

# “With All Deliberate Speed”: High School Sport, Race, and *Brown v. Board of Education*

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THE LANDMARK 1954 *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA*, 347 U.S. 483 decision, sandwiched between the changes resulting from World War II and civil rights legislation of the 1960s, marked a turning point in the history of race relations in the United States. By a unanimous decision the Supreme Court determined that state-sanctioned segregation of public schools was a violation of the 14th Amendment and therefore unconstitutional. This decision marked the end of the legally approved “separate but equal” precedent established by the Supreme Court some sixty years earlier and served as a catalyst in the struggle for equal rights of all citizens in this country.<sup>1</sup> To understand the effects of *Brown v. Board of Education* on interscholastic sport, it is important to examine first the participation patterns of African Americans in high school athletics prior to 1954 and what that participation meant to the African-American community. A significant fact to remember is that prior to the historic decision in 1954 a select number of outstanding African-American athletes outside the South would find their initial success in integrated high school sport and then continue that success in some of the most prestigious

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predominantly white colleges in the country. Some of these athletes would even realize international acclaim for their great athletic performances. Paul Robeson, the great singer, actor, athlete, and civil rights activist, was one of fewer than a dozen African Americans among the approximately 200 students at New Jersey's Somerville High School where he starred in football, basketball, baseball, and track and field. After Somerville, Robeson enrolled at Rutgers University where he was a two-time member of Walter Camp's All American football teams in 1917 and 1918. Fritz Pollard starred in several sports at integrated Lane Technical High School in Chicago before eventually becoming a student at Brown University where he was selected to Walter Camp's All American football team in 1916. Archie Williams, who captured the gold medal in the 400-meter run at the 1936 Olympic games in Berlin, attended integrated University High School in Oakland prior to enrolling at San Mateo Junior College and then later at the University of California, Berkeley. Jimmy LuValle, who won three bronze medals in the 1936 Olympic games, graduated from integrated Polytechnic High School in Los Angeles before finding his way to the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Jesse Owens, the hero of the 1936 Olympic games in Berlin, starred at racially mixed East Technical High School in Cleveland before taking his talents to The Ohio State University. Woody Strode and Kenny Washington, the UCLA stars who integrated the National Football League (NFL) with the Los Angeles Rams in 1946, attended racially mixed high schools in Los Angeles—Strode attending Jefferson High School and Washington, Lincoln High School. Finally, Jackie Robinson starred in several sports at Pasadena's racially mixed John Muir Technical High School in the mid 1930s before moving on to UCLA.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that these athletes attended integrated high schools did not guarantee them equitable treatment or shield them from the racial realities of Jim Crow America or ensure that they would receive a quality education and realize academic success. The academic performances of the above mentioned African-American athletes, and other African-American athletes during the first half of the twentieth century for that matter, were a mixed bag. Although statistics are not available on graduation rates for this period, it is apparent that prior to 1954 some of these African-American athletes floundered academically while others realized great success in the classroom at both the interscholastic and collegiate levels. For instance, Pollard was a C-plus student at Lane Technical High School before becoming what his biographer, John Carroll, referred to as a "tramp athlete" and making stops at Northwestern, Dartmouth, and Bates before finding his way to Brown. His academic performance at Brown did not match his success on the football field, and he eventually dropped out of the university with several failing grades dotting his transcript. Jesse Owens was no better than Pollard academically, an average student at both East Technical High School and The Ohio State University who never did graduate from college.<sup>3</sup>

Paul Robeson and Jimmy LuValle were the antithesis of Fritz Pollard and Jesse Owens from an academic standpoint. Robeson graduated with honors from Somerville High School and at Rutgers was Phi Beta Kappa, a member of the Cap and Skull Honor Society, and class valedictorian. LuValle was an excellent student at Polytechnic High School and Phi Beta Kappa from UCLA. After completing his undergraduate education, LuValle returned to UCLA to take his master's degree in chemistry and physics and then later

earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from the California Institute of Technology where he worked under the renowned Linus Pauling.<sup>4</sup>

Explaining with any degree of certainty the decidedly different levels of academic success among African-American athletes from integrated public schools and colleges during the first half of the twentieth century is an almost impossible task considering the lack of reliable sources. One man, however, places part of the blame for Owens' academic failures at the doorstep of the educational institutions he attended. Delbert Oberteuffer, the well-known health and physical educator from The Ohio State University, wrote a detailed letter to the school's athletic director shortly after the 1936 Berlin games noting that no one had taken a genuine interest in Owens's welfare as a student or his future. Using terms such as a "beautiful and remarkable animal" and "remarkable psychomotor genius" to describe Owens, Oberteuffer claimed that the university had "been interested largely in keeping him eligible but beyond that we have been more or less unconcerned." "It is time," noted Oberteuffer in regard to Owens, "when we as a faculty should do what we can to fan the spark of interest into the flame which it can become."<sup>5</sup>

Classroom performances aside, the integrated world in which these African-American athletes operated often made the realities of racial discrimination that much more personal and poignant. These athletes often enjoyed a more privileged status and greater opportunities, but these were offset by their constant exposure to racially discriminatory practices because of their closer proximity to the white power structure. Fritz Pollard, for instance, recounted in some detail the racial discrimination he experienced while attending Lane Technical High School in Chicago. He continually encountered opponents who utilized illegal tactics and rough play in an effort to injure him and put him out of games. Most appalling and hurtful to Pollard were incidents in which his own coaches and teammates were complicit in the acts of discrimination against him. He recalled with much pain how his own coach, R.F. Webster, kept him out of a game in 1910 versus St. John's Military Academy in Wisconsin because of that school's refusal to play against an African American. An even uglier event occurred when Coach Webster intentionally gave Pollard the wrong departure time and left him at the train station rather than telling him directly that the school in southern Illinois scheduled to play Lane Tech was opposed to competing against him because of his color.<sup>6</sup>



Fritz Pollard, Brown University's All American running back in a portrait from 1915. COURTESY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

