them, as demonstrated by the following comment:

> I don't think anybody ever really grows up thinking when they're young that you
> have to play a sport because you're Black. You just see other Black people doing
> what they do. Just in Black communities you see a lot of athletes—dog you really
> see a lot of athletes and you feel the need to be nice at a sport. You wanna be nice
> at something. That n****'s nice at ball. That n****'s nice at football.
> Everybody wants to have that thing that they excel at. Especially in Black
> neighborhoods, there's always the superstar.   It's not you feel the need to do it
> because you're Black, you feel the need to do it because you see other people
> doing it. Yeah, and that transfers into because you're Black you want to be an
> athlete.

Another participant mirrored these sentiments.

> I think it just—It's something-- I think there's a lot of athletes out there. I think
> Black people—You have that talent and there's a lot of Black athletes out there. I
> think even if you growing up watching. Even if you pick up the sport late, there's
> some guys who don't pick up the sport until they're in high school. There's just
> so much talent involved with the Black athletes I think that it doesn't hurt to give
> it a shot…I just think that at one point in time, when you're African American
> you watch a sport. And you see your own color out there. And you're either
> proud, and you want to do it or you want to try it, even if it's not the best thing for
> you. I think it's just that feeling. Oh I saw the role models, but then once I started
> I loved it. It was like when you have your little homeboys. They were coming
> from football practice, and I wouldn't feel right. I would be in the house or I
> would be watching them practice so…

One athlete highlighted the fact that he was not only influenced by what saw, but

also by what he did not see in the Black community. This particular subject elaborates on

the points raised by the first two subjects by discussing how ingrained, not just the notion

of athletics, but the type of athletics that are deemed acceptable.

> …I never really thought it was I'm Black I have to play football. I never played baseball to tell you the truth. I hate baseball, and hockey and all that stuff. So I guess I think about it that way, like Black people don't play hockey, or some play baseball, but I don't find it to be a fun sport. I never played hockey, or tennis or anything like that. So I guess if you think about it you don't do it purposely, but in my mind I was set to play basketball or football. And my coach said to do wrestling, so obviously some Black people do wrestling, but I don't see it as a sport that I would do. It's either basketball or football.

This was not the only way in which the Black community played a role in their

participation. The previous responses reflect more of a passive influence, whereby these

athletes simply saw other Black males participating and then wanted to participate

themselves. The next type of influence reflects more of an active role on the part of the

Black community in helping to influence these young men into participating in sports.

Some of the subjects discussed the value of sports in the Black community. Their

responses reflect a sense of being steered in that direction based on the amount of

emphasis on athletics they perceived in their communities. The following was stated by a

football player:

> I think it does, because Black people, the area that they grow up in sports is more of an emphasis in the area that Black people grow up in. I guess that's why Black athletes are more athletic because we play sports. Sports is a big emphasis in the Black community. You go in a Black community, they got the basketball courts, the basketball leagues, football leagues whatever it is. So I think it does, when compared to Whites. Yeah it was there for you more. Whenever you turn around there's a ball. You just get used to it.

Another football player provided a slightly different perspective by making it more clear

that people in the community perpetuate this cycle.

> I think so. When you grow up in your community a lot of older kids around you and adults around you, as soon as you're really able to walk they're putting a basketball and football in your hand. They're really throwing it at you because

that's how they grew up. So I think there is a push to try to be good in basketball and try to be good in football, because it's the Black community's best value. That's valued more than academics really. So I think a lot of kids do grow up thinking they have to excel in sports. That was thrown at you first I think. Watching it on TV, even when you didn't understand what was going on you would still watch it with your older brother or uncle. That's just what everybody does.

The second category of responses focused more on the environment providing the context for the type of background from which one comes. Slightly less than half of the participants responded in this manner. These responses differed in that they specifically added to the equation the influence of socioeconomic status in the Black communities from which they came. These subjects indicated that coming from lower socioeconomic classes motivated them to pursue dreams that would afford them the opportunities to not only support their families, but to get them out of the economic predicaments they were in. These subjects were ultimately describing the role of race as it interacted with their social class. The following are responses from a football player and a basketball player, respectively.

> Yes I would say. If you talk to most of the Black athletes were motivated—most of the Black athletes don't come from very good backgrounds. We have difficult times. Some of us live in projects. So we have adversities back home. That makes us motivated to make it somewhere especially within our sports. So I think being Black helps us out with sports, as far as athletics go. I dream of playing in the NFL for the fact that I can benefit my family. And I know a lot of Black athletes look just to go pro. A lot of Black athletes fail to realize that we can use this to get a good education as well. Their first thing is OK I making it pro and that's it. Well this is your chance right here to get a great education for free and play the sport that you love at the same time. That's to answer your question. I really believe that a lot of Black athletes think about going pro and that's it.

> Well I don't know. If I was rich…If I was a rich White guy from the suburbs I might not have as much motivation to play basketball because I would already have a lot of stuff. I wouldn't care about anything else because I would already have it. But growing up we weren't rich. Growing up I gained a competitive edge, so that's part of the reason I play basketball. So I guess being Black and not coming from a lot of money, so I guess that does influence me to play basketball.

In these cases in particular, there seems to be more of an understanding and the concept of choice. Whereas the previous category of respondents indicated a sense of simply being products of their environments, these participants seemed to be acknowledging the act of choosing athletics as a means to an end, with their race and socioeconomic statuses being the primary motivators in making this choice.

The third category of responses was only endorsed by one participant, however, it is unique, and provides a different perspective on this same phenomenon. This subject indicated that his race currently plays a role in participation in his sport in that he wanted to "expand the horizons" of Black people. This particular subject, a diver, participated in a sport that had very little representation in the Black community. He, as well as the others who indicated that their environment provided the context through which race influenced their sport participation, was from a predominantly Black neighborhood. Yet, he did not allow the values of the Black community or the high visibility of Black football and basketball players steer him in the direction of these two sports.

> First and foremost, I do what I gotta do for me. Like I really feel like I just like to do what I do. But once I came to college I got more exposure, and I realized that a lot of Black people don't dive. And then people come and say to me like "Yo, you are the first Black person I ever saw" or "I never dove against a Black person." And the way I see it, it just makes me want to do better. Cause I mean I'll kick your a**, and if more Black people dove they'd kick your a** too. Like it's just that I really want to show people that they can do it. And I really believe that if more Black people decided to expand their horizons and do other things that wasn't typical of Black people to do, they'll find that they're good at it, just like they're good at basketball and football and track.

A second category of responses discussing the influence of race on their participation in their sport dealt specifically with physicality. Subjects (6 of 26) who responded in this way held the belief that being Black meant being more athletic. These

participants described playing sports and certain positions within sports that are typically

dominated by Black athletes because of perceived athletic superiority. A football player

expressed the following:

> I think as far as positioning when I was in high school. If I was a White kid and I
> probably wouldn't have gotten as many letters or recruiters as far as that goes. I
> was a wide receiver. Now I'm a tight end. But in high school there when it's not
> too much love for White skill players, that's just how it is. I don't know why.

While six subjects endorsed sentiments of this nature, they all seemed to have a

lack of understanding as to the reasons that this distinction in the sport world had been

made. The previous comments reflected a more specific iteration of this idea, by

referencing positions. Other respondents were not nearly as specific, but did reflect the

sentiment that their participation in their sport was contingent upon their athletic ability

by way of their race.

The third category of responses was similar in nature to the first, and in fact was

mentioned by two of the subjects who responded in a manner more in line with the first

category. It is worth mentioning separate from this context however. These subjects

mentioned the influence of television. These subjects described seeing Black males on

television and expressing a desire to emulate them, due in part to their skin color. One

student-athlete indicated that watching sports dominated by Black males on television

provided him with a positive image of Black men, and inspiration. Subjects also

indicated that they were proud, both when viewing Black male athletes on television, and

also that they represent role models to others.

Two subjects interpreted the question in a manner dissimilar to most others who

answered the question. For instance, one subject reported an incident where he

encountered racism while participating in his sport. He participates in lacrosse, a sport in

which there was little Black representation in both participation and in spectatorship.

Another subject indicated similar sentiments regarding recognizing that he was one of a

small few Black athletes participating in his particular sport. Although this subject

denied experiencing any racism in connection with his sport, he did express an awareness

of his race, illustrated by the following quote:

> To me it's never really an issue unless someone makes it an issue. Other than the
> 1st day walking in and realizing. My mom asks me how many other guys on the
> team, and I'll say only one. And she'll say "ok, just like usual huh?" Because
> that's what we're used to. And like I said it's fine. It's not a problem. It's a
> shame that there aren't as many Black players in baseball like there used to be,
> but like I said it's never been a problem. It's something that I enjoy and you just
> go with it.

Other subjects expressed sentiments regarding racism and discrimination as well,

however their comments dealt with power dynamics. One interviewee indicated an

awareness that the people in power over athletics were typically White while the athletes

were Black in his particular sport of basketball. This subject highlighted the lack of

representation in administrative, executive, and coaching positions throughout different

levels of athletics. Another subject, a basketball player, also recognized the number of

Black athletes and these power dynamics, but believed that sports could be a way in

which Black males achieved power.

Feelings about Being a Black Male Athlete

In an effort to assess feelings associated with being Black male athletes,

participants were asked how they felt about being Black male athletes. Fifty percent of

the participants stated that they had positive feelings (e.g. great, happy, "fine", privileged,

proud) associated with being Black male athletes. Reasons stated for having positive

feelings included, but were not limited to, enjoying their sport and enjoying their status as

student-athlete. Five of the twenty-six participants stated that they felt privileged and/or proud to be a Black male athlete. Their reasons for feeling privileged were centered on the idea that they were a select few, and not many people have the opportunity to achieve and experience being Black male athletes at the Division I collegiate level. Participants also felt privileged because their status as student athletes provided them with exposure to experiences that would be impossible without being a student athlete. Four participants felt proud because of the idea of them being role models to people of all ages, particularly children. These subjects acknowledged the responsibility of being a role model, and that often it was overwhelming, but one that they were willing to accept. One subject specifically mentioned being proud of the opportunity to "give back" to the community through athletics. Of these participants who endorsed having positive feelings, three went on to also cite negative feelings associated with being a Black male athlete.

Thirty-eight percent (8 of 26) of the participants endorsed feeling no different. Those who answered in this manner, typically cited that being Black made no difference to them in terms of their participation in their sport. Interestingly, of these eight participants, six responded to the previous question of whether being Black played any role in their participation by saying that race did not play any role, and two stated that race did play a role in their participation. Of these six participants, three went on to cite reasons that being Black did play a role in their participation, even though they originally stated that it did not. With this question, two who said they did not feel any difference then went on to provide reasons to counter their original stance, with one endorsing

positive feelings, and the other endorsing more negative feelings which will be discussed below.

Thirty-one percent (8 of 26) of the participants responded in a manner that indicated a level of defensiveness and guardedness. Reasons for this feeling were varied. Some expressed feelings of having to fight the stereotypes of Black male athletes, while others expressed caution when interacting with other players on their team. The stereotypes were also varied. A few of the responses are below to illustrate the differences in responses. The first is from a baseball player, who like the diver, responded in a way that indicated having to fight the stereotypes of what sports Black males are "supposed" to play.

> It's interesting. A lot of guys ask me, because I play flag football, why baseball? Why didn't you go out for the football team? And you know I enjoy playing baseball. It's what I like to do. I figure it's a phenomenal sport with a great history and a great past. And being a Black player it just kinda goes with the territory. I liken it to certain White players in football or White players in basketball. I guess there's always an initial reaction but once you can play it doesn't matter. So I enjoy playing, It's a sport I can play, and so what if I'm Black. That's all that matters. I hope that's all that matters to anyone else.

This response came from a football player.

> For the most part there's a lot of stereotypes around being a Black football player in the community and school. But I think it's a great feeling it doesn't matter if you're White and Black, as long as you're an athlete that's something fantastic. People dream to be where we're at right now. For the most part when you're a Black athlete there's a lot of stereotypes that you have to face. As far as the media, I would say most Black athletes don't carry themselves well. They're troublemakers. They're loud and rowdy. As far as on campus I would say they think Black athletes are the cocky ones, the ones that sleep in class. The ones that think like Oh I run the world. And as far as females, females probably get that same perception, like oh he's cocky, he thinks he's all that. So being a Black athlete you build up a lot of stereotypes, as far as with the media, and with school, with your peers.

This response came from a basketball player.

I don't know. Just to give you a little background, I'm a very serious student. I do a lot of medical internships and stuff like that. So what I get a lot of is what are you doing here, you should be playing basketball. So I get the expectation that because I'm a Black 6ft. 8in. Black guy that I should be playing basketball. That's where I get it more from. No, they don't even know that I play. They just make the assumption in completely non sporting areas, like in a hospital setting. Absolutely [*thinks that people perceive him as dumbed down*]. Because people make the assumption that you're not—that you're an athlete. There's always a tag that goes along with being an athlete. It's something that I've dealt with. That's because I've always had to prove to people that I'm smart as opposed to just accepting it. Yeah some frustration. At first I used to make jokes about it. When people would ask me if I played basketball, I would say no I'm a swimmer. But now, I don't even think that's a good way to respond to it because then it's feeding into the stereotype. Because then you have to be like no of course I am a basketball player. So, I just accept it now. When people ask I'm like yeah I am a basketball player.

Although each of these responses indicated a level of defensiveness in fighting stereotypes, their manifestations differ in where the stereotypes come from, how they were passed on to the athlete, and how the stereotypes were fought.

In line with these sentiments, five subjects indicated a feeling of having to work harder and that more was expected of them. These sentiments came from the notion that they needed to prove themselves to someone in order to succeed. The following was stated by the diver:

I feel like I'm different from other people than other people. I have to work harder than everybody else. I have to be better than everybody else, because I'm Black. I have something to prove, because I'm Black. Because I'm doing it against people who look different from me. They see me and it's like yeah he's different. They just see me and I'm different. When somebody's different, you look at them a way. And me being nice, and doing me, yeah I really do feel like I have to prove myself, not only to myself but everybody else that's watching…But when I came to college and I was really out by myself, and I was able to go places by myself and experience things, I realized that I really do have to be better. I have to carry myself a certain way. When the time is right, I have to speak a certain way. The way people perceive you has a lot to do with where you go and who you meet. So you have to portray yourself in a certain way and I just think diving is a way for me to do that. And it's atypical because I'm not a football player, I'm a diver.

There were two other responses to this question worth mentioning. The first, which was endorsed by two respondents, was a feeling of being one of many Black male athletes. This sentiment was expressed in a positive way, but one of the subjects indicated that being Black makes it difficult for him to stand out since he participates in a sport dominated by Black males at both the collegiate and professional levels. He indicated that this provides him with both an incentive and pressure to work harder in order to be recognized. The other response was that one person specifically mentioned that his athlete identity was only a part of his whole identity, and expressed a desire for both to be considered.

Career Goals

Subjects were asked to describe their career goals both within and outside of athletics in an effort to understand how they define success in terms of their careers. Of the 26 subjects, 22 (85%) stated that they would like to pursue a career in professional or elite athletics, while 15% stated that they would like for their athletic careers to end when they graduate college. The reasons given by those who stated that they did not want to continue playing were because of injuries, because they believed it was a long shot, because the non-athletic career path required a lot of time and energy, and because playing the sport was no longer fun and enjoyable.

Although the majority of the participants endorsed goals of playing professionally, the majority of subjects also endorsed sports related careers. Seven subjects indicated that they wanted to become athletic coaches at the high school, college and/or professional level. Seven subjects stated that they wanted to be teachers, with four of these subjects indicating wanting to be teachers to have the opportunity to coach.

Three participants indicated that they wanted to be sports analysts or broadcasters on television. One subject indicated that he wanted to be a physical therapist or a trainer for an athletic team, while another, who was a pre-med major, aspired to be an orthopedic surgeon and work with a team as well. One subject indicated that he wanted to be an agent for athletes. Another subject stated that he wanted to be a sport psychologist. There were five subjects who had not quite figured out exactly what they wanted to do in terms of a career, but said that they wanted to be involved with sports in some capacity.

Those who did not indicate that they wanted to be directly involved in sports endorsed a host of other career choices such as business, law enforcement, politics, entrepreneurship, law, modeling, journalism, ministry, and entertainment. Subjects also mentioned athletic goals that they had for their careers, including achieving All-American status, becoming national champions, and team success. Subjects who did not know specifically what they wanted to do with their careers stated educational goals of graduating school and continuing school if it was required for their careers.

Preparation for Careers by Being a Student Athlete

Subjects were asked whether they believed being student-athletes had prepared them for their career goals. All subjects indicated that being student-athletes had in fact prepared them for their career goals. There were four categories of responses. The first can be labeled as the nature of being a student-athlete. Subjects who responded in this manner identified components of the athletic program or student athlete identity that prepared them for their career goals. The rigor, pressure, and level of expectations placed upon the student-athletes prepared them for high pressure work environments where they would be expected to perform. Eighty-one percent of the participants endorsed this

aspect of their student athlete lives that has helped prepare them for career goals. The

following example appropriately summarizes these sentiments:

> Believe it or not, I think being a student athlete prepares you for a lot. For example, being a student athlete you have a tough schedule, a tough regiment, and you have to follow it to the T, and you're branded with it.

