“AN ARTIFICIAL HARMONY:” THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY’S CONSTRUCTED RACIAL NARRATIVE, 1955-1969

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Kinesiology

by

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ABSTRACT

Although an agricultural land grant school such as The Pennsylvania State University, located in a rural valley in central Pennsylvania, is not commonly thought of as a bastion of race relations, Penn State University possesses a storied and interesting racial integration history. An important component of this unique history centers on the university’s celebration of successful African American athletes during the mid-twentieth century. This thesis argues that through the public admiration of these individuals, the university cultivated a reputation as a racially progressive and tolerant institution. This reputation allowed the university to ignore and diminish issues of racial discrimination on campus. Ignorance of the inequalities faced by students of color functioned to create an “artificial harmony” in the community. However, this paper will show that as time went on, astute student activists recognized the power afforded Nittany Lion athletics and employed that visibility in an attempt to garner increased support for African American acceptance at the university.

Focusing on the years 1955-1969, and expanding a previous work undertaken by Mark Dyreson, this examination uses a wealth of archival resources, oral histories, local and national newspaper articles, and local and national magazine stories to explore the university’s reliance on athletics to secure a national reputation. Additionally, this work scrutinizes the attempted exploitation of the visibility and public sentiment towards Penn State football to gain support for student political action. Lastly, this paper endeavors to illustrate a more complex history of Penn State athletics and university integration.
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Chapter One

Penn State’s “Great Experiment”

On Thursday, January 26, 2012, The Pennsylvania State University community laid to rest one of the most venerated coaches in college football history, Joseph Vincent Paterno. Charged with eulogizing his father in front of the more than 12,000 mourners who joined him on campus, his son Joseph “Jay” Paterno Jr., attempted to articulate his father’s convictions. He did not start his tribute by recounting his father’s many victories, or the number of young men he helped pilot into the NFL, or his philanthropic enterprises to both school and community. Instead, Jay Paterno began with his father’s creed on the uniting power of Nittany Lion athletics.

The players that came here to Penn State came here, because here was Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream. Here was the place where black kids and white kids could hold hands in a huddle, where we could all be given a chance…an equal chance. Where they would be judged by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin, nor the way in which they prayed to their god. Bound by a common cause, our differences would melt away. Paterno’s words reveal a central component of university mythology: that “WE ARE” unique. That somehow our athletics are special among other collegiate programs. Paterno’s eulogy perpetuates the belief that here, against the backdrop of the cow fields of central Pennsylvania, the school conducted its own “great experiment” of desegregating sport and society. This lore conveys that during the mid-twentieth century, pioneering coaches, athletes, and fans hypothesized that the brotherhood cultivated on racially integrated athletic teams could overcome racism and inequality in the larger community. Their proof was Penn State athletics. This thesis explores the university community’s collective memory about the achievements of its integrated athletic teams and, more directly, the successful African American members of those squads during the 1950s and 1960s. Additionally, this thesis examines how that memory, which
ignores the negative and accentuates the positive, has functioned to create a narrative that obscures Penn State’s true race relations history.

The university, supported by its many proud fans, boasts a unique history of racial integration and activism impossible to disentangle from its legendary athletic programs and football team. This historic mythos continues to thrive contemporarily partly because the institution recognizes that its athletic programs exert a powerful influence on the university’s local, regional, and national identities, both in terms of integration and many other social issues. This sporting influence was acknowledged and highly cultivated during the mid-twentieth century. By publicly celebrating the integration and outstanding performances of its early African American athletes, the university constructed symbols of the supposedly harmonious integration of African American student athletes into the larger academic community.

However, the university community’s public focus on the successful integration of some of its athletic teams, specifically football and basketball, created what some students would in 1969 refer to as an “artificial harmony.” African American students, members of an on campus political action group named the Black Student Union, charged the university with upholding “a degenerate, decadent, and anti-humanistic” atmosphere for students of color after the group was booed from the football field by an angry crowd while attempting to deliver a planned half-time address. Presumably these students felt that the football field, a place at the university historically so accepting of African American players, would also be tolerant of their non-athlete brethren. Nonetheless, this was not the case. Instead, the students believed they had splintered the artificial harmony previously highlighted by stressing the success of African American athletes and upholding them as symbols of racial accord on campus and exposed the facade that
had long obscured the adversities suffered by these athletes and other students of color on campus.

Penn State is not the only school to exploit African American sporting successes to construct an artificial harmony. Schools throughout history and across the nation have celebrated athletes of color while simultaneously treating them like second-class citizens. For instance, David R. McMahon argues that the University of Iowa has relied on “distorted” collective memory to maintain a “progressive reputation” in relation to its football program’s history of African American athletic inclusion. This history, dating back to the integration of the Hawkeye’s football program in 1890 by Frank Holbrook, discredits the hardships faced by standout African American individuals such as Ozzie Smith by ignoring the adversities confronted or tempering race as a factor in their realities. In *Hail to the Victors*, John Behee chronicled the experiences of black student-athletes at the University of Michigan. He found that the school community during the early and mid-twentieth century, known contemporarily for its outstanding athletics program among other accolades, was not as racially egalitarian as perceived outside the area. Furthermore by focusing and relying on the publicized triumphs of African American athletic stars such as Jackie Robinson and Kenny Washington in the first half of the century, UCLA maintained a reputation for inclusion that permeated popular sentiment until the social unrest that took place during the 1960s.

The presence of an artificial harmony on a college campus is further exemplified in the experiences of the 1966 Texas Western College (now the University of Texas at El Paso) basketball team, now famous as the first squad to start five African American players in the final of the NCAA tournament. Upon winning the national championship, hoards of cheering fans greeted the team upon its return to campus after defeating the University of Kentucky. However,
the team’s short-lived athletic approval did not expand to other areas of life, leading team captain Willie Worsley to woefully admit “that was the end of it...you play basketball and that’s it. When the game’s over they want you to come back to the dormitory and stay out of sight.”\footnote{12} Even though the campus celebrated the team’s athletic achievements publically and gained national notoriety for its seemingly progressive stance on race relations in athletics, the African American members were still far from being fully accepted and integrated into the academic community, highlighting the false unity that existed at UTEP.

Similar to the conditions at Iowa, UTEP, and UCLA, Penn State’s reputation as a racially harmonious university community is largely built on the celebrations of African American athletic performances that transpired during the middle of the twentieth century and emphasized the open acceptance of athletes on the Nittany Lions’ many athletic teams. The public praise awarded these individuals illustrated to outsiders that members of the academic community believed that the successful integration of African American athletes on the field, court, or mat mirrored the successful integration of African American individuals in the Penn State community at large.\footnote{13} However, this thesis argues that during this same time period, the harmony allegedly proven by the participation of African American athletes in their chosen sport did not extend off the field of play.

**Integrating Farmers High School: Penn State’s Early Integration History**

The Pennsylvania State University, a sprawling land grant institution located in the geographic center of the Keystone State, currently claims an impressive 38,000 undergraduate students in a small basin fondly known as “Happy Valley.”\footnote{14} The histories of the university’s athletics, better known for its football and its ice cream than racially charged activism and social protest, often ignore the dynamic narrative that surrounds the institution’s athletic integration
Although time does not permit a complete discussion of the history of the university and its African American athletes, the college claims a prestigious legacy since its founding at the request of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society in 1855. Originally named the Farmers High School of Pennsylvania, the institution was formally renamed the Pennsylvania State College in 1875 and expanded its academic curriculum to include a focus larger than solely agricultural instruction. Historians note that twenty-four years later, in 1899, the college admitted its first “colored” student, Georgia native Calvin H. Waller. Darryl Daisey, a chronicler of the university’s African American history, found that ten years after Waller’s matriculation, the institution enrolled its first African American student-athlete. When Cumberland Posey Jr. arrived in 1909, he earned a spot on the freshman baseball team. Also a standout on the basketball court, his peers noted that he “excelled at gathering points” during his first year as a Nittany Lion. Posey left campus in 1911 and played basketball for both the University of Pittsburgh and Duquesne University in the following years. Even with his success in basketball, Posey left his legacy as a player, manager, and later owner of the Pittsburgh Homestead Grays, a small Negro League franchise which he grew over 35 years to one of the most powerful franchises in the league. Penn State university history can (and does) claim a piece of the now-renowned figure’s past.

The college observed the integration of its track and field, boxing, and soccer teams shortly after Posey’s departure from Nittany Lion athletics. In spite of this rapid progress in the early 1900s, the student body was forced to wait until 1941 for Penn State football, the school’s largest and most prestigious team, to integrate. Although claims of the university’s race relations exceptionalism remain on campus, in relation to some other institutions, the university was in fact slow to integrating its football team. Since the 1890s African Americans footballers have
maintained (very) small numbers of players at predominantly white institutions of higher education. Amherst College is credited with fielding the first integrated football team in 1889 with the inclusion of rusher William Henry Lewis and halfback W.T.S. Jackson. African American George Jewett joined the University of Michigan squad in 1890.

However, intercollegiate football in the late nineteenth and early twentieth was not immune to social forces affecting other American institutions of the time. The few African Americans who were granted access to white institutions were almost exclusively found at universities in the north, as competition in southern schools would have threatened the volatile racial caste system. Although years behind institutions such as Amherst, University of Michigan, and Harvard, Penn State remained ahead of many southern schools in their integration efforts, as the Universities of Alabama and Florida did not integrate their football teams until late into the 1960s.

Histories of the university affirm that equal access to the gridiron was achieved when African American twin brothers, Dave and Harry Alston, joined the freshman football squad in 1941. Dave Alston, later hailed by the student newspaper as “the greatest football player ever to don the moleskin for Penn State,” died tragically from complications following a routine tonsillectomy in August 1942. Coach Robert Higgins noted that Alston’s death was “an unspeakable loss to his parents and to his race.” Notably, rumors that internal injuries suffered from a racially motivated attack in a previous game against Navy had complicated the simple procedure swirled among fellow players.

Although never proven in Alston’s case, injuries such as those allegedly suffered by the young man were not uncommon among players during the early era of football. As scholars such as Michael Oriard, Jaime Schultz, and Ocania Chalk have examined, early African American
football players were frequently victim to physical brutality from white players, often meeting racially motivated assaults from opponents during integrated play. This violence was in addition to the violence inherent in the early incarnation of football, once considered so brutal it merited presidential intervention. Excessive violence is blamed for the death of Iowa State player Jack Trice in 1923. Trice, the school’s first African American athlete, died after suffering internal injuries after an especially vicious block during a game against Minnesota. One of the most famous and well documented instances of disproportionate violence against a player of color is that of Johnny Bright. In 1951, during a game against Oklahoma A&M, Drake University’s Bright was savagely hit in the face by an opponent. Bright continued play but was later found to have sustained a broken jaw. The incident was of special note because the malice action was caught by a media photographer and disseminated around the country. While these two incidents are of exceptional callousness, undoubtedly other less severe and more subtle acts of violence occurred and have been simply ignored or forgotten.

Assaults came in both physical and verbal forms. Behee, in his examination of African American lettermen at the University of Michigan, tells of the insults suffered by George Jewett, the Wolverine’s first African American football player. During a game against Purdue, Jewett was made to fear for his life as Boilermaker fans chanted “Kill the coon! Kill the coon!” from the opposing sideline. In addition to this early altercation, historian Adolph Grundman remarks that at the 1960 Cotton Bowl, the University of Texas’ football squad “barked racial slurs” at the integrated Syracuse team, illustrating that African American athletes, like Dave Alston, were marked for racially motivated assaults throughout the twentieth century.

Distressed by the loss of his twin brother, Harry Alston left the university before ever playing a down on the varsity squad. Although only present on the freshman team for one
season, some have suggested that Dave Alston’s stellar performance during his abridged tenure on campus weakened any remaining “reluctance” that Coach Higgins felt towards recruiting future African American players.\(^{41}\) However, with the outbreak of World War II, the Penn State community would have to wait four more years to find out.

World War II greatly changed the social and political landscape of the United States, intercollegiate athletics, and higher education in general. Penn State, like many other universities, curtailed their football schedules to cope with the absence of many players due to military service. Additionally, at the conclusion of the war the passage of the G.I. Bill, which provided educational funding for servicemen, and the fact that many individuals, having just fought intolerance overseas, were no longer willing to accept it at home, created an atmosphere that historian Othello Harris argues made “college desegregation a more acceptable, if not expected practice.”\(^{42}\) Often, forced to cope with the absence of white players due to the war effort, university programs sought athletic talent in a previously largely untapped market, the African American community. These factors combined to create a time period where athletes of color were seen in greater numbers at predominantly white institutions.\(^{43}\)

Wallace “Wally” Triplett became the first African American to play varsity football for Penn State in 1945.\(^{44}\) Originally offered an athletic scholarship to the University of Miami, Triplett chose to attend Penn State after Miami officials rescinded their offer upon the discovery of the athlete’s race.\(^{45}\) Originally from West Philadelphia, he earned playing time as standout wingback on the Lion squad. Triplett, joined by African American army veteran Dennis Hoggard in 1946, helped lead Penn State football to an undefeated season in 1947.\(^{46}\) Hoggard and Triplett are of note not only for their contributions on the field, but additionally for their involvement in the events that shape another prominent pillar in the university’s defining mythology. In 1948,
both athletes are credited with integrating the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas.\textsuperscript{47} The fact that the Cotton Bowl was the first major bowl game in the ex-Confederate south to be integrated, seemed to endorse the Penn State community’s claim to racial relations superiority.\textsuperscript{48}

Unfortunately, even in light of this historic integration occasion, during that same era in State College, Triplett noted that African Americans could not receive service in many restaurants and drinking establishments. Years later while reminiscing about an incident of unequal treatment back in State College, Triplett exclaimed of the continued racism, “To no fault of a lot of people that you wanted to give fault to, it was just a different world…The whole of America was that way.”\textsuperscript{49}

Triplett’s words speak to an unfortunate truth concerning the post war era of the 1940s. Although one cannot deny that World War II was a critical event in the historiography of race relations in the United States, after its conclusion, African Americans still faced a long struggle to achieve full rights and citizenship in the U.S.\textsuperscript{50} In spite of the gains won during the immediate post war era, such as the increased economic prosperity and civil rights legislation, African Americans all over the country confronted racial injustice.\textsuperscript{51} In fact, some individuals reacted to the increased prosperity of African Americans with “white backlash,” including increased racial violence.\textsuperscript{52} Characterization of the time period indicates an artificial harmony nationally. Although Americans of all colors and creeds had just defeated injustice abroad, injustice and inequality still abounded in the U.S.

This abbreviated history of African American athletes, and their accomplishments on and off the field is common knowledge among the Penn State proud, seemingly distributed among incoming freshman students and newly branded fans as recompense for their membership in the Nittany nation. In addition to general histories examining the university, countless authors have
undertaken the challenge of chronicling the institution’s athletic history. For example, Lou Prato, the university’s foremost sports historian, has written extensively about the program during the first half of the twentieth century. He has penned numerous tomes that painstakingly cover every win and loss incurred by the legendary football team and highlights the lives of its most revered and distinguished athletes, including African Americans Dave Alston and Wally Triplett, among many others.53

While these projects acknowledge Penn State’s role in accepting athletic integration, Prato calling the Cotton Bowl integration a “bold statement for integration,” they fail to explore the more complex narrative that accompanies the integration of the university and its athletics, and the celebration of the institution’s African American athletes. For instance, Jordan Hyman in *Game of My Life* acknowledges that Wally Triplett was politely guided to “Lincoln Hall” for housing by a member of the football staff upon his arrival during the 1940s.54 However, Hyman neglects to mention that Lincoln Hall was the only off-campus residence available to African American student-athletes at the time because the university had drawn an unofficial color line that prohibited men of color from living in on-campus dormitories.55 This omission is just one example that continues to sustain the collective memory of racial harmony in the university’s history and will be discussed further in chapter three.