Notwithstanding the treatment of Pollard, it is important not to paint here with too broad a brush. In fact, it is apparent that some African-American athletes in integrated high schools of Iowa, Minnesota, and other states with relatively small black populations became integral parts of their sports teams without seemingly experiencing racial discrimination from teammates, opposing players, or spectators. A classic example of this would be Theatrece Gibbs who starred in football at Dubuque High School in Iowa from 1931 to 1933 and went on to play at the University of Dubuque from 1934 to 1937. Although he is not on the school's website or in their Hall of Fame, Gibbs, along with his backfield mate Jay Berwanger who became the inaugural Heisman Trophy winner, led Dubuque High School to the Mississippi Valley Conference title in 1931. In 1933 Gibbs was elected by his teammates as captain, even though he and his brother Leo were the only African Americans on the squad. That year Gibbs was named by the *Des Moines Register* to its first all-state high school football team.<sup>7</sup>

Conspicuous by their limited involvement in integrated high school sport in the North prior to *Brown v. Board of Education* were African-American female athletes. They were similar to their white counterparts in that they apparently found most of their success on playgrounds and in Catholic youth organizations, Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA), Young Women's Christian Associations (YWCA), industrial leagues, and Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)-sponsored programs rather than high school-sponsored sport. For instance, Tidy Pickett and Louise Stokes, who in 1936 became the first African-American women to compete on a United States Olympic team, began their athletic careers on Northern playgrounds.<sup>8</sup>

In the South the sport participation patterns of African-American women athletes were seemingly quite different. Although finding some success in competitions sponsored by the AAU and other youth sport organizations, African-American women athletes in the South enjoyed a more vibrant and comprehensive sports program in both public and private high schools. Pamela Grundy makes clear in her award-winning *Learning to Win* (2001) how important basketball was to African-American women at West Charlotte High School in North Carolina and other segregated institutions, and that by 1950 thirty-two of the greatest black women's teams from North and South Carolina competed in the prestigious interscholastic Twin States tournament.<sup>9</sup>

Basketball was an especially popular sport among women students at Washington, D.C.'s National Training School for Women and Girls, a private institution founded by noted educator Nannie Helen Burroughs.<sup>10</sup> Black educators and the black community generally were apparently far more receptive to women participating in highly competitive sport, and it was reflected in the high school athletic programs scattered throughout the South. Susan Cahn, in her frequently cited *Coming On Strong* (1994), noted that, despite expensive travel costs and the limited number of black high schools in the South, African-American women competed in highly organized track and field competitions at the interscholastic level in that part of the country. Perhaps the most important of these competitions occurred at Tuskegee Institute, Hampton, and other historically black colleges that often sponsored junior track and field meets for local high school students.<sup>11</sup>

These segregated high school sport programs for African-American women athletes would be the standard mode of participation for their male counterparts as well. Notwith-



Women's basketball team (c.1915) from the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington, D.C. COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

standing the careers of Fritz Pollard, Paul Robeson, Jackie Robinson, and those other athletes mentioned previously, the largest number of African-American athletes during the first half of the twentieth century participated in sport in segregated black high schools and often against only black opponents. Legal segregation in the South and de facto segregation in the North, particularly following the large northern migration of Southern blacks, would result in the creation of separate black public schools that placed a high premium on both academic and athletic success. Perhaps the most famous of these institutions was the M Street School in Washington, D.C., which was founded by Congress in 1870 as the Preparatory High School for "Negro youth." Having a brilliant administrative and instructional staff that was unable to assume positions at white institutions because of the era's rigid racial segregation, M Street School evolved over time into a prestigious institution that provided a broad liberal education for black youth. Graduates of the school, many of whom would attend predominantly white colleges in the North or well-known historically black institutions, regularly assumed leadership positions and fashioned distinguished careers in education, business, law, medicine, music, religion, and the military.<sup>12</sup>

Included among this group was Edwin Bancroft Henderson, the great physical educator, historian of the black athlete, and athletic administrator, who in 1906 joined forces with five other notable black educators in Washington, D.C., to organize the Interscholastic Athletic Association (ISAA). Made up of schools from Washington, D.C.; Indianapolis, Indiana; Wilmington, Delaware; and Baltimore, Maryland; the ISAA organized athletic contests in football, baseball, basketball, and track and field. In 1910 Henderson, at the request of Roscoe Bruce, head of Washington, D.C.'s black public school system, organized the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL). Modeled after the white public school's athletic leagues located in eighteen cities across the United States, Washington, D.C.'s black PSAL sponsored a vast array of sports for children of various skill levels at both the grammar school and high school levels. The PSAL organized, among other things, a grammar school baseball tournament, intercity soccer league, high school cross country meets, and Saturday night basketball games and dances during the winter months at the city's famous True Reformer's Hall.<sup>13</sup>



Edwin B. Henderson, well-known physical educator, Civil Rights activist, and historian of the black athlete. COURTESY OF EDWIN HENDERSON III.

The ISAA and PSAL in Washington, D.C., would eventually be followed by other high school sports organizations in other African-American communities nationwide. In 1924, for example, fourteen schools formed the West Virginia Athletic Union, a truly groundbreaking organization in that it was the first African-American statewide athletic association in the South. By 1930 other black state high school athletic associations had been organized in Virginia, North Carolina, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Florida. Slower to establish black high school athletic associations were many of those states in the Deep South. Mississippi did not have one until 1940, Arkansas waited until 1942, and Alabama finally followed suit when it established a black high school athletic association in 1948.<sup>14</sup>

The most popular sport of these athletic associations was basketball. More so than baseball and probably more so than football, the sport was initially a tool to help build pride, draw attention to the overall educational mission of the black community, and a way to give under-privileged but athletically gifted African-American youth a chance at a college education. In essence, basketball, as conceived of by African Americans, was about developing race leaders and not promoting stars, about developing character and not promoting professional athletes, and about developing model citizens and not promoting the singular pursuit of professional sports contracts.<sup>15</sup>

Black state high school athletic associations showcased basketball in year-end tournaments. The black press is replete with descriptions of these tournaments, which were a combination of great sporting events and grand social occasions. The state basketball tournaments involving black high schools were similar to the Negro League all-star baseball games, Thanksgiving Day football contests between historically black colleges, and any number of other sports events behind segregated walls in that they afforded African

