

Black Coaches' Roles in the Holistic Development of Student-Athletes

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Black coaches' ($n=123$) roles in the holistic development of student-athletes, and barriers impeding the coaches' contributions. The results revealed differences based on coaches' personal and team demographics. The findings indicated that: (a) coaches generally agreed with their responsibilities regarding assisting student-athletes with personal problems and academics, yet were in less agreement concerning offering spiritual guidance and monitoring student-athletes' friends and social support groups; (b) Black student-athletes' experiences are less favorable than others; and (c) time constraints, institutional barriers, and coaching demands are the most prevalent barriers coaches face (regarding their contributions to student-athlete development). MANOVA were performed to examine differences in the responses based on the coaches' demographics (i.e., whether a head or assistant coach) and team demographics (i.e., the race and gender composition of teams coached).

INTRODUCTION

Chickering (1969) highlighted the role of educators in contributing to the holistic and psychosocial development of students. Cheatham and Berg-Cross (1992) further contended that the educational system has the "ostensible purpose... of student development" (p. 167). Since organized school sports are under the auspices of the educational system, they are not exempt from addressing and reinforcing the overall mission of higher education regarding student development. As such, collegiate and high school sports should also promote the overall development of students [i.e. student-athletes].

Blake and Darling (1994) contended that as the primary socializing agent, "elementary and secondary education has negatively affected the achievements and self-concepts of African-American men by disproportionately tracking them and not providing positive role models" (p. 405). Hare and Hare (1991) concurred with this position. Gaston (1986) criticized organized school sports and popular culture for being destructive to the development of young Black men. Therefore, while there is a need to examine the holistic development of all student-athletes under the system of higher education, there is a particular need to examine the factors that influence the experiences of Black student-athletes who appear to be disproportionately impacted by the perils of school sport participation (Anderson & South, 1993).

ROLES OF COACH IN STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

A host of factors may influence student-athletes' holistic development, and thus the experiences of Black student-athletes. Among them are factors at the macro level, such as the change in the institution of sport as a model that shifted its focus from the balance of "unified physical, mental, and spiritual excellence" (Zimbalist, 1999, p. 51) to a focus on physical excellence or performance. Factors at the micro level, however, tend to have a more direct impact on student development. Thus, regarding student-athletes, perhaps the most effective way to improve the overall development of student-athletes is to examine the roles and responsibilities of individuals who have direct and immediate influences on their collegiate and interscholastic sport experiences – their coaches. Herein lies the focus of this study.

In an address at a national coaches convention, Farrakhan (1996) commented on the need for coaches to take a more active role in the holistic development of their student-athletes. He articulated the need for the coaches to give proper guidance to Black student-athletes in particular. According to Farrakhan (1996), coaches must perform a myriad of roles for their student-athletes, which include [sometimes] being there: teacher, father, mother, preacher, counselor, doctor, lawyer, defender, nurturer, psychologist, and cultivator, all wrapped up in one. As such, Farrakhan (1996) contended that coaches have a responsibility to offer much needed personal and social support to their student-athletes. Farrakhan (1996) further lamented that it would be vain for coaches to focus solely on the athletic prowess of the young people while ignoring the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development.

Blann (1992) also commented on the coaches' roles in student athlete holistic development. He suggested that the developmental needs of elite athletes such as achievement and success in sports, combined with their developmental experiences (i.e., feelings of power, being special, and exhilaration), result in the need for programs specifically designed to prepare them for career and life transitions after sports. Cosby (1991) also advocated for a holistic approach to developing student-athletes and suggested coaches' should be involved in the academic, social, personal and career development of student-athletes. Cosby further asserted that the rapport a coach establishes with athletes creates an "ideal guidance climate" (p. 104). Williams (1987) highlighted the role of high school coaches in particular, regarding the development of student-athletes, and contended that a reformation process should begin at the high school level. According to Williams (1987), "The high school coach can and must act as a sculptor, molding and shaping the character of the high school athlete to include high esteem for academics" (p. 261).

The primary focus of this paper is on the roles of collegiate and scholastic sport coaches in the overall development of their student-athletes. However, it may also be argued that, with the growth and popularity of youth sports, the process of sport participants' holistic development should begin long before high school or college, and should commence in the early and formative years (i.e., during youth and community sport participation). Nevertheless, when the most appropriate stage for the onset of holistic development should occur (i.e., at the youth, high school, or collegiate level) may be debatable. However, it is a widely held belief that the coach's role in student-athlete/sport participant development is critical.

