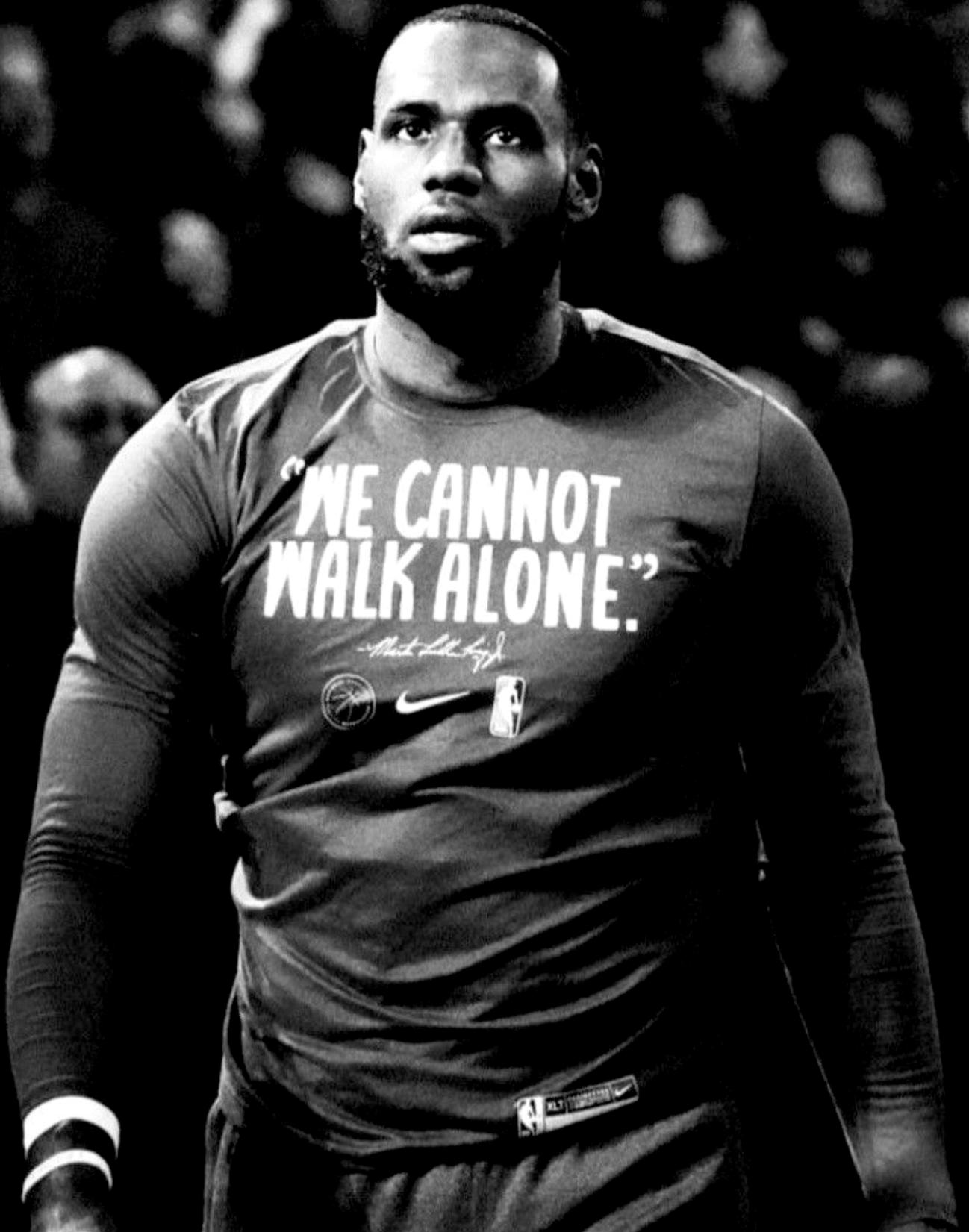


RACISM IN SPORT

How branding might help reach the goal for a positive change?



1

2

3

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION



During this research report, I plan and expect to find out why racism seems so prevalent within sports and how over the past few decades it has been combatted by sports stars as well as the general public.

AIM 1

What is racism within sports and the history of racism within sports?

OBJECTIVE 1

Using primary and secondary sources of research to investigate why racism exists in sports still and investigating historic racial moments within sports.

