

ANALYZING DIVERSITY INITIATIVES AND TRAINING IN AMATEUR ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONS

AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS
OF THE CURRENT STATE
OF DIVERSITY STANDARDS
IN AMATEUR SPORTS

ANDY DOUGHTY
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSIT
SPMT 612



MOVING THE
NEEDLE



MEETING THE NEEDS OF MINORITY ATHLETES AT THE COLLEGIATE LEVEL

THE QUESTION

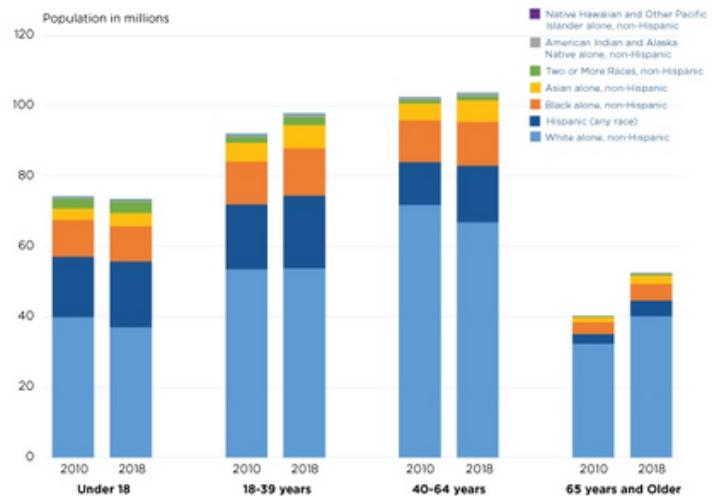
With the current social unrest surrounding the mistreatment of minorities such as African Americans, how are college athletic organizations addressing and implementing diversity expectations that will benefit minority athletes?

DIVERSITY IN SPORTS

To fully understand the changing landscape of sports, and the breakdown of the U.S. population when it comes to racial diversity, we must look at the population estimates based on the total current number of people living in America.

A More Diverse Nation

Distribution of Race and Hispanic Origin by Age Groups



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Source: Vintage 2018 Population Estimates
www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html

Per the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 328,239,523 people living in the United States as of July 2019. Of those individuals, 76.5% identify as White, 18.3% identify as Hispanic, 13.4% identify as Black or African American, 5.9% identify as Asian, and the small remaining percentages include Native American, Native Hawaiian, and two or more races.

While the American population might still identify predominately white, it is imperative to note that we have over 80 million Hispanic or LatinX individuals living in America and over 60 million Black/African Americans as of 2019. Collegiate sports organizations are a perfect example of the growth rate of minority participation and the needs of this particular population. When we examine the racial report cards of hiring administrators, coaches, and front office staff in collegiate sports which is assessed by the The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports (TIDES), we see that there over the past five years, the NCAA has received a median B- in hiring racially diverse head coaches and a C in hiring athletic directors.

The NCAA compiles research from all of their participating sports organizations to create statistical information regarding Race and Ethnic demographic reports. In Figure 1.1, we see that in collegiate sports from 2011-2019, the predominate student-athlete is white. The next closest race is Black/African American which consist of an estimated 8,000 student-athletes. We will use the NCAA demographic report as a basis for discussing the importance of diversity initiatives, trainings, and expectations for collegiate athletic departments during this period in our history of social unrest and protests for the treatment of Black/African American student-athletes.

Figure 1.1

Title/Position	Race/Ethnicity	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Student-Athlete	American Indian/Alaska Native	221	248	233	189	196	194	195	216
	Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	919	926	967	951	917	989	1036	1085
	Black	7879	7962	8393	8597	8557	8541	8448	8336
	Hispanic/Latino	1424	1490	1666	1738	1890	1776	1862	1768
	Nonresident Alien	1815	1848	1986	2212	2308	2530	2646	2845
	Two or More Races	629	875	1282	1699	1761	2042	2061	2273
	Unknown	1453	1706	1575	1210	1568	1689	1945	2205
	White	25004	25174	26940	27567	26700	26235	25968	25376

Source: NCAA Diversity Research Database Chart

CREATING AN EQUALLY DIVERSE PLAYING FIELD

IDEOLOGIES AND BIAS SURROUNDING DIVERSITY

Identity diversity is defined by differences in race, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, physical qualities, and sexual orientation (Page, p. 133). Page argues that we should not label specific populations as one thing. For example, typifying every Black American as African American reduces their culture and history into a category that might not explicitly represent their experiences. Bielby (2000) notes that every person relies on stereotypes. We, as human beings, process information in a manner that "invariably process how we perceive information" in order to make sense of the things around us. By doing this, we are either inherently or externally creating bias towards a certain identity of people. Bias and stereotypes hinder athletic organizations ability to connect, empathize, and learn from the individuals in the program. Figure 1.1 indicates that in 2019, out of the 44,104 NCAA student-athletes, 18,728 of those athletes do not identify as white. If the athletic programs supporting these athletes do not aide in teaching their staff and student-athletes about identity diversity and the negative effects of stereotypes and bias, the organization is suseptible to discrimination.



