



2021

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### Recommended Citation

Curry, Jennifer R.; Soares, Franklin A.; Maclin, Justin E.; and Csaszar, Imre (2021) "Black Male Collegiate Athletes' Perceptions of Their Career and Academic Preparation: A Mixed Methods Study," *Journal of College Access*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 3 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jca/vol6/iss3/9>

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# Black Male Collegiate Athletes' Perceptions of Their Career and Academic Preparation: A Mixed Methods Study



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## ABSTRACT

We employed a mixed methods approach with sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) and a Social Capital Theory framework (Bourdieu, 1977) to investigate three research questions: (1) In what ways were participants' career and college readiness capital developed during high school? (2) How do participants view their academic and career growth and development prior to and after coming to college? (3) Who provided career and college development to participants in this study prior to their college entrance? Results revealed potential reasons why disparities existed between Black and White participants beginning in K-12 and continuing through college. Implications for anti-racist school counseling are given.

**Keywords:** antiracist, school counseling, career development, college readiness, student-athletes, social capital

School counselors provide students with comprehensive school counseling programs including career, academic, and social emotional development (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2019). Ethically, school counselors should promote culturally responsive schools that provide equitable education access opportunities for students through evidence-based practices such as antiracist school counseling (ASCA, 2016, 2019). Black, male student-athletes are an

underserved population compromised in their career and academic success due to educational system disparities.

Black male athletes are less likely than white male athletes, female athletes, and collegiate non-athlete peers to excel academically and in their careers (Vereen et al., 2015). However, the trajectory of educational problems for Black male athletes begins before their postsecondary experience (Curry & Milsom, 2017). In this manuscript, we review revenue generating college athletics, and career and academic outcomes for Black male athletes. We present results of a mixed methods study of a Division I football team in which we compared White and Black student athletes' perceptions of their K-12 academic and career preparation. Implications for antiracist school counseling practice are discussed.

## Antiracist School Counseling

Education in the United States (U.S.) was built upon colonization. In spite of the myth that students excel meritoriously, Jim Crowe era practices of separate and unequal education persist: gerrymandered districts, voter suppression, and segregated housing add to the racial divide in education (Love, 2019).



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White school counselors may submit to notions of colorblindness and meritocracy, further reinforcing oppression for students of color by denying race, SES and academic achievement correlations (MacVeigh, 2012). For these reasons, school counselors are ethically bound to practice antiracism (ASCA, 2016). Yet, developing an anti-racist identity takes knowledge and skills including identifying and challenging racism, advocating for students of color, utilizing trauma informed care (TIC), and addressing policies that disadvantage students of color (Malott et al., 2018).

To integrate antiracist practice, school counselors must anticipate meeting resistance, denial of racism, and “white amnesia” (i.e., defining racism as a condition of the past only) (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019, p. 64). Challenges for antiracist counselors include ambiguity about how to address racism, worry about confronting others, balancing personal growth with antiracist action, and activism burn out (Gorski, 2019; Malott et al., 2018). Advocacy and action require knowledge, skill, courage, and wellness; advocacy might be a single act but it may also be a methodical, planned course of action leading to long-term transformative outcomes.

### College Preparation by Race

Burnett et al. (2020) studied Black seventh, 10th, and 12th grade students' perceptions of academic and nonacademic race stereotypes.

Black males endorsed race stereotypes that positioned Blacks as better than Whites in non-academics (i.e., music, sports). Black girls endorsed stereotypes that Whites were better in academics than Blacks. Both Black males and females endorsed stereotypes favoring Whites in English, possibly injuring Black students' academic self-concepts (Burnett et al., 2020).

These stereotypes may be underscored by high school course rigor which matters for college success. In particular, the number of Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment (DE) courses taken in high school correlated positively with college entrance, persistence, graduation, and grade point average (GPA), especially for STEM majors, first generation college students (FGCS) and underrepresented minorities (The College Board, 2016). Smith et al. (2018) found that AP STEM examination takers had 7% higher first year grades and were 13% more likely to graduate with STEM degrees than non-AP STEM majors. Yet, Black students from low-income households are largely excluded from AP coursework (Ed Trust, 2020). Black students represented 15% of eighth graders but represented only 10% of eighth grade Algebra I enrollment, and 15% of high school students were Black, but constituted only 9% of students enrolled in one AP course (Ed Trust, 2020).

Similarly, Black students scored a composite of 17.9 on the ACT respective to White students' composite of 23.3 (ACT, Inc., 2019).

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In 2019, only 11% of Black students taking the ACT met three or more benchmarks respective to 47% of White students (ACT, 2019). These outcomes hurt African American students' career self-concepts; and ultimately, career aspirations follow perceived self-efficacy and patterns of achievement (Hall & Rathbun, 2020).

In a study conducted by McArdle et al. (2013), GPA and ACT/SAT scores had the largest effect for predicting college freshman GPA. Zeiser (2011) investigated 10th grade students' participation in varsity football and basketball and those same students' GPA and math test scores by race in 12th grade. Participation in varsity sports did not affect math test scores for Black or White men, but it did negatively affect Black mens' GPAs (Zeiser, 2011). School counselors should play a role in closing this education gap by working with administrators, coaches, teachers, families and students to highlight between groups differences (e.g., demonstrating through data) and by advocating for Black male athletes (ASCA, 2019).

### College Athletes, Revenue, and Exploitation

College athletics have become ripe territory for ethical dilemmas. Olson (2019) noted how coaches and athletic directors create special admission policies for athletes so universities will have a better chance of winning games. For example, for the class of 2022, Georgetown University received 22,897

applications and accepted 3,327 (Top Tier Admissions, 2021). That same year, Georgetown University filed 158 special admissions in athletics (Olson, 2019). These problems are exacerbated macroculturally. Gurney et al. (2017) pointed to ethical concerns in Division I revenue generating athletics such as academic integrity, lack of health protection for athletes, and exorbitant pay for athletic directors and coaches. This inequitable structure is supported directly and indirectly by television and social media, conference leadership, and college administrators (Gurney et al., 2017; McDermand & Austin, 2018).

### Revenue Generating Sports

The Knight Commission (2015) highlighted spending increases on collegiate athletics. In 2017-2018, full time equivalent (FTE) expenditures per student at public institutions averaged \$10,780 and \$18,710 at private, non-profit colleges (Hussar et al., 2020). Comparatively, in 2013, spending per athlete was \$190,536 (Knight Commission, 2015). These amounts included student and academic services and instruction.