The next type of response in this first category, although similar to the first type,

dealt specifically with developing a work ethic and discipline. Some of those who

responded in this manner indicated that being in this type of environment had ultimately

made them more focused and determined as well.

> Top firms want athletes. Because they're determined and they work hard, good work ethic, they can deal with adversity, and change—all things that the normal students may not have. Especially if you're in business, you're in an environment where you have to have drive to be the best. And we've been in these contexts before. If you're a teacher, you get the best out of your students. You know, and we're on a team, which is huge. You're in a team environment, so you have to be able to work with people. You know the people that I work with in the professional world are going to be just as tough. You gotta be able to handle these situations, you can't run away.

Also in this first category is the idea of learning time management. Even with

their rigorous schedules, and having some time blocked off for things like study hall and

practice, student athletes still had to depend on themselves for things like making sure

assignments got done and that they attended office hours when necessary for example.

They believed they had learned these lessons through athletics. The following quote was

stated by a football player:

> Yeah as far as organization. If you want to be a teacher you have to be organized. You have to have a lesson plans. As a student athlete, you gotta manage your time. You gotta go to practice. You gotta go to class. You gotta do homework. You gotta go to study hall. You gotta figure out how to fit all this in a day. Some of your time is blocked off because of football. So I guess figure out when I gott go to study hall and when I'm gonna do my homework, when I'm gonna go to office hours. So time management keeps you organized.

The second category of responses considered the idea of being on a team and how that has helped to build skills off the field. These subjects (19%) expressed the idea that being on a team helped them learn how to work with people more effectively. They also implied that being a student-athlete typically meant that they needed to communicate with a host of people, including but not limited to teammates, coaches, administrators, professors, media, and fans, and that having to do so had helped them become more effective communicators. The following subject, a football player, expressed these sentiments through the context of both being a student-athlete, and the opportunities for growth that came from being a student-athlete:

> I think as a student there's a lot of expectations so there's a lot of pressure. So handling pressure will help me with that. Dealing with people, like communicating with people. Teammates yeah. The comradery. When I say communicate with people, like there's so many people that I had to communicate with because I'm a student athlete, that I didn't know. Coaches, trainers, now it's fans and signing autographs. I've done community service where I go back to my HS and my elementary school and talk to kids about being successful in the future. I think that's made me a better person. It taught me not to take things for granted. It keeps me grounded, and keeps me focused and motivated.

The third category of responses dealt with those who discovered what they wanted to do with their careers through athletics. These subjects (15%) incorporated the student side of their identities by indicating that through their coursework and/or athletic experiences they had a better understanding of what it took to make it in their desired career. They also indicated feeling educationally prepared for their career choices.

The fourth category of responses, endorsed by three participants, was the development of leadership qualities. These subjects viewed their athletic experience as having shaped them into leaders due to the hard work and perseverance that they

displayed throughout their careers. Subjects also endorsed sentiments such as becoming a better person through athletics and having a stronger sense of commitment.

Advice

In an effort to both allow the participants the opportunity to pass along words of wisdom to other young Black male athletes, while simultaneously getting their opinions on what they consider to be integral in being successful, subjects were asked, "What advice would you provide young Black athletes in elementary, middle, and high school who want to be successful in your sport?" As with previous responses, these will be grouped according to the themes that emerged from the data. However due to the breadth and depth of all responses, each of their responses will be printed in their entirety in Appendix D, to allow each of their voices to be heard as they offer their words of wisdom.

Eighty-one percent of the subjects stated that they would advise young people to work hard, and stay focused and motivated. Of this subset, three subjects took this a step further and encouraged people to be the best they can be and do the best they can always. Fifty-eight percent encouraged young males not to give up, to stay with it, and be patient. Eight of these subjects specifically mentioned that this notion was important because other people may try to discourage or slow their progress. Five of these subjects indicated that their environments could represent a hindrance, either because of the lack of resources or proclivity for violence. Thirty-eight percent of the subjects indicated that it was important for young Black males to make education a top priority if they wanted to be successful, since education is required for college and as something to fall back on once their athletic careers have ended.

Five subjects thought it was important to share the advice of taking advantage of all of the opportunities offered to them, education and otherwise. Three subjects thought it was important to find a mentor that would be available to them when they needed help. Another three subjects advised young Black males to do things for themselves, and not for others. Two subjects specifically advised avoiding trouble, while another two advised keeping their options open and not making all of their dreams contingent upon athletic success.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS II: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A stated purpose of the dissertation was to gain a clearer understanding of the specific needs that Black male athletes have during their college careers. The following section addresses perceived needs involved with both aspects of their identity as students and as athletes. In order to gain a clearer understanding of their experiences with their particular needs, subjects were asked their opinions of their institutions' fulfillment of these needs, and why they believed this was so. Subjects were also asked their opinions of the awareness and sensitivity of those in administrative positions to the needs of Black male student athletes.

Needs As Students

In order to gain a better understanding of their needs, subjects were asked to identify needs they may have possessed specifically as students. Three primary themes emerged from the data: academic needs, personal needs, and social needs.

Academic Needs

Of the 35 different responses provided by the subjects, 71% of the responses pertained to academic needs. The first two types of responses regarding academic needs both related to academic advising. The first type of response specifically mentioned

needing good academic advising and guidance counseling, which was endorsed by four subjects. Of these subjects, three indicated that good academic advising and guidance counseling included having "someone to tell you to keep school first." These subjects indicated a desire to have someone who would help them to understand the statistics regarding making it to the professional level, and encouraging students to take their academics seriously. Another component of the need for good academic advising stemmed from some of the subjects witnessing other Black male athletes fail to graduate after their four years of athletic eligibility expired or fail to be athletically eligible after not meeting eligibility standards. The following was stated by a basketball player.

> I think they have helped now, but sometimes not enough. We just lost a player that didn't have enough core credits to be eligible for next year. I mean I know that's a part of his responsibility too, but somebody should have at least told him that he needed to take more core credits and things like that.

The second type of response regarding academic advising took a contrasting view of this process. Four subjects responded in a manner indicating that they believed that Black male student-athletes needed more freedom to choose their classes and majors. These subjects perceived their educations to be too little within their control, either because classes that they wanted to take were not offered at times they could not take them (e.g. during their practice time) or because they felt as though advisors chose things for them. The lack of choice due to advisors choosing things for them was because they believed advisors tended to steer them toward certain courses because there was a strong emphasis on keeping the students academically eligible to participate by placing them in courses that were known to be less strenuous. One subject expressed concerns about needing to go against the advice of his advisor to make sure he could both remain eligible to participate in sports, and that would allow him to graduate in four years time.

Three subjects indicated that Black male athletes needed more flexibility in their schedules as students. The reasons for this need ranged from social to academic. One subject stated that the lack of flexibility in their schedule had resulted in him not being able to take courses that he wanted to take. The other two subjects wanted flexibility in their schedules to allow them to engage in social activities that will be discussed further in a later section.

Three subjects reported needing a structured and strict system of operating. These subject cited things like having mandatory study hall hours, daily contact with staff, consequences for missing classes, and class attendants who check to make sure student-athletes are attending class as what they believed Black male athletes need as students. One subject included in his reasoning an understanding that many Black male athletes did not come from good high schools. Therefore, having a structured system provided the athletes with more opportunities for success. One subject added that having structure helped to mold the athlete positively, regardless of the environment from which he came.

Similarly, subjects also reported that Black male athletes needed better focus; better focus meaning on academics. These responses came from the idea that focusing on academics should be the most important thing in a student-athletes life, and that this focus should ultimately be intrinsically motivated, but that having someone to help attain it was acceptable and should be done.

Three subjects also reported needing fairness from professors. Subjects who endorsed this need indicated that they had become privy to information that certain professors either did not like student-athletes, and/or were prone to treating them unfairly. Subjects reported that professors "don't care" that they have to miss class due to games,

or that they might be given harder make-up exams when they had to miss tests. One subject reported having such a hard time with one of his professors that he needed his advisor to intervene to clarify the student-athlete's athletic requirements, so that he would not continue to get penalized for being absent. Another subject stated that he refused to wear anything indicating that he was affiliated with the basketball program at his school, because he did not want to create any problems. This same subject indicated that as students, Black male student-athletes need for the community, including professors, to keep their identities separate. This particular subject believed that he was too heavily judged by feats on the basketball court, and thought that this impacted the way he was perceived in the classroom and as a student in general. This student also believed that his work in the classroom should not impact his ability to participate in sports.

The following needs falling under the academic category were endorsed by one subject each. One subject stated that Black male student-athletes needed to have separation in their classes. The subject who endorsed this need indicated that their rigorous athletic schedule made attending classes difficult. This subject believed that he would often fall too far behind in his classes to be able to catch up to the rest of the class. Having the separation would allow student-athletes to have tailored instruction that would help them maximize their educational experiences. Along similar lines, another subject indicated that Black male student-athletes needed more individual attention regarding their academics. His reason for advocating for this need was that he believed many Black male athletes struggled with their academics, suffering from low grades due to poor preparation. He believed having something in place to provide more individual attention would help to alleviate this problem. Expressing a similar sentiment, another

participant indicated that Black male athletes needed an even playing field, academically speaking.

Another subject indicated that Black male student-athletes needed to have more personal accountability for their academics. This subject cited an incident with a teammate who he believed depended so heavily on his advisors that he left the responsibility of remaining eligible and on track to graduate in their hands. The lack of accountability ultimately left this particular student-athlete ineligible to participate in sport. Another subject expressed that Black male student-athletes needed to get their degree. Another subject stated that Black male athletes needed to overcome their pride and ask for help when they needed it. This subject believed that pride prevented many from asking for help when they genuinely needed it. Finally, one subject indicated that Black male athletes needed to have a better sense of the history of their school as a way of instilling pride and motivation to succeed.

Social Needs

Social needs accounted for 14% of the responses. Two subjects indicated that they believed Black male student-athletes needed to establish social networks outside of their particular sports, either with athletes from other sports and/or with regular students. One subject specifically mentioned the need to engage in what he called "regular student activities" such as joining student organizations. Two subjects indicated that they needed organizations for Black males, to come together to "do positive things". One subject expressed a desire to join a fraternity, but that his football schedule made it virtually impossible. This particular subject believed that organizations did not do enough to ensure that Black male athletes could be equally involved in such activities. Two

subjects indicated that they needed more time for social activities. These subjects stated

that their schedules prohibited them from engaging in social activities, and that having

more time would allow them the opportunity to do so. One subject indicated that Black

male athletes needed to establish positive peer networks. This participant described his

college experience as being filled with many distractions, but that having a positive peer

network enabled him to maintain his focus, and provided him with redirection when

necessary. This participant admitted that his ability to establish a positive peer network

was facilitated by the fact that he had friends from his former high school on the team

with him.

Personal Needs

Forty-two percent (11 of 26) of the participants endorsed the belief that Black

male athletes had certain personal needs as students. These needs will be described in

three separate categories—counseling, support, and financial.

Counseling

Of the 11 subjects who endorsed personal needs, seven specifically indicated that

they needed someone to provide advice. Since this theme appeared again when

participants were asked to reflect on their needs as athletes, it was important to

distinguish this need from that of the athletic identity, and of the sort of academic

advising mentioned with the academic needs. This type of counseling was not

specifically related to choosing courses and majors, although, it might in fact be a part of

it. This type of counseling and guidance was less about the person (e.g. academic

advisor) and more about the content of the guidance. Subjects who endorsed this need

believed they needed someone to point them in the right direction and to provide them

with advice. The following statement by a basketball player exemplified the essence of

this particular need:

> I think they need someone to let them know what's out there in the real world.
> Because most athletes have this stigma, where they think they're gonna be
> athletes forever. I just think they need to be exposed to what the real world is
> like. It's not all happy go lucky all the time. So I just think there needs to be
> somebody who comes in to show athletes something other than just professional
> sports. They need somebody just to come in and tell them night and day how the
> real world is. How demanding and cutthroat it is. Athletes get surprised by the
> real world because… whether we like it or not we're just enclosed in this area
> where we think that, we know our respective sports and that's our comfort zone.
> So we don't really know – a lot of us don't really know what's out there in the
> real world where you have to get up early in the morning and you may be working
> until late at night, doing something that you don't like to do. So I just think there
> needs to be somebody just put in place to educate them on that.

Another basketball player expressed similar sentiments.

> I think that we need, this will sound broad but, I think we need counseling. Just to
> be able to, I feel like too many people just get through the system just to get
> through. They get their degree, but they're not prepared for life.

Both of these participants expressed a sentiment of believing that Black male

student-athletes needed some sort of guidance/counseling that helped them to establish a

sense of preparedness for the world outside of athletics. The notion of "keeping it real"

was expressed by other subjects as a way to convey that they believed that Black male

athletes were often unaware of the real world, and/or of their chances of making it to the

professional status.

> People really need to have somebody that's really gonna sit down with them and
> keep it real, son. "If you could go to the league that's nice son. You're lucky.
> But if you're not, then school should be your first priority." I just feel people
> really need people like that to just sit down and really talk to you, and let you say
> what you have to say…

Three of the eleven participants cited needing role models and mentors as a

primary need of Black male student-athletes as students. In a manner similar to the

previous responses, mentors and role models would provide student-athletes with guidance regarding their academics, drilling the message of the importance of their education. The difference in these responses as opposed to the previous responses was that these three subjects specifically identified the person who should be designated to make this happen. Along similar lines, one subject indicated that Black male athletes needed to see other Black male athletes being successful as a way to provide mentors and role models.

Two of the eleven subjects indicated having a need to have "someone to relate to". According to the subjects, "relating to" encompassed a variety of qualifications, but most importantly, being able to understand the position of the Black male student-athlete. Relating to someone facilitated being able to establish an open and honest relationship with that person, and in turn being able to receive accurate, valid, and honest feedback to which one can listen and adhere. One student-athlete specifically mentioned needing a Black male, and/or an older student as someone to whom he could relate.

Support

Two subjects stated that Black male athletes needed a support system as students. One subject indicated that a support system should be in place during high school to assist student-athletes in the transition to college. One subject indicated that parental involvement was a crucial aspect of the support system. The other respondent stated that the composition of the support system mattered less than unconditional, consistent encouragement.

Financial

Two subjects stated that they believed Black male athletes needed money as students to assist with the incidental costs of living. Subjects were not very specific when providing this response during this question, however, more detailed answers are delineated in the results of the next question.

One subject stated that he did not believe Black male student-athletes needed anything as students.

Needs as Athletes

In order to gain a better understanding of their needs, subjects were asked to identify needs they may possess specifically as athletes. Four primary themes emerged from the data: athletic needs, personal needs, social needs, and cultural needs.

Athletic Needs

Fifty-percent of the participants endorsed specific athletic needs, and accounted for 37% of all responses regarding needs as athletes. These needs, although wide ranging, ran the gamut in terms of the aspects of their athletic lives that they addressed.

Four of the thirteen student-athletes who endorsed athletic needs expressed the concern over the power dynamics in their particular sports. These four subjects disclosed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the way their athletic program had been run, and the way they had been treated in the process. Three of the four participants stated that they needed a way to have their voices and grievances heard, as well as a way to make changes to the system.   In this instance, these subjects believed that as Black male student-athletes, the amount of power they had in making decisions regarding their lives was limited. They believed that having some sort of system in place within the

organization would allow them to at least feel as though they were being heard. One

subject stated that he believed that more power and respect from authorities was what

Black male student-athletes needed. This same subject stated that he believed a Student-

Athlete Union, similar to the NBA Players Association would assist in this endeavor.

> We need a student union. A Black – I don't know about Black but we need an
> athletic student union. Like an association. In the NBA they have the NBA
> players association, which was started in 1970 something, as the NBA players felt
> they were getting mistreated and unfair labor practices and stuff. And Jerry West,
> I think, said boom. See he had the physical talent and a mind, which is what I
> have, and why I might even start it here. I think that if we had an athlete union it
> can be within [school name] or within the [conference name] or within the NCAA
> for all I care. Just somewhere where athletes can go and vent to each other
> problems and try to have a grievance procedure in which we can discuss
> something to do to change the stuff that we don't like. Because I think they—
> they're here, the coaches are here, the administrators, everybody's here because of
> us. So we have to—I'm not going to say we have to have the power because there
> are authorities, but there is a certain amount of respect and power we should have,
> because we are [school name] essentially.

Along similar lines, three subjects stated that they needed to have more freedom

and autonomy in their lives. These three respondents indicated that freedom to them

meant that they would like to have more free time, and believed that what they called free

time was exactly that. They stated that they had previous experiences where they would

have "free time" but would then be asked to do something by their coach, and would

have to do it. One subject stated that freedom also meant respite, and indicated that he

believed he needed time to "get away" from the student-athlete environment. One

participant also made the distinction between having a desire for more freedom and more

autonomy. This subject had become resentful of coaches believing they had to tell him

when to practice. He stated that he believed this was degrading to some Black male

athletes, because in his opinion, many had the motivation and drive to get better and did

not need to be told when to practice.

Two subjects indicated that they and Black male athletes in general needed someone to be honest with them about their potential to make it to the professional level. These two subjects understood that this is often difficult for a Black male athlete to hear, but that it was of extreme necessity to keep him aware of his priorities.