**Celebrated, Yet Segregated: Athletes of Color at Predominantly White Institutions**

Penn State was not the only community forced to deal with issues surrounding athletic integration. Scholars have written extensively concerning the treatment of African American athletes at predominantly white institutions of higher education during mid-twentieth century.56 Historian Donald Spivey has argued that black athletes on predominantly white campuses lived and played within in “a microcosm of the contradictions of a segregated society.”57 The “dual
nature” of an unequal society found African American athletes simultaneously celebrated for their athletic performances on predominantly white campuses and disadvantaged as individuals within those communities. While securing success and prestige for their institutions, many of these same athletes were hurt by the artificial harmony illustrated by the discriminatory actions and practices of individuals within their own sporting and academic groups. These athletes found themselves “simultaneously scorned and loved” by the academic communities in which they lived and played. As colleges and universities continued to recruit African American athletes in larger numbers to their programs, issues of limited social acceptance and outright discrimination beleaguered university officials and administrators. Historians have examined numerous instances of mistreatment faced by African American student-athletes at predominantly white institutions in the areas of academics, campus life, social life, and on athletic teams.60

African American student-athletes often faced unequal academic opportunities and support at predominantly white institutions during the mid-twentieth century.61 These inequalities manifested in several ways, including lowered academic expectations for African American athletes, reduced academic support in terms of tutoring, financial aid and instruction, and less time allocated to devote to academics.62 This trifecta of neglect compounded the difficulties experienced by many African American athletes. For example, historian Adolph Grundman examined the difficulty balancing athletics and academics faced by J.C. Carline at the University of Illinois during the 1950s. The Illini’s sports publicity director publicly celebrated the African American athlete’s sporting prowess and his academic achievements, even quipping in the Saturday Evening Post, “I never saw a boy work so hard.” In actuality, Carline failed two courses that semester. Reacting to his academic struggles he responded, “If they would just leave you alone around exam time… it would be all right. I came up here to get an education. I'm not
going to school to play football.” Apparently to university officials, on the field successes were of greater importance than in the classroom, as “university officials say they are not worried about him earning a degree.”

Sadly, this tradition of academic neglect of African American athletes continued into the 1960s. For instance, members of the Texas Western College (now UTEP) basketball team also experienced the troubling academic realities faced by African American student-athletes. Dave Latin, a starter on the squad stated, “You spent most of your time in the gym, on and off season. You didn’t get a chance to spend much time studying. So you drop behind your classmates.” Wiggins argues that as these “black auxiliaries” became more critical to the success of school’s sporting programs, universities would recruit athletes “that had little chance of surviving in the classroom.”

Some athletes, confronted with the possibility of losing their scholarships over academic ineligibility chose to pursue “Mickey Mouse courses,” intellectually less challenging courses that often did not help students progress towards a degree. Latin’s teammate Willie Cager, reminiscing on his decision to pursue such courses to maintain his active playing status revealed, “I had to keep taking courses like music and art, and now I’m 21 hours short of graduation.” Exemplifying this sentiment, as of 1968, none of the seven African American members of the 1966 championship basketball team had received a degree.

Repeatedly African American student-athletes on predominantly white campuses during the mid-twentieth century levied complaints over inequalities they faced concerning residential and campus life, including access to housing, both on and off campus, and the ability to secure tontorial services. Historians have noted that “college sport serves as a metaphor for the racism encountered by African Americans in our society.” In the decades before the passage of the
Fair Housing Act, a part of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, many minorities suffered discrimination in buying, selling, and renting properties.\textsuperscript{70} African American student-athletes were not immune to these inequities. For example, along with his wife, track and field athlete and future Olympic gold-medalist Bob Beamon recounted his difficulties finding housing close to the Texas Western campus. While his stated preference was to walk to campus, he admitted, “there’s no decent housing for the married Negro anywhere near the school,” suggesting that no one would rent to an African American.\textsuperscript{71}

Furthermore, even when living on campus in residences halls, without the difficulties of securing outside housing, residential life was not uncomplicated for African American student-athletes who often had to deal with the prejudices and racism of their fellow students.\textsuperscript{72} For instance, Don Smith, an Iowa State standout on the basketball court during the 1960s remembers the struggles interacting with his white roommate: “Every weekend he’d go home and he’d leave little notes behind like, “don’t touch my razor!” It was always don’t touch this or don’t touch that. One day I saw something he had written and it said how hard it was for him to live with a nigger.”\textsuperscript{73} Incidents similar to this one illustrate what John Behee argues African American students confronted at predominantly white institutions during the time period: “blacks students were at the university but not of it.”\textsuperscript{74} Although present, many African Americans were not accepted by their student peers.

Finding access to consistent tonsorial services was another concern for African American students on predominantly white campuses. While seemingly less significant than discrimination in housing or education, the ability to acquire a haircut or shave was no trivial matter, for it points the deeply woven prejudices of the nation.\textsuperscript{75} Historian Mark Dyreson examined the “galling example of daily racism” suffered by African American Penn State students during the
1940s. 76 Not one of the many barbershops located in State College offered services to African Americans, claiming either “they didn’t know how to cut Negro hair” or that offering services “would ruin [their] business.” 77 These exclusionary commercial policies forced some students to make arrangements to travel out of town, upwards of three hours by car to receive a simple haircut. 78 Scholars have found this was a pattern across the country. 79 Black students at the University of Illinois and Northwestern University, as examples, also garnered media attention for challenging discrimination at barbershops during the 1950s and 1960s. 80

African American athletes also had to navigate social realities on campuses that were consistently unwelcoming. Sociologist Harry Edwards notes that, “perhaps the grimmest, most dehumanizing experiences for black athletes arise from the dismal and repressive social conditions they encounter on white campuses.” 81 This socially repressive environment was symptomatic of the small or often nonexistent African American community--outside of the male student athlete population--present on most predominantly white campuses. 82 Donald Spivey and Thomas A. Jones noted that “few social outlets” existed for non-white athletes at the University of Illinois mid-century. 83 Jesse Jackson, later famous for his work in the civil rights movement, lamented the social exclusion he experienced during his short career as an Illini in the early 1950s. Jackson and his fellow African American student-athletes were forced to “sit in their dorm drinking Coke and playing cards” while the white athletes “were out partying,” enjoying the opportunities campus life afforded them. 84 As a consequence of their segregated existence, no such social opportunities were available to athletes of color on predominantly white campuses.

The strictest social sanctions faced by male African American student-athletes came in the form of bans on interracial dating. 85 Edwards maintains that African Americans were warned
by white coaches and fellow teammates, “don’t be caught talking to a white girl, much less dating one.”\textsuperscript{86} Countless players confronted the loss of their athletic scholarships after coaches and administrators discovered their interracial relationships.\textsuperscript{87} Bobby Dobbs, UTEP football coach during the 1960s, revealed that dating outside their race was not “in their best interest” as far as their futures were concerned.\textsuperscript{88} For many African Americans Dobb’s words rang all too true. Behee notes that Michigan athletic coaches found it acceptable to discharge individuals from teams who dated outside their race, discharging David J. Hill for the transgression in 1958.\textsuperscript{89} Unquestionably, countless more incidents arose over the issue of interracial dating, illustrating the “maddening” social realities faced by African Americans at these institutions.\textsuperscript{90}

Along with confronting interracial dating bans, historians have surveyed instances in which African American athletes were often excluded from playing or traveling with their squads as their schools acquiesced to Southern institutions’ “gentlemen’s agreements.”\textsuperscript{91} “Gentlemen’s agreements,” informal and later formal rules that prohibited integrated northern squads from competitions with segregated southern institutions were common during the 1920s and early 1930s.\textsuperscript{92} Integrated squads customarily benched their African American members, in line with southern school’s traditions of segregation, even if the competition was played at home in the north. One such example is the plight of Willis Ward, an exceptional footballer and track and field athlete for the University of Michigan. In 1934, Michigan’s compliance with Georgia Tech’s gentleman’s agreement forced Ward to sit out a game in Ann Arbor. The act of exclusion stained Ward for life. In response to his exception Ward remarked, “That Georgia Tech game knocked me right in the gut. It was wrong… [I]t killed my desire to excel.”\textsuperscript{93} Furthermore, Syracuse Orangeman Wilmeth Sidat-Singh was benched in a game against the University of Maryland in 1937 because of the Terrapin’s policy of refusing to play against blacks.\textsuperscript{94} In
addition to facing exclusion on the basis of “gentlemen’s agreements,” scholars argue that African American athletes frequently encountered stacking practices, in which non-white athletes are stacked at limited positions. Furthermore, those athletes of color were often denied starting spots on teams to limit their numbers or playing time, or were outright denied playing some positions, most notably quarterback. Episodes of this nature, common at predominantly white institutions of higher education, illustrate the difficulties experienced by African American players. Unfortunately, these young student athletes were forced to withstand the prejudices of a racist society that infiltrated intercollegiate football.

Challenging the Status Quo: Intercollegiate Sport Led Protests

Scholars have argued that the litany of injustices faced by African American athletes on predominantly white campuses sometimes became too much to bear and that these athletes began to protest their second class status on campuses across the country. Historian David Wiggins argues that the late 1960s were especially marked by numerous “black athletic disturbances” at a diverse collection of institutions. Historian Lane Demas argues the most significant disturbance took place on the campus of the University of Wyoming.

Rising to prominence during the late 1960s, head coach Lloyd Eaton and the Cowboys earned bids to both the Sun and Sugar Bowls in 1966 and 1968. During the 1969 season, fourteen African American players decided to wear black arm bands during a scheduled game against Brigham Young University to protest the Mormon Church’s stance on African Americans. Hearing of the planned demonstration before the game, Coach Eaton preempted any protestor action by removing the players. Even intervention from university President William Carlson, along with Governor Stanley Hathaway and the Board of Trustees did not dissuade Coach Eaton. At the game that Saturday, as the newly dubbed “Black 14” sat behind the
Wyoming bench. The crowd in attendance overwhelmingly showed their approval of the decision, giving Eaton a standing ovation as the Cowboys sailed to victory over BYU, even without their African American players. Although, Wyoming would win its next game, the team went winless the rest of the season; effectively ending its dominance of the conference, and marring its football legacy.  

Historian David Wiggins explored a disturbance that took place the following year at the University of Syracuse. Angered by a change in the coaching staff, nine African American players walked out of practice. The discharged players levied charges of discrimination against the Syracuse athletic department, accusing the university of unequal medical treatment by team doctors, withholding academic support services from athletes of color, stacking African American players in limited positions, and the prevalent use of racial slurs by members of the coaching staff. After a short investigation, a university trustee committee, formed by the administration, agreed and recommended that the university take certain steps in order to correct the “unintentional” racism that existed on the campus.  

However, even in light of the committee’s suggestions, little action was taken and the dismissed athlete’s concerns went mostly unheeded.

The incidents at Wyoming and Syracuse illustrate that the conditions suffered by African American athletes must have been so unbearable that these athletes were willing to risk their academic lives to protest the status quo. These athletes endeavored to attack their segregated and inequitable social realities on predominantly white campuses. Protesting individuals strove to breakdown the “imagined communities” built around African American athletes. Presumably, they endeavored to remove the artificial harmony, similar to the atmosphere created at Penn State, which clouded perceptions of African American in intercollegiate sport.
These two accounts of the events at Syracuse and Wyoming are of special note to this project because they illustrate that not only can racist, unequal treatment and consequent sport-related activism arise in an unlikely area, but also at a school with a marked history of African American athletic integration. The University of Wyoming, located in the small town of Laramie, would not be traditionally considered a hotbed of racial protest and activism. Wiggins argued that environments such as those were “ripe” for social protest in 1969 in light of the growing number of African American athletes on campuses and the small number of African American citizens in the surrounding areas. Additionally, the athlete led protest on the campus of Syracuse is notable because Coach Ben Schwartzwalder and the Orange football squad possessed a well-documented history of early athletic integration with African American football standouts such as Floyd Little, Jim Brown, Wilmeth Sidat-Singh, and Ernie Davis. Perhaps Syracuse officials believed their record on athletic integration excluded them from becoming the target of athletic turmoil lead by African American athletes.

As well, this growing body of literature illustrates that no area, region, or individual school is immune to issues surrounding racial integration at predominantly white institutions. In light of the discrimination present in academics, social lives, and athletes, African American athletes and students on these campuses were spurred to social action. Few scholars have attended to the experiences of black athletes at Penn State, despite the school’s assertion as a bastion of racial tolerance. The paper seeks to fill that gap in the body of sports history literature.

Moreover, this work is informed by previous scholarship on social protests by African American athletes. Though attempting to strongly engage concepts introduced by earlier scholars, bearing in mind the fact that Penn State’s African American athletes are largely absent
from histories of social protest, this work seeks to investigate the phenomenon from a slightly different perspective. An objective of this thesis is to explore how African American athletes at Penn State were employed as symbols, both by Penn State as an institution and by other groups and individuals, to represent the progress or stagnation of racial equality on the campus of Penn State.

This work also seeks to continue previous scholarship undertaken by Mark Dyreson that explored the connections between Penn State athletics and the battle for civil rights from 1939 to 1955. Dyreson explores the racial context in which the university found itself in the first half of the twentieth century as it began to integrate its academics and athletics while discovering “how a small agricultural school in the 1940s and 1950s in almost lily-white, rural sections of Pennsylvania become part what [Charles] Martin has labeled the ‘fair play movement.’”\textsuperscript{106} Dyreson argues the increased opportunity to recruit talented African American athletes and a belief in Penn State’s own “exceptionalism” influenced the progressive attitude towards integration and race relations at Penn State.\textsuperscript{107}

Whereas there are a small number of fascinating and impactful narratives of female African American athletes during this time period, this paper does not attempt to include an equivalent account of female athletic symbolism at Penn State.\textsuperscript{108} The impetus for this decision is based on the fact that Penn State women’s athletics in the 1950s and 1960s occupied a much less commercialized realm than men’s sports, and was therefore less exploited as a tool to cultivate a public identity, image and reputation. However, in the decades following Title IX and the continued success of Penn State’s numerous women’s athletic teams, contemporarily, they also contribute the spectacle of Penn State sports.
In order to illustrate a coherent narrative of Penn State’s sport-related social activism, the following three chapters are separated into five-year time periods. Chapter 2 focuses on 1955 to 1959 and explores how in the late 1950s, during an ostensibly idyllic period at Penn State, the university found itself caught in a conundrum. The challenge to the school community was how to publically manage the successes of its African American student athletes while simultaneously dealing with charges of discrimination and racism present in and around the Penn State community. Chapter 3 centers on the years from 1960 to 1964, and addresses the perpetuation of Penn State’s narrative of racial harmony and the continued celebration of African American athletic achievements while the university still operated under an artificial harmony. As American racial tensions increase domestically, the Penn State community eventually faces its own delusion, as the institution was forced to take a stand on housing and tonsorial segregation. Chapter 4 spotlights the years from 1965 to 1969. As the country moved into a more radical period of social unrest, Penn State and State College were not protected from those forceful ideologies. After making progress in confronting discrimination in both access to tonsorial services and housing, the Penn State community was challenged by accusations that the university wasn’t doing enough to help African American students succeed academically. In a nod to the artificial harmony on campus, clever activists, much like the community of earlier years, employed the symbolism and notoriety of Penn State athletics to aid in their campaign to illuminate the artificial harmony on campus.

Chapter 5 investigates the legacy of the social unrest at Penn State. Penn State’s athletic success endured after the end of the civil rights era and continued social protest lived on as well. During the 1970s and 1980s, the community witnessed its first African American starting quarterback, in addition to the creation of the African and African American studies department,
the Office of Minority Affairs, and numerous “Black Cultural Lounges” to address the concerns of the growing number of African American students and athletes on campus.¹⁰⁹

This decade’s long narrative suggests that long after Jackie Robinson broke the color line, the SEC integrated its athletics, and more than a century after the first African American athlete played for one of Penn State’s many athletic teams, true harmony may have not yet been achieved in “Happy Valley.” Even as fans continue to fill Beaver Stadium on fall days, and eulogies praise the integration of Penn State, the battle to correct the artificial harmony, constructed and maintained through the celebration of prominent athletes of color, continues today.
Chapter Two

“An Artificial Harmony”: Penn State’s African American Reality, 1955-1959

Old Main, the Pennsylvania State University’s principle administration building, is the most prestigious and one of the most heavily traveled structures on campus. Its lush hallways contain many remarkable pieces of artwork, held in high esteem by the collegians who roam the grounds. Most impressive among them are the striking murals that line the building’s grand staircase. Three professors conceived of the idea for the works of art to embody a “pictorial synthesis of Penn State.” The “land-grant frescoes,” as they are familiarly called, pay tribute to important figures and events in the institution’s history. Curiously situated on the right side of this masterpiece, amid former college presidents and esteemed faculty, is the only African American portrait: that of three-time Olympic gold medalist and Nittany Lion track and field star, Barney Ewell. Ewell’s image is an affirmation of the regard afforded athletics at the institution. The university, since the integration of its athletics programs in 1909, has maintained its record of fielding a number, albeit small, of African American athletes on its many sports teams. The image of Ewell speaks loudly to the institution’s tradition of venerating athletes of color, and its ostensible commitment to racial diversity.

