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"Keep the Quarterback White"!: Rush Limbaugh's Social Construction of the Black Quarterback

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Abstract

Despite the prominence of professional football in U.S. culture, little research has been conducted examining the social construction of race in the game. People have a cultural perception of race; what effect does this perception have on the players? There has been research on the historical struggles of Black athletes in collegiate football, as well as lasting issues of racism. To add to this body of literature, this analysis will focus on the institutional racism embedded in the drafting practices of quarterbacks in the National Football League (NFL). This paper finds that institutional racism has a lasting effect on the hiring of Black quarterbacks in the NFL. This study specifically compares the minority status of Black quarterbacks to the majority status of Black athletes in professional and collegiate football.

Key Terms: Rush Limbaugh, Race, American Football, Quarterbacks

Introduction

Media presentations of professional quarterbacks often differ based on race. For example, Rush Limbaugh, former professional football commentator for ESPN, made controversial comments about a Black quarterback (ESPN, 2003). While commentating after a game during the 2002-2003 NFL season Rush Limbaugh stated that “the media [is] biased in favor of” Black quarterbacks, especially Donovan McNabb. Limbaugh further stated that the media credited McNabb for his team’s achievements because “the media have been very desirous that a Black quarterback do well” (Niven, 2005, p. 684). Limbaugh’s statements proved significant in the historic season which featured an unprecedented seven (7) starting Black quarterbacks out of thirty-two (32) NFL teams, thus explaining the surge of media coverage compared to previous seasons (Niven, 2005). Limbaugh’s statements, as well as other media representations of the ability of Black quarterbacks, are based on the social construction of race and athletic ability. The assertion by Limbaugh that Black quarterbacks gain media attention due to a hidden agenda of media outlets to ensure the success of a Black quarterback echoes the belief that Black athletes should function only as the “dumb jock,” and not as the brilliant leader.

A critique of Limbaugh’s comments appears in David Niven’s *Race, Quarterbacks, and the Media* (2005), which details the complicated nature of race relations in sports. Niven’s article provides evidence to refute Limbaugh’s claims, and the data demonstrate that quarterbacks receive equal amounts of media attention, regardless of race, a thesis supported by literally thousands of articles Niven analyzed. A scrutiny of Niven’s data, as well as the examination of the history of race in America, further proves that media conversation on McNabb and other Black quarterbacks stems not from media bias, but from the cultural perception of race that assumes White superiority. Theories continue to be perpetuated through presentations of supposedly inferior Black athletes. Limbaugh’s argument is a modernized expression of the racially motivated myth that the quarterback is an important playing position that should be reserved solely for White athletes, relegating Black athletes to less prestigious roles.

Niven (2005) analyzed over 10,000 articles in his study of attitudes of the media toward quarterbacks. He compared or matched Black and White quarterbacks of similar rating and season record. The study found that Black and White quarterbacks received nearly identical percentages of praise in articles, and any difference was not statistically significant. None of the categories he examined, including the number of articles, number of headlines, or critical or praise articles, was statistically significant. The results meant that any difference could be attributed to environmental factors, such as giving a team the “home field advantage.” Therefore, Limbaugh was incorrect in his assertion that Black quarterbacks received more positive press; the data shows no significant difference between media coverage of Black and White quarterbacks. However, because the media typically denied coverage to Black quarterbacks prior to Donovan McNabb there was significance in the sudden increase in coverage of starting quarterbacks. When Limbaugh argued that the increasing coverage of Black quarterbacks was because of a media bias, he overlooked the pivotal evidence of his argument. In response to Limbaugh’s assertions, Niven (2005) found evidence that the media were just as likely to issue praise to a White quarterback as they were a Black quarterback, thus disproving Limbaugh’s assertion that the media treated Black quarterbacks more favorably than White quarterbacks.