The drive for revenue has very real consequences for student-athletes. Saffici and Pelligrino (2012) contended that the term athlete-students more accurately depicted the role of athletes first and students second. The authors evidenced coaches and advisors encouraging student-athletes to take courses leading to easier majors or degrees with less

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rigorous curricula to maintain eligibility. Saffici and Pelligrino (2012) noted these efforts were meant to focus athletes on sports with academics serving primarily as a qualifier.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA; 2016) surveyed student-athletes to assess how much time student-athletes dedicated to athletics. Comparing similar findings from 2010 for each Division (Division I, Division II, and Division III sport teams respectively) they found that student-athletes' time devoted to athletics had increased across all Divisions. Division I student-athletes spent an average of 34 hours weekly devoted to their sport in 2015, an increase from 32 hours weekly in 2010 (NCAA, 2016). However, Division I football players averaged over 40 hours per week, including the off season (NCAA, 2016).

Beamon (2008) studied ex-collegiate, revenue generating athletes' perceptions of the costs and benefits of sports participation. Participants listed ways they had been disadvantaged by playing sports: (1) having degrees chosen for them, (2) unable to major in a specific program because the course schedule clashed with training or travel schedules, (3) encouraged to take less-demanding classes, and (4) having little to no income as their sports scholarships covered only basic necessities but their sport participation left no time for extra work. Beamon's (2008) participants acknowledged that athletics gave them a route to college but

lamented that the focus on athletics left them academically underdeveloped and underprepared for their careers. Harrison et al. (2015) found that Black male, scholar-athletes at high rigor universities were motivated to succeed academically but identified times they lost confidence in their academic abilities. Student-athletes shared having "false dreams" (p. 86) presented by coaches when they were recruited, fans who turned on them, and pressure to take easy courses or majors to maintain eligibility (Harrison et al., 2015). In sum, student-athletes in revenue generating sports attend college with hopes for their athletic, academic and career futures; however, many leave feeling betrayed by their universities for profit.

### **Academic Outcomes for African American Athletes**

Many colleges and universities have implemented academic support for athletes, but is such support effective? McCaffrey and Fouriezos (2014) argued that students who are academically underprepared for university level work are disadvantaged, as evidenced by graduation rates. The authors cited University of Georgia which had an 82% graduation rate overall, yet football players had a 70% graduation rate. Similarly, Georgia Tech reported a graduation rate of 79% for the overall student body and just 53% for football players (McCaffrey & Fouriezos, 2014).

Studies of athletics and academics have had mixed results. A 2020 Gallup survey

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conducted on behalf of the NCAA, found Black student-athletes (not disaggregated by sport/gender) far outperformed their non-athlete peers in academic and career outcomes (Beamon, 2008; Gallup, 2020). However, Southall et al. (2016) evaluated graduation rates for White and Black football players compared to their full-time college attending peers (i.e., part-time peers excluded). Southall et al. (2016) found both White and Black football players academically underperformed their peers (-5.1% and -25.2% respectively). This gap was an important finding given the NCAA's consistent messaging contending that all athletes, including Black football players, have received a quality education and positive academic experience exceeding their peers (Beamon, 2008; Gallup, 2020). Yet, when data was disaggregated, Black football players had a significantly lower adjusted graduation rate (Southall et al., 2016).

In a study of longitudinal data, Routon and Walker (2014) reviewed over 18,000 teams and 444,000 student-athletes. The researchers found a negative effect for sport participation on student-athletes' GPA (Routon & Walker, 2014). Although significant, the effect was small, yet greatest among males playing football and basketball (Routon & Walker, 2014). In all, there is evidence to suggest that Black males in revenue generating sports constitute a subpopulation of athletes that appear to have reduced academic outcomes (e.g. GPA, graduation rates) compared to their collegiate peers.

### Career Prospects for Collegiate Athletes

Harper (2016) reported that Black men comprised 2.5% of the undergraduate population but 56.3% of football teams and 60.8% of men's basketball teams. According to the NCAA (2020), there were 1,006,013 high school football players across the United States; of those students participating in high school football, approximately 7.3% went on to play in the NCAA in Division I, II, or III (2.9%, 1.9%, and 2.5% respectively). For those NCAA athletes in all divisions, the probability of playing football professionally was 1.6% (NCAA, 2020). For Black male student-athletes, the best question might be, does participation in college athletics expand or reduce/limit future career options? The answer: it depends.

Gallup (2020) noted Black collegiate athletes were 39% more likely to have a good job waiting for them after graduation than non-athlete Black peers (32%). However, Gallup (2020) did not define a good job (e.g., salary, benefits, job security) and did not disaggregate by sport or gender. Therefore, it is hard to deduce if Black males who were in revenue generating sports or those who were enrolled based on special admission policies fared as well as others.

Over one-third of student-athletes indicated that athletics limited their ability to take a desired course and an even greater number (the exact number was not provided) indicated that athletics precluded them from choosing a particular major (NCAA, 2016).

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These barriers are concerning because students who are undeclared or change majors because they need career planning and decision-making support. College students need the opportunity to take classes that match their interests in order to explore and expand career possibilities (Fouad et al., 2016).

Equally concerning, many student-athletes viewed themselves predominantly as athletes, rather than students. Athletic identity superseding academic identity may be a critical factor in career and academic success (Beron & Piquero, 2016). Colleges and universities arguably shoulder blame for the focus on revenue at the expense of student-athletes' academic and career trajectories. However, school counselors should ensure that Black male student-athletes leave K-12 with the career and academic capital to make future-oriented choices.

### Theoretical Framework for Current Study

Bourdieu's (Social Capital Theory) (1977, 1986) asserted that people have resources and assets (capital) that they leverage within relationships and spheres of influence. Individuals have various types of capital: economic (i.e., money, material goods), social (e.g., such as friendship or power), and symbolic such as a title or rank (e.g., coach, football player). Individuals may be born into capital (e.g., high family SES), or may acquire capital through gains in knowledge, skills, and networks (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986).

Capital may be formally cultivated through structures like schools, workplaces, churches, social organizations, and sports. Capital may also be gained informally through relationships with coaches, advisors, and educators (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). For college bound students without familial capital (e.g., FGCS), college capital may be gained through school counselors who provide career and academic information. For Black student-athletes, opportunities for academic and career development (e.g., ACT test preparation, assessment, work-based learning) to increase their career and college readiness capital are important. Students with limited contact with school personnel or limited academic experiences outside of the classroom, are not likely to develop a full range of career options (Curry & Milsom, 2017) and they may not have the mindset to look for such opportunities (ASCA, 2014). When school counselors observe that such opportunity gaps exist, they are obligated to address the root causes (ASCA, 2016, 2019).

### Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

In what ways were male student-athletes career and college readiness capital developed during high school?

How do male student-athletes view their academic and career growth and development prior to coming to college?

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Who provided career and college development to male student-athletes in this study prior to their college entrance?

### Methods

We employed a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Sequential explanatory designs utilize quantitative data collection followed by qualitative data collection (Creswell et al., 2017). We chose Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1977) as our framework to investigate the research questions. To answer these questions, we used a questionnaire followed by a multicase study.

Case studies investigate phenomena, bounded by time and context (Stake, 2006). In this multicase study, we researched the perceptions of the career and academic capital of members of a football team (the case). We used multicase design to study similarities, as well as uniqueness and variations, based on race and individual preparation and capital (Yin, 2018). We collected interviews and questionnaire data as well as students' schedules and transcripts.

### Research Team

Two members of our research team were Black, two were White. One member was female, three were male. One is a prior school counselor, and two are counselor educators, one is a coordinator of campus Black Male Leadership, and one is a motivational

speaker, author and former collegiate athlete. We chose to do this research because we all are interested in career development and underrepresentation of Black males.

### Procedures

We obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and were given permission by the Director of Football Operations to collect data for the study. The study was conducted during the spring (off season). A questionnaire was distributed to football team members prior to a mandatory team meeting. Research associates explained the study purpose and asked student-athletes to participate. Participants were given a questionnaire and a pencil to fill out answers.

*Instrumentation.* The questionnaire had 28 items: demographics questions (n=9) and questions related to participants' perceived academic preparation, perceived career preparation, and college major and outcomes attribution (n=19). Items were either forced choice (i.e., yes/no) or Likert scale (i.e., strongly agree to strongly disagree) (see Appendix A). The multicase study included semi-structured interviews with two research team members (described in detail in the case study section).

### Institution

Participants in this study were members of a Southeastern Conference (SEC), Division I football team. The university is located in an urban area, in a capital city. The university's profile was: Doctoral Granting, Highest Research Activity, Public, Enrollment >

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30,000. At data collection, demographics included: White, not Hispanic (76.5%), Asian students (3.5%), African American students (11.2%), Hispanic students (5.3% overall), multiracial students (2.2%), and undisclosed (1.2%). Incoming first year students had an average high school GPA of 3.4, and average ACT of 25.6. First-generation college student (FGCS) status was 36.9%.

*Questionnaire participants.* Of the 119 members of the SEC football team, 61 participated (51%). However, only 53 of the 61 participants accurately completed all 3 forms (informed consent, demographic information, and questionnaire). All were male. Ages ranged from 17 years to 26 years ( $M=20$ ). The total number of team members (119) identified racially as 83 African American, 34 White, and three of mixed race or ethnicity. Of the 53 included participants, 37 identified as African American/Black and 16 identified as White, non-Hispanic; no other races or ethnicities were identified. University classification level included: 18 freshmen, 16 sophomores, nine juniors, eight seniors, and two graduate students. In addition, 13 out of 37 (37%) of the Black student-athletes identified as FGCS, none of the White questionnaire completers identified as FGCS. For the Black participants, this result nearly matched the university's overall student demographic of FGCS. However, for White participants, the FGCS percent did not match the university's overall demographic in respect to FGCS status. The four individuals chosen for the multicase study interviews were based on a

convenience sample from the questionnaires. More information is given in the case study section.

### Results

All participants reported their majors (see Table 1 on the next page), and a pattern emerged among Black student-athletes. Of the 37 Black participants completing the questionnaire, 19 (52%) identified as majoring in sport fields: Sport Administration, Sport Management, Sport Commerce, or Kinesiology. Comparatively, only three of 16 (19%) White participants claimed these majors. Two Black participants were undecided (4%).

### Forced Choice Questions

The questionnaire results underscored problems of differential academic and career preparation for African American football players compared to White football players during high school. For example, in response to the question, "While in high school I was pushed to take honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses," 27 participants responded Yes, 14 Black students (38%) and 13 White students (81%). Of the 26 responding No, 23 (62%) were Black and three (19%) were White. This result is important because rigorous coursework has been consistently recommended for college preparation.

Another item with a demonstrated disparity included, "I had at least one teacher tell me

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Table 1.  
Self Reported Majors.

| Major                     | N         | Demographic Breakdown                  |   |
|---------------------------|-----------|--|---|
|                           |           | N (%) participants identified as White | N (%) participants identified as African American |
| Architect                 | 1         | 1 (1.9%)                               | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Business                  | 9         | 3 (5.7%)                               | 6 (11.3%)   |
| Business Management       | 1         | 1 (1.9%)                               | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Business-Marketing        | 1         | 1 (1.9%)                               | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Computer Engineering      | 2         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 2 (3.8%)  |
| Construction Management   | 1         | 1 (1.9%)                               | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Criminal Justice          | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Economics                 | 2         | 2 (3.8%)                               | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Education                 | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Environmental Engineering | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Finance                   | 1         | 1 (1.9%)                               | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Geography                 | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Geology                   | 1         | 1 (1.9%)                               | 0 (0.0%)  |
| Interdisciplinary Studies | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Kinesiology               | 4         | 2 (3.8%)                               | 2 (3.8%)  |
| Petroleum Engineering     | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Pre-law                   | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Psychology                | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Sports Administration     | 17        | 3 (5.7%)                               | 14 (26.4%)  |
| Sports Commerce           | 2         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 2 (3.8%)  |
| Sports Management         | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 1 (1.9%)  |
| Undecided                 | 1         | 0 (0.0%)                               | 2 (3.8%)  |
|                           |           |  |   |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>53</b> | <b>16 (30.2%)</b>                      | <b>37 (69.8%)</b>                                 |

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about a career outside of athletics that I might have an aptitude for". In total, 22 (59%) Black participants compared to 15 (94%) of White participants responded Yes. Conversely, 15 (41%) of Black participants responded No compared to only 1 (6%) of White student athletes. This result underscored how often Black students were primarily viewed as athletes by faculty.

