

# Race, Sport and the American Dream



# Race, Sport and the American Dream

Second Edition

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CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS  

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Durham, North Carolina

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Smith, Earl, 1946-

Race, sport, and the American dream / Earl Smith. -- 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-59460-723-3 (alk. paper)

1. African American athletes. 2. Sports--United States. 3. Racism in sports--United States. 4. American Dream. I. Title.

GV706.32.S65 2009

796.08996073--dc22

2009023352

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS  
700 Kent Street  
Durham, North Carolina 27701  
Telephone (919) 489-7486  
Fax (919) 493-5668  
[www.cap-press.com](http://www.cap-press.com)

Printed in the United States of America

*I dedicate this book to my sons  
Daniel Andrew Smith and Edward Du Bois Smith.*



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# PROLOGUE

*Race, Sport, and The American Dream*, published in 2007, was the first scholarly book about African American athletes since the publication of *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* in 1969 by sociologist Harry Edwards. Edward's book treats the 1968 Mexico City Olympics and the genesis of "the angry black athlete" movement. Other books have followed suit, including Bass's *Not the Triumph But the Struggle: 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*; Hartman's *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and Their Aftermath* as well as two very interesting books by professional sport journalists, *Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the Black Athlete* by *New York Times* writer William Rhoden and *Souled Out?: How Blacks Are Winning and Losing in Sports* by *Newsday* sport writer Shaun Powell.

Taken together, all of the aforementioned books give us much needed insight into the sporting world inhabited by African American athletes. These authors come at their subject through the demonstrations in Mexico City and from the perspective of the exploitation of African American athletes by the White corporate world.

This book takes a slightly different approach, aiming to wed the sociological perspective to an analytical study of the institution of sport, paying special attention to the African American athlete. What I bring to this study is an analysis that looks at African American athletes from within the context of the real world. This includes an examination of family, schooling, work, stratification, and the other social institutions that African Americans occupy and that shape their lives.

The new introduction to the second edition goes into more detail in terms of updating the book and pointing to new sections that have been added, so I will not detail these changes here.

Here I acknowledge several colleagues and friends who have been instrumental in getting the first edition out the door and have encouraged me again to do the same for the second edition. Robert Conrow, the former Acquisi-

tions Editor at Carolina Academic Press (CAP), helped immensely by believing in the book from the beginning. Now that Bob is retired and enjoying the leisure an editor is forbade from enjoying while working, I am pleased to have a wonderful working friendship with Beth Hall at CAP. It is nice to know that Beth is only a keystroke away as we put this book to rest and work on the next two that are currently in the hopper.

The first edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream* said a lot about my sociology mentor, the late Robert K. Merton. I am indebted to Professor Merton for demonstrating what sociology is truly about. In a footnote in his magisterial paper, "The Matthew Effect in Science, II Cumulative Advantage and the Symbolism of Intellectual Property," Merton refers to his long-term collaborator Dr. Harriet Zuckerman. From her work on Nobel Laureates, Merton says, had he paid more attention to her contributions to his work, he would have recognized how much he owed a debt to Professor Zuckerman's work, having learned so much from her over the course of their long collaboration.

In the long collaboration with Dr. Angela J. Hattery (books, research articles, presentations, co-teaching, etc.), I must paraphrase Merton: "A sufficient sense of distributive and commutative justice requires one to recognize, however belatedly, that to write a scientific or scholarly paper [book] is not necessarily sufficient grounds for designating oneself as its sole author." A heavy debt of gratitude goes to Professor Angela Hattery for believing in this book and investing in its production, twice!

Finally, my father, the late Thomas C. Smith took me to Madison Square Garden on March 13, 1963, to see then Cassius Clay fight an unknown New York light heavyweight by the name of Doug Jones. The old garden was smoky and packed, and Clay was getting beat. Unknown to many boxing fans at the time, including my father, Clay was already bringing something new to boxing: the moving, talking (rapping) and constant dancing around the ring. Clay was the heavy underdog. Before the fight Clay asked Jones, "How tall are you?" Jones replied, "Why?" Clay said, "So that when you fall, I will know how far back to stand." When the fight was over, and Clay was given the decision, fans threw glass bottles, chairs, and cigarettes into the ring. Clay calmly walked to the center of the ring, picked up a peanut, opened the shell and ate the nut. No one, including my father, thought he would last the fight, let alone win the bout and go on to have a long illustrious career ending as one of the greatest heavyweight fighters ever: this second edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream* is dedicated to

Muhammad Ali.

# INTRODUCTION

This book in the second edition, like the first, is about social science research.

To pull it all together required a sifting of piles of data, in the attempt to find and shape a story about African American athletes. Secondly, I had to figure out a way to measure the effect of various factors on these athletes, their teams, their institutions, and their families to see how, in the end, it all works together.

When the first edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream* was published in 2007, I was convinced—and remain so—that SportsWorld is a pivotal institution in American life and hence in need of a new and more complex interpretation.

This interpretation would take us further into a critical examination of the dynamics of sport competition: the hard work, sweat and sacrifices that men and women, young and old, exerted as they pursued athletic goals. My decision to focus on African American athletes, and men in particular, is based on the overwhelming evidence that it is they who disproportionately, from early in childhood, started to plot and plan for this goal-acquisition, a path they believe, erroneously, would lead to fortunes and fame.

Pursuing this line of inquiry was important in 2007 and it is even more important now, in 2009, as the United States grapples with race—the election and inauguration of the first African American president—and faces the worst economic crisis most living Americans have experienced. As readers of the first edition now realize, the path to success in SportsWorld is made up of a set of challenges that are often contradictory in nature and far from clear. This road can be daunting at times and for all the males who travel it, only a few truly achieve what they strive so hard to attain.

## *The Problem in Context: Money*

Much of what takes place in SportsWorld is about money. Although at first glance it may not seem that way, someone has to pay. This includes expenses such as shoes, uniforms, and health examinations; gas, wear and tear on the

family automobile taking “Lil Johnny” or “Ray Ray” to their football, baseball, soccer, football games; overnight stays at hotels or motels; and sometimes plane flights to distant cities. This task usually falls to mommy and daddy, because the candy sales, bakes sales, and car washes behind the local grocery store just never bring in enough money to meet the financial requirements of a child’s athletic endeavors.

The financial issues grow as the level of the competition grows. When the athletic competition is hitched to the more formal organizations of the games, colleges and universities, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the Professional Players Association, National Football League, etc., we are now talking about “big time athletics.” To reach this level is both a large individual and family investment and dictates that the end-goal be the recuperation of the money outlay made along the way.

