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American sports: the exploitation of Afro-American athletes?

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AMERICAN SPORTS: THE EXPLOITATION
OF AFRO-AMERICAN ATHLETES?

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

BY
WILBUR HOPKINS TATE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JULY 1989
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Department chairperson

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signed: [Signature]
...Sports Reflects the Character of the Larger Society...

Dr. Harry Edwards
ABSTRACT

POLITICAL SCIENCE

TATE, WILBUR HOPKINS  B. A., University of California, 1981

AMERICAN SPORTS: THE EXPLOITATION OF AFRO-AMERICAN ATHLETES?

Advisor: Dr. Larry Moss
Thesis dated July, 1989

The purpose of this thesis was to conduct a preliminary investigation to analyze the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) relationship to the treatment of the black athlete. Exploitation is described for the purposes of this paper as a system that facilitates the economic use of students by contracting with them to play sports for the university or college, in return for a "possible education" (which the athlete presumes is guaranteed to him and will be maintained until he receives his baccalaureate degree). This behavior among most colleges and universities is reprehensible and it promotes among these athletes an illusion that they are amateur athletes. Furthermore, most colleges and universities perpetuate the illusion that their athletes have a high probability of becoming professional ball players when
in reality approximately 1 percent of all amateurs make the pros. Also, the NCAA Proposition 48 rule is briefly discussed and how it affects the black student athlete.

To answer some of the researcher's questions and concerns, the researcher conducted a survey in which he interviewed thirty (30) former black male collegiate athletes who participated in the NCAA. These athletes were black males between the ages of 30 to 65 years old. This survey also assessed the attitudes, experiences and successful/unsuccessful outcomes of their collegiate career. The results of this preliminary investigation generally concluded that indeed, the black college athlete has been exploited by the NCAA and the university or college which he attended. Recommendations were provided that pertain to advocacy, information and creating other career options for college/university athletes.
This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Earline H. Tate and my sister, Dr. Lenore A. Tate; two of the greatest human beings I know.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Larry Moss for taking time out of his busy schedule to work with me so diligently on my thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. William Boone and the Atlanta University Political Science Department for their help and direction. To my mother, Mrs. Earline H. Tate and my sister, Dr. Lenore A. Tate, thanks so much for all of your blessings and guidance.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate whether Afro-American athletes have been exploited by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Perhaps the results of this work can be very useful in aiding Afro-American (black) athletes in their collegiate careers. From the writer's own experience, as a former NCAA Division I athlete, he feels that the most reprehensible behavior of college sports today is that many universities and colleges fail to educate their athletes. Athletes, for the most part, are keeping their part of the contract but it appears that universities/colleges are failing to keep their part of the bargain. It also appears that black athletes are "putting out" more than they actually receive.

Many universities and colleges engage in what amounts to professional sports but hold fast to the illusion that their athletes are amateurs. The black athlete is deceived by the college or university into believing his success as a student is irrelevant since he is headed toward a long and profitable career; furthermore, alternatives to
professional sports are not offered nor discussed with these students. Unfortunately, few college athletes ever achieve professional status and few ever receive a baccalaureate degree.

Evidence has demonstrated that there is nothing with less value in our society than "a worn out Negro athlete." After completing the secondary educational process, the black athlete usually enters predominantly white universities with an inferior educational background (his/her school system has traditionally been under staffed and educationally inadequate according to traditional measures). He/she enters a predominantly white university, with a poor academic self-image, thus while in attendance at college the student athlete's poor self-image is displayed in many forms.

Too often black athletes view sports as a means out of the ghetto or out of their present life situation. The athlete who seems to hold the key to opportunity in reality has locked himself into an athletic dilemma. The black athlete must remain eligible if he wants to maintain his scholarship and continue his education in the hopes of fulfilling his/her dreams as a professional ball player. To further this point, through personal experience, coupled with reports from a number of black teammates, we were all encouraged by our coaches to major in
Physical education rather than math or engineering so that we would not jeopardize our grade point average but losing our eligibility. We were often steered into courses taught by sympathetic professors who were willing to pass a black athlete regardless of his/her classroom performance. In reviewing the black athlete and looking at some of the problems we face, many questions come to mind. For example: How has the NCAA affected the life of the black athlete? Should college athletes be paid? Are black athletes graduating while on athletic scholarship? These are just a few questions that will be discussed by former NCAA black athletes.

Athletes, nonetheless, remain the principal role models for young American males who spend their days shooting baskets and dreaming of televised miracles. Behind the heroic metaphors, however, sports is very business. For example, 90 percent of higher education's news coverage is on the sports pages. For example, in 1978 Notre Dame brought in $3 million in regular football revenues and earned $670,000 from other sports, primarily basketball. Many universities now pay their bills with large television contracts. Furthermore, Notre Dame received an additional $1 million in their Cotton Bowl appearance against Houston. Given these monetary rewards,
hundreds of universities and colleges have decided to enter the "entertainment business."\textsuperscript{1}

When intercollegiate athletics becomes a mass commercial entertainment enterprise winning becomes an economic necessity. To win, highly skilled athletes are recruited throughout the country and usually receive a one year renewable contract, or scholarship, entitling him/her to room, board, and tuition.

The NCAA and various university officials have failed to recognize "big time" college athletes as workers. As a result, they subject their athletes to various types of abuses. For example, many student athletes work while attending college. However, the pressures, time constraints and responsibilities typically make serious academic preparation virtually impossible. Various college coaches assume that young males are really athletes first and students second.

