

BLACK MALE STUDENT- ATHLETES AS NCAA COMMODITIES

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the commodification of the black male body by the NCAA. Throughout history the NCAA has earned lucrative amounts of money from its student-athletes. Black male student-athletes have helped to generate the most revenue for Universities by excelling in basketball and football. The NCAA treats black student-athletes as commodities. The athletic abilities of these young men excite fans and provide universities with means to gain ticket sale, endorsements, and donations. The media distracts from and helps this commodification by saturating the public with images glamorizing the lives of black professional athletes. However, the black male student-athletes are not a part of this reality perpetuated by the media. The pressure and desire for these athletes to succeed negatively impacts their ability to fully experience college, immerse themselves in their studies, and prepare for careers and life beyond professional sports. On the contrary, they often feel like outsiders on their college campuses. The research for this paper includes an analysis of books, journal entries, websites and film. It also includes first-hand accounts from current and former black male student-athletes from a Division I University. This research shows that there is a serious need for change within the NCAA. The NCAA, media, and society needs to move away from the commodification of black male student athletes and shift to uplifting, educating, and preparing these young men for careers outside of professional sports.

What's my story?

I am a first generation college graduate in my family. I finished with a degree in Sociology from a prestigious Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) program in 2008. I have now coached on the NCAA level working with many student-athletes from different backgrounds who often feel hopeless, used, or mistreated by the NCAA system. I was an honors graduate coming out of high school but I still found the academic transition difficult upon my arrival on campus as a freshmen. It was a task for me to balance the physical demands of an athlete and also maintain the high academic standards required by the University. The fact that the majority of other black students on campus were also athletes was immediately apparent to me. Often I found that I was the only black person in classes and this made things awkward at times, especially when the topic involved race and culture. My work sometimes fell short of acceptable and I had to use available resources such as tutors and the writing center in order to get caught up to with my peers. These are just a few of the initial challenges I faced as a student-athlete, but I am not the only one to have these experiences.

As the paper will explain further, I interviewed four current black student-athletes at my alma mater, in order to get a current perspective of the challenges that many black student-athletes face. I asked specific questions concerning their experiences at the university and I was not surprised when they told me some of the difficulties they encountered and the emotions they struggled with. Many players told me that they did not feel welcomed at first by their student body, they felt as if their high schools had not adequately prepared them for the challenges of college, they felt as if the NCAA was abusing their athletic ability and they told me of experiences where they felt as if

they did not belong. It was natural for me to empathize and understand the difficulties that black student athletes experience because of my similar background and experience. I think that it was natural for these student-athletes to open up and give me their honest opinions. The purpose of this paper is not to extensively provide answers as to how to change the commodity-based relationship between student-athletes and the NCAA, but to shed light on the commodification of black bodies in ways many will never consider from a perspective that most will never hear. This paper will assert that A) because black athletes are being treated as commodities, there is little focus on career prospects and academic preparation, B) the media paints an unrealistic image of black people as professional athletes and entertainers, and C) black student-athletes often feel out of place and unwelcomed on college campuses because their treatment as a commodity ignores their experience as a student. All of these assertions inhibit their abilities to successfully graduate, manage financial resources responsibly, and become successful contributors in society after the college experience.

Commodities, Capitalist and the NCAA Capitalist Model

This past summer I took a course that was titled “Bodies, Commodities, and Global Environments.” I took a particularly strong interest specifically to the bodies and commodities portion. The definition of commodities, capitalism and an understanding of NCAA are integral to the claims of this paper. The course defined a commodity as a good or a service produced for the market that are in high demand from the general public. A commodity could be gold, sugar, oil or for our purposes, even the human body. The human body is a commodity because it can provide organs for the purpose of transplants or provide a service such as sex or labor. When something is in great demand people will go to great lengths in order to mass produce or acquire it. It is because of this demand that commodities are able to flourish by being mass produced in a capitalistic system.

In the summer course during our class discussions, we went further to define capitalism as an economic system in which private wealth is used in the production of a good or service. Capitalists are the people who profit from this system. In a capitalist system, the private corporations control the production of the goods or services through cheap labor. The workers or laborers in a capitalist system are generally overworked, underpaid, and taken advantage of in order to acquire more assets for the capitalist.

Capitalist economic theory dictates that wages are determined by labor markets, so how much each employee gets paid is not determined by their contribution, but rather by the market value of the labor. The market value of each employee’s labor is determined by how much other people in the market are willing to sell their labor for. Determining the real ‘value-added’ of each employee is more difficult than simply paying market wages, but what paying market wages also does, is make it much easier to take advantage of employees¹.

¹ Price, R.G., “Understanding Capitalism Part III: Wages and Labor Markets.” January, 11,2005.
http://www.rationalrevolution.net/articles/capitalism_wages.htm

This model allows for the corporate executives of the NCAA to become increasingly rich while the laborers (student-athletes) continue to be exploited on different levels.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is comprised of approximately 1200 colleges and universities across the United States of America² It is geared towards promoting and funding collegiate athletics and student-athletes. The term student-athlete refers to the male and female athletes who represent the NCAA's member schools. There are approximately 450,000 student-athletes across the sports realm who represent the NCAA³. These sports include: baseball, basketball, bowling, cross country/track & field, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, ice hockey, lacrosse, rifle, rowing, skiing, soccer, softball, swimming & diving, tennis, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling⁴. However, basketball and football are in a league of their own as they generate the most revenue for college athletics and fund every other sport.

The NCAA serves as a perfect example of a capitalistic approach. Applying a capitalist model, the system uses student-athletes as the workers to acquire large assets while offering low wages in return to its student-athletes. NCAA is a capitalistic system that makes billions of dollars by entertaining and capturing the attention of fans across the globe who continue to pack arenas and stadiums and buy merchandise in support of their teams. As a former student-athlete I have realized that I was exploited for my abilities while not having much to show for it as I found it difficult to acquire a good paying job after receiving a degree. I like many student-athletes believed that I would go

² About the NCAA. (2015). <http://www.ncaa.org/about>

³ About the NCAA. (2015). <http://www.ncaa.org/about>

⁴ NCAA.com – The Official Website of NCAA Championships (2015). <http://www.ncaa.com/>

play professional sports. The reality is most athletes will not play professional in their chosen sport.