The Pennsylvania State University built its local, regional, and, eventually, its national reputation on a number of issues, including its apparent position as a racially integrated and tolerant community. The institution fashioned this seemingly racially progressive image by publicly celebrating the presence and performances of its outstanding African American athletes. Based upon this constructed reputation, the Penn State community’s confidence in its own dedication to racial equality grew so pervasive that when confronted with contradictory evidence, it chose to overlook allegations of discrimination, rather than reexamine its own false
consciousness. This chapter argues that the Penn State community’s open and enthusiastic celebration of the high-profile achievements of its African American athletes between 1955 and 1959 strengthened and maintained a semblance of racial harmony and inclusion to the outside public. This façade effectively shaped what some African American students would later deem an “artificial harmony” -- an apparent harmony that obscured and ignored the omnipresent racism and discrimination experienced by students of color in the larger Penn State community.\textsuperscript{112}

A number of incidents during the 1940s and early 1950s conceived and perpetuated the ostensible narrative of racial acceptance at the University. Historian Mark Dyreson argues that during this time the university began to challenge segregated sporting traditions. For example, in 1940, school officials forced the relocation of a scheduled track meet against the Naval Academy. Penn State made the decision when Academy officials in Annapolis voiced a desire to prevent Barney Ewell’s participation. While at the time, college officials cited a conflict with final examinations as motivation for the move, a short time later it was revealed that Dean of Athletics, Carl Schott, had personally traveled to Annapolis to negotiate the location change to ensure Ewell’s involvement. With these actions, the administration demonstrated to the public its dedication to integrated athletics was more than superficial lip service.\textsuperscript{113}

In addition, Charles Martin explored the circumstances that led to Penn State integrating the 1948 Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas. The squad, having received a bid from bowl organizers expressly forbidding the inclusion of the team’s two African American members, chose to challenge the traditional gentleman’s agreement, an unofficial athletic tradition that called for integrated squads to either leave their athletes of color behind when traveling to segregated contests or to sit them when playing segregated squads at home. Without hesitation, the team
informed bowl officials that all members of the team would participate or they would waive the invitation. Perhaps bolstered by their equalitarian stance, the Nittany Lion team went on to tie Southern Methodist University 13-13, in a game that Martin argues inspired the integration of future Cotton Bowls.  

So ingrained has this series of events become into the university’s public identity that the anecdote now helps to fill Beaver Stadium on autumn Saturdays. Campus legend explains that the origin of the famous athletics cheer, “WE ARE…PENN STATE,” is an articulation of a statement allegedly pronounced by team captain, Steve Suhey, to express to Cotton Bowl officials the racial unity on the team. In the late twentieth century, astute sports’ marketers reappropriated the supposed pronouncement. Now, the chant not only marks individuals as members of the Nittany Nation, but also expresses the unremitting shared belief in a mythology that Penn State identity is grounded in racial tolerance.  

Furthermore, Dyreson argues that Penn State’s dedication to fair play permeated other areas of campus life. In the spring of 1954, Jesse Arnelle, African American basketball and football standout, made both local and national news headlines when he was elected student body president. Arnelle received an impressive seventy-five percent of the vote, made more remarkable by the fact that only one percent of the student body was African American at the time. Noted as the first African American Student Body President at a predominantly white institution, Arnelle’s election spoke to a seemingly colorblind ethic present on campus.  

Scholars have examined the incidents of progressive racial politics during the time period were not unique to Penn State. For example, during the 1920s and 1930s, northern school’s adherence to “gentlemen’s agreements” was quite common. However, by the 1950s, many schools began dismissing these covenants in favor of nondiscriminatory stances. During the
same time periods, other schools, such as the University of Pittsburgh, challenged segregated bowls games by refusing to exclude their African American players. Penn State was just one among many schools that fought for racial equality in athletics.

**Nittany Nation in Black and White**

The events examined by Dyreson and Martin laid the foundation for Penn State’s artificial harmony. During the second half of the 1950s, the PSU community continued to construct this identity and reputation through Nittany Lion athletics. In the fall of 1956, the University Park campus buzzed as the institution welcomed its largest student population, over 12,000 undergraduates, back to Happy Valley. Among those students were African American track stars Art Pollard and Roderick Perry. Pollard, elected team captain for the 1956 season, was christened the team’s “outstanding sprint man.” The local paper expected both men to “carry the bulk of the team’s load in the coming season.” A member of the team’s coaching staff publicly praised his leadership to the Nittany Lion faithful exclaiming, “Pollard is a great sprinter and, what’s more, he’s an excellent team man. He’s an inspiration to the other boys on the squad…everyone can see why.” More often than not, photographs of the two athletes accompanied their acknowledgments and, as a result, individuals in and around the surrounding communities could not help but notice their race. With their continued appearances, the two young men assured that African American athletes were inextricably linked to the institution’s outward identity.

During this same time period, one of Penn State’s most highly celebrated athletes, and perhaps one of the greatest to ever grace the gridiron, Lenny Moore, began his football career. Racially marked as “the fast moving negro” or “the lithe negro” by the university’s public information office, Moore served as a demonstration of the university’s acceptance of African
American athletes during his tenure. The student newspaper declared the “negro left half back” so influential to success on the field, and implicitly its reputation off of it, that “as Lenny Moore goes, so goes the Lions.” Semingly, Lenny Moore had become the public face of the football program.

Increasingly, national media outlets identified Moore as “Penn State’s Negro,” solidifying the university’s public association with successful African American athletes. The community rejoiced to see that the Baltimore Colts selected Moore in the 1955 NFL draft, flattering the “swiveled-hipped speedster” for his seasons of service to the Nittany Lions. Not only had Moore thrust the football program to national recognition, his presence as the star of the team continued to sustain PSU’s reputation for racially integrated athletics.

Alas, with the newly created void left by Moore’s departure, the community found itself without an African American star to employ as the university’s public face. No individual athletic star possessed the national notoriety similar to that afforded Moore during the past three seasons. Moore’s impact on and off the field had become so iconized, that the student newspaper reported that Coach “Rip” Engle’s “no. 1 problem” was finding Moore’s replacement. Conveniently, with the introduction of African American Bruce Gilmore, the athletics department attempted to thrust the junior running back into the media spotlight in many of the same ways it had offered his predecessor.

Gilmore’s introduction as “another shifty Negro left halfback [who] is trying to walk in Moore’s footsteps,” in local papers served to usher him into the standout position. So successful had Moore been in furthering the institution’s racially inclusive narrative that the community relentlessly compared Gilmore to his precursor, mentioning the youngster was “not so fast as Lenny Moore, but who is?” Looking to answer queries of “can Gilmore make Penn
State rooters forget L. Moore,” the community acknowledged that the pigskin protégé was “able to do just about everything his predecessor was,” including escorting the team into another outwardly racially harmonious season.\textsuperscript{131}

The university community gained additional confirmation of its dedication to sports-led equality in December of 1959. With a regular-season record of 8-2, the football team accepted a bid to the newly established Liberty Bowl, held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{132} The bowl’s committee scrambled to finalize an appropriate opponent for the Lions late into November. Although the school newspaper stated that numerous teams, including Louisiana State University (LSU), Georgia, Georgia Tech, and Clemson were still in the running, a decision was not immediately forthcoming as many schools weighed their bowl options.\textsuperscript{133} Nittany Nation, which hoped for a highly anticipated match-up against LSU, scoffed when the Tiger squad lost interest while their Board of Trustees dealt with the “problem” of “playing against negroes.”\textsuperscript{134} Only temporarily discouraged, the community was delighted to discover that the University of Alabama’s Crimson Tide, led by legendary coach Paul “Bear” Bryant, agreed to meet the Nittany Lions in the mid December bowl.\textsuperscript{135}

Alabama’s acceptance of the bid was surprising for two reasons. First, Bryant had previously turned down a bid to the Bluegrass Bowl, asserting that the Tide would not partake in any post-season play that year; and secondly, because of the University of Alabama’s infamous reputation for segregation in all areas, including athletics. The contest, noted as the first time the Tide traveled above the Mason-Dixon Line to play an integrated team, invigorated the Nittany Nation, who proudly celebrated Charley Janerette, the only African American on the Penn State squad.\textsuperscript{136} The Penn State community was undoubtedly excited when \textit{The Tuscaloosa News} announced that Janerette “will be the first Negro to play football against Alabama.”\textsuperscript{137} Penn
State’s stance against Alabama’s policy of segregated athletics is of special note as it took place in 1959, some eleven years before Jerry Claiborne—one time assistant to Bear Bryant—quipped that UCLA’s Sam Cunningham “did more for integration in sixty minutes than Martin Luther King did in twenty years.” \[138\] Although Cunningham’s 1970 performance is mythologized as the impetus for Bear Bryant’s decision to integrate the Tide, Alabama had a record of playing against talented African American athletes like Janerette for over a decade. With Janerette’s participation in the Liberty Bowl the university community had once again strengthened its apparent conviction in racial equality by standing up to a pillar of southern racism and segregation.

The appearance of outstanding athletes of color such as Moore, Gilmore, and Janerette, was increasingly characteristic of Northern athletic teams during the “romantic era” of desegregation. \[139\] Numerous changes during the 1940s and 1950s created a climate within higher education that was more receptive to African American athletes. The changing social consciousness after World War II and the advancements of the early Civil Rights movement, including 1954’s historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, opened up opportunities previously closed to student-athletes of color. \[140\] Yet, historians explain that African American athletes on predominantly white campuses were still forced to confront discrimination and prejudice. \[141\] Even in light of Penn State’s many accomplishments in the field of athletics, the campus was not immune to the ills of larger social reality.

**Shattered Harmony: The Davage Report and Discrimination**

Amid celebrations of remarkable African American athletes such as Gilmore and Janerette, the establishment of an artificial harmony, in which African American Penn State students suffered discrimination and racism, went unnoticed by the administration and university
community. The narrative created by the public focus on athletes of color obscured the fact that these students faced discrimination in many aspects of daily life. African American students, who had only recently gained access to on-campus housing at the university, levied numerous complaints about discrimination in off-campus housing, access to local restaurants and eateries, the availability of tonsorial services, which included barber and beauty shops, along with general prejudice in the local community.¹⁴²

In January 1955, in response to a student’s request that the administration pass a resolution to discourage discrimination at the institution “if such exists,” the All-University Cabinet announced it would “not take a stand on discrimination at the university.”¹⁴³ Members of the student board declared that at this prestigious institution “no discrimination [was] evident.” A white female member of the cabinet added, “in the three and one half years I have been on this campus, I have not seen any cases of discrimination.”¹⁴⁴ The following day, a student editorial applauded the “sound handling” of the discrimination question.¹⁴⁵ The author did admit, however, that while discrimination was “no problem” at their beloved Penn State, students were becoming “considerably concerned” with the problem of discrimination at other institutions.¹⁴⁶ The resounding approval of the cabinet’s decision appeared motivated by the fact that no discrimination could be proven on campus. Although African Americans reiterated their concerns, the university cabinet concluded that those incidents were isolated events that could not be substantiated. Apparently, to the blue and white faithful, the issues of discrimination and prejudice were problems suffered by students of color at other institutions, but not in Happy Valley.

The following year, school officials echoed their previous stance on racial discrimination at the university. In January 1956, members of the Sociology Club convened a panel to discuss
race relations on campus. African American panel attendees again described instances of discrimination in the PSU community. Condemning the continued inequitable access to off-campus housing faced by African American students, a student accused the university housing office of facilitating the issue by permitting landlords who advertised through the office to stipulate “no negroes” or “no foreign students” in their listings. Another individual claimed he was refused service from a barber in town based on his race. Perhaps most disturbingly, one student of color claimed that she was turned away from a university organized student-teaching appointment because of her race, illustrating that discrimination not only plagued social affairs but had seeped into academic protocol as well.

Though the panel concluded that the academic community had made “much progress” in the field during the previous semesters, an administrator felt obligated to repeat “there is no such thing as racial discrimination at the University.” In an attempt to bolster his argument, the official continued that the administration “keeps no record of a student’s race,” insinuating that discrimination on the part of the institution was nearly impossible. The institution and the larger community chose to ignore the grievances of its African American students once again, under the guise of a color-blind ethic. Tellingly, that same day, the student newspaper’s sports sections featured a large picture of sprinter Art Pollard accompanying an article that praised his “outstanding record” and team leadership. The periodical’s readership ignored the accusation of racial discrimination or bias on the part of college officials, focusing on the achievements of outstanding athletes instead.

During the ensuing years, African American students’ allegations of racial inequity at the university and in the surrounding community remained strong. Most accusations were quickly quieted under the rationale that no proof existed to substantiate the charges, leading one PSU
professor to quip “what is the level of discrimination in the University? We don’t know. There is no evidence, and thank God for it.”\textsuperscript{153} The university continued to rely on a lack of substantiated evidence to explain the absence of action taken to correct the issue.

The situation changed dramatically in 1958, when psychology professor Dr. Robert Davage released a study entitled \textit{Racial Discrimination in the State College Community}. Having arrived at the institution the previous year as PSU’s first African American male faculty member, Davage set about addressing the “problems of racial discrimination” in the community.\textsuperscript{154} He understood that the only method that would successfully spur the administration to take action against the discriminatory practices present in the university community was to substantiate the claims so they could no longer “be classified as hearsay,” and ignored by the architects of university policy.

Davage collected survey data from approximately seventy African American individuals in the university population, estimating that his sample represented “40% to 47% of the total Negro population (including townspeople and children) in State College, and from 45% to 54% of the total population of American Negro students at the university.”\textsuperscript{155} Davage identified the primary motivation for the study to be to determine “how much and what kind of racial discrimination is practiced in the State College community.”\textsuperscript{156} Unfortunately, the results contained within the study were different than what many in the community believed.

The Davage Report’s results ran contrary to the narrative forged by the celebration of athletes of color throughout the twentieth century. Nearly half the African American respondents surveyed in the Davage Report described personally experiencing acts of discrimination in the PSU community, including both at the university and in the surrounding town. The majority of
those reports concerned grievances which others had raised for years, namely, inequitable access to housing, access to tonsorial services, and differential treatment by university faculty and staff.

African American students described numerous instances in which they were turned away from off campus living arrangements. One such respondent remarked:

I called on the phone the lady who had advertised in The Collegian a room for rent. She said it was available and asked if I was a good roomer. I said I was. Then I told her I was a Negro. She became very indignant and a bit nasty and said she did not like mixing and hung up…

The study contended that even when an African American student successfully procured housing, that accommodation was not always secure. One individual reported,

I was requested to move from my apartment locate at ______ Street, on November 15, 1957. The owner had received a request from a neighbor…

Regrettably, State College residents’ harmonious acceptance of African America students did not extend off the playing field and into their homes.

Furthermore, students complained of being turned away from restaurants and barber and beauty shops. One male student reported he was denied a haircut by a barbershop owner who claimed that he was unable to “cut the type of hair that is characteristic of Negroes.” Upon pressing, a shop owner admitted that offering service to African Americans “would ruin [his] business.” Ostensibly, members of the community, who were delighted when African American students were featured in the newspaper for their athletic achievements, were less so when they were featured at the front doors of their businesses.