The following pages will discuss how parents (teachers, coaches, community leaders, etc.) tell their youth the truth about interscholastic athletics and how

parents and athletes must make demands regarding academic success (i.e., baccalaureate degree) of universities and colleges that recruit their children for collegiate athletics often under the disguise of academic achievement.

The black student athlete works in the classroom and on the court or playing field under extraordinary pressures which are a direct result of his race and/or ethnicity. He/she knows that if his/her eligibility is lost of if he/she is not a superstar, he/she will not have his/her financial support (or a scholarship) renewed the following year. Unfortunately, without the NCAA and university financial aid, most athletes usually have no other sources of financial aid and must drop out of school.

The purpose of this paper is to examine, investigate and discuss the role and exploitation of the Afro-American athlete. Some of the questions that will be discussed are:

1) How does the NCAA Proposition 48 Rule affect the black student athlete?

2) What is the relationship between the NCAA and the black male athlete?

3) What are the attitudes and experiences of black males who have played college sports under the NCAA?

4) What is the outcome of black collegiate athletes once their eligibility has expired?

The sociological etiology of black athletes, their exploitation and their circumstances are complex. Many of
the social forces determining black student athletes' extraordinary vulnerability to athletic exploitation have been afflicting black society generally and the black family in particular for decades.\textsuperscript{2}

While blacks are not the only student athletes exploited, the abuses usually happen to them first and impact them more severely than their white counterparts. We must understand from the onset that black student athletes have three strikes against them:

1) The impact of sports upon black society;
2) The popular belief that blacks are innately superior athletes; and
3) That sports are "inherently" beneficial for young blacks.

Under these circumstances and others, there exist pervasive beliefs, popular sentiments, and even scientific claims that buttress notions of intellectual deficiency for these students. This shameful situation (of the black student athlete) has been for so long that not only has it been widely tolerated, but just as importantly, it has been expected and institutionally accommodated.\textsuperscript{3}


Many misconceptions about race and sports can be traced to the presumed racial progress. For example, blacks constituted only 11.7 percent of the U. S. population in 1982 but made up more than 55 percent of the players in the National Football League (NFL). As for the National Basketball Association (NBA), 80 percent of the 1983-84 players were black, while 19 percent of the American Major League Baseball players at the beginning of the 1984 season were black. In 1985, not a single white athlete was named to the first team of a major Division I All American Basketball Roster. Since 1955, whites have won the NBA most valuable player award only five times, as opposed to twenty-three times for blacks. Unfortunately, as a consequence of this progress, sports, over the last forty years, have accrued a reputation in the black society for providing extraordinary, if not exemplary, socioeconomic advancement opportunities. Moreover, this perspective has its origins in black identifications with the athletic exploits and fortunes Abdul Jabar, Mohammad Ali, and other pre-, early, post World War II black sports heroes.

Unfortunately, the above description is only half of the story. Moreover, in 1986-87, there were 500,000 high

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school basketball players, 12,000 college players, 161
players drafted, and 50 who were employed in the National
Basketball Association with an expected professional
playing duration of three years. Parents, the NCAA,
coaches, colleges, and universities must begin to seriously
examine the priorities that they convey to these athletes.
They must all begin to stress the advantages of learning
and an academic education leading to a baccalaureate
degree.

The black family and the black community tend to
reward athletic achievement much more and earlier than any
other activity. This also lures more young blacks into
sports-career aspirations than actual opportunities for
sports success would warrant. Sports are seen by many
black male youths as a means of proving their manhood or
as a passage from boyhood to manhood. This philosophy
tends to be extraordinarily important to blacks because
the black male in American society has traditionally been
systematically cut off from mainstream routes of masculine
expression, such as through economic success, authority
positions, and so forth. Research carried out by Melvin
Oliver of University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)
discloses, for example, that black families are four times
more likely than white families to view their children's
involvement in community sports as a start in athletic
activity that may lead to a career in professional sports. A lack of credible academic expectations and standards and the disproportionate emphasis placed upon developing their athletic talents from early childhood have resulted in high school deficiencies in an estimated 25-35 percent of high school black athletes qualifying for college scholarships.  

At the college level a systematic rip-off begins with the granting of a four-year "athletic scholarship" technically given one year at a time under existing NCAA rules. This means that though the athlete is committed to the school for four years, the school is committed to the athlete for only one year. Various sports experts and athletes purport that college sports in this country needs to begin to reduce the hypocrisy that underlies the whole system. Billie Jean King, former pro tennis player, reported "The Olympics, for God Sake" is the biggest grandest spectacle of hypocrisy imaginable. None of these kids are amateurs. They all live on athletic

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scholarships. But do we tell parents or children the truth? No, we tell our young athletes,

You must win a gold medal at any cost. You must set records and make the pros at any cost. Meanwhile, of course, you have to attend classes and get an education, which often is why you're in college in the first place.7

Furthermore, Arthur Ashe said:

These kids are playing football in front of 80,000 people, and millions more are watching on T. V. Tickets are sold out--and products are sold--become of the entertainment these kids provide. They should get a percentage of the gate. They're out there killing themselves every Saturday. With no guarantee of making it to the pros, while the coaches are making $200,000 a year. If I were attending college on a tennis scholarship and I played in a Virginia Slims tournament, I would not be allowed to take any money. In what other field of endeavor does such bizarre structure exist? If I were in law school, I'd be encouraged to work in a law firm during the summer, and I'd get paid for it. The NCAA is supposedly concerned that these kids not be corrupted and that they receive an education and teach them something useful. For example, less than 1% of them will make it to the pros. They should tell them: "Look, this is a real high-risk situation you're getting yourself into by signing this contract to play college sports. You want to take that risk? Fine, here's the ups and downs of it. Even those student athletes who are drafted by the pros soon learn that the actual realities are quite different from rumored rewards that have fueled and motivated their athletic