In actuality there are only a small percentage of college athletes that make it to the professional level. According to the NCAA, only 1.6 percent of NCAA football players will be drafted⁵. Furthermore, only 3.6 percent of NCAA football players will be selected for professional opportunities, which include: NFL, Canadian Football, and Arena Football⁶. I counted on having my college degree to fall back on if things did not work out professionally. A college degree was supposed to solidify my status amongst society. However I had no job experience in my field and every company seemed to be looking for experience. As a collegiate athlete my time restrictions left me with no opportunities to obtain internships. The end result was a college graduate with a resume void of any real work experience.

⁵ Football. (2015). <http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/football>

⁶ Ibid.

Black Bodies as Commodities

In order to give themselves a better chance to win, the NCAA and the coaches that represent their respective organizations are looking for bigger, faster, and stronger athletes. Since the 17th century black people have been viewed and objectified as the superior athlete. Today, basketball and football are both dominated by black athletes, however many of these athletes are not graduating on time or at all, and those that do are not being adequately educated for a career outside of their sport. While some might argue that athletic scholarships are an equal trade for the services that student-athletes provide, a scholarship is of little use if the athlete cannot utilize the degree for his or her own economic and career advancement upon graduation. The black male has been a commodity since slaves were deported westward to the Caribbean and later the Americas along the Middle Passage. The biggest and strongest men were bred with the biggest (strongest) women in order to produce larger offspring capable of withstanding harsh conditions and brutal work conditions. Larger offspring would give slave owners the ability to mass produce their cash crop of choice. The black slave's athletic prowess did not go unnoticed. William C. Rhoden talks about the exploitation of Blacks as athletes in his book *\$40 Million Slaves*. Rhoden states,

There was a wide range of sporting activities in which African slaves were involved. In the plantation south, slaves of rival plantations were used as oarsmen in high take boat races...Foot racing, an enormously popular sport in the United States during the 1830's, was equally popular on the plantations and provided a convenient backdrop for wagering. Plantation owners exploited the speed of the fastest slaves by entering them into races against neighboring slaves or local challengers in various town races.⁷

⁷ Rhoden, W. C. (2010). *Forty million dollar slaves: The rise, fall, and redemption of the black athlete*. Broadway Books. P. 51

This serves as an early example of how the athletic abilities of blacks were exploited for financial or material gain for others.

Slaves with distinctive talent(s) were given opportunities to earn money. If they accrued enough money for their slave owners they could buy their own freedom in certain instances. For example, Tom Molineaux, a former black slave, won his freedom by using his fists to whip (beat) opponents as a prized fighter during the 1800's. In repeated instances throughout history, the black male's physique and athletic ability has been seen as marvel to both blacks and whites. Felix Haywood, a former slave from Texas, told an interviewer, "We was stronger and know how to play and the white children did not."⁸ Frederick Douglass, former slave and abolitionist, states, "...black boys could run as fast, jump as far, throw the ball as direct and catch it with as much dexterity and skill as the white boys."⁹ Some of the athletes widely considered to be the best of all time include Jackie Robinson, Jim Brown, Muhammad, Ali, Michael Jordan, Lebron James, all Black men.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

No Fair Compensation

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) earns over a billion dollars of yearly revenue but the workers (student-athletes) are not being paid and don't have much to show for their efforts in many instances. The NCAA is run like no other association in the country as it employs laborers or workers without paying a competitive wage for their work. Everett Glenn, a popular sports attorney and agent, states, "While white colleges and industry stakeholders (networks, sponsors, apparel companies, etc.) are reaping huge financial rewards off black athletic talent, the people who make it all possible are not sharing in the benefits. Blacks are undoubtedly the stars on the football field and basketball courts. But economically, African Americans remain confined to the sideline."¹⁰ The sports that make the most revenue (football and basketball) are overly represented and dominated by black athletes. A 2012 study done by the College Sport Research Institute found that 21 percent of all college athletes were black, 46 percent played football and 60 percent played basketball. "The astounding revelation is that 70 percent of all black male athletes played either football or basketball."¹¹ What makes these numbers more staggering is that in spite of the heavy representation of Black athletes in collegiate sports, many of them are not graduating from many of these institutions and often times are far less educated than their peers once they leave college. According to Sports Illustrated, "By the time former NFL players have been retired for two years, nearly 80 percent of them have gone bankrupt or are under financial

¹⁰ Glenn, E. (2013, November 25). Unsportsmanlike Conduct: The Exploitation of Black Athletes. <http://www.blackpressusa.com/unsportsmanlike-conduct-the-exploitation-of-black-athletes/#sthash.9SYZf60J.dpbs>

¹¹ Njororai, Wycliffe W. "Challenges of Being a Black Student Athlete on U.S. College Campuses." *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 2012.

stress because of joblessness or divorce...within five years of retirement, approximately 60 percent of former NBA players are broke.”¹² During their time at college, athletes are a) not given the opportunity for work experience, b) experience handling their own finances or even financial literacy education. This lack of preparation in conjunction with short-lived careers can lead to the aforementioned financial troubles.

The NCAA has come under even more scrutiny in recent years after University of Connecticut (UCONN) basketball player Shabazz Napier told reporters in 2014 that oftentimes he went to bed starving because he did not have enough money to support himself. How can this take place in the United States of America when the NCAA makes over a billion dollars off of athletics? Napier stated, “He appreciates his scholarship but it does not cover all of his expenses. . . I don't feel student-athletes should get hundreds of thousands of dollars, but like I said, there are nights that I go to bed and I am starving.”¹³

Student-athletes are not entitled to receiving benefits for their athletic ability. Collegiate jerseys with a player's game day number can be sold for as much as \$60 yet the athlete cannot be compensated. Student-athletes have huge time constraints on them as they generally have a full day 6 out of 7 days during the week, yet they are not classified as workers. Student-athletes are really workers however, as Jonathan Franklin of UCLA shows when he states, that his day “...generally consisted of weight training from 6am-9am, class from 10am-1pm, meetings from 2pm-3:15pm, Practice 4pm-6pm, and tutor from 7pm-9pm. If we don't perform, we get fired just like in the real world.”¹⁴ Arian Foster, former running back at the University of Tennessee, admitted

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ganim, s. (2014, April 8). UConn guard Shabazz Napier on unions: I go to bed 'starving' <http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/07/us/ncaa-basketball-finals-shabazz-napier-hungry/>

¹⁴ *Schooled: The Price of College Sports* [Motion picture on DVD]. (2013).

that he too has had an empty refrigerator at times and was hungry at times even though he played football in front of a home stadium that fits 107, 000. Foster said,