In response to, "While I was in high school I had the opportunity to participate in extracurricular research or learning activities (such as robotics team, debate team, 4H)" only 10 participants responded Yes. Of those, seven (19%) were Black, and three (19%) were White. This is the only time that both groups had an even response. In regard to No responses, 30 (81%) Black participants responded No, and 13 (81%) White participants responded No. This result demonstrated, regardless of race, athletics participation limited other learning activities. Other concerns included 26% of student-athletes in this sample reported not having career exploration opportunities (e.g. career activities, curriculum). In addition, 29% reported not taking a career assessment during high school and 21% reported not receiving information on scholarships beyond athletic scholarships (i.e., merit or need-based scholarships). Finally, only 22 honors or AP courses were taken by the entire group during high school.

### Results of Likert Scale Questions

The first Likert Scale item, "I wish I had more opportunity before coming to college to develop as a scholar" demonstrated a gap between Black and White student-athletes in this sample. Black student-athletes somewhat agreed (9), agreed (14), or strongly agreed (7) for a total of 30 cases or 81%. White students somewhat agreed (4) or agreed (4) for a total of 8 cases or 50%. Another questionnaire item showed a great disparity, "If I had more information prior to coming to college, I might have made a different choice in regard to my degree." Black student-athletes somewhat agreed (8), agreed (4), or strongly agreed (8) for a total of 20 cases or 81%. Only two White students agreed 13%. For the item, "If I had more information prior to coming to college, I might have prepared differently while still in high school" students responded disparately. Black student-athletes somewhat agreed (9), agreed (6), or strongly agreed (4) for a total of 19 cases or 51%. Meanwhile, White students somewhat agreed (3) or agreed (2) for a total of 8 cases or 31%. Finally, the item, "If I had more information prior to coming to college, I might have prepared differently while still in high school" revealed variation between Black and White student athletes. Black participants somewhat agreed (7), agreed (6), or strongly agreed (7) for a total of 20 cases or 54%. White participants somewhat agreed (5) or agreed (1) for a total of 8 cases or 38%. These results were important because they demonstrated that Black participants perceived themselves as less career and academically prepared.

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### Statistical Analysis

This study passed assumptions for linear regression; we wanted to determine if participants' race was an ACT predictor. We ran a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and calculated Black and White participants mean ACT. We found a positive, moderate correlation ( $r=.643$ ) between race and ACT score with a coefficient of determination for the variables of .414. The regression linear equation for this analysis was  $Y=ax+b$ , or  $Y=5.206x+16.214$ ,  $p<.05$ . Results of the ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences in ACT scores between groups ( $F(1,45) = 31.75$ ,  $p = .00$ ) (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2.  
Correlation Model Summary.

| R                 | Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| .643 <sup>a</sup> | .414   | .401              | 3.001                      |

Table 3.  
ANOVA.

| Model      | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F      | Sig               |
|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Regression | 285.978        | 1  | 285.978     | 31.752 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
| Residual   | 405.298        | 45 | 9.007       |        |                   |
| Total      | 691.277        | 46 |             |        |                   |

Dependent Variable: ACT Score, Independent: Race

### Findings: Multicase Study

In this section, we describe the multicase study design, analysis procedures, research team reflectivity, and participants. Following, we review the findings of the multicase study. We examine our cross-case comparison and shared themes.

### Multicase Study Design

Case studies are popular qualitative designs; they are holistic and allow for thick descriptions (Yin, 2018). The common binding for this study is SEC, Division I, revenue-generating football players at a university in the Southeast. In a multicase study, a quintain, or phenomenon is studied (Stake, 2006); in this study, the quintain is the perceived career and academic preparation of the participants. We anticipated both similarities and differences among participants based on race and pre-college supports.

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### Analysis

We analyzed the data through an interpretivist lens and included researchers' written artifacts (i.e., analytic memos, field notes), transcripts, open ended interviews and participants' artifacts (Morrison, 2012). Interviews involved two members of the research team. After, field notes were written, including researchers' impressions about the interview (e.g., participants' mannerisms, beliefs/values shared). Interviews were recorded and transcribed by a research team member. We then sent transcripts to participants for member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After transcript confirmation, we began coding. First cycle coding was completed by the first and fourth authors and involved finding words, phrases, and elements within the transcripts that answered the initial research questions. Codes were placed in an excel file.

Second level coding was conducted while also instructing members of the research team, as graduate learners, about coding and creating a system of checks and balances. A shared excel file was used for each transcript. A lead researcher, and one graduate student, co-coded. Researchers used codes established during first level coding and reviewed codes alongside the transcript. The goal was to view each code through an interpretivist lens and grapple with participants' meanings. If a team member did not agree with a code, the code was discussed to see if consensus could be reached, whether to include the coded item, and the meaning shared by the participant. If

consensus was not reached, the code was removed for the quote in question.

To establish themes (third level analysis), the research team met three times. We explored the data set including our codes (19 total codes). We reviewed code patterns within and across cases (cross case analysis). This allowed us to explore the uniqueness of each story and the quintain of the whole case. Three major themes of the quintain emerged (i.e., the focus of this study). Following, we give a detailed account of each participant. Our triangulated data was used to aid in writing descriptions of each participant's experience (Yin, 2018).

*Reflectivity.* We discussed our views on antiracism, social justice, and social capital frequently to bracket our own biases in the data collection and analysis processes. We also discussed inequity in educational systems throughout K-12, higher education, and the exploitation of athletes for monetary gain. We interrogated how are views shaped the way we perceived our participants' stories, their beliefs and values, and how our own paradigms shaped our researcher lenses. One question we liked to ask each other often is, "Whose story are we telling?" The purpose of this question was to nuance the ways in which we influence our own stories, the stories we tell through research, and how the participants' impacted us.

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### Participants

Four participants were interviewed for the multicase study: two Black, two White. All four completed the questionnaire portion of the study. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym and a title that described their experience.

**Participant 1:** (Jason, “The Regretful Traveler”) identified as a Black, walk-on collegiate football player. Jason was a 21-year-old junior, majoring in Sport Administration, with a concentration in Sport Leadership. He planned to join the military when he graduated, although he was not active in Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC). He noted he did not know of any other career path, so he was choosing the military due to uncertainty.

**Participant 2:** (Rex, “The Academic All-Star”) was a White, non-Hispanic, walk-on collegiate football player who earned an athletic scholarship for his last two years of eligible play. He was a 21-year-old junior, Architecture major, and planned on being an architect.