Americans an opportunity to exhibit skills of self-organization and strengthen feelings of connectedness and community. These tournaments were more than just opportunities to exhibit great athletic skills, but a chance for the African-American community to reinforce exclusive identities and maintain a much needed sense of solidarity in a world that denied them freedom of choice and relegated them to second-class citizenship based on race.<sup>16</sup>

The West Virginia Athletic Union (WVAU) sponsored one of the most important of these tournaments. Held for the first time in 1925 at West Virginia State College, the WVAU basketball tournament evolved into an extremely significant sporting event that provided, in the words of sport historian Robert Barnett, an “annual reunion for hundreds of black students, athletes, coaches, and supporters. They came from small isolated black communities within a larger white world. They faced segregation and discrimination in every aspect of life, but that adversity itself tended to create unity and togetherness.”<sup>17</sup>

The WVAU tournament and those sponsored by other black state high school athletic associations would be complemented by a national interscholastic basketball tournament involving outstanding black high school teams from across the country. The National Interscholastic Basketball Tournament was first held in 1930 at Hampton Institute in Virginia. Organized by Charles H. Williams, a noted physical educator and coach from Hampton Institute, the tournament enjoyed some initial success attracting such perennial powerhouses as Washington, D.C.’s Armstrong Technical High School; Chicago’s Wendell Phillips; and Gary, Indiana’s Roosevelt High School. In 1933, however, Hampton Institute ended its sponsorship of the tournament, citing the exorbitant costs associated with running such an event. Instead, the tournament was held in Gary, Indiana, in 1934 and 1935; at Roanoke, Virginia’s Lucy Addison High School in 1936; and then back to Gary, Indiana, in 1937 and 1938. Beginning in 1939 the tournament shifted to various sites, including Roanoke and both Durham and Fayetteville, North Carolina, until World War II put a temporary halt to the event in 1942.<sup>18</sup>

In 1945 Tennessee A&I President Walter Davis and the school’s athletic director, Henry Arthur Keane, revived the tournament. Held first in Nashville and then later at Alabama State under the auspices of the newly formed organization titled the National High School Athletic Association, the tournament was highly successful and continued to exist in one form or another until 1964. It was apparent long before 1964, however, that times were changing. Gary, Indiana’s Roosevelt High School and Indianapolis’ Crispus Attucks High School, two of the most famous and powerful black high school basketball programs in the country, did not even play in the tournament since they began participating in 1943 in the recently desegregated Indiana High School Athletic championships. The reason for the tournament’s change in location from Tennessee A&I to Alabama State resulted from the move toward integration on the part of the Tennessee National High School Athletic Association in 1954.<sup>19</sup>

To a large extent, the changes in the National High School Athletic Association Tournament resulted from *Brown v. Board of Education*. The famous 1954 Supreme Court decision set in motion both individual and collective challenges to racial segregation in interscholastic sport. These challenges would ultimately result in the desegregation of various sports in high schools throughout the South. The first public school system in the South to integrate its athletic program after *Brown v. Board of Education* was the same public school system to establish the first separate athletic programs in the early years of

the twentieth century. No sooner had the justices rendered their decision, the District of Columbia, a federal city that could not assume the tactics of many Southern states who deliberately stalled on desegregation by questioning whether it was the responsibility of the federal or state governments, announced that it had abolished its segregated physical education and athletic programs and merged them into two departments that included both black and white high schools. It also established an athletic conference made up of two seven-school leagues divided by geographical location rather than the racial composition of the schools.<sup>20</sup>

The integration of high school athletics in the District of Columbia was duplicated in nearby Baltimore, Maryland, and a few other selected areas. These earliest incidents of integration in interscholastic sport, combined with the previous decade's entry of Jackie Robinson into Major League Baseball and the subsequent integration of other selected professional sports, was evidence to some that America was finally living up to its professed principles of fair play and equality, and it resulted in a spate of writings acknowledging the achievements of African-American athletes.<sup>21</sup> At long last, full integration on America's playing fields seemed to be at hand.

Unfortunately, it would be several years before a large number of other public high schools in the South would follow the leads of the District of Columbia and Baltimore. The reason for the delay resulted from opposition in much of the South to *Brown v. Board of Education*; this opposition taking the form of white citizen's councils, the passage of pro-segregation legislation, the substituting of private education for public schools, and an assortment of less obvious measures.<sup>22</sup> Finally, however, as a consequence of further civil rights legislation, continuing struggles over equality of opportunity, and the burgeoning Black Power Movement during the 1960s, African-American athletes were among the increasing number of African Americans who found their way onto the campuses of predominantly white public schools in the South.

It was in the border states that African-American athletes apparently found their first opportunities to play with and against white athletes. The state of Virginia is a good case in point. As early as 1963, only a year after John F. Kennedy sent federal troops to ensure the entry of James Meredith into the University of Mississippi, African-American football players Eric Burden and Victor Hundley integrated the predominantly white Newport News and Ferguson High Schools in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia.<sup>23</sup> The most famous instance, of course, of racial integration in Virginia high school athletics took place in 1971 at T.C. Williams High School in the city of Alexandria. Largely a result that year of *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971), which permitted busing of students in an attempt to achieve racial integration and enforce the long overdue mandates of *Brown v. Board of Education*, all students in Alexandria, regardless of race, were placed in T.C. Williams High School. Immortalized in the 2000 movie *Remember the Titans*, the newly constituted school's football team would go undefeated and capture the Virginia State Championship.<sup>24</sup>

The opportunity to participate with and against white athletes was certainly welcomed by African-American high school athletes and the black community more generally. In what ways would their lives be the same or different, however, than they were prior to *Brown v. Board of Education*?



