

UC Riverside

UC Riverside Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Carcerality and College Athletics: State Methods of Enclosure Within and Through College Sport

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/52z8679n>

Author

Grummert, Sara

Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Carcerality and College Athletics:
State Methods of Enclosure Within and Through College Sport

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

by

Sara E. Grummert

June 2021

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Eddie Comeaux, Chairperson

Dr. Uma Jayakumar

Dr. Dylan Rodríguez

Dr. Rican Vue

Copyright by
Sara E. Grummert
2021

The Dissertation of Sara E. Grummert is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Carcerality and College Athletics:
State Methods of Enclosure Within and Through College Sport

by

Sara E. Grummert

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Education
University of California, Riverside, June 2021
Dr. Eddie Comeaux, Chairperson

This dissertation qualitatively examined former (18) and current (2) college players' experiences within their athletic department ecology—experiences with teammates, coaches and administrators, team doctors and health professionals, and experiences with various mechanisms of discipline, punishment, and surveillance. Using antiblackness and carcerality as an analytic, this study demonstrated how higher education's administering of college athletics mirrors other antiblack state projects and structural conditions of antiblackness more broadly. Across Division I FBS, FCS, and Division I (no football) institutions and participants who competed in track and field, cross country, men's and women's basketball, men's soccer, football, softball, and/or volleyball, every participant was subjected to carceral conditions and lived in relation to athletic department and coach despotism. However, antiblackness is constitutive of carcerality and as such the concentration and magnitude of harm was oriented around an antiblack logic that mediated participant experiences—with the most harm being concentrated on Black

women. Nonblack, and especially white, participants were afforded more leeway to self-police or maintain the illusion thereof, whereas Black participants experienced heightened, more severe, and/or unique forms of containment, surveillance, and bodily and psychological harm. Findings from this study demonstrate how college sport is used to complement other state projects of enclosure. Sport, when operationalized this way, takes on the state's carceral logic, necessarily making the organization of these leagues follow an antiblack algorithm of containment, control, surveillance, bodily harm, and punishment. Thus, higher education institutions can be understood as engaging in a carceral partnership with the state in their creation and normalization of the nonprofit "collegiate model of athletics."

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
DEDICATION.....	x
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Purpose.....	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	8
Structuring Logics and Critiques.....	8
Socialization Processes.....	12
Surveillance Mechanisms.....	13
Team Environments.....	15
Sport and State Violence.....	18
Chapter 3: Theory & Methodology.....	25
Antiblackness.....	25
Carcerality and the Carceral Regime.....	32
Methodology and Methods.....	37
Interview Protocol.....	41
Participant Selection Criteria.....	43
Recruitment.....	44
Data Collection.....	46
Data Analysis.....	50
Trustworthiness and Dependability.....	51
Limitations.....	53
Chapter 4: Intake, Socialization, & Enclosure.....	55
Early Socialization and Isolation.....	55
Intake Forms and Coerced "Consent".....	61
NCAA as Official Scapegoat.....	66
Privilege of Participation.....	67
Institutional Marking.....	72
Chapter 5: Surveillance, Discipline, & Punishment.....	76
Class Checks, Progress Reports, and Study Halls.....	77
Drug Testing.....	82

Social Media & Disciplining Political Critique	85
Booster Shadow Control	87
Policing Political Demonstrations and Action	90
Punishment.....	96
Chapter 6: Health and Bodily Autonomy	100
Experiences with Athletic Trainers.....	101
Long-term, Severe Health Problems Due to Departmental Negligence	105
Coach Neglect.....	110
Coaches' Influence Over Trainers and Doctors.....	114
Structural Barriers and Manipulations	116
Chapter 7: Refusal and Renunciation	124
Refusals.....	125
Disconnecting Mentally and Emotionally from Sport	129
Quitting, Leaving, and/or Being Forced Out of College Sport.....	134
Renouncing College Sport	138
Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion	143
Discussing Intake, Socialization, and Enclosure	144
Discussing Surveillance Discipline Punishment.....	149
Discussing Health and Bodily Autonomy.....	154
Discussing Refusal and Renunciation.....	155
Conclusion and Implications.....	157
References.....	165
Appendix A.....	181
Appendix B.....	185

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to every participant who chose to share your experiences with me—I am deeply grateful for your time, insight, and analysis you provided this project. I only hope I do your words and stories justice in years to come. I am indebted to my amazing committee—Drs. Eddie Comeaux, Uma Jayakumar, Rican Vue, and Dylan Rodríguez. I want to thank each of you, along with Dr. João C. Vargas and Dr. Raquel Rall, for your generosity, patience, and the many course corrections you all provided that made this project more meaningful. Dr. Comeaux, thank you for your steadfast guidance and support throughout the doctoral program. You’ve challenged me to be more critical, instilled confidence, and shown me how to do higher education research and advocacy with integrity. I so appreciate every opportunity and collaboration you’ve trusted me with. Dr. Jayakumar, I won’t be able to thank you enough for the training and support you’ve given me throughout the last 4 years. I am grateful for you bringing me into collaborations and treating me as if I was your own advisee. I also want to thank you for your stabilizing support, care, and guidance through grief and reminders that the heaviness doesn’t have to engulf me and isn’t something I need to carry alone. Dr. Vue, thank you for your support dating back to my masters program and every formal (and hall/office) conversation we’ve had about this project, methods, and life. You and your work push me to analyze deeper, think interdisciplinarily, and reflect on the contradictions. Thank you to Dylan/Dr. Rodríguez and Dr. Vargas for your generosity, feedback, direction, and pushing as I continue to stumble through understanding carcerality and antiblackness and the implications of each.

Thank you to Drs. Siduri Haslerig, Begoña Echeverria, Raquel Rall, and Kirsten Hextrum for your support and insight throughout my PhD program. Each of you gave me confidence and encouragement that studying sport matters and feedback/collaboration that pushed these ideas forward. Thank you to classmates/friends/peers—especially Margarita, Sneha, Kenyon, and Pat. I would not have made it through coursework or this dissertation without you, and you all made Riverside/campus a hell of a lot more fun while we were all there. Margarita taught me so much, shaped this project, and remains my biggest supporter, hype-woman, thinking and laughing partner, confidant, and bestfriend. Siduri, none of this would have been possible without you. Thank you for being my partner in every way possible and for your unwavering support, feedback, and grounding throughout this whole process (and for generally putting up with my ramblings and mumbles about this document).

Thank you to my parents for your material support throughout my graduate studies—I finally finished “that paper.” Likewise, thank you to Stacy, Jordan, and Barb for taking me in; your material and emotional support, much needed comic relief, and unlimited shrubs throughout these last 4 years are deeply appreciated.

DEDICATION

with Margarita Vizcarra

until we are back in the same time zone...

Carcerality and College Athletics:

State Methods of Enclosure Within and Through College Athletics

Chapter 1: Introduction

For decades critical sport scholars have documented the tension between the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) and college athletes who continue to fight for their rights to healthcare, free speech, bodily autonomy, education, and fair compensation (Comeaux, 2018; Edwards, 1984; Gayles et al., 2018; Huma & Staurowsky, 2011; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013; Staurowsky, 2014). Debates and legislation around the NCAA's and universities' power to violate student rights have left some legal scholars perplexed at the liminal space college players occupy as not only a student and not quite an employee. Some question why universities were and are enabled by the state to a) establish this power by way of creating their own concepts such as "amateurism" and "student-athlete" and b) continue to use this power to restrict player rights at universities' discretion (LoMonte, 2014; LoMonte & Hamrick, 2020; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013; Staurowsky & Sack, 2005), while others rationalize it as morally acceptable or deserved because of the nature of sport or the "privilege" associated with being a college athlete (see Penrose 2013, 2014).

Those who have organized against the current structure and fought for player rights have experienced the massive resistance they meet from administrators and state officials who fight to preserve the system—an arrangement that has been critiqued for mirroring a plantation (Branch, 2011; Hawkins, 2010), and relying on the disposability of primarily Black men (Comeaux, 2018; Rhoden, 2006). Scholars have analyzed other

functions of college athletics such as propagating white supremacist delusions of the ultimate heterosexual white subject (Hextrum, 2021a; Smith, 1990), serving as another privileging access point to college for white youth (Hextrum, 2018, 2019, 2020a; Jayakumar & Page, forthcoming), and as an avenue to further wealth accumulation for primarily white administrators and corporate entities (Gayles et al., 2018).

The most recent example emblematic of these ongoing debates was the discourse around whether players should return to campus during the pandemic. In this instance the state's investment in college athletics was overtly laid bare, shrouded in paternalism and antiblack reasoning. For instance, Ben Sasse, a former university president and current senator, lobbied university presidents arguing, "...the structure and discipline of football programs is very likely safer than the lived experience of 18- to 22-year-olds will be if there isn't a season" (Dellenger, 2020). In addition to arguments for the "structure" and "discipline" of football, other state officials advocated to advance the college football season under the rationale that "America needs football" (Curtis, 2020).

This lobbying was taking place as institutions and athletic administrations across the country responded to white supremacist and antiblack state violence by disseminating statements of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, commitments to antiracism, and calls for antiracist "unity" (OU Athletics, 2020; Worlock, 2021). These institutional proclamations of valuing Black life were juxtaposed with the reality of players being ushered and coerced back to campus and players across the country forming coalitions to report and combat the institutional negligence they were facing—from ambiguous health and safety procedures, a general ambivalence about the effects

the virus could have on their bodies and lives, and being separated from families and communities in a time of heightened racial trauma (Haslerig, 2020; Kalman-Lamb, 2020; NCPA, 2020). This example is illustrative of larger questions about the logic underwriting the state's investment in college sport as well as what the compulsory pivot to "unity" and the need for "discipline" in wake of antiblack terrorism means. In other words, what logic encompasses the contradictory space between universities' antiracist declarations and the decision to move forward with college sport during a pandemic and uprisings against antiblack state violence?

These contradictions take on new meaning when analyzing college sport in relation to state violence. Hextrum (2021a) recently explicated the relationship between college sport, the NCAA, and state power:

Like other arms of the state (e.g., military or taxes), the NCAA is not a singular thing but a collection of member institutions and individuals. Through its diffuse organizational membership (discussed in forthcoming chapters), the NCAA's reach and the state's power expand. (pp. 5-6)

As such, college sport can be seen as enmeshed in and complementing other antiblack state projects and carceral expansion such as segregation, organized abandonment, the war on drugs, nonprofit sporting organizations (Hartmann, 2012), the proliferation of tropes about Black athleticism and invincibility (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Harrison & Lawrence, 2004; Haslerig et al., 2020), as well as narratives that sport via the "state-sponsored sports pathway to college" is an avenue for social mobility (Edwards, 1979; Hextrum, 2021a, p. 3; Kalman-Lamb, 2020).

What remains undertheorized is how higher education's administering of college athletics rests within the carceral continuum of these antiblack state projects and structural conditions of antiblackness more broadly. Put another way, how is the system and foundational logics that structure college athletics tethered to the dehumanization of Black players specifically, and the reproduction and normalization of the abjection of Black people generally? This study asks in what ways does higher education use antiblack logics and carceral formations to administer college athletics? How are mechanisms of surveillance, discipline, and punishment deployed in racialized and gendered ways? What forms of control and ideologies are used to indoctrinate and rationalize this system to participants, as well as gain consent of the public?

This dissertation offers an in-depth analysis and theorization of the carceral function of college athletics; my findings offer more evidence of the ways in which antiblack, carceral logics shape the everyday organization and administration of college sport. As we can glean from research at the nexus of prison and schooling (Sojoyner, 2013, 2016; Wun, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b), there may be more explanatory power when situating college athletics in relation to state sanctioned attempts to enclose and police Black communities and control dissent. This requires a more thorough analysis into the carceral processes that structure contemporary college athletics and how those processes are informed by and extend antiblackness as a structuring logic of social and institutional life.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to analyze college athletics in relation to state-sponsored enclosures such as those documented as shaping K-12 education, healthcare, and prisons (Gilmore, 2007; Rodríguez, 2006; Sojoyner, 2016). Informed by a larger field of carceral studies and scholarship on the carceral state (Foucault, 1975; Gilmore, 2007; James, 1996; Meiners, 2010; Richie, 2012; Rodríguez, 2006, 2021a), I document how various technologies of control (ideological and tangible) and containment are deployed by universities to encroach on player autonomy, mediate and prohibit critical thought and organizing, and surveille, discipline, and punish players in accordance with an undergirding antiblack logic. I draw from larger fields on antiblackness and carcerality as a means of analyzing college athletics. These fields are well developed, but have yet to be applied in the context of college athletics. As such, the primary objective of this dissertation was to show the applicability and explanatory power these theories offer the study of college sport and how doing so necessitates a shift in future organizing efforts.

Scholars of carcerality and the prison industrial complex and Dylan Rodríguez's conceptualization of the *prison regime* or *carceral regime*, in particular, are central to these questions and analyses. Rodríguez posits that carceral logics that underwrite society are indicative of a larger formation of the U.S. prison regime as "a dynamic state mediated practice of domination and control, rather than as a reified 'institution' or 'apparatus'" (2006, p. 40). His definition of the prison regime and its conceptual reach magnifies the "meso-range" of practices and logics that mediate, inform, and deploy carceral logics and formations beyond the site of the prison itself (p. 41).

To locate these logics at work, I qualitatively examined former and current players' experiences within their athletic department ecology—including experiences with teammates, coaches and administrators, team doctors and health professionals, and experiences with various forms of discipline, punishment, and surveillance (such as those outlined in athlete handbooks, codes of conduct, and team rules). I examine findings in relation to federal policies related to sport and theorize that college athletics is used by the state to extend antiblack, carceral formations and forms of enclosure.

As I argue throughout this dissertation, the logics of containment, control, and racialized punishment of the carceral regime that are predicated on antiblackness are essential for maintaining the current structure of college athletics. I aim to show how sport, across youth and college leagues, have been strategically used by the state—largely through outsourcing their disciplinary power to nonprofit organizations such as the NCAA and Midnight Basketball League—to criminalize and contain Black communities. Rather than being a vanguard for racial progress, higher education's use of sport parallels other carceral, racial colonial projects and is a site predicated on Black enclosure and fungibility.

I begin by reviewing extant literature on college player experiences contending with restrictive and oppressive conditions, before reviewing the work of scholars who have explicitly linked sport to state violence or state methods of enclosure. Informed by these studies, I use theories of antiblackness and carcerality to analyze former (18) and current (2) college players' experiences at their respective institutions. Findings are divided into four chapters: *Intake, Socialization, and Enclosure; Surveillance, Discipline,*

and Punishment; Health and Bodily Autonomy; and Refusal and Renunciation. I end with a discussion that outlines similarities and departures with previous research on college athletics, pragmatic implications for researchers and practitioners, as well as implications for the study of sport and higher education more broadly.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is a large archive, both academic and activist, that details college athletes' inequitable and exploitative conditions within higher education. Most research critical of the system has investigated the structure of college sport and player experiences through lenses of capitalism, neoliberalism, racism, and white supremacy. Below, I present extant literature on player experiences as they are influenced by the aforementioned constructs, though it is by no means exhaustive. I organized the first half of the literature review as follows: structuring logics and critiques, socialization processes, surveillance and control, and team environments. In the second half, I turn to research that has directly connected sport to larger state processes and recent literature that has re-conceptualized intercollegiate athletics as the “state-sponsored sport pathway to college” to contextualize my rationale for using carcerality and antiblackness as lens to examine an undertheorized carceral function of college athletics in the U.S. (Hextrum, 2021a, p. 3).

Structuring Logics and Critiques

Several concepts were created and instituted within intercollegiate athletics to cement and sustain the system—namely amateurism, student-athlete, and the collegiate model of athletics (Huma & Staurowsky, 2011; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013). The concept of “amateurism” was created and operationalized by the NCAA and member institutions to frame athletics participation as an avocation—that participants simply play their chosen sport for the love of the game (Gayles et al., 2018; Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). Amateurism is often defended using paternalistic arguments, asserting universities' control of players under the guise of “protection” from capitalism

and that institutions are prioritizing players' best interests (Hawkins, 2010; Southall & Weiler, 2014). Hextrum helps us understand how amateurism as a foundational concept of college sport has continued to morph over time to serve white institutional interests and stakeholders (Hextrum, 2018, 2020a, 2021a), as well as how state formations and sport are inextricably linked to race and class warfare, which I discuss in greater depth in the next section (see Hextrum, 2021a, 2021b).

Another rhetorical, ideological tactic was the creation and institutionalization of the term “student-athlete” which protects institutions from paying workers compensation and was used to shield the NCAA from court cases challenging exploitative labor practices and the arbitrarily capped compensation structure (Staurowsky & Sack, 2005). Universities and the NCAA have used propaganda over the years to protect these logics and the current structure of collegiate athletics. Southall and Staurowsky (2013) described how a series of propagandized concepts were used to rationalize the system and gain consent, stating:

...the college-sport enterprise has been built on a series of legal fictions spun from the imaginative and strategic manufacture of language designed to create the impression that the business practices associated with the running of big-time college sport are educational and not exploitative in nature. (p. 409)

These foundational fallacies combined with the heralding of education as an invaluable exchange not only gains “spontaneous consent” from the public, but also breeds resentment toward college athletes (Southall & Staurowsky, 2013, p. 404). As evidenced by studies that survey students about their perceptions of “athlete privilege,”

misconceptions about athletes and their structural position within the university breeds resentment from non-athlete students; instead of acknowledging or accounting for players' denial of rights, research framing athletes as a "privileged" group in relation to other students furthers resentment from the campus community (Loveland et al., 2020).

Other research has examined these structuring logics and how fulfilling them (e.g., organizing and administering athletics according to them) is tied to structural racism (Gayles, 2018; Hawkins, 2010), white supremacy and whiteness (Hextrum, 2018, 2020d, 2021a, 2021b), capitalism and neoliberalism (Comeaux, 2018; Gayles et al., 2018; Giroux & Giroux, 2012), and antiblackness (Comeaux & Grummert, 2020; Dancy et al., 2018). Most research references the structure of wealth accumulation for white administrators and the disproportionate percentage of Black players in revenue generating sports compared to other sports and the rest of the study body as a signifier of racist exploitation (Gayles et al, 2018; Giroux & Giroux, 2012). Dancy et al., (2018) and Hawkins (2010) paralleled the current structure of college athletics to slavery and a plantation system, respectively. Dancy et al. (2018) asserted that Blackness being equated with property has never been eradicated from the white imagination, structures, and society. Both noted that universities shifted from relying on enslaved Black labor to build and maintain institutions, to relying on Black players to generate revenue and promote the university under the guise of amateurism (Dancy et al., 2018; Hawkins, 2010; Nocera & Strauss, 2016).

Despite popular media coverage and narratives that college athletics serves as a mechanism of upward mobility for people of color, and Black youth in particular

(Kalman-Lamb, 2020), white students make up the majority of college athletes and the majority of scholarship recipients (Hextrum, 2020). Hextrum (2018, 2020a) directly implicated the ideal of amateurism as a privileging mechanism for white prospective athletes, whereby they are able to convert their various forms of capital into athletic scholarships. Through the use of sport camps and unofficial visits, white athletes and white powerbrokers maintain a racially stratified system of opportunity and access through current recruiting practices and thus protect white property interests through sport (Harris, 1993; Hextrum, 2018, 2021a).

College athletics has also elevated white administrators and coaches through a power structure that privileges white people in obtaining and staying in positions of power within athletic departments, the institution, and thus the NCAA. The NCAA is currently comprised of 1,117 member institutions, with each institution having one individual—usually the university president—serving as the institution’s representative (NCAA, 2017). Since there is an overrepresentation of white men holding governing board member positions, this then constitutes NCAA member institutional representation; white men who are governors overwhelmingly appoint white men for governing board positions, who in turn appoint white men as university presidents (AGB, 2016; Rall et al., 2018; Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012). The cyclical process excludes people of color from NCAA and university leadership (Gayles et al., 2018; Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012). Additionally, athletic department leadership and coaching positions are still held overwhelmingly by white men (Hextrum, 2018; Lapchick, 2019).

Socialization Processes

Socialization processes in athletic departments that push players to prioritize athletic demands over academics is well documented (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; Fountain & Finley, 2009; Gayles et al., 2018). Jayakumar and Comeaux (2016) found athletic departments paint an “idealized” picture of student-athlete life during the recruiting process, where coaches and administrators profess their educational values, emphasize the variety of academic support services available, and subsequently socialize players to prioritize athletics over academics (p. 493). Studies demonstrated how this is akin to a bait and switch, setting up unrealistic demands for players and individualizing blame—placing the onus on players rather than the restrictive and exploitive structure (Hextrum, 2020c; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Hextrum (2020c) demonstrated how these socialization practices are not exclusive to football or men’s basketball but rather pervasive throughout athletic departments. Her study showed how individualism as an ideology mediated rowing and track athletes’ responses to the conflicting obligations of athletics and academics; instead of critiquing structure, players internalized the conflict and ultimately relied on individualistic remedies that left the structure unquestioned (Hextrum, 2020c).

Scholars have also documented how institutions prioritize eligibility rather than educational autonomy and success, as evidenced by the ongoing disparity in graduation rates between Black men in athletics and the rest of the study body (Comeaux, 2018, 2019; Gayles et al., 2018; Harper, 2016). Additionally, quantitative research has shown that academic clustering, defined as when at least 25% of students are in the same major,

is often evident in football and basketball programs (Case et al., 1987; Fountain & Finley, 2009, 2011; Paule-Koba, 2015), and that Black players in particular are more likely to be clustered into a certain major (Houston & Baber, 2017). The concern here is whether or not players are autonomous in their major choices, or whether they are being steered into certain majors that the athletic department deems desirable for maintaining their eligibility. Along this line, Haslerig and Navarro (2016) found that players utilized graduate degree programs to make up for the limited set of major options during their undergraduate studies.

Surveillance Mechanisms

Research has shown athletic departments control social life and inhibit player autonomy to administer and organize athletics in accordance with “the collegiate model” (Comeaux, 2018; Haslerig, 2018; Hatteberg, 2018). Scholars have framed policies and practices such as class checks, study halls, tutoring, drug testing, and social media restrictions as forms of institutional surveillance (Comeaux, 2018; Hatteberg, 2018; Sanderson & Browning, 2013). Comeaux (2018) asserted that surveillance practices and the coercive structure of athletic scholarships whereby a coach can revoke a scholarship at will, reinforces the disposability and control of Black men in football and basketball in particular.

With few exceptions, research on class checking, whereby an agent of the institution monitors who is attending class, have primarily focused on men who participate in football and basketball and posit that class checks are part of a larger scheme of hyper-surveillance (Comeaux, 2018). Research has documented other tactics

such as (in)voluntary workouts, restricted access to outside media sources, and a general structuring of their lives around sport that serve a similar function to contain and surveil (Comeaux, 2018; Hatteberg, 2018; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; LoMonte & Hamrick, 2020; Sanderson, 2011). Most research on social media restrictions document athletic department policies regarding social media but do not explore their underlying function (Sanderson, 2011, 2018; Sanderson & Browning, 2013; Snyder et al., 2015). Recent literature has questioned if social media policies are increasingly being used to quell dissent and depoliticize players (Comeaux, 2018; LoMonte & Hamrick, 2020); and conversely, some research on social media policies have reinforced a paternalistic orientation that rationalizes restrictions on players' social media use (Penrose, 2012; Sanderson, 2018; Sanderson & Browning, 2013).

Resources provided by the athletic department have also been found to ease surveillance and containment of players. For example, institutions with all-inclusive athletic facilities that include bowling alleys, barbers, gyms, and academic support services operate as a structure of control and surveillance for athletic administrations (Hatteberg, 2018). The structure of athletic facilities themselves have been compared to a panopticon whereby every player move is surveilled through various technologies (Foster, 2003; Hatteberg, 2018). For instance, the use of one-way mirrored glass in study rooms and tutor sessions are strikingly similar to measures used in jails and prisons (Comeaux, 2018; Foster, 2003).

Due to nearly every part of players' lives—from tutoring, study halls, physical therapy, practice, meetings, and other sport obligations—occurring within the athletic

department, so too does their social life (Hatteberg, 2018). The athletic department then becomes a mechanism to surveil interactions and relationships players develop with one another, thus isolating them from the larger campus community (Comeaux, 2018; Hatteberg, 2018). Further, Black players regularly experience racial microaggressions and resentment from faculty (Comeaux, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2019), fellow students (Beamon, 2014; Lee et al., 2018), and the public (Wallsten et al., 2017), isolating them even further from the general campus community. When contextualized within neoliberalism and commercialism (Comeaux, 2018), or total institution authoritarianism (Hatteberg, 2018), these policies function to surveil, control, and extract from players (Comeaux, 2018; Gayles et al., 2018).

Team Environments

Scholars have documented how racism, sexism, and homophobia shape the internal team environment, as well. In Beamon's (2014) study of former football and men's basketball players, 15 out of 20 participants rejected the notion that sport brought teammates together and instead explained that their teams were segregated by race. Relatedly, Hextrum's (2020b) study of gender and race reproduction within track and field and rowing teams at a Division I PWI found that several Black athletes were subjected to racist stereotypes, microaggressions, and racist nicknames by their coaches and teammates. For instance, this took form in track coaches policing a confident Black student's behavior, in which his demeanor was deemed too "aggressive," and Black women recalled their experiences with their white teammates policing their behavior, thus reproducing gendered, racist ideologies of Black women (Hextrum, 2020b, p. 10).

This lends support to previous research that has documented Black women and Black queer women's reports of hostile team and campus climates (Bernhard, 2014; Bruening, et al. 2005; Foster, 2003; Melton & Cunningham, 2012). Black women have reported being silenced and monitored within athletic departments, while also being hypersexualized by coaches, administrators, and members of men's teams (Bruening, et al., 2005; Foster, 2003). In one study, five Black women basketball players spoke to both the hypervisibility and invisibility they felt on campus; each participant commented on the lack of racial diversity within the athletic department and how this contributed to the isolation and tokenism they felt both on their team and on campus (Bernhard, 2014).

Research on the experiences of queer Black women in college sport reveal overlapping experiences of isolation and constant threats. In a study of queer women of color athletes, a Black woman shared being threatened by a resentful teammate who planned to out her to her parents (Melton & Cunningham, 2012). A coach also threatened to out a separate Black lesbian woman to her parents as a punishment for low grades. Across the participants, the hostile environments they endured led many participants to hide their sexuality from teammates and coaches to avoid further discrimination and hate (Melton & Cunningham, 2012). This treatment echoes Foster's (2003) findings that Black women are uniquely surveilled and controlled within athletic departments, and that resistance to these conditions are often met with new threats from athletic administrations.

Another study found that college athletic environments in nonrevenue sports placated toward white comfort and fragility; in sports where participants were

predominantly—or in the case of the studied rowing team, all white—players did not view themselves as racialized beings (Hextrum, 2020d). The racially segregated team environment, paired with conditions that nurtured rather than disrupted white innocence, spurred white players to construct themselves as nonracialized subjects with no accountability or role in a racist society (Hextrum, 2020d). These findings are connected to how sport often indoctrinates participants into ideologies wherein sport is idealized as a space that is based on pure merit, hard work, and talent (Bimper, 2014; Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Coakley, 2016).

Research has shown how the hegemonic nature of these ideologies attempt to indoctrinate Black players as well. In Bimper's (2014) analysis of race-evasive¹ ideology in which he interviewed seven Black college football players, participants critiqued subtle racism they experienced by academic advisors, but also adhered to some race-evasive frames such as minimizing racism. Many participants relied on the presence of Black men in sport and Obama's Presidency as a marker of racial progress (Bimper, 2014). Even though almost all participants shared that racism was still an issue, sport was immune from that analysis. This is echoed in a more recent study in which players of color framed sport as transcending race, even after describing racial microaggressions from teammates, coaches, and trainers (Lee et al., 2018).

Compounding the harm of hostile internal team environments are structural constraints that prevent players from reporting abusive conditions. Coaches have

¹ I opt for the updated term “race-evasive” rather than “colorblind” in accordance with Annamma et al.'s (2017) and others' corrective to the ableist term.

tremendous coercive power through athletic scholarship policies that they can revoke at will, along with arbitrary and restrictive team rules, and policies that prohibit players from speaking to outside media (Comeaux, 2018; LoMonte & Hamrick, 2020). The culture of fear instituted by coaches and athletic departments foster abusive conditions and have life and death consequences. We see this most egregiously through the seemingly constant reports of sexual abuse enabled by athletic departments (Grummert & Rall, forthcoming), as well as deaths of college football players over the years. In the last two decades, Teg Agu, Ereck Plancher, Braeden Bradforth, and Jordan McNair, among other students, have lost their lives in practice due to overexertion, heat stroke, and abusive conditions during practice (Hruby, 2018; LoMonte & Hamrick, 2020).

Sport and State Violence

Much of the literature on college athletics is disconnected from larger state processes. However, research on nationalism and sport has demonstrated how sport has been intertwined with nation-building and the narration of American values (Bryant, 2015, 2019). For instance, sport has been integral toward instilling nationalist ideologies through the institutionalization of the national anthem before sporting competitions and rationalizing the “war on terror,” as well as normalizing militarized police (McDonald, 2020; Silk & Falcous, 2005). As summarized by Bryant (2015), “Since 9/11, America has conflated the armed forces with first responders, creating a mishmash of anthem-singing cops and surprise homecomings in a time of Ferguson and militarized police.” Bryant directly connects domestic and international state violence, alluding to the thin, transparent line between the two. These scholars, among others, have exposed sport’s

role in empire-building and rationalizing state violence abroad, but there is scant research on how or where college athletics may fit within this schema. Below I review the work of a few scholars who have merged the study of sport and domestic state violence, from youth programs to college sport.

Research has examined how youth sport reinforces criminalizing stereotypes about Black people, and Black boys and men in particular. In youth sporting programs tailored for white youth, they are overwhelmingly used for recreation, fitness, instilling hyper-competitiveness, and/or team building skills, whereas for Black youth they are overwhelmingly used for control and surveillance (Coakley, 2002). There is perhaps no better example than Midnight Basketball. Douglass Hartmann has done extensive research on Midnight Basketball, the sport component in a larger “crime-prevention” campaign that proliferated the 1980-90s as the state divested from cities under rhetorical umbrella of “welfare queens” and deviant communities of color (Hartmann, 2016; James, 1996; Sojoyner, 2016). The systematic abandonment of communities of color and poor white people coincided with the rise of carceral solutions to social problems (Gilmore, 2007). The two strategies, one rhetorical and one legislative, went hand in hand in establishing a new state strategy for dispossessing and containing Black communities in particular (Sojoyner, 2016).