BARRIERS TO THE COACHES' ROLES IN STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

Notwithstanding the critical roles coaches may play in the overall development of their sport participants, a host of political, economic and social forces may undoubtedly influence decision-making within educational institutions, and therefore infringe upon collegiate and scholastic coaches' ability to contribute to the holistic development of student-athletes. At times, the life of a coach is filled with contradiction as the coach is often faced with many conflicting roles (as posed by the pressures of the administration, the media, the student-athletes, alumni, faculty, parents, and [in many instances] the coaches' family). According to Steir (1995) barriers such as time constraints, hardships on family life, discrimination (racial and sexual), burnout, routinization, outside pressures, win-at-all-cost attitudes, problems and disagreements with administrators, lack of job security, lack of control, and teacher/coach role conflict are some of the negative aspects of coaching. Role conflict in particular (Vernacchia, McGuire, & Cook, 1996), often creates friction and incompatibility between coaches' personal values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding their behavior and the behavioral expectations of external constituents such as alumni, the media, and administration. Although they may vary in effect, each of the barriers identified has the potential to create adverse situations for high school and college coaches regarding their contribution to the holistic development of student-athletes.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

While the rhetoric continues about the role coaches should play in the overall development of their student-athletes, few studies (if any) have actually examined the coaches' perceptions of such roles. The focus of this study was on Black coaches. The specific objectives of this study were to: (a) ascertain Black coaches' perceptions of their roles in student-athlete development, along with the barriers they perceived as interfering with their ability to fulfill such roles/responsibilities, (b) assess Black coaches' evaluations of the overall sport experiences of student-athletes in general, and Black student-athletes in particular, and (c) capture Black coaches' suggestions for improving the experiences and holistic development of student-athletes in general and Black student-athletes in particular.

METHODS

Sample Participants

Personal Profile of Participants.

The sample ($n = 123$) was comprised of 71% male and 29% female coaches from various parts of the United States. Over half (56%) of the sample participants were married and over one third (36%) were single, with the remaining 8% in committed relationships. The sample was young-middle aged (see Table 1 for the age ranges). The highest level of educational attainment for 61% of the sample was the receipt of a Bachelor's degree, 39% received a master's degree, and only 1% received a GED or high school diploma. The academic majors of the sample participants were varied; however, the majority of the sample majored in Physical Education and the least amount majored in Counseling. See Table 2 for the participants' major areas of study in college.

TABLE I

Age Ranges of Coaches in Sample

Age Ranges	Percentage of Sample
25 and under	4%
26 – 34	46%
35 – 44	37%
45 – 54	12%
55 and older	4%

TABLE II

Major Area of Coaches' Academic Study

Academic Major	Percentage of Sample
Miscellaneous Disciplines	37%
Physical Education	31%
Business/Marketing	20%
Sociology	7%
Counseling	6%

PARTICIPANTS' COACHING PROFILE

The majority (62%) of the participants in the sample were assistant coaches, approximately one-third (32%) were head coaches, and only 6% had dual head and assistant coaches roles. The majority (63%) of the participants was employed at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level, and the least amount (3%) worked at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) levels. See Table 3 for a presentation of the types of institutions and sport settings in which the participants coached.

TABLE III

Type of Educational Institution in which Coaching Occurred

Coaching Setting	Percentage of Sample
NCAA Division I University	63%
Historically Black College/University	13%
Community College	10%
High School/Jr. High School	8%
NCAA Division II University	6%
NCAA Division III University	6%
National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)	3%
Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)	3%

Regarding the longevity of the participants' coaching career: (a) the average number of years the participants had been coaching in their present position was 4.5 ($M = 4.7$ for men and $M = 4.1$ for women), and (b) the average number of total years the participants had been in the coaching profession was 12.2 ($M = 13.2$ for male coaches and $M = 8.8$ for female coaches). Regarding the gender composition of the teams coached, the majority (64%) of the participants coached male sport teams, 33% coached female sport teams, and 2% coached both men's and women's sport teams. Regarding the racial/ethnic composition of the athletes comprising the teams coached by the sample participants: (a) half (51%) were responsible for coaching teams comprised of a majority of Black athletes, (b) less than one-third (28%) were responsible for coaching teams with majority White athletes, and (c) 20% coached mixed raced sport teams, and only 2% worked with sport teams in which the majority of the athletes were Hispanic, Asian, or Native American. The sports the participants coached were varied; however, the majority (63%) of them had responsibilities for coaching the sport of basketball. See Table IV for a depiction of the sports coached by the sample participants.