Limbaugh, however, is not alone in expressing racially charged evaluations of Black quarterbacks. An examination of NFL draft reports conducted by Mercurio and Filak (2010)

found that in drafts from 2002–2007, racially distinctive evaluations were present on athletes, especially those seeking quarterback positions. The same study found that many evaluators changed their reports from ambivalent to positive for White quarterback hopefuls when a Black candidate with similar statistics entered the draft. In contrast with Limbaugh's statement, *Sports Illustrated*, in their annual draft report, wrote this about a White collegiate candidate: "a hard-working, intelligent signal-caller," with a weakness for throwing the "long ball," with little reliability as a game-changer (as cited in Mercurio & Filak, 2010, p. 67). A Black quarterback, expected to be drafted in the same round or close to the White player, was described by *Sports Illustrated* as an "an athletic passer with the physical skills to play in the NFL" but was criticized for being too "indecisive" and lacking the mental ability to understand the defense of the opposing team (as cited in Mercurio & Filak, 2010, p. 67). The significance in this comparison lies in the statistics of the two quarterbacks; both men had similar win percentages and touchdown rates. The White quarterback was presented in a more positive light due to the representation that he had the mental capability to play professional football. Conversely, the Black quarterback was presented as being physically more than capable of performing in the NFL, but that he was lacking the mental ability to be a team leader. It can be inferred, then, that the difference in draft presentations of potential quarterbacks is perhaps a continued presentation of the inferior Black athlete. The following analysis begins by reviewing the social construction of race. Then the analysis examines the racism, often strongly expressed in collegiate football, which permeates professional football. The racism that exists and is demonstrated in competitive football has a foundation in the social and scientific beliefs held widely by society.

The Social and "Scientific" Construction of Race

Scholars often consider the concept of social Darwinism to be the driving force behind the scientific field that purports the inferiority of Blacks. Sociologist Herbert Spencer began developing the idea of social Darwinism between 1857 and 1860. Spencer's ideas were based partially on the 1859 evolutionary theory of naturalist Charles Darwin (Dennis, 1995). Spencer's social Darwinism hinged on the belief of "survival of the fittest." This phrase stems from Spencer's conviction that society functions as a set of competitions in which those who are physically or mentally superior will succeed (Dennis, 1995). Therefore, those who are unable to compete, or who are of lesser mental or physical ability, are unfit to continue the human race. Spencer believed that eventually any group of people who did not display superior physical or mental abilities would become extinct. Social Darwinism gained popularity in the United States because it provided justification for practices that allowed for the perpetuation of racially motivated theories of inferiority.

With the rise of social Darwinism, some people argued that Blacks suffered from an "intellectual deficit" that rendered them nearly incapable of any activity involving mental stimulation, including leadership roles in athletics (Hoberman, 1997, pp. 53–54). John Crawford (1866), in a scientific article titled, *On the Physical and Mental Characteristics of the Negro*, presented evidence that not only supported many of the previous ideas of his era, but presented a radical idea that pushed the bounds of supposed Black inferiority. Crawford (1866) asserted that Blacks did not even deserve to be called a "race." Instead, he argued, the term "species" would be a better reflection of "what" they were (p. 222). Therefore, because of Blacks' supposed lack of human characteristics, Crawford surmised that it would be shocking if Blacks were to continue to exist at all. Although there was an argument that biracial children might be superior

to their Black parent, doubt was expressed that such biracial children actually would inherit the superior traits of their White parents (Crawford, 1866). As for those who survived, Crawford proposed that enslavement was the ideal occupation for Blacks until their race became extinct. This essay and others like it contained supposed evidence of racial inferiorities. It wasn't just that Blacks were flawed; they also were unfit to live. This "evidence" laid the groundwork for the stigmas faced by Blacks about what they could accomplish due to their supposed physical limitations.

The evidence that formed the basis for the social construction of race was a result of countless scientific explorations of the Black body. In 1895, 30 years after the emancipation of slaves, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* published a diagram under the entry for "Negros" that explained that Blacks were intellectually inferior because they had a "cranial [capacity]" of only 35 ounces, compared to that of 45 ounces for an "average European ... [and] highest gorilla" (as cited in Miller, 2004, p. 331; Taylor, 1998). The encyclopedia essentially argued that the brain of even the well-educated Black scholar was far closer to the intelligence of a gorilla than an average European. Later, the encyclopedia would revise their entry to present a gross exaggeration of Black athletes, describing those who dominated Whites in athletic competitions as having arms that "[reach] below the knee," several inches longer than the arms of White men who were of comparable height (as cited in Miller, 2004, p. 331). The entry was arguably a reference to popular depictions of Neanderthals. Articles published as "scientific" exposed the public to evidence that would serve to justify race myths, thus effectively relegating Blacks to an inferior status.