**Participant 3:** (Finn, “The Indomitable Spirit”) was a Black, collegiate football player on full athletic scholarship. He was a 22-year-old junior majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies (i.e., three undergraduate minors combined in one degree). He had a 3-year-old daughter who lived with him while he was in school. He planned on becoming a teacher, but his degree would not lead to teaching

certification.

**Participant 4:** (Tyler, “The Drifter”) was a White, collegiate football player on full scholarship. He was a sophomore, and during our interview, he claimed to have struggled academically. Tyler began college as an Engineering major but changed his major at his father’s urging. He did not enjoy his second major, Business, and felt academically underprepared.

### **Participant 1: Jason, The Regretful Traveler.**

Jason described himself as a quick learner who easily applied information from the classroom to real world scenarios. He mentioned having teachers who noted his strengths as a learner, particularly in science, beginning in elementary school, until he became very involved in sports. Jason grew up in a notably agricultural area and attended a high school with a robust agriculture program. He had a strong interest in horticulture and veterinary sciences. He stated, “I learned how to cultivate, how to grow strawberries, we have an outstanding Ag department... It’s where my love for animals stems from.” Jason joined 4-H in middle school. He remarked, “I’m not the kind of person you normally see in 4-H” explaining the majority of students in 4-H were White. The extracurricular opportunities provided by 4-H enhanced his love of agriculture and fueled his desire for an agriculture career. He shared a 4-H example that shaped his love for agriculture:

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*In eighth grade we restored the wetlands. I found that interesting... That's when my love for animals and farming, the real hands-on work, began. In high school, I was the only football player who took those classes. I was engaged, excited, every time I was in class. Jason took three AP courses in high school (Physics, English, and Algebra). When asked if his career path might be different had he taken more AP courses in high school, Jason stated, "You had to put a lot more time in studying than with regular classes, and it started to interfere with me playing football in high school. I just felt like I was being overwhelmed with the AP courses. When I look back, I guess I took the easy way.*

Jason described his academics and football as a dichotomy in which he had to choose one area of success. He chose football. He lamented, "It was a tough decision, especially with me being so young. I didn't want to do anything that interfered with football." Jason believed that if he had learned to balance both the academics and football, he would have taken harder courses. He did not know how to manage his time, stress, and how to make everything work together. He stated, "...you only have so many hours in a day".

When asked about his major, Jason said he would advise other athletes not to take easy majors or classes, but instead to follow their real passion. Jason wanted to be a veterinarian but pursued a degree in Business when he came to college and then changed to Sport Administration. Finally, he decided to join the military after graduation if he was not drafted by the National Football League

(NFL). He stated that the military will give him the opportunity to lead, and he would be an officer. Yet, we had the sense that Jason was still unsure about his future.

When asked if he would play football if he had to make the choice again, Jason said no. He instead would pursue his career and academic goals. Jason appeared to be regretful, looking back on what might have been. As a hobby in his spare time, Jason bred dogs. He stated in the interview, "It's the closest I can get to where I really wanted to be professionally."

### **Participant 2: Rex, Academic All-Star**

Rex represented an outlier in our data in almost every way. Rex was a White, walk-on football player, with two educated parents. Rex was very successful academically. In high school, he took nine AP courses and had an ACT score of 32. Rex majored in Architecture and was satisfied with his choice. However, even with all of his success, Rex was not completely prepared when entering college. He mentioned that he did not understand the real-world applications of his degree when he chose his major. He explained, "It is not well communicated what exactly an architect does in the real world. I have had to discover for myself what all is possible with an architecture degree." Rex was clear that he had no regrets about choosing Architecture. We asked if there was any other information he needed to make career decisions. He stated, "I now know most of what I want to know about my major at this point in my education because I'm four years into it."

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Although Rex was clearly a stand-out scholar, choosing to play football had cost him some opportunities. We reviewed the Architecture curriculum at Rex's university and noticed two field-based courses (i.e., internship). We asked Rex if he participated in this type of off-campus experience. He responded:

*No, internships are not possible because the summer [class] I have to take prevents me from having time during those months to do an internship when the rest of my classmates do. It puts me at a slight disadvantage, but the connections I have through football provides me an equal advantage over my peers.*

Rex had learned to leverage connections through football in lieu of his internship. By utilizing his symbolic and social capital as an athlete, he demonstrated how adept he was at navigating capital to his advantage, something his peers with less capital had less proficiency with.

### Participant 3: Finn, The Indomitable Spirit

Finn is a Black, FGCS, on full scholarship. He was offered 56 scholarships coming out of high school to play collegiate football. His top three choices of colleges to attend were Division I teams.

Finn attended an inner-city high school in Memphis, Tennessee. He described his school as having low academic requirements for all students; not just student-athletes. Finn's lack of academic preparation was evidenced by his ACT score. He attempted the ACT three times, took an ACT prep course, and

concluded with a top composite score of 17. This lack of academic preparation caused him to struggle in college.

Finn's transition to college was also impacted by having an infant daughter. However, Finn was a committed father and wanted to be present in his child's life, so he lived off campus in family housing with his child. This daily balance of academics, athletics, and parenting was an added difficulty for Finn. Yet, in many ways, he was the picture of perseverance and determination. When discussing his matriculation through the college environment he stated:

*I had a number of setbacks at this university. Setbacks I caused by the decisions I decided to make. But I have to overcome these obstacles because of my family and my daughter, no matter what prior preparation I had before attending.*

Finn majored in Interdisciplinary Studies; yet, his long-term career goal was to become a teacher. Unfortunately, his major would not lead to teacher certification. Moreover, his football schedule did not permit him to do student teaching. And, due to NCAA regulations, he was unable to change his major to education (NCAA, 2017a)<sup>1</sup>. Ultimately, to earn a teaching certificate, Finn would need alternative certification.

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<sup>1</sup> To maintain eligibility, student-athletes are required to meet benchmarks prior to each year of enrollment regarding hours completed toward their designated degree. For example, prior to the fourth year of enrollment, 60% of the designated degree must be completed (NCAA, 2017a).

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Finn wanted to improve his life and take advantage of opportunities offered to him by the university. He participated in a NCAA Life Skills program with specific goals such as the personal growth of student-athletes, civic and social engagement opportunities, leadership, and helping student-athletes to apply skill sets to real world experiences. Finn also participated in a program designed specifically at his university for student-athletes' college and career success. He credited these programs for his success in the classroom, field of play, and home life. Finn spoke about how he would do things differently if he were to go back to high school. He said he would take more rigorous courses, focus more on academics, and use his football "as a way into college, but not as a way of life". In sum, he would plan to be more academically inclined in his approach towards college. He stated, "I would own my future through books, not football."