There were plenty of times throughout the month that I didn't have enough for food. 107,000 people buying tickets to watch us play. It's tough knowing that and being aware of that. You go outside and there are hundreds of kids waiting for you. You're signing autographs, taking pictures, whatever. Then I walk back and reality sets in. I go to my dorm room, open my fridge, and there's nothing in my fridge. Hold up man, what just happened? Why don't I have anything to show for what I just did?¹⁵

Arian Foster admitted that it got to a point where he actually confronted his coach and told him he had no money or food. Foster said he told his former coach, "We're hungry, either you give us some food or I'm going to do something stupid. He came down and brought 50 tacos for like four or five of us which is a NCAA violation. But then, the next day I walk to the facility and I see my coach pull up in a brand new Lexus."¹⁶

Mark Emerett, President of the NCAA, says that student-athletes are not paid because they are not employees. Emerett admits that players aren't compensated but certainly feels that they are compensated through other means. Student-athletes are compensated with a four year scholarship. However this is a scholarship that is dependent upon players maintaining a code of conduct, remaining eligible, playing time, and not becoming injured. These are all factors that can jeopardize an athletic scholarship and often times an athlete may not have much control of a situation. Emerett also believes that it would be financially impossible for colleges to pay student-athletes. He said that only 14 universities finished in the positive in total revenue at the end of the athletic seasons.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Aronson, R. (2011). Money and March Madness [Television series episode]. In *Frontline*.

Further proof of the error in the argument that there is fair compensation for the talents given by black student athletes in exchange for a degree is in the following data. The racial gap between whites and blacks who attend college has begun to narrow with time. A recent population survey orchestrated by National Center for Education Statistics, reveals that just under 70 percent of white high school graduates attend college whereas 65 percent of blacks attend college. According to Department of Education data, “students who entered college in 2005, the most recent data available, and 62 percent of whites got a degree within six years, versus 40 percent of blacks.”¹⁸ The NCAA has tried to defend itself by saying that at a national level, blacks on athletic scholarships tend to graduate from college at a higher rate than black students generally. This may be true to a certain degree but at the vast majority of state flagship universities it is the complete opposite. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education informs us that, “Each of the 50 states has a university that it has designated as its flagship public university. These schools are usually quite large with enrollments at some institutions nearing 50,000. In most cases these universities are large research institutions that grant undergraduate, master’s professional, and doctoral degrees. Some of these public universities are among the nation’s highest ranked universities.”¹⁹ “There are only 10 states where the percentage of blacks enrolled at the university exceeds the percentage of blacks in the state.”²⁰

¹⁸ Casselman, Ben. “Race Gap Narrows in College Enrolment, But Not in Graduation.” *FiveThirtyEight Economics*, April 30, 2014.

¹⁹ It's time to do better: A count of black students and faculty at the nation's 50 flagship state universities. (2001). *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, (32), 86. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/195564128?accountid=14868>

²⁰ Ibid These states include: South Dakota, Iowa, Maine, New Mexico, North Dakota, West Virginia, Idaho, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Oregon.

Yes, black student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than male peers who do not participate in any athletics but not in the case of when it comes to student-athletes who participate in the six Bowl Championship Series (BCS) sports conferences. I was able to find even more data to further emphasize the racial gap and graduation rates among black and white student-athletes. These numbers were the most up to date graduation numbers available from the 2013-2014 season, including football teams that competed in bowl games last season and also basketball programs that competed in the NCAA tournament. The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for every school that participated in a bowl game this past season had a percentile of 50% or higher. This is an increase from the 2012 season, however, Lapchick states, “The gap between white and African-American football student-athletes continues to be a major issue standing at 19 percent this year.”²¹ Also, of the seventy football teams that participated in bowl games, the average GSR was 65 % for Black student-athletes.²²The average GSR of white student-athletes stood at 84 %. Another key finding is of these 70 schools, 9 of them graduated less than half of their Black student athletes. None of the 70 teams that participated in the bowls last season graduated less than half of its white football student-athletes.²³The GSR for basketball programs that competed in the NCAA tournament this past season also saw similar disparities between black student athletes and white student athletes. The white male basketball student-athletes had a GSR of 89% and the black male basketball student athletes had a GSR of only 65%. These disparities put the gap of participating black

²¹ Lapchick, Richard. “Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2013-2014 Bowl-Bound College Football Teams.”

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

student-athletes and white student-athletes at 24%.²⁴ Lapchick adds, “The most troubling statistic in our study is the continuing large disparity between the GSR of white basketball student-athletes and African-American basketball student-athletes. Although the gap closed by one percent, it is still a staggering 24% in 2014.”²⁵ Also noteworthy, 38 % of the men’s teams had a GSR disparity of greater than 30 percent between white student-athletes and black student-athletes. These numbers show us that the Black student-athletes that make up the largest portion of successful NCAA football and basketball teams are not reaching their full academic potential but are still heavily contributing athletically and financially as they earn revenue for their respective institutions. These numbers shout that the NCAA’s focus is earning as much revenue as possible and not on the ultimate academic achievement of the players, thus black athletes serve as necessary commodities for a larger pay day for universities and the NCAA.

If the above statistical data doesn’t highlight black student-athletes as commodities, then perhaps the annual NFL combine and draft offers a more compelling argument of how the Black Student-Athlete’s body and skillset are viewed as commodities. The NFL hosts a series of combines on campuses annually prior to the actual draft. These combines take place all around the country and are geared for NFL personnel to assess and locate new talent. The most popular combine of all is the official NFL combine that takes place yearly in Indianapolis, Indiana. The young men who participate in this combine are supposed to be the best NFL prospects in the country. All participants arrive by invite only and are selected by NFL personnel. Megan Livingston,

²⁴ Lapchick, Richard. “Keeping Score When It Counts: Graduation Success and Academic Progress Rates for the 2014 NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament Teams.”