Arguably, the most disturbing of the survey’s data was that of the unequal treatment of African American students in academic settings. One student reported, “My teacher deliberately called [on] someone else in the class and gave him the opportunity that he would not give me because of my color.” Citing a litany of examples, Davage concluded that discrimination was a “central” factor in the lives of African American students Penn State.
Interestingly, the Davage Report made no mention of African American athletes in its findings. While it is unknown whether any athletes of color took part in the study, it cannot be ignored that these individuals were a unique subset of the student population. Although they were afforded increased notoriety and possibly even a level of celebrity in the Penn State and State College community, these athletes still suffered similar incidents of racial discrimination. In his autobiography published nearly five decades after he first arrived on campus, Lenny Moore recounts the hostility he and his fellow African American athletes faced during the time period, stating, “I knew where I could and couldn’t go in downtown Happy Valley.” Retrospectively bolstering the Davage Reports findings, Moore listed the dearth of locations accepting of African Americans as “our dorm rooms[s], the Student Union, [and] the Rathskellar (a local restaurant).” Even without the difficulty of attempting to secure off campus housing (Lenny Moore and other athletes of the time lived on campus for the entirety of their athletic careers), African American athletes suffered discrimination in many forms.

Both the findings of the Davage Report and the Moore’s retrospective are accurate to what scholars found to be representative of African American student athletes’ experiences during the time period. For example, Arthur Ashe Jr., who attended UCLA, describes the reality faced by athletes of color as an “other world” swirling with “maddening housing problems and repugnant social conventions.” Penn State was among many predominantly white institutions that struggled with issues of fully integrating their African American student athletes into campus life. Yet, the administration was unwavering in its refusal to admit any shortcomings. Even though the findings in the Davage Report offered evidence of discrimination, the lack of administrative and community response implied that the study’s conclusions had fallen on deaf ears. The student newspaper dedicated little space to Davage’s findings, admitting only
that solving the “problems of negroes” would require some “very serious soul searching… on the part of the university.” But, in light of the absence of action by the administration, it appeared that the community was unwilling to admit the presence of an artificial harmony.

Between 1955 and 1959 university officials continually attempted to distance the institution from the “problems of negroes.” Director of Student Affairs William Kenworthy charged local residents as the origin of racial prejudice in the Penn State community, denying any bias on the part of the university. When pressed as to why the university housing office continued to advertise for landlords who refused to rent to students of color, Kenworthy claimed that the university had “no legal or moral right” to interfere with the private lives of local citizens. Even in light of the fact that these local businesses capitalized and depended on the patronage of students, both black and white, university officials chose to do nothing to modify the environment faced by students of color. With their continued inaction, the administration tacitly insured the persistence of an artificial harmony while still electing to ignore the growing concerns of the African American student population.

**Onward State**

Regrettably, the day-to-day lived realities of African American students changed little in the University Park community after the release of Davage’s findings. Barbershops remained primarily closed to students of color until the mid-1960s, and reports of discriminatory housing practices endured. The university understood the power of intercollegiate sport in shaping the institution’s identity and courting public opinion and continued to publically celebrate the accomplishments of its successful African American athletes on their field of play, with little recognition of their inequality off the field. The publicity afforded African American athletes such as Lenny Moore and Art Pollard, was invaluable to maintaining the public image of a
harmoniously integrated university. Even though this reputation, to borrow from Clifford Geertz, was a story Penn State told itself about itself, the self-perpetuating mythos became so ubiquitous, so ingrained in understandings of the institution’s identity, that when confronted with contradictory evidence, the university community chose to dismiss conflicting accounts as inaccurate and inconsequential.\textsuperscript{171}

Penn State University faced a racial integration reality similar to many other institutions of higher education during that time period. Historians such as David Wiggins and Donald Spivey and sociologist Harry Edwards have explored the difficulties of African American students at predominantly white institutions mid-century, finding that many confronted issues of inequality associated with the increased presence of African American students on campus.\textsuperscript{172} The issues faced by African Americans on the PSU campus were arguably not remarkably different from comparable institutions of higher education during this era. What makes Penn State University’s history striking is that it focused so heavily on the outward, public image of its African American athletes while it continued to ignore any fissures in its veneer of equality. Rather than admit to a false consciousness, the university community continued to rely on its reputation for inclusiveness during the 1960s, and entrench deeper into its own constructed reality. Furthermore, the university community continues, even today, to identify with a color-blind narrative, seemingly unaware or unwilling to admit to the integration difficulties and outright discrimination that plagued the university mid-century.

After disregarding the findings presented in the Davage Report, the community attempted to return to its apparent harmony. However, once cracked, the veneer of racial harmony would never be as strong. Although the university employed the public celebration of prominent African American athletes to advertise its ostensible racial harmony, some in the community
began to see the limitations of such tactics, leading one editorial in the *Daily Collegian* to muse, “the question of prejudice is a broad one---not to whittled down to the boundary lines of a football field.” Perhaps in the future, the on-field actions of Ewell, Moore, and countless athletes like them, would no longer be enough to quiet unrest on the campus. Possibly, a new generation of activists, aware of the narrative created by the celebration of African American athletes, could force the institution and the community to address whether or not we are *all* Penn State.
Chapter Three


In the fall of 1961, the Pittsburgh Courier published a scathing editorial asking, “why can’t inept Pitt [The University of Pittsburgh] find tan gridders?” The author maligned the school for its lack of any African American members on the football team that season. While Pitt’s administrators claimed that there was a dearth of academically qualified athletes of color from which to draw, the author believed that the success of other colleges and universities belied the position. Mostly, the writer was disappointed that the Panthers continually lost potential players to “other” schools that recruited in western Pennsylvania. The other school, known for its reputation of recruiting prominent African American athletes, was The Pennsylvania State University.

Penn State, through a public campaign that celebrated the accomplishments of its African American athletes, constructed its national reputation as an institution founded on racially harmonious principles. This superior reputation, alluded to in The Courier’s critique, allowed the institution and its local community to overlook or downplay instances of discrimination. Although this narrative, set in place in earlier decades and outlined in Chapters One and Two, continued to build in the years between 1960 and 1964, the weaknesses of the approach began to manifest during this time period. This chapter argues that the Penn State community continued to strengthen the artificial harmony that existed in the community between 1960 and 1964 through the celebration of prominent athletes of color. In addition to the public celebration of these athletes, university officials ignored or downplayed the seriousness of charges of discrimination that were present on campus.
As examined in Chapter Two, between 1955 and 1959 the Penn State community employed the public personas of African American athletes such as Lenny Moore, Bruce Gilmore, Roderick Perry, Art Pollard, and Charlie Jeanerette to maintain its public image as a racially progressive place. Prominent African American athletes grew even more integral to shaping its regional and national reputation in the 1960s as the university actively cultivated and promoted its athletic department in an endeavor to transform what was then a local college into a nationally known and distinguished university. Scholars point out that during the 1960s, many institutions began or increased their recruitment of black athletes to play in the ever more competitive intercollegiate football conferences. At Penn State, numerous athletes of color aided in growing the Nittany Nation’s image. Among these athletes were Gene Harris and Dave Robinson.

The early 1960s was a tumultuous period for Americans of all races. Intensified social consciousness thrust the civil rights movement to nationwide prominence. The recent highly contested election of a young, dynamic John F. Kennedy in November 1960 fueled hope that the fight to end discrimination would soon be victorious. Five years earlier, the Montgomery Bus Boycott created a national figure out of a black preacher from Georgia named Martin Luther King, Jr., who preached for non-violent resistance to social injustices. Although remembered contemporarily as face of the civil rights movement, other black leaders including Malcolm X, Bobby Seale, and Stokely Carmichael joined King in the chorus of voices calling for freedom and equality in the U.S.

Among these new voices were those advocating racial separation, “Black Power,” and rumblings of a Black Panther party, all of which added dynamicity to the Civil Rights Movement. African Americans waiting for equality grew gradually more disenchanted with
the tactics of previous decades and began to turn towards more provocative, “confrontational” strategies to garner support for widespread integration. In February 1960, four African American college students sat down at a “whites-only” Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro and sparked one of the largest student-led social protests in American civil rights history. Nonetheless, these new maneuvers did not go unchallenged.

Close to a decade after the passage of Brown v. Board of Education, which denounced the legality of “separate but equal” policies, challenges to desegregation, especially in education, continued to flourish. In September 1962, after numerous Supreme Court challenges by ardent segregationists, James Meredith became the first African American to attend the University of Mississippi. Accompanied by U.S. Marshals sent by President Kennedy, Meredith graduated in 1963. Even as more and more schools accepted African American students and athletes, incidents of racism and discrimination did not disappear. In spite of what David Wiggins argues was a tendency for universities to view “black athletic talent as a means to achieve national recognition” and to claim a role in improving race relations, many predominantly white institutions continued to force African American athletes to live with inequality and injustice. Even in light of these injustices, Penn State continued to cultivate a racially progressive narrative through the employment of successful African American athletes.

**The “Lanky Leaper”: Penn State’s African American Sporting Image**

In early 1961, Penn State basketball coach John Egli had grown concerned about the Nittany Lions’ lack of post-season play since the graduation of former Nittany Lion standout Jesse Arnelle in 1955. Fans grew anxious that the team would never return to its former glory. Luckily for Egli and the fans, African American Eugene Harris joined the varsity squad in 1959. The center quickly hit his stride during his junior year of play, leading the Lions in scoring.
local media darling, it was not uncommon for Harris to grace the headlining spot of the student newspaper’s sports section upwards of two times a week.\textsuperscript{190} Accompanying shots of Harris out-rebounding his opponents or grinning for the camera were accolades of his “superb” performances and determination. His presence on the team insured that continued Nittany Lion basketball success was associated with a talented African American athlete.\textsuperscript{191}

Although neither the student newspaper nor the university’s department of public information overtly referred to Harris as “Negro” or “colored,” as they had with others in the past, there were, arguably, subtle references to his race. For instance, the university’s department of public information repeatedly mentioned his jumping ability, nicknaming the talented center “jumpin’ Gene” and “the jumping jack.”\textsuperscript{192} Head coach Egli charmed reporters by commenting that Harris “jumps real well.”\textsuperscript{193} Certainly, the ability to jump is one prized in the sport of basketball and Harris’s talent warranted praise; however, commentary on his aptitude was disproportionate with that which his teammates received. Historians John Hoberman and David Wiggins have examined the marking of racial difference among African American athletes by emphasizing athletic ability, specifically speed or jumping ability.\textsuperscript{194} Media scholars have argued that historically athletes of color are often framed in news portrayals in accordance with their inherent athleticism.\textsuperscript{195} Michael Oriard reasons that during the 1950s, media outlets outside of the South no longer relied on overt stereotyping to describe athletes of color, but many “unintentionally reinforce[d] racial thinking” through equating black athletic success with “natural talent” and white success with “intelligence” and hard work.\textsuperscript{196} As no mention of Harris’s hard work appears in the \textit{Daily Collegian}, even without explicitly identifying Harris as an athlete of color, the publication reinforced the “lanky leaper” as a well-known African American Penn Stater.\textsuperscript{197}
Gene Harris cemented his place in the history books in December 1961 when he scored an astonishing 46 points against Holy Cross, breaking Jesse Arnelle’s previous record of 44. Comparisons between the two African American athletes abounded in local newspapers, highlighting not only the university’s contemporary African American athletes, but also its long history of racial inclusion. Furthermore, Harris’s noteworthy scoring streak propelled Nittany Lion basketball into the national news. Although the team failed to make any post-season tournaments, Harris’s public success on the court continued to promote Penn State as an environment open and accepting of athletes of color.

**Integrating the Gator Bowl: Dave Robinson and Songs of the Southland**

The University furthered its racially progressive image when its 1961 football squad integrated the Gator Bowl game in Jacksonville, Florida. The *Pittsburgh Courier* commented that Penn State’s participation in the game was “noteworthy” among other integrated post-season contests because of the bowl’s long history of exclusion. While the Cotton and Sun Bowls integrated a decade earlier, the Gator Bowl, established in 1946, clung obstinately to its segregationist policies. This was, perhaps, unsurprising, considering its geographical location. Yet, in 1961, the Gator Bowl was unable to withstand pressure to integrate. And so, as it had in the Liberty and Cotton Bowls, the university made history when on December 30, 1961, David Robinson turned in an impressive performance against the Yellow Jackets of Georgia Tech and led the team in receptions.

A native of Moorestown, New Jersey, Robinson was a standout on the Nittany Lions squad. Majoring in civil engineering, he would go one to become a three-year letterman. Dominant on both sides of the ball, Robinson would later be described by Head Coach Rip Engle as “the best lineman I’ve ever coached.”
Before lining up against Tech, The Daily Collegian described Robinson as “nervous.”

His nerves may have had as much to do with the desire to win as with Georgia Tech’s historical position on integration. Five years earlier, even the notion that Georgia Tech would play against an athlete of color nearly brought the governor’s mansion down at the hands of an angry mob.

In January 1956, not quite two years after the passage of Brown v. Board of Education desegregated public education, Sugar Bowl officials inadvertently provoked “an explosion of southern white resistance” when they offered the visiting bid to an integrated Pitt Panther squad to play against home favorites Georgia Tech. Aware of the implications of the match-up, Georgia Tech administrators cleared any objections with Governor Marvin Griffin and university boosters before accepting the invitation.

Days after announcing the game, Governor Griffin reversed his prior stance in reaction to the response of powerful Georgia segregationists. Warning Southern brethren against compromising the “integrity of race,” Griffin famously cautioned of the contest “the South stands at Armageddon.” Angered by his unexpected reversal, hundreds of Tech students joined together to burn Griffin in effigy and march on his mansion. The following week, against the governor’s wishes, Tech’s Board of Regents submitted their approval and accepted the bid.

However progressive the stance taken by the board of regents appeared, their egalitarianism was short-lived, for they quickly implemented guidelines to bar integrated play at all future home games. Georgia Tech went on to win the game by a slim margin, 7-0, after a questionable penalty was called against Pitt’s African American player, Bobby Grier. Although Tech’s stance against integrated play had been weakened for one game, their reputation for dedication to Jim Crow no doubt preceded them to the Gator Bowl to face Dave Robinson.
Traveling to the game in December 1961, Jacksonville’s segregated hotels forced the squad to stay in St. Augustine, Florida. Integrated teams often had to stay great distances from playing venues in Jim Crow areas or cope with staying apart from their African American members.\textsuperscript{208} John Behee found that African American athletes at the University of Michigan often felt “tremendous anxiety and tension” when confronting travel arrangements in segregated cities.\textsuperscript{209}

In addition to the anxiety of navigating segregated Jacksonville, the Penn State coaching staff informed Robinson that he would not start the game because an upperclassman had earned the honor. They broke the news just before kick-off. It seems, though, that they may have had Robinson’s best interests at heart, as it was later revealed that the author of an anonymous letter had threatened to shoot Robinson on national television if he started the game.\textsuperscript{210} Despite the threat, the game continued without incident and the Nittany Lions emerged victorious over Tech, 30-15. After the win, Robinson was quick point out that “there were 11 gentlemen from Tech on the field.”\textsuperscript{211}

Encouraged by Robinson’s performance and the reactions of the Georgia Tech squad, the PSU community subtly commended Robinson for striking down the Gator Bowl’s segregated seventeen-year history. Little fuss was made over the historic event, with The Daily Collegian quipping only that Robinson “was the first Negro” to play in the venerated contest. Possibly, integrating bowl games had become “old-hat” to Nittany Lion fans, who expected the squad to make a historic stance in any post-season appearance. Or perhaps fans silently believed that Penn State’s campaign for athletics led inclusion had permeated all of intercollegiate football, and imagined more harmonious Gator Bowls in the future.
Whatever the motivation for the absence of fanfare in the student newspaper, instances of racism still permeated intercollegiate athletics in the early 1960s, even as the numbers of African American players at predominantly white institutions increased. Edwards maintains that African American athletes during the era had to contend with racism from teammates, coaches, training staff, and opponents. In addition to outright racism, athletes continued to suffer discrimination in stacking practices, in which African Americans were segregated to only certain positions, the limited starting positions, and recruiting. Although Penn State athletics retained its reputation for racial inclusion, members of the program were still forced to deal with the prejudice and racism.