Thurgood Marshall (pictured on the far right) was chief counsel for the NAACP and argued the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. With Marshall (from the left) is Henry L. Moon, Roy Wilkins, and Herbert Hill. COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Perhaps the most important and significant point that needs to be made in answering this question is that the participation of African Americans at the interscholastic level of competition has often continued to be found in selected sports and in public schools where racial minorities are the majority. De facto segregation, the result of systematic efforts to undermine the spirit of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the nation's lack of commitment to integration and the more conservative nature of the Supreme Court, all forced many African Americans, both in the North and the South, to compete in underfunded and inferior public schools that stressed athletics, much to the detriment of academics. The result—an unequal system in which the academic success of more financially secure, predominantly white public and private schools—is rarely realized.<sup>25</sup>

This sad fact has been the death knell for many African-American male athletes intent on competing in college athletics. While some of these athletes have been fortunate enough to satisfy the academic standards established by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), earn scholarship money to participate in intercollegiate athletics, and graduate at a higher rate than the black male population in the general student body, a large majority is left to recall their glory days in high school, unable to meet minimum academic requirements and dreaming of what might have been.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to overestimate the frustration and disillusionment these athletes must feel, especially when one considers the extraordinary importance many African-American families, particularly those from lower income brackets, attach to professional sport and athletic pursuits more generally.

A number of academicians, while usually coming at the problem slightly differently, have made clear the very high percentage of young and frequently poor African-American male athletes who have devoted all of their attention to the singular pursuit of a life in professional sport at the expense of preparing for more realistic career choices. In

unpublished data from 2002 out of the University of Oklahoma, it was reported that on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most probable and 1 being the least probable, African Americans had mean scores of 4.52 while whites had mean scores of 3.28 when asked if they expected to have a career in professional sport.<sup>27</sup> Historian Steven Riess cited a study, which found that 70 percent of black youth ages 13-18 expected to play in the National Basketball Association.<sup>28</sup> A recent study by the Center for the Study of Sport in Society determined that 66 percent of African-American males believe their first jobs would be as professional athletes.<sup>29</sup> Conversely, Jay Coakley, Professor of Sociology at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, points out in his *Sports and Society* (2009) that forty-one million African Americans are “underrepresented in or absent from most sports at most levels of competition,” including “most of the dozens of sports played at the international amateur level, and all but five of the dozens of professional sports in the United States.”<sup>30</sup> Earl Smith, Professor of Sociology and Ruben Professor and Director of American Ethnic Studies at Wake Forest University, notes that the odds of an African-American student-athlete becoming a professional basketball player “are 20,000 to one” and becoming a professional football player the “odds are 10,000 to one.”<sup>31</sup>

Where African-American women athletes fit into these numbers is difficult to determine since they are seldom the focus of serious scholarly analysis. Because professional sport opportunities are so limited for them it is safe to assume that the largest majority of African-American women athletes do not look beyond the college level in regards to sport participation. We know, at least based on information provided by Donna Lopiano, Executive Director of the Women’s Sports Foundation, that African-American women represent less than 5 percent of high school athletes.<sup>32</sup> We also know, according to sport and legal studies scholar Sarah Fields and other academicians, that only some 15 percent of African-American women in the inner cities participate in sport below the college age level and those who do typically find themselves in basketball and track and field rather than the frequently titled “country club sports” such as tennis, soccer, crew, and lacrosse. This was the participation pattern among African-American women prior to *Brown v. Board of Education* and will probably continue to be so because of economic conditions and denial of access to certain sports.<sup>33</sup>

Notwithstanding this data, it is the poignant stories of the struggles and disappointments of African-American high school male athletes told by popular writers and documentarians that have garnered much of the attention from the American public. In his book, *The Ticket Out* (2004), Michael Sokolove, a *New York Times Magazine* writer, skillfully tells the story of Darryl Strawberry and the all-black 1979 baseball team at Los Angeles’ Crenshaw High School. Sokolove recounts the unfulfilled promises of the players at the school some Los Angeles natives refer to as Fort Crenshaw. With the exception of the temporary fame enjoyed by Strawberry and Charles Brown as major league all-stars, the Crenshaw players were never able to overcome their inadequate high school education and the “realities of being poor, urban and black in America.”<sup>34</sup>

In his 1994 book, *The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams*, writer Darcy Frey monitors the lives and career aspirations of the three best basketball players at Coney Islands’ Lincoln High School: Corey Johnson, Tchaka Shipp, and Russell Thomas. The major problem confronted by all three is the academic requirements for a Division I schol-

arship. Johnson is never able to reach the minimum on the SAT, and he ends up playing two years at a junior college. His dream of one day playing in the National Basketball Association (NBA) never materialized. Unlike his teammate, Shipp makes the minimum score on the SAT and accepts a scholarship to play for P.J. Carlesimo at Seton Hall. After languishing on the bench and suffering the abuse of Carlesimo, Shipp transfers to the University of California, Irvine, but an automobile accident ends his playing career. Thomas never scores the minimum on the SAT. He, like Johnson, played at a junior college. Sadly, he ends up homeless, separated from his wife and child following the close of his basketball career, and at the age of twenty-six, is hit by a train and killed instantly. Some believe it was suicide.<sup>35</sup>

In the celebrated 1994 documentary *Hoop Dreams* director Steve James, over a five-year period, chronicles the lives of William Gates and Arthur Agee, two basketball players from St. Joseph's High School in Chicago who aspire to play professionally. At first, Gates and Agee seem to flourish at the private institution and realize a measure of success athletically and academically. Gates in particular gets off to a fast start, becoming a starter on the varsity team and an honor roll student. Gradually, however, the fortunes of both boys begin to fade. Coach Gene Pingatore decides that Agee is not making sufficient progress as a player and, as a result, forces a disheartened Arthur to return to public school where he struggles academically. Gates also begins to have academic problems after suffering a serious knee injury and receiving, like Agee, little support from teachers, coaches, and his parents. Neither player ever makes it into the NBA. As recently as 2006, Gates was serving as a pastor in the neighborhood he grew up in, and Agee was trying to launch a hoop dreams sportswear line after spending many years playing semi-pro basketball.<sup>36</sup>

