This book is about the place sport holds in America's cultural values and the institutional racism that has been a part of the sports experience since the founding of the nation. It proposes that an understanding of the social relevance of sport is realized through a study of sport's relationship to social class, race, gender and mechanisms of political and economic domination. In essence, the book's central focus is diversity and social justice in American intercollegiate athletics.

In the first chapter, "Climbing the Racial Mountain: A History of the African American Experience in Sport," David Wiggins shows that even as *overt* racial discrimination against African American athletes on the playing fields has been overcome, parity in sport, especially at the intercollegiate level of participation, remains as elusive as ever. (He notes that the opportunity to gain complete access is denied, erecting barriers to mobility, institutionalizing academic-athletic conflicts, and fostering personal dilemmas in adjusting when athletes are faced with termination of careers.) People continue to hold onto stereotypes that portray African Americans as if predisposed to or biologically programmed for success in sport even when contradicted by a historic record of racial domination—from slavery to present day exploitation of urban, African America student athletes. It is also reasonable to regard the history of race relations in sport as a chronicle of the consequences of pervasive social stereotyping and a direct result of segregation in other social institutions (education, law, politics, medicine, business). Sport was often viewed by minorities, especially African Americans, as a possible route to upward social mobility. As David Wiggins illustrates, the historic forces and experiences of African American athletes took place as often off the playing field as they did on the fields of play: the Civil Rights movement, black athletic revolts, academic performance and graduation rates of Black athletes, as well as the current legitimacy crisis of African American sports agents.

Abstract ▼ This essay examines the involvement of African Americans in sport from the latter half of the 19th century to the present. Particular attention is paid to the critical events that influenced the status of African American athletes at both amateur and professional levels of sport. A number of outstanding African American athletes distinguished themselves in

CHAPTER

Climbing the Racial Mountain: A History of the African American Experience in Sport

DAVID K. WIGGINS

Key Terms

- Social Darwinism
- Historically Black colleges
- Civil Rights movement
- Black athletic revolts
- African American athletic superiority
- Academic performance and graduation rates
- African American sports agents

a variety of different sports during the latter half of the 19th century. Hardening racial policies, combined with a number of other societal factors in the late 19th century, forced African Americans to form their own teams and leagues in a number of different sports. Although a few African American athletes were able to overcome racial barriers and compete in predominantly white organized sport, the large majority participated in sport behind segregated walls throughout the first half of the 20th century. The signing of Jackie Robinson by the Brooklyn Dodgers paved the way for African American athletes to reenter predominantly white organized sport in increasing numbers. African American athletes shed their traditional conservative approach to racial matters and became involved in the Civil Rights movement during the latter part of the 1960s and the early 1970s. African American athletes eventually received a great deal of attention from academicians and became the source of much debate as they realized increasing success as participants, yet continued to endure frustrations wrought by racial discrimination.

Introduction

The history of the African American athletes' involvement in sport has been marked by a number of major successes interspersed with bitter disappointments. Initially exposed to different sports on southern plantations or in larger cities in the eastern half of the United States, a number of outstanding African American athletes distinguished themselves in highly organized sport at both the amateur and professional levels of competition in the years immediately following the Civil War (Ashe, 1988; Betts, 1974; Henderson, 1939, 1972; Lucas & Smith, 1978; Malloy, 1995; Rader, 1983; Ritchie, 1988; Rhoden, 2006; Somers, 1972; D. K. Wiggins, 1979, 1985, 2006; Zang, 1995). By the latter years of the 19th century, the large majority of African American athletes were, for various reasons and under different circumstances, excluded from participating in most highly organized sport and forced to establish their own teams and leagues operated without white interference. With the notable exceptions of boxing and international athletic contests, African Americans established their own organizations behind segregated walls in such sports as football, basketball, and baseball. These separate institutions were a source of great pride to the African American community and served as visible examples of black organizational skill and entrepreneurship during the oppressive years of the first half of the 20th century (Ashe, 1988; Betts, 1974; Grundy, 2001; Henderson, 1939, 1972; Lanctot, 1994, 2004; Liberti, 2004; Lomax, 1998; Lucas & Smith, 1978; Malloy, 1995; P. B. Miller, 1995; Rader, 1983; Rayl, 1996; Rhoden, 2006; Rogosin, 1983; Ruck, 1986; Somers, 1972). The historic signing of Jackie Robinson by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1945 was the beginning of the end for separate sporting organizations, but it also helped usher in the reintegration of sport in this country. Robinson's signing with the Dodgers, combined with the integrationist policies in the post-World War II era, triggered the reentry and gradual acceptance of African American athletes into various sports. The following two decades witnessed unprecedented growth in the number of African American athletes participating in sport, a growth that proceeded at an uneven rate depending on the particular sport and location (Grundman, 1979; Lowenfish, 1978; Spivey, 1983; Tygiel, 1983; D. K. Wiggins, 1983, 1989, 2006).