The following December the university rejoiced when, after another winning season, the squad once again accepted the bid to play in the Gator Bowl. This was the culmination of another historic season for the Lions and Dave Robinson. Much to the delight of the community, Robinson had been named a first-team All-American. Even in light of historic greats such as Wally Triplett and Lenny Moore, an African American member of the squad had never before received all-American honors. Penn State’s previous omission from the ranks of All-Americans does not speak as much to Robinson’s prowess as it does to the historical preference afforded white players in the selection of this national honor.

The university community delighted in the opportunity to make integration history again upon learning their opponents in the Gator Bowl would be the University of Florida Gators. Florida maintained a record of ruthlessly defending segregation in higher education, including intercollegiate athletics. For example, the University of Florida had just accepted its first African American students three months earlier in September 1962, some eight years and numerous legal challenges after 1954’s landmark Brown v. Board of Education ruling. Perhaps it was the
recent federally mandated integration of their classrooms that motivated the Gators, or perhaps it was Robinson’s threat to their segregated athletics, but as the Florida band once again played “Dixie” and the squad took the field, they did so with newly painted Confederate flags on their helmets.  

A new addition to the uniform, Florida Coach Ray Graves endorsed the symbol arguing, “our boys were defending the Southeastern Conference.” Apparently to the members of the Gator squad, donning the flag “was a great boost for the SEC [Southeastern Conference].” Although the Gators claimed that their use of the Confederate flag was in defense of their conference, scholars contend that its use during the early 1960s was part of larger campaign against civil rights. In 1948, the States’ Rights Party, commonly known as the Dixiecrats, split from the Northern faction of democrats over their support of civil rights. The group subsequently adopted both the Confederate battle flag and “Dixie” as emblems heavily associated with the opposition of segregation and integration, and equality.  

Despite the fact the players later argued they were unaware of the racial implications of the game and of Robinson’s participation, it is difficult to believe that members of the Gator squad were ignorant to the presence of the All-American they were about to face. Presumably, the Gators were mindful not only of Robinson’s integration of the bowl the year previous, but of his upcoming participation as Florida newspapers salivated over the match-up. Many sources featured pictures and articles of the Nittany Lion. For example, just days before the contest, The St. Petersburg Times nicknamed Robinson “the Negro Terminal” and praised his strength and stamina next to a featured picture of the tight end. Whether the Gators’ motivations were malicious or not, the Lions played sluggishly, losing the game by 10. In spite of the loss,
Robinson was named the team MVP for the game for his outstanding defensive play and made history by becoming the first African American to line-up opposite the Gators.\textsuperscript{223}

In the days and weeks that followed, the Penn State community was uncharacteristically quiet on the stinging events of the 1962 Gator Bowl, possibly due to the semester break stifling the spread of articles and pictures of the Confederate-clad Gators among students and faculty. Although the student paper characterized the flags as “blazing” atop the helmets of the Gator helmets, little was said to condemn the act.\textsuperscript{224} Choosing instead to focus on the positive, the paper heralded Robinson for his effort and his recently signed professional contract with the Green Bay Packers. He went on to have a phenomenal career in Green Bay, helping the franchise to capture the 1965 NFL championship and victories in both Super Bowls I and II—while earning himself a spot in the Hall of Fame. Robinson’s success ensured that another generation of successful African American athletes maintained the university’s image as racially harmonious on a national stage.\textsuperscript{225}

Although Nittany Lion fans may have been disappointed with Florida’s initial response in the Gator Bowl, the fact that the Gators agreed to play against an integrated squad illuminates the slow progress made in intercollegiate football and race relations. For example, gentlemen’s agreements, unofficial athletic traditions that called for integrated squads to either leave their athletes of color behind when traveling or to sit them when playing segregated squads at home, once prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s, were now becoming vestiges of the past.\textsuperscript{226} Additionally, schools previously bound by bans against integrated athletic competitions were now easing their resistance.\textsuperscript{227} For example, the cautiously desegregating SEC proved that Penn State and other institutions athletic led integration methods had far reaching implications in intercollegiate football. In April 1963, the University of Kentucky sent questionnaires to members of the SEC
inquiring about their stances on playing integrated teams. Kentucky was considering desegregating its athletic programs and was attempting to gauge how that decision would influence their conference schedule. In response, Georgia Tech and Tulane universities announced that they would no longer adhere to segregationist policies and would “be permitted to play against Negroes at home or away.”

Pundits deliberated whether or not other SEC schools, including the University of Florida, would follow suit. Reporters were quick to point out that “Florida [had] played an integrated Penn State team in the Gator Bowl last season.” Perhaps the stellar play of the Lion’s standout lessened Florida’s resistance and possibly the SEC’s hard line against racially mixed athletics. Although Florida would not field its own African American football player until 1970, during the 1967-1968 academic year alone, four SEC institutions opened their doors to African American athletes for the first time. While racial acceptance was slow and hard fought, Robinson and the Nittany Lions arguably hastened the reception of integrated football competition.

Trouble in “Happy Valley”: Instances of Discrimination in State College

The university’s apparent public dedication to racial equality is well highlighted through the celebration of Gene Harris, Dave Robinson, and the integration of the 1961 Gator Bowl. In spite of this, events that took place within the university community during the early 1960s paint a picture contrary to its public image. As in previous years, beneath the public celebration of Penn State’s black student-athletes seethed a host of issues that poked holes in the façade of racial harmony. As the institution navigated through the “age of Aquarius,” it found that the veneer of racial harmony was not sufficient to keep social peace in the University Park campus. Simply ignoring the existence of racial discrimination, as university officials had
done during the previous decade, would not quiet the unrest brewing in the community. As the racially harmonious appearance deteriorated, university community members were forced to confront numerous forms of discrimination, including continued housing segregation and sustained unequal access to tonsorial services.

In March of 1960, five students began picketing in front of Bunn’s Barbershop, a popular business located in State College, the small town in which the university is located and serves as a home for many students, faculty and staff. The students were responding to the shop manager turning away an African American student, adding that they were attempting to end the “local segregation problem” present in the university community. When a reporter asked the shop owner why he turned the client away, he responded simply that it “was his policy” and stated that the continued demonstration “doesn’t bother me.” 232 Seemingly, in State College, African American Penn Staters were welcome to win the university prestige on the football field and basketball court, but not free to patronize all businesses.

This was not the first instance of social unrest directed at barbershops in the State College area. Historian Mark Dyreson outlined the events that took place during the late 1940s, when members of the academic community boycotted barbershops in protest of their segregationist policies. 233 Those picketers, members of the campus chapters of the Committee on Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), found themselves joined by Nittany Lion football player Dennis Hoggard. Already a part of university history for his participation on the football squad that proudly integrated the Cotton Bowl in Dallas the year previous, Hoggard’s sweeping support of the picketers spurred numerous campus organizations to join with members of the NAACP and CORE in the initial fight against the shops. 234 Hoggard’s public backing for the campaign to desegregate
barbershops, as a member of the institution’s sporting elite, proved invaluable to boycotters in their struggle for equality.

Perhaps, barbershop protestors of the early 1960s took a page from the same playbook as they too attempted to rely on the public support of a prominent African American athlete. On April 21, 1960, Jesse Arnelle, former Nittany Lion football and basketball standout, met with barbershop owner Kenneth Bunn “to discuss the issue of segregation.” Like Hoggard before him, Arnelle possessed his own chapter in Penn State history. In addition to his athletic exploits, he was a member of Lion’s Paw, an exclusive university alumni society. As discussed in Chapter One, his legacy on campus was augmented by his special distinction of being the elected student body government president in 1953. Arnelle returned to campus on behalf of the picketers, citing that he was “interested in this problem and I would like to see it solved…I do not believe this [segregation] should be fostered in State College or any enlightened community. It’s everyone’s problem to eliminate this situation in any community where equality is claimed, and then denied.”

Arnelle’s presence in the movement and his statement to the media illustrate the artificial harmony present in the Penn State community. Student protestors undoubtedly were aware of the prestige and public amity afforded to successful African American student athletes on campus and attempted to employ the respect and admiration bestowed Arnelle during his term on campus to popularize their boycott movement. Possibly they believed that if unconcerned community members witnessed an athlete and university figure of Arnelle’s stature admitting to the presence of discrimination and emphasizing the lack of action against it, these community members would be spurred to immediate action to protect and support an athlete that had done so much for the institution.
Similarly, Arnelle’s statement highlights the consequence of the artificial harmony. Through the celebration of African American athletes’ on the field successes, the university could create and claim an atmosphere of racial accord. However, the “policy” of the barbershop owner, which clearly denied African Americans access equivalent to their white peers, exposed the fissures in the Penn State’s narrative.237

Arnelle and the picketers endeavored to employ the same public recognition that Hoggard had done a decade earlier, yet their results were not the same. Bunn, who claimed that he and Arnelle “were friendly” while the student-athlete attended classes as undergraduate, insisted he would not be “coerced” into changing his policies. Arnelle corroborated the failure in negotiations, telling reporters, “we got nowhere.”238 While Arnelle’s actions had been enough to bolster Penn State’s reputation for racial inclusiveness in the past, they fell short; Bunn’s Barbershop would remain closed African Americans for the foreseeable future.

While the student protestors failed to immediately change the segregationist policies of the barbershop, the group, now named Direct Action for Racial Equality (DARE), had an opportunity to shift its focus to another disparity present at the university.239 DARE’s fresh ambitions included an investigation into the universities “approved housing,” an issue that continued to be a source of unrest among the African American students and individuals in the State College area.240

Even though students alleged that the administration imagined a “dream world” where no discrimination was present in State College, the issue of residential housing discrimination had deep roots in the university community.241 As examined in the previous chapter, during the 1940s and 1950s, African American students complained of rampant discrimination by landlords and townspeople in off-campus housing arrangements, stating that many had “no negro” policies
and would not allow students of color or foreign students to reside there.\textsuperscript{242} Many of these policies continued into the 1960s, limiting the number of places that students of color could take up residence. Scholars have found that securing adequate housing was one of the most difficult tasks for African American athletes at predominantly white institutions.\textsuperscript{243}

Successful athletes of color were not immune from the forces of residential segregation. Either unbeknownst to or overlooked by individuals in the community, many of the same African American student-athletes that they celebrated on the field of play suffered the injustice of housing discrimination. For example, during the first years of his term at Penn State the “lanky leaper,” Gene Harris, roomed in a segregated off-campus residence, fondly termed ‘Lincoln Hall’ in honor of President Abraham Lincoln.\textsuperscript{244}

Lincoln Hall, located several blocks from the center of campus, was a small boarding house owned by an African American family employed as cooks at local white fraternities. One of the only residences with rooms available for Africans Americans during the mid-century, the home served as the unofficial center of African American life for many students of color at Penn State.\textsuperscript{245} As scholars such as Arthur Ashe, Harry Edwards, Donald Spivey and David Wiggins have shown, social isolationism was a problem that plagued student-athletes of color during this era.\textsuperscript{246} Places like Lincoln Hall provided some relief in the daily grind of prejudice and discrimination, offering a literal and symbolic space for unity and pride.

In addition to providing social acceptance, Lincoln Hall was a necessity for some African American students. During the 1930s, the university drew an “unofficial” color line that excluded African American students from living in on campus housing.\textsuperscript{247} Early African American athletes such as Wally Triplet were forced to room at Lincoln Hall as campus dormitories and houses were closed to them.\textsuperscript{248} After World War II, the restriction on African
American residents in on-campus housing was lifted, and athletes such as Gene Harris were granted permission to reside in dormitories, though the issue of discriminatory housing policies in off-campus housing continued to ignite tempers within the community.

In May 1960, members of DARE asked the Student Government Association (SGA) Assembly to pass a bill that would eliminate discrimination in the “approved university housing list” that suggested off-campus housing for students. The bill further proposed that the SGA levy its influence to “recommend to the borough [of State College] authority that they find a feasible means of alleviating the problem of discrimination in the community.”249 Opinions differed widely on whether SGA had the right to compel action from the larger community on the issue of discrimination. Some students in favor of intervention cleverly attacked Penn State’s belief in its own racially progressive narrative, negatively comparing the school’s inaction to the progress made by the University of Illinois, which had recently agreed to not approve any off-campus housing that was not open to all students, regardless of race or religion.250 Opponents of involvement facetiously asked the SGA to pass legislation against the track coaches for discriminating against “those who cannot run fast.”251 Illustrating their belief that the action was unnecessary and frivolous as discrimination in certain areas of life was lived reality for most individuals.

Members of the SGA found themselves in a unique position: they could vote against the legislation or support the bill and curb the discrimination against students of color. A vote in the affirmative, however, would mean acknowledging that racism did, indeed, plague Happy Valley, a region that had worked so consistently to create an image of racial harmony. Ultimately, the SGA chose to do neither. At the scheduled meeting on May 19, 1960, a number of assembly members left the room, refusing to vote on the bill. “I’ve never seen anything like I’ve seen
tonight,” commented a remaining assemblyman, “this is the highest student governing body on this campus…this is pretty shameful.”

Although the missing SGA members were never questioned as to why they refused to vote on DARE’s proposed bill, the tide of student opinion was changing. One individual wrote to the newspaper commenting that for the first time she was “ashamed” and “disgusted” with her association with the university. A senior student detailed, “the administration has been relatively silent on these matters and even if we overlook the moral implications present one cannot help but realize that it is the responsibility of the University to look after its students.”

Another followed, criticizing the “absurdity” of the SGA’s actions and commented, “while the administration and other groups and individuals in town and on campus refuse to recognize the problem of discrimination in housing exists, those students whose skin is not white can verify it.”

Ostensibly, the assembly demonstrated that the concerns of “those students whose skin is not white” on campus were of little matter to governing body.

The SGA, by refusing to take action, ignored the concerns of students of color, and instead chose to disregard their complaints and disavow the unequal reality within which African Americans were forced to live. Seemingly, the Penn State community was more concerned with maintaining its image and reputation as a racially progressive and tolerant school than in addressing the inequalities of those students of color who helped earn that reputation.

Blue and White History Continues

Once more, the Penn State community failed to take action to create “real” racial harmony at the university. In its place, the community chose to preserve the façade. Through the continuation of racist policies held by barbershop owners and the widely segregated off-campus housing, the university community was unsuccessful in constructing the peacefully and happily
integrated reality that athletes such as Gene Harris and Dave Robinson had symbolized through their accomplishments in athletics. The narrative of racial harmony, crafted by the public admiration offered these athletes, allowed the university and local community to overlook or downplay instances of discrimination at the university. These athletes, like African American athletes before them, were symbols of an academic community – what one student journalist called a “dream world” – that while imagined, was not yet reached.  

Nevertheless, the university did make slow progress towards full inclusion of all its students. After years of debate, university administrators decided to remove any landlord from its list of suggested housing who maintained race or ethnicity preferences in rental agreements. While this action temporarily quieted members of DARE and other social protest groups on campus, they could not quell the fast approaching period of unrest that would turn Penn State’s athletics driven racially progressive narrative on its head.

In only a few years, allegations of racial discrimination once again grew great enough to disrupt the artificial harmony. In this instance, the institution was confronted by the reality that it had not done everything possible to ensure the inclusion of its African American students, both athlete and non-athlete. Ironically, political activists this time turned Penn State’s celebration of its athletes of color on its head by exploiting the same visibility and notoriety of the athletes that had been employed by the university. In an attempt to garner increased support for racial equality on campus, the activists took their protest directly to the venue where the university forged its mythology of artificial harmony: the institution’s athletics.

