The Recruitment of Black Athletes by White Head Coaches at Predominately White Institutions in Power Five Conferences

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The student athlete recruitment process at the collegiate level varies depending on sport and experience. Each experience provided during the recruitment process, either targeted specifically at the student athlete or to their supportive stakeholders (i.e. family members, high school coaches, etc.), provides insight into decision-making themes leading to the selection of a specific institution. The research on the recruitment of black and African American athletes by white head coaches seems to be limited (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Wiggins, 1997). While researchers have examined recruitment processes of black athletes (Harper, 2016; Harper, 2018; Harrison, 2008), the race of coaches (Anderson, 1993), and black athletes at predominately white institutions (Lapchick, 1995). The purpose of this conceptual research is to examine the current research on the recruitment of black athletes at predominately white institutions by white head coaches. The research questions that guide this review include: (1) What current research exists about the recruitment of black and African American athletes; (2) What factors are utilized by black and African American athletes during their decision-making process and how are these associated with social identity; and (3) What stakeholders and interactions affect the decision-making process of black and African American athletes?

What is evident is that future research efforts should provide insight into the athletic, academic, social, personal, and professional experiences student athletes desired prior to committing to a college or university (Braddock, 1981; Hawkins, 2010; Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, & Palmer, 2003). As a result of the aforementioned, my future study will extend the current research by examining the intersectionality of race and identity among athlete, coach, and institution - especially in light of the current political, social, and economic issues that plague our society. By utilizing critical race theory (CRT), primarily focusing on the impact of storytelling and intersectionality, race, sex, and class, in addition to essentialism and anti-essentialism (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993), future research will allow black and African American student athletes to discuss their motivating factors for committing to one school over the next. Furthermore, incorporating athletic and social identity (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995) and the importance of self and support (Burke, 1991; Schlossberg, 1981), black athletes will have the opportunity to discuss their navigation through personal, academic, and athletic successes and downfalls. Furthermore, through a qualitative research approach, athletes will provide crucial themes (i.e., academic major, coach’s personality, geographic location, institutional brand) leading to their ultimate decision.

In this poster presentation, I seek to present the current research associated with the intersectionality among black athletes and white head coaches in addition to providing the foundation of future qualitative research. Pending IRB approval, I discuss interviewing black athletes at predominately white institutions on their recruitment process, in hopes of finding common indirect and direct motivational factors on their decision making process.