²⁵ Ibid.

a sports blogger, has compared this evaluation process to that of chattel slavery. Every year in March, NFL scouts, owners, general managers, and coaches arrive in Indianapolis, Indiana in order to measure, test, and evaluate the latest top NCAA athletes in preparation of the NFL draft in April. In an article by Livingston, titled *Why The NFL Combine Conjures Slavery*, she states, “given the fact that 65% of NFL players are black, and team scouts and doctors are overwhelmingly white, the images produced at the Combine call forth the slavery comparison at its grizzliest: the sight of scantily-clad, muscle-bound black men being measured under the gaze of white men with dollar signs for eyes bring the auction block to mind whether or not you want to acknowledge it.”²⁶ I completely agree with the visual picture that is portrayed. I can remember when I finished college and had aspirations of playing professional football. During my NFL combine day I was placed in a line with other athletes (predominantly black) in a room full of NFL scouts. I was asked to strip down to compression shorts only; I was observed by scouts and compared versus other athletes in attendance. I nervously waited my turn to get my height, weight, arm length, and hand width measured before being put through a series of tests that gauged my overall strength, flexibility, speed, change of direction, and mental toughness. The height and weight measurements were very tedious, all measurements were precise and exact. I can remember thinking to myself at that time that this was a business where my stock would be valued more so by my physical measurements than by my actual playing ability. This was tough for me to consider because I would be considered a smaller player compared to the average football player. I felt as though I was just another interchangeable athlete who was among a long list of

²⁶ Livingston, Megan. “Why The NFL Combine Conjures Slavery.” 2013.

college players pursuing a NFL career. One thing was evident, these scouts were looking for the biggest, strongest, fastest, and most intelligent football players to recruit and provide value to their NFL organizations and there was not a shortage to choose from. I watched the most recent NFL combine for the 2015 draft. This is a spectacle that is aired across the country on the NFL network. Head coaches and general managers sit in the crowd with their stop watches and notepads in order to time the players and make personal notes. The NFL also has play by play analysis from professional commentators and former NFL players. These college players are “certainly a convenient commodity”, as their talents ensure plentiful revenues for the school, while the degrees they receive in return provide them with no such guarantee.

Former Players Speak Out

Student-athletes are being failed by their universities. It is not a secret that student athletes don't get the full spectrum of the college experience. It has come to national attention in recent years that in some instances athletes aren't being educated and are being placed in classes where they receive a passing grade. University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina made the headlines recently as former players came out saying that they did not receive an adequate education while enrolled and playing sports. Former players on the football and basketball team admitted to getting passing grades in classes that they never attended. These players' testimony verifies that their athletic abilities were the source of their value to the universities. The student-athlete receiving an ideal and effective education was not of importance to the University. The school and its athletic department was more interested in winning games and earning revenue instead of serving student athletes with an adequate education. These players have all filed a lawsuit against their former institution.

Dexter Manley, a former NFL Pro Bowler, testified before congress in 1989. Manley graduated high school, played 4 years of college football, and become a Pro bowl caliber player. Most would think that these feats are much to be proud of. However there was a feat that he did not accomplish and left him embarrassed and humiliated throughout his career. Manley testified that he could not read. The truth is Manley, a native of Houston, Texas, did just enough to get by in high school and college. He attended Oklahoma State for 4 years as a student-athlete competing on the field. He did not graduate. He was drafted in the 5th round by the Washington Redskins and ended up

having an 11 year career. During this tenure, Manley became the focal point of jokes from teammates in the locker room regarding his lack of literacy many times.

David Harrison was a former first round draft pick of the Indiana Pacers. He left college early after starring in the Big XII Conference for 3 years. He averaged 5 points and 3 rebounds per game over a 4 year NBA career. Recently, Harrison has made headlines after he admitted to working at McDonald's in order to acquire necessary income to support himself. How can this happen? This happens much more than we actually hear about. Harrison admits that a lack of maturity and pride ultimately contributed most to his downfall. He states, "Pride, that's where I messed up the most, I had too much pride in my ability. I was stubborn."²⁷ Harrison is 16 credits away from finishing his degree at the University of Colorado. Currently he sells stock for a living in order to support his 2 children.

²⁷ Gaines, C. (2015, March 14). A former NBA player was working at McDonald's 9 years after being a first-round draft pick. <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/former-nba-player-working-mcdonalds-163907853.html>

The Conveyor Belt

In recent years the NCAA has come up with a rule that requires that collegiate basketball players to attend college for at least one year. This rule came into effect in 2006 and since then only 3 Americans have entered the NBA without attending college. Previously, athletes could skip playing college basketball altogether and make themselves eligible for the NBA draft. Many players in the past made their dreams of becoming millionaires and professional ball player without even attending college come true. Most notable for this include LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Kevin Garnett, Tracy McGrady and Kwame Brown. Football players have always been forbidden from enrolling themselves for the NFL right after high school. It is not coincidental that only football and basketball have these restraints; they bring in the most revenue for the NCAA. Players are drafted into Major League Baseball (MLB) organizations as teenagers and here are teenagers on the Pro Tennis tour as well who have never attended college. Many National Hockey League (NHL) teams also draft teenage players.

The NCAA has made a fortune off of black muscle and talent the past 50 years and as long as the NCAA continues to operate as it does presently, college coaches will continue to go into black neighborhoods of rural and urban America looking for fresh talent to utilize. This sophisticated recruiting apparatus was termed the “Conveyor Belt” by William C. Rhoden in his book *\$40 Million Slaves*. He states, “At its worst, the “Conveyor Belt” introduces young people to the worst ills of the contemporary sports-industrial complex while they’re young and impressionable.”²⁸

²⁸ Rhoden, W. C. (2010). *Forty million dollar slaves: The rise, fall, and redemption of the black athlete*. Broadway Books. (p.175).

Colleges continue to recruit players at younger ages. In fact recruiting is more competitive than it has ever been. Social media has elevated the volume of recruitment that is now loudly heard in all aspects of social media. Most children utilize some form of social media and college recruiters have adapted their strategies by joining as well. While I was in high school in the process of being recruited, coaches would communicate with me via telephone or send me letters only. Today, coaches can contact recruitable players limitlessly via Facebook and twitter. The players that have potential to play at college or professional level are being identified and targeted at younger ages than ever before and through avenues that have not yet been heavily regulated. Legally, a college can't communicate or actively recruit a student-athlete until their junior year of high school, but players are being ranked and identified at a younger ages. AAU basketball leagues always identify the top basketball players in the country. The youngest age group that the AAU recognizes is their 7 and under team. Recently, LeBron James 9 year old son has received attention and eyes from college recruiters around the country as he continues to excel in AAU basketball leagues. In a pregame interview with CBS Detroit, LeBron James Sr. says, "Yeah he's already got offers from some colleges...It's pretty crazy, it should be a violation. You shouldn't be recruiting 10 year old kids."²⁹ William Rhoden explains in his book *\$40 Million Slaves* why getting a jump start on these antics are so important in recruiting. Rhoden states, "A top recruit could mean the

²⁹ Medcalf, M. (2015, February 2). LeBron: Stop recruiting LeBron Jr. http://espn.go.com/nba/story/_/id/12381552/lebron-james-does-not-colleges-attempts-recruit-10-year-old-son-lebron-james-jr

difference between a winning season and a losing season, a big bowl game or a short season, and all the revenue and priceless prestige that came for a successful program.”³⁰

College football programs offer one day camps for high school athletes to showcase their football talents as well. The football players generally range from 12-17 years of age. The primary focus are the rising seniors but I have witnessed college coaches’ place their stamp on younger players that show promise. One day camps are crucial in recruiting because coaches can get a better gauge on a student-athletes athletic potential at younger ages. Athletes are put through a series of tests, drills, and often times get a chance to view the campus and spend time with the coaching staff. In addition to the failure of institutions to adequately prepare student-athletes for careers after graduation, now coaches are able to start this failing cycle at younger ages.