Obviously unaware of the coming tempest, in 1964, the student newspaper published an editorial extolling that, “few racial incidents marred Negro’s history at university.” The essay went on to explain away earlier “disturbances” involving barbershops, describing State College
discrimination as a “cloud,” apparently too nebulous to attribute to any one person or group. The author notes that, “hundreds of Negro students have studied under the shadow of Old Main. Most of their names and achievements have been lost to history.”\textsuperscript{258} The article concludes with a glowing history of the African Americans that have “made Penn State news.”\textsuperscript{259} All were successful sports figures. Just as the \textit{Courier} insinuated years before, Penn State’s athletes of color would remain all the proof the institution needed to demonstrate the integration of Nittany Nation was more about blue and white than black and white.
“Since We Cannot Reach You at Any Other Place”: Racial Protests, Student Activism, and Intercollegiate Sport at Penn State, 1965-1969

On May 18th, 1968, Jesse Arnelle, former basketball and football standout, entered the ballroom of the Pennsylvania State University’s student union building. Selected by the Quarterback Club as the guest of honor for the yearly celebration, most expected Arnelle to attest to the power of Penn State athletics and what they could do for young men offered the chance to play them. After all, Arnelle was a self-identified child of the “slums” who greatly benefitted from the education he received at the university. Following his years as an All-American cager with the Nittany Lions, he went on to play professional basketball and pursue a law degree.

However, after he approached the podium Arnelle stunned the 450 members of the audience by pointing out what he saw as the universities “monumental and historical failures,” addressing the issues that “bring dishonor instead of glory to the University.”260 Once referred to as “central Pennsylvania’s Sidney Poitier,” Arnelle continued with a thirty minute speech in which he outlined the shortcomings of the community’s dedication to social justice nationally, and more specifically, racial equality locally. Onlookers sat nervously as he pointed out that the university had no tenured black faculty members, had never had a black dean, vice president or member of the Board of Trustees. In fact, the institution did not have an African American individual on any of its numerous policy making boards, councils, or committees. Most disturbing to Arnelle was the fact that although student registration had tripled in the decade since the completion of his degree, the percentage of African Americans enrolled had remained at one percent.

To add insult to injury to the flabbergasted audience, after Arnelle concluded his remarks he politely declined the award--a small Nittany lion statue--offered to him by Ridge Riley, the
president of the Alumni Association. Gently shaking his head Arnelle stated, “I am deeply honored with appreciation, but I decline to take it with me now. I will come back for it when freedom is here, when I can accept it with gratitude, affection, and extreme humility.” The next morning, an assistant football coach responded to Arnelle words, saying, “this wasn’t the time or place for it. The less said about it, the better.”

Jesse Arnelle had attempted to explain the artificial harmony—the celebration of African American athlete’s achievements and an ignorance of their adversities—that he saw on campus. Although the group in attendance has selected a prominent athlete of color as their keynote speaker, the community was unwilling to see the hypocrisy of ignoring the inequality present at the university. Possibly Arnelle understood that his position as a venerated African American athlete allowed him the ability to reach a larger Penn State audience to attempt to articulate the concerns of minority members of the institution. Even though his attempt to connect the popularity of Penn State athletics to the cause of racial equality appeared to gain little success, perhaps his actions left an enduring mark on the community, and many student activists within it.

Although the land grant agricultural school is not commonly thought of as a bastion of racial activism, the university, located in sleepy “Happy Valley,” possesses a storied and interesting history of racial activism. This unique history includes how the university community employed intercollegiate sport and its connection to and status within Penn State’s identity to garner a reputation for racial inclusiveness. As examined in previous chapters, this image, cultivated through the public celebration of successful African American athletes, forged an artificial harmony that belied the existence of racism and discrimination on campus.

However, even sporting success could not quell the rising student activism that was present on campus during the 1960s. The Pennsylvania State University experienced student
unrest not unfamiliar to many other colleges and universities during the tumultuous Sixties. Student-led social protests connected to sport took place at the University of Syracuse, Oberlin College, San Jose State University, and the University of Wyoming, among many others during the time period.\textsuperscript{265} In a decade that witnessed the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy, the continuation of the Vietnam War, and the violent turmoil at the Democratic National Convention, social unrest was palpable. Across the nation, student movements appeared in many forms and furthered many causes, encompassing the struggle for women’s rights, protests against the Vietnam War, and demands for increased student control at institutions of higher education.

Penn State also experienced protest from both African American and white students who were concerned about the racial climate present on campus. An examination of these students’ protests and administrators’ responses reveals an association that makes the university’s story noteworthy among the broader integration narrative of the decade of the 1960s. Groups advocating changes in the racial climate on campus understood the power of intercollegiate sport in shaping the institution’s identity and in courting public opinion. In particular, Penn State’s athletic programs exerted a powerful influence on the university’s local, regional, and national identities. Clever activists, through an examination of earlier university tactics, discovered in athletics a vehicle for affecting social change, specifically, for promoting the acceptance of racial equality in the community during the late 1960s.\textsuperscript{266}

The student protests of the decade were not the first instances of the university’s famed sporting culture being used to promote progressive attitudes concerning racial equality at on campus and in the surrounding community of State College, Pennsylvania. The university community used instances such as integrating the Cotton, Liberty, and Gator Bowls, as discussed
in earlier chapters, to illustrate that the university’s apparent progressive stance on race relations. In 1968 another group employed the same tactics to tear down the façade of harmony that the university had worked so intently to create. This movement called on the community to either admit that they built their reputation upon a false harmony, or acquiesce to changing it.

This chapter explores the years 1965 to 1969 and examines the actions of a group of African American students on the Penn State campus. It argues that this group of black activists, aware of the artificial harmony in the community, endeavored to modify tactics previously used by the university to garner support for their cause. These students employed the community’s same adoration for black athletes, which during the 1950s created Penn State’s racially inclusive narrative, to expose the hypocrisy of their black realities. The students recognized the power of intercollegiate sport at the institution and intended to use that power to change the racial climate.

Who Will Carry the Flag?

On May 13, 1968, approximately one hundred African American students, members of the Frederick Douglass Association (DA) confronted Vice President of Student Affairs Charles L. Lewis at his Old Main office with a list demanding twelve changes to the university’s policies on African American enrollment and employment. The student newspaper reported that a statement made by Dr. Lewis to the Philadelphia Sunday Bulletin, in which he reported that political unrest at Penn State was not as “dangerous as at Columbia” because the campus “is not in an urban area and not contaminated by Harlem” precipitated their confrontation.267

The group used the opportunity to challenge the racial climate in the community. Members had grown increasingly concerned with the low number of undergraduates of color. According to their calculations, only 1% percent of the university’s 26,000 undergraduates were
African American. Included in the list given to Lewis, the group demanded that the university increase its African American undergraduate enrollment from two hundred students to four hundred students by the following year’s commencement and to one thousand students by the fall term of 1970. Also, the list petitioned for an increase in African American graduate students and professors. Taking into account the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., the previous month, the group requested an M.L.K. scholarship fund to assist African American students with the financial difficulties of university attendance.268

In addition to the appeal for increased numbers of black students and faculty, a request for increased African American literature components in university courses, and a call for the creation of an African cultures study program, the list of demands presented to Dr. Lewis by the students included a stipulation for more African American athletes and African American coaches for athletic teams outside of football.269 The appeal for more athletes and coaches of color hints at the presence of an artificial harmony on campus. Although many undoubtedly already associated the university with successful African American sporting stars, the appeal for more insinuates that the institution had not done enough. With their claim, the Douglass Association pointed out that even the vehicle through which the university exemplified its racial progress, sports, could do more to foster diversity on campus.

Additionally, the DA understood the power of African American athletes and coaches in cultivating support for their demands. A generation earlier the stunning athletic achievements on the field and the strong public character demonstrated off it by many legendary African American athletes such as Jackie Robinsons, Joe Louis, and Jesse Owens led the editor of the civil rights journal The Crisis, Roy Wilkins, to argue “[Louis and Owens] have added materially in altering the usual appraisal of Negroes by the rank and file of the American public.”270
Wilkins illustrates a common belief held in the African American community: that athletes and coaches, with their significance to the white community’s interracial education, were at least as central in the fight for racial equality as scholars, artists and writers.271

Yet, during the 1960s, while African American athletes remained powerful symbols in the struggle for racial equality, the manner in which some individuals went about influencing social change had altered. Radical sports figures such as Muhammad Ali, Lew Alcindor, and members of Harry Edward’s Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) began to challenge the image of the “good Negro” sports star such as Robinson and Owens from the previous generation, becoming polarizing figures who used their fame to affect changes in public opinion.272 As Olympic historian Kevin Witherspoon articulates, as these athletes saw it, the discrimination in sport had become so pervasive that African Americans in sport “had become more a sign of inequality that equality.”273 This modification to the image of many prominent African American athletic figures no doubt affected the decision by the DA to introduce the demand for additional African American players and coaches.274

Backlash from students and community members to the demands of the student group was swift and severe. One student wrote the school’s newspaper with a sarcastic list of white demands including a reduction in the number of African American undergraduates to zero and the creation of a “Governor Wallace fund,” the then prominent and outspoken pro-segregationist governor of Alabama and candidate for President of United States.275 Still another anonymous student wrote how proud he or she was to attend a university that did not “make special exceptions for unqualified black students.”276 In spite of the backlash, the actions of members of the DA garnered attention for the issue of African American enrollment, which until the presentation of their demands, bothered few students.
Although the reactions voiced in the student newspaper were overwhelmingly negative, the Penn State administration took a seemingly proactive approach in response to the activist group’s demands. The university assigned three executives to meet with group representatives and discuss the actions needed to address their concerns. On May 16, 1968, after a closed-door meeting with the student representatives, university President Eric A. Walker released information on three immediate steps the university planned to take to implement the Douglass Association’s requests. The steps included the selection of a group of students to work directly with the Office of Admissions to facilitate the recruitment of additional African American students. Additionally, President Walker commissioned a committee to arrange the details for a Martin Luther King, Jr., scholarship fund. Lastly, the administration asked for student assistance in developing the Afro-American academic program that was requested.

The summer of 1968 was quiet on campus as the group continued to work with the administration. The potential for confrontations and protests mostly disappeared in State College as the student body shrank over summer break, and many of the activists returned to their hometowns. The same could not be said about the U.S. in general. During the second half of the decade, racial politics remained problematic across the United States, in spite of the progress made in the Civil Rights movement. Inner-city riots were all too common at the time. During the first five months of 1968, over sixty-five riots accredit in sixty-four different cities. Economic deprivation, spreading unemployment and poverty, and increasing concerns over the Vietnam war troubled many young American’s social consciousness’ and impelled them to take social and political action, so characteristic of the time.

When the student body and the members of the Douglass Association returned to University Park in the fall of 1968, they did so with a renewed fervor for social protest. The
group’s leadership grew frustrated when the group failed to gain press coverage or administration attention due to the settlement of “Walkertown,” a student-erected tent settlement located on the lawn of Penn State’s foremost administration building, Old Main. Named after the university’s president, “Walkertown” was created by displaced students who could not secure university housing during the largest enrollment class in university’s history. Student morale on campus ran high in spite of their living arrangements. The football team played its way to an undefeated season and a number three ranking in the Associated Press poll, beating perennial rivals Syracuse and Pittsburgh.

The following winter, the Douglass Association reappeared on the political protest scene on campus. On January 13, 1969, the student group began preparation for what they named their “1969 Program.” Five members of the group presented President Walker with a new list of demands for African American enrollment at the university. Included in the new demands, the DA restated its call for recruiting efforts to bring the main campus population to one thousand students of color by the start of the 1970 fall semester. Members added a request that would secure financial aid for any accepted African American student and special counseling services that would assist students of color with a smooth transition into the university. In addition to these enrollment petitions, the organization called for the creation of “pertinent black courses,” the addition of a Douglass Association representative with voting powers into the University Senate, and a full-time African American recruiter with a professional staff.

Although this new list of demands did not reference the number of African American athletes and coaches, as did its predecessor, the group had not abandoned its interest in Penn State athletics. On the evening of January 13, 1969, during a scheduled pep rally to celebrate the Nittany Lions latest undefeated season, twenty-five African American students interrupted the
event by standing up together and filing out of the school’s recreation hall with their fists raised high above their heads.  

Members of the Douglass Association later explained that this gesture was an effort to highlight the thirteen demands presented to President Walker earlier that day. When asked as to why the rally was chosen as the location for the action, then DA president William “Rick” Collins responded, “because that was the only place where they would pay attention.”

Although the African American students made no attempt to directly disrupt the rally’s agenda, the timing and placement of the protest angered many student spectators. One student, infuriated by the injection of racial politics into the football rally later complained, “This wasn’t the time or place for them to pull a stunt like this.” Apparently for these students, athletics were not the appropriate vehicle through which to influence campus racial politics.

The angry students’ words emphasis a central contradiction in Penn State’s artificial harmony. Just as the university community acknowledged in the two decades prior with celebrations of individuals such as Lenny Moore and Dave Robinson, athletics was exactly the forum to play out racial politics. There was no student outcry when the praise of athletes of color was employed to enhance the university’s outward appearance. Yet, when the Douglass Association exposed inequality on campus by employing the popularity of athletics, their actions were deemed unconscionable.

Despite the fact that some white students at the rally vociferously expressed their disapproval of the Douglass Association’s tactics, the racial protest movement on campus was beginning to find support in the white student body. In response to the pep rally walk-out, an editorial in the student newspaper applauded the actions of the group, noting that at Penn State “the unexpected, the dramatic, and perhaps even the threat of confrontation are necessary” in
order to gain attention for your cause. The DA’s “1969 Program” gained important support on January 15 when approximately three hundred white students, including members of Students for a Democratic Society, the Student Union, and the White Liberation Front voted to “unequivocally support” the program and the demands presented to President Walker. Leaders of the meeting warned the administration that “if the demands of the black students aren’t met by Monday, we concerned white students, will take action.”

On January 21, 1969, the DA, and a group of white students sympathetic to their cause, planned a rally in State College. The group marched through campus, ending at the President’s office. Each protestor placed a red brick onto the floor. Together, the bricks amassed into a three-foot high wall, topped by a single black brick. A spokesperson for the group stated that the wall represented the barrier to proper communications between the African American students and the administration. The students took special umbrage to Walker’s statement that undergraduate enrollment had increased by fifty percent over the previous semester, accusing the administration of shoddy arithmetic. Although actual bursar numbers for that year are unavailable, group members charged Walker with including foreign undergraduates and African American graduate students in the registrar’s count in a careless attempt to cover an actual decrease in African American undergraduate enrollment.

Supporters stated that they would no longer come to Walker to discuss the racial imbalances, and that in the future he would have to come to them.

During the following weeks, the spotlight on the wall-building protest dimmed as university administrators shifted their focus to the political unrest stirring on the campus after the administration refused to extend the curfew for co-eds and banned The Water Tunnel, a student produced magazine. Lewis, Vice President of Student Affairs, banned the underground publication because it contained a nude picture of John Lennon and wife, Yoko Ono, citing that
it was “contrary to the moral tone of the students” on campus. In spite of these distractions, members of the Douglass Association were determined to remain a powerful campus political force and continued to antagonize the artificial harmony present on campus.

“Since We Cannot Reach You at Any Other Place”

The beginning of the fall semester of 1969 found the student body animated by the hopes of another winning season for the football team. Despite the annual football fever, the campus was once again the center of a Douglass Association protest, although the group was renamed the Black Student Union (BSU). During President Walker’s September 21, 1969, convocation speech welcoming the new class of freshman into the university community, BSU members held signs querying “Where are the 1,000 Blacks?” referencing the number of African American undergraduate students the group had demanded for enrollment the year prior. As evidence that the tide of student body opinion had shifted, concerned students not affiliated with the BSU asked the same question. On Saturday, October 11, 1969, the day of the university’s homecoming game, the student newspaper, the Daily Collegian, ran a full-page editorial reiterating the question asked by the Black Student Union during President Walker’s convocation speech. The essay hypothesized that “the single most pressing problem that the school has: there are not enough Black students here.”

The previous year, President Walker promised to do everything in his power to increase African American undergraduate enrollment to one thousand by the fall of 1969. However, according to the newspaper and Black Student Union count, only four hundred enrolled African American undergraduate students actually appeared on fall rosters at the time of the editorial. The Collegian insisted that issue was no longer simply the Black Student Union’s problem or current students, but rather, this issue affected the entire Penn State community, including
alumni. The editorial focused on uniting current students and alumni to solve the problem of low African American enrollment. The newspaper added “[Alums] should still make the coming year ‘The Year of the Black’ for themselves; if for no one’s sake but the nine black footballers who helped give them a warm feeling in Beaver Stadium on Homecoming Saturday.” The opinion piece hinted at the university’s history of artificial harmony. As was the case in the early part of the century, the university community willingly supported African American athletes when they participated in sports, but refused to extend that same support to black individuals off the field.