To illustrate, let’s consider the example of the University of Southern California 2005 Heisman Trophy winner, Reggie Bush, and his family. I am sure Denise Griffin and stepfather LaMar Griffin incurred considerable debts living on the margins and raising Reggie Bush to be a star football player from the time he was attracting attention as the star back for the Pop Warner’s Grossmont Warriors in 1994 until he signed his scholarship letter to attend the fabled USC (Schrotenboer 2005).

Although the legal wranglings (e.g., out of court settlements) have hidden the true details and outcome of the case, the Bush family came under heavy scrutiny for owing athletic agents money for everything from direct loans in the neighborhood of \$200,000 to back rent in amounts upwards of \$50,000. The news stories, editorials, and commentary focusing on both the hard living the Bush family endured early on and the big attention LaMar garnered as he fielded calls from sport agents and discussed “big money” collectively leads us to the conclusion that these are not fictions (Schrotenboer 2005).

Stories like that of Reggie Bush are not new; they have been around for decades. Alabama’s lop-sided loss to Utah (31–17) in the 2009 Sugar Bowl involved a similar scandal. The reader will recall that star Crimson Tide player Andre Smith, the 2008 Outland Trophy winner, was dropped from the team a few days before the big game because Andre and his family had contact with athletic agents (Low 2008).

The above is but one example of how money is intricately connected with athletics at the intercollegiate level. In professional baseball there is something else going on, concomitant with the worst economic downturn in American history.

What I am making reference to is the collapse of Wall Street. In the fall of 2008 there was a rapid decline in all areas of the economy but most severe in the world’s financial markets and banking. Behemoth banks like Washington

Mutual and IndyMac went under. Large international banks like Lehman Brothers, a global investment bank serving the financial needs of corporations, institutions, governments and high-net-worth investors worldwide, collapsed. Giant insurance companies like American International Group (AIG), a supplier of international insurance and financial services, and automaker General Motors<sup>1</sup> were recipients of portions of the first U. S. federal government bailout funds—a total “package” hovering around \$900 billion and officially titled the Troubled Asset Relief Program. Even as comparisons to the Great Depression abounded, each of the aforementioned companies received *billions* of dollars, painting a picture of an unprecedented collapse of the American economic structure.<sup>2</sup> The second “stimulus” package, at \$787 billion dollars, is just more of the same.

With all this going on—the aftermath of the collapse of both Wall Street and the housing market, Americans losing their 401K retirement funds, home foreclosures numbering in the millions, job loss and unemployment at never before seen levels<sup>3</sup>—the New York Yankees professional baseball team paid over \$423.5 million for two pitchers and one first baseman inside of a two week period. While the contracts varied, CC Sabathia received a \$161 million, seven-year contract and A.J. Burnett an \$82.5 million, five-year contract, with first baseman Mark Teixeira netting a \$180 million, eight-year contract. The Yankees also open their 2009 season in a brand new, \$1.3 billion ball park; ironically, several of the corporate sponsors whose signs hang in Yankee Stadium—including the largest single sponsor, Bank of America—received millions in “bailout” money. Meanwhile, across town, the New York Mets open the 2009 season in their new billion-dollar ballpark “Citifield,” named for sponsor CitiBank, which also took millions of dollars in tax-payer financed federal bailout money (Smith 2009).

## Gender

As was the case in the first edition, the second edition will not address issues related to African American women in sport. The rationale provided in the first edition stands. That said, I am aware of and concerned with both the (a) marginalization and (b) sexualization of women athletes.

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1. AIG: \$90 billion; General Motors: \$5 billion

2. Lewis, Michael and David Einhorn. 2009. “The End of the Financial World as We Know It.” *New York Times*, January 3, 2009

3. According to Smith (2009), 8 percent nationally 634,000 filed for unemployment as of January 2009, and a total of 2 million jobs were lost in 2008

Though it barely generates a whimper and certainly little national news coverage, the stability of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) remains in question, with sparse crowd attendance, on-again, off-again ownership problems, the movement of franchises to new locations, and the original stars retiring (e.g., Lisa Leslie, Rebecca Lobo, Sheryl Swoopes, Cynthia Cooper, etc.). Case in point: the original Houston Comets (1997–2008), winner of four WNBA championships, folded.

There is also the issue of players' contracts. The pay range for a season for players with a minimum contract of three years and a maximum of six years in the league is between \$50,000 and \$97,000. A first-year player, a rookie, is paid approximately \$34,000 to \$37,000. Low pay means most players have to play almost year-round—in the U.S. and in Europe and/or Australia—to make ends meet. With the diminishing opportunities for women after they are finished playing in the WNBA—currently, of the thirteen teams in the WNBA, eight have male head coaches—means the women's professional basketball league is an up and down adventure. The situation for collegiate women athletes is not very different.

Title IX, the legal mandate declaring equal opportunities for women, has clearly opened up opportunities for women in SportsWorld. This cannot be argued. In non-revenue sports such as soccer, men and women have remarkably similar experiences. In contrast, in revenue generating sports—like college basketball—the experiences of female and male athletes are worlds apart, with men's programs receiving as much as 20 times more funding than women's programs at the same university. Furthermore, as opportunities have opened up for female athletes, the down side is that men now hold over half of the top coaching positions once held by women, mostly in basketball and soccer (Smith, Hattery and Staurowsky, 2008).

Again, its all about money. For starters, at the intercollegiate level we still see meager funding of women's sports. And, the excuses about women's sports not bringing in enough money to please the athletic administration can't stand up to rigorous scrutiny as most men's sports don't either, including football teams. In a report issued by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) titled *2004–06 NCAA Revenues and Expenses of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics Programs* we find the following:

In the 2006 fiscal year, the latest of three examined in the study, only 19 of the 119 Football Bowl Subdivision institutions had positive net revenue, while for the rest, expenses exceeded generated revenues. (For the entire three-year period, only 16 athletics department turned a net profit).

Hence, the problem of marginalization can't be for a lack of generating revenues. There must be something else at work, and that something else shows up in the second key issue I have identified: the sexualization of female athletes.

The popularity of sports like "beach volleyball" and commercials in media taken together give us a lot to analyze in terms of how women are treated and portrayed in intercollegiate and professional sports. NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) and other automobile racing institutions, like INDYCAR, have had major problems incorporating women into their development programs and competitions.

Early on, we learn that driving a car is serious business. Teenagers take driving lessons, on and off the road, so that they are aware of the rules for operating an automobile and how to be a safe, defensive driver. The lessons apply to males as well as females. Yet, women drivers in NASCAR and INDYCAR are praised more often for their looks, what they are wearing (or not wearing), and their hairstyles than for their performance in competitions.