TABLE IV**Sports Coached**

Primary Sport Coached	Percentage of Sample
Basketball	63%
Football	30%
Volleyball	4%
Track and Field	1%
Other Miscellaneous Sports	2%

INSTRUMENT AND MEASURES

To examine the coaches' perceptions of their roles in student-athlete development, some of the social support items contained in Chelladurai and Saleh's (1980) Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) was utilized (yet modified for the purpose of this investigation - see Appendix A). In addition to measuring the coaches' perceptions of their roles in the holistic development of student-athletes, the questionnaire used in this study also ascertained the coaches': (a) evaluations of coaches' general contribution to student-athlete development, (b) evaluations of the experiences of student-athletes, (c) perceptions of barriers that may impede their ability to contribute to student-athlete development (see Appendix A), (d) suggestions to improve the holistic development of student-athletes, and (e) demographic information such as personal and coaching profiles, as well as the racial and gender compositions of the teams they coached. To establish content validity, the instrument was given to three Black college coaches (1 football, 1 basketball, 1 track & field) to review. Based on their feedback, one item was eliminated from the questionnaire.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The data were obtained by surveying Black coaches in attendance at a national Black coaches convention. This convention provided a selection frame appropriate for the objectives of this study because it allowed for exposure to a large and representative sample of Black coaches. One of the researchers was allowed to address the coaches at some of the convention meetings, during which time, questionnaires were distributed. Additionally, questionnaires were placed at the convention registration area. The researchers requested that all questionnaires be returned by the beginning of the third day of the convention, at which time the data collection process was terminated. The estimated attendance at the conference was 342.

The questionnaire distribution procedure previously described enabled the researchers to gather 132 questionnaires. One questionnaire was unusable for the purpose of the analyses because the individual who completed it was not currently in the coaching profession, and seven questionnaires were excluded because the participants were not Black/African-American (as deemed so by their self-reported race/ethnic identification). The sampling procedure yielded a usable sample size of 123, which represented 36% of the conference attendee population, and contained an estimated margin of sampling error of approximately 5%.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The researchers coded the questionnaires and utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data. To examine the manner in which the coaches' responses were influenced by: (a) their demographics such as gender (male or female) and coaching position held (head coach or assistant coach), and (b) their teams' racial demographics (majority Black team or majority White team) and gender demographics (female team or male team), two 2 x 2 between group multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVAs) were performed (one to examine the influence of personal demographics and one to examine the influence of team demographics). Thus, the analyses examined the interactions and main effects on the coaches' responses based on their personal and team characteristics.

RESULTS

Coaches' Perceptions of their Roles in Student-Athlete Development

Coaches were asked to respond to the manner in which they agreed with statements that reflected responsibility in a variety of areas (i.e., academic, personal, social, and spiritual) regarding the overall development of student-athletes using a scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The results revealed that the coaches generally agreed that they had some responsibility in each of the areas identified. They were in stronger agreement with their responsibilities regarding assisting the athletes with personal problems and taking an active role in study tables and the athletes' academic progress, than they were regarding their responsibilities to offer student-athletes spiritual guidance and monitor the athletes' friends and social support groups. See Table 5 for a presentation of the mean rankings of the coaches' level of agreement with the roles identified.

TABLE V

**Coaches' Agreement with Roles in Student-Athlete Development
(1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)**

Factor	Mean Rating (SD)
1. Help athletes with their personal problems.	4.68 (.470)
2. Take active role in study table/academic progress.	4.50 (.625)
3. Encourage the athletes to confide in the coach.	4.44 (.649)
4. Have regular meetings with athletes to discuss life (non-sport related) issues.	4.32 (.806)
5. Actively seek cultural support for athletes.	4.24 (.750)
6. Help athletes within a group settle their conflicts.	4.22 (.778)
7. Establish constant communication w/athletes' parents.	4.09 (.881)