During the World War I era, intelligence tests asserted that Blacks had lower intelligence quotients (IQs) than their White counterparts, which was used as justification for myths of Black inferiority (Hoberman, 1997). Because of racist ideas, athleticism has become a symbol of Black identity, which leads to society's disregard of intellectual achievements made by the Black community. Hoberman (1997) asserts that society has a "racist tradition" of making "the body the essence of Black humanity and a sign of its inferior status" (p. 60). Society has come to value the worth of Blacks primarily through their displays of physical ability. Despite the success that many Black athletes have had in their respective sports, many people still hold ideals that dictate Whites as having "an intellectual ... capacity that exceeds all but the exceptional Black person" (Wigginton, 2006, p.2). As the stereotype of superior athletic ability in Blacks perpetuates, the stereotype of inferior intelligence will also continue, due to the acceptance of race myths in society.

The perpetuation of social Darwinist beliefs concerning race can be credited to social learning theory, developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Social learning theory proposes that culture is taught to individuals through their socialization (Mercurio & Filak, 2010). Behaviors and ideology are adopted by people as a result of their mimicking of social role models. The first social role models of children are their parents and other peers. Thus the perpetuation of racist beliefs is due to the adoption of parents' beliefs by children. Social learning theory does allow for behaviors and ideologies to change. Change can occur through the introduction of an opposing opinion or action, and change is reinforced through rewards. An example of a reward for ending racism could be a meaningful friendship with a member of the previously discriminated-against group. However, in order for an ideology or behavior to be adopted, the rewards that are given must come from an individual or group that is in an

authoritative or otherwise respected position, due to the need for influence over another's actions and beliefs. Therefore, social learning theory argues that in order for beliefs about race to change, the presentation and role of race in society will also have to change as well (Mercurio & Filak, 2010).

Critical race theory examines race as a method of social control (Hylton, 2009). Race has been constructed by society as a method of distinguishing between groups. Evidence of race as a method of distinguishing between groups can be seen in the practice of slavery; Whites generally made up the majority of slave owners, while Blacks and other racial minority groups comprised the enslaved. Although the racial differences that served as justification for slavery are based on skin color, and not because of some racially based mental or physical inferiority, race becomes "real" because of the acts of institutions and individuals (Hylton, 2009, p. 3). Critical race theory developed during the 1980s. It explains how race perpetuates the daily actions of individuals, through the development of races as an aspect of identity. Once race is a marker of identity, race becomes embedded in people's thoughts and influences their actions. Whether intentionally or not, many people use race as a determinant in the choices they make, as well as the opinions that they form about others. Therefore, race has an influence on employment, access to financial resources, and many other institutional forces. Essentially, a social hierarchy develops that places minorities on the bottom. Critical race theory reasons that the dominant group is in control of the perception of race. The dominant group in American culture has developed a form of racism that presents Blacks as lazy, unintelligent, and hyper-sexual (Hylton, 2009). When Limbaugh and others who share his beliefs develop the perception that Black athletes lack the intelligence to perform as quarterbacks, their ideas are based in the view of race developed by the nation's dominant group.

Although relations have overall seen great improvement, institutional racism continues to pervade athletics at nearly all levels. Athletes are frequently denied opportunities on college teams because of racial bias. Critical race theory explains racism in sport in American culture because Black athletes are typically given lower status positions on teams (Hylton, 2009). Sports allow an outlet for society to express "dominant ideas and epistemologies while allowing others to be marginalized" (p. 65). The roles that Black athletes hold on professional teams can be seen as a projection of White superiority in athletics. Therefore, when Black athletes are prevented from performing in central roles in football, the exclusion perpetuates the athletic disenfranchisement of Blacks. Similarly, when Black quarterbacks are regulated to a second or third position, rather than a starting position, teams are essentially promoting racism further by asserting that Blacks are good enough to be placed in the position of quarterback, but not good enough to lead the team at the start.

Limbaugh's comments reflect the dominant-culture's beliefs of Black intellectual inferiority that have traditionally restricted the roles that Blacks play in sports. Due to myths about racial inferiority, coaches and scouts often have preconceived views of Black athletes. Research by Lewis (1995) found evidence of professional scouts refusing to observe Black athletes in central roles, or roles that would require some level of intelligence in order to make strategic plays. Lewis argues that many coaches kept Black athletes out of positions of leadership due to beliefs that "Blacks tend to be poor leaders, do not think quick enough, or do not perform well under pressure" (p. 435). Other coaches and scouts feared that Black quarterbacks would be unable to "grasp the terminology" (Bigler & Jeffries, 2008, p. 125). The discrimination that