Toward the latter part of the 1960s, African American athletes became involved in the Civil Rights movement by actively protesting racial discrimination in sport and the larger society. The two major forums for protest were the Olympic Games and predominantly white university campuses, where African American athletes staged boycotts and spoke out against the racial discrimination experienced by them and other members of the African American community. Although their personal involvement in civil rights issues slowly abated under the weight of the women's rights movement and issues associated with inflation and unemployment, the role of African American athletes in organized sport continued to be of great interest to both academicians and lay people alike. In recent years, African American athletes have garnered front-page headlines, particularly in regard to their exploitation by educational institutions, inability to assume managerial and upper-level administrative positions in sport, and restriction to particular playing positions as well as sports (Coakley, 1990; Edwards, 1973 a, b; Leonard, 1993; Rhoden, 2006; Spivey, 1985; D. K. Wiggins, 1988).

A Taste of Success in Late 19th-Century Sport

The African American athlete's first real taste of highly competitive sport took place in the years immediately following the Civil War. Although some African American athletes had achieved fame prior to the great war between the states, it was not until the bloody conflict ended that large numbers of them would realize national and even international acclaim in a wide range of sports. The newly found freedom following the war and the lasting sporting traditions established during slavery created an atmosphere in which African Americans were more readily accepted into horse racing, baseball, and other sports popular during the period. For example, Peter Jackson, the great boxer from the Virgin Islands by way of Australia, continued the tradition of outstanding black fighters and became a household name among pugilistic fans through his well-known ring battles with such men as James J. Corbett, George Godfrey, and Frank Slavin (Ashe, 1988; Betts, 1974; D. K. Wiggins, 1985). Isaac Murphy and a number of other diminutive African Americans dominated the jockey profession, capturing the Kentucky Derby and many of horse racing's other prestigious events (Ashe, 1988; Betts, 1974; Hotaling, 1995, 2005; Somers 1972; D. K. Wiggins, 1979, 2006). Marshall "Major" Taylor, the great bicyclist from Indianapolis, seized the imagination of racing fans on both sides of the Atlantic with his amazing feats of speed on the oval track (Ashe, 1988; Betts, 1974; Ritchie, 1988; Taylor, 1928; D. K. Wiggins, 2006). Moses "Fleetwood" Walker and his brother Weldy became Major League Baseball's first African American players when they signed contracts with the Toledo Mudhens of the American Association in the mid-1880s (Malloy, 1995; McKinney, 1976; Peterson, 1970; Zang, 1995).

By the latter years of the 19th century African American athletes were being excluded from highly organized sport. Even those African American athletes who had achieved great success were either eliminated or pressured to drop out of their respective sports. The reasons for their elimination from highly organized sport were many and varied, including the dominant culture's belief in black inferiority, general deterioration of black rights, and eventual separation of the races in

late 19th-century America. (Davis, 1966; Lucas & Smith, 1978; Rader, 1983; Somers, 1972). The southern black codes, established shortly after the Civil War to insure legal restrictions against the newly freed slaves, became easier to implement toward the end of the century as northern Republicans abandoned their previous commitment to black rights. Further deterioration of black rights resulted from decommitment by the United States Supreme Court toward the latter part of the 19th century. In 1883, the Supreme Court affirmed legislation overturning the 14th Amendment, citing that prevention of discrimination against individuals by states did not prohibit discrimination by individual citizens. In 1896, the famous *Plessy v. Ferguson* case legally sanctioned separation of schools by race and upheld "separate-but-equal" accommodations on railroads. In 1898, the Supreme Court kept many African Americans out of politics by upholding poll-tax qualifications and literary tests for voting (Logan, 1965; Meier & Rudwick, 1963; Woodward, 1966).