Within this larger political context, Midnight Basketball was established by Van Standifer in 1986 in Maryland as a response to his research that crime peaked between 10pm-2am (AMNBL, 2021; Hartmann, 2012, 2016). Early iterations of the program targeted “inner-city” youth and men ages 17-21 and—with state support—expanded to

other metropolitan areas and targeted larger masses of Black youth. According to the Midnight Basketball League's (MBL) organizational website, the program uses,

... basketball as the tool to attract the target audience, participants then had to take part in the other MBL program components to be able to play in league games. Thus the program Mr. Standifer founded provided an alternative late night activity in addition to workshops and educational opportunities.

Stipulations for participating include having two police officers "present and visible" and was formalized as one of the program's guiding principles (Hartmann, 2012, p. 1010).

Midnight Basketball was positioned as a preventative solution to deter youth from participating in gangs or criminal activity, and was positioned as a non-carceral solution that benefited "inner-city" communities. However, the glaring antiblack stereotypes underpinning the program's intent and structure served to further criminalize Black youth. The coded language of the program—"basketball" and "inner-city" signaling "Black" and "poor"—along with its function as a low-cost alternative to surveil and contain Black communities (rather than more overt sites of containment such as prisons or juvenile detention centers), garnered bi-partisan support. Midnight Basketball was embraced by the George H. W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton administrations, culminating in its inclusion in the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act and its expansion to cities across the nation (Hartmann, 2016).

To date, the Midnight Basketball League (MBL) includes 24 active, formal chapters—13 of which were established since 2016. A glance at the organization's website will illustrate their steadfast commitment to the original crux of the state-

sponsored program to increase carceral networks and normalize police power. A core component of the Midnight Basketball brand and initiatives are to promote “respecting authority,” increasing communication between communities and police officers, and increasing presence of police at community events (AMBL, n.d.). MBL also has two prominent partners featured on their website: the “Badges2Bridges” program that promotes “inclusive policing practices” and cross-cultural understanding for police; and the “Scared Stiff” program that partners with schools and juvenile detention facilities (AMBL, n.d.). As such, MBL is a quintessential example of how the state partners with non-profit sporting organizations to expand carceral networks, normalize policing, and utilize sport as a means of containing and surveilling Black communities.

The logic underwriting Midnight Basketball—Black criminality, inherent athleticism, and the need for containment—also extends to college sport. Haslerig et al. (2019, 2020) demonstrated the role college sport broadcasts play in rationalizing state violence against Black people. Through analyzing 118 hours of college football video broadcasts, we demonstrated how dehumanization and objectification of Black players was woven into the fabric of pre-game shows and games; commentators consistently equated Black players to animals and framed them as invulnerable, superhuman, and/or disposable.

Further, Black players’ injuries were seemingly celebrated as evidenced by production decisions to replay Black players’ injuries incessantly. Producers opted to replay “the hardest, most violent point of impact,” overlaid with commentators asserting players’ durability and resilience (2020, p. 280). We argued that the spectacle of

Black pain and imperviousness to injury serves to rationalize police violence and lethal force against Black people in general and positions athletics as the “appropriate venue” for Black criminality and aggression (2019, p. 88). Though we used the analytical lens of white supremacy, our analysis of the spectacle of Black suffering and unique dehumanization processes illustrates how higher education and its nonprofit (NCAA) and corporate partners (ESPN) work in tandem to disseminate antiblack logics to the masses.

Likewise, Hextrum (2018, 2020a, 2021a, 2021b) has traced concepts used in college sport, such as amateurism, to the state protecting white property interests in certain sports and preserving a pathway to college via sport. Her book, *Special Admission*, also connects accessing higher education via sport in relation to state violence and specifically class warfare. In her analysis of how the state works in tandem with higher education to protect white property interests through sporting networks, she reframes college sport as the “state-sponsored sport pathway” to college (2021a, p. 3). Further, her framing provides us with necessary pause when thinking about the United States’ linking of sport and state:

No other nation uses state support to integrate elite athletics into educational institutions. The NCAA, a nonprofit organization, oversees the relationship between school and sport. Their mission is to “support learning through sports by integrating athletics and higher education to enrich the college experience of student-athletes” (NCAA, 2015, para. 2). Like other arms of the state (e.g., military or taxes), the NCAA is not a singular thing but a collection of member institutions and individuals. Through its diffuse organizational membership

(discussed in forthcoming chapters), the NCAA's reach and the state's power expand. (pp. 5-6)

Hextrum (2021a) goes on to trace the history of the sport partnership that has been cemented between the state and college athletics, detailing how eugenicist, white supremacist logics evolved to selectively allow people of color to access certain sports while protecting and keeping others "pure" (p. 56). This demonstrates how traditional forms of overt exclusion shifted toward new iterations that rely on extraction and selective incorporation of Black players, resulting in a specific "...suspect athlete who must be contained and controlled" (p. 46).

Further, Hextrum (2021a) shows how systematized state actions (including inaction) function to not only protect white youth's access to college sport, but creates a bad-faith, bifurcation of choices for Black youth to pursue the state-sponsored sport pathway to college or risk imprisonment. Several scholars (e.g., Edwards, 1979; Coakley, 2016; Hextrum, 2021a; among others) have disrupted the myth that college sport provides Black people an opportunity for social mobility. When contextualizing this point using the example of Cailyn Moore, a Black man whose narrative is portrayed as a quintessential upward mobility narrative, Hextrum states:

Stories of gang violence, poverty, and hunger justify expanded state surveillance and control of Black communities. We know from scholars of the white supremacist carceral state (e.g., James, 1996; Shabazz, 2015; Vaught, 2017) that if Moore challenged his conditions by stealing bread from a local grocery store to feed his family, he would become ensnared in a profit-seeking state prison system

and labeled as a justifiably imprisoned social deviant. By virtue of his subject position, Moore is presented with a narrow, improbable (but not impossible) pathway to avoid imprisonment and leave his community: pursue the state-sponsored sports path to college. (2021a, pp. 2-3)

Implicit in this quote is how state violence is used to shape Black people's choices—seemingly giving Black youth a choice set between various sites of containment and control: juvenile detention, prison, or college athletics. Informed by the aforementioned scholars' research, my project investigates that parallel function and asks in what ways does college athletics represent a carceral site that contributes to Black students' dehumanization, containment, and fungibility? I argue that as higher education was mandated to integrate and subsequently shifted their modalities of exclusion toward extraction and incorporation (Moten, 2021), college athletics increasingly adheres to a structuring antiblack logic to maintain and manage the system that parallels other antiblack, carceral state projects.

Chapter 3: Theory & Methodology

Antiblackness

To center antiblackness is to analyze the enduring social and structural formations that continue to render the dehumanization of Black people as nonhuman or antihuman as essential toward the construction of humanity (Hartman, 1997; Wilderson, 2010, 2021; Vargas, 2018). I draw upon theories of antiblackness informed by Saidiya Hartman, Hortense Spillers, Patrice Douglass, João Costa Vargas, Joy James, Frank Wilderson III, Jared Sexton, Afropessimism's reading of Orlando Patterson, Sylvia Wynter, and Frantz Fanon, alongside other critical theorists who have elucidated specific distinctions within Black experiences and traced them to a fundamental antiblack antagonism.

Borrowing from Farley (2005), Vargas and Jung present antiblackness as:

...slavery *and* segregation *and* neosegregation *and* every situation in which the distribution of material or spiritual goods follows the colorline” (Farley 2005, p. 221; emphasis in original)...Singular in their extensiveness and intensiveness, such antiblack dynamics include the targeted criminalization and industrial warehousing of people in jails, prisons, immigration detention centers, juvenile facilities, and foster care institutions; intensifying protocols of punishment and confinement of ostensibly uncoercive institutions, such as schools, universities, hospitals, and welfare; intractable levels of unemployment and subemployment; absurd deficit in wealth accumulation; hypersegregation in housing and schools, as well as looming gentrification; blocked access to quality education; exposure to environmental toxins leading to birth defects, chronic illnesses, and death;

premature death by preventable causes, including treatable cardiovascular, stress, and birth-related conditions; the AIDS/HIV pandemic; and ever-outlying rates of homicide, domestic violence, and other forms of state and nonstate coercion. (pp. 9-10)

These authors draw our attention to the social relations of slavery that reverberate into the contemporary and shape our modern world. Juxtaposed against legal emancipation and liberal notions of racial progress, Hartman defined our social world as situated in the “afterlife of slavery:”

Slavery had established a measure of man and a ranking of life and worth that has yet to be undone. If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment. (2007, p. 6)

Hartman’s work (1996, 1997, 2007) forces us to consider the “social relations of slavery” (1996, p. 542). Informed in part by Orlando Patterson’s work on the constituent elements of slavery as representing social death (or a social nonperson)—the convergence of natal alienation, dishonor, and vulnerable to gratuitous violence²—Hartman posits fungibility,

² Gratuitous violence, or terror, is violence beyond reason and without transgression; violence that is not contingent but rather quotidian, in both the structural and interpersonal sense. When detailing the relationship between the structural positionality of Black people and gratuitous violence, Vargas states, “Blacks experience gendered violence not because of what they do, but because of who, structurally, they are—or rather, who they are not” (2018, p. 33).

along with absolute submission and assumed guilt and/or occupying a subject position only through violence, as defining dynamics that constituted slavery. In congruence with Hartman, João Costa Vargas posed that we analyze the “blueprint” or “underlying algorithm” of slavery as “a socially enforced theory of human relations” that cements antiblackness as a structuring logic of the social (Vargas, 2018, p. 35; Vargas, 2019; Vargas & Jung, 2021). Importantly, this algorithm that has fungibility at the core of its antiblack schema (Hartman, 1997; Vargas, 2018; Wilderson, 2010, 2021). He argues:

Following Hartman’s reasoning, fungibility provides a more precise measure of contemporary Black experiences rooted in transhistorically imposed abjection through terror. Black subjugation is not explainable as solely a product of capitalist pragmatic logic; Black subjugation is as much about a libidinal economy—a regime of desires and abjections—shaping the ways in which the enslaved were at once dehumanized, transformed into discardable and interchangeable machines, and made into a medium for the expression of the subjectivity of the nonblack. (p. 12)

As Vargas emphasized, Hartman’s analysis of the fungibility of the enslaved and the seemingly agentic and/or “pleasurable” scenes, rather than the most grotesquely violent, exposes the affective dimensions of slavery—or the economy of enjoyment created through chattel slavery. Hartman states:

Put differently, the fungibility of the commodity makes the captive body an abstract and empty vessel vulnerable to the projection of other’s feelings, ideas, desires, and values; and, as property, the dispossessed body of the enslaved is the

surrogate for the master's body since it guarantees his disembodied universality and acts as the sign of his power and dominion. (1997, p. 21)

Thus, we must ask what other antiblack social and structural dynamics are “perpetrated under the rubric of pleasure, paternalism, and property” (1997, p. 4).

In situating slavery as a *theory of social relations*, Hartman also posed whether the concept of the “human” (and subsequent notions of freedom, rights, and liberty) have been accurately transmuted to Black people. She states, “As well, it leads us to question whether the rights of man and citizen are realizable or whether the appellation “human” can be borne equally by all” (1997, p. 6) Afropessimism extends this analysis further. Afropessimism, as “a lens of interpretation” and “outgrowth” of the work of Hartman and Spillers in particular (Wilderson III, 2021; Wilderson III & King, 2020, p. 61), ask us to analyze at the level of ontology to interrogate the nature of being and structural relationships formed therein, to understand their critique of humanity as a parasitic formation that feeds on Black suffering and abjection (Wilderson, 2010); slavery established a Black bodily foil for which nonblack, and most grotesquely, white, humanity gained its coherence (Wilderson, 2010, 2021). In other words, the core antagonism is a Black-nonblack ontological one (Wilderson, 2010; Vargas & Jung, 2021).

I follow some theorists in naming antiblackness as gendered to point to the ways in which antiblack violence is deployed in gendered ways and obscured in gendered ways (i.e., Black women and Black trans people's suffering is routinely erased and/or obscured in national narratives and in sport research). However, I recognize the complexities of

gender in relation to Blackness, that gender is not simply autonomously performed by Black people and that a traditional application and analysis of gender can unintentionally obscure antiblackness; as stated by Patrice Douglass, “The archive of gender is structurally anti-black” (2018, p. 115). As such, my analysis of gendered antiblackness outside of presenting Black women’s narratives of the unique and specific forms of harm is simplistic at best. Please see the work of Saidiya Hartman, Patrice Douglass, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, Cecilio Cooper, and C. Riley Snorton for their detailed and deep theorizing on gender, sexuality, and Blackness.

Wilderson III (re)outlined the analytical project of Afropessimism and clarified its theoretical similarities and departures from other radical theories (which I find helpful for beginning to grasp the theoretical depth, explanatory power, and paradigm shift they offer). He explains that several theories share an understanding that violence forms unethical paradigms; however, when looking at the antagonist/ism each theory analyzes, one can see the departure and the alternative paradigm Afropessimism interrogates:

If revolutionary feminism is an immanent critique of the family or the paradigm of kinship, if Marxism is an immanent critique of capitalism or the paradigm or political economy as a structure, then Afropessimism is an immanent critique of the Human or the paradigm of Humanity. (2021, p. 39)

To investigate antiblackness then, is to call into question the very notion of the “human” as an unethical formation (Hartman, 1997; Hartman & Wilderson, 2003; Wilderson, 2010, 2021; Vargas, 2018). Though I prioritize an analysis of how structural conditions of antiblackness undergird college athletics and affect the material conditions of Black

students in unique and distinctive ways than those of nonblack students, I want to foreground an understanding of the ontological and libidinal desires fueling antiblackness to emphasize the specificity of Black experiences as structurally and paradigmatically distinct from nonblack experiences (Sexton, 2010; Wilderson, 2010). I do this in light of scholarship that has shown how antiracist movements can preserve, if not strengthen, antiblackness when they uncritically collapse Black and nonblack experiences into a shared experience that stems from the same sources and modalities of violence (Bedecarré, 2018; Vargas, 2018).

As Vargas explained, this move creates an implicit denial of antiblackness that functions to preserve the antiblack blueprint that undergirds psychic and social life. In making sense of this phenomenon as *oblique identification*—that is, the increase of multiracial/nonblack acknowledgment and “...a seeming empathy toward Blacks’ victimization by the empire-state, and on the other, a refusal to engage with the foundational and structural aspects of antiblackness”—Vargas points toward the saturation point in which nonblack people begin to suffer some of the consequences of the antiblack structure of society. He notes, “The practical effects of antiblackness at times become so concentrated and expansive, so saturated, that they affect nonblack social worlds” (2018, p. 9). Importantly, these consequences are at the level of experience and/or perception, rather than systematic, enduring, and institutionalized (Vargas, 2018). He further clarifies:

When nonblacks experience such geographies of punishment, isolation, and dispossession, they experience the collateral effects of a transhistorical, society-

sanctioned, institutionalized logic of antiblackness. Thus nonblacks do not experience antiblackness in the same way Blacks experience antiblackness. Nonblacks' experience of antiblackness is distinct from Blacks' experience of antiblackness insofar as nonblacks are not the paradigmatic objects of antiblackness; as such, nonblacks do not experience social death and early physical death by preventable causes as omnipresent, permanent, structural, and defining features of social life.

In other words, when the excesses of an antiblack social world begin spilling over and effecting nonblack people, it is paradigmatically different than the effects of the enduring structural effects for Black people. Throughout my analysis, I attempt to hold João Costa Vargas and Moon-Kie Jung's distinction between racism and antiblackness central. They explain:

The analytical and political imperative of establishing a break from the social concept of racism emanates from the recognition of antiblackness as an ontological condition of possibility of modern world sociality, whereas racism is an aspect of that sociality. A world without racism requires deep transformations in social practices and structures. A world without antiblackness necessitates an entirely new conception of the social, which is to say a radically different world altogether (p. 7).

In doing so, I aim to avoid the conflation between Black and nonblack experiences of oppression and violence as well as the urge to pivot to antiracism as a palliative.

Carcerality and the Carceral Regime

As Hartman and others have asserted, the social and structural dynamics of slavery have been and continue to be rigorously and thoroughly conserved through our structures and social relations, despite legislation and (neo)liberal notions of racial progress. Scholars have documented how the captivity under slavery transitioned over time to other forms of surveillance, punishment, containment, and terror. To name a few iterations: the 13th amendment, the convict prison lease system, Black codes, Jim Crow laws, residential segregation, among others, represent an antiblack carceral continuum—an evolving set of state strategies to contain, surveille, and terrorize Black communities (Browne, 2015; James, 1996; Richie, 2012; Rodríguez, 2021a). Carceral regimes, and the antiblack logics they are founded on and proliferate, are a prime vehicle through which this operates (Rodríguez, 2021a; Vargas, 2018).

Dylan Rodríguez’s conceptualization of the *prison regime* (2006) or *carceral regime* (2021a) is central to understanding carcerality as an elaboration of antiblackness. His definition of the carceral regime and its conceptual reach magnifies the “meso-range” of practices and logics that mediate, inform, and deploy carceral logics and formations beyond the site of the prison itself (p. 41):

Structures of human captivity and bodily punishment, though perhaps most spectacularly actualized at the locality of the jail or prison, necessarily elaborate into other, at times counterintuitive, sites of targeting: the school, the workplace, and the targeted neighborhood or community. (Rodríguez, 2006, p. 58)

As Drs. Rodríguez, James, Vargas and others have emphasized, the logics of containment, control, and racialized punishment of the carceral regime is underwritten by an antiblack code, or what Vargas characterized as an “antiblack death drive” (2013). Thus, antiblackness inflects the formation and management of other institutions such as schools, higher education, and medical systems according to the same logic that target, dispossess, criminalize, and/or kill Black people (Rodríguez, 2006, 2021a; Roberts, 1999; Sojoyner, 2016; Vargas, 2018).

Within Rodríguez’s disruption of the misnomer and national narrative regarding “mass incarceration,” he traces the carceral logic from its prehistory in slavery to contemporary antiblack formations and rhetoric. Crediting the work of Ida B. Wells Barnett, Dorothy Roberts, and Saidiya Hartman, he links the state’s criminalizing apparatus directly to gendered antiblack warfare. I want to foreground some specificities in the genealogy he offers that complement the authors’ points discussed above and those that follow (and that will guide my analysis of college athletics): (a) the criminalization and pathologizing³ of Blackness under notions of paternalism—a paternalism that knows no bounds when it comes violence—was integral toward maintaining and rationalizing chattel slavery and Black containment and control more broadly; (b) these same logics are embedded within conservative battles to increase policing as well as liberal reform efforts—a quintessential example being Clinton’s 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act that heightened surveillance and criminalization of Black communities,

³ Rodríguez provides the example of “a white academic invention” of drapetomania—a 1851 “diagnosis” for the enslaved who sought to escape captivity or refused to be subservient—that functioned to further pathologize and rationalize enslavement under slave owners’ rhetorical umbrella of paternalism and care (2021a, p. 174).

Hillary Clinton’s creation and use of the moniker “superpredator” that aided the rationalization of the bill, and Clinton’s recent calls to increase communication and trust between communities and police as the solution to antiblack state violence. This example represents how the prevailing logics of slavery are preserved, institutionalized, and at times re-narrated and disguised as paternalistic reform. As put by Rodríguez,

The antiblack chattel relation forms as it facilitates the condition of modernity as well as modern (state) institutionality. This formation of power—as paradigm, method, and infrastructural template—structures the very coherence and preconceptual premises of modern institutions as and bureaucratic structures—including notions of order, administrative/labor hierarchy, disciplinarity/compliance, stability, and normative white civil subjectivity. (2021a, p. 194)

The aforementioned quote and theorists illustrate how white institutionality, as necessarily elaborated from white positionality/nonblack subjectivity, relies on antiblackness to sustain and manage them through various forms of discipline, surveillance, and punishment. In discussing surveillance, discipline, and punishment, I want to link James’ (1996) corrective to Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* with Simone Browne’s (2015) analysis of surveillance as understood within the context of Hartman’s work on the afterlife of slavery (i.e., fungibility, assumed guilt, and the economy of pleasure formed through slavery). In Joy James’ (1996) analysis of state violence, she explains how the state codified the “criminal” in the Black body. James asserts that “Rather than the erasure of bodily torture for a carceral of self-policing citizens, as

Foucault maintains, punitive torture in the United States became inscribed on the black body,” while bodies that conform to “idealized models of class, color, and sex” are granted autonomy to self-police, or at most be policed without force (p. 26, p. 29).

James also draws attention to distinctions between carceral and penal and how Black people are subject to penal harm in paradigmatically different way that nonblack people. In other words, though many nonblack people experience carceral systems or are subjected to states of confinement, Black people—including youth—disproportionally experience and/or are more vulnerable to extra-state punishment and terrorism via state mechanisms while within carceral systems (i.e., more vulnerable to state violence such as the death penalty, police terrorism, sexual violence, youth being tried as adults, etc.) (James, 1996; Vargas, 2018).

Likewise, Browne’s (2015) theoretical intervention in surveillance studies details how modern surveillance and disciplining mechanisms were formed in relation to chattel slavery. She demonstrates how technologies of surveillance originated from the hold of the slave ship, the plantation, and the policing of Black movement post-emancipation. In doing so, Browne offers “racializing surveillance” to name the “enactments of surveillance that reify boundaries, borders, and bodies along racial lines, and where the outcome is often discriminatory treatment of those who are negatively racialized by such surveillance” (p. 16). Though her argument is vast and covers CIA and FBI surveillance of Frantz Fanon to Black women’s experiences with TSA security, I want to foreground her analysis of white supremacists’ governing rules and codes for “plantation management,” along with her assertion that these practices are the antecedent of

contemporary racializing surveillance. Browne overviewed Charles Tait's rules for governing his Texas plantation—that are still described by the Texas State Historical Association as “relatively humane and enlightened management principles” (TSHA, 1995, para 1)—that represent the systematizing of a network of surveillance targeting the enslaved (2021):

Tait's directives on the managerial control of slaves demonstrate how disciplinary power operated by way of set rules, instructions, routines, inspection, hierarchal observations, the timetable, and the examination. The timetable, then, was a means of regimenting enslaved labor through repetition where there was an attempt to account for every moment of enslaved life... (p. 51)

Browne's analysis shows how antiblackness was systematized through institutional surveillance practices, how they functioned to obscure the violence of the plantation, and how these surveillance practices gave rise to disciplinary power as a means of control. The systematized set of rules, codes, and surveillance mechanisms used to coerce, contain, and monitor Black people obscures the violence required to institute and maintain such a network.

The aforementioned theorists provide a necessary re-orientation for how racialized state violence is understood, analyzed, and resisted, and demonstrate how logics of antiblackness animate our social and institutional lives. With respect to oblique identification, I argue that over the last several years intercollegiate athletics has reached a saturation point in which nonblack people have increasingly become aware of the

harms occurring within college sports and often there is a subsequent investment in reforming the structure of college athletics.

However, with this call has also come with a deep denial and/or unwillingness to engage with the antiblack blueprint which college athletics is predicated. Instead, we continuously see arguments that pivot toward remedying economic, racist, or gendered exploitation of athletes. I am by no means suggesting that these analyses are not vital, important, or do not lead to imperative change that lessen suffering or inequitable outcomes. However, equally important (and perhaps increasingly difficult according to Vargas), is addressing the undergirding antiblack logic that structures this form of white institutionality. By centering antiblackness—that constructions of humanity, nations, and institutions are fundamentally predicated on Black exclusion to life and humanity—I analyze college athletics in relation to the enduring legacy and sociality of slavery to show how analyses of exploitation are insufficient toward addressing the magnitude and depth of harm radiating from higher education's use of sport (Hartman, 1997; Sexton, 2010; Vargas & James, 2012).

Methodology and Methods

Research on college athlete experiences have overwhelmingly focused on Black men in football and basketball to assert that the structure of the system is producing racialized harm (Comeaux, 2018; Dancy et al., 2017; Gayles et al., 2018; Hawkins, 2010). Other research has analyzed player experiences across sport and gender to delineate common coercive practices such as surveillance, threat of punishment, and precarity (Hatton, 2020; Hatteberg, 2018), and analyzed how the structure placates

toward white comfort and fragility and serves as a privilege access point for white youth to gain preferential treatment in admissions (Hextrum, 2018, 2021a, 2021b). Further, many analogies have been used to analyze and describe the structuring logics used by universities and the NCAA such as the plantation (Hawkins, 2010), indentured servitude (Nocera & Strauss, 2016), migrant labor (Hawkins, 1999), exploited worker (Hatton, 2020; McCormick & McCormick, 2006), brothel (Southall et al., 2011), cartel (Kahn, 2007; Koch, 1973), and company town (Southall & Weiler, 2014).

Within research that analogizes the structure of college athletics to slavery, authors tend to foreground an analysis of the exploitation of Black men in football and basketball and thus prioritize a focus on *labor exploitation*, which may unintentionally obscure a deeper analysis of the ways in which college athletics is imbued with antiblack logics that exceed the labor relation. Scholars of gendered antiblackness have expounded on how the vestiges of slavery reach beyond the labor relation, emphasizing the ontological, fungibility, and gratuitous violence as elements that are not based in conflict, but rather a structure of antagonisms (Hartman, 1997; Wilderson, 2010; Vargas, 2018). As such, this study suspends notions of “revenue-generating⁴” sports and the focus on labor exploitation to engage other structural conditions of antiblackness.

⁴ A bifurcated approach that analyzes revenue-generating vs nonrevenue-generating obscures an analysis of antiblackness and shared, relational experiences across sports, divisions, and genders. Further, several economists and sports scholars have shown that the NCAA manipulates cost accounting to obscure profit allocations and how the NCAA systematically thwarts sports other than men’s basketball and football from being recognized as “revenue-generators” (see Jenkins, 2021). The most recent example was the NCAA’s withholding of the “March Madness” brand from women’s basketball and thus denying that it is profitable.

My guiding research questions are:

R1: What are former and current college players' racialized and gendered experiences with various forms of discipline, punishment, and surveillance in athletics?

- To what extent are these mechanisms oriented around antiblack, carceral logics?
- To what extent do they function as forms of ideological and physical enclosure?

R2: To what extent are former and current college players' racialized and gendered experiences within the athletic department—experiences with teammates, coaches, and administrators, as well as team doctors and health professionals—reflective of antiblackness?

To begin exploring these questions, I used a qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews as my method of inquiry. I am cognizant of Vargas and Jung's (2021) metacritique of the humanities and social sciences for taking for granted "the social" and "the human" being categories from which Blackness is expelled and thus their assertion that the conceptualization of these fields themselves have contributed to the obscuring of antiblackness. With this in mind, I describe my methodological decisions, perhaps uncritically, using the language of "socially constructed" all the while recognizing our experiences as defined by the ontological.

Given that my qualitative approach was undergirded by a critical theoretical paradigm, I had to question in what ways I was reifying or enacting the very power I sought to investigate (King, 2005). Given my positionality as a white woman and the project's aim to interrogate antiblackness, I attempted to be reflexive throughout the project on the contradictions, ironies, and potential harm I could enact. Throughout the

study, I was reminded of Kathryn Bedecarré's reflection on her "ontological position as a terrorist" (2018, p. 18). The phrase was a reminder that regardless of intent, I am implicated and enact antiblackness—that an ethical whiteness is a structural impossibility (Bedecarré, 2018; Wilderson, 2010). For instance, the irony is not lost on me that this dissertation is a result of turning Black participants' suffering into data that then was augmented and molded into an institutional document that directly benefited me, or that I am able to analyze the data without it being traumatic but rather steeped in the very libidinal economy I critique; nor do I think that me naming the irony somehow absolves me.

At most, I hope the study will serve as another document in the sport studies archive that names college athletics as antiblack, irredeemable, and that participants' narratives shape future organizing efforts that position college athletics as inextricably linked to state violence; and at the very least, I hope it will spur other white people to reflect on the ways in which we continually recycle our parasitic reliance on Black abjection and terror (in both tangible and psychic ways) to construct and maintain our self of self, as well as possibilities for rupture.

I also reflected on my status in relation to sport. I have been on the periphery of sport organizations throughout my undergraduate and graduate education; I worked for the NBA and WNBA, and more recently helped facilitate an antiracist reading group within the University of Oklahoma athletics department. Even so, I largely remain an outsider in the more insular environment of college athletics. I reflected on the power dynamics of being a researcher associated with a university as well as how the interviews

taking place during a heightened time of racialized trauma due to the pandemic and uprisings against antiblack violence influenced the whole project. This made me more attuned to ways to respect participant boundaries that I may not have been prior and to acknowledge how the social political context shaped participants analysis and reflections.

I also examined what ideological work language and rhetoric was doing to reify antiblackness. This informed my analysis of phrases such as “the privilege of participation” and how universities deem athletes “representatives of the institution.” I used semi-structured interviews to understand how former and current college players were impacted by various policies and mechanisms of control used to organize and administer college athletics, and how participants’ experiences were reflective of larger social and political processes. The harm policies and practices (some formalized, normalized and thus often unquestioned) produce are not easily identifiable by any other means than that of *experience* and tracing those experiences to structure. It is through listening and analyzing people’s experiences within these conditions, and their differential impact, that they can be understood as part of a larger political project. As such, I analyzed participant experiences to gain a better understanding of antiblack, carceral structures that mediated their experiences.

Interview Protocol

Informed by Mason (2002) and Bailey (2007), developed a semi-structured interview protocol that was tailored to how college players experienced and were affected by various policies and practices within their athletic department ecology—that is, within their team, between their coach, experiences with athletic trainers and doctors, fans,

administrators, nonathlete peers and faculty, how policies impacted them physically and emotionally, and broadly how they experienced the confines of college athletic participation and made sense of it after they were finished competing. Six topical areas were included in the protocol (see full interview protocol in Appendix A): 1) Early socialization; 2) Experiences with athletic department policies and procedures; 3) Experiences with teammates, coaches, administrators, nonathlete students, and boosters; 4) In-game or fan engagement 5) Experiences with pain and/or injury; 6) Political engagement and protest. I conducted a pilot interview with a woman of color who was a recently graduated DI tennis player. The pilot interviewee's feedback was essential toward editing the wording of questions, the order of questions, and how the topical areas should be ordered to achieve a natural flow.

My aim was to have participants reconstruct their experiences being a college athlete. As Seidman stated, "Reconstruction is based partially on memory and partially on what the participant now senses is important about the past event. In a sense, all recall is reconstruction" (2006, p. 88). Though the topics were well-defined by the protocol (e.g., drug testing) participants selected what they deemed most important (e.g., that they were not random). In this way, participants had more autonomy over where they wanted the interview to go and what they wanted to share rather than being overdetermined by me. I also revised the interview protocol two times based on participants' insight about topics I was not aware of; I added a question about booster interactions and drug tests after the second interview. Before each interview, I scanned the athlete handbook of each participants' institution to get more context about their specific institutional policies. This

practice did not change interviews in any significant way, but it did reveal that nearly every handbook emphasized “the privilege of participation” and athletes’ status as “representatives of the institution.”