Two participants expressed the need for Black male student-athletes to be self-motivating and self-sufficient. Their reasons for needing this were different however. The first participant saw this as more of a product of racial dynamics. He believed that many White coaches provided their Black male student-athletes with many "things" because they believed they needed them, when in his opinion they did not. He indicated that giving to Black male athletes was a way to make White coaches feel better about themselves for "helping a poor Black kid out". This subject expressed concern that Black male athletes do not learn how to do for themselves in this way. The second participant believed Black male athletes needed more self-motivation and self-sufficiency, because they did not have people to assist them with living their lives. This particular subject spoke about another need of being pushed to the limit and having good athletic training, but then realized that as Black male athletes, they could not depend on others to do this, because this was something that was critical for them to learn on their own.

Two student-athletes expressed the need for a "strong family emphasis" on the team. These subjects considered their team a family unit. One subject admitted that he did not have a strong family tie with his family of origin, but that having that in college was high on his priority list. The other subject who endorsed this sentiment stated that he did have a strong family tie with his family of origin, and chose his current college because he recognized the emphasis in the program. Their reasons for needing a strong

family emphasis were that it could make Black male athletes more comfortable and committed to working hard and working as a unit.

The remaining athletic needs were endorsed by only one subject. The need for support from fans was mentioned because of the lack of anonymity and high visibility of Black male student-athletes on college campuses. This subject reported having had bad experiences with students ridiculing him when the team was not performing well, and how this had negatively impacted his college experience. Another subject mentioned needing good athletic training in order to maximize potential. Another subject mentioned Black male athletes needing discipline, but did not elaborate on how he believed this was manifested.

One subject endorsed needing more self-control. This need was mentioned in the context of needing more time with family, which will be discussed in more detail below. This subject discussed the trouble that may occur when athletes return to home environments that may be more risky. He believed that Black male athletes especially needed to learn more self control to keep themselves out of potentially harmful situations. Along similar lines, another subject stated that he believed Black male student-athletes needed more structure and connection with coaches during the off-season. He spoke from personal experience about not having contact with coaches once the season was over, but also discussed Black male athletes in general getting into trouble during the off-season, and believed this was because the structure seemed to abruptly end once the season concluded.

One subject mentioned that Black male athletes need to see beyond their talent and work hard. He believed that too many Black male athletes depended too heavily on

their talent, and did not put in hard work to get themselves to the next level. Another subject mentioned that Black male athletes needed to have a mind of their own, and not follow the masses. He mentioned this in the context of risk, where he believed too many Black male athletes followed along with teammates and/or other friends and often found themselves in trouble because they did not think for themselves. One subject mentioned needing a good mentality to keep Black male athletes grounded and focused on the goals they want to achieve.

Personal Needs

Personal needs were endorsed by 77% of the participants. Personal needs encompass a wide variety of concepts. Therefore, these needs are separated into three categories—support system, finances, time.

Support System

Of the 20 subjects who endorsed personal needs, 12 indicated needs that are considered to assist with the support of the Black male student-athlete. As with needs as students, a mentor or role model was seen as a need for Black male student-athletes as athletes by seven participants. The duties of this person, according to the participants, would be to keep the student-athlete on the right track, and to provide him with advice, guidance, and support throughout his college career.

Establishing a relationship with someone who could relate was explicitly cited by three participants as a need of Black male student-athletes, without mention of a specific person. Four subjects thought it necessary to establish a relationship with a coach. These two concepts were related since those who cited finding a relationship with coach, in their description of their coaches included the quality of being able to relate to them. One

subject elaborated further on this concept and stated that Black male athletes needed to have trust between themselves and their coaches.

Six subjects stated that establishing relationships with their athletic peers was a need for Black male student-athletes as athletes. For the majority (4) of the subjects, establishing relationships with athletic peers was important because other Black male athletes would be able to relate to what they were going through. One interviewee proposed a Black Athlete Union as a necessity, a hypothetical organization to bring Black athletes together to assist with establishing relationships with one another. Another subject suggested that Black male athletes need a separate orientation as freshmen to facilitate connecting with other Black male athletes. A third subject proposed a support group of Black male student-athletes to come together to discuss current issues relating to them.

Guidance and counseling, another need that fell under the support category, was endorsed by four subjects. The subjects who endorsed this need were referring to counseling regarding their emotions, not to be confused with academic counseling. These participants described having to cope with a lot of pressure from both the athletic and academic sides of their identity, and not always knowing or understanding how to handle these situations. This person, whether it is a friend, family member, or stranger would provide the athlete with advice and emotional support when they needed it. This person would also present themselves as trustworthy (2), and would protect their confidentiality. The following two responses reflect this sentiment:

> As a Black male, you're not supposed to be emotional. That's the preconception. But sometimes you need somebody that you can sit down and talk to, that you can pour your feelings out to, and somebody that can understand but that can also tell you "that's all good and nice, I know that's how you feel" and explain that to you,

but also tell you how to deal with it and how to be strong through all that. Cause a lot of times you come on campus, and it's different, because you're around a lot of White people. All your coaches are White most likely. And you really don't have anybody to guide you along the right path…I just feel people really need people like that to just sit down and really talk to you, and let you say what you have to say and pour your emotions out. Because sometimes you don't have anybody to talk to…It doesn't matter who it is. Other students that you can be close with that know the ropes, that you can talk to. Or older people, just somebody that can get the job done. They'll be able to relate to you on a deeper level than this bullshit and all. Just everybody needs that, you know.

And I think because of all the outside problems that Black athletes gotta worry about, they need someone to talk to. I don't think they're gonna really find it in D-I football. I think they're gonna find it outside, like maybe their mother. Because I just think they need people to talk to, because when they have a problem, so they don't do anything stupid. They'll have that person to talk to, to vent out their problem. I think it would, but the only thing you have to worry about is that person going back to coach or going back, because a lot of people don't like opening up.

Two subjects stated that Black male athletes needed God or some sort of religion in their lives, as a means of keeping themselves grounded and motivated. One subject simply stated that Black male athletes needed constant encouragement to continue pursuing their goals in order to be successful.

Finances

Five subjects, all basketball players, stated that they as Black male student-athletes needed financial assistance, and generalized this need to all Black male student-athletes. The common theme in each of these responses was that their schedules tended to be extremely intense, and did not lend themselves to finding employment. Each of them stated that if possible, they would get a job, however, in their opinions, there was no way to manage a job, with school and practice. Although the socioeconomic backgrounds of these five subjects varied, each of them indicated a desire to be independent from their parents, even those whose parents could afford to provide for

them financially. Each of the subjects also expressed the sentiment that it should be the responsibility of the school to ensure that the athletes had enough money to live.

Time

Eight respondents stated that they needed more time as Black male student-athletes. Although not all of the participants were specific in describing why they needed more time, the majority (5) stated that they wanted time at home with their families. The common sentiment was that their obligations as athletes tended to monopolize their time, and they felt as though they had no time to call their own.

Social Needs

Three subjects identified social needs as important for Black male athletes. One subject stated that a better reception from regular students was necessary, since many stereotypes existed regarding Black male athletes in general (e.g. lack of intelligence, violent). Another student-athlete stated that Black male athletes needed more interaction with regular students, as a way to expand their social networks beyond the athletic realm. This subject recognized that Black male athletes in particular tended to only socialize with other athletes, and believed having networks outside of athletics would help to establish balance with the student-athlete identity. Along similar lines, one subject expressed the need to "be like a regular student" by engaging in social activities like regular students and taking courses at times when other students were taking courses, rather than having to work around the practice and game schedules.

Cultural Needs

The needs in this category specifically mention a specific cultural, ethnic, or racial characteristic, and it was necessary to separate them from other categories which may

closely relate. One respondent expressed the need for cultural sensitivity without special treatment. This subject, who participated in a sport dominated by White athletes, had experienced several racial encounters during his time on the team, and thought it necessary for there to be some sort of diversity training for players and coaches. This subject, however, was very adamant that cultural sensitivity should not lead to special treatment, as he thought this would do more harm than good.

The following responses pertain to both athletic needs and personal needs and were endorsed by one subject each. Athletically speaking, one participant stated that Black male athletes needed to see more Black coaches. This subject did not believe he needed this personally, however, he recognized that there were not many Black coaches in Division I head coaching positions, yet that many Black male athletes were more comfortable around Black coaches. In terms of personal needs, and more specifically in terms of having mentors and role models, three subjects stated the following needs respectively: more Black male athletes in positive roles, more Blacks in general in positive roles, and needing someone Black as a mentor. The first two needs in this series were stated as a way to motivate Black male athletes, and provide them with a sense of pride and goals to strive towards. The third however, was necessary to this subject because he believed it to be easier to relate to and trust someone Black, when seeking guidance and counseling.

Other needs stated that did not fall into specific categories were the need for Black male athletes to learn from their experiences. This respondent expressed concern that Black male athletes did not recognize opportunities for growth when presented to them, and would often find themselves repeating mistakes made in the past. Another

subject stated that Black male athletes needed to do outreach to younger kids, as a way of building their own character and to learn how to become role models for other young Black males. Two subjects stated that they did not believe Black male student athletes needed anything as athletes.

Personal Experiences with Needs

In order to obtain a sense of their experiences with the needs they described, subjects were asked to describe their personal experiences with these needs. In particular, subjects were asked to describe whether the needs they described had been fulfilled or were lacking in their experiences.   The results of this section will be presented in tabular format in Table 2.

Of the responses related to needs as students, subjects identified 50% of those as being fulfilled, and 50% lacking in their personal experiences. In the case of needs as athletes, there were 32 identified needs. Forty-seven percent of the needs were identified as being fulfilled, while 63% were identified as lacking. In the case of the needs as athletes, there were three responses: cultural sensitivity, equal treatment, and having someone to relate to, that some subjects said were fulfilled and others said were deficient.

When viewing the data, one trend that stood out was that cultural needs were typically deemed deficient according to the participants. Although cultural sensitivity and "no special treatment" were seen as both fulfilled and lacking, specific cultural needs were not deemed fulfilled. No subjects stated that any need which dealt specifically with race (e.g. Black organizations, someone Black around, Black coaches) was fulfilled.

Table 2

Personal experience with needs

	Fulfilled	Lacking
Needs as Students	Guidance counseling Autonomy with school Positive peer network Individual attention regarding academics Better focus Good academic advising Parents guidance Someone to instruct to keep school first Encouragement Structured/strict system	Time Flexibility in schedule Freedom to choose classes and major Starting at an even playing field Better understanding of school history Student/Athlete identities separate Overcoming pride Student-athlete separation in classes Fairness from professors Personal accountability for learning
Needs as Athletes	Someone to relate to Mentor/role model Support system Learning from experience No special treatment Cultural sensitivity God/Religion Strong family emphasis Good training Relationship with coach Outreach to youth Mind of own Self-control Self-Motivation Positive attitude	Social network outside of sport Someone to relate to Someone to talk to about feelings Support groups Organization for Black male athletes Positive reception from students/fans Money No special treatment Cultural sensitivity Trust Someone Black to have as mentor Freedom Respect from authority Breaks/respite Honesty about professional potential Coach presence in off season Black athletes seen in positive light Black athlete orientation Black athlete union Black coaches/Black males in high administrative positions

Responsible Parties for Meeting These Needs

In order to gain insight into who these subjects believed should be responsible for ensuring these needs were fulfilled, subjects were asked to identify the parties responsible for meeting their needs both as students and as athletes. The results were as follows: Coach 62% (16 of 26); Athletes 42% (11 of 26); Athletic Director/Athletic Department/Other Administrators 27% (7 of 26); The University 19% (5 of 26); Black Community/Black Athletes/ Black Coaches 15% (4 of 26); Academic Advisors 15% (4 of 26); NCAA (1 of 26); Professors (1 of 26); Parents (1 of 26).

Coach

The majority of subjects (62%) believed that the responsibility of meeting the athletic and academic needs of student-athletes ultimately fell on the coaches. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that coaches needed to have awareness of the needs of their student-athletes, and have strategies in place to meet them. Some of the specific needs identified as being the responsibility of the coaches included, but were not limited to keeping school a priority, making sure athletes have someone to talk to, support groups for Black male student-athletes, hiring Black coaches and other Black males in the program, keeping a strict and structured system in place, maintaining an even playing field, and providing appropriate, relatable role models.

Athletes

Subjects (42%) also believed that athletes should take responsibility for getting their needs met as well. The general sense was that as young Black men, they should not solely depend on others for their needs.

> I think it has to be the athlete, because no coach or nobody in higher authority is going to worry about you and how you feel about something or what classes you

take. Because in all actuality that all they care about is that you can play on Saturdays. All they worry about is you playing while you're here and you can play, so why would they really care if you don't really want to do your major, as long as you keep your grades up where you can play. That's all they want to see. Each athlete has to be dependent on themselves to decide what they want, because if you just let everybody do what they want then you're just gonna get whatever they give you.

Needs that were determined to be the responsibility of the athletes included, but were not limited to establishing organizations for Black athletes, asking for help, interacting with regular students, finding support, speaking up about preferences for classes, establishing grievance system, speaking up about getting more money, and changing the perception of student-athletes.

Athletic Director/Athletic Department/Other Athletic Administrators

Twenty-seven percent of the subjects believed that the athletic director, athletic department, and other administrators bore the responsibility of making sure the needs of student-athletes were met. Participants believed that many of their needs required approval from administrators before coaches and others would be able to implement them. Some of the needs identified were making sure that student-athletes understood the history of the university, and getting student-athletes more financial assistance.

The University

Nineteen percent of the participants believed that the university should be held responsible for meeting the needs of student-athletes. Similar to the previous category, participants who endorsed the university as being responsible believed that decisions were approved by those with the most authority. Some of the needs that were identified as being the responsibility of the university were support for Black students in general

and Black student-athletes in particular, establishing a grievance system, and providing psychological and emotional counseling for student-athletes.

Black Community/Black Athletes/Black Coaches

Fifteen percent of the subjects cited the Black community, Black athletes, and Black coaches as the responsible parties. Subjects believed that having role models and support were needs that should be met by this group.

Academic Advisors

Fifteen percent of the subjects believed that academic advisors were responsible for meeting the needs of student-athletes. Academic advisors were held responsible for providing solid advising that kept the athlete on track to remain eligible, to graduate in four years, and that was congruent with his career goals.

The NCAA was deemed responsible for regulating the amount of time athletes have for athletics and academics, as well as time off. Professors were held responsible for teaching student-athletes about the history of the university. Parents were held responsible for keeping abreast of their student-athlete's academic progress, as a way to ensure that they are being kept on track.

Responsible Parties Knowledge and Understanding of Needs

Participants were asked for their perspective on whether those they claimed were responsible understood the needs they identified. Subjects were permitted to discuss the needs separately, which allowed them to answer both yes and no to different needs and/or whether different parties understood them. Fourteen participants stated that the parties deemed responsible did understand these needs, while sixteen subjects stated that they believed they did not understand these needs. Two subjects provided the stipulation that

unless the responsible person was a Black male, they would not fully understand the needs.

All of the subjects who thought the responsible parties understood these needs believed that it was due in full to the character of either the coach or the academic advisors. They believed that those who understood cared about their players, and tended to be thorough in their jobs. They also believed that the coaches who they believed understood, were concerned about more than the sport. One person also mentioned that meeting these needs had a direct impact on their jobs, and provided an incentive to act for those responsible.

Those who did not believe that the parties they deemed responsible understood these needs overwhelmingly (56%) stated that responsible parties "have too many other things to worry about" and that these needs were a low priority. Two subjects believed that some of the needs were against the ideology of the responsible parties. One subject, referring to having counseling, believed that coaches have a tendency to keep things within the team, and would not encourage student-athletes to consult with counselors outside of the team. The other subject, referring to having time off, believed that coaches tend to keep their athletes busy to keep them out of trouble, and that allowing them time off could potentially create that very problem. Two subjects stated that they did not believe the responsible parties could relate to the needs, and therefore would never be able to understand. One subject believed that there was no direct incentive for responsible parties to understand their needs.

Ensuring Sensitivity to Needs

As a result of many of the subjects not believing that their needs were understood by those who they believed were responsible, participants were asked to identify measures that would ensure that responsible parties were educated and sensitive to these needs.

Student-athletes speaking up for themselves was endorsed by 10 subjects as a way to ensure that those responsible were aware and more sensitive to these needs. Similar to their responses for who they believed bore the responsibility of meeting these needs, subjects believed that the best and most effective way of ensuring the education and sensitivity of those responsible was to speak up for themselves and allow their voices to be heard.

Six subjects did not believe that there was anything that could be done to ensure the education and sensitivity of those responsible. These subjects believed the problem was too entrenched in the system to allow for anyone to be able to recognize the needs of the athletes. Two of these subjects also believed that the person they thought was responsible (their coach) was not amenable to changing or understanding their perspective, and thought that their particular situation was essentially hopeless.

Four subjects believed that utilizing counseling services or some other third party intervention was crucial in educating those responsible. These subjects believed that counseling services would have the expertise necessary to highlight the importance of these needs, and convey this professionally to those who should be responsible. Those believing third party intervention was necessary did not believe the Black male student-athletes held enough leverage to be able to educate responsible parties on their own.

Four subjects believed that those responsible for meeting these needs should keep in closer contact with the student-athletes. These participants tended to believe that simple contact would allow them to understand the plight of the Black male student-athletes on a more personal level, and possibly be more invested in making the necessary changes. Three student-athletes stated that they had already attempted to make their coaches more aware of their needs, but that they felt dismissed in the process. These subjects suggested that those responsible be open to the feedback.