Danica Patrick, an accomplished INDYCAR racer is continuously portrayed as a sex symbol, even posing nearly nude in *Sports Illustrated* on more than one occasion and in several issues of the magazine.<sup>4</sup> This phenomenon is similar to the experience and "exposure" of former female professional tennis player Anna Kournikova, who is known more for her Internet pictures than her tennis game. These distractions send the message to girls that they must be thin and "sexy" to play sports. The outcome is a rash of eating disorders and injuries. The impact is also devastating in terms of mixed messages that are sent to young girls and women who play intercollegiate sports, where strength is a necessity. That is to say, they are constantly battling with themselves to be thin, pretty, and look like the women portrayed in *SEVENTEEN*, but must balance it with lifting weights, running, and other vigorous training in order to be in top athletic condition to compete effectively in their sports. In short, 35 years after Title IX, women want the opportunities to compete equally with men, yet they are expected to maintain bodies that mimic the waif-thin models they see on "America's Next Top Model." These are not issues that males face in sports.

Another concern, somewhat connected to this one, is the use/abuse of performance enhancing drugs in SportsWorld.

## *Performance Enhancing Drugs*

The 2008 summer Olympics in Beijing, China, will go down as one of the greatest sporting events of all time. While a communist country hosting an

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4. [http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/features/2008\\_swimsuit/danica-patrick/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/features/2008_swimsuit/danica-patrick/)

Olympic Games is a feat unto itself, the games in China were unique in that they far surpassed the competition that took place in the Soviet Union in 1980. The news coverage was overwhelming and the contests themselves, including the opening ceremonies, were spectacular.

Yet one of the lasting legacies of the Beijing Olympics was the wide range of drug use by the Olympic athletes themselves. More than any other Olympiad in history, the Beijing Olympics proved that drug use is rampant in sports. From track and field to cycling and weightlifting, to gymnastics and sumo wrestling, the athletes are looking for any edge they can, not only to win the competition but also gain the incentives often given by their countries after the win.<sup>5</sup>

For example, Levitt and Dubner (2005) conducted an analysis of cheating in the sport of Sumo wrestling. They focused on Sumo wrestling because it has incredible status in Japan—it is *the* national sport—and because there are incredibly high payouts for individual wrestlers. “Each wrestler maintains a ranking that affects every slice of his life: how much money he makes, how large an entourage he carries, how much he gets to eat, sleep ...” (Levitt and Dubner 2005:36) The disincentives are great as well:

Life isn’t very sweet outside the elite. Low-ranked wrestlers must tend to their superiors, preparing their meals, cleaning their quarters, and even soaping their hardest-to-reach body parts (Levitt and Dubner 2005:36)

And, of course, the difference in pay is enormous: elite wrestlers earn \$170,000 whereas low-ranked wrestlers earn only \$15,000 (Levitt and Dubner 2005:3). Thus, as Levitt and Dubner (2005) suggest, the incentives for cheating are high, and in their analysis of 32,000 matches they find very high levels of cheating among wrestlers who are “on the bubble” (Levitt and Dubner 2005:37–38).

In the U.S.—since the publication of the first edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream*—the biggest performance enhancing drug issue has been the use of steroids in Major League Baseball. This problem is so widespread that the U.S. Congress held televised hearings and issued subpoenas to some of the biggest stars in baseball, including 7-time Cy Young winner Roger Clemens. The “Mitchell Report,” named after Senator George Mitchell,<sup>6</sup> struck

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5. Great Britain has proposed an outright cash settlement, on a sliding scale, for their Olympic medalists, starting with the 2012 London Olympics. See, especially, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/olympics/article4597220.ece>

6. <http://files.mlb.com/mitchrpt.pdf>

a blow to baseball—what academician Gerald Early<sup>7</sup> calls a “pastoral sport of innocence and triumphalism in the American mind, a sport of epic romanticism, a sport whose golden age is always associated with childhood.” Maybe, but not anymore. Baseball, like every other professional sport—from boxing to football to auto racing—is now about the money. And one way to ensure that you, the individual athlete, gets yours is to engage in the illegal behavior of performance enhancing drug-use (Denham 2009; Ritchie 2009).

Even the biggest baseball “stars” can’t stay away from performance enhancing drugs. Just days before the opening of 2009 spring training, Alex Rodriguez, New York Yankee infielder and the highest paid baseball player ever, with a 10-year contract worth \$280 million dollars or approximately \$28 million per year—a contract payout for one year that exceeds the Florida Marlins and other teams entire team payroll!<sup>8</sup>—admitted that he used performance-enhancing steroids.

It is definitely not surprising, then, that other baseball players like Roger Clemens, along with Andy Pettitte, Jose Canseco, and others who are both teammates and off-the-field friends, are also drug buddies. The problem with Congressional investigations, such as the one undertaken by Senator Mitchell, is that they produce few results. There are several recommendations in the report but there have been no arrests for illegal drug use.

Any unfortunate addict on any street in America (especially if she or he is poor and African American), once convicted, will immediately be thrown in jail for ten years for *possessing* five grams of crack, a conviction that carries an automatic mandatory minimum sentence. It is a far different world for star baseball players like Alex Rodriguez, Barry Bonds, and Mark McGuire, who have been investigated and shown to have had some relationship with trainers who supply them with all types of steroids, or to distribution centers (BALCO), and even street suppliers. Yet, there have been no indictments and there are no mandatory minimum sentences. In fact, the only person to have “done time” is Marion Jones—it’s not so surprising that a woman was incarcerated for using performance-enhancing drugs, as this is akin to patterns of incarcerating women who act in an unfeminine manner: women who commit homicide, for example, are on average given significantly longer sentences

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7. Early, Gerald. 1998. “Performance & Reality: Race, Sports and the Modern World.” *The Nation Magazine*. August 10th (<http://www.thenation.com>)

8. Selena Roberts and David Epstein. 2009. “Sources tell SI Alex Rodriguez tested positive for steroids in 2003.” *Sports Illustrated*, February 9th

<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2009/baseball/mlb/02/07/alex-rodriguez-steroids/index.html>

than men convicted of the same crime. I do note that Marion Jones did not go to prison for using performance-enhancing drugs. She was convicted of perjury: she lied about it.