### **Participant 4: Tyler, The Drifter**

Tyler was a White, sophomore Business major. Tyler attended public high school in Texas. Although Tyler identified as a continuing generation college student, during our interview, we learned his father had an Associate's degree and his mother did not have a degree. So, by federal definition, Tyler was a FGCS. Tyler was on full football scholarship, but admitted he no longer saw a future in football. He suffered two injuries which left him in constant pain. Tyler stated:

*Sometimes it's hard to think of how I'll get through another season. I injured my shoulder and after surgery I thought I would be okay. Then, this year I hurt my knee... (long silence and tears in his eyes) ... I'm just...hurting all the time...Everyday I'm in pain and I don't like to complain. I know I won't get drafted (pause) so this isn't going to be a future for me. (long pause) Now I don't know what to do. I thought football was my thing. College was something I needed to get to football and now it's like the opposite.*

Tyler expressed disappointment with college, sharing that he originally majored in Engineering but switched to Business. He explained that Engineering, "was pushed by my high school, everything was STEM." He commented that he didn't really know what engineers do or much about the degree and the more he learned the less interested he was. Tyler had taken two honors courses and one AP History class in high school, but admitted the courses were hard. When asked about his switch to Business, Tyler stated, I don't really understand Business either. I'm not great at math or finance. I don't think I'm going to want to run our family business. But since I probably won't play football long term.....I don't know.

Tyler was counting on two more years of college to figure out his future. We asked him, "How might you go about figuring out your future?" Tyler seemed overwhelmed by the question. He didn't seem to have a direction or a process. He answered, "I guess I could ask my advisor. I'm not really sure because I can't change majors again." Tyler did not

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know how to resolve this career moratorium or how to approach the decision-making process.

Tyler mentioned he loved music in middle school. He played multiple instruments in the band. However, he did not have time for band after ninth grade because of football. He still loved music and said if he could have another career, it would have been music. He stated, "I wish I didn't have to give up so many other things for football." When asked about other career activities, Tyler could not remember any. His main career advisement had come from his coach and the only time he received counseling was "to have papers signed". He did not know who his school counselor was. Tyler seemed to be drifting, hoping things would somehow workout.

### Cross-Case Analysis

We conducted cross-case analysis and three themes emerged: (1) low overall career and college readiness capital, (2) football regrets, and (3) potential strengths and supports.

**Theme #1: Low overall career and college readiness capital.** This theme applied to three out of four of our multicase participants (all but Rex). Jason, Finn, and Tyler struggled to find a major, and all three described coming from schools where they were not pushed to take more rigorous courses. Jason and Finn, both Black student-athletes, felt pushed toward majors they perceived as easier. Jason mentioned his degree was "the easy way out". Finn stressed that the low academic

expectations and lack of academic and career preparation he experienced were endemic at his high school. Conversely, Tyler came from a school that heavily stressed STEM as was reflected in his initial major, Engineering. So even within this common theme, there were differences among the Black student-athletes and the White student-athlete.

### Theme #2: Football regrets.

For Jason, Finn, and Tyler, there appeared to be an undercurrent of regret related to football. This regret was on a spectrum and was expressed in varying degrees with Jason saying if he could go back in time, he would not play football, whereas Finn would place more emphasis on academics. Tyler, who had not contemplated a future without football, appeared to be in the early stages of grieving but moving toward accepting a new reality of his future. As such, he was still sorting out his feelings.

Although Tyler may not have regretted playing football, he missed his hobbies and interests, specifically music. The Black student-athletes had long-term consequences for their decisions to play football. For example, Jason, was settling for a military career as he could not think of any other career options based on his degree (Sport Administration). We were unclear if Finn understood that his current degree (Interdisciplinary Studies) would not lead to teacher certification. Finn would also need to pass the PRAXIS exam to qualify to teach. Tyler seemed unclear about his pathway forward or where to start.

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### *Theme #3: Potential strengths and supports.*

All participants displayed strengths and supports. Finn and Tyler mentioned accessing resources (i.e., career program, academic advisor). Finn, Jason, and Tyler noted the use of external supports; Finn's daughter served as a motivator, Jason's dogs became a hobby that replaced his initial career interest, and Tyler's dad gave him advice he leaned into. Although Finn appeared to come to college with the least career and college capital, he seemed the most determined to persevere and used his struggles to learn, reflect, and grow. He wanted to be a father even if it meant having to make sacrifices. Similarly, Rex seemed to use his opportunities to capitalize on his strengths. Although Rex came with high career and college capital, he easily identified his growth edges so he could grow even more. For example, Rex did not have time to do an internship, but had enough social savvy to use his football connections to leverage career opportunities in his field.

### **Discussion**

There are benefits to athletic participation; yet, the downside of sports for some students is the distraction from learning and career development. Similar to prior researchers (Vereen, et al., 2015; Zeiser, 2011), our data reflected discrepancies in the academic and career preparation of Black and White participants. Black participants had sports heavily promoted at the expense of their academics (Beamon, 2008; Routon & Walker, 2014). And, similar to Harrison et al. (2015), the Black participants in this study were

academically motivated but faced roadblocks. Black participants found that the focus on revenue-driven winning in Division I football was time consuming and did not allow them to make up inequities in K-12 academic preparation.

We set out to answer three research questions. The first was: In what ways were male student-athletes' career and college readiness capital developed during high school? Participants disclosed details about their college preparation such as whether they had been encouraged to take high rigor courses (i.e., AP, DE), participated in extracurricular activities outside of football, and taken career assessments. Black participants were less likely to be encouraged to take AP and honors courses in high school than White participants (38% and 81% respectively). More concerning, only 59% of Black participants had a teacher tell them about a career outside of athletics they had an aptitude for compared with 94% of White football players. For students to build career capital they need to hear about careers they may have aptitude for or enjoy, and teachers are critical for helping students identify such possibilities.

The first theme from our multicase study helped us answer research question one. The theme: Low overall career and college readiness capital, helped us explore the results from our questionnaire a bit deeper. Based on the questionnaire results, Black participants reported they had lower career and college capital. Likewise, in our multicase study, this lack of capital appeared to have a

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more pronounced impact on two of the participants: Finn and Jason. Both had career ideas (teacher and veterinarian) but neither majored in their career aspiration field. Jason was a Sport Administration major and Finn was an Interdisciplinary Studies major. Both indicated their majors were chosen for them by academic advisors. While this may have been well meaning, Finn and Jason noted they had not received a career assessment in high school. Thus, it might have been more helpful to give them both a career assessment rather than assigning them a major.