Participant Selection Criteria

Anyone who was a former or current college athlete over 18 years old and spoke English were eligible to participate. I was intentional in leaving the call open to any NCAA divisional classification, as well as any race and gender and any scholarship status. Participants self-identified their race and gender when they filled out the recruitment link. My decision to recruit participants from all racial backgrounds was guided by theory (Vargas, 2018). Comparing participant experiences across race and gender was essential toward identifying the minutia of antiblackness and how the carceral conditions targeted Black participants in qualitatively different ways than nonblack participants. In other words, being able to compare and relate Black and nonblack experiences provided a finer analysis into how antiblackness was shaping college athletics.

I was also intentional in my decision to recruit former college players who were recently graduated and/or toward the end of their athletic participation for three reasons: 1) they had years of experience within athletics and contending with the policies and procedures I was examining, whereas first year and second year students did not; 2) based on previous research and advice from committee members (Hatton, 2020; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016), former athletes were more likely to have had time to reflect on their experience and could better name what they experienced within a larger

context; and 3) participants having already graduated lessened some power dynamics that could arise with me being a member of a higher education institution and lessened the fear of retaliation of an athletic department or coach if they were to find out about their study participation.

Recruitment

After obtaining IRB approval in June 2020, I recruited participants using both snowball sampling (resulting in 6 participants) combined with purposeful sampling (resulting in 18 participants) (Bailey, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Haslerig (2021) argued that college athletes share characteristics with both elite and vulnerable participant populations, creating tensions and power relationships that must be attended to within both recruiting and interviews. Given this and the coercive tactics documented within athletics departments to elicit consent of college players for internal research (Allen et al., 2019), I chose to avoid recruiting through athletic departments. In fact, many institutions' IRB offices served as additional gatekeepers that wanted the athletic department to do their own independent review of my IRB documents, thus giving the power to athletic administrators to decide whether or not they wanted "their" athletes to participate in the study. This is emblematic of the larger enclosure and stripping of autonomy I discuss in the findings.

I posted a recruitment flyer on Twitter and Facebook, as well as in the email listservs of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport and the Society for Sport, Exercise & Performance Psychology of the American Psychological Association general listserv (seen in Appendix B). The call stated the purpose of the study to

“understand the racialized and gendered experiences of current and former college athletes.” Of the 31 people who filled out the recruitment link indicating they were interested in being interviewed, 24 responded to my follow-up email, completed the consent form, and scheduled a time either via phone or via zoom to be interviewed, and completed the interview. I included 20 Division I players in the final sample and

Table 1. Participant Pseudonym and Demographics

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Sport	Division	Athlete-Status
Aaliyah	Black	Woman	Track	FBS	Current
Aneesa	Black	Woman	Soccer	NF	Former
Ari	Black	Woman	Basketball	NF	Former
Chiney	Black	Woman	Volleyball & Track	NF	Former
Diego	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former
Dom*	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former
Elena*	White	Woman	Basketball	NF	Former
Iliza*	Multiracial (Latina, white)	Woman	Track	FBS & NF	Former
Janelle	Black/West Indian	Woman	Cross country	NF	Former (quit sport)
Jenny	white	Woman	Softball	FCS	Former
Jessica	Black	Woman	Basketball	NF	Former
Kyle*	White	Man	Football	FBS	Former
Nate*	Black	Man	Football	FBS & FCS	Former
Skylar	Black	Woman	Track and Field	FBS	Former (quit sport)
Sydney*	Black	Woman	Soccer	NF & FCS	Former
Thiago	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former (quit sport)
Toby	Multiracial (Hispanic, African American)	Man	Basketball	NF	Current
Tori	Black	Woman	Soccer	NF	Former
Wayne*	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former
Whitney	White	Woman	Swimming	FCS	Former

* Participant transferred to a different university

excluded the 4 DII and DIII participants (see Table 1.). Participants from Division II and III echoed similar themes as those in DI regarding restrictive policies and particularly

coach abuse; however, given the small sample of four former nonblack players, I want to continue recruiting DII and DIII participants before drawing conclusions. The sample was comprised of 10 Black participants (nine women, one man), four Latino men, four white participants (three women, one man), and two participants that identified as multiracial (one man who identified as Hispanic and African American; one woman who identified as white and Latina).

Thirteen institutions total were represented in the sample: 12 four-year, public, historically nonblack institutions; and 1 four-year, public, historically Black institution, representing the following NCAA divisional classifications: 5 DI FBS, 3 DI FCS, and 5 DI no football (NF). Of the 20 final participants, 17 opted for a video interview via zoom, and 3 opted for a phone call and/or called into a zoom meeting (and therefore did not have video). All 20 participants consented to me audio recording the interview. After interviews were complete, I transcribed them verbatim and assigned pseudonyms that were selected by participants (in a few cases participants did not have a preference and I assigned a pseudonym).

Data Collection

I found that former athletes (18) who were recently graduated or those who were competing in their fifth year (2) provided keen, reflective insight into their time participating in college athletics. The average time post-playing career was 1 year and 4 months, and the majority of the sample had stopped competing between 2017-2020 or were currently competing. On average, interviews lasted around 90 minutes, with the longest being 2 hours and 41 minutes, and the shortest 30 minutes. In cases where time

was severely limited, I prioritized questions regarding surveillance and discipline, along with health and wellbeing. In many instances, participants were eager to share because they felt they had a good experience overall and wanted some policies and practices to be improved, and some (mostly women) wanted to participate, in part, because they wanted people to know about the inner power dynamics and what life was truly like as a college athlete.

As stated previously, my outsider status aided the project in several ways. For instance, at times participants would check in with me about whether or not I understood the terms they were referencing, and at times I would explicitly state that I did not know a term or process, thus prompting them to explain things in more detail that were perhaps normalized for them. For example, when I asked how certain policies were enforced or if players had to consent to them, many participants took time to think and sometimes would comment on the questions being difficult due to the “everyday” “normalized” nature of the policies. In some ways I think my line of questioning about the taken for granted policies and procedures internal to athletic departments helped de-normalize those processes to them as well, and elicited deeper reflections and analysis from participants themselves. These interactions that checked for understanding helped establish more of a conversational, relational interview style rather than reciting question after question (Josselson, 2013).

However, given the understandable distrust of outsiders and particularly researchers, participants seemed to question me more directly about my political ideology and orientation in relation to the NCAA and college sport—wanting to know what my

underlying political purpose was going to be with the data. Sometimes this took place before an interview and through explicit questioning, and sometimes throughout an interview. In one instance, a participant wanted to see the questions beforehand before deciding whether to participate. When the questioning of my politics took place throughout the interview, I got the impression that participants wanted to gauge my perceptions before revealing certain information—both in favor of college sport and against college sport.

The former or recently graduated players had endured and/or witnessed many abuses of power during their time as a college athlete and their reflections illuminated their awareness of the system operating around them and their disposability within it. During several of the interviews, participants paused when reflecting on an experience and described it as being “messed up” or “fucked up” in a way they had not fully realized previously. Some shared that they were still processing or healing from certain situations and now recognizing them as abusive and/or intertwined with coercive power dynamics. Over the course of the interviews, I learned to sit in these moments in my attempt to affirm their feelings and offer them space and privacy; I asked if they felt comfortable sharing further and in some instances reassured them to take their time as I looked down at my notes or interview protocol.

Similar to research on the advantages of phone interviewing over in-person interviews (Haslerig, 2021), conducting interviews via zoom seemed to allow for more personal moments and silences to take place without the participant or I searching to fill the silence. The interview taking place at a location of their choosing, and most often in

their own homes, could have lessened interview-participant power dynamics and made participants more comfortable to share and be more in control of the interview. Further, I checked in at the beginning of each interview about participants' time demands and how much time they had to do the interview, and checked in usually 10-15 minutes before the time was up to check in and gauge how many broad topics were left. I also checked in with participants who said they did not have time constraints after one hour of interviewing to gauge if they felt like wrapping up or were still ok to continue.

I did not ask follow-up questions when two participants mentioned experiences of teammates' suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts. Though mental health was a cornerstone of the interview protocol and I had resources for participants during/after the interview in the event they were in distress or revealed to be in distress, participants' explicitly stated that they knew of resources but the problem was accessing them when participating in athletics and contending with a discouraging culture in athletics. Given this, combined with my lack of training, I attempted to mitigate risk by not pushing participants to revisit those circumstances. Though an imperfect solution, I believe this mitigated harm. I also did not ask follow-up questions to Black participants who referenced stories in which their coaches and teammates were being racist and/or antiblack or other instances of racial trauma. In these instances, I recognized the risk some participants were taking in talking to me in the first place, given that fellow white women were often the perpetrators, and followed their lead in how much detail they wanted to share.

Data Analysis

After each interview was complete, I wrote a reflective memo about the defining aspects of the participant's experience, unique insights, and/or similarities and differences compared to other participants (Saldaña, 2009). After data collection was complete and I transcribed the interviews. I analyzed the data using a deductive and inductive approach. I used Dedoose, a mixed methods data management application, to code and analyze data. The application allows you to create a codebook, do line-by-line coding, and provides numerous analysis tools that provide aggregated code counts, show code co-occurrence, illustrate relationships between codes and participant descriptors and characteristics (i.e., race, gender, sport), among others tools (Dedoose, 2021). I analyzed data in accordance with Saldaña (2009), Emerson et al., (2011), and Miles and Huberman's (1994) guides to qualitative data analysis which begins with broad codes and systematically gets finer and more defined codes as you progress through levels of analysis.

I defined a first round of codes deductively from extant research and my interview questions. These broad codes represented large categories that were guaranteed to come up in the data based on the questions I was asking (e.g., experiences with trainers; political engagement; experiences with study hall; drug testing, etc.) (Emerson, et al., 2011, p. 175-176). I developed inductive codes from recurring themes in participant experiences. I also read the data through the lens of theory and in relation to my reflective memos to develop inductive, analytical codes (disconnecting from sport; negligence toward pain/injury; scholarship threatened) and began to collapse codes into larger

representative themes (i.e., surveillance; discipline; punishment; fungibility) (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2009). I weighted certain codes on a whole number scale from -1 to 1 to reflect participant experiences as either “positive,” “neutral,” or “negative”; or “yes” or “no.” For example, if someone described having complete trust in team doctors, the excerpt was coded “Trust in team doctors” with a code-weight of 1 to indicate a “positive” sentiment.

This iterative process resulted in 60 defined codes and 922 distinct excerpts from participant interviews. By comparing participant experiences within and across the thematically coded excerpts, I was able to analyze racialized and gendered specificities within each category (i.e., it was clear that Black women’s negative experiences with trainers were distinct from Latino men’s positive experiences). The coding scheme and use of Dedoose was essential toward analyzing these qualitative differences and Black and nonblack experiences in relation to one another. Doing so illustrated how players’ social interactions and experiences with various policies and practices were reflective of structural conditions of antiblackness. In the discussion, I begin tracing how these pragmatic antiblack social experiences are derivative of larger antiblack phenomenon and connected to state violence.

Trustworthiness and Dependability

To ensure trustworthiness and dependability, I completed member checking, a decision log, and peer debriefing. Member checking, which entails communicating my interpretations of participant narratives and giving participants access to transcripts, were used as a means of ensuring validity (Bailey, 2007). Due to participants’ time demands, I

incorporated member checking into the interviews themselves as much as possible to check my interpretation and understanding. For example, when participants told a longer narrative, I routinely repeated back my interpretation and/or implications of what they were saying in order to avoid me misconstruing their intended meaning. This served as a data triangulation technique and a prompt for participants to share more about their response to clarify what they meant, disagree and correct, and/or add more detail. These questions also provided the participant and I with a discussion on what they did or did not want represented in the data (i.e., a specific department or incident that others may have been involved in), and how I would go about presenting their story in the findings. This contributed to sound ethical practices and further protected participant anonymity. When I was unsure of my interpretation during the coding process, I followed-up with participants to ask clarifying questions via email (4 total participants responded). One participant requested the final transcript for his records.

Additionally, I aimed to provide thick and rich description throughout my findings to translate some of the affective components of the interview and provide more context for participant responses. I did so by analyzing my reflective memos along with participant interviews, by documenting, presenting and analyzing participant pauses and laughs, providing quotes that included as much context as possible, as well as taking into account the brevity or length of responses in my analysis. I also engaged in periodic peer-debriefing throughout the research process to incorporate peer feedback and/or expert critique regarding codes and emerging themes from scholars in and outside of my field (Bailey, 2007). These discussions were built into the dissertation process with committee

members, but I also reached out to people external to the process: two faculty members at a different institution and one fellow graduate student. These discussions added theoretical depth and insight to the analysis, and provided an added check on my interpretations. Lastly, I kept a detailed decision log. Leaving a trail of data, or “dependability audit” is used as a mechanism to ensure trustworthiness and signals to other researchers how to replicate the study, as well as review my methodology in connection to my findings (Bailey, 2007, p. 188).

Limitations

First and foremost, the study was conducted by me, a white woman. Thus, my gaze affected the data collection (e.g., some participants were navigating how much I could be trusted and editing their experiences as such) and analysis in ways that likely does not capture the nuance of participant stories. For example, while analyzing participant narratives, there may have been an inclination to foreground the most obvious examples of antiblack social process or most egregious examples of antiblackness rather than the everyday minutia and more subtle processes that antiblackness enables (i.e., a white woman being rewarded for doing a dissertation on antiblackness) in part to distance myself from it.

Second, some may question whether there was selection bias with more critical former players opting to join the study over players who had overwhelmingly positive experiences. To protect against this, I wrote the recruitment call to be broad but not misleading, stating that the study was to “understand athletes’ racialized and gendered experiences.” Even so, some potential participants, and white men in particular, may have

self-selected out of the study due to not identifying as a racialized being (Hextrum, 2020d) or gendered. In other words, they may have thought I was only interested in speaking to people of color or women, nonbinary, and/or trans players. Further, my decision to prioritize sports other than football and men's basketball means the unique inflections of antiblackness in those sports are not fully captured.

Lastly, locating antiblack processes is at times difficult because of the psychic, subliminal dimensions and how it is often the amorphous foundation and/or component in other logics. As put by Vargas (2018), "This logic competes and meshes with other logics (neoliberal individualism, racial democracy, market, empire); it may not exist in a pure state, making its detection difficult. Yet, it inflects other logics, resulting in their distinctive anti-black drive" (Vargas, 2013). As such, the pragmatic excesses of antiblackness that render themselves legible (to and through a white gaze) do not and cannot capture the breadth or magnitude of the logic in its totality.

In the following chapters, I present four categories of findings that are representative of participants experiences contending with various conditions of control while competing in college sport. Each chapter presents findings as analyzed through the conceptual lens of carcerality and theoretical framework of antiblackness. Chapters include: *Intake, Socialization, and Enclosure; Surveillance, Discipline, and Punishment; Health and Bodily Autonomy; and Refusal and Renunciation.*

Chapter 4: Intake, Socialization, & Enclosure

Universities deployed several strategies to enclose and isolate college athletes from the rest of the campus community. This took form in early summer socialization practices, inundating and coercing players to sign forms that stipulated their de facto propertied status in relation to the institution, foreclosing academic opportunities, naturalizing administrator policing and state police force, forbidding individuality, and marking players with branded gear. Athletic departments and administrators also used key rhetorical/discursive strategies—namely the “privilege of participation” and designating players “representatives of the institution”—to prime players to accept the denial of rights and the numerous intrusions into their lives.

Early Socialization and Isolation

Nearly every participant spoke about arriving on campus the summer before their fall term. Summer was the typical time players were expected to train, get acclimated to the campus environment, and engage in "team bonding" exercises. In their reflections, some former players talked about how the various resources and glamorous facilities influenced their early thinking and excitement toward being a college athlete. For example, Janelle, a Black former track and cross country player, commented that upon her arrival it was, "really easy to be enamored because they have like all the photos in the school records and you know, you get gear and that was always super exciting because the gear is different every year." Kyle, a white former football player, also commented on the “between \$500 and \$600 of apparel” they received and being in awe of the facilities. He ironically commented on the lavish buildings, stating, "I go into the, the huge facility

and it was massive. It was nothing like I've ever seen before... It's absolutely gorgeous. It's above and beyond...I go, 'this is beyond professional—it's amateur.'"

Other participants shared that their institutions invested in new resources and capital projects such as updated football and basketball facilities and a new academic resource center for athletes. Resources such as academic advising, tutoring, printing, life skills, entertainment options, etc. were all offered inside the athletic department, which was often resented by the larger student body, as I discuss later. The majority of participants explained how the summer socialization period and resources were beneficial in many ways, from building relationships with their teammates to getting acclimated with campus buildings and resources.

However, saturating players with resources functioned to enclose and isolate players from the rest of the campus community. As put aptly by Skylar, a Black former track and field player, "I was also a sociology major at [institution]. So like my perspective was just like very heightened, um, in terms of understanding that like the privileges were actually just tools to keep us isolated from other people." In addition to isolating athletes, the early socialization period functioned to discipline players into behaviors beneficial and desirable to the university and athletic department. For instance, players' time was structured to maximize athletic-related activities and normalized their coaches' control over where they allocated their time (i.e., mandatory meetings, training, practice, film, physical therapy, team bonding, etc.). Further, players were often mandated to live on campus and with other teammates, insulating them even further from nonathletic life. The majority of participants noted the practical side of this arrangement:

being paired with your teammates made their experience easier because they were on similar schedules, as opposed to non-athlete students. However, Skylar connected her earlier analysis regarding organized isolation to how living with teammates impacted her experience. She explained:

I will say that was a little more difficult because there was less like separation between practice, between school, between just like practicing life. So it's like, you'd wake up at seven in the morning, go to practice or go lift. You'd go to class all day. You'd all be in the same major. So you go to class, um, you go to practice and then you just talk about practice for the rest of the night. Like, it was really difficult for me to be in that environment. Um, cause it was just like track was all I thought about all day long.

Structuring players' lives around maximizing sport-related activity and efficiency all but foreclosed relationships and engagement with people and ideas outside of athletics. Several players explained that even if they had the extra time to dedicate elsewhere, joining outside organizations was strictly prohibited by their coaches. Of the few players who mentioned being involved in other organizations on campus, they emphasized how unsupportive the athletic department was of their involvement. Importantly, 2 out of 3 of these participants (Thiago and Dom) did not have an athletic scholarship; therefore, the coach and department had less leverage to control their nonathletic lives.

Even when it came to academics, establishing an identity and purpose outside of athletics was discouraged and frowned upon by coaches. For instance, all participants spoke to some degree about the constraints they faced enrolling in classes for their major

requirements. Elena (a white former basketball player), Jennie (a white former softball player), Tori (a Black former soccer player), and others cited their practice and game schedules as dictating what classes they could take, as well as the expectation from their coaches that they prioritize having practice blocks open. Thiago, a Latino former soccer player, mentioned a more senior player on his team informing him of these constraints when he informed him, "You don't choose your major, soccer chooses it for you." This made Thiago realize "that a lot of the players had easy majors just to be able to play or to have the grades to play." Kyle also reflected on the structural impediments toward enrolling in a major of one's own choosing:

So in terms of an education, do I think, uh, a student athlete has the same education as a, as a regular student? I don't at all. I, even though we have the resources to get us through it, we don't have the same kind of choices. We don't have the same kind of study hours. We don't have the same kind of just time to be a student to really learn what you're supposed to learn. So in the essence, even though, yes, it is a scholarship, it's not a scholarship for whatever you want to be. It's a scholarship for whatever fits the schedule.

Though all participants faced restrictions on what courses or majors they could enroll in, only Black players described being advised out of a major of their interest and funneled into a different, often deemed less-demanding major due to their perceived intellectual inferiority. In other words, Black players were either explicitly prohibited or highly discouraged from enrolling in their major of interest due to the convergence of antiblack stereotypes and athletic-related demands, whereas nonblack players were afforded more

autonomy over their major as long as they also accommodated their athletic schedule. For example, Jessica—a Black former basketball player—shared her experience choosing a biology major along with her teammate, which was made more difficult due to their academic advisor’s veiled racist assumptions about the major being too difficult for them:

So, um, we both wanted to be biology majors. And they told us, like, they basically tried to convince us not to be because they were like, 'no, it's going to be too hard for you. Um, you're not going to be able to do it'...And then they told me about all the other athletes who thought they wanted to be biology majors, and then like switch and change their mind after.

Skylar faced similar circumstances when she was forced out of her desired major:

But in order to pick my major, so I actually wanted to be a film major in either - a film or communications major - I majored in sociology. Um, but because of the course load, my academic advisors recommended that I pick something different. And I know that was the case with a lot of my friends as well...Um, and so I think if you also want to look at racial prejudices, that would be an interesting thing to look at because the majority of the Black students were pushed to do things like sociology or other lower level, uh, sciences that wouldn't take up as much time.

Both Skylar and Jessica had an awareness that their experiences were not isolated but rather indicative of a larger antiblack pattern that shaped who was counseled out of their major and who received support.

Black players were also adversely impacted due to academic advisors enrolling them in classes to maintain their eligibility rather than to complete their degree. This had

the effect of extending some players' time in college and resulted in extra expenses they had to pay. For instance, Jessica shared how her boyfriend and other men's basketball players did not graduate as a direct result of advisors' negligence:

Like there's a lot of people I know, um, like my boyfriend right now, he was on the men's basketball team and he's still, he was supposed to graduate, um, in 2018, I think in the summer, but she like messed up his classes so bad that like, she just kept him in classes to be eligible, but it wasn't like degree requirements. But she does their schedule, like for the, the, for the men's basketball team, she just does their schedule. Like they don't have any say in it. So like she just looks at what their major is and stuff. And she like gives them their schedule, um, for what the practice times are and all that. And so she gave him classes to stay eligible to play, but she didn't realize that it wasn't like towards degree progress. So he still has like two classes that he needs to take that he couldn't before. And then he like played overseas and stuff, so he couldn't finish them still. So like he still doesn't have his degree. That happened to my other friend too, who played on the men's basketball team.

Relatedly, a culmination of advisor negligence and faculty unwillingness to make accommodations for athletic-related absences resulted in Ari, a Black former basketball player, paying \$6,000 for an online course from a different institution that she needed in order to graduate. The ramifications of academic restrictions and constraints haunted Black players in tangible ways, even post-graduation, that were absent from nonblack participant narratives.

Intake Forms and Coerced "Consent"

All but one participant (Nate was not asked the question due to his time constraints), mentioned the range of forms they were required to sign at the beginning of the year and/or the beginning of fall term. These forms outlined rules and policies regarding health, team rules, NCAA rules, Title IX, and amateurism, among other policies. Tori described the process as "boring" and that it consisted of presentations on "This is what you cannot do." Some participants mentioned the sheer volume of forms being overwhelming and some had an overt critique of what signing the forms meant in relation to giving up their rights. Aaliyah, a Black current track and field player, recounted, "We signed a bunch of forms giving up our name, image, likeness, um, and then sign like code of conduct, like rules for your team, all of that in the very beginning of the year."

Signing these forms happened under duress, often during high stress periods, and players were incentivized to not read what they were signing. Kyle—who attended 3 different Division I football programs—illustrated the typical scenario:

So we were in the middle, I think we were in the middle of fall camp traditionally. And so in fall camp, you're looking for any kind of time you can get, right. I mean, you - you're trying to go sleep. You're trying to go, you know, get some ice or go eat. So they would bring us all into the computer lab. And we would all just scroll, click, scroll, click. Nobody - nobody read these things. And I didn't either. And I knew better, I knew - my dad was a lawyer. Like I knew that, you know, you ought to read what you're signing, but nobody did - nobody. We, we, it was

all at the same time. And it was basically a, how fast can you get this done?

Nobody's reading. And nobody's really understanding that, you know, if you don't perform at the end of the year, they can cut you.

This experience was not isolated to football, but shared across sports. For example, Aaliyah echoed Kyle's description of the stressful process and environment created by the athletic department:

I think sometimes when you get through so many forms - even though they'll kind of like go through really fast - it's so long. So we were just like check, check, check, or like 'so just sign here, sign here,' so they just sign. So like a lot of times athletes don't actually fully, fully read it. They just go off like whatever the presentation was.

Both Kyle and Aaliyah illustrated the coercive conditions created by athletic departments to manufacture written consent from players. As evidenced by their descriptions, contractual forms were signed in conditions that prevented full engagement with what students were consenting to, without counsel, and without clarity that the scholarship and/or team agreement can change at the coach's or athletic department's discretion. Tori also described the strategic omissions of coaches and athletic departments. When I asked if she felt coaches and administrators were misleading in the signing process after she explained that the team did not provide any meals during summer, she stated:

I wouldn't say they were misleading. I think, I mean, from what I have seen and I have a lot of friends who also played collegiate soccer, coaches don't lie - they just don't tell you. You don't think, 'Oh my gosh, will I have meals during pre-

season?' during your recruiting meeting. I mean, I didn't - a lot of people that I knew didn't think to ask that when we were being recruited. So I wouldn't say that they were misleading. I would just say that they didn't say things that they knew would be concerning to our parents.

A similar sentiment was shared by other participants who were misled in various ways: Kyle said, "Well they don't really even tell you, I'll be honest," when discussing the stipulations of his one-year renewable scholarship; Aaliyah questioned, "... sometimes I'm like, do we actually know all the information?" as well as Janelle when she shared "So that's another thing I didn't know. I didn't know that me being on a full cross country scholarship meant I was running cross country AND track." Participant reflections highlighted how coaches omitting and not disclosing the full conditions of their contracts or expectations were used to exploit players and led them to assume certain conditions would be met—perhaps out of good faith or players knowing there was no avenue for disagreement or recourse.

For example, Ari admittedly did not remember what each contractual form she signed consisted of, but highlighted the power dynamic that made it a moot point stating, "So basically I just sign whatever they give us. Yeah. Cause it's not like you have an option anyways." Ari placed direct emphasis on the coercive reality involved in college players having no choice but to forfeit their rights in order to maintain their eligibility. Jessica also expanded on the power relationship established during the intake process.

She explained:

I don't think people understand that, like once you sign the - like, they literally own you. Like when you sign your scholarship, it's like, they own you. And you - a lot of people don't even read it. Um, but I'm like, they have all of the benefits. Like if we do anything wrong, we're just [snapped fingers across screen], they could just get rid of us at any time, but we're not allowed to leave.

Jessica was—as were other former players—keenly aware of the dehumanization and power dynamic the intake process established. Jessica's description of being owned highlights the propertied relationship institutions sought to establish between player and university. From the moment players signed their contractual agreements, whether on scholarship or not, they entered a near constant state of precarity defined by risk, little to no security or safety, and vulnerability to a range of emotional, psychological, and physical abuse. Put simply by Aaliyah and Jessica respectively, "We sign our life away," and "They control our whole lives." As I show throughout the findings, even though all players had a shared sense of precarity, there was an underlying antiblack logic shaping how athletic departments enforced and/or took advantage of the power differential and who was most vulnerable to harm.

Alongside athletic departments and administrators establishing themselves as having the right to control player lives, there were more formal, explicit shows of state power incorporated into intake procedures. The two former football players I interviewed stated that presentations from the local police department were commonplace during their early socialization period. Unlike policies around surveillance or signing away one's right

to their name, image, and likeness, I did not anticipate presentations from police to be a regular practice and thus did not even ask the question. Rather, the show of police force was casually mentioned by Kyle when I asked if racial or social justice issues were openly discussed in the team environment to which he replied:

Uh, so in terms of racial, uh, you know policies, biases, uh, the biggest thing that I saw consistently through my career is they would have a, the police chief come and talk to the whole team and the police chief would, you know, discuss how to be arrested and how to interact with, uh, uh, a officer. How to, you know, not escalate a situation.

Being an outsider, I was surprised and asked if this was a common practice to which Kyle said, "Yeah. That was everywhere. That was everywhere." I then followed up with Nate, a Black former football player, who affirmed that "Yes that has happened...Yes it's very common in that arena." The overt show of police force seemed to establish a united front and synergy between the informal policing of the athletics department and formal state power. Though I did not ask participants who participated in other sports if they too received a presentation from the police department, the absence of this information from all other participant narratives may signal that the presentations were targeted toward the sport with the highest concentration of Black men. Given this along with Kyle's description, these presentations functioned to assert Black players as always already criminalized, preparing them for and placing the responsibility on them to deescalate the (seemingly inevitable) confrontations with police. The only behavior deemed acceptable

to the university was deference to authority, whether it was in relation to formal agents of the state or administrators in the athletic department.

NCAA as Official Scapegoat

When participants described signing intake documents and compliance forms, it became clear the rhetorical strategy athletic departments used to create a distinction between themselves and the NCAA, and thus distance themselves from rule creation and enforcement. Aaliyah provided a clear description of how athletic administrators enacted this strategy when players signed various forms:

...it's definitely like when we're signing - once again for like name image and likeness - they definitely don't say like, 'You guys are the only Americans, you know, that don't have the right, you know - maybe besides like incarcerated Americans - that don't have the right to their name image or likeness'. So like they don't, they definitely don't frame it like that. They just say like, 'as an athlete, you know, because per NCAA'. So I think schools usually just like, they just kind of put it 'per NCAA', like 'This is not us, its the NCAA.' Um, so we're all like 'Damn, you know, the NCAA.'

When athletic departments, and higher education institutions more broadly, frame themselves as beholden to the NCAA, they mask the fact that institutional actors comprise the NCAA and voluntarily opt-in to the organization. To invoke a movie metaphor, this move is akin to the Wizard of Oz yelling "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!" In this way, the theatrics and discursive strategies to distance athletic departments from the NCAA essentially hide the "man" behind the curtain—that is,

universities. Further, the false dichotomy attempts to create a coalition dynamic between athletes and the athletic department; one in which both are at mercy of the NCAA and that their political allegiances are similar. Toby, a multiracial current basketball player, also illustrated this. He adhered to his coach's rationale for following all of the team rules "because if it is not taken care of on the front end, um, the NCAA gets a hold of it and its gonna be a bigger deal for the individual or team in general."

This is reminiscent of the classic good cop/bad cop strategy that forces players to engage in a bad-faith negotiation of how much harm and/or intrusion they should accept in order to prevent the potential for more harm in the future. Aaliyah commented that administrators portrayed themselves as "here to help" athletes navigate the rules and restrictions, but that distrust remained strong between athletes and compliance. In her case, administrators and coaches were seen as the ultimate "gatekeepers" to player autonomy, whereas Toby believed his coaches to be protecting him and his teammates from worse harm (rather than implicated in inflicting it). The rhetorical strategy distances the university from their active role in stripping away player rights, while simultaneously reinforcing athletic departments as a paternalistic force that "protects" players from outside forces—whether that be the NCAA, outside media members, or private corporations.