Returning to the Beijing Olympics, amidst all the controversies, there were some bright spots as well, including the incredible performance of U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps,<sup>9</sup> who won eight gold medals in the pool, breaking three decade-old the record of seven gold medals set by Mark Spitz. Perhaps one of the brightest moments of the 2008 Beijing Olympics was the crowning of the new “fastest man alive.” This designation goes to the man who wins the 100-meter dash. Who among us could not be moved watching Jamaican newcomer Usain Bolt—what a fortuitous name—leave his competition in the dust as he cruised to a new world record of 9.69 seconds in the 100-meter dash? He also won the 200-meter dash a few days later, setting another world record. By the time the week was out, he had won a third gold medal in the 4 by 100 meter relay. He was the first man to accomplish this feat since Carl Lewis in the 1984 Olympics. Bolt inspired many not only because of his tremendous talent but also because of his youth, his unconventional body, and the fact that he decisively conquered a field of giants in the world of sprinting including U.S. sprinter Tyson Gay, who had long been favored to win the 100-meter event.

### *Troubled Athletes*

In the first edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, I devoted nearly two chapters to discussions of athletes and trouble—Chapter 4 examined the troubles facing young African American men and Chapter 7 focused on athletes who involve themselves in all kinds of incivility ranging from cheating to murder to violence against women. The phenomenon of athletes getting themselves into trouble is nothing new. As I wrote earlier in this introduction, one of the major issues that broke in the last year was the issue of doping. But doping, though a problem that was considered important enough to all U.S. citizens to be addressed by the U.S. Congress, can also be what criminologists refer to as a victimless crime: the major harm is done to the athlete him or herself and there is no easily identifiable “victim.”

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9. Phelps himself came under fire in 2009 for smoking marijuana after a photograph of him appeared in a British newspaper inhaling from a “bong.” Saying he “acted in a youthful and inappropriate way” Phelps apologized to his fans, alleging that this behavior would not happen again. See, especially, <http://www.newsoftheworld.co.uk/news/168726/Michael-Phelps-drug-charge-threat.html>.

In the two years since the first edition of the book was published, athletes have gotten themselves in increasingly serious and more frequent trouble. It is becoming increasingly more likely that not only are the male athletes involved in everything from DUI, violence against women, assault, carrying unlicensed handguns, etc., but the charge of murder is starting to become an all too common event.

In the first edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, I pointed to murder as an issue in SportsWorld using the example of professional football player Ray Carruth and the basketball student athletes at Baylor University. Carlton Dotson pleaded guilty to killing teammate Patrick Dennehy and Ray Carruth was found guilty of conspiracy to commit murder. Carruth hired a “hit man” to murder his girlfriend and his unborn baby. His girlfriend died but his son lived; he is plagued by physical handicaps associated with the trauma of his birth and is being raised by his grandmother—he is essentially an orphan, with one parent dead and the other in prison.

Tragically, in 2008 and 2009 high school student athletes have also been involved in murder, including a spate of burglaries in Manatee County, Florida by high school student athletes. In the course of these burglaries, the athletes murdered their robbery victims. In one instance, Palmetto High School football student athletes Ta Heem Blake, 17, and Marquis Sanders, 18, broke into a residential home and killed an elderly woman. Six months earlier, in the same Florida county, Lakewood Ranch high school football quarterback Tim Brooks murdered another youth in a robbery.<sup>10</sup>

In early December 2008, New York Giant Plaxico Buresh shot himself in the leg in a Manhattan nightclub. Though this incident resulted in a lot of jokes on the sports blogs—“Top 10 Reasons why Plaxico shot himself”—nearly every day there is news of a college or professional athlete being arrested with a gun in or around a nightclub in a major city. The relationship between athletes and the gun culture is far too lengthy to discuss here, but I remind the reader of the Michael Vick case in which his major defense was the connection between “Black” culture and dog fighting. Thus, any discussion of athletes and the trouble they get in must be contextualized with an examination of broader social relationships.

With regards to athletes getting into trouble, the years between the first and second editions of this book can most aptly be described as belonging to Adam

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10. Napper, Robert. 2009. “Local prep athletes face murder charges.” *Brandon Herald.com*

<http://www.bradenton.com/news/local/story/1198759.html>

“Pacman” Jones. Between the time he was drafted in 2005 and the time of this writing—early 2009—Jones has been arrested six times for his involvement in twelve incidents that required police intervention. Jones served a six-week suspension in the fall 2008 for a “scuffle” with a bodyguard, and he was released from the Dallas Cowboys in early 2009 for his alleged involvement in a shooting in Atlanta, Georgia.

In December 2008, O. J. Simpson was back in the news when he was sentenced to 30 years in prison for kidnapping and assault that stemmed from a 2007 incident in which he robbed some men at gunpoint. Simpson alleged that he was just taking back “property”—memorabilia—that belonged to him.<sup>11</sup> In early January 2009, Charles Barkley was arrested for driving under the influence (DUI). In addition, he had a handgun in his car as well as a woman who was going to perform sexual favors for him; he is married. Nearly every day brings another example of an athlete in trouble with the law. And, often his mug shot is posted on the internet. In fact in the fall of 2008, golfer John Daly was arrested for assault and public drunkenness outside of the Hooters in the town where I live (Winton-Salem, North Carolina). Daly’s mug shot from the local jail was posted on the local newspaper website (the *Winston-Salem Journal*) within hours.

To understand the trouble that athletes get into—from cheating on spouses to murder—requires us to analyze their behavior in the context of race, social class, privilege, patriarchy and other social systems that organize and shape our lives. The discussions of athletes and incivility remain from the first edition of the book. In addition, the reader will find a new discussion in Chapter Seven that focuses specifically on athletes and violence against women and offers a statistical analysis that underscores the importance that race and privilege play when athletes are confronted by the criminal justice system.

## *Coaches*

Like many other scholars and sports journalists, I, too, am concerned about the low number of African American head coaches in professional sports as well as in colleges and universities. I am not concerned simply because the low numbers show little improvement over the last decade. My concern is that African Americans—and anyone else—should have equal access to opportunities in the labor force and not be confined or segregated to some sub-division simply because of their race or ethnicity.

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11. <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/news/story?id=3747669>

The situation for African American coaches is similar to the history of college attendance by African Americans, and in a brief examination of these patterns we can draw some conclusions about African American coaches. Though things are slowly beginning to change, for a variety of reasons, even in 2009 the majority of African American college students are the first in their families to attend college (Alon and Tienda 2007).<sup>12</sup> How can we explain this? First, African Americans historically are disproportionately likely to be low-income (Hattery & Smith 2007) and they simply could not afford to send their children to college. More significant, however, is the fact that up through the 1960s most colleges and universities, other than the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, were off-limits to African Americans. This was an intended consequence of deep social segregation all across the United States. And, this segregation created the probability of legacies (the preferential treatment in admissions for relatives of alumni) for whites that was systematically—until only the last decade—denied to African Americans.