Three participants stated, in a manner similar to those who said the athletes should speak up for themselves, indicated that there should be focus groups of athletes initiated by administrators and coaches to assist them in becoming aware and sensitive to the Black male student-athletes. One interviewee believed that consistent group discussion with the teams would suffice in keeping those responsible educated. One respondent indicated that more of a coach presence around Black male student-athletes would allow for responsible parties to be more sensitive. Three participants made more of an abstract suggestion, by stating that they needed some sort of reminder that they were dealing with students, and that their needs should be kept as a first priority.

One subject believed that getting parents involved as a third party would help to motivate those believed to be responsible for meeting these needs into being more sensitive. Diversity training was suggested by one subject as a way to educate those who were responsible. Two subjects did not know what would help those responsible to be more sensitive and educated. Three respondents indicated that nothing needed to be done as those they believed were responsible were already educated.

Suggestions for those Working with Black Male Student-Athletes

Participants were asked to provide suggestions to those who work with Black male student-athletes in any context, including but not limited to coaches, trainers, academic advisors, and athletic administrators. The results will be presented in thematic format as with previous results, but their responses will be printed in their entirety in Appendix E, to fully capture the essence of their words.

Half of the subjects suggested that those working with Black male athletes have more empathy for them, to make attempts to truly understand them and relate to them. In doing so, four participants further stated that people should avoid treating all Black male athletes the same, and that understanding would help them to learn this. Nine interviewees stated that they would like for people working with them to provide them with guidance, support, and care. Seven subjects stated that they would prefer to not be treated any differently than White male student-athletes. Three student-athletes thought it was important to suggest that those working with them not stereotype, discriminate or judge them based on their race. Three subjects discussed having the people who work with them be encouraging and motivating, and push them to maximize their potential. Two participants expressed the desire for those who work with them to make them feel comfortable. Showing Black male athletes a life outside of athletics was suggested by two participants as a way of expanding their horizons.

The following suggestions were each endorsed by one subject:

- Have patience
- Be culturally sensitive
- Be consistent
- Make Blacks more present throughout university
- Do not insult our intelligence
- Respect the athlete

- Be honest
- Keep them focused on grades
- Listen to them

Assessing for Interviewer Effects

In an effort to ascertain possible effects of the interviewer, participants were asked to describe the process of the interview, specifically their thoughts and feelings about being interviewed by a female. Eleven subjects reported having positive feelings regarding the interview process or being interviewed by a female. Nine subjects expressed that they did not notice or did not have any feelings regarding being interviewed by a female. Four participants stated that they felt more comfortable discussing sensitive topics such as those covered in the interview with females. Two reported somewhat negative feeling of "weird" due to not knowing information about the interviewer. One subject thought the interview was strange in the beginning before he knew the interviewer's major, while the other subject was uncomfortable because he did not know the interviewer.

CHAPTER VI

GUIDELINES FOR COACHES AND ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS IN
WORKING WITH BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES

The following guidelines were created for coaches, athletic administrators,

athletic and academic support staff as a resource in their work with Black male athletes.

These guidelines are based on the available research in the domain of sport psychology

regarding this particular subpopulation, combined with the data collected from the current

exploratory study on race and factors of success associated with Black male athletes in a

Division I context. The structure of the current dissertation provided subjects the

opportunity to express their concerns and approvals regarding their experiences as Black

male athletes at Division I universities. The guidelines represent a response to the dearth

of research regarding the needs of Black male student-athletes, and are intended to

increase awareness of their experiences in a Division I context. Areas identified as being

the most salient in terms of needs were mentorship, counseling, social network, academic

advising, grievances, and autonomy vs. structure in athletic programs. Information

necessary to understand in working with Black male student-athletes is also included in

these guidelines.

In terms of needs, the majority (62%) believed that people in the positions to meet their needs, generally understood some of these needs. Coaches and academic advisors were most frequently the two groups identified as being aware of the needs and ensuring that they were met. Although coaches were especially identified as understanding these needs, subjects made the distinction that Black coaches were more likely to understand and meet their needs since the respondents believed they were more likely to have a vested interest in meeting the needs of the Black male athletes.

Support System

Mentorship Programs

The need for what subjects labeled as "role models" or "mentors" was endorsed by a majority of participants (14). They expressed an interest in having this person provide them with support. While it was apparent that a mentorship program was in place for some of the participants, it was not clear the extent to which the program was adhered to in terms of amount or quality of contact. The following are guidelines regarding establishing and maintaining a mentorship program for Black male athletes:

1. Establishing and maintaining a mentorship program is ultimately the responsibility of coaches. However, it would be important for all members of an athletic department, including the athletic director to understand the benefits of, and be firmly invested in establishing this type of program.

2. Recruit former (matriculated) Division I male athletes to serve as mentors. The most important aspect of the mentor is that he has the ability to understand and relate to their experiences as students, as men, as being Black, as athletes, and as individuals who maintain these identities. For many Black

male athletes, race and the ability to relate are indistinguishable, therefore recruiting former Black male athletes will help maximize the effectiveness of the mentorship program for these individuals. For those Black male athletes who do not place sharing a racial group membership as central to developing rapport or relating, having a mentor of the same race may be less important.

3. Former athletes from the same university could potentially boost the relatability factor of the mentor, as this person would have a precise understanding of the context of the university the student-athlete is attending. However, this does not take into consideration the fluidity of collegiate athletics in terms of changing administrations, nor does it account for differences in administrations over time.

4. It is important to ensure that the mentors participated in the same sport as the student-athletes they mentor, as the experiences of Black male athletes vary significantly across sports. This may become an arduous and seemingly impossible task, as there may be a lack of available Black male athletes in a particular sport. In these instances, consulting with the student-athlete may be important in order to to provide him the option of finding someone outside of the university, or of having someone from the same university of a different race, matched on other factors.

5. Care should be taken in matching mentors to their student-athletes. Randomizing this process may lead to incompatible pairings in the mentor-mentee relationship. Characteristics that should be considered when matching mentors and student-athletes include but are not limited to ethnic background,

region of origin (e.g. Northeast, South), family of origin (including

socioeconomic status), and career path/goals.

6. Age of the mentor is another factor that should be considered. An ideal age

for a mentor would be between 8 and 15 years the mentee's senior, as

someone too close in age may be seen as a peer, while someone too distant in

age may have significant generational gaps to overcome and may be seen as a

parent (Levinson, 1978).

7. Commitment from the mentors would also be important to establish for

continuity. A four-year commitment, the typical duration of a college student,

from the mentors would be ideal, and should be sought. However, a two-year

commitment would be the least amount of time that would be acceptable to

form a viable mentor-mentee relationship.

8. Mentors should be men who would keep their mentee's best interests a high

priority. They should be able to engage in honest dialogue with their mentees.

The importance of dedicating significant energy to their education is one of

the messages mentors can and should deliver to the Black male athletes. It is

important for mentors to maintain a balance between being honest with their

mentees in terms their goals and aspirations while continuing to foster their

goals.

Counseling/Psychological Resources

Counseling was disclosed as an additional form of support that participants

needed. In two instances, subjects acknowledged knowing that these types of resources

existed. However, the remaining subjects who endorsed needing counseling or some

other sort of psychological resource, did not indicate an awareness of these resources

currently available to them. The participants who were aware of psychological services

described lacking trust with counseling services. The following are guidelines regarding

access and utilization of psychological services.

1. The responsibility of ensuring Black male student-athletes have access to

   counseling and psychological resources would be with the Athletic Director,

   as he or she would most likely have the authority to implement a policy

   change of that nature. Forging relationships with counseling services would

   begin the process of implementing unobstructed access to these resources.

2. Awareness of services is the first step to increasing access and utilization of

   counseling/psychological services. Increased visibility is a way to increase

   the student-athlete's understanding of available resources.

   2.1. Marketing and outreach to athletes and coaches by counseling staff would

       begin to ameliorate the lack of awareness.

3. Counseling/Psychological resources would benefit in their efforts to increase

   awareness and access by establishing a presence in the athletes' environments

   (e.g. the athletic centers). This may require designated counseling staff

   relocating into these environments.

4. During the orientation period for student-athletes, designated counseling staff

   could introduce counseling services to incoming students. This serves a dual

   purpose. First, it establishes counseling services as a part of the athletic

   experience, and can work to minimize the stigma that may be associated with

   seeking psychological resources. Second, Black male student-athletes would

be able to meet the counseling staff, which could help to eliminate some of the uncertainty regarding to whom they would be speaking.

5. Increasing the appeal of services would assist in utilization. This may require a diversification of services including various groups such as psychoeducational, therapeutic, and discussion; or programs such as relaxation, mindfulness, etc.

6. Establishing department-wide mandatory counseling visits periodically is a way to ensure that all student-athletes, including Black male student-athletes have some contact with these services. Although this would essentially be another obligation for student-athletes, it could help to establish within the athletic department the sense that mental wellness requires maintenance similar to physical wellness, which they would be able to understand. Mandatory visits also allow Black male athletes the opportunity to meet and establish rapport with a counselor, possibly facilitating "help seeking" when necessary.

   6.1. Coaches could determine to implement their own mandatory visits in addition to those mandated by the department.

7. Confidentiality is a critical aspect of counseling relationships. Efforts to increase utilization of services would need to include department wide educational programs on confidentiality. The entire student-athlete population, as well as coaches and other athletic staff should be aware of the limits of confidentiality.

7.1. When coach feedback is requested from counseling services, it is imperative that the student-athlete be made aware immediately, and be informed of the information being communicated.

7.2. Any progress notes regarding counseling would be kept separate from any medical records, and would only be accessible to athletic staff with permission from the athlete.

Social Needs

Social Guidelines

Participants described having concerns regarding the quality of their social lives. Areas of concern included the lack of interaction with "regular" students, with Black students in particular, and with athletes (generally Black but athletes of other races as well) outside of their particular teams. The following guidelines are intended to facilitate the expansion of the social networks of Black male student-athletes.

1. The responsibility of facilitating social contact with other students and athletes rests on the athletic director and administrators, as well as the coach. The director and administrators have the authority to reach out to other department administrators on campus, while the coaches have the power to make necessary changes within their own individual teams.

1.1. Interaction with "regular" students

   1.1.1. Scheduling changes would be a starting point in helping to facilitate an increase in social activity.

       1.1.1.1.   Some flexibility in scheduling may allow student-athletes time to be in high traffic areas during peak student activity

times where the opportunities to meet and interact with "regular" students are greater.

    1.1.1.1.1. Staggering practice schedules so that they are at lower traffic times on certain days of the week would allow for some flexibility. Having this coincide with class schedules (e.g. Tuesday/Thursday or Monday/Wednesday/Friday) would also allow Black male-athletes the opportunity to take courses they may not have been able to take previously.

1.1.2. Continued efforts to integrate dorms would also facilitate more social interaction. Although the NCAA passed legislation, banning residence halls from housing more than 49% athletes, it is often the case that certain dorms still have up to 49% athletes, which does not facilitate the expansion of their social networks. This is particularly true of revenue generating sports where many members of a particular team could live in the same dorm, again limiting the opportunities to expand social networks beyond teammates.

1.1.3. Although the athletic centers are often places of refuge for Black male athletes, there should be some limits on the amount of time spent in the centers, especially when they are not engaged in athletic or academic activities. Doing so may force Black male

athletes to find other places to socialize, places that may offer more contact with their non-athlete counterparts.

1.2. Interaction with Black students in general

    1.2.1. Inviting Black student organizations into the athletic centers periodically throughout the semester to discuss their organizations can provide Black male student-athletes the opportunity to learn about and make contact with organizations that are of interest to them. This would be especially important in the beginning of the year in order for Black male student-athletes to learn the process of joining these organizations.

        1.2.1.1. The organizations would also have to make an effort to outreach and include Black male student-athletes in their membership. Education on the importance of including Black student-athletes may be warranted in order to facilitate cooperation. These organizations should have an understanding of athletic playing seasons, and make attempts to reach out during Black male student-athletes particular off season.

    1.2.2. Fraternities would be included in the Black student-organizations, however, there must also be some way of communicating the requirements and process of pledging, and having some way that this process could be adapted in terms of time commitment and

scheduling to make it possible for Black male student-athletes to participate.

1.3. Interaction with other athletes

    1.3.1. The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) is an established organization comprised of student-athletes from each university, and is one way in which Black male athletes can have periodic interaction with other athletes.

        1.3.1.1. More outreach from the committee to the members of the revenue generating sports for their participation, and to assume leadership roles.

        1.3.1.2. Encouragement from coaches to become involved in the committee may also increase participation in this committee.

    1.3.2. Establishing a program where during the student-athlete orientation, student-athletes are partnered with another student-athlete from another sport. This type of contact would allow athletes the opportunity to form relationships with other athletes, could expand social networks, and could also serve as another avenue of support.

        1.3.2.1. Partners may also serve as roommates during their first year as a way of helping to alleviate the problem of team segregation in residence halls.

Academic Guidelines

Advising

Academic advising was seen as an area of concern for some of the participants in the current study. The following guidelines are designed to improve the quality of service regarding academic advisors of student-athletes.

1. Maintaining a balance between exercising expert judgment in terms of academic choices and not forcing certain courses and majors, is important in working with Black male student-athletes. This will allow them to feel more autonomous in determining the trajectory of their academic careers.

2. Course and major selection should be made with the student-athlete's best interests in mind, in terms of career goals, academic strengths, and other interests. Decisions based solely upon keeping Black male student-athletes eligible to participate in sports would not be considered acting in their best interest, and could ultimately result in their ineligibility.

    2.1. Clustered majors, or those substandard majors created to be "eligibility factories" where courses are not challenging and academic standards are not adhered to, are ways to ensure that Black male student-athletes ultimately fail.

    2.2. These clustered majors and their classes gain a reputation around campus with the student-body of being easy "bird" courses. This perception, coupled with seeing many Black male student-athletes enrolled in these courses contributes to the many negative stereotypes of Black male student-athletes.

3. Engaging in honest discussions with student-athletes regarding their academic strengths is important in establishing an open and honest relationship with Black male student-athletes, a critical quality in the advising relationship.

4. Establishing rapport with Black male student-athletes is extremely important, as a level of mistrust may be present due to a lack of understanding of confidentiality and/or loyalties to coaches and other administrators versus loyalties to the student-athletes.

5. With the understanding that academic concerns may be a top priority when working with some Black male student-athletes, it is important to establish some sort of system to assist them in their transition from high school to college academics, and to produce academically competent young men, who would be ready to enter the work force in their respective fields of study.

   5.1. Specialized tutoring in majors that may be more demanding may be necessary to allow student-athletes the opportunity to pursue degrees that fit their career interests.

      5.1.1. Establishing relationships with faculty in these particular departments in efforts to collaborate in offering more recitation hours and extra support.

      5.1.2. Establishing these relationships may also assist in setting core classes at different times to allow Black male student-athletes the opportunity to take these courses and majors.

5.1.3. An added benefit of establishing these relationships would be that

Black male student-athletes would receive specialized and

individualized attention regarding their academics.

Communication, Growth, and Development

The following guidelines have been established as a way to establish and enhance

communication between athletes and coaches and administrators, and to assist in the

growth and development of Black male student-athletes. Based on the data, Black male

student-athletes had a strong tendency to hold themselves accountable for making sure

that their needs were being met. Although 42% of the subjects responded in this manner,

this percentage be misleading, since many of them characterized responsibility as

"speaking up" and making sure that someone, be it coach or the athletic director, was

aware of their needs and concerns. When the need for them to "speak up" arises, it is

necessary to have some way to ensure that these needs are recognized and handled

appropriately. These guidelines help to address these issues.

Grievance System

Subjects described needing to establish a grievance system, whereby they would

be able to discuss and make changes to the system. The following guidelines outline the

placement of responsibility regarding needs.

The following are guidelines regarding establishing a grievance system.

1. The responsibility of establishing a functional and effective grievance system

should be on the athletic director and athletic administrators for department

wide concerns, and on coaches for team concerns.

2. Utilizing SAAC--The SAAC has, as one of its intended purposes, an avenue for advocating for student-athletes and making changes to policy. However, enough subjects stated that this sort of system was a need that was lacking in their opinions[4].

    2.1. Clear explanation of the purpose of SAAC during student-athlete orientation may help to alert Black male athletes of grievance system to which they have access.

    2.2. Outreach by student-athlete representatives to revenue generating sports may increase membership from Black male student-athletes.

3. Opening line of communication directly to Athletic Director.

    3.1. Establishing and maintaining open lines of communication between the Athletic Director and the student-athletes would also facilitate discussing grievances and proposed changes.

        3.1.1. The Athletic Director could randomly select liaisons from each team, with the task of understanding and regularly (monthly, biweekly) reporting grievances and other matters of concern to Athletic Director.

            3.1.1.1. Random selection may help to ensure more Black male student-athletes are in these positions to be able to speak directly to the AD on a regular basis versus the nominating procedure done by the SAAC which may or may not allow Black male athletes an equal chance at being selected.

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[4] The current Division I SAAC has no Black male student-athlete representatives.

3.1.1.2. Black male athletes as liaisons help to ensure that an accurate assessment of the needs of Black male athletes are understood and discussed with those with the power to make change.

3.1.1.3. It is important to understand that Black representation from one team is not necessarily representative of all teams.