³⁰ Rhoden, W. C. (2010). *Forty million dollar slaves: The rise, fall, and redemption of the black athlete*. Broadway Books. (p.172).

Integration and the Changing Perception of the College Athlete

The integration of the black athlete into mainstream competition has impacted the sports realm greatly in America and across the world. The NCAA has profited and continues to profit off of black brawn as black athletes continue to dominate basketball and football, while receiving fairly little in return. In analyzing the history of the black athlete within the NCAA, the NCAA's integration process during the 1960's made it evident that black athletes faced many difficulties on campuses across the country due to racism. Some of those same challenges encountered by those pioneers are still being faced today by black student-athletes. The Civil Rights act of 1964 ended public segregation, however Jim Crow laws dominated the South well throughout the 1960's. The Southeastern Conference (SEC) has always been known for having the most dominant athletic teams in the NCAA. Before the 1970's college football's top programs in the country were represented by white athletes. The SEC was dominated by the University of Alabama who was coached by the legendary Paul "Bear" Bryant. Black athletes had to attend historically black colleges (HBCUs) or attend school on the west coast or northern states. Bryant had been trying to transition to recruiting black athletes but the governor of Alabama was staunchly against this. During the late 1960's, Alabama's football team began to lose its dominance as a national powerhouse and other programs were catching up. Bryant knew he had to get bigger, faster, and stronger players in order to compete. On September 12, 1970 Bear Bryant and the rest of the nation would realize how integrating the black athlete into top programs could be a difference maker. University of Southern California (USC) traveled to Alabama and played the University of Alabama in Birmingham, Alabama. It became the first integrated

football game in the state's history. University of Alabama had a roster full of white players and USC had a fully integrated football team. USC won the football game 42-21 in dominating fashion. This game changed the culture and the landscape of college recruiting.

Jimmy the Greek was a news analyst for Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and was popular for his authenticity and ruggedness that he exhibited in the public and on live over the airwaves. Even so he was fired by CBS in 1988 after he gave his honest opinion about race relations in the sports industry. A reporter asked Jimmy of his opinion on race relations in sports. Jimmy answered, " Black Athletes perform better than whites for reasons that went back to slave times...the slave owner would breed his big black man to his big black woman so that he could have a big black kid...that's where it all started."³¹ Due to extreme racial tensions present only 30 years after the Civil Rights movement, CBS was not ready to discuss this topic and felt his comment was out of line, especially since the question came on the day of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday celebration. Jimmy brought to light the disparity between the amounts of Blacks dominating the sports realm compared to the amount of Blacks in the coaching profession. Jimmy stated, " The only thing that whites control are the coaching jobs...the black talent is beautiful, it's great, it's out there... the only thing left for the whites is a couple of coaching jobs."³² Jimmy's comment may have shocked the network and viewers but there was truth in what he said (Blacks had been seen as superior athletes for quite some time). Jimmy wanted to clear up his intentions on air and publicly apologize but because the network was anxious to keep the comments in the past and remove

³¹ Mitchell, F. (2009). The Legend of Jimmy the Greek [Television series episode]. In *30 for 30*.

³² Ibid.

themselves from the backlash, Jimmy was never able to further explain his comments. Jimmy never worked on television and was labeled a racist because he said what many were afraid to say. He bit the bullet for a nation still struggling with racial tension.³³

Within the context of the complicated history of blacks in collegiate and professional sports, black pioneers saw college as a way to obtain an education, not just an avenue to play sports. According to Richard Lapchick, a human rights activist and speaker,

Almost all went on to successful professional careers. They became doctors, lawyers, documentary filmmakers, elected officials, professional athletes, coaches, college professors, entrepreneurs, and high school teachers and administrators. Many served our nation in the military. A substantial number earned advanced degrees. These trailblazers created paths of enormous opportunities for future Black student-athletes, who now comprise 58 percent of all Division I male basketball players, 45 percent of all Division I football players and 44 percent of all Division I female basketball players.³⁴

However, the perception of young Black athletes has changed from those of the pioneers. A prominent factor in this shift is the media. For many, college is now only seen as a stepping stone to a career in professional sports. Within the black community there is a perception that college is a means to get into professional sports. The perception and mentality should instead portray college as a means to a higher education, career preparation, and financial stability. Unfortunately within the Black community a sports fixation can be found. According to Hoberman: “ The sports fixation has been made possible in part by the black middle class, which appears to have accepted athletes as the

³³ Sharbutt, J. (1988, January 17). Jimmy 'The Greek' Is Fired by CBS. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/1988-01-17/sports/sp-36803_1_jimmy-snyder

³⁴ ³⁴ Lapchick, Richard. “Breaking the College Color Barrier: Studies in Courage.” *ESPN*, February 20, 2008. <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/blackhistory2008/columns/story?id=3254974>

most prominent symbols of black achievement”³⁵ This comes with the failure to recognize the worth in intellectual achievement or academic achievement. Careers such as lawyers and doctors somehow lose their esteem. This sports fixation can have a detrimental effect on the development of young black males and females long before they enter college. For some young black children, this sports fixation discourages academic achievement and emphasizes only physical traits.³⁶ The media, community and black families play a role in the fixation on sports exercised black males. This is all at the detriment of the academic and intellectual achievement.

The NCAA is adding to its revenue earnings with huge television contracts that highlight the best basketball and football athletes in the country as national celebrities. It is through these television contracts that young athletes are able to watch their favorite sports teams and athletes, aspiring to become a professional athlete as well. Today’s media exposure is vastly different from what pioneers of the 1960’s were exposed to. It has affected the way the NCAA advertises and recruits while also having a huge influence on youth and other sports fans of modern society. Television and money have considerably helped transform college football and basketball into a capitalist system that feeds off of young black talent. Jason Whitlock, sports writer for ESPN, writes:

Television and money perverted college football and basketball a generation ago. Coaches and administrators are making millions. The athletes are being compensated in a currency many of them don't respect and haven't been properly prepared to use. The NCAA takes most of the money generated by football and men's basketball and invests it in welfare sports that don't generate a dollar and are played mostly by kids who have nothing in common with the football and basketball players who produced the revenue.³⁷

³⁵ Hoberman, J. M. (1997). *Darwin's athletes: How sport has damaged Black America and preserved the myth of race*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Whitlock, Jason. "Expose the NCAA, Not the Athletes." *La Prensa*, Aug 01, 2010. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/748698729?accountid=14868>.