On November 1, 1969, the Black Student Union announced that it had secured permission to address a sellout crowd at Beaver Stadium during the football game. The objective of the speech was to inform the crowd of the Black Student Union’s “goals and purposes.” The proposed statement represented the culmination of weeks of discussion between the group and Dr. Ernest McCoy, Dean of the College of Health and Physical Education, the department that, at that time, controlled intercollegiate athletics. At half time of the game between Penn State and Boston College, approximately 175 African American students, most affiliated with the Black Student Union, marched out of the stands and formed a circle around centerfield. The spokesperson charged with giving the address provided the reason for their presence: “Since we cannot reach you at any other place, we find it necessary to come to a football game and ask you to think as members of the academic community.” The leaders spoke for eight minutes, highlighting their grievances regarding the university’s handling of issues pertaining to African American enrollment. The crowd of 48,000 on hand for the spectacle was not receptive to the message offered by the students. Fans booed, stomped their feet, and catcalled throughout the speech. The Black Student Union ended their address by marching off the field, single file, with their fists held high.
The demonstration at halftime of the football game intertwined sport and activism. The students used the visibility and popularity provided by athletics at the institution to push for a cause; specifically the advancement of true acceptance and integration on campus, outside of sports. The group’s use of athletics was similar to how the university community had employed sport previously. The institution, through the acclamation of African American athletes, created a reputation as a racially progressive and tolerant community. While the university used athletics to build an artificial harmony, the student protesters endeavored to use athletics to tear it down, and possibly bring about actual harmony.

In another way the BSU’s demonstration was similar to the events in Mexico City. Public reaction was once again severe. The jeers vocalized by the crowd in Beaver Stadium soon turned into a torrent of letters to the Daily Collegian’s editor by spectators angered by the Black Student Union’s use of sport for protest. One student fumed, “I believe there is a time and place for everything. A football field is no place for a mass protest.” The student, possibly unaware of the BSU’s previous tactics, persisted, “wouldn’t a protest at the admissions office, or a mass rally on Old Main lawn accomplish the same thing? At least those who wanted to participate could go, and those who didn’t could reserve their right to stay away?"\textsuperscript{302}

This individual’s letter clarifies the protestors’ motivations for taking the field. The student body and the community mostly ignored their previous efforts to gain support on campus. Only in Beaver Stadium, among the hallowed memories of football’s greats, would their demonstration receive the attention they deemed necessary to break the artificial harmony. No other event or location on campus received as much respect. No individual African American on campus received as much respect and adulation as successful athletes. The members of the BSU
were cognizant of this status quo, and attempted to exploit it. Unfortunately, many in attendance were not aware and responded accordingly.

The Black Student Union, incensed by the reaction of the crowd during their address called for a meeting with six members of the administration, including President Walker. The BSU stated that they had exposed an “artificial harmony” in the community that was highlighted by the negative reaction of fans at the football game. The “artificial harmony” was not only the concern of the BSU. A Collegian editorial discussed the events that took place at halftime the following day, “They booed and they jeered and they cursed the members of the Black academic community…Yet the cheer for Charlie Pittman when he broke the long standing record held by Lenny Moore was overwhelming.” Both African American football stars, Charlie Pittman and Lenny Moore, were fan favorites on the field during their time at Penn State; however, their African American student peers did not receive the same warm fraternal PSU embrace.

The administration commended the BSU demonstrators conduct in response to the disapproving crowd reaction, adding an apology for those who “did not allow the statement to be made.” Members of the union charged Dean McCoy, whom they now referred to as “Rodent McCoy,” with intentionally disrupting their address by shortening their allotted time immediately before the presentation to eight minutes, down from the originally agreed upon time of ten minutes. They also accused McCoy of conspiring with the state police to exclude white supporters from joining their protest by instructing officers to stand on their allied white protestor’s signs. President Walker refused the invitation to meet with members of Black Student Union to discuss these “issues”—as the group had dubbed them. In effect, Walker refused to see the artificial harmony so apparent to the protesting African American students on campus.
“Penn State Forever”: Lasting Impressions

Although the highly publicized protests of the Black Student Union would fade after the events at Beaver Stadium that Saturday afternoon in November, the ripple felt throughout the community persisted. Both President Walker and Dean McCoy left the university in 1970 to pursue other employment. Although no evidence suggests the administrators left because of the actions of the BSU, the protests no doubt scarred the last years of their tenure on campus. Outspoken BSU member and protest organizer Teddy Thompson was elected as student body president, bolstered by the notoriety gained throughout the student protests.309

The BSU’s attempt to harness the visibility and power of Penn State football to garner community support for their cause is certain. The group acknowledged that the platform provided to them at a football game was unavailable to them at any other venue. Members of the union hoped that their message would be better received by a gathering of football fans, which had so readily accepted African American players in the past, than at any other place. However, the negative response to the message delivered by the group revealed that many spectators did not feel that athletics was the appropriate vehicle to advance their cause. Many had already forgotten, or instead chose to ignore that the university community exploited the notoriety of Penn State sport similarly for over two decades prior to the BSU’s actions. While the university wanted to appear to enjoy racial harmony--hence the artificial harmony that formed--the BSU wanted actual equality and real harmony on campus between white and African American students. Though both the Douglass Association and Black Student Union served as integral forces in the push for increased African American enrollment and for the creation of Afro-American literature courses during the 1970s, the struggle for true integration and equality on campus would not end with the protests of 1968.
Throughout the many incarnations of the Douglass Association, student members have been concerned about the attitudes toward racial integration and racial equality at Penn State and in the surrounding communities. The university’s powerful sporting culture which largely shapes its image in local, regional, and national consciousness provides a unique platform for certain groups, such as the university community, the Douglass Association, and the Black Student Union to gain support and to educate the student body and community members about their concerns through the visibility of Penn State athletics. For as long as African Americans have struggled for equality in society, groups have attempted to harness the strong feelings felt for athletics and athletic figures in an effort to garner support for equality. Whether or not the student body, the administration, or the surrounding community agreed with the tactics used by the Douglas Association, it is difficult to ignore the complex relationship between intercollegiate athletics, national identity, and student activism at Penn State.
Conclusion

“Like Sisyphus”: The Penn State Community’s Continued Struggle

In 2005, Lenny Moore wrote an autobiography. Part of that story revolved around his time at Penn State, especially his time as a running back during the 1950s. Most expected that he would reminisce fondly about his tenure as a Nittany Lion Star, as many others had done before him. He recollected,

“To this day, many emotions well up inside of me whenever I visit the Penn State campus in Happy Valley, Pennsylvania. Like so many other before me, I am overwhelmed with the beauty of the campus…At the same time, those grand old mountains may have protected the residents from cultural progress and enlightenment. It is as though racial equality, for one thing, possibly ran out of steam while trying to climb Mount Nittany: black students and athletes of today endure much the same treatment as my buddies and I experienced back in the fifties. Like Sisyphus, pushing his rock uphill for eternity, the issue of race struggles against a slippery slope of Eurocentric ideologies in the central Pennsylvania town. As a result, in my opinion, true race equality has never really quite reached Happy Valley. Racism was an issue before I arrived on campus, and there has been only stilted improvement in the town’s attitudes since I left.”

Moore’s words, written almost five decades after the outstanding player left the hallowed halls of Penn State, perhaps left readers confused or angered. Some no doubt were confused by Moore’s criticisms of Penn State and Happy Valley. After all, those who were around to watch him play in person and read about him in the papers never had any inkling that something was amiss on campus. Those who were angered may have felt betrayed. Moreover, Moore’s time there with the football squad catapulted him into a long and successful professional football career with the Baltimore Colts. However, there may have been a small contingent of bibliophiles, who upon reading Moore’s recollection understood his trials at the university during the 1950s. Possibly they appreciated that the history of the university, through the public admiration of its popular athletes of color, belied an artificial harmony.
During the 1950s, Moore’s successes, and those of other African American athletes were used by the university community as symbols of the institutions racial harmony. Years later, the very same man, who was held up as an example of successful integration, dismantled the mythology. His words indicate that while African American athletes were celebrated on the field, they were often segregated off it.

**A University United, A University Divided**

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, through an active campaign to publicize and acclaim the presence and successes of African American athletes, the university succeeded in cultivating a local, regional, and eventually national reputation as an institution with a history of dedication to and success in race relations. At times, confidence in this racially tolerant reputation grew so robust that on occasions when challenged by allegations of discrimination, prejudice or intolerance, the community chose to disregard or ignore the accusations. However, this same athletics-driven positive reputation relied on a tenuous stability. During the 1960s, when activists called upon the community to reevaluate the artificial harmony created by the symbols of African American athletes, the community reacted with scorn and anger.

Between 1955 and 1959, as the university was entering new chapter in its history, the institution welcomed numerous successful athletes of color. An examination of the public celebrations of these stars and the narratives that were present illuminates a story of successful integration. Football stars such as Lenny Moore and Bruce Gilmore, through their standout performances, thrust the Nittany Lions into national prominence.

Additionally, the university claimed additional racial progressivism when in 1959 the team integrated the Liberty Bowl in Philadelphia. More credence was given to this claim because the Nittany Lions faced off against the rolling Tide of Alabama and their legendary coach, Bear
Bryant. The game’s legacy to integration history becomes even more remarkable taking into account that only four years later, Alabama’s Governor would proclaim upon entering the office, “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.”

The governor’s words were not dissimilar from the realities faced by many African Americans students at Penn State. The inequalities faced by students of color demonstrated the university’s artificial harmony. In 1958, Robert Davage, psychology professor and first African American faculty member at the institution, released a study that attested to widespread discrimination against individuals of color at the university. An investigation of the administration and student response to these findings demonstrates that the community was not ready to admit to the presence of, nor attempt to eliminate, an artificial harmony. Additionally, it verifies that the history of racial integration of Penn State athletics is more nuanced and complicated than historians have previously revealed.

By 1960, many in the community had fully subscribed to its own exceptionality in the area of race relations. It continued to build upon the racially progressive reputation that it cultivated during the previous decade. This status became even more invaluable to the institution as it attempted to grow from a locally known college to a nationally respected and prestigious university. Considerations of the public celebration of basketball star Gene the “Lanky Leaper” Harris exemplifies the university community’s continued to exultation of African American athletes. Along with All-American footballer Dave Robinson, the two athletes spread the universities sporting exploits across the nation; guaranteeing that successful and seemingly well integrated athletes of color were widely associated with the fledgling university.

Yet, even as the university recognized the power of its sporting influence, the strength of the campaign was limited. During the time period an artificial harmony persisted on campus as
proven through the continued segregation of certain barbershops in the community. Although African American athletes visibly voiced their concern over the continuing practice, their sway did not change the views of the masses. Additionally, students of color listed residential housing discrimination as one their most pressing concerns in State College. When given the opportunity to take action against these injustices, the academic community faltered, and the façade of integration remained. These events insinuated that segregation was a more multifaceted issue than any touchdown or triple-double could counter.

As the country moved into the tumultuous second half of the 1960s, the Penn State community proved it was not immune to more radical forms of social protest that permeated the local community. African American students grew tired of what they saw as their second-class citizenship at Penn State. Moreover, they were frustrated with what they saw as an extreme hypocrisy. The public afforded great attention to student-athletes of color on the field, however, their non-athlete peers were not offered such concern.

Unsatisfied with the responses to their anxieties, these students took their argument to the revered space where African Americans Penn Stater’s had long been accepted and appreciated, athletics. Nonetheless, their message was no better received there. Scrutiny of the public’s reaction to the student protesters, who interjected politics into sport as so many others had done before, clarified that the limitations of the university’s tactics and forced the administration to reevaluate the status of all its students.

**A Nittany Lion Epilogue**

During the four decades since the members of BSU made their statement on the field, the institution has endeavored to address the concerns of its student population. It has made advances in athletics and academics. For example, at the beginning of the 1970 football season,
the university was quick to announce that Mike Cooper, an African American quarterback and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania native, would be named to the starting position on the squad. This assignment is of special historical note as scholars have determined that earlier in the twentieth century players of color were almost always limited to certain positions on the squad. One of the most heavily guarded positions was that of the quarterback. Historically, non-white players were believed to lack the intelligence and leadership ability required for success at the position. Because in 1970, African American quarterbacks were still a relative rarity in intercollegiate football, Penn State once again maintained its progressive reputation in race relations.

Coming off two very successful football seasons and attempting to prolong the squad’s thirty game winning streak, the senior Cooper had large expectations to fulfill. Paired with returning standouts halfback Lydell Mitchell and fullback Franco Harris, the Lions presented an all-African American backfield to opponents. The university released a plethora of articles and stories introducing the new starter. In one curious biography, the author noted that Cooper returned to the “ghetto area he was raised in” during the summer months. The article insinuated that the education Cooper received as a Penn State student-athlete was invaluable to him and to his fellow “ghetto residents” as it allowed him to educate them about water safety. Quite possibly, after the accusations of the BSU members the season before, the university community was campaigning to prove that it cared not only about its athletes of color but the larger African American population as well. By demonstrating that successful non-white athletes were beneficial, not only to Penn State, but to their black communities as well, the university hoped to avoid criticisms it faced previously.
During the 1970s the university did more than simply start an African American quarterback to improve its reputation and standing with its students of color. Contrary to earlier eras, the institution understood that images of successful athletes were no longer enough to quiet criticisms. The protesting members of the BSU made it clear that students of color wanted their existence and realities acknowledged on the Penn State campus. The politically charged climate on college campuses tempered during the era, as it did in the larger national context. By the 1970s, the advances of the Civil Rights Movement had eliminated many of the concerns expressed by African American athletes and students mid-century. Fears of outright segregation waned and concerns developed into issues over integration.317

In response to the continued concerns of African American individuals at the university, the administration requested that an outside consulting agency take stock of the racial climate.318 After spending a week on in Happy Valley and interviewing over 200 individuals associated with the university, the consultants did not mince words. The group found “clear division” between the white and black populations of the campus.319 The 62-page report found that “the typical minority student on the University Park campus expresses that he is in an alien environment and is consequently wary, uncertain, and often fearful about white persons--whether students, faculty, staff, or residents of State College.”320 The group went on to determine that white faculty view students of color as “a problem that will have to be lived with.”321 The team determined that the reason for these continued and serious issues was a “cultural gap” that existed between individuals of different races that created rampant “misunderstandings of actions and rhetoric” between the groups.322 The findings added “special attention needs to be devoted to the elimination and amelioration of the attitudes expressed by many students and faculty.”323
The findings provided substantiated evidence of the student’s concerns. As the Davage report had done more than a decade prior, these findings attested to prejudices on campus. In 1958, the university chose to ignore the findings of Davage’s report, and continue to operate under the façade of artificial harmony. Once again the university had been given the opportunity to address discrimination, and in this instance the institution took a more proactive stance on eliminating the artificial harmony in the community.

Between 1970 and 1975, the university instituted a myriad of solutions to the concerns of African American students on campus. One such resolution was the creation of a Black Cultural Center. The objective of the center was to provide a pace for black students to congregate “where they [could] feel welcome.” In addition to the center, the university funded the establishment of numerous Black Cultural Lounges and Black Student Lounges. Though the lounges were intended to serve generally the same purpose as the center, they were met with an amount of vitriol from the white student body.

One upperclassman questioned the necessity of the lounges, declaring “I don’t understand why all students cannot share equally in University facilities?” Another followed, “is this not segregation” by blacks students? Some mocked the notion, demanding that if the university was responsible for funding black lounges, it should also be responsible for creating Irish Catholic and Slovak lounges as well.

Some students were responsive to the idea. One student in support of the lounges criticized the lack of previous action by the administration charging, “I find the USG [Undergraduate Student Government], Academic Assembly or any of the other so-called student organizations have not identified or even attempted to deal with the plight of the blacks on campus because they probably feel that blacks on this campus have no problems…I can
definitely say they are dead wrong.”  