4. Opening line of communication with coach

4.1. In a manner similar to the procedure for athletic director, having open lines of communication between the players and coaches would facilitate discussing grievances and proposed changes

4.1.1. The coach would randomly select two to three liaisons from the team with the task of understanding and regularly (biweekly, weekly) reporting grievances and other team matters of concern to the coach.

4.1.1.1. Random selection may help to ensure more Black male student-athletes are in these positions to be able to speak to the coach on a regular and consistent basis.

4.1.1.2. Black male athletes as liaisons help to ensure that an accurate assessment of the needs of Black male athletes are understood and discussed with those with the power to make change.

4.2. In addition to having liaisons, coaches should be scheduling weekly (bi-weekly for coaches with larger teams) check-ins with individual players

dedicated to discussing matters of concern to the athlete. These matters

can include but are not only limited to the athlete's grievances (athletic

and academic), performance issues, and personal issues.

4.2.1. It is important that during these meetings the communication is

bidirectional, and not simply the coach discussing athletic issues or

concerns with the athletes.

4.2.1.1. Allowing Black male athletes the space to also

communicate with coach facilitates the development of a

cooperative and trusting relationship between player and

coach.

4.2.1.2. Establishing these lines of communication may also allow

coaches to become more effective advocates for their

players, as they would have full knowledge of any

problems, and possible solutions that are in the player's best

interests.

Freedom and Autonomy versus Structure

The participants discussed their appreciation and disdain for the amount of

structure involved in their athletic programs. The distinction should be made between

freedom and autonomy as some of the participants used these words interchangeably.

Freedom when not being used interchangeably is speaking in terms of time away from

athletic and academic obligations. Autonomy was understood to mean the ability and

possibility to make decisions on their own terms without being told or forced into

decisions. The following guidelines discuss the balance between structure and autonomy allowed in the athletic programs.

1. Striking a balance between autonomy and structure would be most beneficial to Black male student-athletes.

    1.1. The structure is necessary in an environment where there are many academic and athletic obligations, in addition to the many distractions to put them at risk.

        1.1.1. Structure in a sense, allows them to be successful, in part because it limits the amount of free time, which could lead to more risk. It also keeps them accountable and fully aware of when, where, and what obligations are.

    1.2. The balance between structure and autonomy is necessary, however because this structure does not always allow for personal growth as students, athletes, and young men, as their sense of their own strengths and weaknesses is not developed due to the amount of control in the environment.

        1.2.1. The lack of autonomy prevents Black male athletes from believing that others, including coaches and academic advisors, have the confidence in them to make good decisions.

    1.3. Finding a balance may be individually determined, and may take understanding the particular Black male student-athlete with which one is working to try to allow him autonomy in areas that are strengths and providing more structure in areas in which improvement is needed.

2. The responsibility of striking the balance between structure and autonomy rests predominantly on coaches since they are typically responsible for setting schedules, however academic advisors must also practice striking a similar balance in their work with athletes as well. Coaches and academic advisors have the most contact with the Black male student-athletes, and should have the most accurate understanding of their individual strengths and areas of improvement to be in a position to determine the most appropriate balance.

General Guidelines

The following are other general guidelines that are important for anyone working with Black male athletes.

"Relating"

1. An effort should be made by all staff involved in working with Black male student-athletes to find a way to relate to them.

2. Relating was seen as a theme throughout the data, as its importance was expressed by a number of participants in a number of areas.

2.1. Relating, per the participants, generally consists of sharing similar backgrounds, and the ability to understand and empathize with their current circumstances.

2.2. For many of the participants the ability to relate depends on sharing a racial group membership. Being of the same race, according to the subjects, allows for an understanding of the Black male athletes without judgmental, prejudicial, or stereotypical attitudes.

2.2.1. However, based on their responses, race does not necessarily have to be the ultimate deciding factor in determining whether someone will be able to relate. If someone is willing to take the time to understand/empathize with Black male student-athletes, they can learn to trust them and can forge close relationships.

2.3. Relating paves the way for trusting open relationships.

2.4. Relating also allows one to have a solid understanding of the Black male student-athlete, including the best ways to communicate and work with him.

Low Priority/Dismissing

1. There was a sense that the needs of Black male student-athletes were of a low priority to those working with them. In addition, when attempting to address their needs, they often perceived those working with them to be dismissive.

2. A sentiment of being a low priority and dismissed leads to mistrust and contaminates the formation of the relationship.

3. A genuine interest in the development and betterment of Black male student-athletes should be the standard for anyone working with them.

Qualities of a Good Coach

1. The following characteristics were described by participants as being qualities of a good coach. However, these characteristics can apply to anyone working with Black male student-athletes.

1.1. Those working with Black male student-athletes should be "good people" who care about their jobs and Black male student-athletes. They should

also be able to maintain their professionalism, while being flexible in their role.

1.2. Those working with Black male student-athletes should be "good teachers", who want the best out of their players, see the potential in the Black male athletes with which they work, provide constructive criticism and hold them to high standards.

1.3. Redefining and being flexible with their job description is another quality important to Black male student-athletes. This can include taking on a parental or familial figure and extending themselves beyond their job description, if necessary.

1.4. The ability to relate, as described above, is also an important quality to possess when working with Black male student-athletes.

1.5. While the ability to remain professional is important to Black male student-athletes, it is also important that those who work with them can also have fun with them.

Presence of Black Males

1. The importance of having Black males in their presence was another theme seen throughout the data.

2. An effort should be made to continue to employ Black males in positions within athletic departments.

2.1. Recruiting Black males for positions of leadership is especially important to provide Black male student-athletes with positive images and examples of Black men, who can serve as role models to the athletes.

2.1.1. Many Black male student-athletes come from single-parent, mother-headed families, where there may not have been the constant presence of Black male in the home.

2.1.2. The general sentiment, based upon the data, was that their athletic careers were due, in part, to the influence of male family members helping to steer them in the right direction.

2.1.3. In addition to male family members, Black coaches were also very influential in their athletic development.

The preceding guidelines were created to provide coaches, athletic administrators, and others that work with Black male student-athletes with an educational resource regarding issues that may arise when working with this particular population. Through the current study, support systems, social needs, academic needs, and communication, growth and development were areas identified as being of concern to Black male student-athletes. In addition, information discovered through the research, including relating, feelings of being low priority, positive qualities, and the presence of Black males also warranted further guidelines so that those working with Black male student-athletes have a resource to guide their work with this population.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to uncover the nature of the attributions Black male student-athletes make regarding race and factors of success in their sport participation. The discussion will be delineated according to the research questions of this dissertation.

1. What do Black male collegiate athletes perceive as having led to their success?

Based upon the results, Black males attribute multiple factors as having led to their success. The most frequently endorsed determinant was family. To many of the subjects, familial influence was the sole reason they began participating in sports in general, and in their particular sports. For some of the participants, family members were either coaches or former athletes, and provided them with the motivation, guidance, and skills in order to succeed in their sport. Participants were also influenced by the messages they received from family and others around them. Families conveyed messages that helped to internalize the significance of education. The messages they received from their parents, mothers especially, highlighted the importance of maintaining a focus on school. This is a common message in the Black community (Boyd-Franklin, 2003). The value of education was not only received from family members, as coaches, mentors, and teachers also provided these participants with

reinforcing messages in this regard. Participants also attributed some of their success to themselves, as a few were able to associate their success with an affinity for learning and education.

Familial messages were not the only ways in which subjects were influenced to succeed both in the classroom and on the field. The environments from which they came provided subjects with motivation for success. Many of the participants described a desire to move beyond their impoverished neighborhoods, and believed that athletic success was their way to achieve this goal. For some, simply getting themselves out of these environments was not enough. They were also motivated to provide better lives for their mothers or younger siblings. Although many have a clear understanding of the difficulty in achieving that goal, they believed that by being "the best" they would increase the chances of that happening. Efforts to become the best resulted in their success.

As mentioned previously, subjects received messages from mentors regarding the importance of academic success. Mentors were also important in other ways as well. Participants described having mentors who took them under their wings, so to speak, and provided them with the knowledge and guidance to keep them on the path to success. Mentors seemed to assist these participants with personal issues and sometimes served as role models to them as well. By being positive examples and providing them with advice and counsel, mentors were a significant factor in the success of Black male athletes. The issue for these participants was that they believed the mentorship should continue during their college careers, and not all felt that it had. The relationship with

mentors that the subjects described is similar to that which Levenson (1978) described where mentors provide advice and serve as a source of guidance to the mentee.

Participants did not exclude natural ability when discussing factors of success. Whether discussing intellectual ability or athletic ability, or having a good work ethic, subjects recognized their role in their own success.

2. What factors have contributed to their participation in their particular sports?

The interviewees described a number of factors that contributed to their participation in their respective sports, including family, natural ability, and their environment. Similar to their responses for the factors that made them successful, subjects saw these three factors as having been the most important in guiding them to their particular sports. Again, familial influence was an important determinant, especially when fathers, older male cousins, and uncles participated in or coached in their current sport. This influence represents a natural progression in some families, where the boys are expected to follow the paths of their fathers, uncles, and other male relatives.

Similar to the first, natural ability not only allowed these subjects to be successful, but it was the reason many of them initially began playing their particular sport. Basketball players in particular mentioned their body types as contributing to their participating in sports, citing that they were taller than others their age and were often told by others to try basketball. What is surprising about these results is the nature of subjects who endorsed included themselves in contributing to their success. When asked about initial participation, none of the subjects who cited natural athletic ability or body type were football players. It is unclear why this is so; however when speculating it may

be that when many of the football players began playing their sport, their body types were no different than those playing other sports.

The concept of environment, again, is similar to the question regarding success factors. Environment includes the idea of family members, friends, and others around them having a sport affiliation, and influencing the subjects to participate in these sports. The idea of environment should be explored further however, when discussing its influence on choice of sport. It is here where there may be factors at play that may be unique to the Black community.

The notion of Black male student-athletes overwhelmingly coming from low income neighborhoods was discussed during the literature review, and will not be reviewed again here. With this particular sample being comprised of more basketball and football players, there are other issues that should be mentioned. The first is the financial impact of participating in a sport. Basketball, specifically, requires very little from families in terms of finances. Other than a basketball, there is no equipment to purchase, as would be the case with baseball or tennis, making it an appealing choice to many lower income families. Football, on the other hand, can require more in initial costs. Although youth football leagues exist where equipment is provided, the registration fees can be expensive. Baseball, similar to football, also requires equipment, which may or may not be included in registration fees. With similar barriers to initial participation, the question arises as to why there are more Black football players than baseball players or players of other sports with similar requirements.

It is at this point where environment may have its largest impact on sport choice. When a young Black male is choosing his sport, several considerations have to be made.

One would be the amount of access and visibility of the sport in his neighborhood. Basketball courts are often not difficult to find in any neighborhood, including low income, predominantly Black neighborhoods, or can be created on one's own, making it an easy sport to access and to participate in. Football, baseball, and soccer are similar, in that finding spaces to play would not be extremely difficult. However, access is clearly not the only factor, since soccer is not a sport that is commonly played in Black communities. Sports that are not as present in Black neighborhoods, in terms of leagues and former players, are not going to have as much Black participation. The data supports this claim since only one of subjects who participated in a sport not typically dominated by Black males came from a predominantly Black neighborhood.

The perception of the sport is also important. In the Black community, football and basketball appear to be the sports of choice (Rhoden, 2006). Black males are not only highly visible, but have also excelled in these two sports. One can speculate that a perception exists that participating in one of these two sports is more appropriate or acceptable than other sports. One can also speculate that parents may be more willing to invest money into their child's participation in a sport which could, in the long run, result in educational and/or monetary advances. When using the example above that the access to space to play football, baseball, and soccer is almost even, and the amount of money needed to participate in soccer may even be less than either baseball or football (due to equipment), these hypotheses can hold true. There is the perception that as a Black male, there is a better chance of being able to play at the collegiate or professional level if one plays either of these sports (Robinson, 2004). Subjects also acknowledged, as they did previously, that a factor in choosing their particular sport was a motivation to be

eventually leave these neighborhoods, either through college or professional participation.

Based on the data, choice of sport did not appear random for many of the athletes. Even for those who participated in sports not dominated by Black athletes, there seemed to be both internal and external influences on this choice. The participant who was a soccer player was also a first generation Nigerian immigrant. Living in a middle class suburb of a major US city, most of his Black peers, also African immigrants, participated in soccer as well. The baseball player lived in an area known for its baseball programs. Although these examples may also reflect the impact of the environment, it may not be as deliberate an influence as those who participate in football or basketball. Family and natural talent played major roles in helping some of these subjects make their choice of sport, but for more the environment sent many cues that certainly impacted their choices.

3. How has race been a factor in their athletic careers?

Participants provided both obvious and subtle answers regarding the influence of race on their athletic careers. In some instances, subjects responded with a hesitance to admit that race played a role in their athletic careers. Only after continued discussion, would they begin to explore possibilities. In other cases, participants readily attributed many aspects of their careers to race.

A number of issues arose when discussing the influence of race on their athletic careers. One way in which race had been an influence was that it provided some with motivation. Again as in previous questions, being Black provided them with motivation to succeed in their sport for various reasons including being able to support family. However, other subjects who described motivation had a different understanding of its

significance. These participants interacted with people in their lives who did not believe

they could be Black and succeed at their sports. Rather than succumb to the

discouragement, subjects used the discouragement as motivation. Similar to previous

responses, subjects acknowledged that being Black may have influenced the sport they

play. Rather than understanding this influence only through their neighborhoods and

environments, some participants acknowledged the internalized stereotypes of Black

males being more athletically inclined.

Subjects described certain feelings associated with being Black and participating

in their sports. Although respondents described overwhelmingly positive feelings such as

proud, fun, or great, some were able to identify more problematic feelings associated with

being Black male athletes in their sports. They described being fully aware of the

negative perceptions and stereotypes of Black male athletes, and often felt it necessary to

be cautious and careful of their behavior in certain settings. Interestingly, subjects from

sports not dominated by Black males shared this feeling, which may indicate a more

global sentiment rather than one specific to a particular sport. Participants also described

a sense that they needed to work harder, and that more was expected of them because

they were Black. Again, this sentiment was expressed by athletes from all sports. This

may be interpreted two ways, and may speak to two distinct trends. In one sense,

working harder may represent a method to combat the negative stereotypes of Black

males in general. In another sense, working harder may represent a way to prove oneself

to authorities. The latter sentiment may be more true of those who participate in sports

dominated by White males, who may either internally or externally, receive messages of

not belonging in their sport. The data from this dissertation did not specifically indicate

whether this sentiment came from Black or White coaches. This would be an interesting avenue to pursue in future research.

What was not overtly discussed by the subjects, rather deduced through the data, was the impact of sport on race. After completing the data analysis, it was discovered that sport participation may have also served as an instrument for racial socialization. All of the athletes, regardless of the cultural makeup of their neighborhoods and schools, received racial socialization through their participation in sports. Participants who may not have had much exposure to other Black males received this contact through sports.[5] However, the inverse was not true, as those who came from predominantly Black neighborhoods and schools were not more likely to experience those of other races through sports. This phenomenon can be viewed as an additional incentive to participating in sports. The scope of this dissertation did not allow for further exploration of this phenomenon.

4. Are there differences in the degree to which race is a factor depending on sport? How have they perceived their experience of being Black and participating in their particular sport?

Based on the data, few overt differences exist between sports in how subjects discuss race. Yet when examining the data beyond their particular responses, one can begin to understand subtle differences. These differences can be dependent not specifically on sport, but perhaps the racial makeup of the teams. There were no major differences between sports in sentiments discussed regarding race in terms of content. Subjects who played soccer and basketball, for example, both endorsed feeling proud to

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[5] The data includes those who played multiple sports. Therefore it should be noted that those who currently participate in sports with less Black participation may have played in other sports and had this experience.

be a Black male athlete. The diver, along with football and basketball players said that being Black and participating in their sports provided them with motivation to succeed. All of the subjects reported positive relationships with their Black coaches past and current.

Subtle differences can be seen in the nature of their responses. Those who played in sports not typically dominated by Black males were less likely to describe problems with being Black in their sport. This subgroup also seemed to work harder to minimize any differences between themselves and their teammates. Those who played in sports dominated by Black males were able to provide many concerns about the interaction of their race and participation in their sport, and did not work to downplay differences between themselves and their teammates. Answers such as "I don't know" when asked about race and its role were endorsed only by subjects who did not play football or basketball. Another trend from the data was the nature of the relationship between player and coach. Those who reported the most problematic interactions with their current coaches were on teams where Black males were the minority and the coach was White. Subjects who reported that their coaches expected more from them due to their race, were all discussing their participation while attending predominantly White schools with a Black coach.

It is unclear as to the cause of these particular trends, the latter two especially. Responding in a non-threatening manner regarding general questions about race and their sport may be protective for those athletes who may be the only Black males on the team. However, it may be more difficult to provide a nondescript response to a more salient and problematic aspect of their athletic experience. One subject, the soccer player, began by

saying that his issues with his coach had nothing to do with race, and labeled the fact that the Black players on the team were more likely to get into trouble than the White players as coincidence. After continuing to discuss his interactions with his coach further, he then described the situation as less coincidental, and more intentional.

