

Daily Forum

Cain's Scrutiny

Struggle for selfhood, II

In 1966, the N.C.A.A. basketball champions, Texas Western U., now called the University of Texas at El Paso started five black athletes; as a matter of fact, of eleven of the teams 15 players were black. These black athletes beat a University of Kentucky team that was supposed to be "unstoppable." It was the shock of the college basketball world, maybe because Texas Western's team consisted of black athletes from the heart of some of the nation's biggest cities, where athletics were their only way out to college.

The main point was that Kentucky's team went on to graduate, none of Texas Western's team graduated. The leading scorer and rebounder, now in the professional basketball ranks, lacked 30 credits before he could have graduated! Their services were no longer needed!

The ratio of black athletes graduating from college is no where near the number that have entered college and have completed their eligibility. For a quick source, check the records here at ISU.

The role of any athlete, regardless of color, has twice as much pressure as a regular student. With the addition of his academic work he has his own personal life to lead. It then gets discouraging to have the heaviest burden of all, being black.

Being a black athlete is sharing glory of a exciting win, being named athlete of the week, or being named to the all-conference team. It is also being subjected to "mickey mouse" courses to make sure you are eligible, being told to watch yourself if you are seen with

the "Great White Angels" on campus, being told the apartments are not for rent and subjected to the funny "nigger" jokes.

Although many times black athletes have used college for a stepping stone into the professional teams, mainly because that is why taking the easy way out, but now have a outlook even if their number is not picked up in the draft. That outlook is being a respected and bright individual with all kinds of capabilities.

The black athlete is tired of being told that he is just a big black animal with just better jumping and running ability and not the ability to think. The people who have that idea of the black athlete need to look at people like Alcindor, Simpson, Jo Jo White, Oscar Robertson, Chamberlin, Bill Russell, Tommie Smith, Bob Beamon, Bobby Douglass, Jim Brown and the Great Ali.

The black athlete can do wonders for his black community, because an athlete holds a lot of respect and prestige. He can convince the kids back home of an advancement in college and the chance to obtain scholarships for those with athletic ability. His stress should also be to tell of his advantages as well as the disadvantages of being a student and athlete.

With all the pressures of being an athlete and black, the black athlete whether in the court or classroom should think most of all that he is the best, no matter with whom he competes. Head-up high, a smile, and lots of confidence are the essentials. Nobody can take away what you already have and have worked so hard to obtain.

— CAIN