To further emphasize Whitlock's view of the NCAA's added monetary growth through media, sports writer Joseph Milord states:

“Over the years, the NCAA has seen its total assets more than double while its revenue generated from television contracts has soared to new heights (a 12-year, \$5.6 million deal with ESPN to broadcast the new college football playoffs adds to that \$10.8 billion contract with CBS for March Madness). All of this has occurred while the average amount of a college tuition in America has increased, as well, but certainly not to the degree that the NCAA's revenue has. In layman's terms, while the value of the NCAA's product and revenues continues to soar, the amount in compensation that it must pay to its laborers, those who produce the product, remains relatively unchanged. Revenues up while keeping costs down; it's a CEO's dream. By any token, the NCAA is running an amazing business.”³⁸

Educational institutes should prepare student-athletes for a future beyond just athletics but for a large number of black athletes this is not occurring. In contrast to the widely held notion that young blacks can become successful as professional athletes is the realistic fact that only 2% of college athletes go on to play professionally. Athletics can serve as a means of upward mobility for many blacks who come from underprivileged backgrounds, who may have not had the opportunity otherwise. However, many will continue to face challenges once they arrive on campuses because they have not been adequately prepared growing up and in their high schools.

³⁸ Ibid.

Young blacks need to have access to more positive role models in general. The media paints a picture that showcases the black male as a dominant athlete. More times than not, black role models that are portrayed by the media include either athletes or entertainers. Such examples of today include: Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, Michael Vick, Lebron James, Jay Z, 50 Cent, Beyoncé, etc. Children and teens do not have enough role models in other diverse careers to look up to.

As the black child grows, s/he is systematically channeled towards the world of athleticism as evidenced by the overwhelming presence in sport. The visibility of Black athletes to youths dwarfs any success of black lawyers, doctors, engineers and other professional careers. This is due to institutional racism, which as limited black access to the full spectrum of high prestige occupational opportunities...Black America needs black productive, educated individuals to serve as role models and to become leaders in economics, politics, business, and education.³⁹

Because young blacks continue to see successful blacks portrayed in the media as athletes and entertainers; there should be no surprise that in many instances, the only way a minority and/or economically disadvantaged youth can see themselves out of their circumstances is through athletics and entertainment. For some athletes, agreeing to be a student athlete is a viable way out of poverty, as if the case with former University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) running back Jonathan Franklin, who grew up in Los Angeles, California. He was an All-American running back and left as the school's all-time leading rusher. In an interview for the documentary film, *Schooled: The Price of College Sports*, he states, "Growing up, it was all about get money and take care of my mom. Nobody was talking about a degree coming out of here, nobody was talking about going to college. Football helped me focus and get out of the neighborhood."⁴⁰ However,

³⁹ Sailes, G. A. Guest editorial: The exploitation of the Black athletes: Some alternative solutions. *Journal of Negro Education*, 55.

⁴⁰ *Schooled: The Price of College Sports* [Motion picture on DVD]. (2013).

this is not the only option available and it has its own disadvantages that many Black student-athletes are unaware of. Lapchick emphasized:

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s push to improve urban high schools is crucial. Many of our African-American student-athletes graduate from underfunded and under equipped schools. Some arrive on too many of our predominantly white campuses and do not feel welcomed whether or not they are athletes. We have to find new ways to narrow this gap.⁴¹

⁴¹ Lapchick, Richard. “Keeping Score When It Counts: Graduation Success and Academic Progress Rates for the 2014 NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament Teams.”

You're Not Welcome

Even though African American student-athletes bring in enormous amounts of school revenue for the campuses they represent as athletes, they are not always welcomed on campus as students. Outside of my own experiences discussed previously, I interviewed 4 current student athletes and 1 graduate student at a BCS school in order to get a better understanding of what current black student-athletes are going through on college campuses. The individuals that I interviewed all came from circumstances where athletics was a way for them to further their education. These individuals were all different ages and all from different states ranging from Florida up to Virginia. I wanted to know how young black males saw themselves, how they thought others perceived them, and if they felt that they had the adequate assistance to become educated on a college level. In order to protect identities, I will refer to the individuals as student-athletes (SA) followed by the number they were given ranging from 1-5. Student-athlete 1 (SA1) was a redshirt sophomore, Student-athlete 2 (SA2) was a redshirt junior, Student-athlete (SA3) was a freshman, Student-athlete 4 (SA4) was a redshirt senior, and Student-athlete 5 (SA5) was a graduate student. I asked each individual the same series of questions in the exact same order. Each individual had different answers but similar experiences at the University. The questions that I asked each student-athlete included: Why did you choose your University, did you feel welcomed once you arrived on campus, do you feel comfortable interacting in class, do you think your high school prepared you for the challenges of college, do you think you have enough available resources in order to become successful. In addition, I asked each individual to give me

one example where they felt as if they didn't belong and I asked each individual did they regret the decision of their college choice.

The interviewees gave different but similar opinions as they shared with me their impressions as black student-athletes. The consistent feedback I received was that all of the respondents experienced an initial culture shock and all came to college wanting to obtain a high level of education. SA4 stated, "I recognized the opportunity to receive a higher education, I wanted to better my surroundings." The results of the interviews were not shocking to me, considering the research I had already done and from my personal experiences. I was able to sum up the results of the interview in a manner that connected to the theme of this paper and give a feel of the experiences that the black student-athletes encounter while in college. When asking the individuals if they felt welcomed once they arrived on campus, each student-athlete admitted to me that initially they felt like outcasts. All were in agreement that they did feel accepted by their teammates and coaches, but not by the student body. SA3 states, "I didn't feel welcomed at first because people didn't talk to me. People would stare but not introduce themselves. It was a culture shock because my high school was very diverse coming from Florida but I stood out here." When I asked the players if they felt comfortable talking to professors, the majority said that they did not find it easy to communicate with professors initially. SA2 was the only interviewee who said that he felt comfortable talking to professors initially. SA3 said, it depends on the professor, if they have a topic that I can relate to it generally interests me but often times the subject matter is boring." SA4 said, "It is awkward being wrong in class but I've learned that my input in class is important." These responses are important because they show that black student-athletes often times feel out of place and