When viewing this trend beyond the athletes' responses, it becomes possible that a systemic issue is presenting. It is not beyond possibility that many of these particular coaches, who may have had little experience coaching Black male student-athletes, do not have a clear understanding of the best ways to work with them. The salience of race may be heightened with these student-athletes due to their being in the minority on their teams. The combination of these two factors can lead to conflictual interactions.

The ideas behind higher expectations of Black male athletes were discussed in the previous section and will not be discussed here again in that manner. However, what will be discussed is the nature of these perceived differences in treatment. It may be that these Black coaches were generally tougher on their players than their White counterparts. It may also be that in these circumstances (predominantly White schools), Black coaches have a sense that the Black athletes need to do more to be viewed as competent, qualified, and equal to their White peers, forcing them to hold their Black athletes to higher standards. It may also be that these particular Black coaches had a strong desire for their Black athletes to succeed, and pushed them harder, possibly even to the detriment of their White players. The nature of this dissertation did not allow for these issues to be explored further to confirm or refute any of these hypotheses.

One final issue with regard to race was the disparity between how the participants viewed their experiences with their Black coaches and their White coaches. Generally,

the athletes had positive experiences with both types of coaches. However, the data indicated that subjects reported only positive aspects of their relationships with Black coaches, while they were able to report both positive and negative experiences in their relationships with their White coaches. Reasons for this trend were discussed in the preceding section, and the impact of the interviewer will be discussed later.

5. What do Black male collegiate athletes perceive as their psychological, cultural, academic, and athletic needs? How does the athletic system understand or demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of Black male athletes?

Psychological Needs

The data suggests that Black male student-athletes have an awareness of their psychological needs. Those who reported having this type of need typically phrased it in terms of needing support. Support was a more benign way of stating psychological needs, as many were aware of stigma affiliated with seeking psychological services. Subjects suggested counseling, support groups, and mentors as ways to assist them with the stress associated with being student-athletes.

Social needs may also be considered psychological needs, as learning, understanding, and engaging in relationships is a psychological process. Many student-athletes described having a lack of diversity in their social lives, as many of their friends were teammates. Although listed as an academic need, subjects also expressed a need for flexibility in their schedules, a request that would allow them to take classes at times when other students typically take classes. Engaging in activities of "regular students" was seen by the subjects as a way to escape, in a sense, the stress associated with their lives as student-athletes. Too often the athlete identity is primary for Black male athletes

(Melendez, 2008), so having a means of more effectively connecting to the student identity is critical to having a well-balanced student-athlete.

Cultural Needs

Subjects were able to identify cultural needs that they considered important for Black male student-athletes. The most endorsed, and seemingly the most important of those was having Black males in their presence. For some subjects, having Black males available signifies some level of comfort, as these subjects tend to find it easier to relate to other Black males. It is also important to note that having Black males visible and accessible to the student-athletes would assist in resolving some of the psychological needs, as these Black males could serve as mentors for the student-athletes.

Other cultural needs included having staff that were culturally sensitive, and did not judge or stereotype based on race. Another concern of subjects was the idea of those who work with them treating them differently than they do others because of their race. This concern was specifically stated by someone who participated in lacrosse, a sport not typically dominated by Black athletes. In this instance, this participant expressed concern with standing out due to his race. Being the only Black member on his team made him very aware of his skin color, and did not want any further actions on his part or that of anyone else to further differentiate him from the rest of his team.

Academic Needs

Subjects were able to identify many academic needs critical to success for Black male athletes. The most important of these needs was good academic advising. Although they, were generally satisfied with their experiences of academic advising, it was clear that there were still areas of concern that should be addressed. Many of the

athletes who thought that good academic advising was critical believed that their advisors

sometimes lost sight of their obligations to the student-athletes, and depended too heavily

on their loyalties to the athletic department. These loyalties, according to the subjects,

led many Black male athletes to the unfavorable positions of either not being eligible to

participate in sports, or not being ready to graduate after four years.

Subjects also believed that their sense of autonomy in choosing their academic

and career paths were too often undermined by academic advisors, and felt forced to

choose the courses and majors they recommended. Chapter Six details guidelines for

those working with Black male student-athletes in a Division I context regarding

academic advising. Other academic needs included having more individualized attention

regarding academics, and fairness in the classroom. In their opinion, some professors

judged them based on their status as student-athletes, and often believed they suffered

mistreatment because of this.

Athletic Needs

Subjects also identified a variety of athletic needs critical for Black male student-

athletes. Those that were most endorsed were ways to have their grievances heard and

more freedom and autonomy. Regarding grievances, interestingly, only basketball

players from university 1 cited this as a need. It is the opinion of this author that this may

speak to troublesome dynamics on this particular team, rather than a systemic issue.

Nevertheless, guidelines for establishing a grievance system were outlined in Chapter

Six. Freedom and autonomy, also seen as an academic need, in the athletic context spoke

to subjects not believing that their coaches trusted them to make appropriate choices.

These subjects expressed concerns over having much of their time accounted for, and left

them little opportunity to develop as men without the crutch of structure. In addition, participants believed they became resentful as a result of this perceived lack of trust.

Other athletic needs included, but were not limited to discipline, self motivation, self-control, and a positive attitude. These personal attributes were deemed a necessary component of being successful in a Division I university athletic program. The description of these needs can be seen as an indication of Black male student-athletes sense of taking personal responsibility for their success.

Limitations of the Current Study

Recruitment Method

Participants for this research were recruited by using various methods. Contacts of the researcher allowed her the avenue to reach out to athletic administrators and coaches, as well as permission to present her project to a course in which many Black male student-athletes were enrolled. In the case of the revenue generating sports, once the initial contact was made, the academic advisors were responsible for arranging the interviews. In the case of football, the academic advisors selected the participants. With the non revenue generating sports, once the initial contact was made, the researcher conducted an internet search of the athletic website to visually identify the Black male athletes on the teams. Because there were multiple methods to recruitment, the selection of subjects was neither uniform, nor random. In the case of the non revenue sports, visual identification of Black athletes was subjective, and may not have accounted for Black athletes who do not physically look Black. Although participants permanently resided in areas across the country, they were recruited from two universities in the Northeast region of the US. Generalizability of the results is therefore impacted by both

of these recruitment strategies. It will be important for future research to identify a single recruitment method that would allow random selection of Black male athletes from universities across the nation.

Participant Characteristics

Participants were all males recruited ranged in age from 19-23, and identified themselves racially as Black. However, there was one subject who identified as Jamaican, and three subjects who were African immigrants. Because the sample was not completely homogeneous, it allowed for an exploration of potential differences among various ethnic groups, however the non African American sample was too small and too heterogeneous[6] to be able to offer comparison.

A requirement of the sample was for the athletes to be on athletic scholarship and eligible to participate in sports. These requirements may have eliminated a number of athletes from the participant pool. Results may not represent the experiences of those who did not meet the study criteria, and therefore should not be generalized. Future research should consider broadening the eligibility criteria in order to gain an understanding of the experiences of those athletes who did not meet the requirements.

The subject pool was heavily weighted with football and basketball players. Although the sample may be more representative of the distribution Black athletes across the NCAA, the data is skewed more toward the experiences of revenue sports. Qualitative research allowed for the data of the non revenue sports to be presented, however, this must be taken into account when considering the results. Future research may benefit from examining these research questions separately with non revenue sports to gain a non biased view of their experiences as Division I athletes.

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[6] The African immigrants came from different countries.

Interviewer Effects

The interviewer and primary investigator was a 24 year old African American female. Although the interviewer and subjects were matched on race, they were not matched on gender and ethnicity in all cases. It is within reason that participants may not have been comfortable discussing certain topics with a female. To account for this possibility, participants were asked to discuss the process of completing the interview with a female interviewer. Although most of the athletes responded that they experienced no discomfort with a female, it was observed that there was no discussion of nonfamilial females in the data with the exception of one subject. It is within reason to assume that being interviewed by a female may have impacted the results. Research on cross gender interviewing would be an important consideration for future research.

The personal contacts of the researcher should also be considered. The personal contacts who assisted in the recruitment of subjects included faculty members and a relative. This is important because subjects from the revenue generating sports of the first university also interacted with this contact, and were aware of the association between the contact and the researcher. Subjects from the second university were fully aware of the familial relation between the researcher/interviewer and the mutual contact. This awareness may have also influenced their responses due to impression management, and a fear of the researcher sharing information with these contacts.

Given these limitations, generalizations from this data to all Black male athletes should be avoided.

Implications

Information regarding the experiences of Black male student-athletes would be of

use to coaches, athletic administrators, academic advisors, and sport psychologists.

Awareness of this topic can be increased through education and training programs for

coaches and athletic administrators, sport psychology research and training programs, and

policies and procedures in collegiate athletics.

Coaching at the Division I level requires coaches to be effective administrators of

their teams. Too often, the deciding factor in whether a coach is effective is his or her

win-loss record, forcing coaches to focus their attention on measurable outcomes on their

team. Has this athlete increased his speed and quickness during winter workouts; are his

passes accurate; how many stolen bases did he have; can he maintain his agility at a new

weight are just some of the questions coaches have to consider in order to place their

teams in the position to win games, meets, and matches.

What does not typically get attention are the subtle differences in coaching

techniques that make them the most effective. It is here where education and training

programs could be most beneficial. Training for coaches at the Division I level,

understandably includes thorough training in policies and procedures of the NCAA and

their respective universities. What also is included is some sort of diversity training,

aimed at fostering tolerance and understanding of other cultures. Beyond these standards,

coaches' training focuses more on being the executive of the team, and the athletic

knowledge required to complete that task.

What is missing from diversity training would be some of the issues mentioned in

this study. The reasons that Black male athletes choose their sports vary within and

across sports, but impact the way they view their participation. Communication

techniques used toward those motivated solely by achieving professional status may not

be as effective with someone who plays more for the love of the game. Those that come

from more impoverished backgrounds may not respond well to certain coaching styles

that may work well with others. Understanding the importance of empathy and relating,

seems to be crucial in establishing relationships with Black male athletes.   With the

ability to relate to their status as Black male student-athletes, coaches can place

themselves in positions to develop relationships that better serve both player and coach.

Also important for coaches' awareness is understanding the differences across sports with

Black male athletes as to avoid generalizations, and gain an appreciation for the impact of

the context of a particular sport on the athlete.   A Black collegiate basketball player may

have a completely different cultural and socioeconomic background and motivation for

participation than a Black collegiate soccer player. It is also important to remember that

these variations can and do exist within a particular sport as well.

Results also clearly underscore the importance of families to Black male student-

athletes. For many, families are the reason they began participating in sports, understood

the importance of getting an education, and for some the reason they continue

participating in sports. Keeping families involved in the lives of Black male student-

athletes on campus may ultimately benefit coaches by showing them their commitment to

keeping them on track, establishing a better sense of trust in the coach-athlete

relationship. This may also be important for academic advisors to understand and utilize

to help keep these athletes focused on their educational goals. Athletic administrators

have the authority to implement policy changes that would allow families to be more actively engaged in their student-athletes' progress.

The findings of this dissertation allow sport psychologists the opportunity to provide coaches and other athletic and academic staff the awareness of many of these issues. As the results indicate, Black male athletes seemed less concerned about the physical aspect of their athletic experiences, and more concerned with the psychological implications, suggesting for the most part that athletically speaking, their physical needs were being met. Even for those participating on teams that may not have had winning records, the concerns were not about not being strong enough or lacking technical skills, but more about poor relationships among teammates and coaching staff, lacking support, and other psychological concerns that they perceive to impede their individual and team performances.

Sport psychologists often serve athletes with regard to performance concerns. It is not beyond reason to believe that issues raised throughout this dissertation can have an adverse effect on athletic performance. It would be useful when doing assessments for sport psychologists to conduct thorough assessments to accurately determine whether any of these issues described in this dissertation are impeding performance. Sessions can then be tailored to more effectively deal with these issues.

The findings also have implications for the role of sport psychologists. Based on the results, sport psychologists could be useful in advocating for better, more effective support services for Black male athletes. As experts in the interface of psychology and sport, sport psychologists would be able to effectively convey the importance of having

more easily accessible psychological resources for student-athletes, not only on their psychological well-being, but its effects on the playing field as well.

Based on the current study, training programs for sport psychologists should also include a more thorough understanding of cultural issues, beyond basic issues of diversity. With an understanding that nearly 25% of all Division I male student-athletes are Black, it is within reason that sport psychologists working in this context would have contact with this subset of the student-athlete population. The athlete identity for Black males can be extremely complex and varied across sports. Black male athletes would not be adequately served without a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and needs.

Future research into the experiences and needs of Black male athletes will continue to shape the perceptions of this population. Since current research focuses primarily on problematic academic issues associated with Black male athletes, it will be important to add other dimensions to this body of literature. Utilizing racial identity scales may help to further isolate the variables that differentiate players within and across sports. Samples that include a more balanced distribution of sports may also assist in gaining a better understanding of these differences. Regional differences, referenced in this data set, are also important to consider, so future research should seek participants from around the country. Ethnicity factors are also important to consider in evaluating the experiences of Black male student-athletes. Continued investigation regarding this population will ultimately facilitate the development of programs and policies that enhance the educational and athletic experiences of Black male student-athletes.

Summary

This dissertation was designed to explore the perceptions of race and factors of success of Black male student-athletes in a Division I context. The needs of this population were also assessed during this study. The participants of this study were Black males from two universities in the Northeastern region of the US, representing seven sports, with 21 subjects playing either football or basketball. Findings from this study reveal that race generally plays a role in their athletic experience, but the degree to which this happens varies across sports and individuals. Families of origin and experiences with Black males were generally the pivotal factors in their success, with each of these sending messages to participate in sports in general, to choose their current sports, and to keep their education as a priority throughout their schooling. Families and experiences with Black males provide these student-athletes with support that many find lacking in their current settings. The ability to relate to Black male athletes was seen as a critical aspect in establishing good relationships with them, and often this ability is race dependent. Athletes were able to identify a whole host of needs that they believe are necessary not just to themselves, but to Black male student-athletes in general. These needs included but were not limited to good academic advising, psychological support, and more balance between their student and athlete identities.

Despite the limitations of the current study, and the necessity of further research in this domain, the objectives of this dissertation were accomplished. An awareness of the experiences of Black male student-athletes regarding race and factors of success has been established. The cultural, psychological, academic, and athletic needs of Black male student-athletes were identified, assessed, and explored. It is the hope of this author

that the information provided in this dissertation will be used to improve training for those actively involved in the lives of Black male student-athletes. With such a visible population, it would be worthwhile to ensure that their experiences are well understood and appropriately taken into consideration.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Agreement

An Exploratory Study of Race and Success in Black Male Collegiate Athletes

You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate in this study, you should know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, ask the investigator. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the study is to identify factors that may lead to success in Black male collegiate athletes. The study also wants to explore your thoughts about how you have felt psychological, cultural, and athletic needs of Black male athletes have been met. In addition, I want to learn your suggestions on how to better serve the needs of this unique population. A doctoral student at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University is conducting this study as a fulfillment of dissertation and doctoral requirements. Between 20 – 25 individuals will participate in this study.

Study Procedures
You will be interviewed about your experiences, thoughts, and opinions regarding your participation and success in your sport. You will also be asked about how you believe your needs have been met as a Black male athlete throughout your athletic career. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Interviews will be audio taped to contribute to the authenticity of the study. Interviews will be transcribed and tapes will be destroyed after transcription. Any tape recordings, transcripts of interviews, or other data collected from you will be maintained in confidence by the investigator in a locked file cabinet and destroyed at the end of the study.

Risks: The interview focuses on your experiences being a Black male athlete. There may have been some experiences in your lifetime related to you being a Black male athlete that were unpleasant. If you experience major distress related to the study, please contact the researcher, so that she can provide you with the necessary referrals.

Benefits: Your experience and knowledge have tremendous value to understanding the issues that Black male athletes face as well as developing guidelines to address the needs of other Black male athletes. In addition, the opportunity to share your experience as a member of this population may be valuable to you.

Confidentiality: All records will be stored in locked files and will be kept **confidential** to the extent permitted by law. The data about your interview will be stored on an electronic data file in the researcher's personal computer to keep confidential. The data will be available only to the research team and no identifying information will be disclosed. Audiotapes and other paper work will be assigned a case number.

Your responses will be grouped with other participants' responses and analyzed collectively. All common identifying information will be disguised to protect your confidentiality. This will include changing your name and other demographic information (i.e. age).

<u>Research Standards and Rights of Participants:</u> Your participation in this research is **VOLUNTARY**. You can decide not to participate or terminate participation any time during the study without any penalty. If you decide not to participate, or if you decide later to stop participating, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Also, if you refer other individuals for participation in this study, your name may be used as the referral source only with your permission

I understand that I may contact the investigator or the investigator's dissertation chairperson at any time at the addresses, telephone numbers or emails listed below if I have any questions, concerns or comments regarding my participation in this study.

Amber Cargill (Investigator)   Charles Maher, Psy.D. (Chairperson)
Rutgers University   Rutgers University
GSAPP   GSAPP
152 Frelinghuysen Rd   152 Frelinghuysen Rd
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8085   Piscataway, NJ 08854-8085
Telephone: (336) 207 - 8735   Telephone: (732) 445 - 2000
Email: acargill@eden.rutgers.edu   Email: camaher@rci.rutgers.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

I have read and understood the contents of this consent form and have received a copy of it for my files. I consent to participate in this research project.