As with many other businesses, coaching looks a lot like a “family business” where we see distinct and important patterns of successful coaches “handing down” teams to their sons, much as a small business owner might pass his business down to the next generation. Like legacies in college admission, because African American men have had so few opportunities to coach in Division 1 college football and these opportunities have only come about recently, part of the “cause” of the low numbers of African American men coaching college football is the fact that white men are handing down their teams through a legacy-like system that (1) precludes the hiring of African Americans because there is no formal hiring process when these vacancies arise and (2) the fact that African American men have not been allowed to coach long enough for them to engage in legacy practices with their own sons. These types of systematic explanations for the lack of African American coaches is a much stronger analytical explanation than individual level discrimination—though I certainly acknowledge that is a factor as well.

Another important concept in deconstructing the lack of African American college football coaches can be borrowed from feminist sociology, and in particular the work of Irene Padavic and Barbara Reskin (2002), who explore occupational sex segregation as a major cause of the gendered wage gap that persists in the United States well into the 21st century. They argue that there are two types of segregation: industry and establishment. Industry segrega-

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12. Alon, Sigal and Marta Tienda. 2007. “Diversity, Opportunity and the Shifting Meritocracy in Higher Education.” *American Sociological Review*, 72:487–511.

tion was the type that was in place in college football for most of the 20th century. African Americans were simply not admitted to the ranks of the college football coach. Establishment segregation refers to the situation in which an industry—waiting tables or coaching college football—is itself integrated but in which layers of the industry as a whole are segregated. For example, though the occupation “wait staff” is occupied by both men and women—thus it is integrated—women are most likely to wait tables in diners and local chain restaurants whereas the vast majority of wait staff in Five-Star restaurants are men. Thus, though the industry is integrated, the establishments themselves are segregated, and in such a manner that men are more likely to work in higher paying establishments whereas women are relegated to establishments with lower prestige and lower wages.

Similarly, though at the time of this writing African Americans make up approximately 7 percent of the Division 1 college coaches, only one of these coaches—Randy Shannon at the University of Miami—coaches at a program that is eligible for the Bowl Championship Series. In other words, only *one* African American is employed at an institution of higher learning in the capacity of football head coach in the elite or premiere part of the league. In short, though we may be moving closer to an integrated occupation—college football coach—we are still deeply embedded in a situation that is best described as establishment segregated. And, what are the consequences of establishment segregation? They are profound: lower wages, lower prestige, less opportunity to advance, and less opportunity to participate in the legacy transfer that Division 1 coaches like Joe Paterno and Bobby Bowden participate in. Thus the consequences of establishment segregation are devastating, perhaps most so because it is rendered invisible by the insistence of scholars and sports journalists who focus exclusively on “industry segregation” or the total number of African American coaches in college football. There is some sign of change, however, and I point the reader to Chapter Eight, in which I argue that Tony Dungy has established a mentoring program—a sort of quasi-legacy—that has propelled a series of African American men into positions as head coaches in the National Football League (NFL).

In examining data from the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) on personnel in athletic programs, including football head coaches, and data from *USA Today* and *ESPN* on the movement of professional head coaches in football, there are trends that are highly troubling since *Race, Sport and the American Dream* was initially published two years ago. More so than in the professional game, a lot of attention has been given to intercollegiate sports.

A lot of commentators have made it their business to criticize intercollegiate presidents and athletic directors for not hiring African American head

football coaches (DeFord 2009). They have found that the standard excuses still exist: alumni want head coaches in football who “look like them.” That is, to go out for rounds of golf and then sit in the comfortable club houses and lounges to discuss business. This seems so trite in 2009, after the election of Barack Obama, an African American male, as the 44th President of the United States.

Hence, it makes having an African American head football coach seem simple, indeed. But the data point in that direction. When the first edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream* was published, there were five African American head coaches in Division 1 football—now called the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS); these five coaches comprise a mere 5 percent of the league. Currently there are two African American head football coaches in the FBS (1 percent of the league), and as I stated above only Randy Shannon at Miami is employed at an institution eligible for one of the several big-time bowl games.

One flaw, pointed out above, is the constant counting of African American head coaches without some sort of analysis of why the situation looks the way it does. Furthermore, when we simply count and design strategies that are limited to *simply* hiring more African American head football coaches without regard to division, conference, etc., we fail to address the underlying problems that led to the situation being what it is. What is of greatest concern to me is the decline in the percent of African American head football coaches in just the two years since the first edition of this book was published.

The landscape is notably better in the NFL, but again, in the two years between the publication of the first and second edition of this book, the number and percent of African American football coaches in the NFL has declined precipitously. Currently in the National Football League there are five African American head football coaches, or 15 percent of the total (see table 8.4). Beginning with the report by the late lawyer Johnny Cochran, looking at the dismal record of hiring African American football coaches, there was a constant drum beating to implement the “Rooney Rule” in the NCAA. The Rooney Rule, simply put, requires the NFL to interview an African American before the final hire can be made.

Would that Art Schell and Jim Caldwell be so appreciative! The Rooney Rule, a good concept when it was implemented in 2003 and which produced an initial “bounce,” has not created sustainable head coaching positions for African Americans. Jim Caldwell was rewarded for his stern loyal support of Tony Dungy; when Dungy finally retired in 2009, Caldwell became the head coach for the Indianapolis Colts. Yet, Caldwell wasn’t hired as a result of the Rooney Rule, but rather was a beneficiary of the type of pseudo-legacy Dungy

has been able to create and which I detail in Chapter Eight. Art Shell still waits for such an opportunity.

All this is showcased with the Dallas Cowboys franchise. The Dallas Cowboys have long been the darlings of North American professional football. At one time during their heyday they were hailed as “Americas Team.” Flashy, brash and a constant winner, Dallas also had some of the best African American football players in the NFL. From “bullet” Bob Hayes, to “Hollywood” Henderson, to Henry Carr and of course Emmitt Smith, the Cowboys were always loaded with African American talent.

Yet, they never brought in an African American quarterback nor have they hired an African American head coach. In fact, Jerry Jones would rather take recycled white males as coaches than take a chance on an African American.

One also wonders after Superbowl XLI—if the owners would have seen that, given the chance, an African American can handle the complexities of coaching a tier 1 professional football team. Case in point: two years later, coach Mike Tomlin (Pittsburg Steelers) walked away from Superbowl XLIV with the Championship trophy.