Jason was not interested in pursuing a career related to his major and Finn did not seem to realize that his degree would not lead to teacher certification. Notably, Finn was an ACT exception and as mentioned in his profile, he had received over 50 scholarship offers from universities. But this begets the question: who benefits from such an offer? The student-athlete or the university? Finn will graduate with a degree, but not in his chosen field, and with a low GPA, so he may never be able to get alternatively certified as a teacher. Is it possible that if he had never played football with such a rigorous schedule that he might have excelled in college?

Our second research question was: How do male student-athletes view their academic and career growth and development prior to and after coming to college? Our case studies answered this question, but we also learned a lot from the questionnaire. Black student-athletes reported they had not been pushed to take AP or DE courses, and teachers had not

suggested a career they had an aptitude for outside of sports. Moreover, many wished they had more development as high school scholars, and that they had learned more about degrees and majors. More Black participants agreed or strongly agreed that if they had more information prior to coming to college they might have prepared differently while in high school compared to White participants who agreed or strongly agreed (51%, 31%). Only 13% of the White participants agreed that having more information prior to college might have led to a different choice in degree compared to 81% of Black participants. Further, there was a statistically significant difference for Black and White student-athletes on the ACT, another indicator of academic preparation. We concluded that Black participants perceived they had significantly less career and college preparation (Research Question #2). This lack of preparation manifested for our multicase study participants as well, including choice of major or degree, feeling unsure about what to do after college, and wishing they had chosen other degrees or majors or having prepared differently for college. The multicase study theme, Football Regrets, corroborated the quantitative results for this research question.

Football Regrets underscored feelings three of our participants expressed (primarily Finn and Jason, but an emerging feeling for Tyler) that their football identities had superseded their academic identities and had compromised their futures. The compromised academic identity appeared most pronounced

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for Jason as he recognized he had the talent and skills necessary to become a veterinarian but had forfeited that career for football. Tyler noted loving music and not pursuing that passion due to football. He recognized that football had led to foreclosure of music opportunities, but we wondered if he might revisit those opportunities in the future. We noted a spectrum of grief and remorse for Finn, Jason, and Tyler as they lost their football dreams and agonized over not investing more in their academic and career development. The upside for Finn was an undeniable hopefulness, courage, and resilience he developed through his struggles as a college student and father. He had grit, strength, and fortitude.

Our third research question was: Who provided career and college development to male student-athletes in this study prior to their college entrance? Nearly 75% of the participants took a career assessment and 70% reported access to a high school career curriculum. Yet, coaches and family members were the main influence on career decision-making. A problem in the scope of our data set is that we did not measure the career and college interventions received by participants in high school. In other words, they might have received a robust career and college planning curriculum or very little. The other concern we had in lieu of these results, is that perhaps, by the time student-athletes are in high school, their primary identity as athletes may be solidified which might preclude their career and college planning.

In our sample, Black participants had lower career and college readiness capital than their White peers prior to coming to college and this trend continued once in college as evidenced by their overall majors and regrets. Our findings corroborated results of similar research (Farmer-Hinton & McCullough, 2008; Beamon, 2008). The contrast between White and Black participants was more nuanced in the multicase study where White participants discussed the involvement of parents (Tyler) to help them figure out a major and the potential use of networking for career opportunities (Rex). Neither of these were mentioned by the Black multicase participants, both of whom were FGCS.

Career and college capital readiness may be raised and leveraged by all students with support; however, creating and maintaining accessible support systems in the transition to college is another key area that needs to be explored. In regard to question three, we found Finn to have the least career and college readiness capital, but his child provided motivation. Of all four participants, he appeared most determined. This was noteworthy as determination is different from grit or resilience, and a true asset.

Notably, fixing the problems we found in this research is possible. Black males should be challenged earlier in K-12 schooling to partake in the highest rigor courses available and understanding and addressing implicit bias against athletes needs to be an integral part of training for school counselors, teachers, and coaches (Foy & Ray, 2019;

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Moskowitz & Carter, 2018; Obert, 2019). As part of an anti-racist paradigm, school counselors need to ensure that school cultures foster a student-first education for Black males throughout K-12 and that they are comprehensively providing career and college preparation (ASCA, 2016, 2019). The NCAA, colleges, and universities might consider providing school counselors and secondary school coaches training that delineates the minimal requirements of eligibility for athletic participation and expounds on the realistic expectations of college play, limitations of matriculation from collegiate to professional sport careers, and the importance of students choosing a major that aligns to long-term career aspirations based on career assessments. For incoming high school athletes (eighth to ninth grade), school counselors and coaches might want to consider an intense career development seminar that puts academics first and sends the message that all students are scholars. In addition to working with coaches, as part of antiracist practices, school counselors should consider training teachers to ensure that they are knowledgeable of trauma informed classroom models and are not perpetuating racial stereotypes. Simple acts, such as acknowledging students' scholastic talents and aptitudes can have a large impact. Inviting Black male student-athletes to engage in short term projects such as science fairs, internships, cooperative learning, encouraging job shadowing, and volunteer work related to a particular career path can send the message that students are scholars first.

Student-athletes should be given in-depth career assessments to ensure they understand how their interests, values, personalities, and aptitudes align with career choices (Curry & Milsom, 2017). Moreover student-athletes need opportunities to discuss how their majors will prepare them for a career after sports. Harris et al. (2020) provided suggestions for a school counseling group intervention for Black male student-athletes to mitigate over-identification with sport identities. The curriculum was designed to help participants explore aspects of themselves and their purpose. Two themes emerged: a greater sense of self and a connection to brotherhood. This group demonstrated that efforts by school counselors to support Black male student-athletes had positive outcomes that mitigated sport over-identification (Harris et al., 2020). Supports for Black male athletes might include foci on stress management, time management, and anxiety reduction. Our case study participants noted challenges finding balance with difficult course work and football. Understanding and effectively applying time and stress management strategies may have helped our participants feel more efficacious to pursue majors they had passion for. These same skills could be helpful for students in the college transition as sports demand a great deal of time and personal resources.

School counselors and college advisors can advocate for a reasoned approach to college athletics. Such an approach would be collaborative, encourage players to have time

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to rest in the off season, ensure career assessment and exploration beginning in elementary school, and all students would have access to credentialed school counselors. All athletes transitioning to college would have quality career development prior to choosing a major.