Participant Signature _____   Date _____

Investigator Signature _____   Date _____

I Give My Permission For the Interview to be Audiotaped.

Signature _____   Date _____

APPENDIX B

Demographics Sheet

Protocol _____

Demographics Sheet

Age: _____

Racial/Ethnic Identification: _____

Current Sport Affiliation: _____

Years Participating in this Sport: _____

APPENDIX C

Study Questionnaire Interview Protocol

(1) History of Participation--General
    (a) What factors have contributed to your involvement in (*insert sport)*? Which have been the one or two most important ones?
    (b) When did your participation in (*insert sport)* begin? Did you play more than one sport? Why or why not?
    (c) Who was involved in your initial participation in sport (*insert sport)*?

(2) History of Participation—Cultural influences
    (a) What was the cultural and/or ethnic makeup of your childhood neighborhood/neighborhood when you began playing (*insert sport)*?
    (b) What was the diversity of the schools you attended/school when began playing (*insert sport)*?
    (c) What was the diversity of the people on the teams you've been a part of throughout your career?
    (d) Were there any role models in (*insert sport)* that you looked up to? Who were/are they? Why?
    (e) What role did your parents play in your involvement in (*insert sport)*? Rest of family?
    (f) What has kept you playing (*insert sport)*?
    (g) Were you ever discouraged from participating in (*insert sport)*? How did you handle this kind of experience? Did anyone help you through this experience? Who and how?
    (h) Did you ever have coaches who were of the same ethnic/racial background? How was this experience?
    (i) Did you ever have coaches who were of the different ethnic/racial background? How was this experience? Were there any differences between these coaches and coaches of other racial backgrounds?

(3) Cultural Influences on Current Participation
    (a) Does being Black play any role in your participation in (*insert sport)* (in past and currently?)
    (b) How do you feel about being a Black athlete in (*insert sport)*?
    (c) What are your career goals? Outside of athletics?
    (d) Has being a student-athlete prepared you for these goals? How so?
    (e) During the past 6 months, what has been an experience of which you have been proud as a Black collegiate student-athlete? Why?
    (f) During the past 6 months, what has been an experience that you wish could have changed as a Black collegiate student-athlete? Why?
    (g) What advice would you provide young Black athletes in elementary, middle, and high school who want to be successful in (*insert sport)*?

(4) Needs Assessment
  (a) What do you think Black male athletes in your position need as a student at a Division I university?
  (b) What do you think Black male athletes in your position need as an athlete at a Division I university?
  (c) What have your experiences been like with these needs? Were there things in particular that have been especially fulfilled/lacking in your experience?
  (d) Who do you think should meet these needs? Do you feel as though coaches and administrators understand these needs? Any thoughts on why this is so?
  (e) What could be in place to ensure that these staff members are more educated/sensitive to these needs?
  (f) What suggestions do you have for those working with athletes in your position with respect to race?
  (g) What have you learned from your athletic experience?
  (h) What did I forget to ask? What else do you wish I would have asked?
  (i) What else would you like to tell me about being a Black male student-athlete?

APPENDIX D

Responses to the Question "What advice would you provide young Black athletes in elementary, middle, and high school who want to be successful in (*insert sport)*?"

"Study, school work. Like I wish early on, that I was known as a student who was a football player that had a 5.0 GPA average. But I didn't. Go for being known as a student-athlete, the top student-athlete. Just try to get a high GPA. Cause I know me, my problems were- I was concerned about school so I stop playing football, then my school grades go up, but football starts slacking. I know it was like, the higher my GPA got, the better I was doing in football. Because once the school work gets done, you don't have to worry about it anymore, and I can focus all on football. So its more important to hit the books, keep the GPA high. You should be good to go."

"I would tell them how to see everything as school first. You can't do anything without your education. You can't do nothing. But then I would tell them if you go after something, you put your mind to it, and stick with it. Patience is definitely involved with what you do. And I think when you got your school first and your priorities right opportunities are going to open up for you regardless of whether its football or basketball."

"Most of us don't come in based on grades, so be as prepared as you can before you get here so that you won't be behind in any way. Also, maybe get in good with someone, a mentor, to help you get through this time. But honestly, son, do you. Do what you want to do. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't."

"The biggest thing I could say, and I say these things to my teammates all the time, but they don't listen, cause they're not mature enough. Soccer coach, basketball coach, football coach, any coaches, they make promises to you. They'll promise you the world. They all promise you that you'll be a pro. If you're not gonna be pro, they'll get you a job. They promise you anything, living lavish. Why because it's big business. [School name] is big business. [School name] soccer, [school name] football everything in this university, everything in every university is big business. It's all about money. These guys are the master persuaders. They can talk so well, and they know what to say. So you have to know that these guys don't hold your future. You hold your future. You take the necessary steps to be the best, but at the same time you make sure they are not disrespecting you and not trying to take advantage of you. If you do that, you'll be fine. Because at the end of the day, 3 years down the road when you look back on it, you're not gonna be a pro, and somebody owns you, then what have you learned. You haven't learned anything. You're the same 17 year old, in a 22 year olds body. I'm not saying— anyway you just gotta learn to not be disrespected and grow and evolve, and make sure that your future is in your hands, and not in the hands of somebody else. Oh, keep driving. Don't let anybody persuade you. Keep playing, keep playing. Keep doing it. Keep learning. You can be the best. I coach 16 year olds. And I work them as if that

was me. I know that maybe a few of them have the ability to play at this level, but I say that the way you play in this is a microcosm for everything in life. If you work hard at this, then you can work hard at anything in life. I just instill that in them, and hopefully they can leave and their parents are happy with the things that I put in them."

"Um just that the more you put into it, the more it will give back to you. That's what I learned like my sophomore year. Like the more work you put into it, like all the extra hours you spend carrying your stick around, or maybe throwing against the wall, the more it will help in the long run. My stick never left my hand. My mom would always make fun of me like you're bringing that stick with you? Yeah because it's a part of me. It's my right hand. People walk around with a basketball or football in their hands, it's the exact same thing. The more time you spend like shooting in the cages or something, the more it will give back to you."

"I would definitely tell them that education is important. Don't put all your apples into the athletic bowl. It's obvious that without academics I couldn't be here, not just Black or White, just athletes in general. I think athletes in general make football more of a priority than academics. So I would tell them to put academics first. Stay focused, stay motivated. Don't let anybody tell you, you can't do it. Don't let your background or your struggles or burdens that you've been through in life, hold you back. If you're doing it, do it for yourself, do it for someone that you love, like a mother grandmother. Stay out of trouble. I think for Black athletes it's harder to stay out of trouble, so you gotta be cautious with the law because they kind of point fingers. It's more likely for a Black athlete to get harassed more so you gotta avoid that, like the funny cops and the racist cops. I think Black men in general. But it goes both ways, because sometimes they might let you go if you're a football player with a speeding ticket. You have more to lose than to gain, so just stay out of trouble. In our neighborhoods there's more trouble so just be aware of your surroundings."

"Work as hard as you can all the time. You never know who's watching you, who's keeping an eye out for you. Over the summer I teach baseball clinics and a sports camp, and one thing in the past we've always done—you get a group of kids for 5 days, and you work with them and play games with them and stuff, and then they leave you. So one thing I always tell them is work as hard as you can and have as much fun as you can, and when it stops being fun, then stop doing it. Because there are these parents who want to live their lives through their kids, and you can't do that. Kids have to know that sports were created to be fun or created as recreation, or created as something to do, and somewhere along the line, money has taken over, but to work as hard as you can, and have as much fun as you can. And if it's something that you want to do then do it to the best of your ability. You only get certain opportunities once, so you have to take advantage of them. And especially for Black athletes, it's important to be comfortable with your surroundings, with your environment. Also to do what you enjoy, and to know that you don't have to fit certain mold. You don't have to be something because other people expect you to do that. If you want to play golf, or if you want to be a doctor or play baseball if that's where your heart is then go for it. That's what life is about go for it.

That's what I try to tell my kids to just do what you love for as long as you love it, and to just work hard and to be the best than you can be and let the rest take care of itself."

"Be motivated. I would say great character and great attitude, because that's what somebody told me when I was younger. Be motivated, have a great character and a great attitude and be ready to work. Because nothing's ever handed to you. You gotta go out and get whatever you want in life. That's something that somebody told me which was beneficial to me. So hopefully that can be beneficial to somebody else".

"Have patience. Because all things will not go your way in a sense, but if you realize one thing, like everyone has the same if not similar goals as you will. And if you're spiritual that will help out. Being in the book and having faith will help you tremendously. But if you're not in that area, just communicate. Just allow people to know what's going on. When you're going through a rough time don't try to bottle it up. Find somebody to talk to about it, because there's a lot of people who go through the same thing within the team. And it's ridiculous how many people stay quiet. But for the most part pretty much communicate, have faith, and just continue to work hard. Don't give in and have that defeatist mentality, because once you do that it pretty much negates everything you've worked hard for. So where you are now--that no matter where you were if you give up, everything that you put in, it's for nothing."

"Play hard, train hard, work hard. Don't let anybody stop you. I think everybody knows that. Black Whites—Black White coaches they tell you if you want to be successful you know what you have to do to be successful with football. You know what you have to do to be successful. You have to train hard, and work hard, give everything 100%. Think that's the easy part. It's easy to be a successful football player, not NFL wise. But to get to the level where you put in everything you've got and this is all you can give, I think that's something everybody can do. To know what to do is easy. It's just a matter of doing it."

"Stay strong and don't let anybody tell you that your dreams are not realistic. I made it but there's a lot of other people who have made it. We are on full scholarship And we come from like we don't even have a house at home and we have a full scholarship. Yeah. If you want it, you can't use your background as an excuse. If you want it you gotta work hard for it, because it's not going to be for free."

"I'm saying just work hard and go for it. And then there are stereotypes about Black athletes and stuff like that, but I wouldn't think too much about that. I wouldn't take anything for granted. I would just try to do the best I can do. That's all."

"Right now, when I go back and talk to schools I basically tell them it's about education first. Most kids think when I go home they think he's on TV making plays, and then the running back that plays with us, we're from the same place we grew up together. So they see him and they think I just need to learn how to run the football. But they don't know he's got a 3.5 in school. And without grades you can't get into college. I just try to talk

to them about education first. And then football if you work hard that things will take place."

"I was going to say don't listen to your teachers. Because I realized that some teachers that are out there are just really jealous. And my mom tried to tell me the whole time as a Black athlete in a White school in a White area people are going to be against you. And I never had parents or anything against me, only teachers I had that experience. So I say not to really listen to what other people say, I guess you could listen to your friends. But as a young Black male athlete just do what you have to do. I'm not going to say only look out for yourself because that's kind of not a good mentality to have. But you kind of have to sometimes. So just take a step back don't think that everything's going to be easy, because some people are going to discriminate against you because you are Black. Or it might help you out when you are Black and you are an athlete, then you might start because they expect you to be something. They expect you to be great because you are a Black athlete. And if you don't live up to what's expected, then you're less of a person. You're Black you're supposed to be able to do this. You're supposed to be able to dunk. You're supposed to be able to run fast. So don't discourage yourself over it. I don't really listen to things like that. That's what I would tell them."

"You gotta know what you want. You gotta set goals for yourself. You gotta know how to obtain those goals. A lot of times even growing up, I didn't know –like I knew I wanted to go to college, but I didn't know what I had to do. I didn't know about test scores and core requirements. I didn't know how many classes I had to take. Because in high school you may have a certain requirement to graduate, but as far as the NCAA and the clearinghouse is concerned, you gotta have sixteen or something credits. They're saying you gotta take Algebra 2, when most kids don't take that to graduate high school. You can just take a geometry class and graduate. They'd tell you to take a year of chemistry. I don't know how many high schools that it's mandatory that you have to take chemistry. It tells you a whole bunch of things. A lot of kids don't know that, so a lot more awareness of what it is you want to do and how to get there. Well working hard should be a no brainer. You gotta set your sights on it. All the distractions, you gotta cut them loose. A lot of people want to hang out with their friends, but your friends are not going to get you where you need to be sometimes. You gotta look at it like that. I got plenty of time for friends on the weekend. During the week I gotta get it done. Football, basketball, baseball, whatever sport you play you gotta get it done like that."

"The biggest thing was--they gave us a sheet to read off of. And I decided not to read off the sheet, because I feel like different situations different kids grow up different. So I spoke to the kids about drugs, selling drugs, trying not to go down that path. Because I had friends, like a kid who was younger than me who really loved basketball. He just wasn't blessed with the talent to be as athletic as other people, but I didn't know anyone who worked harder than him. And when I was a senior he was a sophomore. The next year I went to college and kind of lost touch with him. I heard he started selling drugs, and he eventually got arrested and had to go to court and all that. The biggest thing I've talked to him a lot now because I don't want him to go down that path. He stopped selling drugs. He doesn't know what's going to happen but I just tell him try not to go

down that path because you don't know-- you do know that it's going to determine whether you're in jail or you're dead. But if you work hard whatever you want to be at the end that's what it's going to be. So I think he's more focused now on just trying to stay focused, but the worst part is that he's created enemies and stuff. Now he has to worry about who's behind him. But I just tell kids just try not to even go down that path. Hopefully he'll have a chance to turn it around, but if you just don't go down that path then it's easier."

"Just work hard but don't forget about the books. Because I think at the end of the day basketball can be taken away from you. But you can use basketball to further your education to do that. But if you're going to be successful in anything in especially basketball it takes hard work and dedication."

"To not let your social life get in the way of what you have to do. Whatever it is that you do, whether it's music, athletics, academics, anything whatever it is that you do you have to make it a priority and work harder at that than anything else. That and I did tell them to listen to their parents, because when I was younger I usually listened, but when I wouldn't listen I would get beat so then I would listen. The point is I listened to them and I got where I am today. So I don't know all of their situations they have with their parents or not. But if they have somebody who's telling them the right thing to do because they want them to succeed in this world then they just have to listen and work hard at whatever it is they do."

"It's hard. I would tell young Black people who are trying, striving to be athletes whether they be male or female that it's a tough road, but the prize at the end will be worth it. I would tell them that academics can take you a long way as well, because it opens up a lot of opportunities to lots of schools that you may not think you could get into, but it might be the best place for you. Because even though you want to be a basketball player, there's a lot of other stuff out there that you can do that you can set yourself up for the future. There's a lot of jobs – I found that there are a lot of other things that you can do that will make you more than if you were Lebron James. Like in the financial industry, I know this guy who makes $150,000.00 a year. You have to work hard on both ends. You have to work hard on the athletic field if you want to be good, but also you don't need to let your academic suffer. Even though you may be good in basketball, you are not going to be able to play basketball if you don't get your grades straight. So balance it so that one thing doesn't slack. Academics are more important, but you can't make one thing suffer because you try to do another too hard. So you have to manage your time, that's it."

"I think they need to know how hard it is out here. They should keep focused on their goals because things don't always come easy. That was what my dad taught me. Just stay focused, and things will happen for you."

"Use the game, because too many people let the game use them. Like everybody gets a piece of them and there are so many athletes that have been used and one, don't even know it or two, they were just not intelligent enough or aware of the situation to know

that they were being used. That would be my biggest advice would be to get the most of the game as you can, because basketball is a game and if you let it, it will use you until you're mentally and physically broken down. So I feel that's the biggest thing that I would tell any young athletes especially the young Black athlete coming from, most the time has coming from nothing is to use the game for as much as you can use it for. For some, use it however you can use it. Whatever you can get what you can get it you should get it. Whether that's money, car, whatever you can get I feel like you should use them to get it. You only have that opportunity for so long. And as far as education, if you can get to this level and get a free education than definitely use it for what it's worth."

"Some of them want to be basketball players. Some of them want to be soccer players. They just want to do something with their lives. And when I call I'd tell them I think you have a chance. I will not lie, I think it will be hard to get to it. But you should want to prove something to anybody. You should want to prove it to yourself. You should do it for you. If you want something, picture it every time you want to give up or you have something going on. Just think about it and say this is where I want to be. This is where I want to go. And giving up is not an option."

"I would say first work hard in the classroom. Don't take any days off. I mean don't take days off from basketball. Every day you have to do something to better yourself. Even in the classroom you have to do stuff every day. Read a book or something. Learn something new every day."

"Ask for help. Take constructive criticism. If they yell at you, don't take it as yelling at you. Take what they're saying from it. Just turn down the volume in your head. Don't let them yelling at you prevent you from getting from what you're supposed to get out of it. And study, remember that you have to have the grades to stay. You might not be an "A" student. You might not be a "D" student, but you have to be somewhere in between."

"Work as hard as you can and don't listen to any outside people telling you good or bad basically. People that are hyping you up are trying to do a good thing for you but they're doing you a disservice for doing that. And the people who discourage you don't listen to them. If you really want to do it in commit to it and you can."

"I would tell them to work hard. Hard work is definitely the key. A lot of people don't realize the significance of hard work, like what it really means to work hard. And not to listen to other people. You can achieve what you want if you put your mind to it. I would also tell them to keep in mind that at some point basketball is going to come to an end. That's the biggest problem ever. It's actually funny because—this is side track. Some of my teammates, when you come in, you think you're gonna go to the NBA and the best basketball player ever. And now as I'm going to my senior year, we're starting to realize that we have to either get a job, because we're graduating in a year. So my advice would be to start planning in time, so these things don't take you by surprise."