many coaches and scouts carry out has lead to many talented Black athletes being funneled into peripheral positions, meaning that their role on the team is often overlooked and widely considered unneeded to achieve victory, such as the kicker or defensive backs. Often, coaches and scouts justify their behavior through the common race myth that Black players would not be able to mentally react fast enough if a White player made a sudden move (Lewis, 1995). This belief held by many coaches led to the practice of lining up players by race, so that players rarely are forced to “face” a player of a different race. Hoberman (1997) writes of a study by Arthur Jensen in which the supposed lack of intelligence in Black athletes could be seen in their slow reaction times. Jensen argued that his results showed that Muhammad Ali, and presumably all Black athletes with lesser skill, had a “very average” reaction time (p. 55). Jensen’s results were discredited by psychologist Leon Kamin, who found that Jensen’s results actually showed that Ali had a reaction time that “approached the recognized limits of the human organism” (as cited in Hoberman, 1997, p. 55). Jensen’s attempts to show that Black athletes could not succeed in sports due to their low intelligence, reportedly linked to reaction time, were based on social constructions of race that assumed Black athletes could not mentally function quickly. Faulty evidence touted as fact lead to the development of racist beliefs concerning race and athletic and mental ability that have had a lasting impact on Black football players at the college and professional level.

Integration in Collegiate Football

Although some college and professional teams hesitated to integrate due to beliefs about the inferiority of Black athletes, they had also a host of other reasons. First, many northern teams did not have more than a few Black players on their roster until the 1940s out of fear of integrating too fast and drawing contempt from segregationists (Demas, 2010). A majority of college funding comes from state budgets, so if teams came under scrutiny from local politicians the entire institution could suffer. Second, integrated teams were also aware of the belief that Black athletes who were allowed playing time would develop “an air of bravado.” The teams feared that if bravado occurred, it would in turn reflect negatively on a university, and deter future students and athletes from attending (p. 11). Third, other coaches used the justification that Black athletes simply did not possess the intellectual ability to perform up to the academic standards needed at the institutions (Banks, 1970). By asserting that Blacks were not smart enough to attend any schools other than historically Black universities, segregated universities were able to fight integration with a seemingly legitimate argument. When Black athletes gained the opportunity to play on formerly “sworn bastions of White supremacy,” coaches claimed that the integration was not due to the ability of athletes, but because Black athletes “suddenly became intelligent enough to pass the entrance exam” (Banks, 1970, p. 132).

After overt racism no longer became feasible, universities adopted more subtle methods of displaying their racist ideals. Of the teams that did have Black players, a “gentlemen’s agreement” came into practice, in which parties agreed that integrated schools would not allow their Black players to take the field when playing a segregated school (Demas, 2010, p.11). Black athletes were only allowed to participate in substantial amounts of playing time under certain circumstances. For example, they were required to renounce any political ties to the equal rights movement (Wigginton, 2006). Darryl Hill is widely considered to be the “Jackie Robinson” of football for his role as one of the first Black football players to receive significant playing time in college football. At the beginning of Hill’s football career at the University of

Maryland in 1963, he was advised to make a statement before playing any southern college teams that he “was not trying to be Jackie Robinson,” meaning that he was not attempting to pave the way for any more Black athletes to play football (Rhoden, 2008). Hill described several instances in which fans of southern schools would bring nooses and other intimidating symbols into the stands to intimidate Black players. Before a game against the University of South Carolina, Hill received death threats if he saw any playing time. Undoubtedly, the racial intolerance directed toward Hill was influenced by the position he held on the team of wide receiver, a central role. Hill would most likely have faced racial discrimination even if he had occupied a peripheral role; but because he occupied a central role typically reserved for White athletes, the opposition he faced was much more severe.

The pressure on schools to remain segregated was even stronger in southern colleges. Paul “Bear” Bryant, coach for the University of Alabama, resisted integration partly due to his reluctance to be the first Southern coach to integrate. But he also resisted because he believed Black players lacked talent compared to White players (Rhoden, 2008). The film *Breaking the Huddle: The Integration of College Football* (Rhoden) asserted that Bryant was so entrenched with racist ideals that he arranged the 1970 Alabama versus Southern California game, with a high number of Black players, as a way to promote the supremacy of White players. Bryant and the all-White Alabama were ultimately defeated by a score of 42–21 (Rhoden). Following the game, Bryant reluctantly began recruiting Black players. The argument can be made that many coaches recruited Black athletes to the position of wide receiver, a central role, as consolation for the refusal to recruit any Black quarterbacks. Despite the reluctance of Coach Bryant to integrate the University of Alabama football team, he was eventually forced to disregard his racist beliefs, and he made the bold decision to place the first Black player for Alabama in a central role. Although Bryant’s actions were shocking in the college football realm, his actions were mirrored by at least one professional coach.

