

2-10-1993

## Marge Schott Racial Slurs - The African American Athlete

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### Recommended Citation

Crepeau, Richard C., "Marge Schott Racial Slurs - The African American Athlete" (1993). *On Sport and Society*. 316.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/onsportandsociety/316>

SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE  
February 10, 1993

The word police have caught up with Marge Schott. Major league baseball has completed the investigation of charges that Marge used racial and ethnic slurs like Richard Nixon used expletives. And so she must be punished.

And what will her punishment be? First, she will be suspended from club operations for one year. Second, Marge Schott will be sent to her room. She will not be differ among themselves in terms of body types and physical characteristics as much as they differ from any selected individual whites. Furthermore many black athletes can be shown to be more like a selected group of white athletes than a selected group of black athletes.

Even within a group of black athletes, as within the black population as a whole, there is tremendous diversity of physical builds, body proportions, and other anatomical, physiological, and biological features. The same can be said of whites. In the face of this diversity, generalizations fail.

To look at a specific example: If 50% of all blacks in America have a favorable leg length to height ratio, compared to 20% of whites, then you might expect that there would still be three times more actual numbers of whites than blacks in the total population with this trait. Therefore three times more white athletes than black athletes would possess this physiological advantage. Beyond that it is very difficult to connect a particular physical trait to a particular athletic skill or performance.

In the psychological area of relaxation under stress, there is virtually no evidence to support the claim of black superiority, and in fact some studies show the opposite.

As to the claim that there is some sort of genetic superiority resulting from the selective character of survival in slavery, this is beyond all belief, and fits well into the Jimmy the Greek school of genetics.

This argument is significant because if natural athletic skills belong to blacks then they can not claim to have earned and learned these skills. They can not use the facts of their performance as evidence for either equality or their suitability to serve as coaches. This is also related to the rationale for denying blacks certain positions that are designated as

requiring high mental abilities. The quarterback in football would be one such example.

If there is no evidence of physical superiority then how can the high numbers of blacks excelling in professional sport be explained. Clearly cultural factors come into play, such as motivation, perception of opportunities for success, and limited avenues for success. The black athlete is hungrier than his white counterpart.

Earlier in this century Jews dominated basketball and boxing, and at various times other groups have dominated in other sports. At no time did any of these groups do so for reasons of natural superiority, and to suggest otherwise would be absurd. Just as it is absurd to suggest that black athletes are naturally superior today.

Some white men can jump, some black men can not jump.

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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