APPENDIX E

Responses to the Question "What suggestions do you have for those working with athletes in your position with respect to race?"

"hmm… They have to be more understanding of the situations that we are stuck in. Like for instance my situation. I can't get a job. He don't care. As long as there's money in his pocket, he's fine. Now the lights in my house are turned off. What am I supposed to do? Yeah that we're all not gangsters. That's the reason why I cut all my hair, because I was tired of being called a thug or a gangster. Everybody, from teachers to coaches. They think because you have dreads and gold teeth that that makes them a gangster. And really my dreads were a part of my religious belief. And my gold teeth were like—my father who was also a drug dealer. And he had gold teeth. And why did he have those gold teeth? Because each gold tooth was a goal that he achived in life. I was doing the same thing, but I got tired of hearing, "Oh you're a thug. That's a bad image." So I just took them out."

"Well you're going to meet different people, different Black male athletes. And I just think, one by one, collectively we go through different things. And it's easy to say that we have different minds than other people. Just because of the earlier struggles we had in our societies. I mean it's still like that to me. You know we still have to work our way up in society. And I just think that if you have a Black male athlete, and you can relate to him, stick your hand out to him and give him a lending hand. It'll make it comfortable for him to do different things. I think once a Black male athlete is comfortable with his environment, you start to see greatness come out of him. That's why I said, when you come out of that shell…Cause I seen it happen my freshman year, our team had a lot of guys from Florida come up here. They're Black male athletes. When they get comfortable with the school, they do well. In the summer, they get homesick, rough, ready to fight and stuff, and you gotta have guys you can relate to."

"They have to really recognize that people come from different backgrounds. They're coming from 2 different places. You can't deal with them the same."

"I say, depending on your sport, you have to have people who relate to the kids that you bring in. So when I used the example, I'm from Bethesda, if you play soccer, you play football, you come from hotbeds. You come from these areas where it's not—when coaches go to recruit for these things, it's not necessarily the city. So the makeup of the individuals who were recruited—my coaches came to my house and met my parents. It's a lot different than if you're maybe recruiting someone from Cabrini Green in Chicago for basketball. You have to have, according to your sport, and that's generally basketball and football you have to have people that relate to those demographics. That's all it's about. Having someone who you can relate to. But that also applies to the recruiters. In soccer since we don't make as much money, our recruiting is done totally in house. We

have our assistant coaches going out there, going across country, going across the world to find the players in house. They know the players before they bring them in here. Basketball and football sometimes they might hear about these players from a recruiter who are not going to coach these kids. And so they don't really know what the intricacies of the university are. So you have to have someone who is aware of the demographics of the students you're bringing in. If not he's going to come into a situation and be screwed. So it's not the university's fault, because like I said it's a business. But if you're not a top athlete then you really need someone that can guide you. I think it's about sport. It's more than race. It's about sport. It's about the different sports you play. Cause I play, but I've been fortunate."

"Being culturally sensitive without walking on eggshells, that's what I'd tell people that work with Black male athletes. That's what Black athletes need."

"Understand them. I just can't see someone helping me be successful if you can't relate to my problems. Like how could you solve my problems if you haven't been through it? It's always better if you've been through it. If I have a son, and he wants to be an athlete, I've been through it so I can help him. If I didn't play sports I wouldn't really know. I could probably do secondhand, or what other people do I would tell him to do, but I've been through it, so I can easily help him be successful. I could say "Son, football isn't meant for you, you have to find something else." I would know. So just being able to relate. You just have to be able to experience—I think that if you're going to hire somebody to work with athletes they should be somebody that's been through what they've been through. Like somebody that can relate to them. But not like a peer though. You don't want a peer. You want somebody that's been through what they've been through and that's serious about their job."

"Kind of along the same lines, knowing that they have support, knowing that there are people out there who are interested in what they do who want to make sure that they are comfortable with what they're doing. To have counselors, and I wouldn't even want to call them counselors, because to me that sounds too much like you have a problem. But just to have I keep using the word support, but someone to talk to basically if needed. Because for me I don't have a problem, but I'm sure there are other athletes on other teams in other places that may not be as comfortable. It's important for the athletic department to have someone that these athletes can talk to if needed to talk about these situations or problems. Not even a problem, but someone they can sit down and talk to and relate to I think would be really important. If it's not there it should be there. And if it is there, it should be more highly publicized. That's a real tough one. I relate it to me being an RA. They're like I can't talk to you because I'll get in trouble, or I can't talk to you about certain things because when I tell my friends about it they're going to be like you talk to your RA? It's like yes, well I'm an RA but I'm also a student, I'm also a kid, I'm also your age, so I go through the same things you do, so if you just want to talk or just watch tv with then I'm here. I'm sure there's someone out there who can come up with a catchier name than I can, but when talking to the athletes about it, to gear it more towards being…to just shy away from the whole counselor aspect. So that these players know that if you want to come in and talk to me about a movie going on yesterday then

you can definitely do that. Yeah and then further down the line when there's something going on then they'll be more willing to come talk to you about it. But to call it—I can't come up with a catchy name, support services. Focus more on building a relationship than coming to me if you have a problem. I think that's definitely a better route to take."

"Patience. If you're working with a Black male athlete you should have patience. You should be very motivating if you're working with Black male athletes. I'm not touching on certain people at all but, the majority of athletes that are Black, come from rough difficult neighborhoods, and they're motivated by the wrong things. So you should motivate them with things that are beneficial to them. You're going to have to have a lot of patience. Because most Black athletes if they don't get something right the first time they feel like they can't do it. So you gotta have patience and motivation and you just have to be consistent with them. Constantly help them out. Constantly give them things that are beneficial. Constantly give them compliments and stuff like that, things that just build up who they are and their self-esteem."

"Just understand that whether you're White or Black they will be coming in with baggage whether you know it or not. You should just know that they're coming in with baggage. What the baggage may be whether you know it or not it's going to be something. The way my coach puts it is like you're his child now. I'm going to quote him real quick. "Your parents entrusted me. They delivered young men to me to develop into men." A lot of people think they're grown men going into college, but at the same time it's like you're not a grown man. I hate to say it but I wasn't a grown man. I was not. And I think his development of us is really good, and with any young men you're going to have problems. Or what things they think they are, or egos. So understand that they have baggage, and working with their baggage, and helping them understand--I guess knowing them. It's a hard job for him because he has to know every one of us. And at the same time he can't have like an emotional – well he has an emotional attachment to everyone, but at the same time he can't show it because that's a part of his job as a head coach. But the other coaches can show emotional attachments. But at the same time another part is you can't talk to a lot of people the same way. Because some people just won't have it. Like some people would just shut down and stop listening to you. Just know that with different people you have to approach them in a different way. That's all."

"Don't treat them differently than White guys. That's always something that I've done a good job of. I think people get caught up in if you're Black and with poverty and have problems with family, I think sometimes White people may really want to help you, so they can say I helped this guy. But if you're Black you don't need sh*t from them. Not don't need nothing, but you don't put all your problems out there. I think it's kind of like they're not really sure how to figure you out. So I think you just have to treat everybody the same. Don't treat people, like he comes from this, he's Black, he needs my help. Right, don't assume. And don't talk down to people. Black people, White people, don't talk down to Black athletes. I think it's hard if you're White to tell somebody something about race, because everybody might not take it the same way. Some people might take it as you're racist. You know if you say "come on man stop acting like the typical Black guys. Be something more. Don't you want more for yourself and your race?" And if a

White guy said that you'd be like—I might take it as damn, I'm acting stupid. Why am I failing classes? Some other people might be like what are you talking about? You're racist. I think it's a very tight rope to walk, but I think you just gotta have Black people in every part of the university. So even if it's not ok we have a meeting for all the Black athletes, but if there was somebody there that could maybe be like "come on man, it's going to be hard enough being Black, so don't put extra stuff where you're going to be behind everybody, and just—you don't care about school, you don't care about this because you don't want a hand out. You don't want people to have to be helping you all the time. You want to stand up and be a man, a Black man, and just do your own things."

"I guess just push us to the limit. That's like the only way we're going to reach our potential. Push us to the limit and-- 'cause we're not going to – because of the background we have we're probably not used to being pushed to the limit. So I guess push us to the limit as hard as we can go to see how far we can get."

"I don't think it's any different from any other Student-Athlete. I don't understand how there's a thing there. I think it's a big stereotype because we're good at sports or whatever, but I think we're here because we want to be here. We want to learn. We want to do something academically. And have fun and do our sport whatever it is. I'm not taking that for granted…I guess I would say don't treat us any differently."

"Just treat them like everybody else. Most people just think that Oh he's Black he just wants to play football. He doesn't focus on class and all this type of other stuff. So I just think they need to treat him like everybody else. Both. When we walk into a class, and it's so many of us I think teachers get discouraged, and students get discouraged. They think we're there just to be there and we don't learn. You can tell because football players, at least on this campus, we don't like to talk much. It's not because we don't know what's going on, it's because most of our classes are night, and we just came from a two hour practice and we just don't feel like talking. You just need to get it out of the way and take what notes you need to take. You don't feel like talking. So I feel like we're just there to be there, and we don't want to talk about the class or nothing. I think they want us to talk, but we don't like to talk. So they figure whatever. And then the rest of the students basically just see us as dumb jocks that just play football. And when we're winning, they really look at us like that. Like, they're winning so they don't really need to do anything."

"Coaches, I honestly think in the athletic world, maybe some schools do like that, but I really don't think coaches see a Black kid and then think they're going to ride him hard. I think coaches should just read him exactly the same as everybody else. Don't ride him just because they're Black and it is star of the team or something like that. Just treat him like everybody else. Just because he's Black OK. You shouldn't judge him based on his color, just based on how good he is. I think academic teachers, academic people I think no matter what anybody says I think there's that little thing like Black kids coming from urban areas I think that's how they see it. Depending on where you're from, which is why they don't treat me like I'm dumb. I think they treat people differently based on where they live. Which is that whole Florida thing. I'm not going to say they shouldn't,

but if they treated – if they expect us to all to know the same thing, kids might not have that same education level. That's just plain and simple. Some schools are just as good as other schools. So some key areas might not have taken trigonometry when they were in high school. So, so I really think they should just treat kids differently based on where they're from just to see where they're that. Not all the time but I guess the first interaction to see where they're at just analyze and see if they're on the same level. Because schools do teach different things."

"Well I mean the guys here they do a good job. Certain areas you can't go wrong, like with school work, because everybody's treated the same. You go downstairs, everybody's treated the same. Throughout this building it's not much difference in what goes on. The behavior is still the same. Campus wide though, the way the Black students are looked at as opposed to the rest of the population, it's like if Black students have a party there's a lot more security and metal detectors. You'll never see that at a frat house. Even though crazy stuff goes on frequently. Even before I came here, there were girls getting raped in the frat houses. My mom didn't want me to come here, because all these girls getting attacked around here. She was like what if you're in the wrong place at the wrong time. You know how that is. You get put in a situation and you can't do much about it. But because you're there you're put in the group with the rest of the guys, even though you might not have anything to do with it. It's more the treatment. Like I said before, the bars on the vending machines. It's not necessary. Why do you gotta do that? Just make the Blacks and Latinos that live on [school name] feel like second class students. Cause if you go to [school name] other places you won't see that. Why does that have to be there? Things like that I disagree with."

"I think to treat them like you treat everybody else. Don't feel like because the kid came from a hard past where he lost both of his parents and his sister raised him or something, not to feel too delicate towards him. Have some sympathy, but not be too delicate and not be not let the person and go through life thinking everyone's going to feel sorry for him. I think me growing up that was big. With me it was in my father and not really having a male figure in my life most of the time, I felt like my mom was always there, so it would've been nice to have it, but I never grew up thinking I needed to have someone else in my life. Even if someone said it was sad, I would say thank you but I wouldn't let anybody take more sympathy for me and treat me different than anybody else. So I just think just to be treated the same as everybody else."

"You gotta understand us. We are different. We are different. Some of the things we've seen growing up, places we were raised may not have been the best. So basically understanding us and not judging us. Get the chance to know us, and look inside and find out what we have been through or what we're going through. Things may not be so easy. So don't be so quick to judge us. And just get a chance to understand us. And not put labels on us as idiots or whatever the case may be. But understand because a lot of times we are so misunderstood."

"First thing I would say is don't insult our intelligence. I've seen it time and time again. When I first got here, I think it was Memorial Day and one of my administrators this is

when one of our teammates went to him and said we'll give you the day off today. And in my mind I was thinking it's a holiday. What do you mean you'll give him a day off? That's insulting intelligence. I would say that. I would tell them that they should always respect the athlete. Because when you're a coach you have a job, and part of it is to get to know your players. And if you know that you do something pisses of a player, then don't do that. I'm not saying baby the athletes, but unless you don't care if they care about you then whatever. But in our family, the coaches talk about basketball family. So you definitely want to get along with your family members."

"It depends on what kind of person they're dealing with. If they really really think that player can play professionally, then they obviously will have a different outlook than if they have a person who really is not as talented as a lot of other people. So my suggestion is if they have one of those people who is not as talented, then to really talk to them and really emphasize to them that it's really important for them to get their grades. That's what I think should happen. An African American is not going to be successful in athletics and they don't know anything about the real world then they're just set back a lot. The world kind of views Black people as being athletes anyway. If they can't make it as being an athlete, and they're not intellectually in tune, then they're just farther back than the average Black person, because all they know is athletics. And then they can't be an athlete so what are they going to do then? And it's going to take time to figure out if your athlete is going to make it or not. But once you really know then you should sit down and talk to them."

"I would just say that they really should care. Because I don't think some of them really care about people. Everyone is different. If you're doing the right thing then everybody's like oh yeah he's doing well. But if you're not on the right page—it's the same thing for the athlete though, because they have to care too. From my experience, I can tell when a coach doesn't care about a person or a player. But at the same time that player might not care about them either. But still growing up you can't just be babied all of time. But I guess some people learn the hard way. I think athletes should be evaluated more by everyone around the system. Like one on one."

"I would say that for many of us it's a blessing to be here, coming from where we come from. I feel like when we try to voice our opinion, they think we're trying to get out of something because we don't want to do it. But we sacrificed so much, and come so far just to get here. So for us to BS now would be cheating ourselves and cheating all the hard years of work that we've put in. So from that aspect, just to listen and take everything into consideration. Know that person's background, know that person's life, and know where they come from. And to relate that to our team, our coach says we're a family. But most of us don't even like this coaching staff so how are we family? We do things together that are mandatory. Before when I first got here and we had a different staff, we would go to all the coaches houses. We didn't do that once this year. But we're a family? I feel like there is a fake image that's been paraded to people outside of the family that's making them look good, but it's really not how he says it is."

"I think they should make them believe that they can make it. Take the time to explain to the Black man that they have an opportunity. Show him the real picture of outside. Not society's vision. Show them that they have the opportunity to go and do what they want to do. And show them how to do it. Don't cut them off. A Black man already has too much on his back. So getting turned down all the time really messes with you. You can't really deal with them. If you have somebody telling you that you are going to be able to do it. I'm sure you can do it. You just need to put your mind into it. Then they will do it. If my mom hadn't said to me when I was six years old I know you can do it. I know you're going to be somebody then I don't know what I would have done. So I am able to do it. I don't focus on society. Society is something that you have to be nice to. That's why I smile at everybody, and I don't have a problem with anybody. I'm not going to let society tell me what I have to do. My dad, in one of the only lectures he ever gave me, told me that wearing my pants down and big tee shirts and a hat everywhere I go is not going to work with society. And I told him maybe it's not going to work but I'm going to make it work. Exactly, showing them the bigger picture of what's outside, not just what society wants you to do, because that thing is very small, but what is actually out there, what is going to confront, what you're going to go through and what will be the problem at some point. And they will understand it. Most Black athletes know, but sometimes they need somebody to tell them."

"Just try to help them as much as you can, because sometimes everyone comes from different environments. Some kids don't have to do anything in school and they get cheated because when they get to college they don't know anything. Those are the main ones to get in trouble. Because all they know is trouble, but they know how to play basketball too. So I guess just help as much as you can. And understand them."

"Always, well not always, but try to make the best of the situation. If we mess up, most of the time we know we messed up. We don't have to hear how we messed up again. I always tell kids a student athlete can do whatever he sets out to do. Even though we might be grown men, we're still fragile. Sometimes some of us feel like we're just machines. We get cycled in and cycled out. Especially if you don't get what you want out of the situation, you feel used. I know that's a lot, but just make us feel less like another person on the squad and make us feel more like a person. Not even the coach, because the coach could care about it if the school cares about it. Because at the end of the day were making money for the school. The school sells tickets. They get gate. They sell gear. They have people who subscribe to online to listen to the games, so that's it."

"None really. People stress Black male athletes like a lot more then it really should be at this point. Black and White, if you're an athlete you're an athlete. White athletes get the same treatment as Black athletes. They're looked at in the same form. So I really think that it should just be athletes in general. Look at them as not just athletes basically. See what they have to offer."

"I don't want to get into brash generalizations. Just from my experience with some of my teammates, and I love them all, but sometimes Black athletes can be harder to coach than your typical White athlete. Maybe because the Black athlete is better, or there's

more pressure and stuff. I think in terms of just finding the best way to reach everyone, and realizing that everyone can't be reached the same way. You can't just assume that because someone is Black you can reach them the same way. I won't be motivated by the same thing the next Black guy would be motivated by."