7 Frank Gifford, "Sports: How Dirty a Game?" Based on discussion held at The New School of Research, New York City, September 1982, p. 51.
Despite the great pool of athletic talent generated in black society, black athletes still receive fewer than one in ten athletic scholarships given in the U. S. Partially as a result of the emphasis placed upon developing their athletic talent from early childhood many of these young men eventually end up in what is called "slave trade," a nationwide phenomenon involving independent scouts who, for a fee (usually paid by a four-year college), search out talents by academically "high-risk" black athletes and place them in accommodating junior colleges, where their athletic skills are further honed while they earn the grades they need to transfer to the sponsoring four-year colleges.9

There is also evidence of the behavior discussed above outside the playing field or court. For example, there are only nine black head basketball coaches in the traditionally white Division I schools; furthermore, there is not a single black head football coach at the professional level. Despite the tremendous visibility of the black collegiate athlete, less than 5 percent of

8Arthur Ashe cited in Gifford, p. 50.  
the athletic scholarships awarded in this country go to black athletes who must be demonstrable "blue chip" (all-state, all-American, state or national champion or perceived to be of superior athletic potential). Of those who are awarded collegiate athletic scholarships, as many as 65 to 75 percent may never graduate from college. This might be the reason why so many people are in favor of the NCCA's Proposal 48 which is sometimes called the "no pass no play" rule (a player must maintain a C average in their major subject area in order to play sports. He must also score not less than 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Circumstances discussed in this paper pertaining to the black student of the 1980s affirms the validity that organized sports participation has been associated with American collegiate education and the image of the unappealing "dumb jock" student athlete has endured. In an age when all the traditional idols, from presidents to Miss Americas are gleefully exposed, athletes totter on their pedestals as the so-called last American hero.10 All persons involved with the athlete, from his family to his coaches, must maintain a realistic perspective and understanding of the seeds that must be sewn in order to receive success and fortune.

10Sack, Amateurism as an exploitation Ideology," p. 3.
Black families, black communities and black student athletes have a vital role to play in efforts to remedy disastrous educational consequences of black sports involvement. The undeniable fact is that through its blind belief in sports as an extraordinary route to social and economic salvation, black society has unwittingly become an accessory to the disparate exploitation of the black student athlete. It appears that black children are set up for academic failure. Black families seem to put all of their energies and talents into emphasizing one area, and that is sports, particularly for young black males; everything else is secondary. Our nation and community, has in effect, put black children on the auction block and sold them to collegiate athletic recruiters.

Just as the family has an influence on a child's attitudes about religion or education, it also plays a major role in directing future career choices and roles in life. It has been shown by some political scientists that there is a direct correlation between the occupation of parents and the attitudes of their children concerning labor, education, and sports. Children most frequently
reflect their parents in their thinking on these matters. The degree that children are influenced by their parents' attitudes depends largely on the amount of similarity between the interest and attitudes of both parents. If the parents, for example, support their children's academic future and certain policies concerning sports affiliation, their offspring will probably follow in their footsteps.

As one unifying body, blacks must learn the realities of sports involvement and its impact on black youth and the community. Black parents must begin to motivate their children to do their best both academically and athletically. For example, black parents must demand in writing that:

1) Student athletes must be tutored on a consistent basis;
2) Student athletes must be granted ample time to study;
3) Student athletes should be in a bonafide degree program; and
4) If the student athlete receives an injury, educational benefits will be maintained.

The black community must learn and teach its youth about the pitfalls as well as the opportunities in sports. Children should be taught about all aspects of life but, most importantly, there is life after sports.

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11 Warfield, "Sports and Social Mobility Research,"

11.
The general emphasis is placed upon sports achievement accompanied by many stereotypes, family pressures and the mass media. For example, as soon as sports representatives find that a particular black youngster can run a little faster, or jump a little higher than all of his peers, that youngster becomes "something real special," says Frank Gifford.\textsuperscript{12} Typically from that point on, little else is expected of him academically. By the time many black student athletes finish their junior high school eligibility and move onto high school, so little has been demanded of them academically that their teachers and school officials no longer expect anything of them intellectually. Those black youths are endangered species, confronted by these complex social forces that prohibit their development into whole, capable, and confident adults. Left to move along life's path, the black child becomes overwhelmed by a world totally hostile to his or her well being.\textsuperscript{13}

It becomes the responsibility of the black family whether or not these demands are followed through. We must come to grips and realize that throughout America

\textsuperscript{12}Gifford, p. 47.

there exist a racist, oppressive sports institution, regardless of any appearances to the contrary. Like the old slave codes of the past, these laws have been replaced today by more subtle but not less effective social and political mechanisms for accomplishing the same methods as in past decades. In sports as well, the segregation of the pre-modern era has been replaced with effective methods that are part of modern America's machinery for systematically denying black people and some athletes their human rights.

Black children are in need of a caring family and parents who serve as positive role models. This builds character thus strengthening children and gives them the courage to become leaders in our nation. They need direction and guidance and room to grow.\textsuperscript{14} The family must also be re-educated because its the family who influences our children's attitudes about right or wrong, religion, racial and social tolerance, morals and values. When sports is used as a catalyst to capture a youth's attention, direction and purpose are almost guaranteed. Black children are the most valuable resource to its community.