AIM 2

The Washington Redskins rebrand problem and the history it holds.

OBJECTIVE 2

Using online articles to assess the historic problem of The Washington Redskins and why ultimately in 2020 it was slated to be re-branded.

AIM 3

Find out what the public feel racism in sports is, how it effects their favourite sports?

OBJECTIVE 3

Using qualitative and quantitate data off my own to be able to open a discussion with both sides of the discussion of racism within sports.

WHAT IS RACISM IN SPORT?



Identifying there is a problem within sports with racism is one aspect of a massive machine of institutional racism, but what is racism in sports? Is racism still prevalent in sports? If so, are fans or owner-ship to blame for this continued dated and harmful abuse?

SOCIETY

I will never understand truly what racism is for a person in a minority group, but education on this is something everyone should've to strive to learn, and how racism still exists in microdoses to blatant aggressive derogatory comments, "It exists every day. The pain of racism exists in the lack of promotions and micro-aggressions at work, the poor access to decent health and housing, the low expectations from teachers, the racial profiling by the police, the lack of positive exposure in the media. It is an everyday struggle." (Derek A Bardowell, 2020). The writer for GQ outlines the hidden aspects that the white public doesn't see or experience within society. How does this filter into sports.

COMMENTARY

In 2018, during a regular-season game at Oklahoma, the OKC Thunder were playing the Memphis Grizzlies, when the announcer Brian Davies, made a derogatory comment about Russell Westbrook, "Westbrook was "out of his cotton-picking mind" after he tallied his ninth assist midway through the second quarter" (Aj Neuharth-Keusch, 2018). With Davies later apologising for the comments to the whole team and the viewing public, this suddenly links back into what Bardowell was presenting saying "microaggression at work", this was the Davies job and he was unprofessional.



FANS & MEDIA

Football fans around the world have been rocked in recent years with athletes gaining their own voice and speak up for those who can't, this has created a division within sporting fans, one side completely standing with their sports stars and some believe these type of actions do not belong in sports, "LeBron James was told to "shut up and dribble" by a Fox News anchor in 2018 in response...comments on racism and being Black in the United States.(Faras Ghani, 2020). Even though this came from the media, a lot of fans backed the news anchor, who presented arguments for politics to stay out of sports, "We can certainly remove politics from sports. Politics are all over sports. It's not necessary for anyway, shape, or form." (Laura Hancock, 2018), this was in a sport forum online while people debated whether politics should be in sports. However, sports pundits have taken things way too far before, pushing the people dismissing the protest to the brink and offending them by calling them epithets they didn't believe they were. This started when an ESPN pundit was

suspended for making comments about commented about President Trump, "ESPN's suspension of the "SportsCenter" anchor Jemele Hill, who had tweeted that President Trump was a 'white supremacist.'"(Hua Hsu, 2018). Whether you liked the previous president or not, sports has a wide range of viewers and to antagonise aside and call a person they deemed 'worthy', of the presidency shows a lack of awareness with the voice they have. This continued in the ESPN panel when a high profile member wrote a vulgar email to a senator who worked in the Trump administration, "Less than two hours after Tweeting out his letter to Silver, Hawley shared another A tweet showing ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski's response to the letter: 'fuck you.'"(Mark Harris, 2020). Baring in mind the senator had sent an email to the NBA commissioner demeaning the protests players took part in but again it showed unprofessionalism and suddenly overshadows all the good that comes from player and fan protests raising awareness for the cause, instead of the headlines move to a comment made by a pundit.



EMPLOYMENT

In the eyes of Bleachreport, a sporting journalism outfit, they believed in 2008 that sports were starting to fall behind in society in terms of progressive ideals, "In a worldly society, where the ethics and moral stature of its inhabitants appears to be improving at a rapid pace, it seems that in sports, it may have begun to lag behind." (Antony Herbert, 2008). This statement isn't something new within the sports community, "Team executives have to overcome their biases and broaden their vision to see black candidates as viable for the decision-making jobs in sports."(Michael Fletcher, 2018). This article from the undefeated discuss the opportunities for minorities to get jobs within sports, organisations compared to their white counterparts, "black athletes and their families noted Tampa Bay Rays pitcher Chris Archer, who is among the shrinking number of African-Americans in major league baseball." (Michael Fletcher, 2018).



