

Understanding the (Mis)Education of African American Male College Athletes: Toward a Multilevel Framework

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Scholars, educators, and others interested in the reform of college sport have been critical of the role college sport participation has played in the educational experiences of college athletes. Attention to this topic has intensified in the aftermath of the integration of African American athletes into predominantly white institutions of higher education (PWIHE). Moreover, it has been heightened with the growing and continued commercialism of college sport since the arrival of this African American talent on campus. The research literature has revealed that in comparison to other groups of college athletes, African American males, particularly in the major sports of football and basketball, lag behind in terms of educational performance and outcomes (i.e., grade point average, graduation rates). Brooks and Althouse's (1993, 2000, 2007) books on diversity and racism in college athletics have especially been relevant to our understanding of this issue. This work is comprised of research and writings from a broad array of scholars and educators from various disciplines who have offered keen insights into why these educational disparities exist. Our goal here is build upon and extend this work by drawing on the work of scholars in a myriad of disciplines (e.g., sport management, sport sociology, sociology, psychology, education, history, Africana and African American Studies) in proposing a multilevel framework for understanding what we deem to be the miseducation (i.e., a process that often occurs when one is given a wrong or faulty education and where oftentimes external forces restrict or impair one's ability to explore the totality of oneself) of the African American male athlete in big-time college sport. More specifically, we discuss the macro or societal, meso or organizational, and micro or individual level factors that have contributed to this miseducation, and consequently, these educational disparities we see today. Implications for future research and for the various educational stakeholders of college sport, particularly the African American male athlete, will also be addressed.