\textsuperscript{14}Sailes, p. 30.
To be an athlete one must first have discipline, dedication, hard work, determination, and intelligence. The task that parents have is to harness the innate intellectual talents of black athletes and make academics as much a part of their lives as is athletics.\textsuperscript{15} All the hard work the athlete uses on the field or court must also be channeled into the classroom.

The athletic socialization of black males shows that this athlete is greatly influenced by all forms of the media especially black sports heroes, and his peers. With this particular information, it is possible to reach the athlete; and through these mediums we can resocialize or reorient him about the impracticality and the odds of pursuing a professional sports career.

The mass media also play a role in distorting reality thus making black athletes much more visible to black youths and the black community than black doctors, engineers or lawyers. Unlike white children who view a variety of role models who look similar to themselves each and everyday in a variety of settings; literally millions of black youths are modeling their career aspirations into

\textsuperscript{15}\text{Edwards, "The Black Dumb Jock," p. 89.}
sports as seen daily on the courts, fields and playgrounds throughout America. Again, this behavior, for the most part is futile and doomed to frustration and failure. To add to this problem, serious sports involvement frequently distracts from academics; especially those young athletes who are ill-prepared for the challenges of educational achievement from the outset.

Two high school programs, "Athletes for Better Education" and "Athletes for Academic Success" have had success in channeling high school Chicago athletes towards academics. Minimum grade point averages are required and the classes are held every weekend at a local college. Athletes are used as role models for students and student athletes. Professional athletes talk to and stay in communication with the participants to monitor their academic progress. Recreational activities are offered to allow the student athletes an opportunity to participate in skill development. At times sports equipment is given to student athletes as a reward. The programs teach an appreciation for academics and also instill self-respect.

Another innovative and successful program is at Northeastern University in Boston. This university has begun a degree completion program for former college athletes and pros who want to finish their college
education. The athletes are registered like normal students but at a less expensive tuition rate. In return, the students must participate in community work wherein they serve as role models for aspiring student athletes.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The black athlete has participated in NCAA collegiate sports for over forty years. Although this is a very important area in America sports, there is limited literature available on this topic. One major source of information on this subject derives from Dr. Harry Edwards of the University of California at Berkeley. He has written several essays on the black athlete which the researcher found to be very useful in the preparation of his thesis.

In "The Black Dumb Jock," Edwards addresses major concerns and problems that the black athlete must face in his pre-collegiate years. This article points out that "Dumb Jock[s]" are not born but they are being systematically created, and the system must change. Edwards explains in detail the social forces that determine the black student athletes extraordinary vulnerability to athletic exploitation.

Warfield, in his paper "Sports and Social Mobility Research: The Role of Race," takes the subject (the athlete) one step further. Like Edwards, he agrees that
the role of race in American sports plays a major factor. Warfield ventures on to discuss social mobility through athletics. Edwards and Warfield explain that blacks must learn the realities of sports involvement and its impact on black youth and the community.

Toner, in "A Statement of NCAA Policy and Intentions Regarding Proposal 48," points out that the NCAA's intentions are very good. When enforced, it establishes rules and regulations and academic standards that are meant to balance competition. This article gives the facts and the rules of Proposal No. 48 and the NCCA intentions regarding this new ruling. The author claims that in Division I, when rewards are high and pressures to win are intense, member institutions should agree upon certain minimum national standards. This author is very much in favor of Proposal No. 48 in the manner in which it presently stands.

Ervin, Saunders and Gillis, the authors of "The Right Direction but Short of the Mark: The NCAA's Proposal 48," present to the reader that Proposal No. 48 might fall short of the direction intended. Unlike the previous article by Toner, these authors purport that Proposal 48 does not cater to the black athlete. The authors give data and research studies regarding the academic performance of both the black and white athletes in reference to
test scores and classroom performance. This paper also reveals some attitudes of the black community and concerns about Proposal 48. This was helpful in establishing evidence of the shortcomings of this fairly new ruling.

Clarke, Horton and Alford, in their article "NCAA Rule 48: Racism or Reform?," tend to agree with Ervin, Saunders and Gillis. The article reveals the attitudes of the black community about Proposal 48. The authors feel it will hurt black colleges and black athletes as well. This particular controversy over Rule 48 has been led by the majority of presidents and chancellors of the historically black colleges and universities.

In "The Exploitation of Black Athletes," Edwards discusses in detail the process of this exploitation of black athletes. This article further describes the history in which America began to exploit her athletes to this present situation. Edwards explains that athletes have maintained their part of the bargain in college sports, but the author has provided evidence that universities and colleges have not fulfilled their part of the contract.

Sailes' article, "The Exploitation of the Black Athlete: Some Alternative Solutions," unlike Edwards, gives the reader some alternatives to the exploitation of black athletes. Sailes explains as a result of this
intercollegiate activity, some athletes are filing suits alleging that their colleges and/or coaches caused them injury by exploiting their talents and ignoring their educational needs; leaving them ill-equipped to deal with the real world. Both Edwards and Sailes agree that these black athletes are still being exploited and that the black family and the community must put an end to this kind of behavior.

In Sack's paper "Amateurism as an Exploitative Ideology," he explains that intercollegiate athletics is a commercial entertainment business and of financial benefit to the sponsoring college or university. The author purports that most university athletes should be considered employees. Sack continues his paper on the black family and how black society as a whole must double its efforts and expand the opportunities for black youths beyond the sports and entertainment realm. The previous author, Edwards, would agree with Sailes about alternatives to the kind of exploitation of black athletes.