HISTORY OF

RACISM

IN SPORT

1936
OLYMPIC GAMES

JESSE OWENS



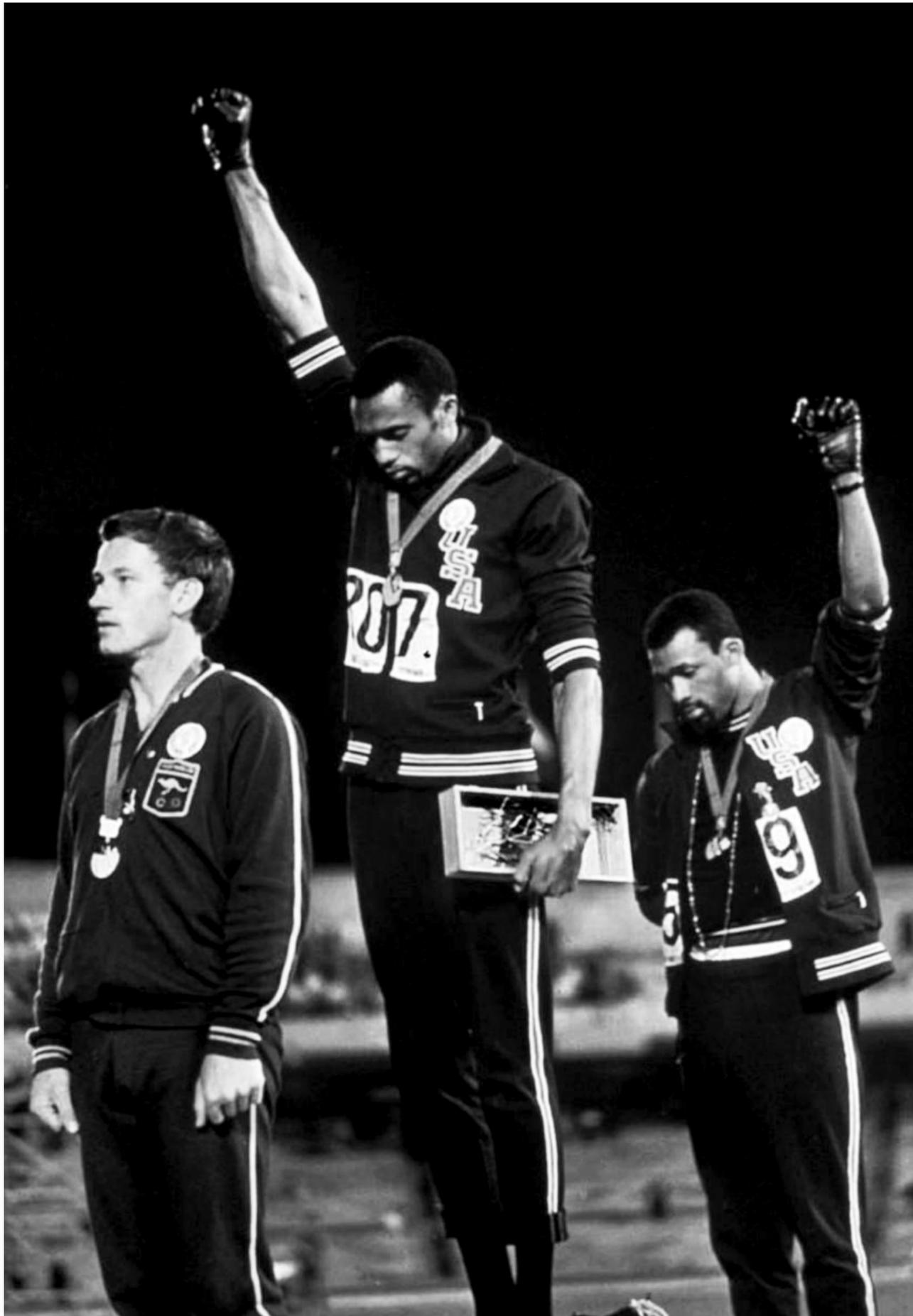
In 1936 the Olympic Games were held in Berlin during the heights of the tension building up to World War 2 under the Hitler and Nazi regime. Due to this regime, Hitler wanted to prove the Aryan race was the dominant race in the world. "For Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games were expected to be a German showcase and a statement for Aryan supremacy." (A&E Television Networks, 2017). Insert Jesse Owens and the revolutionary move the American Olympics team made by bringing African American athletes to Berlin to compete, to compete against Hitler's 'Aryan Race' claims, not dismissing the United States has continued racism within their country, "Hitler lambasted America for including Black athletes on its Olympic roster."(A&E Television Networks, 2017).