The stories of African-American male athletes at Crenshaw, Lincoln, St. Joseph, and other high schools across the country have caught the attention of prominent African Americans who have spoken out about the seductive power of sport and that athletic success is transitory and must be counterbalanced by a genuine commitment to education. In contrast to many prominent African Americans of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century who often expressed the view that the individual success of African-American athletes was enormously important from a symbolic standpoint, helped break down the prevailing opinions of the black man's inferiority, and had an uplifting effect on the entire black community, prominent African Americans since the 1970s in particular have consistently warned against an overemphasis on sport and stressed the importance of preparing for life after the end of a playing career. The direct message conveyed in their comments is that young African-American athletes were putting themselves at a severe disadvantage if they considered their body to be their only résumé and focused all their attention on sport rather than more realistic career choices. Implicit in their comments is that however psychologically satisfying or however materially advantageous to a few, success of individual African-American athletes is not a satisfactory solution to the problem of discrimination because political and economic dominance still remained in white hands. Implicit in their comments, moreover, is that sport, while a worthy activity and legitimate endeavor, is not by itself going to change America and substantially improve the lives of the majority of African Americans.<sup>37</sup>

For instance, Arthur Ashe, the celebrated tennis player and civil rights activist, observed in a 1977 *New York Times* open letter to black parents, entitled “Send Your Children to the Libraries,” that the African-American community “expends too much time, energy, and effort raising, praising, and teasing black children as to the dubious glories of professional sport.” “We have been,” wrote Ashe, “on the same roads—sports and entertainment—too long. We need to pull over, fill up at the library and speed away to Congress and the Supreme Court, the unions and the business world.”<sup>38</sup> Anthony Leroy Fisher, a graduate of Grambling College and vice-principal of Gaskill Junior High School in Niagara, N.Y., wrote in a 1978 *Phi Delta Kappan* essay, “The Best Way Out of the Ghetto” “that too many young blacks are looking for the ‘ghetto to glory’ storybook ending, and no one comes out to tell them that they are betting their lives with odds greater than 1,000 to one against them.” “The young black,” noted Fisher, “thinking of a bright future had better spend time studying science and math after school not practicing his sky hook.”<sup>39</sup> Earl Graves, publisher of *Black Enterprise* magazine, wrote in a 1979 essay “The Right Kind of Excellence” that for every black who has made his mark as an athlete there are dozens of others who have done so as businessmen, lawyers, physicians, and engineers. “To a teenager,” wrote Graves, “that is not apt to be an instantly persuasive argument yet gradually he must come to see and be helped to see that this is the reality that counts.”<sup>40</sup> Finally, in a 1991 essay in *Sports Illustrated* entitled “Delusions of Grandeur,” Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the W.E.B. DuBois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University and President Barack Obama’s beer-drinking buddy, echoed the same concerns as his predecessors, believing that black athletic success has served a hegemonic function. “Let me confess,” wrote Gates, “that I love sports,” but “the blind pursuit of attainment in sports is having a devastating effect on our people. Imbued with a belief that our principal avenue to fame and profit is through sport and seduced by a win-at-all cost system that corrupts even elementary school students, far too many black kids treat basketball courts and football fields as if they were classrooms in an alternative school system.”<sup>41</sup>

The cautionary tales regarding the overemphasis on sport among African-American youth are especially significant since white youth generally have a higher participation rate in sport than their black counterparts. As noted previously, African-American women represent less than 5 percent of high school athletes. The few African-American women participating in interscholastic sport are overrepresented in basketball and track and field and underrepresented in tennis soccer, lacrosse, and other sports, which richer white students tend to select. A similar pattern is evident among male high school athletes. African-American male high school athletes are 2.5 times more likely to play football and 5.7 times more likely to participate in basketball than their white counterparts. On the other hand, white male high school athletes participate in greater numbers in all other sports than their black counterparts.<sup>42</sup>

These numbers, while perhaps a surprise to many who take seriously the selected media portrayals of athletes and assume African-Americans dominate sport, are most alarming in that participation in football and basketball seem less likely to be associated with academic achievement while participation in all other sports appear to have more positive correlations with success in the classroom. Sociologists Tamela Eitle and David Eitle contend that African-American males are not only more likely to play football and basket-

ball but also more likely to be negatively impacted by participating in these sports. “Rather than sports serving simply as a drain on energies that could be spent maximizing academic achievement,” argue the Eitles, “males may end up pursuing some sports because they lack the resources to perform well academically which only serves to disadvantage them further in achieving academic excellence.”<sup>43</sup>

Regardless of the connections between sport participation and educational achievement, which are obviously complicated and multidimensional, the consolidation of power in a white elite during the post-1954 period has successfully convinced lower-class African Americans in particular, and others lacking power, that permanent social change is possible and that participation in sport and other forms of entertainment will result not only in ephemeral benefits but redistribution benefits as well. It is why the cautionary tales of Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and others fall on deaf ears among many economically disadvantaged African-American families who are not often making a choice between professional athletics or education but rather a choice between professional athletics or being a blue-collar worker or something worse. Earl Smith made clear in personal correspondence with me (based on the work of many others as well as with his colleague Angela Hattery) that high school athletes from lower economic classes, if they are able to overcome their inadequate schooling and satisfy NCAA guidelines or do not make the rare leap directly from interscholastic to professional sport, typically choose a college based on the athletic rather than educational reputation of the institution in which they are being recruited. Once enrolled, they frequently find themselves clustered in degree programs for which they have little interest and do not adequately prepare them for satisfying professional careers.<sup>44</sup> And even if they do graduate it does not mean that education has occurred, as evidenced by the famous case of Creighton University basketball player Kevin Ross who graduated without knowing how to read, and perhaps a less famous but equally disturbing case of former Oklahoma State and Washington Redskins football star Dexter Manley who testified about his inability to read before a Congressional Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.<sup>45</sup> Importantly, these examples do not specifically take into consideration those athletes whose paths first took them to Rise Academy in Philadelphia; Genesis One Christian Academy in Mendenhall, Mississippi; Eldon Academy in Michigan; and other bogus private high schools first uncovered by the *New York Times’s* Pete Thamel.<sup>46</sup>



Kevin Ross at Westside Preparatory School. COURTESY OF *THE PRESS DEMOCRAT*.