A subsequent analysis using the 2 x 2 MANOVA design was performed to examine whether significant differences existed (i.e., among the head and assistant coaches, male and female coaches) due to 2-way Coaching Position x Gender interactions. No Coaching Position x Gender interactions were revealed for any of the items listed regarding the coaches' perceptions of their roles in overall student-athlete development. No main effect for coaching position was found; however a main effect for coaches' gender was found on three items: male coaches had stronger levels of agreement than did the female coaches on: (a) encouraging athletes to confide in the coach, $F(1, 108) = 3.93, p = .05$; $\bar{M} = 4.52$ and $\bar{M} = 4.26$, respectively; (b) establishing constant communication with athletes' parents, $F(1, 108) = 5.37, p = .02$; $\bar{M} = 4.20$ and $\bar{M} = 3.77$, respectively; and (c) monitoring the friends/social support groups of athletes, $F(1, 108) = 14.17, p < .001$; $\bar{M} = 3.77$ and $\bar{M} = 3.03$, respectively.

A 2 x 2 MANOVA analysis was also performed to examine whether coaches' perceptions of their roles in the overall development of student-athletes differed based on the racial and gender composition of the teams they coached. No 2-way Team Race x Team Gender composition interaction was revealed for any of the items. Main effects for team's race and team gender were found only on one of the items: monitoring friends/social support groups of student-athletes. (Corresponding to one of the gender differences revealed previously) the participants who coached male teams were more likely to agree ($\bar{M} = 3.93$) with the need for coaches to monitor the friends of student-athletes than were coaches who were responsible for female teams ($\bar{M} = 3.25$), $F(1, 91) = 5.02, p = .01$. Regarding the racial composition of the teams, participants who coached teams comprised of predominately Black student-athletes were in higher agreement ($\bar{M} = 3.85$) that coaches had a responsibility to monitor the friends of their student-athletes than were participants who coached predominately White student-athletes ($\bar{M} = 3.30$), $F(1, 91) = 5.82, p = .02$.

Coaches' Perceptions of Student-Athletes' Experiences

Coaches were asked to evaluate the experiences of student athletes in general and Black student-athletes in particular, using the scale: "excellent" (1), "good" (2), "fair" (3), and "poor" (4). The results were as follows.

Experiences of Student-Athletes in General. The coaches rated the experiences of student-athletes in general as "good". No 2-way Gender x Coaching Position interaction was revealed for the coaches' evaluation of the student-athlete, $F(1, 100) = .285, p = .59$. Also, no main effect for coaching position was found, $F(1, 103) = .251, p = .62$ ($M = 2.00$ for head coaches and $M = 2.04$ for assistant coaches), nor was there a main effect for coaches' gender $F(1, 103) = .265, p = .61$ ($M = 2.04$ for male coaches, and $M = 2.00$ for female coaches).

Regarding the influence of team demographics on the coaches' evaluations of student-athletes' experiences in general, no 2-way Team Gender x Team Race composition interaction was revealed, $F(1, 100) = .453, p = .50$. No main effect was found due to gender composition of team, $F(1, 86) = .094, p = .76$ (M for male teams = 2.02, M for female teams = 2.03); however a main effect for racial composition of the team was found, $F(1, 86) = 4.47, p = .04$: participants who were responsible for coaching teams with predominately Black student-athletes rated the student-athlete experience in general less favorably ($M = 1.91$) than did participants who were responsible for predominately White teams ($M = 2.23$).

Experiences of Black Student-Athletes. The coaches rated the experiences of Black student-athletes in particular as "good-fair". No 2-way Gender x Coaching Position interaction was revealed, $F(1, 100) = 1.31, p = .26$. No main effect for coaching position was found for the ratings of the head and assistant coaches, $F(1, 100) = 1.85, p = .18$ ($M = 2.38, M = 2.53$, respectively); nor was there a main effect for gender on the ratings of the male and female coaches ($M = 2.49$ and $M = 2.57$, respectively), $F(1, 100) = .173, p = .68$.

Regarding the influence of the team composition on the coaches' evaluations of the experiences of Black student-athletes, no 2-way Team Gender x Team Race composition interaction was found, $F(1, 86) = 1.43, p = .24$. No main effect for racial composition of team was found, $F(1, 86) = 2.45, p = .12$ (M for majority Black team = 2.39, M for majority White team = 2.70); nor was there a main effect for gender composition of the team coached) $F(1, 86) = 1.94, p = .66$ (M for male teams = 2.49, M for female teams = 2.50).