Raspberry, in his article "Let's Just Pay the Athletes," comes up with yet another alternative in regards to black athletes. This author believes that since these kids are causing themselves injuries (physically and psychologically) every weekend on the football field or basketball courts and the school gets money for this kind
of special entertainment, student athletes should get an equal percentage of revenue for this type of entertainment. The author believes these athletes must be compensated for their time and energy that they are providing to their colleges or universities.

Gifford, in his discussion on "Sports: How Dirty a Game?", invited a group of athletes, coaches, sport officials, and journalists in a panel discussion to consider the future of America's dirty sports game. Some of the people on the panel were: Dr. Harry Edwards, a professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley and author of many books such as the Revolt of the Black Athlete and the Struggle that Must Be; David Stern, Commissioner of the National Basketball Association; Billie Jean King, ex-tennis pro and founder of the Women's Sports Foundation; Howard Cosell, Digger Phelps and a few professional athletes. Some of the questions that were discussed included: What does all this money mean for universities? Is it still possible to clean up so-called amateur sport? This particular discussion was very helpful in aiding in a variety of opinions of the subject matter. Athletes and NBA officials felt that the panel discussion was helpful in pointing out options both pro and con.
Cramer, a former editor and athlete who is now a freelance writer living in D. C., in his article "Winning of Learning? Athletics and Academics in America," focuses on the corruption in college sports; from the recruitment process to the NCAA tournament. The author explains even at the high school level how gambling, drugs, exploitation of students (particularly black athletes) and cheating is very prevalent. Cramer makes the reader aware of the enormous revenues from these sports programs. He purports the pressure to win and earn more money for the school leads to still more extreme abuses. The author really points out the flaws in the American sporting game. Just as Edwards explains in his article, "The Black Dumb Jock: An American Sports Tragedy," he too has found numerous flaws at the college and high school level in regards to the black athlete.

In Donnelly's article "College Sports under Fire," he points out that the NCAA is currently trying to clean up its past mistakes by implementing Proposal 48, the no/pass no/play rule. The author points out how the black community was strongly in opposition to this ruling primarily because many black athletes will be affected by this rule. Donnelly feels that all freshmen should waive their eligibility to allow students to adjust and possibly meet the standards without having to deal with
the pressures of athletics competition and thus will show confidence on the part of the school that the student can make it academically. The author makes a very good point in regards to the freshmen students. This helped in broadening the researcher's knowledge about this new ruling. Overall, in reviewing Proposal 48, the researcher found through his survey that over 60 percent of these former athletes are in favor of the Proposal 48 no pass/no play ruling.

In "Sports World Series: Well Coached," Lincoln interviews Dr. Harry Edwards who explains how the American sports system is geared for exploitation of its athletes. The author points out that the primary reason most students attend a university is to earn a degree. The black athlete, however, must give education a back row seat as the primary role is to perform well in the sports arena. If one fails to perform "well" one may lose one's athletic scholarship. This study showed that fairness and equal opportunity were a myth in collegiate sports and that the patterns of racial discrimination found in society were also found in U. S. athletics.

The panel discussion, Harpers put together on "Sports: How Dirty a Game?" addresses these same issues. The study shows the same conclusion that yes, fairness and equal opportunity were a myth in collegiate sports.
In conclusion, my study shows that black America needs productive, educated, blacks to serve as role models and to become leaders in various professions such as economics, business, politics and education. Our young athletes need direction, purpose, and room to grow. When sports are used as a catalyst attract and hold their attention, direction and purpose are almost guaranteed.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This is a case study of black college athletes who participated in the NCAA. A survey was conducted in which the researcher interviewed thirty former black male collegiate athletes who participated in the NCAA. The criteria for selection was full athletic scholarship and consumed college eligibility. The purpose of this survey is to research the relationship of NCAA and the black athlete to determine if black athletes have advanced or if their talents have been exploited while in college. The survey the researcher developed along with his own experience as a former Division I athlete will aid in this determination. Exploitation is described for the purposes of this study as giving players scholarships as payment for their athletic services and then placing them in the job market unprepared, usually no better educated than before they entered the college or university.

Subject. The participants in the preliminary investigation were thirty black males between the ages of thirty to sixty-five. Black males were chosen because
they are the college's or university's revenue producing athletes. It was my opinion that the thirty selected participants were sufficient for statistical analysis. The athletes interviewed for this study were raised in different regions across the country, attended American colleges or universities on an athletic scholarship sponsored by the NCAA, and were each surveyed individually and confidentially.

Instrument. The instrument used in this study was "The Exploitation of the Black Athlete Survey" that was developed by the researcher in 1988. This survey may be used with groups or individuals. It provides both an objective and subjective measurement of the experiences held by former collegiate athletes.

Procedures. All subjects were administered the "Exploitation of the Black Athlete Survey" in the spring of 1988. The examiner gave oral and written instructions to the subjects. All subjects responded by recording their answers directly onto the survey.

Data Analysis. The data analysis for this study consisted of measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode), frequency distributions and a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. In the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, its symbol "r" gives the numerical description of the degree of the relationship
between two variables. Pearson's "r" is never less than 
-1 and conversely, if a perfect positive correlation 
exist, "r" is +1. At all other times, "r" is between 
positive and negative one.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first question looks at whether or not these former black athletes supported (were in favor of) the NCAA's Proposition 48 which is currently being implemented throughout the country. By almost a two-thirds margin, ex-black college athletes are in favor of implementing the "no pass/no play" ruling. The total percentage of positive responses were 62 percent and the total percentage of negative responses was 38 percent.