Making choices is to what Harry Edwards, the noted sociologist and activist from the University of California, Berkeley, was referring in a little known yet important 2000 interview he conducted with *Colorlines* magazine. Claiming that the black athletic pool had been so emaciated through the judicial process, disqualification, and deaths that we are “currently witnessing the end of the golden age of the black athlete” that, he says, had stretched over a fifty-year period from Jackie Robinson’s entry into Major League Baseball in 1947 until 1997, Edwards went against much of what he had expressed for years by noting that sports are crucial to the survival of African-American youth and should be emphasized as such. “There is still, a disproportionately high emphasis on sport achievement in black society,” notes Edwards, “relative to other high-prestige occupational career aspirations. Given what is happening to young black people, who have essentially disconnected from virtually every institutional structure in society, sports may be our last hook and handle.”<sup>47</sup>

Edwards’ claim that the black athletic pool has been emaciated is not easily countered considering the data. In 2006, for example, Michael Ross of MSNBC reported that African Americans are seven times more likely than whites to go to prison or jail and, according to statistics released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2008, the homicide rate among black males aged ten to twenty-four is more than double that of Hispanic and white males, even though African Americans are a minority population in the United States.<sup>48</sup> Edwards claim, however, that there was a “golden age of the black athlete” is debatable, as is the notion that a disproportionately high emphasis on sport is going to save African-American youth.<sup>49</sup> However one defines it, I do not recall reading about or living through a period that could be termed a “golden age of the black athlete” and if sport is our “last hook and handle” to save young blacks it must be a version that resembles more closely the Progressive Era’s athletic code of preparation for life or as Douglas Hartmann, a sociologist from the University of Minnesota, noted in a 2008 report to the LA84 Foundation, be deliberately designed with “positive, proactive educational intervention” in mind.<sup>50</sup>

What seems less debatable is that the increased integration in post-1954 America has, in the words of *New York Times* sportswriter Bill Rhoden in his book *Forty Million Dollar Slaves* (2006), “weakened the collective resolve of African Americans and spawned a mentality of using blackness as a way to get a piece of the pie without necessarily feeling any reciprocal responsibility to sustain black institutions.”<sup>51</sup> Gone are the National Interscholastic Basketball Tournament, the West Virginia Athletic Union Basketball Tournament, and a host of other sport and non-sport-related black institutions that allowed African Americans to maintain the collective spirit necessary to withstand the second-class citizenship they faced. Gone also is the apparent disengagement, to use W.E.B. DuBois’ famous phrase, “the talented tenth” from the poor and underrepresented members of the African-American community, a fact that has played an important role in the spiral of poverty in urban America that has never been seriously confronted.

This group, along with concerned whites, could take the lead in designing strategies and tactics to help overcome the racial disparities in public education that *Brown v. Board of Education* was meant to rectify. This group, along with concerned whites, might also do well to heed the advice of historian Louis Harlan and realize that often “the wisdom of one

era is the foolishness of another” and embark on a more aggressive and less deliberate campaign of action that challenges the continuing assumptions of white dominance rather than the reliance on an egalitarian creed as outlined in *Brown v. Board of Education* and other civil rights legislation. If not, I fear we will never overcome the premise of the story told by Malcolm X that the white man’s ice is colder or successfully challenge Booker T. Washington’s 1895 declaration that “in all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers” or ever fully realize Martin Luther King’s “dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed.”<sup>52</sup>



<sup>1</sup>For general studies on the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, see Charles J. Ogletree, Jr., *All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half Century of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004); Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage, 1975); Jack Bass, *Unlikely Heroes: The Dramatic Story of the Southern Judges of the Fifth Circuit Who Translated the Supreme Court’s Brown Decision Into a Revolution for Equality* (New York: Simon&Schuster, 1981); and James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). For a nicely detailed study on sport and the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, see Samuel R. Hodge et al., “Brown in Black and White—Then and Now: A Question of Educating or Sporting African American Males in America,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 51 (2008): 928-952.

<sup>2</sup>For information on these athletes, see Martin B. Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Knopf, 1988); John M. Carroll, *Fritz Pollard: Pioneer in Racial Advancement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); William J. Baker, *Jesse Owens: An American Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1986); Woody Strode and Sam Young, *Goal Dust: The Warm and Candid Memoirs of a Pioneer Black Athlete and Actor* (New York: Madison Books, 1990); Arnold Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1997); Jules Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); transcript, interview, Jimmy LuValle to George A. Hodak, 17 June 1988, Palo Alto, Calif., pp. 1-32, LA 84 Foundation, Los Angeles, California; “Archie Williams, Olympic Gold Medal Winner, dies-obituary-brief article” <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1355/is\\_n11\\_v84/ai\\_14100782](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1355/is_n11_v84/ai_14100782)> [14 June 2010]; and Lewis H. Carlson and John J. Fogarty, *Tales of Gold: An Oral History of the Summer Olympic Games Told by America’s Gold Medal Winners* (New York: Contemporary Books, 1987), 144-158.

<sup>3</sup>Carroll, *Fritz Pollard*, 18, 25, 29, 47-48, 90, 116-117; Baker, *Jesse Owens*, 11-12, 25-28, 37, 39-42, 53, 63, 66, 68, 121-122, 161, 237.

<sup>4</sup>Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 12-17, 19-30; LuValle interview, 1-32.

<sup>5</sup>Cited in Baker, *Jesse Owens*, 122.

<sup>6</sup>Carroll, *Fritz Pollard*, 38.

<sup>7</sup>John Nauright, “Race and Football in the Heartland during the 1930’s,” unpublished manuscript, in possession of author.

<sup>8</sup>See Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Women’s Sport* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 119-139; Gwendolyn Captain, “Enter Ladies and Gentlemen of Color: Gender, Sport, and the Ideal of African American Manhood and Womanhood During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Journal of Sport History* 18 (1991): 81-102; and Jennifer H. Lansbury, “The Tuskegee Flash and the Slender Harlem Stroker: Black Women Athletes on the Margin,” *Journal of Sport History* 28 (2001): 233-252.