A one-sample t-test to examine whether the participants' evaluation of the experiences of the Black student-athletes differed from those of student-athletes in general, revealed statistically significant differences, $t(df=118) = 36.31, p < .001$. The results indicated that the coaches rated the experiences of the student-athletes in general more favorable ($M = 2.03$) than they did the experiences of Black student-athletes in particular ($M = 2.52$). See Table 6 for the frequency ratings of the student-athletes' experiences.

TABLE VI

Coaches' Perception of the Overall Sport Experiences of Student-Athletes

	Student –Athletes	Black Student-Athletes
	(In General)	
Excellent	16%	6%
Good	67%	48%
Fair	15%	37%
Poor	2%	10%

Perceptions of Coaches' Contributions to S-A Psychosocial Development

Coaches were asked to evaluate their personal contributions and the contributions of other coaches in general to student-athletes psychosocial development using the scale: "excellent" (1), "good" (2), "fair" (3), and "poor" (4). The results were as follows.

Personal Contributions. The coaches rated their personal contributions to the overall psychosocial development of student-athletes as "good". No 2-way Gender x Coaching Position interaction was revealed, $F(1, 100) = 1.80, p = .41$. No main effect was found for coaching position and among head and assistant coaches, $F(1, 100) = .274, p = .60$ ($M = 1.74$ and $M = 1.79$, respectively); nor was there a main effect for the coaches' gender, $F(1, 100) = .078, p = .78$ ($M = 1.74$ for males, $M = 1.77$ for females).

Regarding the influence of team composition on the coaches' evaluations, no 2-way Team Race x Team Gender composition interaction was found, $F(1, 86) = .915, p = .34$. No main effect for racial composition of the team was found, $F(1, 86) = 2.45, p = .13$ (M for predominately Black team = 1.68; M for predominately White team = 1.93); nor was a main effect for gender composition found, $F(1, 86) = .673, p = .41$ (M for male teams = 1.71; M for female teams = 1.88).

Contributions of Coaches in General. The coaches rated the contributions of coaches in general to the psychosocial development of student-athletes as "good". No 2-way Gender x Coaching Position interaction was revealed, $F(1, 100) = 1.80, p = .41$. No main effect was found for coaches' positions, $F(1, 100) = 3.39, p = .07$ (ratings of head and assistant coaches was $M = 2.06$ and $M = 2.37$, respectively); nor was there a main effect for the coaches' gender, $F(1, 100) = .303, p = .58$ (ratings of male and female coaches were $M = 2.25$ and $M = 2.30$, respectively).

Regarding the influence of team composition on the coaches' evaluations, no 2-way Team Race x Team Gender composition interaction was found, $F(1, 86) = .415, p = .52$. No main effect was found for racial composition of the team, $F(1, 86) = 1.89, p = .17$ (M for predominately Black team = 2.18; M for predominately White team = 2.37); nor was a main effect found for gender composition of the team, $F(1, 86) = .220, p = .64$ (M for females = 2.28; M for males = 2.22).

To examine whether there were significant differences between the coaches' personal evaluations regarding their contributions to the psychosocial development of student-athletes and the contributions of coaches in general, a one-sample t-test was performed. The results revealed significant differences, $t(df = 121) = 35.38, p < .001$, and indicated that the coaches' evaluated themselves more favorably (M = 1.74) than they did other coaches in general (M = 2.25). See Table 7 for the percentages of the sample and their corresponding ratings regarding coaches' contributions to the psychosocial development of student-athletes.

TABLE VII

Coaches' Evaluations of Contribution to the Psychosocial Development of Student-Athletes

Coaches' Personal Contribution		Contribution of Coaches (In General)
Excellent	32%	9%
Good	63%	60%
Fair	5%	29%
Poor	0	2%

Barriers to Coaches' Roles and Contributions

A number of barriers were posited to infringe upon coaches' ability to assist in the overall development of student-athletes (i.e. time constraints, family obligations, institutional factors, etc.). The results revealed that the top three barriers as perceived by the coaches were: (a) time constraints, (b) institutional barriers (as imposed by their universities, conferences, or the NCAA), and (c) the demands of coaching. See Table VIII for a listing of order in which the coaches ranked each barrier presented, with the corresponding percentages.

