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## NCAA Scholarship Cuts and Black Coaches Assn.- NFL Conference Finals

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The NCAA decided a year ago to cut the number of scholarships for men's basketball from fifteen to thirteen. Two weeks ago that body in convention rejected an attempt by a number of coaches to restore one of the two scholarships. This produced cries of pain from several of the coaches, and from one coaches group, the Black Coaches Association. They claimed racism, and threatened a boycott. The threat was withdrawn when the Congressional Black Caucus and the Justice Department displayed some interest in the subject. One can only speculate that the NCAA would have preferred a boycott to the possibility of the federal government investigating its questionable business.

So what is this about anyway? Is it really a racial question, or just a financial question? Or is there some hidden agenda?

The Black Coaches Association under the leadership of John Chaney of Temple, John Thompson of Georgetown, and George Raveling of USC, charge racism. If we can assume that this one additional scholarship would definitely go to an African American, then the charge might hold up. There is of course no way of demonstrating this.

In addition these coaches claim that the NCAA action will deny a college education to African Americans, and so they want the scholarship restored. If they would like to give more credibility to their protest, they should ask the NCAA to provide funding for a scholarship for an African American student, a non-athlete, as a way to ensure against cuts into educational opportunity to African Americans. It would also remove the Black coaches from the charge that they are only interested in acquiring basketball players.

When the decision to cut scholarships was made, it was done on the recommendation of the President's Commission as a way to cut costs in intercollegiate athletics, and was part of a larger plan in this area, which included the cutting of a number of college coaching positions in several sports, as well as scholarships.

The fact of the matter is that basketball teams do not need thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen players on scholarship. Most teams play only eight or nine players in games, and certainly ten scholarship players would be enough to insure adequate practice sessions. There is enough marginal talent around most

campuses to fill out the bench. The same can be said of football, where there clearly is no need for 75 to 90 people on scholarship.

In addition the coaches might well be asked to demonstrate their dedication to the education of students, by tying the number of scholarships to the number of players on scholarship who graduate. If an athlete is kept on a campus for five years to use up eligibility plus one red shirt year, it seems reasonable to expect them to graduate. If they can not, then the coach should lose the ability to use that scholarship again. The hidden agenda here is really the old Proposition 48 issue, which the NCAA insists is about academic standards, and the black coaches know is about race.

And finally let's stop calling these things scholarships. Let's go back to the old terminology, athletic grants-in-aid. Scholarship implies scholarly excellence, not athletic excellence. These are athletes not scholars.

And speaking of scholars, the National Football League, which has an extremely high rate of non-degree holding former collegians among its players, is heading into the conference finals to determine which teams will meet on Super Sunday in Atlanta.

After an incredibly lackluster regular season, the playoffs have been a pleasant surprise. Exciting games and great individual performances have set the tone for the post-season. In the opening round the Kansas City-Pittsburgh overtime game with an outstanding performance by Joe Montana, was matched in excitement only by the Green Bay-Detroit game. Then this past weekend the Kansas City-Houston and the Raiders-Buffalo games matched that level. Once again Joe Montana showed why Kansas City paid him the big bucks to move East.

But mark this clearly. We are only one week away from a Super Bowl re-match, and a fourth straight Buffalo appearance. This depressing thought cries out for action against Buffalo by the ice-skating crowd. Something must be done to keep the Bills out of Atlanta on Super Sunday.

I would like to think that Joe Montana might be enough, but the game is in Buffalo, where it might take a heat wave for the Chiefs to challenge. Meanwhile here come the Cowboys, with only the Niners standing in their way.

Let's hope this is a double-dog weekend.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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