<sup>9</sup>Pamela Grundy, *Learning to Win: Sports, Education, and Social Change in Twentieth-Century North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 46.

<sup>10</sup>Traki L. Taylor, “Womanhood Glorified: Nannie Helen Burroughs and the National Training School for Women and Girls, Inc., 1909-1961,” *Journal of African American History* 87 (2002): 390-402.

<sup>11</sup>Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, 110-139.

<sup>12</sup>Carter Woodson, Anna Julia Cooper, Kelly Miller, and Mary Church Terrell are examples of the types of quality faculty who taught at the school. Graduates of the school included Sterling Brown, Nannie Helen Burroughs, Charles Drew, Charles Hamilton Houston, and Robert Terrell, among others. For detailed information on M Street School see Mary Church Terrell, "History of the High School for Negroes in Washington," *Journal of Negro History* 2 (1917): 252-266; Lillian G. Dabney, "The History of Schools for Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1807-1947" (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1949); Henry S. Robinson, "The M Street High School, 1891-1916," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C.* 51 (1984): 199-143; and Kenneth Robert Janken, *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilemma of the African-American Intellectual* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), esp. 18-27.

<sup>13</sup>Edwin B. Henderson and William A. Joiner, eds., *Official Handbook: Inter-Scholastic Athletic Association of Middle Atlantic States* (New York: American Sports Publishing, 1910-1913); Biography-Edwin B. Henderson, September, 1971, Edwin Bancroft Henderson Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

<sup>14</sup>Nelson George, *Elevating the Game: The History & Aesthetics of Black Men in Basketball* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 27.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 27-33.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>C. Robert Barnett, "The Finals: West Virginia's Black Basketball Tournament, 1925-1957" *Goldenseal* 9 (1983): 30.

<sup>18</sup>George, *Elevating the Game*, 26, 28-29, 32. See also Gerald R. Gems, "Blocked Shot: The Development of Basketball in the African-American Community of Chicago," *Journal of Sport History* 22 (1995): 13-148; and Troy D. Paino, "Hoosiers in a Different Light: Forces of Change Versus the Power of Nostalgia," *Journal of Sport History* 28 (2001): 63-80.

<sup>19</sup>George, *Elevating the Game*, 82-85. For another view of African-American involvement in basketball, see Reuben A. Buford May, *Living through the Hoop: High School Basketball, Race, and the American Dream* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup>Wendell A. Parriss, "Integration of Athletics in the District of Columbia Public High Schools," *Negro History Bulletin* 19 (1955): 14-15.

<sup>21</sup>Included among these works are Sterling Brown, "Athletics and the Arts; Sports: They Set the Pace in 1947," *Opportunity* 26 (1948): 83; Edwin B. Henderson, *The Negro in Sports* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1949); Rufus Clement, "Racial Integration in the Field of Sports," *Journal of Negro Education* 23 (1954): 222-230; and Charles A. Bucher, "Sports Are Color-Blind," *Journal of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation* 28 (1957): 21-22.

<sup>22</sup>Ogletree, Jr., *All Deliberate Speed*; Kluger, *Simple Justice*; Bass, *Unlikely Heroes*; Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

<sup>23</sup>Dave Johnson, "From Court to Courts: Integration in the Schools Meant Changes in Athletics and After-School Activities as Well," <<http://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-brown23,0,2789860.story>> [2 December 2004].

<sup>24</sup>Carole D. Bos, "Remember the Titans: A Story of School Integration," <[http://www.lawbuzz.com/movies/remember\\_the\\_titans/the\\_titans\\_ch1.html](http://www.lawbuzz.com/movies/remember_the_titans/the_titans_ch1.html)> [18 January 2005].

<sup>25</sup>Ogletree, Jr., *All Deliberate Speed*; Kluger, *Simple Justice*; Bass, *Unlikely Heroes*; Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

<sup>26</sup>The most recent data from the NCAA indicates that the graduation rates for African-American male athletes now stands at 49 percent, which is still lower than white athletes but 11 percentage points higher than the African-American males in the general student body. The same data set indicates that African-American female athletes now graduate at a rate of 63 percent, which is 14 points higher than African-American females in the general student body. See <[http://www.ncaa.org/wps/portal/ncaahome?ncaa\\_global.context=/ncaa/ncaa/media+and+events/press+room/curre](http://www.ncaa.org/wps/portal/ncaahome?ncaa_global.context=/ncaa/ncaa/media+and+events/press+room/curre)> [14 June 2010].

<sup>27</sup>Cited in Earl Smith and Angela Hattery, "African American Community: The Dynamics of Race, Class, Gender, and Community" in *Diversity and Social Justice in College Sports: Sport Management and the Student Athlete*, eds. Dana S. Brooks and Ronald C. Althouse (Morgantown, W.V.: Fitness Information Technology, 2007), 379-405.

<sup>28</sup>Steven A. Riess, "Basketball Career Still An Inner-City Dream but Only Few Achieve Star Status, Financial Rewards," <<http://www.america.gov/st/sports-english/200/apri/20080401/20426zjsredna0.8432886.html>> [4 April 2010].

<sup>29</sup>C. Keith Harrison, "There Is More to Life than Sports: Getting Brothers to Take the Road Less Traveled," <<http://diverseeducation.com/article/8143/1.php>> [16 January 2010].

<sup>30</sup>Jay Coakley, *Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies* (Dubuque, Iowa: McGraw Hill, 2009), 293.

<sup>31</sup>Earl Smith, "The African American Student-Athlete" in *Race and Sport: The Struggle for Equality On and Off the Field*, ed. Charles K. Ross (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), 121-145.

<sup>32</sup>Donna Lopiano, "Gender Equity and the Black Female in Sport," <[www.womensportsfoundation.org/cqi-bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?ecord=869](http://www.womensportsfoundation.org/cqi-bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?ecord=869)> [30 April 2010].

<sup>33</sup>Sarah K. Fields, "Title IX and African American Female Athletes," in *Sports and the Racial Divide: African American and Latino Experience in an Era of Change*, ed. Michael E. Lomax (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 126-145; Angela Hattery, Earl Smith, and Ellen Staurowsky, "They Play Like Boys: Gender, Equity, in NCAA Sports," *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletics in Education* 1 (2008): 249-272.