Privilege of Participation

Another key rhetorical strategy used by administrators during the indoctrination process was to frame athletic participation as "a privilege and not a right," or that players "were lucky to be playing their sport." As discussed by Hatton (2020) in her analysis of

labor exploitation across college athletes, prisoners, and graduate students, framing college athletes as a privileged elite is integral toward “status coercion” (p. 13). Perhaps stemming from court cases that ruled college athletes should expect less rights than the average student (*Vernonia v Acton*, 1995), this credo was plastered all over departmental documents such as athlete handbooks and athlete codes of conduct. As stated by Aaliyah, this framing helped prevent complaint or critique of players' restrictive, controlling conditions:

...but it's also taught or like shown as like we're still privileged to be here. So I don't think athletes like complain about it as much because of that. Um, I mean, that's starting I think to change a little bit as there's more of a conscious awareness around the ethical issues that are happening, especially right now, um, with everything happening in the world. So that's starting to change a little bit, but prior I think a lot of athletes just complied like, yeah, very easily complied. Didn't really question it because it was shown to us as like the privilege to be in their position.

It is worth noting the definition of privilege as documented in Merriam-Webster as "a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor" (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Priming players to believe participation is a privilege—a structural advantage or gift the university bestows upon them rather than a position they earned—takes the construct of "amateurism" a step further to assert that college athletes enjoy rights otherwise denied to other students. This framing has been used to deny rights to fair compensation, autonomous education, bodily autonomy, free speech, among other rights.

This credo is particularly ironic given the systematic stripping of rights college players go through in order to participate in athletics. My critique of this ideological priming that playing college sport is a privilege and not a right does not absolve the masses of white students who operationalize their privilege to gain *access* to higher education. Rather, this priming tactic functions to preemptively quell dissent, as well as foreclose rights to bodily autonomy and equitable compensation, which impacts players differently based race, gender, and sexuality. There is a fundamental antiblack drive to how this logic shapes college sport in relation to who benefits and accrues wealth and who is most vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and bodily harm, as I discuss in later sections.

Further, this ideological priming is disseminated to campus communities and the public through a variety of means to gain consent from outside stakeholders and communities (i.e., television programming and NCAA propaganda) (Hatton, 2020). For example, resentment from non-athlete students and faculty was discussed among all participants; they spoke to how they *earned* their scholarship, but that most people did not understand the work and sacrifice that went into maintaining their status as student and athlete. The most-cited reasons for resentment from other students were players receiving priority registration and a general stereotype that athletes "don't have to work as hard," or don't deserve scholarships. However, race was a mediating factor that allowed most nonblack participants to avoid or lessen this negative stigmatization or stereotype—a stigma that 3 of 4 white participants said they never felt personally, but acknowledged existed for other athletes. Nonblack players of color were at times able to

shed the athlete designation through removal of institutional-branded gear or simply not disclosing their athlete status, whereas Black students were often assumed to be athletes whether they participated in athletics or not.

For instance, Thiago spoke about making sure he did not wear any athletic-related gear to class to separate himself from his athlete status and that, "Some classmates would actually be surprised when they find out I'm an athlete because they'd be like, 'You didn't you tell me that?'" Conversely, Aaliyah shared the reality of being Black on campus and stigmatized whether or not they were an athlete. She explained that other students often avoided being partnered with athletes on group projects but added specificity to Black player experiences by stating, "I think Black athletes actually get it worse. If you're Black on campus they also assume you're an athlete." Aaliyah also shared an instance of a group of students knocking on her dorm room door when she first arrived on campus to ask what her GPA was. After she responded, the man turned back to his friends and yelled, "See, they are smart!" Black participants spoke about being stereotyped in an almost exhausted manner, immediately able to recall countless instances of being framed as "intellectually inferior," or being resented for their scholarships. As explained by Skylar:

A lot of them didn't understand that the funds that were paying for all of our stuff, were separate funds from [the institution] itself. Um, so a lot of people used to be really upset about our scholarships, um, and having money. Cause they didn't understand that our money wasn't getting taken from the same pool that their money was.

Skyler brought attention to how allocation of university funds is obscured and how that too contributed to resentment and divides between athlete and nonathlete students. Several Black participants spoke about not engaging with people who held those stereotypes anymore and chalked it up to others' ignorance. For example, Nate stated, "I didn't really entertain that conversation. That was, uh, beneath me to be honest with you, because it made zero sense. It's an uneducated voice of opinion because they obviously don't - or its ignorant - either way." Jessica shared a similar outlook with parallel frustration:

And this is something, this is like a topic that I don't really like engage with, like people who don't understand because it's so, it's so exhausting to explain to someone like all the things like, I don't know. I just feel like I don't have to, like, I don't have to validate my, my existence or my 'privilege' as you would so call it to you. It just makes me so upset that people have no idea what we go through and then can just say, 'Oh, you just like show up and get all these free things and you just play basketball.'

All participants of color shared instances of feeling resentment from other students in some form, but only Black players experienced these more intimate violences of students naming them as fundamentally out of place—constantly being demanded to prove their worth, value, and belongingness to other students and faculty on campus.

It was more difficult, however, to navigate faculty members who treated Black players in a punitive manner based on the perceived “preferential treatment” from the university. Jessica spoke about this directly when she described how professors provided

leniency to nonathlete students who had jobs and were going to miss exams or quizzes, but would deny Jessica's requests to take a quiz early due to sports competition, as well as give her lower grades without reason. Aaliyah also voiced frustration with the power dynamic between players and faculty stating, "...and obviously there's a power dynamic. It's not like as me as a student athlete can go tell the professor 'Oh, but like, look at the real demands. This is the real life of a student athlete.'"

Participant narratives about navigating faculty stereotypes again highlighted the precarious conditions college athletes—particularly Black players—found themselves in, having to contend with both student and faculty resentment. Framing college athletes as privileged group to the campus community and public was essential toward maintaining the illusion that players were being given a gift rather than structurally exploited. Further, the rhetorical strategy also served to disrupt potential political alliances between intra-campus groups or outside communities that advocate against antiblack and exploitive relations.

Institutional Marking

Marking players in visible ways to make them easily identifiable on campus also manufactured and maintained resentment toward players and the illusion that they were of a "privileged" class. Institutional marking took form by way of requiring athletes to wear university-branded and corporate-sponsored gear, designating athletes "representatives of the institution," and an overall discouraging of individuality. In this way, institutional marking facilitated more efficient surveillance by faculty, teaching assistants, students, and community members as I discuss at length in the following

section. However, a perhaps more insidious function of institutional marking was oriented around stripping away individual identity and political subjectivity and replacing it with institutional branding. Ari and Jessica illustrated this well in relation to their coach prohibiting individual expression on their team. As said by Jessica, "...our coach was really big on us not being individuals and being part of a team." Ari shared a similar sentiment:

Our coach was like killing us - look the same, act the same, play the same - you know what I mean? ... But like with, with school and students and athletes - student athletes - we're told to be like one certain way. And if you're not that way then they're just going to get somebody else that will be that way.

Prohibiting any individual expression was the prerequisite for forcing players to exclusively represent institutional values at the risk of punishment. Iliza, a multiracial former track and field player, also mentioned how strict her university was in relation to branding and players' physical appearance, as did Aaliyah when she recalled coaches reminding players to always wear the branded gear.

Throughout participant narratives, the notion of a uniform image was used to discipline players to adhere to institutionally-dictated standards and behaviors in order to "represent" the university well. Jessica alluded to this when she expanded on her coach's stipulations of prohibiting individuality: "Like he wouldn't let us have our last names on our jerseys because that would be making us like individuals and we represent [the university], not ourselves." "Representing the university," much like the "privilege" of athletic participation, is published throughout departmental and institutional documents,

serving as a constant reminder that players are mandated to put the university and team before themselves. Toby, who was sympathetic and understanding of policies dictating players' image and behavior, explained the reasoning as, "because again, we're representing not only ourselves, we representing the university. We have, um, the image we have to uphold." Other participants reflected on the structural and economic conditions that shaped reasons as to why their behavior and appearance was policed so heavily. As shared by Nate, "...so it was ALWAYS protecting the bottom line and protecting the brands." Jessica traced restrictions on individuality back to institutional branding as well, stating:

They teach us how to talk, like they train us how to talk to the media to say specific things. Even when you're being interviewed individually. They, they tell us how to be on social media. They basically want you - they don't want you to like throw a wrench in anything that they're branding.

Invoking Simone Browne's analysis of the surveillance of Blackness in relation to slavery, we can think of institutions prohibiting individuality and mandating Black players, in particular, wear institutionally branded gear as being marked for institutional use. Browne's discussion of Hank Willis Thomas' "B@anded" series, which recasts corporate branding on Black bodies as reminiscent of the terror of branding enslaved people as property, is worth quoting at length:

In the B@anded series, however, the Swoosh is instead branded on the male black body, first as a large scar on the side of a bald head in *Branded Head* (2003), and also in a series of nine raised keloid-appearing scars on the upper torso in *Scarred*

Chest (2004)...Branded Head and Scarred Chest are photographic reckonings with the trauma of racial injury, traumatic head injuries, raised keloid scars that grow beyond the boundary of the seemingly healed original wound, commercial branding, and the power of advertising to crop and frame the black body, and the power of the artist to counterframe. (Browne, 2015, pp. 125-126)

We can extend Hank Willis Thomas' critique to public institutions, as well. In this way, the sociality of slavery is omnipresent as universities use college players as surrogates for university imagery, branding, and values, thereby reinforcing Black players as de facto property for institutional use. As I discuss in the next section, this property relation was maintained and enforced by departments and universities through racialized surveillance and disciplining mechanisms.

Chapter 5: Surveillance, Discipline, & Punishment

Throughout participants' time in college athletics, they were subjected to a range of surveillance and disciplining mechanisms to remain "in-line" and in compliance with behaviors and actions desirable to the university. Several participants described it as "Having eyes on you at all times," "Eyes everywhere," and that "There's eyes everywhere basically." Different formal policies and practices were used to manufacture this feeling; the university tracked and monitored players through formal means by using class checks, mandatory study halls, progress reports, drug testing, and social media monitoring; as well as informal means, such as coaches' manipulation of practice and team bonding time and "voluntary" workouts. Importantly, all of these practices were racialized; surveillance was uniquely concentrated on Black players and/or were used to criminalize Black players.

In effect, each of these practices were used to control any free time players had and relegated them to certain areas where surveillance was easily accomplished outside of the formal "countable athletic-related activity" hours outlined by the NCAA. The athletic department also invested considerable resources and time toward monitoring players' political engagement—especially politics that confronted racism, genocide, and/or antiblackness. Participants described a range of disciplining and punishment mechanisms used to coerce and threaten players into compliance that included revoking scholarships, emotional abuse/humiliation, physical suffering, and further limiting resources and autonomy.

Class Checks, Progress Reports, and Study Halls

Every participant mentioned class checks and spoke of them in a normalized, common-sense manner. Class checks entailed a representative from the team or institution, such as a coach or paid employee of the athletic department, to make an appearance at players' classes to "check" if they were in attendance. Most often class checks were conducted by someone on the coaching staff, and in other cases by a paid employee outside of the coaching staff. As with all forms of surveillance, the coach and administrators had discretion over who to target—on an individual level and team level. This often meant teams racialized as Black, such as football and men's and women's basketball, were subjected to more strict and routine forms of class checking. As explained by participants, football and basketball teams were often required to sit in the front rows of their classes to make them easily identifiable for the designated class checker and more visible to professors and teaching assistants (TAs).

Importantly, this policy was less about targeting players in "revenue-generating" sports, and more about targeting Black players generally. Even players who were on teams whose coaches invested less time in class checking as a policy, explained how their coaches would target specific players. Tori, for example, explained that her coaches did not want to waste their time checking her classes because she rarely missed class, but would target people who were more likely to be absent. She explained, "Whereas other students that they probably were not on their best list, they were like, 'Oh, I'm going to go because I know that she won't be there.'"

Progress reports were another tool used to monitor players. Most participants said their academic advisor emailed their professors and/or teaching assistants to ask about player progress, behavior, grades, upcoming assignments, and any issues or concerns. These were often seen as a more efficient and thorough method of tracking player progress and behavior in their courses, in addition to merely tracking attendance. Perhaps less intuitively, progress reports were also a tool that deputized faculty and teaching assistants to surveil players in their classes. In this way, the university instituted a shared responsibility among the campus community to surveil players and placed an overdetermined focus on their athlete status that foreclosed, or at the very least made it more difficult, for faculty and TAs to foreground their student identity.

In the absence of formal progress reports, several participants stated that their coaches and academic advisors had “full access” to their grades at all times, thus making the tangible reports less necessary. In these cases, coaches and academic advisors were granted access to player grades through integrated information systems, phone applications, and other technology. Universities have increasingly transitioned to technology to conduct progress reports and track athlete attendance, which two players referenced explicitly. With respect to detailed grades and course progress, Tori explained that her academic advisors used a new system that gave them unrestricted access to athlete courses—the course page, syllabus, and real-time grades posted by the instructor. Relatedly, Aaliyah said she was thankful her institution had not implemented more intrusive measures *yet*, noting that other universities had: “I know like at [university] they had like an app where their coach could literally track if they were like in class or not.”

Most of these applications (e.g., Spotter, TeamWorks) track when players arrive and leave class and can provide a geolocation. Operating under the rationale of increased efficiency, these systems are at times accepted by college players because they seemingly reduce extra paperwork on the part of players, and also decrease the physical presence of class checkers.

All participants also spoke about formal study hall hours they were required to attend. Study hall hours were often a set number of hours and mandatory in their first year, then incentive-based moving forward where players could “earn” their way out by achieving a certain GPA standard. The caveat was that the coach could increase or decrease the amount of hours and the GPA standard at their discretion. Janelle shared that in one instance when she was designated the study hall monitor, the volleyball coach increased mandatory study hall hours for her players to 20 hours per week (a standard that was shocking and above the average 5-10 hours per week). Several participants characterized their experience meeting the minimum standard for study hall hours as “annoying,” “a waste of time,” and overwhelmingly shared that study hall hours did not help their educational experience. Dom, a Latino former soccer player, spoke to the ridiculousness of expecting a large group of students to be able to study in one room:

So you have a certain amount of hours of study hall and I get it – it’s your first year, people are wildin’ out, but there’s no way you could put hundreds of kids in one fucking room to study. That was my biggest like, ‘nah, this is not it - not it.’

Other participants echoed Dom’s assertion and cited how hard it was to focus when in a large room with their peers, or noted that their learning style made study hall detrimental

to their productivity. Similar to the strictness of class checks, the amount of mandatory study hall hours were often racialized by team. Several participants who competed in soccer, women's basketball, and track and field mentioned that study hall hours were stricter for men's basketball and football players. These policies largely concerned maintaining player eligibility over delivering a quality educational experience. As mentioned by the majority of participants, these policies did not enhance their educational experience and in fact made it more difficult to engage in meaningful educational activities. Thus, class checks, progress reports, and mandatory study halls functioned to both surveil players and maintained their isolation from the rest of the campus and academic community.

Coaches also had control over players' time and movement in more informal ways through manipulation of practice time and arbitrarily designating time toward "team bonding." For instance, both Toby and Jessica mentioned that their coach required "team study hall" on Sundays, regardless of their GPA. Further, Jennie and Kyle explained that their coaches controlled their time by keeping them at practice longer or on more days than technically allowed by NCAA rules. In Jennie's case, the coach would suggest that the team should hold an "involuntary" practice amongst themselves and would manipulate university time sheets and have players sign them. As Jennie reflected on this she said, "I don't think you're technically supposed to do that. You, you can get in trouble. So like instead of them getting in trouble, they just like would like, 'Oh, that one wasn't mandatory. You guys just all showed up.'"

One of Kyle's coaches, who had been reprimanded for working players over the allowed time in the past, found an easy work-around to maintain his control over players while technically operating inside of the "rules." Kyle explained that the coach coerced players into staying at practice by blowing the whistle and simply announcing that they were now at practice on their own volition. He shared:

And what I actually found interesting was that these coaches, they actually stopped whenever the, the allotted time had met and these coaches would actually stop and say, 'Hey guys, y'all don't have to be here. This is now on your time'. And, you know, obviously there's the saying, that goes with that - that, 'well, you don't have to be here, but I don't have to play you'.

Kyle also described how coaches at a separate university he attended prevented players from attending a party celebrating the end of fall camp. He described the scenario: "Instead of allowing people to leave once practice was over, they've got everybody on a bus, toted them to the other side of town and we watched a movie until like one o'clock in the morning." When I asked if there was any option to refuse, he responded "No it's mandatory, it's mandatory. You can't leave." Jennie and Kyle's coaches were easily able to manipulate NCAA rules that are allegedly intended to protect players from excessive practice time. The rules were no match for the power and discretion given to coaches to control player lives. This perhaps hints toward the function of the NCAA to be a regulatory body to police first and foremost the players, rather than coaches or institutions themselves. Each university represented in the data had a whole staffed

department—athletics compliance offices—deputized to monitor player actions, yet coaches were able to manipulate the rules at their will and without consequence.

Drug Testing

Both the NCAA and individual universities had power to test players for drugs at their discretion. When talking about their experiences with drug tests, nearly every participant (16/20) rejected the premise that they were random and put the word “random” in air quotes or emphasized the word as ironic or contradictory whenever they mentioned the tests. As a policy, the NCAA states drug testing is intended to prevent competitive advantage. However, participants’ experiences shed light on how administrators used drug testing for their own pleasure, how the policy criminalized marijuana in particular, and how universities used drug testing as a strategy to recoup players’ scholarship money.

Several Black and Latino participants spoke about being targeted for drug tests, especially after holidays, breaks, or campus events. Diego, a Latino former soccer player who once failed a test for marijuana, described how the administrator seemingly took joy in “catching” him. He shared, “I felt like he like got a rush out of it, like he was happy.” He expanded, “I felt like they want to catch people you know, instead of trying to help them....I felt like they'd be like, ‘Oh, I think this guy does it. Let's pick him.’” Ari shared a similar feeling about administrators’ intentions of wanting to “catch” players:

I feel like our school was always trying to catch us. And they'll like drug test us after spring splash or drug test us after like 4-20, you know? Like set up drug tests one day and then like, wait two days and drug test us again, you know, try to

catch them slipping. And they say, it's like, for the better of the athlete or for our help. But like, it felt like they were trying to catch us.

Both participants pointed toward the underlying meglomantic mentality of administrators and coaches who seemingly enjoyed using the control they were given to drug test players at their will. Jessica also shared that one Black woman on her team was routinely selected for testing because she was simply strong, but gendered antiblack stereotypes of Black women as masculine and her coach's perception of her being "buff" made her the target for steroid testing. Administrators and coaches seemed to weaponize the policy for their own libidinal desires to surveil, control, and at times harm players.

Aside from the pleasure administrators seemingly received from targeting players, there were several instances of drug testing being used as a strategy to selectively "take back" or revoke a players' scholarship. Kyle explained:

So, and what I came up with in my perception of how they use drug tests is there was two categories for people that were asked to be drug tested. Number one, players that they thought would pass. So players that they, they believed to be, you know, on the straight and narrow, uh, to not take drugs - particularly weed. And the second category was people that they knew weren't panning out. You know, I had a bunch of friends that were in there that, you know, their junior year, they, they weren't that good. You know, they had already lost to somebody under them. And so they knew that their, their utility to the team wasn't there and they use drug tests in a lot of ways to get a scholarship back so they might be able to offer a new kid.

Kyle underscored that drug testing was yet another policy mechanism that coaches and administrations could manipulate for their personal and material gain. Jessica recognized the same pattern; her coach chose from two categories of people: those he thought would pass and those who he thought would fail. For example, Jessica said he would routinely select a white woman who abstained from drugs and alcohol, along with players who he thought would test positive (largely based on racial and gender stereotypes).

Across participant narratives, it became clear that universities criminalized marijuana in particular, while rarely testing for other recreational drugs. The negative ramifications of universities targeting marijuana—which several players used for pain management, as a supplement to help regain appetite, and to reduce anxiety—were far reaching and potentially harmful.

The harm caused by this was explained by Kyle who stated, “And the scary part about it is, is for a lot of us, we chose to do harder drugs because we knew that they would be out of our system faster.” Kyle went on to explain that many players turned toward amphetamines such as cocaine and adderall because both drugs helped ease pain and worked their way through the body quicker than marijuana, thus lessening the risk of a failed drug test. This is indictive of a larger cycle that some players are forced into due to being in extreme working conditions and without proper resources for mental and physical pain. The safest option for relief (marijuana) was criminalized, leaving players to look toward other options that were harder on their bodies and addictive.

Social Media & Disciplining Political Critique

Administrators and coaches also monitored players' online lives through Twitter, Instagram, and/or Facebook. Nearly every participant said they knew their social media accounts were being followed by a coach or administrator. Participants spoke about having to be cautious of posting anything that would "tarnish" the university image or break NCAA rules such as promoting products, posting pictures in proximity to alcohol, or retweeting posts that included profanity. In general, all of these were categorized as detrimental to the university image for which athletes were designated the "representative." Aaliyah described the standard process of administrators going through players' profiles stating, "So for revenue, sports, like football and basketball, they would have people that actually like went through their Instagrams and their Twitter and they were like, yeah, delete this, delete that, delete this. You can't have that."

Most participants were understanding toward their departments monitoring their accounts for larger rule violations, but felt they enforced the rules in an excessive manner. Players could be reprimanded or punished for anything an administrator or coach did not personally agree with or condone. For example, Ari was reprimanded by the team photographer who did not like her comment on a picture of herself, Jennie mentioned a coach not liking a song lyric posted by her teammate, Dom was told to "be careful" when he tweeted about not agreeing with a professor, and Whitney, a white former swimmer, explained that anything deemed sexual or promiscuous was strictly off-limits. The constant monitoring incentivized self-policing and adherence to institutional brand-

standards. For instance, after Diego was reprimanded for retweeting a post that had profanity, he described how he started self-policing before posting to social media:

Before you put something up, you kind of like had ... I would have it like, "Oh, damn, I remember he follows me. My coach, if he sees this, will he get mad?" It was like, "All right, nah." You're self-consciously thinking like, "All right, nah, I shouldn't put this.'"

Though the general espoused purposes of social media surveillance are to prevent NCAA rule violations and “protect” the reputation of the university from potential player “misbehavior,” how administrators enforced their power indicated a separate purpose: policing political thought or critical critique—particularly when it concerned their team/coach, racism, genocide, or antiblackness. For example, Nate compared players who are more outspoken on social media today versus during his playing days and explained that when he played they were disciplined and “advised” to avoid posting anything related to sociopolitical or racial justice issues. Policing political critique was also concentrated on any critique of “American values” or U.S. history. Jessica explained how her and her teammate were disciplined for such a critique:

...so we took, uh, a race and ethnicity class together and we basically learned like all of the messed up stuff about America. And you know how like when you take classes like that in college, you like unlearn all the stuff you learned when you were younger. And it's like really like upsetting when you take those classes. Um, not like you didn't have an idea, but like just when you're going through it, you're like emotional and mad.

So like we - [my teammate] tweeted after class one day she was like, 'Man, America's the worst.' Like something like that. And then, I liked the tweet and I think like retweeted it, cause we were talking about how they, when they first came here, they like committed genocide and were like torturing Native Americans and like all that stuff. And so we're like, yeah, like America sucks. And so literally I think that day, like four hours later when we had film, one of the donors saw the tweet - one of the donors for the basketball team. And he basically sent an email to our coach like, 'Oh, well that's funny that your international student doesn't like America, considering that we're paying for her college' and all that stuff. So they had to talk to her and I about like, 'Oh, well be careful what you put on the internet because it could be misconstrued and we can lose money.' And we basically got in trouble for being like upset about social injustice.

Ari, who was on the same team, also brought up this example and shared that the author of the tweet was almost kicked off the team and was required to write an apology letter to the donor who was offended. This example is illustrative of how boosters maintained control over the politics of universities in general, and in this case, athletic departments.

Booster Shadow Control

The shadow-control donors maintained was also revealed through social dynamics and expectations that players act deferential and/or thankful to donors. Athletic departments often hold events every year where donors have opportunities to interact with administrators and athletes. Several participants mentioned various dinners or events

where donors were present, and as put by Aneesa—a Black former soccer player—administrators selected players to attend who would “schmooze” and “make sure they were happy.” Most participants were thankful that they personally were not required to attend such events, citing the extra labor and odd dynamic they rather avoid.

Several participants did have experience attending the events; Janelle and Tori both attended award events held at country clubs, Kyle and Dom interacted with donors at smaller events, and Jessica shared several examples of formal and informal booster interactions. When I asked how those events made participants feel, the majority said they felt uncomfortable in varying degrees. Janelle, for example, said “It was confusing cause it was like, I’ve never seen any of these people come to races...And so that was always really odd having like this random older crowd watching the award show...” All players who attended these events said their primary role was to advertise for the university. As Janelle and Dom said respectively, they were expected to “tell them how great we are,” and “make them want to donate.” Dom also explained that he was expected to lie about his experience and only share the positive things about the university.

Jessica, who had several interactions with boosters due to her popularity on the team, reflected on the dynamics of those interactions throughout her career. She noted that they made her feel “uncomfortable” and made her feel like “a museum artifact.” It is worth quoting her at length to illustrate the uneasiness and discomfort she detailed:

I will say that the boosters make me uncomfortable though because, um, I don't know. Um, because they give money to the program there's some of them that

like, we just, they just expect us to, I don't know. There's like these, they - they're like creepily - I can't even imagine how this is at like bigger schools. But like they know everything about us. Um, it's super weird. I feel like, um, I don't know. It's kind of like they're paying money so like we owe them something like our time and our, our attention and stuff like that. Like we, when they come on road trips with us, we have to be like super nice.

After I expressed surprise that boosters were allowed on their roadtrips, she expanded:

Yeah. Cause they raffle it off. So like they raffle off like, 'Oh, you get a road trip with the women's basketball team' and then they pay for it. And so like they win it, um, they auction it off. So they like win it in an auction. And it kind of makes me feel like a museum artifact or like something that they're like buying. I don't like that. Um, just in general. I don't like when people who have money think that the people who, I guess you're like paying to see, have to like be a certain way. But, um, we would always have to be super nice and like give them all our attention and like make them feel included and like they're getting the full team experience. It was just something weird. And I feel like it had nothing to do with my education or my ability to play basketball.

Jessica's reflection demonstrates the relationship between fungibility and the libidinal economy: donors essentially purchased access to players and purchased a set social dynamic—one in which their comfort and pleasure was prioritized over player autonomy.

Further, other participants mentioned having to make phone calls and write letters thanking donors for their contributions and noted that this was a common practice among

athletic departments. The racial dynamics of this practice cannot be overstated. The university prefers players, and Black players in particular, be supplicatory over autonomous. They are expected to take on a polite, thankful demeanor toward the majority-white donor base and administration. Similar to the athletic departments trying to carve out a clear distinction between themselves and the NCAA, donors were often used as a scapegoat for why the athletic department policed players' political opinions or critical thought. As I discuss in the next section, departments reinforced this type of relation through discouraging dissent and then deferring blame to the donor-base.

Policing Political Demonstrations and Action

Policing political thought online was accompanied by policing player activism and/or organized protest. This came in the form of preemptively discouraging player demonstrations—especially kneeling during the national anthem—with the understanding that there was a threat of punishment if you did so. Ten participants spoke about their desire to organize a political action or protest, but 5 participants said the warnings to avoid any public demonstrations increased after Colin Kaepernick and other professional and college players began kneeling during the national anthem. The threats were both explicit and implicit. For example, when asked how the athletic department and coaches delivered the directive that they were not allowed to kneel before a game, Thiago said “they sweet talk it,” as if to softly remind them that political action is unacceptable. He expanded and summarized that the coaches told them, “Hey you know what - I know these things are going on but our program decided that's not a good idea to kneel down. So its not - we're not allowing that.”

Other participants said they were told in more certain terms they were not allowed to do any type of public political display. Ari shared, “I know we were told that if we kneel we're off the team...our coach was saying like all of our boosters are like, they would take it as disrespect.” Coaches and administrations would strategically use the threat of revoking scholarships to quell dissent among players. Tori also explained how her team was disciplined to avoid political action after I asked if activism was accepted while she played:

Do I think it would have been accepted when I was at my campus? No. I don't, at all. And I actually remember, I think it was my senior year. It might've been my junior year. I am not for sure when Kaepernick first started kneeling during his games. My coach talked to us and wanted our opinions on why he would kneel. My coach thought it was like, ‘Why would you do that? It's the flag. It's not very respectful, and all these things.’ I remember myself and one of my other friends who was also Black, we were like, “Well, your experience here isn't going to be the same experience as myself, isn't going to be the same experience as this person, or as this person, across the board. So like the reasons that you may say the pledge of allegiance or say the national anthem is the reason that you say it and the same reason that he's kneeling it's for the reasons that he's saying. Like just because you don't agree doesn't mean that it's not valid...And he was like, ‘Well, I think that on our team that we will say the National Anthem with pride.’”

Sydney, a Black former soccer player at an HBCU, shared a narrative of her team being discouraged from doing a political demonstration. Sydney’s team planned to kneel during

the national anthem in solidarity with and to bring more attention to the Movement for Black Lives. She explained that they were not allowed to kneel, but did a different action which the athletic director reprimanded them for:

I want to say 2016, um, me and my teammates decided that we would love to take a knee for the Anthem before, you know, before we played. Um, we pretty much planned it and word got to our athletic director. Um, and he pretty much encouraged us not to do that. Um, so we kind of made a loophole and we wore black wristbands around our wrists and, you know, wrote BLM black lives matter on our wrists. Um, and then once the anthem did play, we all like, um, locked arms.

She went on to explain that the athletic director held a 2 hour meeting reprimanding the team:

And then after that, our athletic director had a conversation with us in the sense of, and he was pretty much asking us why did we feel as though we had the authority to do that. Um, just to remind, or just to note, the athletic director is also a Black male, so it's actually very interesting to see that. Um, and a lot of us were very upset because we were being belittled by our athletic director for standing up for what we believe is right. Um, for what we all agreed upon and what we stood in solidarity for. Um, and we felt as though he was belittling us due to our losing record, um, and due to our lack of impact in the community as he would put it.

Other players spoke about protesting racism or antiblackness as not being in the realm of possibility because it would be so unacceptable in the context of their athletic department

and university. For instance, when asked if he felt political protest would have been accepted when he was playing, Nate answered:

Oh, hell no! No. That's why I kind of wish I played during these times because there's a lot of shit I could say. But, um, no, that, that was, that was unacceptable uh, back then. Now, you know, all the social stuff is like PR now, you know, they it's it's, you know, its obviously political moves. But, um, no, we were advised not to go into politics and, you know, uh socio-political conversations.