Finally, I draw the reader’s attention to data that I reveal in Chapter Eight, that similar to the situation with African Americans on Wall Street and in other industries, African Americans who are given a chance at coaching in Division 1 college football are handed the worst opportunities: the teams with the worst records, who have the steepest climb. Additionally, they are given less time to turn a team around and are held to higher standards with regards to the requirements of what constitutes a turn around.

Note, for illustrative purposes, the case of Tyrone Willingham and Charlie Weis. Willingham was fired only three years after taking over a failing Notre Dame football team whereas Weis, with a similar record, has seen his contract extended to 2015. As in so many areas of life and work, African American football coaches are expected to be “twice as good”<sup>13</sup> if they have any hope of retaining their jobs and advancing.

Although it is clear that one of the most significant ways in which African American men can impact SportsWorld is as coaches—and their power will increase as they gain positions in athletic leadership and owners—when we consider actions that impact SportsWorld in irrevocable ways, we must look at two figures who are never discussed as changelings: Earl Woods and Richard Williams.

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13. Marcus Mabry. 2007 *Condoleezza Rice and Her Path to Power*. New York: Rodale Books.

Though at first glance it might seem that Earl Woods' and Richard Williams' impact is limited to the individual level, influencing only their own children's experiences, I suggest that in fact Earl Woods and Richard Williams, as fathers—African American fathers—have had an impact that reaches farther than the individual experiences of their children Tiger Woods and Serena and Venus Williams. These fathers, steadfast in their beliefs that their children had just as much right to play the virtually lily white country club sports of golf and tennis respectively, changed forever the way that SportsWorld is shaped by race.<sup>14</sup>

Earl Woods and Richard Williams took on roles that most father-coaches don't have to. In addition to training their children and carting them from tournament to tournament, these men had to address racism at every turn, including their children's participation being blocked, defending their coaching practices, enduring and watching their children endure the hurling of racial epitaphs because not only were they frequently the *only* African American teenagers participating in the tournaments held at country clubs, but moreso because their children were *dominating* the competition. The role that these two men played in changing the face of country club sports cannot be over-estimated and I would argue is equivalent to the roles their children played in transforming the sports themselves (see Earl Smith 2009 for a lengthy discussion of the dominance of Tiger Woods).

## *Race*

The United States is defined in many ways by its struggle with race and the unique system of racism that was developed on our soil (Smith & Hatery 2009). And, though this book is obviously about race—the word leads off the title—as I reflect on what has changed between the first edition of this book and the edition I'm completing in early 2009, among the most significant changes with regards to race in the United States is the election and inauguration of the nation's first African American president, Barack Obama. And though race is as important an issue in this edition of the book as in the first—Chapter 3 is devoted entirely to the arguments about race, biology, and athletic ability—here I offer a few reflections on where we are today.

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14. This is not to over look other pioneers like Arthur Ashe, Althea Gibson and Lee Elder, whose presence in tennis and golf laid the groundwork for those that followed.

The United States has elected its first African American president. A black man, Tiger Woods, is the most dominant player in the most segregated of country club sports, golf. More African American men are coaching in the National Football League than ever before. Yet, in 2009 we are reminded of the struggles many African American athletes encounter, both on and off the court. In late 2008, I attended a pre-release screening of *The Express: The Ernie Davis Story* at the Hamilton movie theatre in downtown Hamilton, New York less than an hour from Davis' hometown of Elmira, and home to Colgate University, where I spent the 2008–09 academic year as a distinguished professor. Ernie Davis was the first African American to win the Heisman Trophy (1961) for his feats as a running back for the Syracuse Orangeman. That, coupled with the fact that he died of leukemia before he ever played in an NFL game, makes his story doubly compelling. After watching the movie and meeting a fellow moviegoer on the way out the door who had played at Syracuse with Davis,<sup>15</sup> I was compelled to pick up my tattered copy of the *Ernie Davis Story*, the biography that forms the basis of the film, that I bought decades ago from the Syracuse University bookstore. In re-reading the story of Ernie Davis, I was struck by an experience he recounted during the months following winning the Heisman Trophy. Davis, like many Heisman winners, was a sought after commodity and during the spring after winning the trophy he traveled the country making speeches and appearances. He was such an intriguing young man that even President John F. Kennedy, who was at an event just a few blocks away from the New York Athletic Club on the night Davis received the Heisman, demanded a chance to meet him. While traveling in Maryland with one of his white teammates, Ernie Davis was denied service at a diner. When his friend confronted the waitress, pleading, "but this is Ernie Davis, he just won the Heisman Trophy," it is reported that she remarked, using a racial slur, that he was just another black person and they didn't serve blacks in this diner (Gallagher 2008). This is similar to experiences Muhammad Ali reported during his travels around the U.S. after winning an Olympic gold medal in the 1960 Rome Olympics:

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15. Upon exiting the movie theatre, standing looking at the poster advertising the film, a middle age white male (Eric Weber) and his wife walked over and asked if I lived in Hamilton. I responded that I was a visiting professor at Colgate and was really glad that I had taken in the movie. He then told me that he was a teammate of Davis, on the Syracuse men's basketball team. We exchanged personal information and Mr. Weber will be addressing my sociology of sport class in April, 2009, talking about what it was like at Syracuse in the late 1950s and early 1960s having African American athletes on campus.

The man said, “We don’t serve Negroes.”  
 I said, “I don’t eat them either!”  
 They shouted “Boy, get out!”  
 I looked at my gold medal, and thought,  
 “This thing ain’t worth nothin”-  
 it can’t even get me a hamburger!”  
 —19-year-old Olympic Gold Winner  
 Cassius Clay in Miami (Lois 2006)

We’ve clearly come a long way since then, but as long as Tiger Woods is not allowed to join the Shoal Creek Country Club in Birmingham because he is African American and as long as Serena and Venus Williams are subjected to the kinds of racial epitaphs that were hurled at them in Indian Wells, near Palm Springs, California, the battle for equal access is far from over.

### *The Athletic Industrial Complex (AIC)*

The Athletic Industrial Complex (AIC) is a unique moniker for discussing money in SportsWorld. Used effectively, researchers can begin to make connections between advertising, marketing, and stadium building. In the first edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, I devoted a lot of space to the AIC demonstrating its enormous power to shape SportsWorld. Here I will say more about the AIC and the changes that have taken place since 2007.