<sup>34</sup>Michael Sokolove, *The Ticket Out: Darryl Strawberry and the Boys of Crenshaw* (New York: Simon&Schuster, 2004).

<sup>35</sup>Darcy Frey, *The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994).

<sup>36</sup>bell hooks, "Dreams of Conquest," *Sight and Sound* 5 (1995): 22-23.

<sup>37</sup>See in particular David K. Wiggins, "The Notion of Double-Consciousness and the Involvement of Black Athletes in American Sport," in *Ethnicity and Sport in North American History and Culture*, eds. George Eisen and David K. Wiggins (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 133-153 (reprinted in David K. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* [Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997], 200-220).

<sup>38</sup>Arthur Ashe, "Send Your Children to the Libraries," *New York Times*, 6 February 1977.

<sup>39</sup>Anthony Leroy Fisher, "The Best Way out of the Ghetto," *Phi Delta Kappan* 60 (1978): 240.

<sup>40</sup>Earl Graves, "The Right Kind of Excellence," *Black Enterprise*, November 1979, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup>Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Delusions of Grandeur," *Sports Illustrated*, 19 August 1991, p. 78.

<sup>42</sup>See Pat Antonio Goldsmith, "Schools' Role in Shaping Race Relations: Evidence on Friendliness and Conflict," *Social Problems* 51 (2004): 587-612; idem, "Race Relations and Racial Patterns in School Sports Participation," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 20 (2003): 147-171; Douglas Hartmann, *High School Sports Participation and Educational Attainment: Recognizing, Assessing and Utilizing the Relationship Report to the LA 84 Foundation* (Los Angeles: LA 84 Foundation, 2008), 1-34; and Tamela McNulty Eitle and David J. Eitle, "Race, Cultural Capital, and the Educational Effects of Participation in Sports," *Sociology of Education* 75 (2002): 123-146.

<sup>43</sup>Eitle and Eitle, "Race, Cultural Capital," 142.

<sup>44</sup>Letter, Earl Smith to David K. Wiggins, electronic mail, 29 April 2010, copy in possession of author; Smith and Hattery, "African American Community," 293. See also Earl Smith, *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2009); and Jade Norwood, "Adult Complicity in the Dis-Education of the Black Male High School Athlete & Societal Failures to Remedy His Plight," *Marshall Law Review* 21 (2008-2009): 21-91.

<sup>45</sup>"Outside the Lines: Unable to Read," espn.com, <<http://sports.espn.go.com/page2/tvlistings/show103transcript.html>> [14 June 2010]; Dexter Manley and Tom Friend, *Educating Dexter* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1992).

<sup>46</sup>“College Sports’ New Problem,” <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/12/01/NCAA> [10 November 2010]; Pete Thamel, “The Quick Fix: Easy Pass, Easy Score; Schools Where the Only Real Test Is Basketball,” *New York Times*, 25 February 2006, <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C01EFD91F3EF936A15751C0A9609C8B63&sc=2&sq=Quick%20Fix:%20%20Easy%20Pass,%20Easy%20Score:%20Schools%20Where%20the%20Only%20Real%20Test%20Is%20Basketball&st=cse>> [16 November 2010]; idem, “Colleges; N.C.A.A. Schools’ List Stirs More Controversy,” *New York Times*, 6 July 2006, <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A0DE2DB1330F935A35754C0A9609C8B63&scp=1&sq=Colleges;%20N.C.A.A.%20Schools%20List%20Stirs%20More%20Controversy&st=cse>> [16 November 2010]; idem, “N.C.A.A. Cracks Down on Prep Schools and Angers Some,” *New York Times*, 1 May 2007, <[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/01/sports/ncaafotball/01preps.html?\\_r=1&sc=1&sq=N.C.A.A.%20Cracks%20Down%20on%20Prep%20Schools%20and%20Angers%20Some&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/01/sports/ncaafotball/01preps.html?_r=1&sc=1&sq=N.C.A.A.%20Cracks%20Down%20on%20Prep%20Schools%20and%20Angers%20Some&st=cse)> [16 November 2010].

<sup>47</sup>Dave Leonard, “The Decline of the Black Athlete: An Interview with Harry Edwards,” *Colorlines* 30 (2000): 20-24 (reprinted in David K. Wiggins and Patrick B. Miller, *The Uneven Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003], 435-441).

<sup>48</sup>Michael E. Ross, “Grim Forecast for Young Black Men: New Studies Find Them Falling Further Out of Labor Force, Mainstream Society,” MSMBC.com, 17 April 2006, <[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/1254123/ns/us\\_news-race\\_and\\_ethnicity//print/1/display](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/1254123/ns/us_news-race_and_ethnicity//print/1/display)> [18 May 2010]; Kristin Gray, “African American Youth Face Growing Threat from Peers,” Washington Afro, New America Media, 7 October 2009, <[http://bews.bewanerucanedia.irg.bews.vucw\\_artucke.gtnk>artucke\\_ed=2486fze06cc7ccbb99e4068afabc](http://bews.bewanerucanedia.irg.bews.vucw_artucke.gtnk>artucke_ed=2486fze06cc7ccbb99e4068afabc)> [9 May 2010].

<sup>49</sup>For a thoughtful critique of Edwards’ notion of a “Golden Age of the Black Athlete” see Earl Smith, “There Was No Golden Age of Sport for African American Athletes,” *Society* 37 (2000): 45.

<sup>50</sup>Hartmann, “High School Sports Participation,” 24.

<sup>51</sup>William C. Rhoden, *Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the Black Athlete* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006), 256. For a similar type of view as that of Rhoden see Shaun Powell, *Souled Out? How Blacks Are Winning and Losing in Sports* (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 2008).

<sup>52</sup>See Kenneth L. Shropshire, *In Black and White: Race and Sports in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 128-141; Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 218; and David Levering Lewis, “Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Problem of Nonviolent Populism,” in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, eds. John Hope Franklin and August Meier (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 277-313.