Another intimated that the negative response by some students was due to their “total blindness” to the social structure and “blatant racism’ in America. Yet another pinned the cause for racial discord not on cultural differences, as the earlier study had reasoned, but on the disparity between the percentage of African Americans living in the state, and the percentage attending the state-run university. In a nod to Penn State’s earlier race relations success, the author anxiously concluded, “I wonder if Alabama has a higher percentage of blacks than Penn State?”  

Although a controversial topic on campus throughout the 1970s, numerous Black Cultural Lounges remained an active part of African American social life on campus.

In addition to the Black Cultural Lounges, university administrators created an Office of Minority Affairs, increased the curriculum included in the Afro-American Studies Program, and increased Equal Opportunity Programs on campus. While these steps were all met with both acceptance and hesitance by some individuals in the academic community, the institution appeared to acknowledge the artificial harmony that had existed on for many years on campus, and finally taken a proactive stance on changing it. No longer did the university and surrounding community believe that the presence of African American players on Penn State’s many athletics programs was proof enough of the tolerance of individuals of color.

This is not to say that the university did not continue to struggle with issues surrounding diversity within its athletics programs, student body, faculty, and staff. Not until 1976 did the university hire its first African American head coach in any sport. It would take another twenty years before the university had an African American head coach in a major revenue sport. Intermittently, African American students continued to voice concerns over the atmosphere they experienced at Penn State. During the mid-1980s, Black Students on campus
voiced outrage over the university’s continued investment in South African companies. They were concerned that by supporting those business ventures, the university was tacitly supporting apartheid. During the 1990s, African American student pushed for the African American studies option, which was created during the 1970s, to become its own department within the college. Successful in 1993, the African and African American Studies Department now focuses on educating the student body in three areas: African American history, culture, and contemporary problems. Although the Penn State community has made great progress since the outright segregation of the 1950s, issues and difficulties surrounding racial politics still exist on campus.

**Penn State’s Race Relations Legacy**

On April 21, 2001, twenty-six Penn State students rushed the field at Penn State’s annual Blue-White spring scrimmage in order to make a statement of protest against the current racial climate. Unlike the Black Student Union in 1969, these students did not have prior administration approval and police officers quickly quelled the demonstration and arrested the protestors. The protest, led by the Black Caucus, a predominantly African American student political action group, arose in response to an alleged racially motivated death threat received by a member. Harkening back to the protests of the 1960s and illustrating the continued artificial harmony on campus, in defense of inserting their political concerns into a football celebration, one Black Caucus member asserted, “Without this demonstration today, all students would be blind” to the issues faced by black students.

Penn State University, nestled in “Happy Valley” continues to cultivate and maintain a reputation as an institution that was progressive and racially tolerant mid-century. On crisp fall Saturdays, 110,000 people fill Beaver Stadium and proclaim “WE ARE…PENN STATE”.
Whether those fans are aware of the mythos or not, the chant endures, telling friend and foe alike, that we are all Penn State, regardless of religion, race, color, or creed. For most in the community, intercollegiate athletics provided an interracial education. It delivered knowledge that if integration could work on the field, court, and track, it could work in larger society. A historical examination of the “great experiment” conducted by Penn State, however, also illuminates the limitations of such an experiment.\textsuperscript{338} While Penn States athletes of color were celebrated on the field, an artificial harmony remained off of it. Whether or not the community has made the progress necessary to maintain its reputation for race relations exceptionality remains unseen. Events that entangle sport, racial politics, and national recognition remain a part of the university’s history.

Lenny Moore’s words, in addition to pointing to the presence of an artificial harmony in the 1950s, also highlight an unfortunate truth about the contemporary status of racial politics in Happy Valley. The artificial harmony present on campus does not end with the culmination of this thesis. Regrettably, incidents that emphasis racial discord at the university have periodically appeared since the social unrest of the 1960s. Although students of all races are no longer content to ignore such incidents, and the administration no longer disregards them, the stagnation of full integration persists. Penn State’s conceived racial harmony mid-century, is in reality a manufactured past. Hopefully, racial harmony in the next era is not an impossible future.
Chapter One


2. Veera Greene, “Iconic Cheer Began in 1977,” *Daily Collegian*, October 8, 2010. Penn State is famous for its call and response athletics’ cheer. While the true creation of the “We Are… Penn State” chant is contested by historians; the common mythology, stating that the impetus for the creation of the chant were the events of 1948, is furthered by numerous university publications.


13. The Penn State community does not necessarily denote only those individuals who are employed by and attend the university, but any person within the surrounding town or larger geographical region who identifies with the institutions.


Bezilla, *Penn State: An Illustrated History*.


Penn State’s *All Sports Museum* held a series of programs celebrating prominent African American athletes in 2009. Among those athletes highlighted was Cumberland Posey Jr.


Chalk, *Black College Sport*, 142.

Sayle Watterson, *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy*, 308.


Sayle Watterson, *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy*, 68-79. President Roosevelt, although at one point a proponent of football for character devolvement, became critical of the game in the early twentieth century for its violence and brutality.


John Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*, 32.


John Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*, 32.

40Prato, “Penn State Football Led Equality Movement”.


44Prato, “Penn State Football Led Equality Movement.”


46Prato, “Penn State Football Led Equality Movement”; Prato and Brown, What it Means to be a Nittany Lion.


48Martin, “Integrating New Year’s Day,” 360. The Rose Bowl, having never drawn a strict color line, was the first major bowl game to allow integrated play.


50Wynn, The Afro-American and the Second World War, 123. Wynn argues that many African Americans believed that the president’s stance on civil rights, the desegregation of the armed forces, numerous legal decisions, and increasing financial strength of the population was a sign of coming equality. However, post war the “racial issue” stalled.


52Wynn, The Afro-American and the Second World War, 125.

54 Hyman, *Game of My Life*, 3-4.


58 Spivey, *Fire From The Soul*, 247.


60 Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*; Spivey, “The Black Athlete in Big-Time Intercollegiate Sports”; Wiggins, “Prized Performers, but Frequently Overlooked Students.”


65 Wiggins, “Prized Performers, but Frequently Overlooked Students,” 170.

66 Olsen, “In an Alien World,” 34.


Olsen, “In an Alien World,” 34.


Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*, 68, 79.

Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*, 69; Spivey, “The Black Athlete in Big-Time Intercollegiate Sports,” 68.


Robert H. Davage, “Racial Discrimination in the State College Community” (State College, Pa: Centre County Layman’s League, 1958).

Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*, 85; Grundman, “The Image of Intercollegiate Sports and the Civil Rights Movement”.


Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*, 86; Spivey and Jones, “Intercollegiate Athletic Servitude: A Case Study of the Black Illini Student Athletes.”

“Gentleman’s agreements were both formal and informal contracts entered into by integrated athletic teams in which they agreed to either sit or leave behind the African American members of their team when competing against or traveling to a segregated institution. For more information on Gentleman’s agreements see Martin, *Benching Jim Crow*; Martin, “Integrating New Year’s Day”; Gems, *For Pride, Profit, and Patriarchy*; Oriard, *King Football*; John Matthew Jones, “‘Breaking the Plane’: Integration and Black Protest in Michigan State University Football during the 1960s,” *Michigan Historical Review*, 33 (2007), 101-129.


Ashe, Jr., *A Hard Road to Glory*, 97.


Ashe, Jr., *A Hard Road to Glory*, 98-99; Behee, *Hail To the Victors!*, 55; Schultz, “Moments of Impact,” 53; Wiggins, “Prized Performers, but Frequently Overlooked Students,” 166.

Ashe, Jr., *A Hard Road to Glory-Football*, 111; Lane Demas, *Integrating the Gridiron: Black Civil Rights and American College Football* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Wiggins, “‘The Future of College Athletics is at Stake.’”

Wiggins, “‘The Future of College Athletics is at Stake,’” 110.


89


102 Ibid., 147-150.


105 Mark Dyreson, “’We Are’—From Civil Rights at the Cotton Bowl to the Civilities of the Barbershop Boycott: Race and Sport at Penn State and State College, 1939-1955”; Wiggins, “The Future of College Athletics Is at Stake”; Demas, *Integrating the Gridiron*.

106 Mark Dyreson, “’We Are’—From Civil Rights at the Cotton Bowl to the Civilities of the Barbershop Boycott: Race and Sport at Penn State and State College, 1939-1955,” 4.

107 Ibid., 4.

108 For example, Betty Love Gibb, an African American coed during the early 1950s, served as president and featured dancer in the modern dance club. In 1953, Betty decided to try out for the Penn State cheerleading squad and was allegedly told by officials that colored students were not allowed on the squad. Her story, among other courageous female’s, needs to be examined in the future to truly illustrate Penn State athletics’ racial integration history.


**Chapter Two**


113 Mark Dyreson, “’We Are’—From Civil Rights at the Cotton Bowl to the Civilities of the Barbershop Boycott: Race and Sport at Penn State and State College, 1939-1955,” 5-7.

Veera Greene, “Iconic Cheer Began in 1977,” *The Daily Collegian*, October 8, 2010. While the true creation of the “We Are… Penn State” chant is contested by historians, the common mythology teaches that the impetus for the creation of the chant were the events of 1948. This narrative is furthered by numerous university publications.

Lisa Roney, “‘Jim Crow Must Go’: 1900-1955-From the First Black Student to the First Black Student Body President,” *Penn Stater*, March/April 1981, 21-26, 53; “I love PSU-But I love Freedom More,” *Daily Collegian*, November 19, 1968, 3. Although official bursar records of African American enrollment at the University did not exist until the early 1970s, it is estimated that only 1% of the student body is African American. Additionally, Jesse Arnelle makes reference to the lack of growth in African American enrollment in May, 1968 when he speaks at a meeting of the Quarterback Club.


Ashe, Jr., *A Hard Road to Glory*, 92-94; Martin, *Benching Jim Crow*.

Martin, “Integrating New Year’s Day,” 370; Martin, *Benching Jim Crow*, 80-83. Griffin reversed his decision to allow Georgia Tech to play in an integrated Sugar Bowl.


“Walker Expected to Accept Bowl Bid in Next 36 Hours,” *Daily Collegian*, November 21, 1959, 1. Football fans generally agreed that political ties led the Nittany Lions to accept the Liberty Bowl bid so early in the season. Newspapers statewide insinuated that President Walker accepted the bid after personal appeals from both the Governor of Pennsylvania and the Major of Philadelphia.


Ibid; Martin, *Benching Jim Crow*.


Quoted in Don Yaeger, Sam Cunningham, John Papadakis, *Turning of the Tide: How One Game Changed the South* (New York: Center Street Books, 2006), 138.


Ibid., 171.


drew an “unofficial” color-line that excluded African American men from living in on-campus dormitories. The ban was lifted during the late 1950s.


144 Ibid.


151 Ibid.

152 “Pollard—Facing ’56—Has a Good Record,” *Daily Collegian*.


154 Robert H. Davage, “Racial Discrimination in the State College Community” (State College, Pa: Centre County Layman’s League, 1958).

155 Ibid., 11.

156 Ibid., 3.

157 Ibid., 19.

158 Ibid., 20.

159 Ibid., 26.


162 Ibid., 30.

Ibid., 29.

165 Ashe, A Hard Road to Glory-Football, 85.

166 "Racial Discrimination Seen in Borough,” Daily Collegian, December 11, 1958, 1.5.

167 Ibid., 1.


Chapter Three


175 Ibid., 3.

176 Ibid., 3. The author mentions numerous conferences that recruit African American players but names Penn State as “greener pastures” for athletes of color.


Wiggins, “Prized Performers, but Frequently Overlooked Students,” 172.


John H. Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 8th ed. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2000), 546-547. Stokely Carmichael is credited with the creation of the “Black Power” slogan. Originally an integrationist and allied with the views of leaders like King Jr., in his later years, Carmichael allied himself with more militant leaders, including Malcolm X and affiliates of the Nation of Islam.


Kevern Verney, *Black Civil Rights in America*, 56.

Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 531-32.

Wiggins, “Prized Performers, but Frequently Overlooked Students,” 172.

Ibid., 172-73.

In January 1961, Harris occupies the headlining picture 3 times during one week.


Harris Biographical File.

Sport History, 16 (1989): 158-185. Hoberman and Wiggins examine the historical assumption that athletes of African descent possess inherently superior athletic ability, which has traditionally been understood to manifest itself in exceptional speed, strength and jumping ability.


197 Harris Biographical File.

198 Ibid.


204 Quoted in Martin, Benching Jim Crow, 81. Martin explores the events that took place after Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin reversed his decision to allow Georgia Tech to play in an integrated Sugar Bowl.

205 Martin, “Integrating New Year’s Day,” 370.

206 Quoted in Ibid., 370.

207 Ibid., 370-372; Martin, Benching Jim Crow, 80-83.


209 John Behee, Hail To the Victors!: Black Athletes at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI: Ulrich’s Books, 1974), 68.

“Gator Bowl Sidelights,” *Daily Collegian*.

Wiggins, “Prized Performers, but Frequently Overlooked Students,” 172.


“Florida Chewed Up State, Made Critics Eat Words,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 31, 1962, 7. This was not the first time that the University of Florida played “Dixie” during a performance.


Ibid.


“Florida Chewed Up State, Made Critics Eat Words,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.


Dave Robinson Biographical File, Athlete Vertical File, Athletic Department Records, University Archives, Eberly Family Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.


Common during the 1920s and early 1930s, as the numbers of African American players increased during the later decades, northern adherence to these agreements waned.
Martin, *Benching Jim Crow*, 253-291. Martin examines the appearance and disappearance of segregated athletics in the south. He deems SEC football the “final citadel of segregation” as member schools hold onto segregationist policies the longest of any athletics conference.


Wiggins, “Prized Performers, but Frequently Overlooked Students,” 172.


Mark Dyreson, “‘We Are’—From Civil Rights at the Cotton Bowl to the Civilities of the Barbershop Boycott,” 16-18.

Ibid., 6-8.


Quoted in Ibid.

Nicki Wolford, “Five Picket Barber Shop.”

Quoted in “Segregation Stand Restated by Bunn,” *Daily Collegian*.


247 Darryl Daisey, “Introduction of Residents.”


249 “Assembly To Discuss Segregation,” *Daily Collegian*, May 12, 1960, 1.


256 Ibid.


Chapter Four


261 Ibid., 3.


263 Jesse Arnelle: ‘A love-Wait Affair’.”

264 Quoted in Levine, “They Didn’t Understand.”

Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete*.


Serrill, “Blacks Confront Lewis with Demands.”

Collins, interview.


Wilkins, “Joe Louis and Jesse Owens.” Wilkins asserted that black athletes were more influential to white individuals “interracial education” than the majority of black scholars, poets, and writers because of their increased visibility through sport and the masses that they reached with their performances.

Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete*; Lew Alcindor, UCLA basketball standout, later changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar after converting to Islam in 1968.


Collins, interview. Although hesitant to name any one in particular, Collins did state that there were athletes present while the group determined the list of demands and they were especially concerned with the number of black coaches.

Holding a closed fist above their heads, the student activists employed a gesture that was becoming popular in athletic protests and the larger Black Power movement. The gesture had gained internationally recognition the summer before when Americans John Carlos and Tommy Smith raised their fists on the victory stand at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City.

Collins, Interview.


Ibid.


Marge Cohen, “What is White Racism: Hate, Fear or Ignorance?” November 4, 1969, 1.

Don McKee, “Runners Grind Out 398 Yards As State Erases Early Eagle Lead,” November 4, 1969, 6; Charlie Pittman was the All-American Halfback for Penn State in during the 1969 season. Pittman surpassed Lenny Moore’s record for rushing attempts during the Boston College game where the BSU made their presentation.

Kranzley, “BSU Calls for Meeting.”

Kranzley, “BSU Calls for Meeting.”

Ibid.


**Conclusion**


Mike Cooper Biographical File, Athlete Vertical File, Athletic Department Records, University Archives, Eberly Family Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.


Ibid., 1.

Ibid., 1.

Ibid., 1.

Ibid., 1.


335. Nancy Funk, “Shanties to go up Today,” Daily Collegian, March 10, 1986, 1. The Black Student Coalition Against Racism constructed a “shantytown” on campus to protest the effect of apartheid on black South Africans. The protest continued for four weeks.


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