New York State Governor David A. Paterson in his first State of the State address to the New York Legislature said that the economic situation in New York State is “perilous.” The budget shortfall for the third most populated state in America is estimated at \$15 to \$47 billion dollars. This is a lot for New Yorkers to make up. Some proposals if implemented would cause New Yorkers to spend deeply to imbibe sugary soft drinks like Coke or smoke cigarettes, and a steep increase in taxes could be implemented on everything from barbers’ licenses to car rentals, to beer and wine. These increases in taxes, along with a decline in jobs, will hit New Yorkers very hard. At the same time, as I noted earlier, the major professional baseball team in New York, The New York Yankees, is opening a lavish new baseball stadium at a cost of \$1.3 billion dollars. Ticket prices are advertised at \$500 to \$2500 per seat per game.<sup>16</sup>

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16. See <http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/news/story?id=3305979>

To remain competitive and always be in the hunt for the next world championship, to add to their record number of twenty-six (26) World Championships, the Yankees have the highest payroll in all of SportsWorld and will pay out some \$209 million to field a team when the season opens in spring 2009. Other team owners, and players, are crying foul.<sup>17</sup>

One major indicator of the AIC can be seen in the infrastructure of intercollegiate athletics. The research on the growing commercialization and greed in college sports is heavily documented, showing that with excessive facilities, skyrocketing coaches' salaries and game schedules that dictate the academic schedule, intercollegiate sports has started to look like an entity separate from, rather than a part of, the institutions that house them. Coupled directly with what happens in the sport arena is the continuing sham about what happens—or does not happen—in the classroom.<sup>18</sup> This academic malfeasance is defined as a “necessary” element in fielding competitive teams, and teams have to be competitive if they are to win—which is believed by many to be the critical element in creating the most appealing “window on the university.” All of this leads me to note that one of the biggest controversies in the AIC is the end of season football bowl games.

Under the current system, only certain teams from specific institutions and conferences<sup>19</sup> are allowed to compete for the big prizes: the “national championship” and the other BCS bowls, including the “granddaddy of them all, the Rose Bowl.” The Bowl Conference Series (BCS) was created in 1998 (to do for football what “March Madness” has done for basketball; make money) and by 2008–2009 the proliferation of meaningless, insignificant bowl games had risen to 34, double the number of bowl games in 1980. These corporate titled contests, aired on TV with empty stands, include the EagleBank Bowl in

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17. Dubner, Stephen J. 2009. “Questions for Sports Economist Andrew Zimbalist.” *New York Times*, January 9th.

18. Sack, Allan. 2008. *Counterfeit Amateurs An Athlete's Journey Through the Sixties to the Age of Academic Capitalism*. University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press; Carty, Jim, John Heuser, Nathan Fenno. 2008. “University of Michigan athletes steered to professor.” *The Ann Arbor News*, Sunday March 16, 2008; Thamel, Pete. 2006. “Top Grades and No Class Time for Auburn Players.” *New York Times*, July 14; Knobler, Mike. 2008. “AJC investigation: Many athletes lag far behind on SAT scores.” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 28; Sperber, Murray. Beer and Circus: *How Big-Time College Sports Has Crippled Undergraduate Education*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

19. Conference realignment was necessary to make all of this happen. Conference changes were very much a part of a major regrouping. Several conferences have expanded (e.g., the ACC) while others have contracted or dissolved. The speed at which these changes took place is amazing. *The Orlando Sentinel* has a nice schematic of what took place as of 2003. See [http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/sports\\_college/2008/06/conference-real.html](http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/sports_college/2008/06/conference-real.html)

Washington, D.C., the R+L Carriers Bowl in New Orleans, the San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl, and the Gaylord Hotels Music City Bowl in Nashville. The major BCS bowls, all of which have existed for decades, are now named for their major corporate sponsors so that they are no longer known or referred to without referencing these capitalist entities: Rose Bowl *presented by CITI*, *FedEx* Orange Bowl, *Allstate* Sugar Bowl, *Tostitos* Fiesta Bowl and finally the *Tostitos* BCS National Championship Bowl, all leading National Public Radio (NPR) commentator and sport columnist Frank DeFord to note that “college football is a strange duck,” a duck built on excess and greed (DeFord 2009). Writer Michael Lewis put it this way:

College football’s best trick play is its pretense that it has nothing to do with money, that it’s simply an extension of the university’s mission to educate its students.<sup>20</sup>

In closing this introduction, what needs to be said about SportsWorld is that it changes daily. The mixture of positive and negative outcomes for African American athletes forces a researcher to be constantly alert for these changes as more and more young males continue to see their future life chances in SportsWorld, regardless of how many times it is demonstrated that these opportunities for fortunes are few and far between.

Looking back to when I first wrote *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, I now realize that a good portion of its content is not about sports at all. That the issues of importance to me are larger than SportsWorld is not surprising in that I look at SportsWorld through the larger lens provided by the discipline of sociology and more specifically the area of sociology we call “social stratification.”

My larger intellectual interests are shaped by concerns surrounding justice, fair play, open access and equity. These concerns take me to the margins to systematically explore everything from “wrongful convictions” to issues related to family survival, violence against women, the exponential growth of the Prison Industrial Complex and then back to the enduring complexities of SportsWorld.

I believe that now, more than at any other time, the institution of sport is a mirror image of society at large and all of the societal events that still sell newspapers—although in a format and form quite different from the days when Grantland Rice (1880–1954)<sup>21</sup> penned sport stories and reported on

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20. Lewis, Michael. 2007. “Serfs of the Turf.” *New York Times*, November 11th.

21. Oriad, Michael. 2001. *King Football: Sport & Spectacle in the Golden Age of Radio and Newsreels, Movies & Magazines, the Weekly & the Daily Press*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

sport game results—positions *Race, Sport and the American Dream* outside of the narrow box filled with texts that are solely about sports.

This second edition of *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, has been totally updated including the tables accompanying the text. Thank you.

# ABSTRACT

*Race, Sport and the American Dream* reports the main findings of a five-year research project investigating the scope and consequences of the deepening relationship between African American males and the institution of sport. While there is some scholarly literature on the topic, my project has tried to explicate how sports have changed the nature of African American Civil Society and have come to be a major influence on economic opportunities, schooling and the shaping of African American family life.

This book makes a contribution to the literature on the continued relevance of African American athletes in contemporary American society. What is of interest here is the broader socio-cultural milieu that surrounds the dialectic of African American athletes and mainstream American society. Here I provide social scientists and others interested in the sociology of sport with an understanding of carefully selected issues related to the African American athlete. I examine the world of amateur sports (Olympic and intercollegiate sport) using Immanuel Wallerstein's "World-Systems Paradigm" which provides a lens with which to examine the colonizing and exploitative nature of intercollegiate sports; the special arrangements that universities have with the world of sport.