TABLE VIII**Rank Order of Barriers Perceived by Coaches**

Barriers Identified	Percentage of Sample
1. Time Constraints	45%
2. Institutional Barriers	38%
3. Coaching Demands	33%
4. Lack of Resources	22%
5. Lack of Responsibility or Interest from Athletes	16%
6. Family or Personal Obligations	11%
7. Lack of Support from Athletes' Parents	8%

To examine whether coaches experienced different barriers based on their coaching role and their gender, a subsequent 2 x 2 MANOVA was performed. No 2-way Gender x Coaching Position interaction was found to influence any of the barriers identified. A main effect for coaching position was found for three items: (a) family or personal obligations, was more of a barrier for head coaches ($M=1.85$) than it was for assistant coaches ($M = 1.92$), $F(1, 109) = 3.69$, $p = .03$; (b) head coaches were more likely to perceive the lack of support from athletes' parents as a barrier, ($M = 1.91$) in comparison to assistant coaches ($M = 1.94$), $F(1, 109) = 8.32$, $p < .001$; and at the marginally statistically significant level ($p = .058$) (c) head coaches were more likely to report lack of resources as a barrier ($M = 1.71$) more so than assistant coaches ($M = 1.85$), $F(1, 109) = 2.93$. A main effect was also found for coaches' gender on one item: the male coaches perceived the lack of responsibility or interest from student-athletes as a barrier to their overall development ($M = 1.87$) more than did female coaches ($M = 1.74$), $F(1, 109) = 3.95$, $p = .05$.

Regarding the influence of the team composition on the barriers perceived by the coaches, no 2-way Team Race x Team Gender composition interaction was found for any of the barriers identified, nor was a main effect found for the gender composition of the teams. A main effect was found, however, for racial composition of the teams, $F(1, 86) = 7.65$, $p = .02$, as participants who were coaching majority Black teams were more likely to report institutional barriers ($M = 1.70$) than were coaches of majority White teams ($M = 1.43$).

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The coaches offered a variety of suggestions that would improve the overall development of student-athletes and contribute to them having more rewarding sport experiences. The suggestions offered by the coaches focused on: (a) the encouragement of more interaction between student-athletes and coaches, (b) greater attention to life skills issues, (c) collaborations with community and campus entities, and (d) better student-athlete support programs. The coaches also suggested that Black coaching organizations could play a major role in assisting them to improve the psychosocial development of their student-athletes by: (a) increasing their membership of Black coaches, (b) offering student-athlete support services and encouraging student-athlete involvement, (c) offering convention sessions and workshops to assist coaches with the overall development of student-athletes, (d) developing role models and mentoring programs for Black student-athletes, and (e) increasing their overall presence and visibility as a voice for Black coaches, Black administrators, and Black student-athletes.

DISCUSSION

Sample Characteristics

This sample was comprised a young to middle-aged educated constituency with professional training in physical education and business, who were increasing their longevity in the coaching profession. The majority of the coaches coached at the college level and had responsibilities for basketball teams comprised of majority Black student-athletes. Because of the reported salience of basketball to Black youth and the Black community (Harrison, Lee, & Belcher, 1999; Sachs & Abraham, 1979) these coaches are, therefore, in a high visibility position to evoke change and promote the overall development among Black student-athletes. The majority of the coaches were also assistant coaches. Assistant coaches usually serve as liaisons between athletes and head coaches, and therefore athlete development may be inherent in the job responsibilities of their respective positions. As such, the propensity with which this sample of coaches was cognizant of their roles in the overall development of student-athletes was overwhelmingly favorable. In addition, the respective coaching organization from which the data were obtained should maximize the resources and expertise of their member coaches regarding the psychosocial development of student-athletes by mobilizing and seeking input from the 13% of the coaches who had received formal training in the areas of Sociology and Counseling (which are disciplines that address factors that could enhance student-athlete development).