The Supreme Court decisions took place in an increasingly more hostile environment where African Americans were being "proven" inferior to whites. The exclusion of African Americans from sport, like the exclusion of African Americans from all walks of life, was given a philosophical rationale based on a combination of social Darwinism, the rise of imperialism around the world, and the spread of pseudoscientific writings by academicians and others. Such well-known thinkers as Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner gave support to the belief that African Americans were on the lowest rung of the evolutionary ladder, incapable of surviving in a competitive society due to their intellectual and emotional inferiority (Cochran & Miller, 1961; Logan, 1957; Meier & Rudwick, 1963; Woodward, 1966). Social Darwinism was supported in principle by various members of the dominant culture who believed "nonwhite" people of the new territories annexed during imperialist expansion were merely savages in need of education and cultural enlightenment. The belief in African American inferiority was further "substantiated" by a number of racist treatises and academic studies completed during the period. Prejudiced whites received all the support they needed from academicians in such divergent fields as history, psychology, sociology, biology, and anthropology, who were busily trying to prove African American inferiority through their various writings (Cochran & Miller, 1961; Logan, 1957; Meier & Rudwick, 1963; Woodward, 1966).

Striving for an Equal Share in the American Dream

The segregation of highly organized sport did not stop a select number of African American athletes from continuing to achieve success in certain sports at different levels of competition. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, a number of outstanding African American athletes gained prominence in professional boxing, in college sport on predominantly white university campuses, and in Olympic competition (Ashe, 1988; Betts, 1974; Chalk, 1976; Davis, 1966; Fleischer, 1938; Young, 1963).

Involvement of African Americans in boxing had a long tradition, extending back to the early years of the 19th century when Tom Molineaux, with assistance from Bill Richmond, another famous African American pugilist and trainer of boxers, fought for the heavyweight championship against the Englishman Tom Crib (Brailsford, 1988; Cone, 1982; Frazer, 1999; Goodman, 1980; Gorn, 1994;

Kaye, 2004; J. W. Rudolph, 1979; Shropshire, 2007). A sport that fit nicely into the dominant culture's stereotypical notions of African Americans and legendary traditions of gladiatorial combat, boxing provided a better life for some African Americans while at once helping delimit the conditions of African American identity within American culture and reflecting the racial realities of society in general. African Americans withstood the segregationist policies of the late 19th century and continued to engage in matches, drawing worldwide attention from audiences especially interested in bouts where at least one of the fighters was black (Early, 1989; Kaye, 2004; Sammons, 1988; Shropshire, 2007).

The two most prominent African American fighters of the first half of the 20th century were the similarly legendary, yet decidedly different, Jack Johnson and Joe Louis. Johnson, the powerfully built boxer from Galveston, Texas, became the first African American to capture the world's heavyweight championship, holding on to the title for some seven years before losing to the Pottawatomie giant, Jess Willard, in 1915. As great as Johnson's exploits were in boxing, it was outside the squared circle that Johnson gained the most attention and caused the greatest controversy. He has often been referred to as a "Bad Nigger," a man who played on the worst fears of the dominant culture by marrying three white women and having illicit affairs with a number of others, often prostitutes whom he treated with an odd mixture of affection and disdain. He was absolutely fearless and attracted to dangerous escapades that challenged white conventions and mores. Although a hero to many members of his race, Johnson drew the wrath of segments of both the African American and white communities because of his unwillingness to assume a subservient position and play the role of the grateful black. He was eventually convicted of violating the Mann Act for transporting a white woman across state lines for illicit purposes and was forced to leave the country for a short time before returning home to serve a jail sentence at the federal prison in Leavenworth, Kansas (Farr, 1964; Gilmore, 1975; Hietala, 2002; Kaye, 2004; Roberts, 1983; Shropshire, 2007; Ward, 2004; D. K. Wiggins, 2006; W. H. Wiggins, 1971).