I analyze the world of professional sports as well, including the NBA, NFL and Major League Baseball. The topics in this book range from youth violence to sport as big business (what I term the Athletic Industrial Complex) to incivility and criminal behavior by athletes, to the lack of leadership opportunities for African American athletes who retire from play. The topics are addressed within the context of the history of racial oppression that has dominated race relations in the United States since its inception as a nation-state in the 1620s.

All topics, including the question of the biological superiority of African American athletes above all other race/ethnic athletes must be understood within the context of power and domination. Otherwise, the importance of the question itself will always be (a) misunderstood or (b) underestimated.



# PREFACE

This book is the result of five years of research into the subject of the African American presence in sports. Sports have long been an important part of American culture and are deeply embedded in African American Civil Society.

This book addresses issues related to African American athletes, both professional and collegiate. It looks at central societal issues as they intertwine with sports and impact the lives of African American people. An athlete's neighborhood, community, and hometown are at least as important in the formation of the individual as the game he or she plays. It is, after all, one's environment that shapes one's life and affects one's acculturation to the playing fields of football, baseball, track and field, basketball and other individual and team sports.

Environmental factors are critically important in the research that went into the book. For example, not many knowledgeable sport fans would deny that Jim Brown (Syracuse University and Cleveland Browns) is one of the greatest running backs who ever played the game of football. Yet, Brown himself often talks about how—more than the feats he performed on the football field—his upbringing in rural Georgia and urban Manhasset, Long Island formed the person he became.

One part of the history of African American presence in sports that is omitted from the book is the fascinating, if still perplexing, story of the Negro Baseball League. Because I made the decision to start the book in the post-World War II era, that story is not included, even though it is an important part of the evolution of African Americans in organized mainstream sports. Many Americans have become interested in the great feats of the early African American baseball players—some of the best African American athletes of the first half of the twentieth century. However, stories about Josh Gibson, Buck O'Neil, Andrew 'Rube' Foster, Wilbur 'Bullet' Rogan, Fleet Walker and, of course, the legendary pitcher and showman Mr. Satchel Paige can be found in many other sources.

Additionally, in the bibliography the reader will find references to some of the literature (see Craft 1993) on earlier heroes, for example, teams of the Negro Leagues (e.g., The Birmingham Black Barons, Kansas City Monarchs, New Orleans Black Pelicans). Since my disciplinary specialty is sociology and

not history, the book starts with the modern integration of major league baseball when Jackie Roosevelt Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers became synonymous (Rampersand 1997).

Beginning with Robinson and continuing through to the incredible career of Tiger Woods, the book asks readers to reconsider the relationship between African American Civil Society and the institution of sport. Specifically, it challenges readers to examine in more depth the degree to which the American Dream, especially through the conduit of sports, is accessible for all Americans and especially African Americans.

I could not begin this book without noting the importance of an historical moment in sports that took place during the production of the book. Until January 2007, no African American head football coach had *ever* guided his National Football League (NFL) team to the coveted Super Bowl.

However, on January 21, 2007, not one but two African American coaches led their teams to a berth in the ultimate professional football game. First, the Chicago Bears, led by coach Lovie Smith, defeated the New Orleans Saints 39–14 to win the NFC championship game. The significance of this achievement became greater later that same day when the Indianapolis Colts, coached by Tony Dungy (another African American) won the AFC championship, beating the New England Patriots 38–34. So Super Bowl XLI on February 4, 2007 in Miami made history by having, on opposing sidelines, two African American head coaches.

Ron Pitts, football analyst for FOX NFL Sunday said on the January 21, 2007 NFC post-game show, “Take notice college football and the NCAA, when given a chance, black guys get it done.” I could not have said it better myself.

Not only did two African Americans coach in Super Bowl XLI, but many of the players for the teams were African American. In this book, I note that up until now, the leadership of major league football teams as well as that of other major sports was roughly 90% white male.

Of the less than ten African American coaches in the NFL today (32 teams total), seven have winning records. As my book shows (and Ron Pitts noted), given the opportunity African Americans will excel. Given the assumptions on the part of many white Americans, far too often, African Americans still have to be exceptional to be considered for leadership roles. This is true in athletics as well as in other major institutions in American society.

Historically, many African American athletes have helped pave the way for their counterparts today. For example, look at the career trajectory of none other than Jackie Robinson. In his rookie year Robinson was the Rookie of the Year (1947) and two years later he was the Most Valuable Player in Major League Baseball. His lifetime batting average was .311. Jackie Robinson

changed not only major league baseball but all sports—collegiate and professional—and many African American athletes who followed him also became stars in a world that earlier would have refused to accept them.

Look at the biographies of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jim Brown, John Mackey, Rafer Johnson, and don't forget Wilma Rudolph or Althea Gibson or Jackie Joyner-Kersey. Take a look at the amazing record of Tiger Woods in a game in which, not long before, African Americans could only have carried the bags for white male golfers. The careers of these athletes and others have contributed to Lovie Smith and Tony Dungy being in the spotlight of what is often hailed as the biggest sporting event of each year.

Critical sport scientists know that the struggle has been long, making the 2007 Super Bowl so important. It is to be hoped that all Americans will understand the significance of, and applaud, this historic event. Not too long ago, many gyms, golf courses, stadiums, and especially swimming pools were off limits to African American athletes; however, they strove, often under the worst of conditions, to become excellent athletes and gain access to the coaching community. The struggle did not end on February 4, 2007 when Tony Dungy became the first African American to lead a team, as head coach, to a Super Bowl victory.

*Race, Sport and the American Dream* chronicles this wonderful, long and arduous struggle and I salute the two great football coaches, their assistants, and their respective teams as they take their place in U.S. history and note that this event is, in fact, a significant part of the story told in the following pages.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With all books an author is indebted to many people. For me the list is long and to name one person and forget someone else would be dreadful. Therefore, I offer a big thank you to all my friends and colleagues that I have had the good fortune to know and work with across many years. Thanks to Mark Aleysia and the *Indianapolis Star* for access to data on the Athletic Industrial Complex in intercollegiate athletics and for sharing his ideas for constructing tables in a way that allows for the unique examination of multiple relationships. Thank you to Tania Acuna, who helped in immeasurable ways. I offer a much appreciated thank you to Emma and Travis. There is a special thank you to Professor Angela Jean Hattery, Department of Sociology at Wake Forest University. Throughout this project she invested time and a lot of energy in helping to make this a better book. Thank you, Angela!