Relatedly, Sydney almost laughed at the question, saying that before she transferred to an HBCU “Ohhh, hooo hoooo so at [PWI university], definitely not.” Janelle shared that anything related to race or racism was off limits, stating, “No, No. Like that - that hands down - No. They would talk about like, um, volunteering, like community volunteering that they wanted.” She continued to explain that picking up trash or doing community service were encouraged and the department would promote them on social media, “but race? Nope, Nope.” On the other hand, Whitney described her team attending women’s marches and events in support of gun control. As shown by participants’ examples, activism that explicitly increased awareness of antiblack state violence was deemed inappropriate, but action that decentered race was encouraged.

Several participants shared that they wanted to do a public action or protest their own working conditions, but the threat of losing their scholarships or other forms of punishment put many players in a precarious situation. Diego shared, “I for sure felt like if you did something, it was kinda like - it was a bad look, not a bad look, but it would impact you some way, for sure more negative than positive.” Dom elaborated that, “A lot

of people don't speak up because they're scared. They're scared. They [administrators and coaches] have the funding...So it's like, it's like, you want to say something, but they could like snap their fingers and like 'later, like, bye'" again highlighting the coercive power dynamic between players and their coaches and universities. The exhaustion felt from players being in abusive environments and in a near constant state of precarity also dissuaded player action. Skylar, for instance, tried to plan a team boycott but explained the culmination of negative experiences drained many players' emotional capacity:

Um, I definitely think the scholarship thing is really real. Um, I think for a lot of my teammates, I mean, I'm not going to lie. Most of them had really negative experiences. So like they had all kind of reached a point where they were like, it doesn't even matter. Like it doesn't matter.

Skylar went on to explain that in many of her teammates' cases, they "had bigger fish to fry" and were focused on doing their time and moving on to graduate school or their careers. Overall, Skylar described a sense of awareness among her and her teammates about the structure they were up against—a sense that there would need to be large-scale collective action to change their conditions rather than put them more in harm's way.

Several participants were hopeful that universities would be more supportive of athlete activism since the summer of 2020 and the latest uprising against antiblack state violence, but many remained skeptical. As Nate aptly mentioned, posting statements about racial justice is "like PR now" for universities. Aaliyah, Jessica, and Chiney, a Black former track and field and volleyball player, also offered their thoughts on the

dynamics of athletic departments releasing antiracism statements on social media during summer 2020. Jessica explained:

For example, [university] has never, ever spoke on like social injustice issues, like when we were all upset about it. But now that it's like a huge national global movement, I keep getting emails about their support from the athletics department. I've never, EVER heard them say anything like that before...And so I feel like they just, they will do what they think they need to do to appease the public.

When I asked whether she felt players believed those departmental statements of being “against systemic racism” Jessica replied:

No. They even used - I don't know if you saw it - but they used athletes to support their support. Like, ‘Oh, see, this is real because we got athletes to speak on it’ and they put it on Twitter and stuff. And I was like, this is not real. Like they just want us to shut up.

Jessica highlighted the contradiction of departments monitoring & inhibiting players’ political engagement while simultaneously using their intellectual and activist labor for department antiracism proclamations. Chiney shared that during the summer, her athletic director invited her to participate in a conversation about issues in the department. She described the superficial, performative effort on behalf of administration when students expressed their concerns:

Um, unfortunately the athletic director didn't take it as a time to hear out students. He was more trying to push, um, push agendas. I feel like he wanted to find like

tangible ways to fix or, um, tangible means to make like racial equality and or equity a priority in the athletic department, compared to taking the time in that meeting to understand like what race means to individuals and their sports.

Chiney made an important distinction between administrators' searching for the "fix" to appear equitable, and those who listen and try to understand the scope of the problem before attempting to ameliorate inequity. You cannot have the former without the latter; yet, athletic departments throughout the country announced their solutions to racial inequity seemingly in unison.

Aaliyah also expressed frustration with her administration posting statements of solidarity and inviting racial justice speakers, but showing little commitment to interrogating policies and practices in the department itself. She commented that overall, "Black athlete contributions get under-recognized [at university] and often white leadership gets promoted a little bit more." Many recently graduated players acknowledged that athletic departments remained consumptive of players' political consciousness for the university's material and performative gain.

Punishment

When participants described the various rules and restrictions they faced, the threat of punishment loomed over them and were embedded in their narratives. Dom even joked that he would get in trouble if his former coach knew he was speaking to me/a researcher about his experiences. There were four primary categories of punishment that participants described: physical pain; loss of autonomy; emotional abuse and humiliation; and removal of material and financial resources. As said by Kyle, forms of punishment

were intended to “maximize suffering.” For the purposes of this dissertation, I briefly describe the most-cited punishment that players feared—removal of financial resources in the form of revoking scholarships.

As discussed previously, the threat of one’s scholarship being revoked was a constant threat throughout participants’ time in college sport that shaped their decision-making (e.g., their political activism, advocating for themselves or their teammates, whether or not to publicly critique their abusive and/or racist coaches or teammates, and whether to play while injured). A scholarship could be withdrawn at the coach’s or administration’s discretion, and there were many avenues for them to do so due to the sheer volume of rules and regulations they could invoke and manipulate.

For example, five participants explicitly mentioned a “three strike rule” that their programs had in which your scholarship was taken on the final strike. “Strikes” did not necessarily have to be from breaking a formal rule, such as failing a drug test, but could be highly subjective rules such as “disrespecting the coach,” talking “in an inappropriate place,” or even the perception that you were prioritizing academics over athletics. This allowed the coach and administration incredible latitude to exert their control over players and arbitrarily reduce and/or revoke scholarships. Aaliyah illustrated this well when she explained that her teammate was reprimanded for suggesting to the coach that the team needed to evaluate the climate, especially in regard to mental and physical health. She recalled:

And there's a lot of ways to void a contract. It's not just like negligence or like doing something crazy, you know, what's in the handbook. But it can be written

off as like "disrespect to the coach." And so when we went into the coaching office, like my friend ended up getting written up and so you get like three write-ups and they can take you off your scholarship. So like that for me was like a wakeup call because I was like, I'm still very like controlled in this setting. Like I don't have as much power. I want to change things, I want to voice my opinions, but I have to be very cautious because they don't really care. Like it's like kind of a conveyor belt. So I can say all these things, but I don't want my scholarship to get taken and they know that. So I don't want to get written up cause then my scholarship can get taken and they know that. So they'll play that card for sure.

A parallel sense of precarity was felt by Ari who was warned not to say anything about an abusive coach because if she did, she should not "be surprised if your scholarship is taken the next day." She also cited that her coach "basically would like hold it over your head every chance he gets." Notably, when each participant was asked if they ever felt their scholarship was threatened, six out of nine Black women replied with a resounding "yes," while the majority of nonblack participants said "no," and in some cases asserted that threatening someone's scholarship was inconceivable. This disconnect is reflective of the disparate experiences between Black and nonblack players, and the specificity of Black women's experiences in particular. Several Black women shared that their scholarship was either reduced or threatened when they were injured, which resulted in some players hiding their injuries. Janelle, for instance, described feeling that she could not divulge injuries to her coach for fear of she "was going to be penalized for it." She

went on to describe those fears coming to fruition when she found out her scholarship was reduced after she suffered an injury:

That blew my, that one - that one was jarring for me because I didn't know that it was going to happen because I thought that when I signed the scholarship, like injuries are not something that I'm going to be blamed for.

Janelle's circumstance again highlights how the coercive structure leaves players' scholarships largely at the mercy of their coaches and with no outlet to protest coaches' decisions.

Jessica faced similar threats. Though Jessica was able to keep her scholarship, she said her coach threatened to revoke it numerous times throughout her career—especially when she was injured. In one example, Jessica described her coach's reaction to her choice to take an exam and then travel afterward to catch up with the team who left for a roadtrip a day earlier to scout the opposing teams. In other words, Jessica wanted to take her exam instead of leaving for a tournament a day early. She explained her coach's reaction: "And then he was mad at me and he was like, 'well, if you don't want to play, let me know right now because I'll just take your scholarship away.'" Coaches' power to revoke one's scholarship at will functioned to further incentivize and coerce players into playing while injured, which had lasting ramifications on player health as I discuss at length in the next section.

Chapter 6: Health and Bodily Autonomy

Interviewer: And with your physical health, do you feel comfortable sharing -

Ari: Oh, I could tell you all about my physical health because they Fucked. Me. Up.

Participants described enduring a range of mental and physical health problems while playing college sport. I asked participants about their experiences with coaches, athletic trainers, and team doctors regarding their mental and physical health. Former players shared problems stemming from abusive coaches, under-trained and/or negligent trainers and doctors, and a general environment that discouraged tending to mental health. Mental health was cited as a concern for every participant; both Black and nonblack participants noted how even though there were technically mental health resources available, support was absent and sporting culture placed an extra stigma on seeking help related to depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I only present in-depth findings related to mental health as they were embedded in participant narratives of trying to get care for injuries. Physical and emotional/mental health were inextricably linked, particularly when coaches and trainers created toxic conditions where injuries were neglected and thus compounded existing mental health challenges. However, I want to note that for Black participants, poor mental health was exacerbated by various forms of interpersonal antiblack violence—from a coach mandating their predominantly Black team watch Selma and as he proclaimed “see, you are all free!”; a coach taking a predominantly

Black women's basketball team on a confederate tour while on an away trip despite their protests; and teammates' explicit and implicit antiblack comments.

Experiences with Athletic Trainers

All but two participants suffered an injury while competing, but the extent to which one's pain and injury was handled with attention and care varied by race. When I asked each participant to describe their experiences with athletic trainers, nonblack participants were overwhelmingly positive, citing how they felt cared for. For example, Diego said he remembered having the thought "All right, he really cares about me," Thiago shared, "they treated me with respect, they cared about me, they were always there for me taking care of me," Wayne said he "had really good trainers, like at both schools," Jennie "trusted my [her] ATs wholeheartedly," Whitney said she felt treated like a "holistic human being," and Iliza felt her body was more respected during her time in college sport versus after. In nonblack participant narratives of being injured or in pain, there was a general theme of trainers being trepidatious and taking precaution to ensure players—particularly nonblack men—were healthy.

Nonblack participants' positive experiences were juxtaposed with the majority of Black participants describing how they were treated as fungible. There were three exceptions in Chiney, Toby, and Tori's experiences. Tori stated that she had a world-renowned Olympic trainer and thus exceptional care; Toby stated he did not suffer any significant injuries; and Chiney felt she could trust her athletic trainer but noted it as a rare occurrence. When I asked other participants about their experiences with trainers, several shared that there was a known neglect toward Black players' pain and their

bodies. Nate, for example, shared that he and his teammates knew not to trust trainers and doctors. He explained:

Oh, I can't trust nobody. But for, I mean, for the injuries that I've had - a sprained ankle, a separated shoulder, I can trust them for that. Uh, now there is a fine line because, you know, a lot of times they want to just get you back on the field. Um, so you can help pay the bills at the end of the day. That's just what it is.

Nate connected his experiences to the structure of college sport and university priorities to get Black players back on the field rather than healthy. Kyle, a white football player, shared a similar overall sentiment that trainers were “trying to get me back sooner, than actually caring about what I was going through.” Though there was a general neglect toward football players injuries in general, the level of care players received from doctors after they were injured varied. For example, Kyle said he generally trusted doctors, but knew of other players who had worse experiences than him. In one case, Kyle spoke to a trusted doctor about a separate players’ ACL surgery in which the doctor critiqued the procedure as being outdated and a “medieval practice.” Janelle and Skylar also shared that they, along with other players they knew, had negative experiences. Janelle stated, “I know other athletes who did not feel in some of their, in their biggest health crisis that they could trust the trainers, um, and it damaged their bodies.”

Black women, in particular, described the negligence they routinely faced from coaches and trainers. Five out of nine Black women offered numerous stories of neglect from athletic trainers, coaches attempting to convince them that they were not hurt, and in some cases suffering worse health problems due to ongoing neglect. In many cases, this

took form in trainers denying them a standard level of care and coaches having an ambivalent attitude toward injury prevention. For instance, Skylar attributed multiple stress fractures in her shins and tendinitis in her achilles tendons to her coach not knowing how to properly train. She shared, “And they were caused by my coach’s, like, incompetence. My - the coach that they had hired - wasn't like a qualified coach. So those were caused by her incompetence.” She explained further that she was denied care after knowing she was injured:

And then when I went to the training room, they wouldn't give me MRIs. And then when they finally gave me an MRI, they'd put like the boot that I was supposed to wear on the wrong foot. So I was in like a boot for like two or three months, just like switching it back and forth because they couldn't determine which one was correct.

Throughout several Black women’s narratives, trainers held a laissez faire attitude toward their pain, in which trainers seemed uninterested and indifferent when it came to their care.

Black women also faced not being believed that they were in pain or were injured despite continuous reports of their feelings and symptoms. As summarized by Aneesa, “I would say overall, you needed to have your bone sticking out of your leg for people to believe that you were hurt.” Jessica shared one of her many experiences contending with trainers that did not believe her pain. After she suffered multiple knee injuries, Jessica explained, “So like I was telling them when my leg was swollen, like ‘There's something wrong with my leg like for real.’ They were just like, ‘Well, your ligaments are fine, so

you're fine.” Trainers were quick to dismiss Jessica’s own assertion about her body and her reports of pain. This was a shared experience among several Black women participants; within Jessica, Janelle, and Ari’s accounts of trying to get care, all explicitly stated that trainers did not believe they were in pain—a dismissal that Jessica and Janelle said they faced since high school. Ari explained what this looked like when she was being treated for a pilonidal cyst, a condition that can quickly escalate if not treated properly:

What happened is like the trainer would talk to the doctor - like I'll be sitting there and ... she [trainer] was like, 'Oh, it's not that bad.' And I'm like 'No, actually it's the worst pain of my life,' you know? So like the trainer would try to downplay it to get you cleared by the sports medicine doctor.

Janelle echoed Aneesa, Jessica, and Ari’s experiences of their physical pain and injury being denied by trainers and coaches. Janelle suffered multiple medical crises during her career—she became anemic her first year, had several stress fractures in the subsequent years, and toward the end of her career was diagnosed with mononucleosis. She described the varying degrees of support she had through the different crisis, noting the difference when it came to more overtly-physical injuries:

When I was anemic and when I had mono, I had the most support, um, with the athletic trainers. When I had my stress fractures, that was a little bit more challenging because they didn't quite believe me when I told them, like, I cannot put pressure on my foot at all. Um, that, that one was challenging. And I eventually, I had to go to the university health center to get x-rays, to bring back

to show them like, something is wrong with my foot. And then they brought in a specialist to, to do another set of x-rays. Um, yeah. And then they ended up, like, 'okay, it looks like you do have a couple stress fractures.' And I'm like [laughter/gasp] I told you all! Like I told you something was wrong.

Not only was Janelle's physical pain not believed, she had to "prove" she was injured. Janelle shared two separate instances in which she had to go outside of the athletic department to get care and prove to the coaches and trainers she was indeed injured and/or ill. Janelle was constantly treated as an unreliable witness of her own body, whether it was physical pain from stress fractures, or fatigue from anemia and mononucleosis. Her awareness of the pattern of trainers and coaches denying her pain—which dated back to high school—led her to go to the general student health center to get care. Other Black women shared similar experiences of having to go outside of the athletic department to get proper care. Unfortunately, this often meant their injuries had been neglected within the athletic department for some time before they finally received care and thus exacerbated their injuries.

Long-term, Severe Health Problems Due to Departmental Negligence

The denial of Black women's pain and neglect toward their injuries often led to longer-term, more severe problems. The lapse in between their reports of pain or injury and when they received appropriate care often compounded existing issues and deteriorated mental health. Ari's case was one of the most severe and egregious examples. The ongoing neglect she faced when she was diagnosed with a pilonidal cyst in her second year made her condition worse until it eventually became life-threatening.

She first described the process of being diagnosed by her personal doctor, and the reaction and treatment plan from the athletic department once she informed them:

I saw my doctor, my primary care doctor. He was like, 'Yeah, we're going to need to go in and remove this before it gets too bad. Because if you don't, it's just going to keep growing. And then if it gets infected, like you could get really sick.' So then I told my trainer. And my trainer was like 'Okay, cool. Well, we're just going to have her meet with the doctor at our clinic to see what he says and get a second opinion.' So I meet with that doctor at the athletic clinic and he was like, 'Oh, she'll be fine. We can just give her a couple of antibiotics and it'll go down and she'll be good as new.' So I'm like - me not knowing. 'I'm like, oh, okay, cool.'

Ari went on to describe taking the antibiotics and then a year later feeling the pain swell up again. She realized that the cyst never went away but just decreased in size. She informed the trainers and she was met with an ultimatum to either take another round of antibiotics or sit out for the season. Ari made a point to mention that the conversations about her health were had with her coach, who then framed the decision even further:

And this conversation was had with my coach - not with me. So then it got to the point where my coach was like, 'Well, I'll talk to her.' So my coach talks to me. He's like, 'Hey, um, you're playing good. Um, I don't really want you to take any time off cause you can get the surgery.' Like I remember crying in his office cause I was in so much pain and he was like, 'I think it's best for you to just hold off for a couple of more games and then get the surgery.' So then I'm like, okay

[sigh/exasperated laugh]. I mean, you know me - like thinking I'm saving the day by risking my health.

Ari obliged and took another round of antibiotics to decrease the size of the cyst. The cyst again came back after the season ended, to which she visited her personal doctor:

So then like the summer comes and I'm like, not even thinking about the cyst because I'm like, 'Oh, the antibiotics worked it's like, it's gone now. Like no problem.' And to me, like my athletic trainer - they kept having me see the doctors in the clinic. So like they were telling me, 'Oh, like, it's fine. You know, we'll just give you some antibiotics,' not actually telling me that the real effects that its going to have on me if I don't get the surgery. So then my senior year comes. The cyst - it grew like four times bigger than it was before. And it was infected and I couldn't walk, I couldn't sit down. I couldn't lay down. I couldn't move. My whole body like hurt so bad. So basically, um, I went to go see my doctor and he was like, yeah, you need to have surgery ASAP because this is very infected and you could get really sick and your blood is starting to get, like, we don't want your blood to start getting infected or whatever.

The athletic trainer again suggested they get a second opinion from a different doctor, who ultimately agreed that Ari needed surgery, but that the surgery can only be done once the cyst “pops” on its own. Ari was prescribed another round of antibiotics while she waited for surgery, and described the adverse side-effects from being prescribed so many antibiotics for an extended period:

So that third week I was on antibiotics, I had heartburn - my stomach, I couldn't keep food up. I had a headache. Like my whole, my body started rejecting the antibiotics, I guess. I don't know and so I seen another doctor and she was saying that the antibiotics started to attack my good cells because they didn't know which ones were the bad or the good.

Weeks later Ari finally received surgery, which included a skin graft due to the incision size needing to be larger after so many months of neglect. Even during her mandated four month recovery, she described the pressure her coach put on her to practice and play before she was cleared:

It was just like so stressful, them putting pressure on me to like wanting—they saying, 'Oh, the team needs you, you were playin so much better. Like you were playing so good, its your senior year,' you know, trying to put pressure on me to come back sooner than I was supposed to. And I actually did, like before the doctor cleared me, I was like working out. I was running, I was doing things I wasn't supposed to do. And like, I feel like to this day, like I'm still gonna have issues with this cyst. I don't feel like it healed completely because like my scar tissue is all fucked up.

Ari's experience is perhaps the most illustrative example of the culmination of numerous mechanisms of gendered antiblackness in college athletics. Though Ari's experience is one of the most egregious examples in the data, it is by no means an extraordinary scenario. The emotional toll these women experienced as a result of the layers of incompetence and neglect cannot be overstated. They spoke with a sense of exhaustion

and frustration, still unpacking and processing what they went through as a college player. Skylar, who was reprimanded by her coach for suggesting the team get a psychologist, explained the ramifications of the emotionally and physically taxing environment:

I developed, um, an anxiety disorder and like early levels of PTSD. So when I had left [university] or when I, I had left to go home after my sophomore year, I spent a lot of time at home just like working to train with my own coaches, trying to heal my injuries and really get myself together mentally to kind of step into the new year. I got into the new year at, at [university]. I had an entirely different coaching staff, so we didn't, we literally did not know anybody that was on the coaching staff. And I started to realize early on that I was struggling a lot, just like with being disassociated from track. Like I would go to practice and I would have panic attacks. I would have a lot of difficulty just like getting through my workouts. Um, I was throwing up all the time. Like, I, I couldn't sleep. Like it was just, I — it was taking a really big toll on me mentally. And it's still kind of, like three years later, I'm kind of dealing with the impacts of developing those coping mechanisms to try to be sane through the process.

Skylar's experience highlights just how linked mental and physical health are, and how being in a toxic environment deteriorates both. As these women's narratives illustrate, vulnerability to preventable, long-term health problems were uniquely concentrated on Black women. This echoes Black women's experiences of dehumanization and fungibility more broadly in the U.S., consistently not being believed by doctors, denied

appropriate care, and structurally vulnerable to death by preventable causes (Roberts, 1999; Sacks, 2018; Vargas & Jung, 2021).

Coach Neglect

Embedded in narratives of athletic trainers' neglect were coaches, who were also a significant barrier to accessing quality health care. Similar to trainers, coaches denied player reports of pain and injury, and also coerced players into playing while injured. Participants detailed the cultures coaches created whereby reporting pain was looked down upon and they instead were expected to sacrifice their bodies for the team. For instance, Jessica's coach demonstrated a blatant disregard for her body; Jessica described her experience being pressured to practice despite her awaiting surgery for multiple injuries. She recalled her coach saying, "Well, you're going to have the surgery anyways. So you might as well practice." In addition to the blatant disregard for Black women's bodies, coaches attributed any complaints about pain to emotionality. For example, when Janelle informed her coach that something was "not right with her body" when she had mononucleosis, her coach told her to "stop being dramatic about it." Relatedly, Skylar's concern that she was not prepared to compete, both mentally and physically, was dismissed by her coaches. She explained a scenario before a track meet where she informed her coaches she was not in the right state of mind to compete:

I told my coaches beforehand that I was, I was like, 'I don't think that I'm going to be prepared to do this...Um, so like mentally I'm not in a good place to be able to compete here. Cause I don't think that I'll be able to.' They were like, 'Yeah, no, you'll be fine.' So the day of the race came, I, um, called my coach. Like I didn't

sleep at all. I called him, I was throwing up. I was like, I can't go. Like, I'm not going. And he's like, 'Just come to the track and like, you'll be fine.' So I came down, it was my last meet. I told my mom, I was like, don't come. Like, nobody come. Like, I don't want anybody to be here. I feel like it's going to be embarrassing. Like I'm hurt. I haven't been able to train.

Skylar continued to describe the subsequent race—one in which she was struggling through tears until she finally stopped running and went to the middle of the track:

And so I just stopped running. Um, and I stopped running and I went into the middle of the track and I just cried. And I—I sat there and I waited to see if one of my coaches would come up to me and like check on me. And none of them did.

And that was when I knew, I was like, yeah, I'm never running again.

Coaches seemed to care for these women insofar as they could deliver wins in their respective sports—all other notions of their health and well-being were at best a secondary concern and at worst completely absent.

Three participants also spoke candidly about their team culture around head injuries and concussions. Jessica explained the culture of fear that one's scholarship would be taken away incentivized players to hide their concussion symptoms. She shared:

So like every time we were injured, it was basically like—one of my teammates hid concussion symptoms for like a whole season because she didn't want to have to sit out. Um, but then she ended up having to sit out like way longer than she would have.

There were also concerns that players would be punished in other ways if they prioritized their own health. Sydney, who suffered multiple concussions during her playing career, explained that her coach reprimanded her for being late to practice while she was receiving treatment:

I wasn't even certain if I was allowed to be outside because of the sun and, you know, lighting and things like that. Ultimately I was, technically, I was late for practice and I did get yelled at and ridiculed from my coach for being late. Um, and he pretty much reprimanded me in front of the whole team saying, 'Why are you late?' And I tried to explain to him, you know, 'I have a concussion, don't you remember?' However, I wasn't given time to really explain and I was sent back inside as punishment.

Sydney pointed out the underlying threat of punishment that several players faced when advocating for their own health or the health of their teammates. Kyle provided example of this occurring on his team when he was concerned for his friend who was being subjected to a dangerously high amount of head contact. Recognizing that he had more privilege and protection as a scholarship player as opposed to a walk-on, he anonymously reported to the compliance office that some players were participating in too many full-contact practices. The subsequent practice, the coach stormed into the room and yelled "Which one of you pussies called your parents complaining about your head hurting!?" Kyle continued to explain the climate in the room and his realization about the compliance office enabling the abusive conditions:

You know, everyone stays silent. And most people—it was only two people in that room that really knew why he was saying this. It was me and my friend. And so we, we stayed quiet. We didn't, we didn't say anything. But it meant to me that, you know, this compliance person that I had called had informed the coaches of this, had let them in on the situation and had, later to find out, let them in on what they was going to do.

He continued to describe the compliance check-in that was orchestrated by coaches and the compliance office, in which the coaches abruptly halted practice and instructed players to take off their pads and line them up on the sideline. Kyle and other players then watched as equipment managers rearranged the helmets and pads behind a lift, placing them out of sight. Kyle then explained how a person from the compliance office walked onto the field surrounded by the coaching staff:

So while that is happening, I'm like, 'dude, this is weird'... And it was—the reason why I mentioned that [the compliance person] was surrounded because it was weird, because they surrounded [the person] in a, in like a kind of triangle formation where [the person] couldn't deviate from this path ... And so it was at that moment that I understood that player safety was not a priority for the, for the athletic program. And then the [compliance office] that was in charge of helping us, protecting the players, they didn't. They were either oblivious to it, or complicit in it.

Given the unusual circumstances, Kyle characterized the compliance office as complicit in the charade, “because all the things that we did was on film. You know, these were all

things that could have just got film for and seen everything going on. Everything was filmed, everything on that practice field, it was filmed.”

Both Sydney and Kyle’s coaches reinforced a culture of suppressing complaint about pain and concussions, and instilled fear of punishment and/or public humiliation if you were to do so. In Kyle’s case, instead of the compliance office addressing the unsafe working conditions, the office and coaches orchestrated a performance of accountability—an action they could technically point toward to avoid liability and therefore make the compliant about abusive conditions disappear. This was not exclusive to one university; Jessica and Ari detailed similar scenarios where their compliance offices performatively attended practice after complaints of players being over-worked. In each case, coaches were again able to manipulate rules and/or policies to avoid any repercussions or change in behavior. In Jessica and Ari’s case, the coach simply mandated that players not warm-up and begin practice immediately at full speed, thus putting even more stress on their bodies and exposing them to greater risk of injury.

Coaches’ Influence Over Trainers and Doctors

In some cases, participants shared that they felt trainers and doctors were coerced by coaches to clear players to play, despite their medical knowledge suggesting otherwise. For example, when Jessica was recovering from surgery, her coach wanted her to lie about her symptoms to athletic trainers in order to get cleared.

When she refused, she explained the alternate strategy her coach used:

And so the coach worked out this deal with my trainer that they would go around my surgeon and basically get another doctor to clear me. And um, they tried to like loophole it and basically get me cleared to play that day in [city] if I could.

Fortunately, Jessica had a better relationship with her trainer and surgeon, and plead with them to assert that she could not play. After they discussed the importance of all three of them having a united front against the coach, the trainer and doctor obliged and told the coach that she was not able to play. Aneesa shared a parallel story of strategizing with trainers to navigate her coach's coercive tactics. She explained,

Like I remember having an interaction with them [athletic trainers] and being like, 'You need to be 100% honest with me. Can you play or not, because I'm going to have to tell the coach that you cannot play, and I need you to be on the same page as me.' Because they were like willing to go to bat for us, but our coach was just so like, "Are you sure? Are you sure? Is there not any chance?" And so it would be like if she would find a weakness in our athletic trainer, which sounds terrible, she would like poke at it until she got them to be like, "Well, maybe they can try."

Two white and one multiracial woman (who identified as white and Latina) shared similar frustrations in regard to their injuries not being taken seriously by their coach and/or feeling pressured by their coaches to play through pain and injury. However, each of these women ultimately reported trusting team doctors and that trainers generally treated them with a level of care that was overwhelmingly denied to Black women. Elena, a white former basketball player whose coach attempted to gaslight her about her broken

ankle and override her doctor's decision that she could not play, reflected on her experiences in relation to her Black teammates. She said her coach would try to override doctors' decisions regularly and that it occurred "especially with my roommate," a Black woman who experienced several instances of her coach manipulating trainers and doctors.

Structural Barriers and Manipulations

It is important to distinguish between different spheres of care—from coaches, trainers, and doctors. While most participants felt some amount pressure from their coaches to play through pain, there was a clear divide between who ultimately received care from trainers and what type of care, if at all, they received from medical doctors. When I asked each participant if they trusted team doctors, the responses from Black participants were in stark contrast to nonblack participants. Black participants overwhelmingly responded with a negative such as "no," "hell no," "not at all," "no, clearly no," and "I can't trust nobody," whereas nonblack participants overwhelmingly answered with an affirmative "yes," "absolutely," "definitely," "yeah, for sure," and "wholeheartedly." Some nonblack participants even expanded, unprompted, about how much they felt cared for and in trusted hands with medical staff.

Conversely, there was often an underlying structural analysis within Black participants' answers as to why they did not trust doctors. For instance, Nate cited the university's priority to generate revenue at the expense of players and Ari spoke about power being overly-concentrated with coaches. Aaliyah touched on both Nate and Ari's points and placed emphasis on the structure team doctors are embedded in:

Because they're hired by athletics and they'll still put you, like, they'll still have you perform, even if you're like not actually ready to perform. And there's a lot of pressure by the coaches to get them to bring us out to the track as fast as possible...Um, yeah. I don't trust team doctors.

Participant narratives illuminated other structural problems that contributed to poor health outcomes, such as undertrained athletic trainers, limited access to nutritious food or appropriate gear, and university strategies used to avoid paying health-associated costs.

Both Aneesa and Skylar spoke about the level of education athletic trainers had completed before having decision-making authority in relation to players' bodies. Aneesa stated "...all of our athletic trainers are grad students. So they come in for 2 years and then they leave." Aneesa's statement highlights that the healthcare professionals players interact with most are the least trained and experience the highest rate of turnover. Skylar expanded on the egregiousness of having an undertrained and understaffed medical team:

But there was only one trainer for the track team and there's again, a hundred people on the track team. So we had one trainer, we had one trainer and one doctor and all you have to do to be a trainer is get a certificate. You don't really have to do a lot. So I'm not gonna lie—the majority of our care was actually done by other students at [university], um, because they had an internship program ... Sara, let me tell you — the majority of our team, or the majority of our trainers were students. And that, you know, went horribly because they had just learned—yeah, they were undergrad students. So they had just learned what, like a

hamstring was like three weeks ago. And now they're telling me what kind of rehab I'm supposed to be doing.