COACHES' ROLES AND STUDENT-ATHLETES' EXPERIENCES

Coaches believed that student-athletes in general are having "good" sport experiences, however, they believed that Black-student-athletes' experiences are less favorable than the experiences of most athletes in general. The factors contributing to these evaluations were not ascertained, thus, the researchers are unsure "why" these assessments prevailed. These findings suggest a need for subsequent examinations/future study on this topic. Further, more participants who coached predominately Black student-athletes reported institutional barriers (i.e., NCAA regulations, conference regulations, etc.), regarding their ability to contribute to student-athletes holistic development than did participants who did not coach predominately Black athletes. In addition, the coaches perceived themselves to be making contributions that were more viable to student-athlete development in comparison to the contributions of coaches in general. Since coaches generally perceived themselves as doing a "good" job of contributing to the overall development of their student-athletes, perhaps barriers posited to interfere with their roles were not substantial enough to be perceived as such. Nevertheless, the three major barriers that infringed upon the coaches' progress in assisting with the overall development of their student-athletes (i.e., time constraints, institutional barriers, and the demands of coaching) were comparable to the ones listed by Steir (1995) and Vernacchia et al. (1996). Based on the barriers identified, there is a need for the respective institutions and sport settings to examine "systematic" ways of facilitating coaches' contributions to the holistic development of student-athletes.

Responsibilities coaches were generally in strongest agreement with were: assisting athletes with their personal problems, taking an active role in study table and athlete's academic progress, and encouraging athletes to confide in them. Responsibilities coaches expressed moderate agreement with included: having regular meeting with athletes to discuss life (i.e., non-sport related) issues, helping athletes settle their conflicts, actively seeking cultural support for athletes, and encouraging close and informal relations with athletes. Responsibilities coaches expressed the least amount of agreement with included: offering some sort of spiritual guidance for athletes and monitoring the friends/social support groups of athletes.

The findings regarding the coaches' roles were generally more similar than dissimilar considering the coaches' gender, their coaching positions (i.e., head or assistant coaches), and the racial and gender compositions of the teams they coached. However, based on the main effects found, some differences were revealed in the coaches' level of agreement with their roles based on the coaches' personal demographics as well as the demographics of the teams they coached. For instance, male coaches had stronger levels of agreement than females regarding the encouragement of athletes to confide in the coach, the establishment of constant communication with athletes' parents, and the monitoring of the friends/social support groups of athletes. In addition, participants who coached male teams (in comparison to female teams) and majority Black teams (in comparison to majority White teams) were in stronger agreement with the need to monitor student-athletes' friends and social support groups. These findings illustrated that coaches may approach their responsibilities in student-athlete development differently based on the variability of their personal demographics and team characteristics.

THE NEED FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

The results of this study revealed that Black coaches perceived the overall experiences of Black student-athletes to be less satisfying than those of all student-athletes (male, female, Black, White, etc.) in general. In addition, participants who coached teams comprised of predominately Black athletes were more likely to report experiencing institutional barriers that interfered with their ability to contribute to the student-athletes' holistic development. The process of improving the overall experiences of Black student-athletes will require coaches (and athletic administrators) to be mindful that Black student-athletes are (first and foremost) Black individuals, who (consequently) are not exempt from the social constructions and manifestations of race (and gender for Black female student-athletes) that may influence their educational, developmental, and athletic experiences. Thus, addressing the holistic development of Black student-athletes begins with recognizing the manner in which their cultured (racial/ethnic) identity influences their development process.

Cheatham and Berg-Cross (1992) have argued that African-American (used interchangeably with Black) student development differs from student development in general. While African-American students experience developmental challenges that are experienced similarly by the general student populace, African-American students must also respond to the emerging concerns related to their racial and cultural identities, which ultimately influence their overall development (Cheatham & Berg-Cross, 1992). Boykin (1983) contended that there are specific values that most discern African-American culture. McEwen, Roper, Bryant, and Langa (1990) further contended that there are nine dimensions that are related to developmental tasks of African-American students that have not been adequately addressed: (a) developing ethnic and racial identity, (b) interacting with the dominant culture, (c) developing cultural aesthetics and awareness, (d) developing identity, (e) developing interdependence, (f) fulfilling affiliation needs, (g) surviving intellectually, (h) developing spiritually, and (i) developing social responsibility (p. 430). The Black student-athletes' referenced in this study may have also been (directly and/or indirectly) influenced by the culturally related developmental issues identified by McEwen, et al (1990); however, the rankings of this sample of coaches' agreement with varied responsibilities on a scale ranging from one (highest) to 10 (lowest) placed "cultural support" at #5 and "spiritual guidance" at #9.

