

MORE THAN AN ATHLETE: HOW BLACK STUDENT-ATHLETES USE NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL TO TRANSITION TO LIFE AFTER SPORT

RESEARCH FROM THE FRONT PORCH

“BLACK STUDENT-ATHLETES ENTER THE INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS SPACE WITH CULTURAL ASSETS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR ABILITY TO PERSIST, GRADUATE AND NAVIGATE THE PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE.”

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2020, the NCAA reported that few college athletes reach the professional ranks and only about 59% of Black athletes graduate (compared to 69% of all athletes). It is incredibly important that practitioners understand how Black athletes have fared despite a system that places financial gain over academic success and overall well-being.
- This study explored how Black student-athletes used various forms of Yosso’s community cultural wealth, the “array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro- and micro-forms of oppression,” to navigate their post-collegiate transitions and life after sports.
- Black student-athletes leveraged career aspirations, familial and cultural lessons, the desire to challenge racial stereotypes, and various sources of social capital to navigate transitions away from playing college sports.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

- In what ways are certain policies and practices at my institution prioritizing maintaining academic eligibility and athletic success over the career development of all student-athletes?
- How can practitioners at my institution leverage Black student-athletes’ familial and aspirational capital to prepare them for life after college sports?
- In what ways can our athletic department facilitate Black student-athletes’ development of social capital within athletic spaces, and across campus?
- What racial stereotypes may be shaping how we support Black student-athletes at my institution, and how can we move from a deficit-informed model to an assets-minded model of supporting Black student-athletes?



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Additional Resources:

- Estimated probability of competing in professional athletics
- Division I Graduation Rates Database
- Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth by. Dr. Tara J. Yosso
- “More than an athlete”: How Black student-athletes use navigational capital to transition to life after sport

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