The NCAA and the Proposition 48

The academic standards that colleges and universities use to admit and educate athletes are central to the justification for the schools' being in the business of mass sports entertainment. Moreover, if these schools are admitting black athletes with no real prospects for benefiting from a college education, then sports have very little connection with the colleges' or universities' educational mission.

Evidence time and time again illustrates that some, if not most, institutions of higher learning have ignored
academic abilities and have concentrated their efforts on athletic achievement, particularly with blacks. As a result of these misuses of most athletes, NCAA has ruled that students from Division I schools must have a "C" average in high school English, math, and science courses. Freshmen athletes also are required to score at least 700 on the SATs or fifteen on the American College Testing (ACT) examination. Student athletes who fall below this standard cannot compete in NCAA activities during their freshmen year, and the year counts as part of their period of NCAA eligibility. Full implementation of this rule begins in the fall of 1988. For the 1986-87 years, a sliding scale was established under which students were allowed to offset a slightly lower test score with a higher grade point average or vice versa.

Moreover, most black athletes have both lower SAT and ACT scores as well as lower grade point average than their white counterparts. Edwards is in favor of this ruling. He reported that the main effect of this ruling would be to weaken the athletic competitiveness of traditionally black schools. Unlike major colleges, with ample athletic funds, black colleges that are not doing well financially, may not be able to provide expensive scholarships to those athletes who cannot compete for a
Another very realistic argument brings up the issue of colleges being the gatekeepers for those athletes seeking professional careers. Many opponents to this ruling report that increasing the academic standards for these players may provide a major obstacle to attaining the professional sports ranks.

Proponents of Rule 48 report that the use of a standardize test score is needed because a grade point average may not be an accurate reflection of academic achievement. Unfortunately, it may be a recognition that there is a great deal of disparity in America's high schools. This rule will not prevent a school from admitting anyone who does not meet the standard or from giving that student a scholarship; it will just prevent the student from participating in intercollegiate sports as a freshman. Thus, ineligibility will allow the student to meet academic standards without having to deal with the pressures of athletic competition and will show confidence on the part of the school that the student can make it academically.2

1Donnelly, p. 591.

Most blacks in our communities are enraged about the no pass/no play rule, that sets minimum standards for college freshmen. Many report that it is racist and undermines the advancement of blacks in college. Sixty-two percent of the survey participants want Proposition 48 initiated and felt that it would be beneficial, while 38 percent responded negatively. Possibly, in hindsight these ex-jocks feel that many of us could benefit from this ruling and that this may be a way to "clean up" (education first, athletics second) the NCAA's reputation and college situation (96 percent believe that sports should be cleaned up on the college level). The black community should probably begin to support this effort, because it sends a message to high school boys and their coaches that they must achieve both academically and athletically.

Too many universities seem not to care about the athletes' academic responsibilities. It appears that they encourage the illusion that a young black male who plays for them will ultimately be a professional athlete. Very seldom do they inform the athlete that the average playing career of a professional ball player is five years and without a college degree the athlete will have a difficult, if not impossible, transition to reality. It is partially up to the NCAA, the school, and the athlete who chooses
to attend college to gain a better understanding of what the realities are for pursuing a professional dream. Problems must be faced and discussed by all with regard to academics, drugs, injuries, racial/cultural factors and future career.\textsuperscript{3}

Question 2 related to the relationship between the NCAA and the black male athlete. The athletes were also asked several subquestions pertaining to this issue. Question 2a looked at the age these men were recruited to an NCAA institution of higher learning. The average age was fifteen and the most frequently occurring age was seventeen years. Question 2b looked at the subjects perceptions on whether or not they benefited in any way from participating in the NCAA. More than two-thirds (70 percent) reported that they benefited from the NCAA during college but 70 percent also reported that the NCAA did not actively help or promote black athletes to advance in college.

Since 63 percent of the participants did not graduate, they felt exploited by their schools. Exploitation means for the purposes of this study, giving players scholarships

as payment for their athletic services and then dumping them into the job market without a degree, usually no better educated than before they entered the college or university. We can see an example of this form of exploitation with the University of California, in which only 29 percent of the black football players were awarded degrees within a seventeen-year period between 1960 and 1977.4

A closer inspection of the data reveals that most (69 percent) of the coaches did not encourage their athletes to excel academically; the university did not monitor their grade (70 percent); and although tutors were available to approximately one half (50 percent) of the sample, only 23 percent took advantage of them during their college careers. Edwards (1980) reported that nearly 80 percent of the black athletes do not graduate from college and the situation seems hopeless.5

Question 3 attempts to ascertain the attitudes and experiences of black males who have played college sports under the NCAA. Today, many of the respondents, while

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in college, viewed athletes with great value and one of their highest accomplishments. In talking with the survey participant, many reported being indoctrinated at a very young age to aspire to be a prized athlete and dreamt of becoming a professional ball player. Unfortunately, only one in 12,000 have a chance of becoming a professional ball player. Most athletes do not graduate from college (63 percent) and the ones that do graduate, have been shown to have an extraordinary ability to excel, even with a competitive academic disadvantage.\(^6\)

Raspberry reported a few years ago a state senator in Nebraska named Ernest (Ernie) Chambers of Omaha proposed monetary compensation for most valuable college athletes for their performances similar fashion to compensation of who work on campus, but much more. Since it has been openly acknowledged by researchers throughout the country that college sports is a huge money making proposition, he proposes a bill that states "any person who competes in the sport of football at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln shall be an employee of the University of Nebraska and shall be compensated and entitled to the same rights and benefits as other university employee." Unfortunately,

\^6\ Sailes, p. 41.
as other university employees." Unfortunately, Senator Chambers has been unsuccessful to date, but each year he will resurface introduce this bill in an effort alleviate plight of the black male athlete.  