A MORE PERFECT UNION

IMPORTANCE OF ACKNOWLEDGING DIVERSITY

There are many modes of thinking when it comes to addressing diversity and implementing practices that are inclusive for student-athletes who identify as a minority. Athletic programs provide special services to these individuals including: linguists, tutors, cultural accommodations, and financial aid to ensure athlete success. However, it is not enough for these athletic teams to aide in individual minority support. Thomas (2020) states "Condensation creates the context for organizational efforts that ultimately fail to reduce or address differential access to opportunities, resources, power, and decision-making between whites and racial and ethnical minorities" (p. 79). In order to implement diversity procedures that serve all in the organization, the athletic administration and governing

bodies must create an environment where they acknowledge that there has been an imbalance of power and strive to provide equality in multiple facets of the sports organization's roles. Direct representation of minority races and ethnicities in leadership positions is a straightforward way to ensure that the needs of students-athletes that identify as a minority are represented. Another important aspect is developing training material, especially for white students, that acknowledges the struggles of student-athletes, coaches, and administration of racial minorities. Thoughtful training that incorporates various perspectives, meaningful communication, and opportunities for growth are all effective ways to address the current situation surrounding the social injustice of Black/African American student-athletes. Providing them a space to share their experiences and allowing them to express their anger and hurt in an honest way will provide all members of a sports organization the opportunity to learn and grow to help advocate for equality for those who have experienced oppression in multiple ways in America's history.

A PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

INTERVIEW WITH A COACH

I had the opportunity to have a brief phone conversation with an Assistant Football Coach from SMU about how they are approaching diversity in their program this upcoming season. He has asked to remain anonymous due to the sensitivity of the subjects being discussed. Below are the five questions I asked him with abbreviated and edited (for length) quotes:

1. What does diversity mean to you?

A: "Diversity is defined as an individual with individual characteristic traits, whether that be physical or personality-based, that makes that person unique and who they are."



2. Would you consider your staff and athletes a diverse group of people to work with?

A: "I would consider us diverse. We have athletes that have been recruited from all different backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, cultures, and races. Our staff is made up of a lot of different coaches that come from a lot of different places, and we are a racially-diversified group. The nice thing is we all find a way to connect with our athletes no matter our differences. We learn to recognize and embrace those with each other."

3. Does the sports organization as a whole provide diversity training opportunities and what does that look like?

A: "Yes, we are given multiple opportunities to partake in diversity training. We have former athletes, alumni, and community leaders come and speak to our players often. We have required trainings that we all must complete through the university system. Also, being a Christian-based private University, we focus our core values around teachings in the bible of acceptance and loving each other for who we are."

4. Will there be a conversation about the recent events in the media and what will that look like?

A: "I don't want to go into too much detail here because things are still evolving, and we are still deciding how best to support our athletes who are directly affected by these heinous crimes."

What I will say is that we plan to take care of our team, be there to support them, love on them, and learn and grow together through all of this. We all acknowledge that there is work to be done, and we are committed to doing it."

5. Do you think things will look different for college football this year between COVID and the Black Lives Matter Movement?

A: "No doubt. Our world is changing. The only constant guarantee in life is change. As far as COVID, we are monitoring and following guidelines and making sure our staff and athletes are safe. For the Black Lives Matter movement, I think that it is a wake up call to the NCAA that we need to ensure that we are a part of solution when it comes to discrimination and hate and find ways to unify the people and eradicate racism."

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CONVERSATION

Hearing this coach's perspective was insightful and helpful.

As a coach of two high school teams, I found it inspiring that the collegiate organizations are taking the matter of social injustice and oppression of Black/African American people seriously. The coach's responses fell in line with a lot of the research and background material I found surrounding diversity in collegiate organization. The importance of acknowledging athlete's differences and embracing them is becoming a norm in athletic programs. It is a slow process that requires a lot of progress, but when things such as the Black Lives Matter Movement are brought to the forefront, it is encouraging to see that collegiate athletic programs are responding with compassion, empathy, and calls to action.

MANAGERS SHOULD

1. Utilize social movements to mobilize their staff and athletes to make positive changes.
2. Continually encourage professional development surrounding diversity and inclusion.
3. Create safe spaces that celebrate each individual within the organization.

SMU's Response to Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

"SMU Athletics, our coaches and our administration mourn the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, but our sadness and outrage are not enough. We must commit daily to challenging the systems and values that are making such tragedies more commonplace."

"As an athletic department, we seek to provide our student-athletes, particularly those of color, an environment that is welcoming and safe and creates opportunities for them to excel on the field, in the classroom and life. The legacies of Jackie Robinson and Jerry LeVias illustrate that real success is only possible when everyone can be a part of the team. Racism has no place in our locker rooms or offices, nor will hate be tolerated on our campus."

"Together we are stronger. Together we must stand for justice. Together we must be a team of World Changers!"

- SMU ATHLETICS -

**COMMITMENT
TO
GROWTH**

Source: SMU Athletics Twitter page

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