The bitter aftertaste from Johnson's career, combined with continuing racial discrimination in American society, made it virtually impossible for African American boxers to secure championship fights over the next two decades. That all changed in 1937, however, when Joe Louis, the superbly talented boxer from Detroit, became the second African American heavyweight champion by defeating James Braddock. Louis was a decidedly different champion than Johnson. Possessing enormous strength and boxing skills, Louis was a quiet, dignified man who assumed the more subservient role whites expected from members of his race. He became a hero of almost mythical proportions in this country's African American community by demolishing white fighters with remarkable regularity and serving as a symbol of possibility for those subjugated by continuing racial discrimination (Capeci & Wilkerson, 1983; Demas, 2004; Edmonds, 1973; Erenberg, 2006; Hietala, 2002; Kaye, 2004; Margolick, 2005; McRae, 2002; Mead, 1985; Shropshire, 2007; D. K. Wiggins, 2006).

Whereas Louis and Johnson gained fame as possibly America's finest pugilists, a select number of outstanding African American athletes outside the South found success in integrated high school sport and then continued that success in some of the most prestigious predominantly white colleges in the country. Some of these athletes would even realize international acclaim for their great athletic per-

formances. John Baxter Taylor, the great track star, was one such athlete. He attended racially mixed Central High School and Brown Preparatory before enrolling in the University of Pennsylvania. Winner of the 440-yard dash in the 1904, 1907, and 1908 championships of the Intercollegiate Amateur Athletic Association, Taylor was a member of the gold-medal-winning 400-meter relay team in the 1908 Olympic Games in London. Paul Robeson, the great singer, actor, athlete, and civil rights activist, was one of three African Americans among the 250 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 selected Phi Beta Kappa and a two-time member of Walter Camp's All-American football team in 1917 and 1918. Fritz Pollard starred in several sports at integrated Lane Technical High School in Chicago before becoming a student at Brown University where he was selected to Walter Camp's All-American football team in 1916. He would eventually become a player with the Akron Pros in a league that evolved into the NFL and later achieved distinction as the first African American head coach in a major team sport when he was hired to lead the Pros in 1921. 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 Ohio State University. Woody Strode and Kenny Washington, the UCLA stars who integrated the NFL with the Los Angeles Rams in 1946, both attended racially mixed high schools in Los Angeles; Strode attending Jefferson High School and Washington Lincoln High School. 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 (Ashe, 1988; Baker, 1986; Behee, 1974; Carroll, 1992, 2004; Chalk, 1976; T. G. Rampersad, 1997; Smith, 1988; Spivey, 1988; Strode & Young, 1990; D. K. Wiggins, 1991, 2006).

The great success of these athletes did not guarantee them equitable treatment or shield them from the hideous race relations of Jim Crow America. In fact, their accomplishments were sometimes overshadowed by the insensitivity and various forms of discrimination they experienced on their individual campuses and outside the halls of academe. African American athletes at predominantly white schools invariably experienced the loneliness and sense of isolation that come with being members of a small minority in a largely white setting. A large number of African American athletes found white campuses and their environs insensitive to their needs, not always providing satisfying social and cultural activities and educational support services necessary for academic success (T. Davis, 1995; L. Miller, 1927; Spivey & Jones, 1975; D. K. Wiggins, 1991; Wolters, 1975).

Perhaps most traumatic for African American athletes were the racially discriminatory acts committed against them by white opponents from other institutions. The most noteworthy of these involved the refusal of white institutions to compete against schools that had African American athletes on their teams. It was especially hurtful to African American athletes when one of their own teammates or coaches were complicit in these blatant forms of racial discrimination. For example, Fritz Pollard recalled with much pain how his own coach at Lane Technological High School in Chicago, R. F. Webster, kept him out of a football 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 (Carroll, 1994). In 1916 Washington and Lee College of Virginia threatened to withdraw from a football game against Rutgers because Paul Robeson was on the Rutgers team. Rutgers coach George Sanford eventually acceded to Washington and Lee's request, and Robeson was forced to sit out the game, apparently without any protest from the Rutgers community (Fishman, 1969; Gilliam, 1976; D. K. Wiggins, 1991). Approximately 13 years after the Robeson incident, coach Chuck Meehan of New York University acceded to the demands of the University of Georgia by withholding his star halfback, Dave Myers, from a football game between the two institutions. This incident resulted in much debate and protest, including protracted negotiations between the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and university officials (Spivey, 1988; D. K. Wiggins, 1991; Wolters, 1975). In 1941, New York University complied with the wishes of Catholic University of America by withholding its three African American athletes from a track meet in Washington, DC. In the same year, Harvard University's outstanding African American lacrosse player, Lucian Alexis, Jr., was withheld from a match against the Naval Academy because of that institution's refusal to compete against African American players (P. B. Miller, 1991). The Alexis decision caused a great deal of protest on Harvard's campus and ultimately resulted in the university's announcing that it would never again "countenance racial discrimination" (Brower, 1941, p. 261).