Overall, 93 percent of the survey participants felt they experienced in college sports and that it had an inverse relationship to athletes advancement in college ($r = -.44, P > .01$), moreover, as racism increase, respondents reported that the exploitative tactics used by the NCAA should be cleaned up [(e.g., recruitment, higher graduation rates) $r = .69, P > .001$]. Furthermore, almost all respondents were promised tangible rewards such as cars, extra money, public exposure to name a few examples. Not surprising, 41 percent of the respondents said that their grades had been altered in some form (e.g., tampered with transcripts, phony correspondence from other schools).

The athletes said that there was never enough time to study while in school, and getting a degree was never stressed. Many of the sample felt that since racism exist and many wanted a black coach, it is assumed that a black coach would insure a college degree by stressing academics

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as well as athletics. Unfortunately, out of the 269 Division I basketball coaches, for example, only 9 percent are black.  

Lastly, question 4 relates to the "outcome" (e.g., occupation, job and educational history) since the end of college. Approximately two-thirds of the sample did not graduate from college (63 percent) although 90 percent were awarded a scholarship while on NCAA eligibility. Furthermore, 46 percent were unemployed, 42 percent were in college or graduate school, and 3 percent played professional sports.

It appears that the researcher could conclude that the black male athlete overall, did not advance academically in general while in college, and that his talents have been exploited for the profit of the NCAA and the college or university for which he played. The number of black NCAA athletes that have been exploited by institutions of higher education and the NCAA is probably countless. Black athletes have loss "the promise" while these institutions continue to thrive, prosper, and benefit from black male athletes. Everyone (NCAA, fans, coaches, merchants, colleges and universities) seems to

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benefit economically except the athlete. This is why 93 percent of the sample agreed that college athletes should be paid to play college sports.

Black athletes fill stadiums with thousands of paying ticket holders, they work all year round. The ball players receive one year grant which includes room, board, tuition, and books; definitely a minimum wage or salary by anyone's standards. Usually they leaves college unprepared while most of their non-athletic peers were developing skills the to necessary succeed in society.

Furthermore, after attending these universities and colleges many athletes are disappointed by what they thought would be a "free education" in return for playing sports. The black athlete in particular, begins to see that in return for tuition being paid by the NCAA, they must provide countless hours of time that requires their very best; which includes physical punishment without regards to their bodies and practically intolerable amounts of mental stress, anxiety and possible depression. Preparation for games go on throughout the year. Very few college students work as hard and are so diligent as the black college athlete.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The problems of intercollegiate athletics are seen as pathological, exploitative and resistant to reforms and public policy (specifically Title IX). The most comprehensive feature of college sports today is that many universities and colleges engage in what amounts to professional sports but hold fast to the illusion that their athletes are amateurs. College athletics are too professionally organized to retain their amateur status. Intercollegiate athletics is partially a form of commercial entertainment and financially beneficial to the sponsoring university or college; thus, due to the high financial revenue generated by these athletes, most college athletes should be considered employees. Unfortunately, institutions of higher learning persist in this hypocrisy of amateur athletics, whether out of greed or ignorance, these institutions do a tremendous injustice to college athletes.¹

¹Gifford, "Sports: How Dirty a Game?" p. 45.
As a result of this intercollegiate activity, some athletes are filing suits alleging that their colleges and/or coaches have caused them injury by exploiting their athletic abilities and ignoring their educational needs, thus leaving them ill-equipped to deal with the real world. Furthermore, the college system seems to guarantee the subversion of academic values. It also seems to support athletes cutting classes, cheating, and taking a number of academic short-cuts.

The athlete who seems to hold the key to opportunity in reality has locked himself/herself into an athletic dilemma. The black athlete must remain eligible if he/she wants to maintain his scholarship and continue his/her education. Through personal experience, coupled with reports from a number of black teammates, we were all encouraged by our coach to major in physical education rather than math or engineering so that we would not jeopardize our grade point average, thus losing our eligibility. We were often steered into courses taught by sympathetic professors who may be willing to pass a black athlete regardless of his classroom performance. The black athlete is deceived into believing his success as a student is irrelevant since he is headed toward a long and profitable career. Furthermore, alternatives are not offered nor discussed with this student.
In reality, few college athletes ever achieve professional status. Evidence has shown that there is nothing less wanted in our society than a worn out Negro athlete. This kind of behavior started in the athletes secondary educational years (and usually from an educationally inferior school system). After completing the secondary educational process, the black athlete usually enters predominantly white universities with an inferior educational background (this system was probably under staffed and educationally inadequate according to traditional measures). He enters the white university, with a poor academic self-image, and his experience in college usually reflects this kind of behavior.²

The black student athlete works in the classroom and on the playing field or court under extraordinary pressures; pressures which are a direct result of his/her race and/or ethicality. The black student athlete knows that if he/she loses his/her eligibility or if the athlete is not a superstar in the field, his/her financial support or scholarship program will not be renewed the following year. Moreover, the athlete usually has no other sources of financial aid to pay for school. For generations, college

²Clark, p. 62.
athletes have ventured into competition immunized against the stigma of defeat by Grantland Rice's famous assurance, "it matters not whether you win or lose, but how well you played the game that counts." Those were the years when athletes were motivated to achieve heroic distinction by running on the field or court with Knute Rockne's words ringing in their ears: "Win one for the Gipper!" That glorious tradition, however, rigidly excluded black athletes.