unwelcomed, thus making it much harder to learn and adjust to the college experience. When I asked the young men if they thought their high school had prepared them, 2 of them said they felt they were adequately prepared and 2 said that they were not. SA1 said, "It was definitely an adjustment for me. I went from writing 5 paragraph essays to writing 10 page papers. It was a challenge." When I asked the individuals if they thought they had enough available resources on campus to succeed, they all agreed that they had enough help via tutors, study hall hours, and academic counselors but the time to effectively utilize those resources was scarce. When I asked if they thought they were being exploited by the NCAA, they all said no except for SA3. He said, "Yes I feel like I am being exploited but I signed up for this and it is to be expected. It is up to me to make the most out of it." When I asked the student-athletes to give me a situation where they felt as if they didn't belong, I got a variety of answers including instances such as: having people not look at them directly when speaking, people giving them short responses and non-attentive in conversation, receiving awkward stares and being unfairly judged by peers. SA3 stated:

"I was in class once with 2 other black student-athletes. We were having a class debate about hate. Students in a class were saying that black people born in poverty were ignorant. They talked as if blacks weren't sitting in the class listening to what they were saying. I was very much offended because I knew that wasn't true." I ended the interview asking all the student-athletes if they regretted the decision to attend their University. Only one said that he regrets the decision. SA1 said, "He regrets it occasionally but said he makes the most out of his opportunity. It is about the academics ultimately."

As seen with the student athlete interviews, college campuses across the country can be an awkward learning environment for black student-athletes who stand out on campuses with minimal diversity. These settings often do not offer welcoming atmospheres. The feeling of being included as a part of the student body often takes time and adjustment on the behalf of all students. Aaron Clopton states, “The racial diversification of higher education is not a phenomenon that automatically registers beneficial outcomes. While today’s college experience is more diverse than ever before, certain elements of higher education possess the potential to divide the campus community along these lines of diversity.”⁴²

Athletes do not get the benefit of a normal academic lifestyle that a regular college student receives; therefore learning time management is crucial. Often times, once athletes arrive on campus they are hindered by vigorous athletic training and consistent traveling during season. Psychological and physical fatigue create a decreased will to study. Student-athletes also have less time to meet with professors, socialize in study groups, attend campus events, and participate with student organizations. These are all beneficial steps of the college experience that non-student athletes have adequate access to in hopes of becoming a well-rounded student and a future contributor in society. Also, “in order to remain eligible, student-athletes are often pushed into choosing majors that are most compatible with athletic participation, even if they are uninterested or unprepared for those majors.”⁴³ If an athlete has not been properly guided beforehand then it can be a major adjustment in balancing life as a student-athlete. It is a lifestyle that

⁴² Clopton, Aaron W and Brian Bourke. “Big-Time College Sport in Black and White: Perceptions of the Impact of Athletics on Campus.” *College Student Affairs Journal* 30, No.1 (Fall, 2011).

⁴³ Beamon, Krystal. “Used Goods: Former African American College Student-Athletes perception of exploitation by Division I Universities.” *Journal of Negro Education*, 2008

can seem impossible at times. Jonathan Franklin, former student-athlete at UCLA, states, “I did not know what college was going to be like when I got there. I was going to school to get my degree, but mainly I was going to stay eligible for football.”⁴⁴ Given the feelings of otherness or isolation that many Black students feel from their non-athlete peers combined with a grueling schedule that does not allow the academic and social support that are integral in building a career upon graduation, many Black athletes have the added burden of not only being a commodity, but an undervalued one at that.

⁴⁴ *Schooled: The Price of College Sports* [Motion picture on DVD]. (2013).

Bridging the Gap

While the arguments as to whether student-athletes should be classified as employees of the university with the benefit of financial payment for their services will likely be long-debated issue with no immediate resolution, there are ways now that universities can begin to bridge the gap between unrealistic perceptions about college degrees, between the athletes and the students that are their peers, and between the granting of a degree to successful employment and career aspects in return for their commitment to a school's rigorous athletic requirements. I believe progress can be made if the exchange between student-athlete and university is made more balanced and fair.⁴⁵ Universities need to consider giving student-athletes more opportunities for career preparedness. I would suggest that the student athletic scholarship have the ability to get extended to 6 years versus the current 4. The athlete will have four years to play. If they do not get selected on a professional team their scholarship gets extended an additional two years for either graduate school, shoring up their transcripts, and/or time to focus on some sort of career that they are actually passionate about, now able to devote the necessary time and effort into achievement. If the athletes are making so much money for the school, the least the school can do is make sure they have a quality degree ensured. Another suggestion would be to require athletes take classes that help in time management and study skills as freshmen in order to help balance the physical and academic demands they will face throughout their career. Also I think it would be helpful if colleges required additional testing upon freshmen arrival in order to diagnose student subject weakness. Once the student's weakness area was identified a tutor could help the

⁴⁵ See the following for an example of a union designed to create fairness and equality: "What We're Doing". College Athletes Players Association (CAPA). 2015. Web. <http://www.collegeathletespa.org/what>

student in that particular subject area throughout the year instead of just a class by class basis.

Traditional students not only leave college with a degree and the capability to have a fruitful career; they also leave with social capital, connections forged through networking and internships that provide them access into employment or further degrees much faster. Many black student athletes are not able to create this professional bonds because of their obligations, therefore I suggest that school come up with creative ways to help student-athletes make similar connections within their fields of study, either through community partnerships, university programming, alumni engagement, or even training as to how to form these networks of opportunities. Additionally, the media needs to give the youth visuals of blacks in careers other than sports and entertainment. The likelihood of any person establishing a sports or entertainment career is highly unlikely. Families need to take responsibility as well and inspire their kids to be more than just athletes and entertainers. We are upon a new age of enlightenment where thinkers will prevail. There are huge steps to be made in solving the racial disparity in NCAA sports; it will take a joint effort by the black community, the athlete, scholars, coaches, and athletic administrators. The goal should be not only to win championships but also to graduate student-athletes and prepare them for life after college. Too often the black athletes are being left behind. All entities above need to be on the same page if change is going to occur. "Coaches and athletic administrators should pay attention to the course enrollment and selection of majors by their black male athletes, as well as those students' participation in enriching educational experiences, like study-abroad programs and summer internships. Colleges must examine and support post-graduation pathways such

as graduate school, employment in student's major field of study, and recruitment into their own athletics departments."⁴⁶ Young blacks can be so much more than just professional athletes and entertainers. In order for the future generation to understand this we have to advertise the importance of an education and stop putting athletics on a pedestal. High school teachers must do more in preparing high school students and not just pass kids along that have exhibited less than average academic performance. Most of all, the athlete has to be willing to learn and push themselves. Individual player initiative and willingness, consistency from all parties, and more welcoming environments on college campuses may be all the ingredients necessary in solving the racial disparity amongst black and white athletes.