McEwen et al. (1990) further contended that, "Those responsible for teaching and helping Black students must create models of human and student development that take into account the unique needs and experiences that Black students bring to college campuses" (p. 430). Most of the coaches in this study were employed at Predominately White institutions (PWI). PWI's were founded to educate the White middle class and were based on Anglo-Saxon and Euro-American values (McEwen et al., 1990; Kovel, 1970), and perpetuates a culture that is likely to exert a profound influence on the overall development of Black students. According to Cheatham and Berg-Cross (1992), "collegiate environments that do not acknowledge and incorporate the cultural values of African-American and other ethnic minority students retard rather than promote these students' psychosocial development" (p. 179). Therefore, notwithstanding the challenges of doing so, (as suggested by Cosby, 1992, Farakhan, 1996, and others) there is a particular need for coaches to examine ways to contribute

to the broader cultural, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of the holistic development of Black student-athletes that ultimately influence: (a) their overall experiences as student-athletes and (b) their readiness for life after sports.

CONCLUSION

Organized school sports are under the auspices of the educational system. As such, coaches and athletic administrators (as employees of the educational system) have a responsibility to make positive contributions to the overall development of their student-athletes. In addition, sports that are youth or community oriented (such as AAU teams) also have a responsibility regarding participant/student development. In light of the dynamic challenges confronting student-athletes in general and Black student-athletes in particular (Brooks & Althouse, 2000), coaches might need to revisit the manner in which they prioritize the dimensions of overall student-athlete development. Rather than focusing solely on the immediate and acute personal and academic problems that student-athletes must contend with, there is also a need for coaches to increase their understanding of the impact of the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of student-athletes' well being.

The results of this study may not be generalizable to coaches not included in this sample. Further, using a coaching convention as a selection frame may have represented a selection bias. In addition, the predominate sample of college coaches (with only 8% high school coaches and 3% AAU coaches) prevented any reliable examinations of the differences that may exist in the perceived roles and factors influencing them based on the setting in which coaching takes place (such as high schools or AAU programs). Moreover, consequent to having a majority sample of male college coaches, the suggestions offered were more relevant to the college campus environment (than to other sport settings) and perhaps more relevant to men's rather than women's sports. However, it is likely that the influence of some of the factors identified as roles and barriers may differ with a more heterogeneous sample of coaches. As such, future examinations should seek to obtain samples comprised of representative numbers of: (a) coaches from various academic levels and sport settings and (b) female coaches.

Future research should also: (a) ascertain roles and responsibilities as identified by coaches (rather than researchers) regarding student-athlete development, (b) identify the factors that adversely influence the experiences of Black student-athletes such that their experiences are less favorable than those of students-athletes in general, and (c) seek to itemize specific institutional barriers that inhibit coaches' contributions to student-athlete development. Additionally, there is a need to (not only examine the manner in which the performance based-business orientation of the institution of sport may reinforce practices that negatively influence student-athlete development), but to also examine the manner in which the business discourages or inhibits responding to student-athletes' unique social, cultural, or psychological needs. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, there is a need to examine student-athletes' perspectives (as suggested by the American Institutes for Research, 1989) regarding their overall development. Nevertheless, (notwithstanding the limitations of this study and the need for future study) the findings of this study offered valuable insight into coaches' perspectives on factors that influence their role in student-athletes' overall (i.e., holistic) development.

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APPENDIX

A. Items Relating to Coaches Responsibilities in Holistic Development of Student-Athletes

I believe that coaches have the responsibility to:

- a) Help athletes with their personal problems.
- b) Help athletes within a group settle their conflicts.
- c) Encourage the athletes to confide in the coach
- d) Encourage close and informal relations with athletes.
- e) Establish a constant communication with the parents of the athletes.
- f) Monitor the friends/social support groups of athletes.
- g) Take an active role in study table/academic progress of athletes.
- h) Offer some sort of spiritual guidance for athletes.
- i) Have regular meetings with athletes to discuss "life" (e.g. non-sport related issues).
- j) Actively seek cultural support for athletes.

B. Barriers Perceived to Influence Coaches' Role in Psychosocial Development of Student-Athletes

- a) Time constraints
- b) Family/Personal obligations
- c) The demands of coaching
- d) Lack of resources (financial, social, cultural, psychological, etc.)
- e) Lack of support from athletes' parents
- f) Lack of responsibility, interest, and/or cooperation from athletes.
- g) Institutional barriers (Universities, NCAA, Conferences, etc.)