Compounding the lack of trusted and educated health professionals was also limited access to nutritious food and proper equipment. For example, Janelle, who suffered from severe anemia her first year, attributed the anemia to a lack of healthy food options on campus. She explained:

I had an unlimited food plan, which is the most expensive one, right. So I mean I could go into the dorms and eat whenever I wanted. And at that point I was running so much, I was always hungry and it wasn't like I didn't know how to eat healthy. Just the food in there is not that healthy.

Janelle's experience is illustrative of the failure of smaller reforms, such as the rule change eliminating restrictions on providing food for athletes, to address structural problems. Even though players were technically allowed unlimited access to food, the food provided was not healthy or sustainable for their bodies, and over half of participants said their schedules did not allow enough time to eat. Further, the gear players were mandated to wear at times caused injuries due to improper construction or a lack of options for sports other than football and basketball. Skylar, for example, shared that shoes for track athletes were an issue:

So it was a really big issue on our team that the shoes that we were given were causing injuries, um, on our team. So a large majority of the kids on our team got injured from not having proper equipment. Um, and I was one of those kids.

Due to contractual agreements between the university and apparel companies, Black players' injuries were seemingly incorporated into the ledger as a type of sunk cost—an irrecoverable harm to players' bodies that universities were willing to take in order to do business.

In addition to individual-level neglect players faced from coaches, trainers, and doctors, there were also systemic-level strategies universities used to avoid paying players' healthcare costs. As discussed earlier, several players were forced to find their own personal doctors in order to receive appropriate care. Skylar, Ari, and Jessica said they each learned to go to their own personal doctors for better care, but constraints were in place that made it difficult. Ari referenced this constraint when she tried to get care for her cyst. She explained, “So they like bend rules by basically making you see their doctors. And that's where I fucked up because like freshman year I didn't have a car. So I couldn't always go to my doctor.” In some of these cases, the university cited the player's decision to go outside the athletic department as the reason to not pay the associated healthcare costs—costs that were often made larger due to athletic department negligence. That is exactly what happened to Ari:

Well, I paid for my surgery. I had to pay for it, even though now that I think about it, why did I have to pay for it? Yeah. Cause it was like, it was like \$15,000, but with insurance, I had to pay \$5,000. So yeah. I had to pay for that. But normally when you see like the doctor in clinic, they pay for it and they pay for you to get x-rays, but they didn't pay for my surgery.

Kyle said that he noticed the same strategy when he began researching healthcare for college athletes and read the story of Hardrick, a former basketball player who was denied healthcare from the University of Oklahoma:

I was doing some research about, uh, a student athlete at Oklahoma, a basketball player who had, you know, came to Oklahoma and had a, I believe it was a torn meniscus or a torn ACL. Uh, I think it was a torn meniscus. And he had never, I guess his trainers had talked about how he, uh, how he was having these problems and that he, how he didn't feel like he was right. And, but the trainer had, and the surgeon, I guess the doctor, whoever he talked to said he didn't have anything wrong with him. So he ended up going to a private doctor and there was a lawsuit that was filed because they didn't. And he ended up going to a private doctor, a private surgeon having the surgery. And then the university of Oklahoma said, 'because you went to a private doctor outside of our thing, we don't, we're not going to pay for it.'

This points toward a systemic, cyclical pattern of negligence toward Black player health and wellbeing: trainers and doctors deny players' pain and injury until the player is forced to seek private care; the university penalizes players for going outside of the athletic department by refusing to pay associated costs; and the university ultimately avoids culpability by citing that their own medical staff never detected a health problem.

Lastly, there were no options for recourse to address the individual and structural harm participants were subjected to. I asked each participant if they felt there was a safe option for reporting such abuses, whether micro or macro, and most participants said no.

Importantly, the depth and assuredness of answers varied by race and gender, as they did with the amount of trust participants had in medical doctors. Most Black women answered with a definitive “no” and the answer often came after they had already detailed experiences being harmed and attempted to ameliorate the harm or find redress to no avail. Of the few women who did not answer with a definitive “no,” they said they could think of somewhere or someone to report to, but doubted anything would be addressed. For instance, Chiney provided an example of the volleyball team reporting their coach to administration but that “it wasn’t taken seriously” and she felt that “it was kind of shut down.”

As Aaliyah asserted, the absence of a human relations department was one of the largest structural flaws that prevented abuse from being reported or addressed. She explained:

So any other corporation, any other company, you have HR, you have HR for a reason. Um, and they have it yeah for so many things. And that would be the person you would talk to as an employee. If there was some sort of like either violence or there was some sort of issue that you had. As athletes, and technically employees of the institution, we don't have HR, so there's no one that we can report issues to. There's no one we can like report claims to. There's no one we could feel trusted to do that at least, because if there is, they're hired by athletics.

These women’s narratives demonstrated how reports of abuse remained siloed within the athletic department, even when a formal complaint was reported.

Men, on the other hand, often pontificated on the different options they could theoretically tap to address issues of abuse. In other words, there was a fundamental difference between the theoretical exercise men engaged in and the tangible, experiential knowledge women had that informed their answers. Even in these cases, several men (Nate, Diego, Wayne) worked through their theoretical scenarios and concluded that there was no such option for addressing harm. For Wayne, a Latino former soccer player, he thought about the women's basketball team's experience at his institution when forming his answer:

Dang, like I never had, I never had like to complain about anything like that. But like in all honesty, like from what I've seen, like from women's basketball and stuff like that, like I've heard like, yeah, like they have that set up, but like, it doesn't work you know what I mean? Like, yeah, I mean every school has something set up, but it's about if it's efficient or if it works, you know? Everybody's like, 'Oh, like if you have a complaint, like you report it to this, like type it up and it's anonymous,' you know? But like what happens after that? So like, like, yeah, they have it set up. But like, do I trust it? No, just from other people's experience.

Women, and Black women in particular, had a more intimate awareness of their vulnerability to harm and the limited options for recourse. The culmination of neglect was felt in and on players' bodies. Negligence toward Black participants' bodies and health was demonstrated by coaches overworking them, not providing sufficient income or resources for nutritious food, trainers and doctors denying their pain, and coaches

using increased physical activity as punishment for advocating for better wellness practices.

Chapter 7: Refusal and Renunciation

Interviewer: What was that like to like stop playing? Did you, did you feel like you got healthier?

Skylar: It was the best day of my life...I feel like it has, it's been the most liberating experience.

Nearly every person I interviewed critiqued college sport or their athletic department in some respect—from economic exploitation, the concentration of power with coaches, strategies the athletic department used to manipulate scholarship money, gender disparities in access to resources, rules and regulations limiting their freedom, being excluded from decision-making, and how college sport foreclosed opportunities for a meaningful education. Despite their critiques, the majority of participants felt relatively satisfied with their experience, but wanted to institute reforms to make college sport more equitable and/or increase the quality of experience for future players.

However, a handful of participants offered more structural critiques that left little room for reform as a solution. Many of these participants were still processing their experiences and reflecting on what they had endured, particularly as it related to abuses of power. This knowledge formed many participants' strong structural critiques and their refusals to perpetuate an idyllic narrative of college athletics. Below I analyze participants' narratives as they relate to moments where they refused to abide by unjust rules or expectations; how they began disconnecting from college sport; and the process of some participants being forced out and/or quitting college sport.

Refusals

There were many instances in which participants refused to abide by their coaches' unjust demands, whether they were team rules or larger mandates about behavior and priorities. Some participants found it easier to risk the potential ramifications because they were not on an athletic scholarship, they had other financial options, or simply did not respect how their program was run. For example, Dom was not offered a scholarship and credited that for allowing him to have more leeway and more autonomy. He stated:

I personally did whatever I wanted because I wasn't going to get controlled by the coach. I was on my own thing as in financially wise, they weren't helping me out. So I wasn't going to let them tell me how to live my college undergrad, you know?

Skylar said her and her teammates also refused to abide by most team rules, especially due to the high turnover of coaches and the flawed program:

I mean, I'm not gonna lie, a lot of—in the span of my time at [university], we didn't really respect a lot of our team rules just like, based on having different coaches every year. And it was just like, okay, I'm just gonna do whatever I want because you guys clearly don't. So I'm gonna just do what I want.

Skylar explained that she was willing to risk her scholarship because she knew she could afford to go elsewhere. She recognized this as an economic privilege that most of her teammates did not have, and thus left the majority of her teammates in a more precarious financial situation:

A lot of my teammates were sending money back home to their families. Like you're not really in a position to, to want to fight back against a lot of things. And so I knew that in the conversations that I was having, they were definitely coming from a place of privilege because I was like, "I'll lose my scholarship here and just go to school somewhere else before I let you guys just like, act crazy."

Skylar leveraged her ability to go elsewhere and in an act of solidarity assumed the risk of speaking up on behalf of her and her teammates. Relatedly, Jessica grew tired of her coach's constant bullying and the overall unhealthy environment he created. For instance, when she described prioritizing her academics while she was injured, it infuriated her head coach who berated her with questions such as, "You think you could - you think you're getting paid millions of dollars? You think you're in the NBA? Or you can just do whatever you want?" Jessica explained her overall refusal to engage with him on his terms and the demeaning line of questioning:

Like I told him, like, you could do what you want. If you take away my scholarship, that's completely up to you, but I'm not going to apologize for anything. Like he got, he had a lot of problems with us realizing that like, we don't need him as much as we thought that we did. When I was younger, I used to think like, 'Oh my God, like basketball is my whole life. And like, if he takes my scholarship away, I won't have anything. I won't be able to pay for school.' But then once I had the attitude of like, you guys need me more than I need you. And even if I don't have this scholarship, I'll still be able to go to school and find a way to do that. So like do what you want. I'm not going to apologize for doing normal

things and making decisions for myself. And so like that just infuriated him cause he didn't have control.

Jessica noted the powerful shift in her mindset over time where she rejected the notion that her life was only oriented around basketball or that she should be apologetic for investing in herself and prioritizing academics.

Participants' refusals related to academics in other ways, as well. When Ari and Jessica described the attempts by academic advisors to counsel them out of their majors, they each described the struggle they engaged in to stay in their major of choice. Ari described this as her having to "put my foot down and actually take the classes that I need." Jessica also contended with her coach's attempts to threaten her into not taking a class so she would not miss any athletic-related activities, even when she was injured. She mentioned again how she refused to abide by his wishes and instead did what she wanted:

So I told him like, 'I need to take this class. It's either going to be this year or next year, and next year I'm going to be able to play so I think it should be this year.'

And he basically tried to tell me, like, if I took the class, then he would never put me in the game ever again ... I told him like, 'Well, I'm going to do it anyways.'

So that's up to you.'

There was a general sense among these women that academic advisors and coaches did not have their best interests in mind, thus forcing them to protect themselves and do extra labor to get the most meaning out of their education. For example, Aaliyah mentioned avoiding athletic-related tutors and advisement all together. She explained the benefit of

moving away from in-house academic support and instead back toward the general campus community for both her own autonomy and a better experience:

I was like, I don't want to do that anymore. I just rather like learn on my own and, or like learn by like utilizing the professor themselves and the TA themselves.

Um, I don't know. Sometimes I feel like when you have another like area for that, you neglect like just the actual connection with the professor and TA and things. I don't know. That's just my like personal, like take. So for me, I just stopped doing that and just like took more responsibility on my own, like academic accountability.

In addition to participants' individual refusals, there were collective team refusals in which teams decided to take matters into their own hands to assert their autonomy and/or force an issue to be addressed. For example, Jessica said her team refused to practice until they had answers about the employment status of their verbally and emotionally abusive coach. She stated, "So we all went upstairs, but we like didn't practice. And we were like, we're not gonna practice at all until you explain yourselves."

Relatedly, Skylar tried to organize a boycott of practice until their coaches addressed the unhealthy team climate. Skylar explained her rationale:

I was trying to get us to boycott practice. Cause I was like, if we just don't show up, what are they going to do? They're going to get us all in trouble. Like, okay, if we just don't show up to the trouble and then what are they going to do?

The boycott ultimately did not occur due to the fear that many players' scholarships would be revoked, but Skylar's analysis of the collective refusal players could engage in

was powerful. Lastly, Sydney described the aftermath of her team’s demonstration in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives. After they were advised by their athletic director that they were not allowed to kneel before the game, the team decided to alter their plans and still maintain their integrity. Sydney explained, “So we kind of made a loophole and we wore black wristbands around our wrists and, you know, wrote BLM—Black Lives Matter—on our wrists. And then once the anthem did play, we all like locked arms.” She continued, describing how the team felt after they were reprimanded by their athletic director:

Well, ultimately, we just decided we were going to do what we felt was necessary. Um, we just realized that, you know, all skin folk ain't kin folk. Um, but the fact that he didn't recognize our presence as athletes, in the Black community. So ultimately we still did whatever, but we just realized that we weren't going to get his support in that way.

These individual and collective refusals asserted participants’ agency and autonomy within a predatory system, and often aided in developing a general disconnect from sport that helped their transition out of college athletics.

Disconnecting Mentally and Emotionally from Sport

The culmination of negative, and at times traumatizing, experiences precipitated several participants to begin disconnecting from sport and investing their emotional energy elsewhere. Four participants—Aneesa, Aaliyah, Skylar, and Janelle—all described the emotional toll their experiences had and mentioned in some form that they realized they were no longer happy. Janelle referenced this in the context of her injuries

and subsequent scholarship reductions, stating, “And I just got to a point where I realized this wasn't making me happy anymore. And it was draining to try and to try and fit back into this mold when I didn't really want it anymore.” A similar sentiment was shared by Aneesa whose culmination of negative experiences with her coach precipitated her process of disconnecting from sport. When I followed up and asked if what I was hearing was “kind of a healthy disconnect?” she replied:

I think it was like unhealthy and then healthy, just because, yeah. I started not liking soccer anymore. I didn't even like to watch it, which for me, that's bad, because I love sports, period. So not wanting to watch something is not good for me. So I think I kinda was just like, "I have to get through this." I had a conversation with my brother. He ran track in college and kinda had similar issues that I did. And he was just like, "If anything, like do it in spite of what other people think of you. Like you be happy with your own effort, and who cares the outcome and what other people think or say, because you know that you tried your hardest."

Aneesa went on to describe how the conversation with her brother changed her perspective and how she began investing her time elsewhere:

So at that point, I kinda disconnected the outcome from the process and I was just like, "If I know I work really hard and I do workouts and I do well and I'm working as hard as I can, that's all I can ask for. And I can't change her mind." So I think it turned into being like, "Okay, I'm leading this, not her, and I'm like the reason I am ... I can define what success is for me." So at that point, I was just

kind of like, "Okay, let me just get through these next - my junior season. It was like, "Let me just get through this next January to November, and then I'm done. And I know I'm done."

And then I started focusing on after school. And I think being in a research lab was very helpful to help me have something going for me in academics. So that also like allowed me to step away a little bit. But I think I definitely was doing it for myself. And I was like, "I just want to be the fittest person that I can be for me." And so that allowed me to take the power back from her, and then just be able to enjoy like when I did get those rewards from her. But I just knew I was working really hard, so that's all that mattered.

Aneesa ended her reflection by discussing her future and her life beyond sport:

So when soccer was over, it was like, "Okay, well, I put all that hard work in. That's great. But also, I also just did all this hard work in school, and I know I'm going to go to grad school and I'm going to be perfectly fine, and like it doesn't matter anymore." I don't have to be the person on the team who doesn't play. I can just be the person who played soccer, and no one's going to care that I didn't play. So I think that was super helpful. The conversation I had with my brother was the turning point for me.

Throughout Aneesa's reflection she highlighted how empowering it was for her to reject her coach's standard of what "success" looked like and instead prioritize her own health and future over soccer. Aaliyah shared a similar story in which external factors

contributed to her poor performance in track, which ultimately took away sport as her preferred coping mechanism and therapeutic outlet. She described the process of investing her time elsewhere to regain control:

I'm like, okay, well, where else can I excel in? If I, if I'm trying to do everything I can on the track and it's not working out, clearly there's environmental factors that actually influence your performance as much as, sometimes like, as athletes, you don't try to acknowledge that. You just try to take on and assume all, a hundred percent responsibility for your performance. But when you get to college, it does kind of change. And there's a lot of program changes, just different types of things you have to adjust to. Um, so because I started to finally realize that, as stubborn as I was, I was like okay what else can I control?

As I discuss at length later, Aaliyah began investing her time elsewhere by creating a sports management academic organization to connect athlete and non-athlete students, as well as co-creating a platform that foregrounded athlete activism. I again followed-up asking her, “So it was like a healthy disconnect from, like, idealizing sport in some way?” She replied:

Yeah. Because as athletes, you know, like our outlet all the time is our sport. But what they don't tell you is like, if your, if your sport is like where you're struggling mentally or you're grieving or where you're just dealing with injury, like different things like that, your outlet that you've built your whole life is no longer there. Um, so yeah. Then you have to create new creative outlets for yourself and that's like super hard sometimes to think about and like to create for

yourself, especially within the schedule that we have. Um, but yeah, I think like family—I have this older sister that was a college athlete too. They kind of like also gave me like some nudges and stuff like, "Oh, let's try to create something on your own" and that pushed me as well.

Notably, both women relied on family support to affirm their identity and autonomy outside of sport, which helped them disconnect in healthier ways and provided encouragement to do so even within the constraints of college athletics.

Aaliyah also mentioned injuries. Participants suffering injuries were key moments in which players were forced to step away from sport to some degree. For some participants, they recognized their injury as a complicated tradeoff: on one hand, there was the obvious physical and emotional toll of trying to get care and rehab; and on the other, it forced participants to focus their attention outside of sport and sometimes provided larger perspective on their collegiate experience. Thiago described how his injury helped him contextualize his athletic participation:

I think what helped me out a lot is definitely my injury. That allowed me to put a lot of things into perspective. But I'm not going to lie to you, like yes my first two years I definitely invested a lot in the sport because of my injury and I wanted to recover and I wanted to play. But it also gave some time to get involved and putting myself with other peers and organizations on campus. But my injury allowed me to understand that there's so much other than just soccer.

Jessica held a similar perspective early on in her college career, which she credited in part to her senior teammate who pulled her aside during a rough practice and reminded her,

“It's just a game, like, this isn't our whole life.” She described this reminder as giving her perspective throughout her career that she didn't *need* basketball but rather it was something she was just choosing to do. Additionally, many participants used sport as a means to an end—utilizing their athletic ability as a strategy to lessen the financial burden of college.

In turn, this means-to-an-end orientation helped some instill perspective early on and remain somewhat distanced from sport, instead remaining grounded to their ultimate goal. As stated by Ari, “I didn't really take athletics like that serious because like, my whole goal was just to get like a full ride scholarship.” Tori and Janelle held the same outlook. Tori described being one foot in, one foot out of soccer. When I asked her if she ever felt her spot on the team was threatened she replied with laughter and stated, “I think they thought I would have left before I would ever have gotten kicked off,” thus demonstrating the general distance she maintained toward college sport.

Quitting, Leaving, and/or Being Forced Out of College Sport

Four participants stopped playing their sport while they still had remaining eligibility (Thiago, Skylar, Janelle, and Kyle) either due to unhealthy conditions or academic constraints. In other words, some participants could have kept playing had they chose to do so, but felt they had to leave for their own health and well-being. Skylar, for instance, left the team her 3rd year. For her, leaving the team was the only viable option given the unrelentingly toxic environment and the threat it presented to her health. When I asked what it was like to stop playing, Skylar replied:

It was the best day of my life. Like I felt at [university], it was much easier for me to miss it than it was for me to endure it. Like every day, like going to the track, I just, it was really overwhelming and I couldn't really handle it and it wasn't hitting home yet because I had to, but at the end, like I knew that I couldn't do it anymore. Like it was taking way too much out of me. And so I felt really good. I mean, I struggled after a lot with just like body dysmorphia issues and like transitioning because I'd been running since I was 10. So like, for that to be your lifestyle, since you were so young, I didn't realize how much it was integrated into everything that I was doing from like what I ate, how much water I drank, how much I slept, when I slept, who I was talking to.

She continued, describing how leaving the team impacted her in the two years since she stopped competing:

But in the long run, I feel like it has, it's been the most liberating experience. So I'm happy I'm not still doing it. And then I got the chance to experience [university] outside of it. I feel really blessed for that.

Skylar's powerful description of how her life changed after leaving college sport, characterizing it as "the best day of [her] life" and "liberating," hit home the magnitude of control and harm she felt within college sport, compared to the freedom and autonomy she felt after leaving. Later in the interview Skylar mentioned that she even told her parents she felt, "...more healthy when I was done than I was when I was doing it." Uniquely, Skylar was the only participant who left college sport but was able to retain her scholarship. She explained this was not out of good faith by the athletic department, but

rather because she “knew too much” about the program and thus posed a threat they wanted to keep close.

Other participants, such as Janelle, Thiago, and Kyle, took out additional student loans to pay for college. Similar to Skylar, Janelle left for her own health and well-being. She cited her scholarship being reduced after she was injured and the antiblack, racist climate as key factors that pushed her out:

I just decided I had to leave for my own, like, mental wellbeing and to not be around racially charged comments spread by the team. And it wasn't the first time that it had happened...Um, so the, my last quarter I decided that I am not competing. Like just I'm off the team, like I'm leaving.

I want to emphasize the gendered antiblack conditions that forced these participants out—from neglecting injuries and health, precarious labor relations, and racial and gender violence. Harm was uniquely concentrated on Black women, as evidenced by Skylar and Janelle’s testimonies, among others. The underlying antiblack logic structuring college athletics effected nonblack participants tangentially, which led to Thiago leaving and Kyle being forced out, as well. For instance, Kyle seemed to keep football at arm’s length after witnessing the neglect toward players and how university actors enabled abuse. He continued to play football with the goal to earn his master’s degree until the last university he attended revoked his scholarship in his final semester of graduate school.

He stated,

I ended up retiring and I knew that in terms of scholarship, there was no recourse that I could have. There was at that point, I knew there wasn't going to be any kind of financial aid going down the road.

Kyle's experience witnessing the intricacies of college sport and his attempts to advocate for himself and his teammates to no avail, ultimately led to his decision to pursue career options outside of coaching (which was his original aspiration). Thiago, who left his team at the beginning of his senior year, did a cost/benefit analysis of playing college sport and decided that it was only to his—and other players'—detriment to continue:

But then I started analyzing my overall experience as an athlete and what's going to benefit me, playing this sport again for one more year or leaving the team and joining a research group, getting involved on campus, and working towards my future, my career, right? And so I made the hard decision that I needed to leave soccer and focus on my career because I know that for me, and also based on my teammates, they gave so much to the sport, but once they graduated, it was like 'Oh shoot now what? What do I do? All I know is soccer.'

Thiago's motivation for leaving was primarily academic; he recognized that the structure of college athletics de-incentivized academic success and concluded that continuing to compete would only harm his future aspirations.

I do not want to overemphasize agency and autonomy at the expense of a robust analysis of the predatory structure that forced these participants to resist its harm and abuse in the first place. Janelle, Skylar, and Kyle were essentially forced out due to their

refusals to cooperate and/or being critical of their conditions. The structure was so violent toward Black women in particular, that quitting was the only viable option for Skylar and Janelle's physical and emotional health.

Renouncing College Sport

Former players who had some time to process and reflect on their experience and those who were most harmed offered the most scathing critiques of college sport. They renounced college sport as a system, as well as policies and practices that stabilized what Kyle characterized as a “tyrannical structure.” Some participants, such as Dom and Aaliyah, continued to compete until they finished their degree, but had a goal to educate others about the truth of college athletics. Within their critiques were explicit and implicit warnings for other people who were contemplating participating in athletics, or were college athletes already. For example, Dom provided a general warning for anyone to think twice about participating in athletics when he disclosed:

If I could go back before—if I could go back to my first day here, I would probably quit. Yeah, I wouldn't. If you're not getting a scholarship or you're not at a big school or university, there's no reason. Or you're not trying to go pro or you have, if you don't have more than 50% possibilities going pro, there's no reason why you should be playing athletics because you're going to miss out in more, a lot. You'll miss out, I don't even know, A LOT of opportunities on campus being just a student.

Dom went on to compare high profile, DI FBS universities to lower level divisions or universities without a football program. He asserted that lower profile athletics programs

are more exploitive in many ways due to less resources, but ended his reflection on DI FBS universities by stating, "...and even then when you're at those schools, you're still getting played. You're still getting played. It's more money, but you're still getting played because there's more money involved and more money because more secrets." Here, Dom rejects the notion that players in other sports or at more prestigious schools are receiving benefits that outweigh the costs; rather, everyone is "getting played."

Ari also commented on the exploitive structure and highlighted who benefits the most from the arrangement. She stated:

I feel like the policies and rules that we have, they're only in place to control us...

And I just feel like it's kinda set up to, not benefit the players, but only benefit like the coaches and the programs.

Ari aptly named not only who accrues benefits, but also named at whose expense—the players. Thiago gave a tangible example toward Ari's point when he discussed how he felt about his decision to leave college sport. He shared:

That's why I left the program and again I don't regret it because I am where I am because of that decision. But that is something that I would love to change because at least for me, it hurts me to see other teammates give so much to the sport and struggling to find a job, working minimum paying jobs, especially because of the low income first generation.

Thiago's pain he described watching players struggle after they are done competing echoes Ari's observation on how the system is set up to extract from players for the sole benefit of the university. Several participants hinted at the truth being hidden from

college players and the need to increase the critical consciousness of current and future players, which some felt was slowly changing in the last few years. Skylar stated this directly when she discussed the increase in coverage of athlete activism. She stated:

And I also think there's an issue with just like athlete not having a high level of consciousness either. And so I think now, because it's collectively been raised, like, I think it's great to see, it's great to see kids like standing up for their rights and understanding that they're valued much higher than a scholarship. And so that they're providing the value to the university and not the other way around.

Skylar highlighted a fundamental shift in orientation—that players provide value to the institution—which is in direct opposition to university assertions that playing college sport is a “privilege” players should be grateful for. Nate held the same outlook as Skylar and shared the advice he gives to current and prospective players to help instill a similar orientation:

I used to tell him the same thing when I got done playing, like, use your power, you know. Use, use what you have. Cause at the end of the day, the universities NEED the players. That's why kids is playing, that's why they playing football right now, you know, with COVID-19, with this super deadly virus, this super bad pandemic but everybody's still playing football because they need the money.

He went on to emphasize that a growing number of players are aware of this power dynamic, stating:

I mean, one thing that I want you to put in, whatever you're writing is that these players are not stupid...Like they, they are aware of what's going on. They are not

stupid. It's not, you know, especially nowadays with all this information out on social media.

Along this line, Aaliyah, who was still competing at the time of the interview, developed a media platform with the goal to educate future or prospective college players to increase their awareness and critical consciousness. She described her motivation for doing so and explained:

And let's like talk to other athletes because also just part of our experience we're like, there's, it's so different. Like college sports is so different than what we thought it was, um, in good and bad ways. And we're like, we just need to share this information and talk to other athletes about it and share that because a lot of people don't know what it's really like. And so that's when I started creating that and I started getting more interested in like athlete activism, helping support athletes in a better way.

She expanded on how her observations about the power structure combined with her process of disconnecting from sport influenced her to co-create the media outlet:

Cause I realized a lot of people that had power and control in these situations weren't former athletes or weren't like athletes at that level. So they didn't fully understand the experience. Or if they did it, it didn't seem like they were full advocates either. So for me it became like a passion of mine to help fellow athletes, whether it was emotionally, physically, or just like getting them just more aware of like their own talents in other fields other than just their sport.

The critical reframe several participants did upon reflecting and analyzing their experience in college sport was powerful; at times they moved from active participant to critical outsider—being in the system but not of it. Black participants, in particular, were acutely aware of how vulnerable the structure left them to economic exploitation, racial and gender violence, and other abuses of power. Within the narratives of the 7 aforementioned participants, there was a general sense that there needed to be large-scale change to the structure of college sport—a change that some acknowledged may not occur until there was wide-spread divestment from college athletics from both the public and players. As stated by Nate, “So it's probably not going to happen until kids really stop playing in collegiate sports.” Kyle also emphasized the importance of placing critique on universities themselves. He posed the need for increased awareness that universities, rather than merely the NCAA, are the enabling body that is in control and morphing the current structure to suit its interests.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

This dissertation examined how athletic department policies and practices shaped former (18) and current (2) college player experiences. Across Division I FBS, FCS, and Division I (no football) institutions and including participants who competed in track and field, cross country, men's and women's basketball, men's soccer, football, softball, and/or volleyball, every participant was subjected to carceral conditions. By centering antiblackness, this study demonstrated how college athletics preserves the sociality of slavery, not merely the labor relation. Carcerality provided the algorithm for the organization and administering of athletics programs regardless of sport type or division, echoing Hatteberg's (2018) findings of surveillance in her study on athletics as a total institution. This was evidenced by participant experiences of the denial of their bodily autonomy and rights, coercion, all-encompassing surveillance, policing political thought, working under threat of punishment, and mandates that players be deferential to authority (including athletic administrators, donors, and police).

However, the "antiblack death drive" of the carceral regime was uniquely concentrated on Black participants in ways that were either completely absent from nonblack participants' narratives, or did not have the paradigmatic significance as it did with Black people (Vargas, 2013). In other words, some practices take on different significance and have a more severe impact because of the fundamental organizing logic behind them—in this case, the sociality of slavery. The specificity of antiblackness was evidenced by Black participants' unique experiences of athletic trainer and doctors' negligence toward their bodies and emotional wellbeing, being treated as fungible,

administrators policing participants' organizing and activism in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives as well as other political commentary critical of U.S. slavery and colonialism. Additionally, the various ideological tactics echoed rhetoric that was used to rationalize enslavement. Below, I expand on these insights and discuss findings in relation to extant literature as organized by chapter.

Discussing Intake, Socialization, and Enclosure

With respect to Part I of my findings, copious research literature has documented the socialization processes for college athletes and how they frequently lead to isolation and individuation (Adler & Adler, 1991; Beamon, 2014; Benson, 2000; Hextrum, 2020c; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016), including racialized isolation (Beamon, 2014; Hatteberg, 2018; Hextrum, 2020d). Findings from this study support and add to that earlier work by demonstrating how early summer socialization processes, paired with team rules regarding housing, and forbidding involvement in outside organizations, served to foreclose opportunities for players to interact with the larger campus community.

Further, several participants demonstrated how the early idealized “pitches” from athletic departments that included lavish facilities and copious resources functioned to enclose and isolate athletes to athletic-only spaces (echoing findings from Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016, as well as Bernhard & Bell, 2015). These early socialization processes were also a prerequisite for administrators orchestrating the day in which players signed away their rights to bodily autonomy in various forms. As detailed by several participants, the coerced “consent” given by players was accomplished through athletic departments manipulation of conditions—either under

duress during training camp and framed as something to do as quickly as possible, through the sheer volume of forms, and through no option for recourse or counsel.