Ultimately, for such an approach to work, a cultural shift must occur. Coaches, athletic directors, the NCAA, and institutional structures that support athletes, must decide that the long-term health, success, and development of athletes is more important than winning. During the covid-19 pandemic, student-athletes and parents demanded that the well-being of athletes become a primary concern of college athletics. This type of advocacy may shift how policies and practices around collegiate athletics are implemented. It is our hope that school counselors, college counselors, and student affairs professionals will actively support such measures.

### Limitations

As with all research this data set comes with precautions. The sample size was limited to one SEC, Division I football team and only to players who chose to participate. As such, we cannot generalize based on the data garnered.

However, this data does add to the ongoing discussion regarding revenue generating sports and the impact on Black male student-athletes.

### Implications

A social capital framework, as proposed by Farmer-Hinton and McCullough (2008), proved useful for this study. Black participants in this study demonstrated less academic and career capital than White peers leaving high school. This lower capital appeared to follow the Black athletes in this study through their university and collegiate athletics experience.

Based on this data, we have concerns regarding the career and academic development of Black student-athletes. School counselors should implement antiracist practices including working

to create a culturally competent and welcoming school environment, providing access to a career and college going culture for all students, and providing academically rigorous programming for all students. Furthermore, providing faculty with training and resources for trauma informed teaching, such as identification of students who may need support, and recognizing faculty and staff behaviors that have the potential to re-traumatize students (Malott et al., 2018).



**“Black participants in this study demonstrated less academic and career capital than White peers leaving high school. This lower capital appeared to follow the Black athletes in this study through their university and collegiate athletics experience.”**

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School counselors should analyze school data for opportunity gaps among student groups and address gaps through programming, services, and advocacy (ASCA, 2016, 2019). College counselors and student affairs staff might consider ways to bridge athletic student support, mental health, and career services for student athletes to promote access. Division I, revenue generating athletes are busy and may need services delivered in unconventional ways (e.g., in the residential hall) in order to fully access support. Through a coordinated effort among professionals, these services might become available in meaningful ways to student-athletes. Future research could include expanding studies on the mental health, career, and academic outcomes of revenue generating sport participation on African American males. Moreover, research on how to prevent sport identity foreclosure for African American males during middle school and high school would be helpful. It also remains difficult to discern if Black males in revenue generating sports who were underprepared or those who were enrolled based on special admission policies fared as well as their Black male scholar-athlete peers. Finally, research to improve academic and career efficacy for African American athletes who will not matriculate to post-collegiate professional athletics would be helpful.

### Conclusions

We reported a mixed-methods, sequential explanatory study of a SEC, Division I football team. Disparities in academic and

career capital were found between Black and White participants. Participants left K-12 with differential educational outcomes and disparities continued at the university in the form of majors chosen and career satisfaction. The social capital framework appeared to fit the results/findings of this study and may be useful in future research. School counselors are obliged to address inequity in K-12 education as indicated by the ASCA National Model (2019). Implications for antiracist school counseling practice were given. 

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# Black Male Athletes' Career and College Preparation

## APPENDIX

Sport: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

ACT Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in College

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate Student

Race

African American/Black

White, Non-Hispanic

Asian/Pacific Islander

Native American/Alaskan Native

Hispanic/Latino

Self-Identify: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's highest education level

some high school

high school diploma or equivalent

some college

college degree

post-graduate studies

professional degree (e.g., MD, JD)

Unknown

Father's highest education level

some high school

high school diploma or equivalent

some college

college degree

post-graduate studies

professional degree (e.g., MD, JD)

Unknown

Hometown (City, State): \_\_\_\_\_

## Black Male Athletes' Career and College Preparation

My elementary, middle, and/or high school offered advanced math, English or Science course work.

Yes

No

Unsure

If yes, did you take any of those advanced courses?

Yes

No

Unsure

In middle school, I was told by a teacher or school counselor what my academic strengths were in the areas of math, English or Science (for example, I was told my reading comprehension skills were advanced).

Yes

No

In high school, I was told by a teacher or school counselor what my academic strengths were in the areas of math, English or Science.

Yes

No

I had at least one teacher tell me about a career outside of athletics that I might enjoy and have an aptitude for (for example, "*You might enjoy being a marine biologist since you seem to really like cell biology*").

Yes

No

I was given at least one career assessment in middle or high school and the results were fully explained to me.

Yes

No

Unsure

I was recruited to attend a middle school outside of my regular school because of athletics and I chose to attend that school.

Yes

No

I was recruited to attend a high school outside of my regular school because of athletics and I chose to attend that school.

Yes

No

While in high school, I was pushed to take as many honors and AP courses as I could handle taking.

Yes

No

Number of honors courses taken in high school: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of AP courses taken in high school: \_\_\_\_\_

## Black Male Athletes' Career and College Preparation

I took the ACT at least one time during my sophomore year of high school.

Yes

No

Although I knew I would potentially qualify for an athletic scholarship, someone at my high school still explained to me how to apply for academic, merit, or need based scholarships.

Yes

No

I had opportunities to explore career options through my high school curriculum so that I was certain to choose a degree program in college that fit my future career plans.

Yes

No

While in high school, I had the opportunity to participate in extracurricular research or learning activities (such as robotics team, debate team, Olympics of the mind).

Yes

No

If yes, what extracurricular activities did you participate in? [text box for answers]

I will be the first person in my immediate family to earn a college degree.

Yes

No

In high school I had the opportunity to attend career and college exploration events such as career fairs, college fairs and campus visits.

Yes

No

## Black Male Athletes' Career and College Preparation

Please answer the following questions on a scale from *Strongly agree* to *Strongly disagree*.

|   |                |       |                |                            |                   |          |                   |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 25. I wish I had more opportunity before coming to college to develop as a scholar.   | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 26. If I had more information prior to coming to college, I might have made a different career choice ( <i>for example, I may have wanted to be a broadcaster instead of a teacher</i> ).                                   | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 27. If I had more information prior to coming to college, I might have made a different choice in regard to my degree ( <i>for example, I might have majored in Kinesiology instead of Biology</i> ).                       | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 28. If I had more information prior to coming to college, I might have prepared differently while still in high school ( <i>for example, I might have taken different electives or chosen a different academic track</i> ). | Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

Based upon your answer to the previous question, please elaborate on how you might have prepared differently while still in high school.

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Who did you discuss your college and career choices with (list all):