Sport Behind Segregated Walls

As a select group of African American athletes struggled to realize a measure of success in predominantly white organized sport, the African American community established its own separate sporting organizations behind segregated walls and out of view of most members of the dominant culture. Although remarkably similar to white-controlled institutions, these sporting organizations reflected special African American cultural patterns, attesting to the strength and vibrancy of the African American community during the oppressive years of the early 20th century (Ashe, 1988; Gems, 1995; George, 1992; Gould, 2003; Grundy 2001; Henderson, 1939; Lanctot, 1994, 2004; Liberti, 1999, 2004; Lomax, 1998; P. B. Miller, 1995; Peterson, 1970, 1990; Rayl, 1996; Rogosin, 1983; Ruck, 1987).

Prime examples of African American sporting organizations were the athletic programs established at black high schools. Many of the leading black high schools in this country fielded athletic teams, including M Street School in Washington, D.C., arguably the finest high school in America during the early 20th century. There were also separate sports leagues and organizations established in the African American community patterned after those interscholastic sports leagues and organizations established in the white community. In 1906, Edwin Bancroft Henderson, the great physical educator, historian of the black athlete, and athletic administrator, 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, Wilmington, Delaware, and Baltimore, 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 schools 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 (Henderson & Henderson, 1985; Kuska, 2004; D. K. Wiggins, 1997, 1999).

The ISAA and PSAL in Washington, D.C., would eventually be followed by other high school sports organizations in other African American communities across America. In 1924 fourteen schools formed the West Virginia Athletic Union, a significant event 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 to create a separate organization, and Alabama finally established a black high school athletic association in 1948 (George, 1992).

Perhaps the most popular sport of these athletic associations was basketball. Although they would sponsor a variety of competitions in different sports, the black state high school athletic associations were seemingly most interested in basketball and showcased it in year-end tournaments. Certainly one of the most important of these tournaments was sponsored by the West Virginia Athletic Union (WVAU). 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 an opportunity for African Americans from every part of West Virginia to come together and share a degree of racial pride and communal spirit (Barnett, 1983). During the early years of the tournament, schools from the southern portion of the state, including Kimball, Gary District, Genoa (Beckley) and Excelsior (War) dominated because of the relatively larger number of African Americans. Between 1934 and 1945, the tournament was dominated by Clarksburg Kelly Miller High School. Coached by the famous Mark Cardwell, Kelly Miller won the state tournament in 1935, 1936, 1942, 1943, and 1944. Between 1946 and 1957, the last year of the tournament, Charleston Garnet and Huntington Douglass would dominate play, partially a result of the transformation of basketball into a more urban or city game (Barnett, 1983).

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 who had been very instrumental in the creation of the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association (now Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association) in 1912, 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 as the reason for its decision. 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. The four tournaments in Gary, Indiana, were highly successful, in spite of the fact that it faced stiff competition from the recently organized Southern Interscholastic Basketball (SIB) tournament founded by Cleve Abbott at Tuskegee Institute. Run by Roosevelt's High School's John Smith, perhaps the country's most well-known black schoolboy coach who formed the all-black National Interscholastic Athletic Association (NIAA), the tournament in Gary typically realized attendance each year of some 10,000 and was marked by the outstanding play of some of the best teams in America. Beginning in 1939 the tournament shifted to various sites, including Roanoke, Virginia, and both Durham and Fayetteville, North Carolina, until World War II put a temporary halt to the event in 1942 (George, 1992).