Findings also demonstrated how normalizing deference to authority was ingrained in socialization processes for all athletes during their orientation period. However, visible shows of police force—and connecting administrator authority to state authority through police delivering presentations to players—was unique to the sport with the highest concentration of Black men (football). This compliments larger university projects of investing in and normalizing police (Rodríguez, 2021b), but it was uniquely administered to Black college players. In addition to criminalizing players, the presentation placed the onus on players to be deferential and de-escalate interactions with police. These efforts inside of college sport work in tandem with other sport leagues that partner with police and normalize their predatory power, such as those in youth sports and professional sports (Culpepper, 2018; Hartmann, 2016; Johnson, 2020).

My findings also illustrated three ideological tactics athletic departments used to normalize athletic administrators and coach intrusions into player lives: scapegoating the NCAA, framing participation as a privilege, and asserting that players were representatives of the university. Athletic departments and coaches framed themselves as the paternalistic force that could protect players from the NCAA if players obliged to their conditions and rules. Logically, participants explained acquiescing for fear of worse punishment from the NCAA. Speaking to the centrality of the carceral logic, this good cop/bad cop act advantaged the institution by convincing players that administrators and athletes were in similar circumstances and that administrators have players' best interests at heart. The coercive tactic used the NCAA as a scapegoat and thus shielded universities from blame. The NCAA was created with this purpose

in mind; the partnership between higher education and the NCAA function to shield universities from the brunt of the critique, blame, or public resentment, while also obscuring the fact that universities voluntarily join the NCAA and retain control over the organization.

Further, this paternalism is fundamentally antiblack. Universities deny player rights under the rationale of “protecting” them from commercialism or protecting them from the NCAA (Hatton, 2020). When viewed in relation to how drapetomania was created and weaponized by the white pro-slavery bloc, there is a striking parallel. The rationale has a condescending overtone that positions the university as knowing best and players as supplicants who do not know what is good for them and thus cannot be trusted and granted autonomy. Paternalism was also intertwined in how universities primed players and the public to believe competing in college sport is a “privilege.” The courts have framed athletics participation as “a privilege and not a right” for decades and it has subsequently been used to rationalize player dispossession, denial of rights while competing, and ultimately university control over players’ lives (Czekanski et al. 2019; Lumpkin & Stokowski, 2011; NASB, 2004; *Vernonia v Acton*, 1995). The “privilege of participation” priming has seeped into popular and academic culture, taking hold as another racialized institutional logic to rationalize “the collegiate model of athletics” to the public (Hatton, 2020; Loveland et al., 2020).

Likewise, the institutional imposition that players be representatives of the university functioned to strip players of their individuality—as well as collective affiliations—and political subjectivity, thus marking players for institutional use. As with other logics, the underlying function of forcing players to be surrogates for institutional brands and “values” has an antiblack antecedent (Brown, 2015). Black students could not escape this marking like their nonblack

counterparts who could subvert the athlete label by simply taking off their gear. These concepts further divide athletes from the rest of the student body and obscures state violence in the form of player dispossession, control, and abuse.

Further, my findings echo previous research on socialization processes which detail how college players are socialized to prioritize athletics over academics through unrealistic time demands, athletic departments misrepresenting their values and priorities, and individualizing conflict (Adler & Adler, 1991; Beamon, 2014; Hextrum, 2020c; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). In addition to the aforementioned tactics, all participants were socialized into a disciplinary mechanism that foreclosed academic opportunities, limited their political speech, and prevented reporting abuse. Disciplinary power can be understood as working in tandem with ideologies of individualism and neoliberalism that attempt to thwart player organizing against abusive, carceral conditions (Hextrum, 2020c).

Research has established the intense time constraints and socialization processes athletes experience are not unique to players in revenue generating sport (Hextrum, 2020c, 2021a; Hatteberg, 2018). Much of the research that emphasizes alienation from academics establishes that these effects are heightened for Black players. Participants in this study showed how even though all players were subjected to academic constraints that forced them to prioritize their athletic schedules over their academics, Black players were the only students who were deterred from even trying to enroll in their major of interest, were counseled out, and who were forced into majors deemed “less demanding” to accommodate what participants described as academic advisors’ stereotypes about Black intellectual inferiority. This lends more evidence for how

academic clustering occurs, and that academic clustering occurs in qualitatively different ways for Black players (Houston & Baber, 2017).

Relatedly, previous studies have shown the resentment and microaggressions college athletes endure from faculty and other students, and how these are deployed in racialized ways (Comeaux, 2018). My findings show how nonblack players circumvented stereotypes by removing athletic-related gear, whereas Black athletes and non-athletes alike could not escape the perception that they were only on campus due to their athletic abilities; in fact, a few participants (along with previous research) show how antiblackness fuels the general study body to assume any Black student on campus is an athlete regardless of their status or attire (Dancy et al., 2018).

Institutional marking—that is, mandating players wear university and corporate branded gear and avoid individualizing themselves—seemed to cement this dynamic even further. Literature has demonstrated that this occurs in ways that can both mark players as part of the privileged elite and further isolate them and make them a target of stereotyping (Comeaux, 2011, 2012, 2017, 2018; Haslerig, 2017; Oseguera, 2010). When contextualized within Simone Browne’s scholarship on racializing surveillance and the afterlife of slavery, institutional marking takes on a more insidious meaning beyond accruing prestige and/or profit for corporations; they functioned to both mark Black players as de facto property for institutional use and signaled broadly to the campus community for them to be surveilled. As such, this study suggests that these initiations and socialization processes are in service of a larger carceral logic that demands the isolation, enclosure, and surveillance of Black players in uniquely dehumanizing ways.

Discussing Surveillance Discipline Punishment

The disciplinary power established in the socialization and intake process transitioned into the enacting of that power through various surveillance, discipline, and punishment mechanisms. Research has problematized the role of class checks (Comeaux, 2018), arguing they can serve as a sensitizing prompt for stereotype threat and how class checks and study halls serve as additional surveillance mechanisms that ease the labor on behalf of administrators by keeping players in spaces designated athlete-only (Comeaux, 2018; Hatteberg, 2018). Recently, scholars have raised concern about universities instituting tracking technology as a means to monitor player attendance and general movement (Comeaux, 2018). Two participants in this study discussed phone applications that coaches used to track players, as well as platforms that gave coaches and administrators total access to their grades and courses in real-time, and nearly every participant spoke about coaches having total access to their grades and course pages. The trend of moving toward technology to surveil players represents a new challenge. Aside from the most fundamental intrusion on bodily autonomy and movement, these applications create a shadow network of surveillance that will inevitably target and harm Black students disproportionately (Browne, 2015).

With respect to mandatory study halls and class checks, my findings corroborate Hatteberg's (2018) findings and show how these measures, ostensibly put in place in the name of "academic success," have resulted in the opposite. Many participants shared that these served to further reduce player autonomy and in many cases hindered their educational experiences. Additionally, by deputizing teaching assistants and faculty to pay extra attention to athletes by

summoning progress reports about grades and behavior, athletic departments have expanded formal athlete surveillance mechanisms to include faculty and teaching assistants.

Drug testing has received less attention in the literature. Often, research has questioned the legal authority for institutions to mandate drug testing without suspicion (Albrecht et al., 1992), but not how drug testing is functioning on university campuses. The rise of drug testing in college sport paralleled the “war on drugs” directive of the Nixon administration. Unsurprisingly, my findings show how drug testing policies—and the criminalization of marijuana in particular—have had harmful effects on players that included using harder drugs for pain management, Black women being targeted based on gendered antiblack stereotypes regarding strength and physique, and contending with administrators’ “enjoyment” of their discretionary power to tests players at will. Further, my findings show how athletic departments used drug testing as strategy to recoup players’ scholarships. Contrary to past literature that reported athletes having no problem with drug testing (Diacin et al., 2003), every participant was skeptical of drug tests and rejected the premise that they were “random.”

This study also brought attention to how athletes’ political engagement is policed. We know from literature on athlete activism that the public is often unsupportive and resentful of athlete activism (Frederick et al., 2017), that coaches perceive Black athletes to be protesting for individual attention (Druckman et al., 2019), and that television broadcasts refuse to televise Black players’ protests and instead opt to highlight community service that is organized by the athletic department (Haslerig & Grummert, 2017). Participants in this study explained how organizing, protesting, or even talking about race and racism was taboo. Additionally, though

social media surveillance was a normalized part of every participants' experience, only Black women reported being reprimanded for political posts.

Disciplining players' political engagement and political critique also applied to in-person organizing. Administrators took a proactive approach to police players' thought or organizing around kneeling during the national anthem in particular, and in one case punished a soccer team that stood in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives despite their athletic director's warning. This again shows how integral sports are toward serving as a conduit for nationalist propaganda and disciplining critique of antiblack state violence or empire (Bryant, 2019). In attempts to shield themselves from critique, some athletic administrators and coaches told players that boosters were the reason players could not protest. This is illustrative of how the diffuse nonprofit network of the NCAA enables shadow control by boosters and donors who are overwhelming white and wealthy—thus maintaining a hold over university politics in general, and in this case athletic departments.

Stripping players of political subjectivity was accompanied by the mandate that they serve as surrogates for institutional “values” for donors. The dehumanizing dynamics of these staged performances, in which one participant cited feeling “like a museum artifact,” was enabled by and reflective of the libidinal economy. Following Hartman's work on fungibility and the economy of pleasure, the fungibility of Black players was used as a source of entertainment and personal pleasure for donors who wanted to have staged interactions with players. Based on participants' descriptions of their interactions with donors, it appeared that donors and universities alike are, in part, using college athletics to fulfill their own libidinal fantasies of controlling and being in staged proximity to Black people. This was evidenced by participants

being used to market the university and the “good experience” they were having, being forced to call or send thank you letters or apologize to donors, and in one instance serving as happy hosts for donors who accompanied a women’s basketball team on a roadtrip. On a national level, this can be seen in the recent threats donors at the University of Texas Austin levied toward players that they would be barred from Texas employment if they did not sing the classically antiblack “Eyes of Texas” song (McGee, 2021).

Given participant experiences of having their politics and state critiques surveilled so closely, several participants were skeptical of their athletic departments’ social media posts and emails that asserted their stance against systemic racism. In wake of the uprisings and the heightened awareness of antiblack state violence during Summer 2020, university and athletic department responses ranged from patches that declared “unity” or “BLM,” working groups or task forces addressing racialized harm, and antiracist reading groups, among other initiatives. Increasingly, theorists have shown how antiracism can be used to strategically obscure antiblackness (Bedecarré, 2018; James, 2020; Vargas, 2018).

When applying Joy James’ analysis of the “antiracist algorithm” and João Costa Vargas’ defining of “oblique identification,” these institutional sentiments functioned to recognize Black suffering and simultaneously deny antiblackness as a foundational logic that produces that very suffering. In other words, athletic departments made small *antiracist allowances* (e.g., uniform patches, book clubs) in order to preserve the antiblack and carceral logics structuring and sustaining college athletics and the university at large. Antiracist allowances are birthed from oblique identification. As such, athletic departments, along with universities and corporations, made the necessary pivot toward antiracism as a means to preserve and fortify antiblackness.

I am not suggesting these allowances are void of potential; a reading group, for example, can raise consciousness and inspire collective action. However, this is rare and difficult to accomplish when engulfed in liberal discourses in which the structure evades sustained critique, when the site of organizing is itself part of a carceral continuum, and in which there is a reluctance to center antiblackness as a separate logic from white supremacy and racism (Vargas, 2018). A prime example were the demands of players in the PAC12 for collectively bargained health protections, profit sharing, curtailing inflated administrator salaries, among other demands (WeAreUnited, 2020). These demands were strategically diluted and silenced by institutions' partnerships with state representatives and instead, "antiracism" initiatives were used as a replacement for structural change. These actions are counterinsurgency tactics.

I want to emphasize that the disciplinary power in college sport that resulted in players being coerced to play during a global pandemic is the same disciplinary power that forces players to abide by arbitrary team rules, NCAA restrictions, and be subjected to a range of abuses. When historically situated, this disciplinary power is achieved and maintained through a tremendous amount of state violence. Drs. Joy James and Simone Browne reminds us that disciplinary power and the power to surveil stems from the structural and social conditions of slavery. Black participants were the paradigmatic target of disciplinary power, whereas nonblack participants experienced the excesses. In other words, nonblack participants faced precarious circumstances, while Black participants were overwhelming in a constant state of precarity.

Discussing Health and Bodily Autonomy

My findings, along with extant research on Black players' health and wellbeing, show the negligence and complete disregard for players' health during COVID-19 was not exceptional by any means. The logic of antiblackness, and specifically fungibility, was perhaps most glaring when Black participants shared their experiences with athletic trainers, coaches, and doctors. As evidenced by participant stories, the antiblack structuring logic of college athletics enabled, and produced, harm and abuse toward Black players as their injuries and pain were consistently neglected or denied. Importantly, Black women were uniquely vulnerable to state violence as administered through college athletics—psychologically, emotionally, and physically. More than half of the Black women participants in this study referenced their pain and injuries being treated as an afterthought or not treated at all; they experienced pressure from coaches to further harm their bodies by playing while injured, were threatened by coaches to avoid critiquing psychologically abusive conditions, and a few participants experienced worse injuries due to ongoing departmental neglect. These findings complement other studies on Black players' dehumanization and perceived imperviousness to pain through the production of college football broadcasts (Haslerig et al., 2019, 2020), as well as studies that document how Black women's pain is denied (Roberts, 1999; Sacks, 2018). Perhaps not surprisingly, trainers' and doctors' refusal to recognize Black players' pain is reflective of the larger medical community's denial of Black pain and humanity in the U.S. more broadly (Hoffman et al., 2016).

Further, the structure of medical care in college sport enabled abuse and coercion from coaches; participants described athletic trainers being under-prepared and at times under-trained, and that trainers and team doctors were easily manipulated by coaches. This is documented as

being a concern in literature on athletic trainers in college athletics and the ostensible measure to avoid it (Weidner et al., 2006), but findings suggest these measures fall far short in achieving their goals. Injuries were also used as an excuse to reduce or revoke players' scholarships, a tactic that has garnered more attention from researchers of athlete rights and well-being (Comeaux, 2018).

The experiences of players in sports outside of men's basketball and football, and experiences of Black women in particular, may be glossed over in part due to the inclination to focus purely on economic exploitation—as if someone must have experienced a financial loss in order for it to be registered as harm. These findings suggest that it would be more appropriate to center Black women's experiences in discussions and advocacy related to health and wellbeing. Doing so may prevent the exclusive focus on men, and therefore “revenue-generating” sports, as well as reductive narratives that come to the fore when women's players receive attention, which are often white-washed and solely focused on resource discrepancies compared to men's sports. Lastly, these experiences of neglect were not exclusive to DI FBS institutions nor football or basketball players. Rather, it was a shared, relation experience that proliferated the very foundation of the system and thus was reflected in Black players' experiences across sports and gender.

Discussing Refusal and Renunciation

Previous research has documented the agency of college players as it relates to athlete activism (Agyemang et al., 2010; Carter-Francique, 2013; Cooper et al., 2019; Edwards, 1970, 2016; George-Williams, 2019) and disproving stereotypes through academic achievement and graduate school (Comeaux, 2015; Haslerig, 2018). This study adds to that literature,

demonstrating how refusing to abide by unjust rules and/or abusive conditions helped players disconnect from sport in healthy ways and assert their autonomy. Further, findings detail how athlete organizing is thwarted by athletic departments and universities counterinsurgency tactics—illustrating the constraints and threats players face when trying to do so. I do not want to overemphasize or romanticize players’ agency at the expense of a systemic analysis of how harmful the system was toward Black players in particular, which necessitated their refusals.

For example, the two Black women who left their programs with eligibility remaining were forced out by a predatory structure; they had to leave in order to preserve their health, safety, and prevent being harmed further. Other participants who quit, such as Kyle and Thiago, were also forced out due to academic constraints and in Kyle’s case, the athletic department using a drug test to recoup his scholarship while he was on a medical redshirt scholarship. So while these moments of refusal are powerful, we must also foreground an analysis of the structure that thwarts athlete insurgency and larger political movements—in this case, structural conditions of antiblackness, that contributed to emotional and physical abuse and thus players’ refusals and departures.

Along this line, extant literature documents how the transition from sport is difficult, especially with respect to the over-emphasis on athletic identity at the expense of academic identity (Grove et al., 1997; Harry & Weight, 2021; Menke & Germany, 2019). Less research exists on how former players’ lives get *better* post-playing career, especially when they leave abusive, hostile environments. Findings from this study suggest that players have more opportunities, more autonomy, and are generally healthier once they leave collegiate sporting environments. Other research also shows that former college players who have had time to

reflect and get away from athletics oversight are often more critical of their experience and the conditions they endured (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). As such, narratives from former players who have quit, left, or were forced out of college sport need to be centered. In this study, these were the participants who had been most harmed and in many cases had more reflections on how their experience was indicative of larger systemic issues. Participants who were more critical of the policies and practices in college sport echo larger organizational efforts to reform college sport or institute collective bargaining such as the National College Players Association or Cain Colter's efforts (NCPA, 2021; Staurowsky, 2014).

One point of departure, however, was how a few participants warned others to avoid college sport, rather than hope for reform. These participants used their experiences as a cautionary tale to help other students avoid "getting played" or harmed in the process of using sport as a means to finance their education. In these cases, participants saw taking on additional loans as less harmful than enduring collegiate sporting environments. Again, this is indicative of a larger access issue in higher education in which one is weighing being physically and emotionally harmed by participating in college sport or going into copious amounts of debt.

Conclusion and Implications

Higher education institutions have created a carceral partnership with the state in their creation and normalization of the nonprofit "collegiate model of athletics." College athletics operates in accordance with a carceral, antiblack logic, and in doing so extends other states sites of enclosure, de-politization, and dispossession. The sport-state partnership of college athletics functions in three overarching, related ways that have been previously documented: maintaining racial and class reproduction and stratification

by privileging white access to higher education through athletics (Hextrum, 2018, 2021a, 2021b); reinforcing white supremacist, eugenicist notions of white superiority and Black inferiority and fungibility (Haslerig et al., 2020; Hextrum, 2021a); and creating a network of parasitic economies that profit off players' labor, images, and likeness through racism and capitalism (Gayles et al., 2018; Hawkins, 2010; Huma & Staurowsky, 2011; Staurowsky, 2007). My research underscores how antiblackness and carcerality are driving logics that are enmeshed in the aforementioned functions. As such, higher education's administering of college sport extends the states carceral reach and is called upon to contain and dispossess Black people in particular, rationalize state violence, and normalize disciplinary power.

As Foucault suggested (1975), no one is outside of the carceral; all participants experienced surveillance, were subject to arbitrary coach rules and punishment, limited access to majors, and lived in relation to athletic department and coach despotism. As put by Dom, regardless of NCAA Division or sport "You're still getting played." This echoes Kirsten Hextrum's scholarship on Olympic sports and predominantly white sports which demonstrates no players live outside of these harmful mechanisms. Though white people use the state system to maintain a white supremacist hold on *access* to higher education, the in-college experience is still characterized by the carceral. For instance, when white and nonblack players of color stepped outside of the bounds of desirable behavior (i.e., tweeted "America sucks," or reported abusive conditions during practice) they were reprimanded and disciplined.

However, antiblackness is constitutive of carcerality and as such the concentration and magnitude of harm was oriented around an antiblack logic that mediated participant experiences—with the most harm being concentrated on Black women. Applying James’ (1996) analysis of state violence demonstrates how nonblack, and especially white, participants were afforded more leeway to self-police and/or maintain the illusion thereof because they were not the primary target of policing and surveillance. The antiblack blueprint undergirding carcerality made Black participants the paradigmatic target of policing, surveillance, punishment, and bodily disintegration and harm (Browne, 2016; Vargas, 2018). Importantly, the carceral logic is not exclusive to college athletics; college athletics is nested in the larger context of higher education institutions that carcerate knowledge and expand policing apparatuses—both materially (through literal police presence) and ideologically (through pedagogical practices and content) (Moten, 2021). However, the structure of athletic departments and teams, along with the copious resources and modalities they had to police, surveil, isolate, and punish students, made athletic departments a paragon of carcerality on campus.

Given these findings and previous research on the state-sport partnership (Hartmann, 2016; Hextrum, 2021a), we can see how college sport—as a state-sanctioned athletics league and nonprofit enterprise of the NCAA—partners with the state to further antiblack, white supremacist, colonial projects under the guise of “education.” Findings from this study lend credence to the claim that college sport complements other state counterinsurgency tactics to quell dissent. Just as some youth sport nonprofits serve to normalize police power and state violence (e.g., Midnight Basketball), so too does

college athletics. Within these nonprofit organizations, normalizing state violence is essential to the overarching project. As such, this research should push researchers and organizers to contend with how antiblackness is a core structuring logic that is being expanded and preserved through sport as well as various reform efforts.

As scholars of the carceral regime and prison industrial complex reminds us, nonprofits are not just a financial formation but a political formation; they were created and shaped by a white liberal politic that has been shown to thwart Black liberation movements and other political alliances against state violence (Allen, 1969; Bierria, 2017; Gilmore, 2017; Rodríguez, 2017). In the macro sense we can see how the NCAA, as a nonprofit organization inextricably tied to the state (Hextrum 2021a), is used to manage and control dissent and complement other state projects of enclosure. Sport, when operationalized this way, takes on the state's carceral logic, necessarily making the organization of these leagues follow an antiblack blueprint of containment, control, surveillance, bodily harm, and punishment.

Implications

Given these findings, there are a few pragmatic implications for athletic administrators, researchers, and organizers. Student affairs has begun to wrestle with antiblackness (Stewart, 2019), but the student-facing practitioners within college athletic departments have been much slower to do so. On the most basic level, administrators, faculty, and teaching assistants should refuse to enact antiblack surveillance and disciplinary practices. The paternalistic logic defending most of these practices is reflective of a parasitic reliance on controlling Black people and acting as a voyeur.

Faculty and teaching assistants have incredible leeway to name them as such and refuse to comply with progress reports and class checks. Perhaps this could shift the orientation to being in solidarity with students rather than racial-colonial institutions.

As well, reform efforts should be met with skepticism. Scholars of the prison regime have continued to document how carceral systems thrive on reform (Gilmore, 2007; Rodríguez, 2017, 2021a). Reforms often present a narrow set of solutions that operate within the current paradigm, such as diversifying athletic departments or allowing college players more access to economic opportunities (i.e., more rights to their name, image, and likeness). As Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) bills increasingly garner support from state legislators and backlash from university presidents, we see an orchestrated dance between higher education and the state that preserves the current structure: a do-si-do with one party presenting a liberal reform and the other conservative backlash, linking arms together to dilute and prevent more radical demands.

I am not critiquing the fight for increased rights that are achieved through NIL legislation or health advocacy—these are invaluable strategies for harm reduction. I am, however, critiquing the notion that they are solutions to structural problems, thus leaving the predatory structure unscathed. Nearly every reform to make college athletics more equitable has resulted in increased surveillance, political erasure, and less player autonomy while increasing public acceptance and the endurance of the current structural arrangement. Reform efforts need to question if proposed changes will alter the material conditions of Black students, and the antiblack sociality of college sport more generally.

Further, this study showed an analysis of economic exploitation is insufficient toward describing participant experiences as they were shaped by university policies and practices. Such a focus serves to obscure Black women's experiences in particular. There must be increased attention and research that attends to how gendered antiblackness is shaping college athletics as well as reform efforts. Participants were not being strategically funneled into sport, isolated and contained, surveilled, and rendered fungible because they played football or basketball, but rather because they were Black. Of course the modalities of antiblackness vary with respect to the ways in which they are gendered, sexualized, and inflect certain sports in unique ways, but the fundamental organizing logic behind them remains.

Future research could also explore carceral policies through athletic department handbooks and team rules to document how carcerality is written into institutional documents and provide further support for what participants in this study shared. Institutional documents are additional insight into the strategic use of rhetoric and language that have consequences both in terms of professed values and political ideology (Bernhard, 2016; Southall, & Nagel, 2003). Future research could also investigate the reach of police-athletic department partnerships, how they function, and how abolitionist organizing on campuses across the country has impacted and/or led to the refusal of such partnerships.

The carceral, antiblack logic was also an aspirational logic for universities who wanted to elevate their athletic programs. Universities that aspired to be competitive with the most highly touted programs did so through implementing policies and practices that

are oriented around carcerality and antiblackness. Contrary to the popular narrative that universities use athletics out of purely a profit, revenue-generating motive, the aspirational logic behind departmental decisions—particularly those universities that aspired to have a larger profile such as DI FCS and no football institutions—appeared to be antiblackness. In other words, the path universities took to allegedly increase prestige, revenue, and the university profile were all anchored in antiblackness. Surveillance measures and drug testing, for example, do not inherently lead to any increase in “revenue-generation” but they do satisfy the libidinal desire for controlling and criminalizing Black people (Sexton, 2010).

College athletics represents a state partnership through higher education and must be treated as such. Researchers, administrators, and organizers must connect college athletics to higher education and larger state projects. Participants suggested this be done directly to raise player consciousness as well; political education is invaluable especially in higher education sporting environments where athletic departments proliferate harmful ideologies. There is power in relating struggles within college athletics to the broader campus community and national contexts. Relating struggles inside college athletics to larger national issues may help prevent proposed solutions that other organizers have already employed in other contexts.

Following the lead of other scholars, divesting from the current organization and ideologies within sport invites alternative ways to incorporate sport into campus life that do not revolve around antiblackness, neoliberal individualism, white supremacist masculinity, hyper-competitiveness, abuse, etc. (see Chapter 16 of Coakley, 2017;

Hextrum, 2021a). Some universities, such as Spelman College, have divested from the NCAA and instead invested resources into campus health and community wellness (Rick, 2018). We can look toward abolitionist organizing for how sport can be used in different, liberatory, or educative ways (Davis, 2011; Stanley & Spade, 2012). For instance, youth sport leagues are often organized in a way that is similar to a mutual aid network, and autonomous community sport leagues can provide points of connection for community members.

Further, universities and the NCAA need to be discussed as one in the same rather than as separate entities. A complete separation of the two cloaks state and university investments in maintaining college sport in its current form and frames universities at the mercy of the NCAA rather than in control and dictating the organization. By severing our emotional ties and divesting from college athletics, we can think of what value sport brings to communities and society and how to preserve and transform sport on (or off) campus. Given that college athletics has more in common with other antiblack carceral sites such as K-12 schooling (Sojoyner, 2013, 2016; Wun, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b), calling for divestment from the NCAA and a radical re-envisioning of how sport can function is the least we can do. Lastly, the study of sport, and analyses of college athletics in particular, are routinely marginalized in the academy. Scholarship on the function of college athletics has utility and political implications beyond the sporting arena; acknowledging this and creating more intramural communication between researchers and practitioners can deepen the study of higher education and organizing within.

References

- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (1991). *Backboards & blackboards: College athletics and role engulfment*. Columbia University Press.
- Agyemang, K., Singer, J. N., & DeLorme, J. (2010). An exploratory study of Black male college athletes' perceptions on race and athlete activism. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(4), 419-435.
- Albrecht, R. R., Anderson, W. A., & McKeag, D. B. (2001). Drug testing of college athletes: the issues. *Ethics in sport*, 181-187.
- Allen, R. (1969). *Black Awakening in Capitalistic America*. Africa World Press.
- Allen, E. L., Haslerig, S. J., & Hextrum, K. M. (November, 2019). On or with? Ethics in qualitative research about college athletes. Presentation at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS), Virginia Beach, VA.
- Annamma, S. A., Jackson, D. D., & Morrison, D. (2017). Conceptualizing color-evasiveness: Using dis/ability critical race theory to expand a color-blind racial ideology in education and society. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20(2), 147-162.
- Association Midnight Basketball League (AMBL). (n.d.) What is Midnight Basketball League Programs. www.amblp.com
- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). (2016). Board demographics. Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Retrieved from <https://www.agb.org/blog/2016/05/12/board-demographics-infographic>
- Azzarito, L., & Harrison Jr, L. (2008). White men can't jump!: Race, gender and natural athleticism. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 43(4), 347-364.
- Bailey, C. (2007). *A guide to qualitative field research*. Second edition. Pine Forge Press.
- Beamon, K. (2014). Racism and stereotyping on campus: Experiences of African American male student-athletes. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 83(2), 121-134.
- Bedecarré, K. A. (2018). *Doing the work: The Black Lives Matter Movement in Austin, Texas* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Benson, K. F. (2000). Constructing academic inadequacy: African American athletes' stories of schooling. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 71(2), 223-246.

- Bernhard, L. M. (2014). "Nowhere for me to go:" Black female student-athlete experiences on a predominantly white campus. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 8(2), 67-76.
- Bernhard, L. M. (2016). Between the lines: Diversity and NCAA division I athletic department mission statements. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 10(2), 75-98.
- Bernhard, L. M., & Bell, L. F. (2015). Location, location, location: Placing athletic academic support offices. In E. Comeaux (Ed.), *Making the connection: Data informed practices in academic support centers for college athletes* (pp. 125–141). Information Age.
- Bierria, A. (2017). Pursuing a radical anti-violence agenda inside/outside a non-profit structure. In INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Eds.), *The revolution will not be funded* (pp. 151-164). Duke University Press.
- Bimper Jr, A. Y. (2014). Lifting the veil: Exploring colorblind racism in Black student athlete experiences. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 39(3), 225-243.
- Bimper Jr, A. Y., & Harrison Jr, L. (2017). Are we committed to issues of race? Institutional integrity across intercollegiate athletics. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 52(6), 675-692.
- Branch, T. (2011). The shame of college sports. *The Atlantic*, 308(3), 80-110.
- Browne, S. (2015). *Dark matters: On the surveillance of blackness*. Duke University Press.
- Bruening, J. E., Armstrong, K. L., & Pastore, D. L. (2005). Listening to the voices: The experiences of African American female student athletes. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 76(1), 82-100.
- Bryant, H. (November 2015). When leagues pay for patriotic acts, sports fans cover the cost. *ESPN the Magazine*.
- Bryant, H. (2019). *The heritage: Black athletes, a divided America, and the politics of patriotism*. Beacon Press.
- Carter-Francique, A. R. (2013). Black female collegiate athlete experiences in a culturally relevant leadership program. *The National Journal of Urban Education & Practice*, 7(2), 87-106.