Black Professional Football Players

Professional football has only reluctantly allowed Black athletes entry into professional football. During the turn of the twentieth century, in which professional football teams were first developing, public opinion deemed Black athletes as inferior. In that era, giving Black athletes positions over White athletes could potentially ruin a professional sports team. The first football franchise owners simply refused to hire Black athletes out of fear that the sport would lose its respectability, a fear magnified by the popularity of college football over professional football in the 1920s (Lomax, 1999). When Black athletes were finally allowed to receive positions in 1946, it was only because a rival league, the All-American Football Conference (AAFC), was organized (Lomax, 1999, p. 164). But even with the addition of a rival league, acceptance of Black players was slow in coming in the NFL.

The final football team to desegregate was the Washington Redskins, in 1962; additionally, this team was the last to desegregate among professional football, baseball and basketball teams (Wigginton, 2006). The Redskins held out on desegregating due to owner George Preston Marshall, who helped to begin the franchise in 1932 and was owner until his death in 1969 (Smith, 1987). Marshall and the Redskins were the last professional football team to try to preserve their status as “lone wolf in lily-Whiteism” (p. 189). Marshall was notorious for his hands-on practices with his team; at one point, when coach John Whelchel refused to switch the offensive and defensive linemen, Marshall replied that he hired Whelchel as a “disciplinarian

... not a coach” (p. 192). Therefore, the decision to stay segregated was due to Marshall’s racism. Marshall even used the justification that if he allowed a Black player on his team, he would lose advertisers and his “White southern audience” (p. 194). However, Marshall’s assertion that he would lose advertisers was a somewhat misleading statement. He was in a great bargaining position because he owned television and radio stations, and he could likely find other, more racially tolerant advertisers for his stations. However, Marshall was correct that he risked losing some of his southern fans, as the Redskins became a popular team for the American Nazi Party, who carried banners stating, “Keep Redskins White” to games (p. 201). Another fan was quoted as asserting that “when a football owner is forced to put a nigger on his team,” it was a sign of the impending invasion of “liberalism” that would overtake the government (p. 201). Marshall further fanned the fires of racism by alleging that allowing Blacks on his team would be akin to allowing women to play on his team. Therefore, not only was Marshall making derogatory remarks toward Blacks, but also reinforcing ideas of the masculinity of football players, which Black athletes were accused of lacking.

Marshall’s racism was so ingrained that he refused to hire Black players until President John F. Kennedy threatened federal intervention in 1961 if Marshall did not integrate before the 1962–63 season. Marshall reluctantly caved in to pressure, but he only allowed for one Black player, Bobby Mitchell, a halfback/flanker (Smith, 1987). Ironically, a halfback is considered to be a central role on many teams due to the strategy needed in both handling the ball and, when other positions are handling the ball, preventing the opposing team from tackling the ball handler. Although Marshall allowed a Black player to occupy a central role, it seemed to be because of the federal pressure to integrate. The Redskins may be a rather extreme example of refusal to integrate, but Marshall exemplifies beliefs that Blacks simply could not, and should not, compete on the same fields as Whites. Marshall held out on integration because of his racist beliefs regarding Black athletes, as well as his reluctance to lose the loyalty of his racist fans. Even with the completed integration of professional football following the installation of the first Black player on the Redskins’ roster, professional football continues to retain racial inequalities.

In the Footsteps of Doug Williams

In 1968, professional Black football players numbered only 66, compared to 220 White athletes (Loy & McElvogue, 1970). A vast majority of the Black athletes, 60 of the total 66, occupied peripheral roles; often these positions were ones which many coaches argued would prevent the “slow-thinking” Black players from losing the game (Lewis, 1995, p. 433). Thus, only 6 players occupied central roles, such as quarterback, although the most common central position continues to be wide receiver (p. 12). The most notable exception to the “slow-thinking” Black athlete was Doug Williams, the only starting Black quarterback in history to win the Super Bowl. Williams, from historically Black college Grambling State University, led the Redskins to a 1988 victory over the Denver Broncos in a 42-10 win (Leavy, 1988). Williams did not demonstrate the view of what Black quarterbacks were expected to be; he was quick and maintained precision and focus on the field (Leavy, 1988). In 2007, there were a total of ninety-six (96) quarterbacks in the NFL (three (3) for each of the thirty-two (32) teams), but only eighteen (18) were Black, or only about 19% (Mercurio & Filak, 2010). The relatively small percentage of Black quarterbacks is surprising because Blacks account for 70% of athletes in professional football. By allowing the practice of racial segregation by position to continue, teams are perpetuating myths of racial superiority developed in the Victorian era by Herbert