It is hoped that this preliminary investigation will lead to a larger study that may facilitate a change in the present system by those black males who still aspire athletic excellence and those parents who see sports as the key to success. It is hoped that parents and their sons/daughters begin to take an active, informed role in the decisions that affect their education, athletic career, and possibly entire future.

The NCAA is exploiting black male athletes in particular, and the black community throughout America must become better organized and demand reforms for their sons. Listed below are some suggestions for improving the treatment of black college athletes by the university of NCAA.

1) Give college athletes their entire freshman year to assimilate into college life and make those
athletes ineligible for all organized college sports for one year.

2) Give enough time to do school work and reduce the time demands for practice and games.

3) Create a national advisory committee of the NCAA that comprised men of similar ethnic backgrounds as the players of the NCAA to study research and bring back to the NCAA their findings and recommendations pertaining to this issue.

4) The black community must be reminded to look beyond sports as a way to increase social mobility.

5) Open a national counseling center throughout the country for athletes to assist them in learning about the system, eligibility, process towards a degree, and realistic visions of what can be accomplished.

6) Set aside television revenues to establish a "trust fund" for athletes who fall short of their degree requirements, run out of eligibility and wish to continue to pursuit of a college degree.

We need to begin an assertive effort to advise and guide the black college athlete. At every college and university there should be "an advocate" to help insure informed judgment and responsible representation during recruitment and while in attendance at the university or college.
This survey assesses the attitudes and experiences of black men who have played college sports. Please fill in each question. There are no right or wrong answers. Your honesty and support is greatly appreciated.

1. Name: ________________ 3. Phone: ______

2. Address: ____________________________________________

3. Occupation: 46% unemployed
   42% employed
   7% students
   3% professional sports

4. Education:
   High School Attended _______________________________
   City/State ________________________________
   Year Graduated 1974 (average)

   Colleges Attended ____________________________ Years __
   ____________________________________ Years __

   Did you graduate from college?
   Yes 36%
   No 63% (2/3 did not graduate)

   If so, how many years did it take to receive your bachelor's degree from college? 4.72 or 5 years

6. Did you graduate while on athletic scholarship?
   Yes 10%
   No 90%

7. Did you receive financial aid during your entire college career (while playing sports)?
   Yes 80%
   No 20%
8. How has the NCAA effected your life? 

9. Did you benefit from the NCAA during your college career? 
   Yes 63%  No 36%  
   Please discuss. 

10. Do you feel that the NCAA promotes and helps black athletes to advance in college? 
    Yes 27.6%  No 72.4%  

11. How were your athletic talents used in college? 
    Please discuss. 

12. Do you feel that you were "putting out" more than you actually received? (For example, long hours of practice and short amounts of study time)? 
    Yes 75%  No 25%  
    Please discuss. 

13. What kind of promises were made to you regarding college recruitment? 
    Please list. 

14. Do you feel that college sports should be cleaned up (recruitment, graduation rates among blacks)? 
    Yes 96%  No 3.6%  

15. Since graduation (or since college), what types of jobs have you been employed in? Please list and state length of time. 

16. What is your future career goal? 

17. Were you forced into sports at an early age?  
Yes 17.2%  No 82.8%

18. At what age and/or grade did athletic recruitment begin for you?  
17.5 years with the youngest age being 15 years and the oldest age was 20

19. Did you have a career goal while on athletic scholarship?  
Yes 67.9%  No 32.1%  
Please discuss.

20. Were tutors made available to you while on athletic scholarship?  
Yes 44.4%  No 55.6%  
If so, did you take advantage of them?  
Yes 23.1%  No 76.9%

21. Did your college coach encourage academics?  
Yes 37%  No 63%

22. Did your college coach encourage academics over athletics?  
Yes 25%  No 75%

23. Was your coach the type of person that would do "anything" to maintain your eligibility (cheat on exams, assign you to non-degree courses, etc.)?  
Yes 58.6%  No 41.4%

24. Is Proposition 48, the "no pass no play" rule beneficial for black athletes?  
Yes 62.1%  No 37.9% (2/3 said yes)

25. Should college athletes be paid?  
Yes 93.3%  No 6.7%

26. Is there a need for more black coaches in the NCAA?  
Yes 100%  No 0%

27. Did your family play a significant role in aiding your decision to attend a particular college?  
Yes 36.7%  No 63.3% (2/3 said yes)

28. Was there consistent monitoring of your academic program and progress in college?  
Yes 30%  No 70%
29. Were your grades ever altered to maintain your athletic eligibility?  
   Yes 41.4%  
   No 58.6%  

30. If you could do it all over again, with respect to your athletic career in college, what would you do differently, if anything?  

31. Were you ever denied publicity by your coach because you "rocked the boat" or because you refused to follow the coaches demands?  
   Yes 50%  
   No 50%  

32. Do you feel that there is racism in college sports?  
   Yes 93.3%  
   No 6.7%  

33. Have you had any correspondence or communication from your coach after your eligibility was over?  
   Yes 30%  
   No 70%  

34. Were you ever on academic probation while on athletic scholarship?  
   Yes 60%  
   No 40%  

35. How many people on your ball team graduate?  
   3% of the athletes surveyed  

36. How many players on your team were black?  
   81.7%


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