- Case, B., Greer, S., & Brown, J. (1987). Academic clustering in athletics: Myth or reality. *Arena Review*, 11(2), 48-56.
- Coakley, J. (2002). Using sports to control deviance and violence among youths: Let's be critical and cautious. In M. Gatz, M. A. Messner, & S. J. Ball-Rokeach (Eds.), *Paradoxes of youth and sport* (pp. 13-30). State University of New York Press.
- Coakley, J. (2017). *Sports in society: Issues and controversies*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Coakley, J. (2016). Positive youth development through sport: Myths, beliefs, and realities. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), *Positive youth development through sport* (pp. 21-33). Routledge.
- Comeaux, E. (2010). Racial differences in faculty perceptions of collegiate student-athletes' academic and post-undergraduate achievements. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 27(4), 390-412.
- Comeaux, E. (2012). Unmasking athlete microaggressions: Division I student-athletes' engagement with members of the campus community. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, 5(2), 189-198.
- Comeaux, E. (2013). Faculty perceptions of high-achieving male collegians: A critical race theory analysis. *Journal of College Student Development*, 54(5), 453-465.
- Comeaux, E. (2018). Stereotypes, control, hyper-surveillance, and disposability of NCAA Division I Black male athletes. *New Directions for Student Services*, (163), 33-42.
- Comeaux, E. (2019). Toward a more critical understanding of the experiences of Division I college athletes. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 35, 1-53.
- Comeaux, E., & Grummert, S. E. (2020). Antiracism in College Athletics: Facilitating High Impact Campus Engagement and Successful Career Transitions among Black Athletes. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*.
- Comeaux, E., Grummert, S. E., & Cruz, N. A. (2020). Strategies of Resistance among Racially Minoritized Students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution: A Critical Race Theory Perspective. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 1-34.
- Cooper, J. N., Macaulay, C., & Rodriguez, S. H. (2019). Race and resistance: A typology of African American sport activism. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 54(2), 151-181.

- Culpepper, J. E. (July 8, 2018). Falcons ride along with Atlanta police to move beyond protests. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.
- Curtis, C. (2020, August 10). If politicians like Donald Trump wanted college football, they should have controlled COVID-19 first. *USA Today*.
<https://ftw.usatoday.com/2020/08/college-football-big-ten-donald-trump-twitter>
- Czekanski, W. A., Siegrist, A., & Aicher, T. (2019). Getting to the heart of it all: An analysis of due process in interscholastic athletics. *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport*, 29, 152-170.
- Dancy, T. E., Edwards, K. T., & Earl Davis, J. (2018). Historically white universities and plantation politics: Anti-Blackness and higher education in the Black Lives Matter era. *Urban Education*, 53(2), 176-195.
- Davis, A. Y. (2011). *Abolition democracy: Beyond empire, prisons, and torture*. Seven Stories Press.
- Dedoose (2021). Version 8.3.47b, web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data). Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC www.dedoose.com.
- Dellenger, R. [@rossdellenger]. (2020, August 10). Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) has drafted a letter that he plans to send to Big Ten presidents, identifying reasons why he believes college football should be played [Tweet]. Twitter.
<https://twitter.com/RossDellenger/status/1292830897260175360/photo/1>
- Diacin, M. J., Parks, J. B., & Allison, P. C. (2003). Voices of male athletes on drug use, drug testing, and the existing order in intercollegiate athletics. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 26(1).
- Douglass, P. D. (2018). Black Feminist Theory for the Dead and Dying. *Theory & Event*, 21(1), 106-123.
- Druckman, J. N., Howat, A. J., & Rothschild, J. E. (2019). Political Protesting, Race, and College Athletics: Why Diversity Among Coaches Matters. *Social Science Quarterly*, 100(4), 1009-1022.
- Dumas, M. J. (2016). Against the dark: Antiblackness in education policy and discourse. *Theory into Practice*, 55(1), 11-19.
- Edwards, H. (1984). The collegiate athletic arms race: Origins and implications of the "Rule 48" controversy. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 8(1), 4-22. Edwards, H. (1970). *The revolt of the Black athlete*. The Free Press.

- Edwards, H. (1979). Sport within the veil: The triumphs, tragedies and challenges of Afro-American involvement. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 445(1), 116-127.
- Edwards, H. (2016). The fourth wave: Black athlete protests in the second decade of the 21st century. Keynote address at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport conference.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.
- Fanon, F. (1952). *Black skin, white masks*. London: Paladin.
- Flachmeier, J. H. (1995). "Tait, Charles William," *Handbook of Texas Online* Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/tait-charles-william>.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Translation by Alan Sheridan. Random House.
- Fountain, J. J., & Finley, P. S. (2009). Academic majors of upperclassmen football players in the Atlantic Coast Conference: An analysis of academic clustering comparing white and minority players. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*.
- Fountain, J. J., & Finley, P. S. (2011). Academic clustering: A longitudinal analysis of a Division I football program. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, (4), 24-41.
- Foster, K. M. (2003). Panopticonics: The control and surveillance of Black female athletes in a collegiate athletic program. *Anthropology & education quarterly*, 34(3), 300-323.
- Frederick, E., Sanderson, J., & Schlereth, N. (2017). Kick these kids off the team and take away their scholarships: Facebook and perceptions of athlete activism at the University of Missouri. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 10, 17-34.
- Gayles, J. G., Comeaux, E., Ofoegbu, E., & Grummert, S. (2018). Neoliberal Capitalism and Racism in College Athletics: Critical Approaches for Supporting Student-Athletes. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2018(163), 11-21.

- George-Williams, G. (2019). *Love Is at The Root of Resistance: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Inquiry into The Lived Experiences of Black College Athlete Activists*. (Doctoral dissertation, Azusa Pacific University).
- Gilmore, R. W. (2007). *Golden gulag: Prisons, surplus, crisis, and opposition in globalizing California*. University of California Press.
- Giroux, H. A., & Giroux, S. S. (2012). Universities gone wild: Big money, big sports, and scandalous abuse at Penn State. *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies*, 12(4), 267-273.
- Grove, J. R., Lavalley, D., & Gordon, S. (1997). Coping with retirement from sport: The influence of athletic identity. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 9(2), 191-203.
- Grummert, S. E., & Rall, R. M. (Forthcoming). Looking beyond the toxic triangle: Connecting sexual abuse to failed governance in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Athletics and Innovation*.
- Harper, S. R. (2016). *Black male student-athletes and racial inequities in NCAA Division I college sports: 2016 edition*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Race & Equity in Education.
- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 1707-1791.
- Harrison, K. C., & Lawrence, S. M. (2004). College students' perceptions, myths, and stereotypes about African American athleticism: A qualitative investigation. *Sport, Education and Society*, 9(1), 33-52.
- Harry, M., & Weight, E. (2021). Post-collegiate athlete transitions and the influence of a coach. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 1-26.
- Hartman, S. V. (1996). Seduction and the Ruses of Power. *Callaloo*, 19(2), 537-560.
- Hartman, S. V. (1997). *Scenes of subjection: Terror, slavery, and self-making in nineteenth-century America*. New York City, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hartman, S. V. (2007). *Lose your mother: A journey along the Atlantic slave route*. New York: NY. Straus and Giroux.
- Hartman, S. V., & Wilderson, F. B. (2003). The position of the unthought. *Qui Parle*, 13(2), 183-201.

- Hartmann, D. (2012). Beyond the sporting boundary: the racial significance of sport through midnight basketball, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35:6, 1007-1022, 10.1080/01419870.2012.661869
- Hartmann, D. (2016). *Midnight basketball: Race, sports, and neoliberal social policy*. University of Chicago Press.
- Haslerig, S. J. (2017). Graduate(d) student athletes in Division I football: Redefining archetypes and disrupting stereotypes or invisible? *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 34(4), 329-343.
- Haslerig, S. J. (2018). Lessons from graduate(d) student athletes: Supporting academic autonomy and achievement. In J. G. Gayles (ed). *Critical Issues for Student Athletes: Going Behind the Invisible Wall. New Directions in Student Services*, 163, 93-103. Jossey-Bass.
- Haslerig, S. J. (September 2020). Athletic Diversity Council (ADC) Workshop on Athlete Activism, University of Oklahoma.
- Haslerig, S. J. (2021). Phone it in: Reflections on the use of phone interview methods with college athletes. *Journal for the Study of Sport and Athletes in Education*. 1-21.
- Haslerig, S. J. & Grummert, S. E. (November, 2017). Omissions & misdirection: Policing dissent beyond the backlash narrative. Paper presented at North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS), Windsor, Ontario, CAN.
- Haslerig, S. J., Grummert, S. E., & Vue, R. (2019). Rationalizing Black death: Sport media's dehumanizing coverage of Black college football players. In P. Brug, K. Roth, & Z. Ritter (Eds.), *Marginality in the Urban Center* (pp. 77-109). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Haslerig, S. J. & Navarro, K. M. (2016). Aligning athletes' career choices and graduate degree pathways: Implications for 21st century career development professionals. *Journal of Career Development*, 43(3), 211-226. Doi: 10.1177/0894845315597472
- Haslerig, S. J., Vue, R., & Grummert, S. E. (2020). Invincible bodies: American sport media's racialization of Black and white college football players. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 55(3), 272-290.
- Hatteberg, S. J. (2018). Under surveillance: Collegiate athletics as a total institution. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 35(2), 149-158.

- Hatton, E. (2020). *Coerced: Work Under Threat of Punishment*. University of California Press.
- Hawkins, B. (1999). Black student athletes at predominantly White National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I institutions and the pattern of oscillating migrant laborers. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 23(1), 1-9.
- Hawkins, B. (2010). The new plantation: Black athletes, college sports, and predominantly white NCAA institutions. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hextrum, K. (2018). The hidden curriculum of college athletic recruitment. *Harvard Educational Review*, 88(3), 355-377.
- Hextrum, K. (2019). Operation Varsity Blues: Disguising the legal capital exchanges and white property interests in athletic admissions. *Higher Education Politics & Economics*, 5(1), 15-32.
- Hextrum, K. (2020a). Amateurism revisited: How US college athletic recruitment favors middle-class athletes. *Sport, Education and Society*, 25(1), 111-123.
- Hextrum, K. (2020b). Bigger, faster, stronger: How racist and sexist ideologies persist in college sports. *Gender and Education*, 32(8), 1053-1071.
- Hextrum, K. (2020c). Individualizing conflict: How ideology enables college athletes' educational compromises. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(4), 755-767.
- Hextrum, K. (2020d). Segregation, innocence, and protection: The institutional conditions that maintain whiteness in college sports. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. 13(4), 384–395.
- Hextrum, K. (2021a). *Special admission: How college sports recruitment favors white, suburban athletes*. Rutgers University Press.
- Hextrum, K. (2021b). White property interests in college athletic admissions. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 1-21. 01937235211015352.
- Hoffman K. M., Trawalter S., Axt J. R., & Oliver, M. N. (2016). Racial bias in pain assessment and treatment recommendations, and false beliefs about biological differences between blacks and whites. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 113(16), 4296–4301.
- Houston, D. A., & Baber, L. D. (2017). Academic clustering among football student-athletes and exploring its relationship to institutional characteristics. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 11(1), 66-90.

- Hruby, P. (2018, August 19). 'Junction Boys syndrome': How college football fatalities became normalized. *TheGuardian.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2018/aug/19/college-football-deaths-offseason-workouts>
- Huma, R., & Staurowsky, E. J. (2011). The price of poverty in big time college sport. *National College Players Association*.
- James, J. (1996). *Resisting state violence: Radicalism, gender, and race in US culture*. University of Minnesota Press.
- James, J. (1999). *Shadowboxing: Black feminist politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jayakumar, U. M., & Comeaux, E. (2016). The cultural cover-up of college athletics: How organizational culture perpetuates an unrealistic and idealized balancing act. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 87(4), 488-515.
- Jayakumar, U. M. & Page, S. (forthcoming). Cultural capital and opportunities for exceptionalism: Bias in university admissions. *Journal of Higher Education*.
- Jenkins, S. (March 25, 2021). The NCAA's shell game is the real women's basketball scandal. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2021/03/25/ncaa-women-basketball-tournament-revenue/>
- Johnson, M. (September 3, 2020). Miami Heat to partner with Miami police department to improve police interactions with Black communities: The program is part of the Heat's pledge to 'not sit on the sideline' in regard to systemic racism in the criminal justice system. *The Undeclared*. <https://theundefeated.com/features/miami-heat-to-partner-with-miami-police-department-to-improve-police-interactions-with-black-communities/>
- Josselson, R. (2013). *Interviewing for qualitative inquiry: A relational approach*. Guilford Press.
- Kalman-Lamb, N. (2020). The (African) American dream. *Sports in African American Life: Essays on History and Culture*.
- Kahn, L. M. (2007). Markets: Cartel behavior and amateurism in college sports. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(1), 209-226.
- King, C. R. (2005). Cautionary notes on whiteness and sport studies. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 22(3), 397-408.

- Koch, J. V. (1973). A troubled cartel: The NCAA. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 38(1), 135-150.
- Kohli, R., Pizarro, M., & Nevárez, A. (2017). The “new racism” of K–12 schools: Centering critical research on racism. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 182-202.
- Laird, S. (2014, December, 14). Black lives matter: Athletes' powerful statements still going strong. Mashable.com. Retrieved from <https://mashable.com/2014/12/15/black-lives-matter-athletes/>
- Lapchick, R. (2019). The 2018 college sport racial and gender report card: College sport. Orlando: University of Central Florida, Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport. Retrieved from <http://nebula.wsimg.com/5665825afd75728dc0c45b52ae6c412d?AccessKeyId=DAC3A56D8FB782449D2A&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>
- Lee, S., Bernstein, M. B., Etzel, E. F., Gearity, B. T., & Kuklick, C. R. (2018). Student-Athletes' Experiences with Racial Microaggressions in Sport: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(5), 1016-1043. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3095>
- LoMonte, F. D. (2014). Fouling the First Amendment: Why colleges can't, and shouldn't, control student athletes' speech on social media. *Journal of Business & Technology Law*, 9(1), 1-50.
- LoMonte, F. D., & Hamrick, V. (2020). Running the full-court press: How college athletics departments unlawfully restrict athletes' rights to speak to the news media. *Nebraska Law Review*, 99, 86-140.
- Loveland, M., Grant, K., & Mishra, V. (2020). College students' perceptions of athlete versus non-athlete privilege. Poster presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 2020.
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Forum qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: qualitative social research*, 11(3). <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs100387>.
- McCormick, R. A., & McCormick, A. C. (2006). Myth of the student-athlete: The college athlete as employee. *Washington Law Review*, 81, 71-158.
- McDonald, M. G. (2020). Once more, with feeling: Sport, national anthems, and the data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. Sage.

- Moten, F. (2021). A Conversation with Sandy Grande, Stefano Harney, Fred Moten, Jasbir Puar, and Dylan Rodríguez. Strike MoMA.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2vzhwnjy4s>
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). (2019b). NCAA Directory Database [Data visualization dashboard]. Retrieved from <https://web3.ncaa.org/directory/>
- National College Players Association (NCPA). (2020). NCPA calls on NCAA to investigate rampant COVID safety violations.
<https://www.ncpanow.org/news/releases-advisories/ncpa-calls-on-ncaa-to-investigate-rampant-covid-safety-violations>
- Nocera, J., & Strauss, B. (2016). *Indentured: The inside story of the rebellion against the NCAA*. Portfolio.
- Oseguera, L. (2010). Success despite the image. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 4(3), 297-324.
- Patterson, O. (1982). *Slavery and Social Death*. Harvard University Press.
- Paule-Koba, A. L. (2015). Gaining equality in all the wrong areas: An analysis of academic clustering in Women's NCAA Division I basketball. *International Journal of Sport Management*, 16(2), 300-315.
- Penrose, M. (2012). Outspoken: Social media and the modern college athlete. *J. Marshall Review of Intellectual Property Law*, 12, 509-550.
- Penrose, M. (2014). Sharing stupid \$ h* t with friends and followers: The first amendment rights of college athletes to use social media. *Southern Methodist University Science & Technology Law Review*, 17, 449-488.
- Rall, R. M., Morgan, D. L., & Commodore, F. (2018). Invisible injustice: Higher education boards and issues of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. In R. Jeffries (Ed.), *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity in Contemporary Higher Education* (pp. 261-277). IGI Global.
- Rhoden, W. (2006). *Forty million dollar slaves: The rise, fall, and redemption of the Black athlete*. Crown Publishers.
- Richie, B. (1996). *Compelled to crime: The gender entrapment of battered Black women*. Routledge.
- Rick, O. (2018). Is this the beginning of the end? Small colleges and universities are questioning the value of an NCAA program for their student body. In R. King-

- White (Ed.), *Sport and the Neoliberal University* (pp. 153-169). Rutgers University Press.
- Roberts, D. E. (1999). *Killing the Black body: Race, reproduction, and the meaning of liberty*. Vintage.
- Rodríguez, D. (2006). *Forced Passages: Imprisoned radical intellectuals and the US prison regime*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Rodríguez, D. (2017). The political logic of the non-profit industrial complex. In INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Eds.), *The revolution will not be funded* (pp. 21-40). Duke University Press.
- Rodríguez, D. (2021a). “Mass incarceration” as misnomer: Chattel/domestic war and the problem of narrativity. In M. K. Jung & J. H. C. Vargas (Eds.), *Antiblackness* (pp. 171-197). Duke University Press.
- Rodriguez, D. (2021, January 29). *Campus safety task forces as police power*. Remaking the University. <http://utotherescue.blogspot.com/2021/01/campus-safety-task-forces-as-police.html>.
- Sack, A. L., & Staurovsky, E. J. (1998). *College athletes for hire*. Praeger.
- Sacks, T. K. (2018). *Invisible visits: Black middle-class women in the American healthcare system*. Oxford University Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.
- Sanderson, J. (2011). To tweet or not to tweet: Exploring Division I athletic departments’ social-media policies. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 4(4), 492-513.
- Sanderson, J. (2018). Thinking twice before you post: Issues student-athletes face on social media. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2018(163), 81-92.
- Sanderson, J., & Browning, B. (2013). Training versus monitoring: A qualitative examination of athletic department practices regarding student-athletes and Twitter. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 14(1), 105-111.
- Sanderson, J., Weathers, M., Snedaker, K., & Gramlich, K. (2017). “I was able to still do my job on the field and keep playing”: An investigation of female and male athletes’ experiences with (not) reporting concussions. *Communication & Sport*, 5(3), 267-287.

- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.
- Sexton, J. (2010). People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the afterlife of slavery. *Social Text*, 28(2 (103), 31-56.
- Sexton, J. (2012). Ante-anti-blackness: Afterthoughts. *Lateral*, 1(1).
- Sharpe, C. (2016). *In the wake: On blackness and being*. Duke University Press.
- Silk, M., & Falcous, M. (2005). One day in September and a week in February: Mobilizing American (sporting) nationalisms. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 22(4), 447-471.
- Smith, A. (2017). Introduction: The revolution will not be funded. In INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Eds.), *The revolution will not be funded* (pp. 1-20). Duke University Press.
- Smith, R. A. (1990). *Sports and freedom: The rise of big-time college athletics*. Oxford University Press.
- Snyder, E. M., Hutchens, N. H., Jones, W. A., & Sun, J. C. (2015). Social media policies in intercollegiate athletics: The speech and privacy rights of student-athletes. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 9(1), 50-74.
- Sojoyner, D. M. (2013). Black radicals make for bad citizens: Undoing the myth of the school to prison pipeline. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 4(2), 241-263.
- Sojoyner, D. M. (2016). *First strike: Educational enclosures in Black Los Angeles*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Southall, R. M., & Nagel, M. S. (2003). Content analysis of athlete handbooks from selected NCAA Division IA athletic departments. *International Journal of Sport Management*, 4(3), 179-191.
- Southall, R. M., Hawkins, B., Polite, F., & Sack, A. (2011, April). "Pimpin' ain't easy, but it's necessary": Oscillating migrant labor & one-year grant-in-aids in college sport. 4th Annual College Sport Research Institute Conference on College Sport, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Southall, R. M., & Staurowsky, E. J. (2013). Cheering on the collegiate model: Creating, disseminating, and imbedding the NCAA's redefinition of amateurism. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 37(4), 403-429.

- Southall, R. M., & Weiler, J. D. (2014). NCAA Division-I athletic departments: 21st century athletic company towns. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 7, 161-186.
- Spillers, H. J. (1987). Mama's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book. *Diacritics*, 17(2), 65-81.
- Stanley, E. A., & Spade, D. (2012). Queering prison abolition, now?. *American Quarterly*, 64(1), 115-127.
- Staurowsky, E. J., & Sack, A. L. (2005). Reconsidering the use of the term student-athlete in academic research. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19(2), 103-116.
- Staurowsky, E. J., & Sack, A. L. (2005). Revisiting the use of the term "student-athlete" in academic research. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 103-117.
- Stewart, D-L (2019). Ideologies of absence: Anti-Blackness and inclusion rhetoric in student affairs practice. *Ideologies of Absence: Anti-Blackness and Inclusion Rhetoric*, 28, 14.
- University of Oklahoma Athletics (2020, September 12). OU announces sooners for humanity initiative. *SoonerSports*. <https://soonersports.com/news/2020/9/12/ou-athletics-announces-sooners-for-humanity-initiative.aspx>
- Vargas, J. H. C. (2013). "Borrowed Land as Prison: Spectacles of Homeland Warfare in Rio de Janeiro." In "Beyond the School to Prison Pipeline: Radical Perspectives on Criminalization & State Violence Across State Institutions." Sponsored by UCR Critical Ethnic Studies Research Center.
- Vargas, J. H. C. (2018). *The Denial of Antiracism: Multiracial Redemption and Black Suffering*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Vargas, J. H. C., & James, J. (2012). Refusing blackness-as-victimization: Trayvon Martin and the black cyborgs. In G. Yancy & J. Jones (Eds.), *Pursuing Trayvon Martin: Historical contexts and contemporary manifestations of racial dynamics*, (pp. 193-204). Lexington Books.
- Vargas, J. H. C. & Jung, M. K. (2021). Introduction: Antiracism of the social and the human. In M. K. Jung & J. H. C. Vargas (Eds.), *Antiracism* (pp. 1-16). Duke University Press.

Vernonia School District 47J v. Acton

- Wallsten, K., Nteta, T. M., McCarthy, L. A., & Tarsi, M. R. (2017). Prejudice or principled conservatism? Racial resentment and white opinion toward paying college athletes. *Political Research Quarterly*, 70(1), 209–222.
- Worlock, D. (2021, March 5). March madness courts at Lucas Oil Stadium named to recognize NCAA's commitment to inclusion and social justice. *NCAA*. <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/march-madness-courts-lucas-oil-stadium-named-recognize-ncaa-s-commitment-inclusion-and-social>
- WeAreUnited. (2020, August). #WeAreUnited. *Players Tribune*. <https://www.theplayerstribune.com/articles/pac-12-players-covid-19-statement-football-season>
- Weidner, T. G., Noble, G. L., & Pipkin, J. B. (2006). Athletic training students in the college/university setting and the scope of clinical education. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 41(4), 422-426.
- Wilderson III, F. B. (2016, March 16). Afro-pessimism and the end of redemption. *The Occupied Times*. Retrieved from <https://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=14236>
- Wilderson III, F. B. (2010). *Red, white & Black: Cinema and the structure of US antagonisms*. Duke University Press.
- Wilderson III, F. B. (2021). Afropessimism and the ruse of analogy: Violence, freedom struggles, and the death of Black desire. In M. K. Jung & J. H. C. Vargas (Eds.), *Antiblackness* (pp. 37-59). Duke University Press.
- Wilderson III, F. B. & King, T. L. (2020). Staying ready for Black study. In T. L. King, J. Navarro, & A. Smith (Eds.), *Otherwise worlds: Against settler colonialism and anti-Blackness*, (pp. 52-73). Duke University Press.
- Wun, C. (2016). Against captivity: Black girls and school discipline policies in the afterlife of slavery. *Educational Policy*, 30(1), 171-196.
- Wun, C. (2017). Not only a pipeline: Schools as carceral sites. *Occasional Paper Series*, (38),3.
- Wun, C. (2018a). Angered: Black and non-Black girls of color at the intersections of violence and school discipline in the United States. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(4), 423-437.
- Wun, C. (2018b). Schools as carceral sites: A unidirectional war against girls of color. In *Education at War*, (pp. 206-227). Fordham University Press.

Yiamouyiannis, A., & Osborne, B. (2012). Addressing gender inequities in collegiate sport: Examining female leadership representation within NCAA sport governance. *Sage Open*. 2 (2), 1-13

Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Guide

General/Background Questions

So first off, can you introduce yourself, where you went to college and what sport you play(ed)?

How did you go about choosing (insert college name)? did they offer you a scholarship?

Experiences with the Athletic Department and Policies

1. What was it like when you first got to campus, how did you get acclimated to the campus and team?
2. Did you live on campus? Are you required to live on campus what is that process like?
 - a. Who do you live with? Was that a personal choice?
3. What does a typical day look like for you? Where do you spend most of your time during the day?
4. How did you go about choosing your major?
5. Are there on campus or off campus groups and organizations that you're a part of that you can go to? Are these resources encouraged?

Policies and Climate

6. How would you describe the overall climate/vibe in the athletic department?
7. How would you describe interacting with administrators? Boosters?
8. When you first came into the team did anyone give you tips for how to navigate the team, coach, or administration?
9. Did they go over policies in athletic handbook, like the athlete code of conduct and all the rules? Did you have to sign things?

Are there team-specific rules?

10. Do you feel like there are unwritten rules? If so, describe.
 - a. How are they enforced?
11. What has your experience been with class checks and progress reports from faculty and TAs?
 - a. What has your experience been with academic advisors?
12. What has your experience been with mandatory study halls?

13. Are there social media policies you have to follow?
 - a. If so, what type? How did you feel about them?
14. Do you find that these rules or policies—like progress reports or mandatory study halls—helps your educational experience?
15. Did you receive general media training about what to say and not say?
16. What has your experience been with drug testing?

17. Were tracking systems like tracking your heart rate or things like that used?

18. Have you or anyone you've known broken any guidelines? If so, what was the response? reaction from the coach or administration and your teammates?

19. Was there ever an instance where you felt there would be consequences for something you did or didn't do?
 - a. Was there a time where you felt your scholarship or spot on the team was being threatened? Implicitly or explicitly...

Reporting abuse

20. If you have a complaint—if you don't feel safe or if something happened and needed to be addressed—is there a clear outlet you could report to?
 - a. What is that process like? Did you feel comfortable doing so?
 - b. Did you feel like the team or athletic department wanted things reported/addressed?)

21. And with physical health - Have you had experiences where you got injured and needed treatment?
 - a. What was that process like trying to get care?
 - b. How are complaints about pain handled within the team? is it a tough it up type situation?

22. Do you feel like you can trust team doctors? Why or why not?

23. And with mental health – Are there mental health resources? Are they encouraged?

Team Experiences/Relationships

1. How would you describe the overall team climate?

How would you describe your relationship with your teammates?

2. What about coaches? How were your interactions and relationships with them?

3. Are there specific people on the team you gravitate toward more? If so why?
4. Are racial and social justice issues discussed in the team environment?
 - a. Does it ever come up? Why do you think that is?
5. If race and racism was discussed, do you remember an example?
6. Do you feel like race and racism should be discussed in a team environment more? Why or why not?
7. Are there things you feel you can't talk about within the team or within the athletic department?

In-Game Experiences

1. What are your in-game experiences in relation to fans? And especially fan comments...
2. Do you ever hear fans derogatory comments? If so what types? For example, are they racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.?
3. Do you have an example situation you could share? What happens in those situations typically?
4. To what extent do the comments affect you?—emotionally, psychologically, performance, sense of safety, etc.
5. Do you and your teammates talk about it? Is it ever addressed within the team, or by the coach?
6. Who did you go to for support/to talk about it? In what ways do you think it could've been handled better?
7. What would it have meant to you if a teammate or coach did step in?
8. Overall do you feel a sense of safety while you are playing?
9. What about on social media – do you ever get fan harassment in that arena? What types? Do you respond – do you feel like you can respond? How do you manage that?

Macro

10. There is this notion from some students and administrators that athletes are “privileged,” that they get so many resources and stuff like that — how do you feel about those notions? Did you encounter that from other people on campus?
11. Would you want to change anything about athletics?
12. Generally, how do you feel about your educational experience?

Political Engagement and Protest

1. How do you feel about recent athlete activists and protests?
2. Do you think it would have been accepted within your team?
3. Are these instances ever discussed in the team or within the administration?
 - a. How does that go if so?
4. What was the response from your teammates, coaches, and administration?
5. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience in athletics?
6. What is a pseudonym you'd like? Do you have a fake name in mind?

Appendix B

Social Media Recruitment Flyer

Call to Participate: Current and Former College Basketball (women's and men's) and Football players

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview related to your experience in athletics.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to better understand college athlete experiences within their team ecology—meaning interpersonal interactions between teammates, in-game experiences, and experiences within the athletic department. In particular, this study seeks to understand how these topics may be racialized and gendered and impact athletes differently given their positionality.

Eligibility: You are eligible to participate in this study if you are at least 18 years of age or older and have participated in women's or men's college basketball or football.

Participation: If you choose to participate, you will be asked to do a 60-90 minute interview about your experience in athletics. The interview can be conducted via phone/video and at your convenience and represents your total time involvement of the study.

If you are interested in participating in this study and would like more information, please click the link below, message me, or contact me by email: sgrum001@ucr.edu.

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ePMIvHy6qKPlxK5

Tables

Table 1. Participant Pseudonym and Demographics

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Sport	Division	Athlete-Status
Aaliyah	Black	Woman	Track	FBS	Current
Aneesa	Black	Woman	Soccer	NF	Former
Ari	Black	Woman	Basketball	NF	Former
Chiney	Black	Woman	Volleyball & Track	NF	Former
Diego	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former
Dom*	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former
Elena*	White	Woman	Basketball	NF	Former
Iliza*	Multiracial (Latina, white)	Woman	Track	FBS & NF	Former
Janelle	Black/West Indian	Woman	Cross country	NF	Former (quit sport)
Jenny	white	Woman	Softball	FCS	Former
Jessica	Black	Woman	Basketball	NF	Former
Kyle*	White	Man	Football	FBS	Former
Nate*	Black	Man	Football	FBS & FCS	Former
Skylar	Black	Woman	Track and Field	FBS	Former (quit sport)
Sydney*	Black	Woman	Soccer	NF & FCS	Former
Thiago	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former (quit sport)
Toby	Multiracial (Hispanic, African American)	Man	Basketball	NF	Current
Tori	Black	Woman	Soccer	NF	Former
Wayne*	Latino	Man	Soccer	NF	Former
Whitney	White	Woman	Swimming	FCS	Former

* Participant transferred to a different university

FBS (Football Bowl Subdivision); FCS (Football Championship Subdivision); NF (Division I no football)