Spencer. Despite the success of Black quarterbacks such as Doug Williams, coaches have relied on social constructions of the Black athlete to determine where athletes are placed on the field, rather than examining the strengths of each individual player.

Despite the achievements of Williams and many other notable Black quarterbacks, the amount of discrimination in professional football, as apparent by the degree of racial segregation, continues to be noticeably unstable. Lewis (1995) found that racial segregation in professional football was more pronounced in 1985 compared to 1960, with a higher number of Blacks in peripheral positions in 1985 (p. 434). One of the reasons for the increase in racial segregation is the amount of time that passed after the development of the American Football League (AFL), in addition to the National Football League (NFL). Lomax (1999) found that prior to the 1961 season, many Black players considered moving to AFL teams to escape the prevalent racism in the NFL, including restrictions on where Black players could live in relation to White players (p. 170). In order to prevent the move, several NFL teams added more Black players and decreased the racial separation in playing positions (p. 170). When the tension between the rival leagues began to fade in the 1980s, racial segregation by playing percentage began to rise again (Lewis, 1995, p. 434). Therefore, due to the unstable nature of race relations in football, any noticeable change in player relations, such as an unprecedentedly high number of Black quarterbacks, would be likely to spark media attention, and not because of personal or professional bias from the media, a fact supported by the lack of any data supporting a conclusion to the contrary.

Society constructs the Black athlete into a symbol of athletic ability without any intelligence, a belief that Limbaugh readily accepts. Studies have been conducted to try to prove Black inferiority, and studies have been done to refute such claims—but still the social construct of inferior Black athletes pervades. Black athletes face discriminatory practices that prevent their acquisition of central roles in football not because of a lack of intelligence, but because society grips a construct that the Black athlete is all brawn, and no brain. Limbaugh perpetuated this race myth through his assumption that Black quarterbacks receive media attention because of the desire for a successful Black quarterback. Niven (2005) has proved that Black quarterbacks receive media praise for overcoming the preconceived notions of racial inferiority demonstrated by their supposed lack of ability in leadership roles. The praise is not simply because of race, as Limbaugh assumes.

Conclusion

Limbaugh's comments reflect the social construction of race through his presumption that Black athletes do not possess the intelligence to be quarterbacks. The assumption that Black quarterbacks do not deserve media coverage stems from the cultural myth that Black athletes have nothing to offer other than their physical performance; therefore, Limbaugh is devaluing any strategic contribution that Black quarterbacks make by dismissing their performance. The social construction of race perpetuates the experiences of minorities at every level of society, which is reflected in the racially segregated positions of professional football teams. Blacks had to fight for the desegregation of public facilities; this battle mirrors the battle fought for equal access to athletics. Race has been constructed in United States society to present Black athletes as possessing dynamic physical capabilities, but little intelligence. In a similar vein, Blacks in nearly all other arenas have been portrayed as simply unable to compete with Whites, especially in academics. The media often portrays Black quarterbacks as having "innate abilities and distinct biological advantages," but ultimately lacking the intellect to become a leader (Mercurio

& Filak, 2010, p. 60). Limbaugh and other media personalities ultimately continue to present the racist beliefs that Black quarterbacks are simply not comparable to their White counterparts.

Research has proven the perpetuation of racism in collegiate football, but studies often ignore the effect of racism on professional football. Future research should examine the effect of media presentations of athletes on the continuance of stereotyped, racially motivated beliefs. Current research already demonstrates the continuance of racially charged language in presentations of Black athletes. In a larger context, Limbaugh's comments reflect the deep penetration of the popular belief in the inferiority of the Black race in nearly every institution. Collegiate and professional football teams continue to allow the perpetuation of race myths through the continued reluctance to allow Black athletes to fill starting quarterback roles. As long as racism continues to dominate decisions in institutions Black quarterbacks will continue to be marginalized and denied opportunities to play professionally without pressure to switch to a peripheral position.

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