In 1945 the tournament was revived by Tennessee A & I president Walter Davis and the school's athletic director Henry Arthur Keane. 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 Association 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 (George, 1992; Paino, 2001; Pierce, 2000).

Complementing the athletic programs at segregated high schools were those established at historically black colleges. Originally organized during the late 19th century, athletic programs at historically black colleges were similar to those at predominantly white institutions in that they began as informal, student-run activities and evolved into highly structured and institutionally controlled phenomena. They were also much like intercollegiate athletic programs on white campuses in that they included a wide variety of sports, were eventually controlled by elaborate bureaucratic organizations, and were rationalized along both educational and social lines. Most historically black colleges competed in all the major team sports, including football, which was one of the most popular sports in the African American community. The annual Thanksgiving Day football games between various schools, including the classic match between Howard and Lincoln (PA), drew thousands of spectators from around the country, contributed to a sense of institutional pride and national reputation, and stimulated school spirit by bringing students, faculty, and alumni together to share in the excitement of common pursuits. Organizational structure was first brought to black college sport in 1912, when the Colored (later Central) Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) was formed among such well-known institutions as Howard, Lincoln (PA),

and Hampton Institute. Shortly after the creation of the CIAA, similar athletic associations were organized, which led to the further legitimacy of black college sport (Ashe, 1988; Captain, 1991; Chalk, 1976; George, 1992; Henderson, 1939; P. B. Miller, 1995).

Differences between athletic programs at historically black colleges and predominantly white institutions were almost as great as their similarities. In contrast to their white counterparts, black colleges lacked the funds necessary to hire large coaching staffs, purchase the latest equipment, and build elaborate athletic facilities. The financial circumstances of most black colleges made it impossible for them to outfit well-equipped teams like those at predominantly white institutions. Sport at historically black schools was also different from athletic programs at predominantly white institutions in that the exploits of many outstanding black college athletes never became known to a larger American audience. Although many of them became household names in the African American community, black college athletes were forced to perform behind segregated walls, which obscured their many exploits from public view and usually minimized the attention they received from the powerful white press (Ashe, 1988; Captain, 1991; Chalk, 1976; George, 1992; Henderson, 1939; Liberti, 1999, 2004; P. B. Miller, 1995; Rhoden, 2006; D. K. Wiggins, 2006).

The last major difference between the two forms of intercollegiate sport had to do with gender and participation in the Olympic Games. Few, if any, male athletes from black colleges participated in the Olympics. Male athletes from black colleges were left at home whereas John Taylor, John Woodruff, and other great performers from predominantly white universities traveled the world competing in the most famous of all athletic festivals. Why there were no male Olympians from black colleges is open to speculation, but it partly stemmed from the fact that predominantly white institutions recruited the best of the elite African American athletes (Ashe, 1988; Chalk, 1976; Henderson, 1939).

Ironically, African American female athletes who participated in the Olympic Games often came from black colleges rather than predominantly white universities. The first wave of African American women Olympians, including high jumper Alice Coachman, the first African American woman to capture an Olympic gold medal, had been members at various times of Cleveland Abbott's great track teams at Tuskegee Institute. The next outstanding group of African American women Olympians, including such great athletes as Wilma Rudolph, Barbara Jones, Martha Hudson, and Lucinda Williams, were products of Edward Temple's famous Tigerbelles track teams from Tennessee State University (Cahn, 1994; Gissendanner, 1994, 1996; W. Rudolph, 1977; Thaxton, 1970; D. K. Wiggins, 2006). The large number of women Olympians from historically black colleges perhaps resulted, as Susan Cahn has suggested, from the fact that African American women athletes were seemingly more accepted in their community than white women athletes were in their own. Although "middle-class white women" avoided track and field because of its reputation as a "masculine endeavor," African American women athletes were training and honing their talents under the watchful eyes of African American male coaches like Abbott and Temple (Cahn, 1994, p. 112). Unfortunately, the acceptance of African American women in a sport such as track and field "also reinforced disparaging stereotypes of black women as less womanly or feminine than white women" (Cahn, 1994, p. 112).