⁴⁶ Harper, Shaun R. "Black Men as College Athletes: The Real Win-Loss Record." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Jan 20,2014).

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SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Dedicated and solution-focused coach who understands the balance between winning and education. Immense ability to instill good sportsmanship in players, develop game plans and instruct the technical and tactical skills of football. Reliable team player and respected leader with outstanding communication and motivational skills both on and off the field. Passionate mentor who is able to connect and cultivate meaningful relationships with student-athletes, staff and those connected with the football program. Energetic innovator who easily adapts to changing environments, ability groups and weather conditions. Proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Visio) and DVSPORT software.

KEY STRENGTHS

MODERN FOOTBALL STRATEGIES / SKILLS	HEALTH & SAFETY RULES
LEADERSHIP / SUPERVISION	
STRENGTH CONDITIONING / TRAINING	OBSERVATION / ANALYSIS
MOTIVATING / MENTORING	
ATHLETIC RECRUITING	INSTRUCTION / EXPLANATION
BUILDING RAPPORT	

COACHING EXPERIENCE

Wake Forest University – Winston-Salem, NC

July 2012 – Present

ROVER COACH / GRADUATE ASSISTANT

- ❖ Coach the Rover position and work extensively with defensive backfield, including primary film study and drill work
- ❖ Help teach basics of football, as well as values associated with livelihood, good gamesmanship and pushing past obstacles
- ❖ Prepare and conduct position specific practice drills, ensuring all aspects met NCAA, college and conference regulations
- ❖ Monitor other college teams and breakdown game film to prepare tactical strategies
- ❖ Relay defensive substitutions, function as primary opponent route identifier, and serve as primary signaler on game day
- ❖ Locate and recruit talent in South Georgia, and aid recruiting efforts in Charlotte, Tennessee and Louisiana
- ❖ Run weekly scout teams in order to prepare defense for each opponent
- ❖ Assist in hosting campus tours for prospective athletes

Camden County High School – Kingsland, GA

August 2010 – December 2010

COMMUNITY COACH

- ❖ Assisted in executing techniques, coverage schemes and offseason physical development of Defensive Backs
- ❖ Served as mentor and role model to student-athletes

COACHING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ❖ Assisted and coached Kevin Johnson (Cornerback) ♦ 2015 1st Rd Draft Pick, Houston Texans(#16 overall)/2013 All-ACC Honorable Mention / 2014 All-ACC Team/

- ❖ Assisted and coached Anthony Wooding (Safety) ♦ 2015 Free Agent, Green Bay Packers
- ❖ Assisted and coached Merrill Noel (Cornerback) ♦ 2014 3rd Team All-ACC/2015 Free Agent, Buffalo Bills
- ❖ Assisted and coached Ryan Janvion (Safety) ♦ 2013 All-ACC Honorable Mention
- ❖ Assisted and coached Kenny Okoro (Defensive Back) ♦ 2013 Free Agent, Washington Redskins

PLAYING EXPERIENCE

TEAM MEMBER ♦ Indoor Football League (IFL) / Amarillo Venom – Amarillo, TX ♦ January 2010 – August 2010

- ❖ Led arena football team in tackles and interceptions
- ❖ Selected as 2010 All-IFL Second Team Defensive Back

TEAM MEMBER ♦ Wake Forest University Football – Winston-Salem, NC ♦ August 2005 – December 2008

- ❖ Developed an increased mental and physical toughness as a 4-year Letterman
- ❖ Started at Cornerback on the 2006 ACC Championship Team, at Safety on the 2007 Meineke Car Care Bowl Championship Team, and at Safety on the 2008 Eagle Bank Bowl Championship Team
- ❖ Honored as 2008 ACC Defensive Player of the Week
- ❖ Signed with the Jacksonville Jaguars in 2009 as an undrafted free agent

TEAM MEMBER ♦ Camden County High School – Kingsland, GA ♦ August 2001 – December 2003

- ❖ Listed as one of the Top 50 players in the state of Georgia
- ❖ Spearheaded team to 15-0 record and 2003 5A State Championship as a Senior
- ❖ Selected for first team All-State by the Atlanta Journal Constitution and Georgia Athletic Coaches Association
- ❖ Chosen to play in Georgia's North-South All-Star Game
- ❖ Led defense that gave up a total of 9 shutouts and 47 total points

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Big Brothers Big Sisters Services, Inc. – Winston-Salem, NC
September 2011 – June 2012

CASE MANAGER

- ❖ Enrolled and matched children in school-based and community-based mentoring program with volunteers and provided match support to ensure safety, positive impacts and constructive relationships for youth
- ❖ Conducted parent, mentor and mentee interviews in order to gauge personality types
- ❖ Served as mentor and instilled confidence in underprivileged youth
- ❖ Supported agency's strategic direction as it pertained to avoidance of risky behavior, educational success, increased self-esteem and confidence

Youth Detention Center of High Plains – Amarillo, TX
March 2010 – September 2010

YOUTH SUPERVISION OFFICER

- ❖ Assisted in management of security and safety programs
- ❖ Monitored detainees' behavior and charted observations and incidents
- ❖ Educated students regarding basic personal, social, academic and work skills
- ❖ Helped with meal preparation
- ❖ Received training in first aid, CPR and personal restraint techniques

EDUCATION

- ❖ **MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES** ♦ Spring 2015
Wake Forest University – Winston-Salem, NC

- ❖ **BACHELOR OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY ♦ 2008**
Wake Forest University – Winston-Salem, NC

CERTIFICATIONS

- ❖ **Passed GACE Basic Skills Assessment ♦ March 2014**
- ❖ **Passed SPED General Curriculum GACE ♦ APRIL 2015**
- ❖ **First Aid/CPR ♦ American Heart Association ♦ Current thru March 2016**

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Nyanya Project – Tanzania, Africa
June 2008

VOLUNTEER

- ❖ Built homes for impoverished grandmothers raising orphaned grandchildren
- ❖ Served as a mentor and role model to young children in Africa