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## Race and Athlete's

Richard C. Crepeau  
University of Central Florida, richard.crepeau@ucf.edu

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE  
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A few weeks ago Addis and The Sporting News sponsored a symposium in New York City on the issue of job opportunity for minorities in management level positions in sport. One of the participants in the discussion was Bill Rhoden, columnist for The New York Times and The Sporting News. That symposium and several of Bill Rhoden's columns over the past few weeks have reminded me of a number of issues which have been raised in the past few years, but have not been adequately addressed in most professional and intercollegiate sports establishments.

A few weeks after it was revealed that Arthur Ashe was HIV positive, he made the comment that being black in America was much more difficult than having AIDS. It really was a stunning remark when you think about it, what with Ashe's incredible success and the great fear that has been displayed by the public over AIDS. And yet when asked about the comment Wayne Embry, v.p. and general manager of the Cleveland Cavaliers, immediately agreed.

When you look at the results of several years of commitments to increase the number of Black Americans in management positions in professional sport the news is depressing, and give credence to Wayne Embry's comment that although we have arrived at 1992, we are not only still reconstructing, but we have a long way to go. The story at the intercollegiate level, especially in football, is much the same.

Although the NBA under the leadership of David Stern has the best record of minority hiring at the management level, the picture there is not all that encouraging. This past year the NBA turned over nine head coaching jobs, and in a league that is 72% Black at the player level, not one Black was hired for these positions, and only one or two were even interviewed. In addition one of the positions was filled by someone who had no coaching experience whatsoever. In 1992 the league had two Black head coaches, four general managers, sixty-one assistant coaches, and 234 blacks in the front office. The past thirteen head coaches hired in the NBA have been white.

In baseball, where forty percent of the players are Black Americans, fourteen managerial positions opened in the 1991 season and only one of those was filled by a Black. In 1992 in Major League Baseball there were three minority managers, not one Black general manager, and three assistant general managers.

There have been increases of minority employees at the Commissioner's office, on the field, and in the front offices of baseball, but the fact of the matter is that forty-five years after Jackie Robinson broke into the majors, seventeen years after Frank Robinson became the first Black manager, and five years after Al Campanis' remarks on Nightline, the picture is bleak.

In the history of major league baseball there has been one black general manager, Bill Lucas of the Atlanta Braves. In the five years since Campanis' remarks, the hiring of Harry Edwards as a consultant, and the various commitments from baseball people, major league teams have hired 48 managers. Six have been minorities.

Moving on to the National Football League there are now two Black American head coaches, three coordinators, four general managers, ten working in the commissioner's office, and twenty-eight in management positions. All of these are increases over the past five years, but all represent extremely low percentages in a league where approximately sixty percent of the players are Black. It is generally considered that the NFL has the worst record on minority hiring, and is moving the slowest to rectify the situation.

NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue complains that hiring Black Americans in head coaching positions is very difficult because one of the major sources of coaching talent, the colleges and universities, do not have any. It may seem hard to believe but Division IA football at present has not a single Black head football coach. As Bill Rhoden points out, although college presidents have done a lot of posturing about ethics and integrity in sports, they have not made equal opportunity hiring in football a priority, although all universities claim to be equal opportunity employers. In Rhoden's view it is a simple matter; university presidents do not have the courage to tell rich boosters that they must accept a Black as a head football coach. At the same time these Division IA football powers have no difficulty bringing in Black players by the truckload.

But even at the player level there remain serious racial problems on the campuses. For the last several decades there has been speculation about when Bobby Bowden would finally bite the bullet and recruit and start a black quarterback. The story was that the major boosters around Tallahassee simply would not allow their beloved Seminoles to be led by a Black American. It would be interesting to know what the reaction has been around

town to Charlie Ward. Twenty years ago when Hugh Durham first started an all black lineup in basketball the hate mail poured in, and the cancellation of season tickets was significant.

In the end whether any of this will ever change significantly in sport is difficult to say. What we can say is that those who looked to sport for leadership had better look elsewhere. Minority hiring, although still problematic everywhere, finds sport one of the most resistant institutions in American life.

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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