This led to the United States winning 11 gold medals, 6 won by black athletes, Jesse Owens won 4 of them. But to go against Hitler he saluted the American National anthem while being booed by majority of the crowd who were doing the infamous Nazi Salute, a symbol of hate.

Owens later commented on how the racism didn't stop in Berlin and how his own country contributed to the discrimination thrown his way. "The mild-mannered Owens seemed not the least bit surprised by his home country's hypocrisy. 'When I came back to my native country, after all the stories about Hitler, I couldn't ride in the front of the bus,' he said. 'I had to go to the back door. I couldn't live where I wanted. I wasn't invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I wasn't invited to the White House to shake hands with the president, either.'" (A&E Television Networks, 2017). This shows that no matter how you represented your country you were still judged by the colour of your skin.



1968
OLYMPIC GAMES



Owens later commented on how the racism didn't stop in Berlin and how his own country contributed to the discrimination thrown his way. "The mild-mannered Owens seemed not the least bit surprised by his home country's hypocrisy. 'When I came back to my native country after the 1968 Olympic Games, the start of a change that would continue for decades to come. John Carlos and Tommie Smith would create the most iconic and powerful statement in sporting history. Carlos and Smith held their fist up at their medal ceremony in protest of equal rights for ethnic minorities within the world and specifically America.

However, this started the movement, the fist that was thrown up by Carlos and Smith is now used all through the Black Lives Matter social movement and used by Colin Kaepernick in his protests against police brutality against minority communities. This showed how they unknowingly created a brand that stood the test of time, it is a symbol that resonates with anyone who sees it and you can easily trace it back to the 1968 Olympic Games. In fear of the push back from onlookers in Mexico, Carlos wanted to make sure he could defend himself while he protested, worrying he would be lynched by disapproving 'fans'. "Look at the picture and you'll see that while Smith's arm is raised long and erect, Carlos has his slightly bent at the elbow.

"I wanted to make sure, in case someone rushed us, I could throw down a hammer punch," he writes. "We had just received so many threats leading up to that point, I refused to be defenceless at that moment of truth." (Gary Younge, 2012). No one should have to feel they need to defend themselves let alone a sport that has just won Olympic medals for their country.

This leads onto were the 'fans' racism that we are seeing in today's sport comes in, "And then came the storm. First boos. Then insults and worse. People throwing things and screaming racist abuse. 'N****ers need to go back to Africa!' and, 'I can't believe this is how you n****ers treat us after we let you run in our games.'" (Gary Younge, 2012). This being back in 1968 you feel it shows its ages, but this leads me to Colin Kaepernick and the NFL in 2016 and how things have changed very little. , after all the stories about Hitler, I couldn't ride in the front of the bus," he said. "I had to go to the back door. I couldn't live where I wanted. I wasn't invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I wasn't invited to the White House to shake hands with the president, either.'" (A&E Television Networks, 2017). This shows that no matter how you represented your country you were still judged by the colour of your skin.

2016

COLIN KAEPEERNICK

During the 2016 NFL season, Colin Kaepernick shocked the NFL and sporting world by protesting against police brutality that had been taking place within America. What Kaepernick did was kneel during the United States national anthem, in a way of peacefully protesting.

The quote from Kaepernick in his eyes embodied the feeling of minority athletes and fans after the unlawful deaths of coloured citizens such as Alton Sterling.

This triggered a lot of negative reaction around America, bringing out some of the underlying racism that is within society and the sports industry, "Or they don't view this form of protest as peaceful, respectful or immune from punishment. Spend a moment on Facebook, Twitter or the comments section of an article on the subject this week, and you may find yourself reading thoughts from people who are outraged with the players

who are protesting, but claim that it has nothing to do with race or prejudice." (Kenneth Arthur, 2017).

What Kaepernick started then, sent waves through the NFL and the sporting world; other players started kneeling in the league after Kaepernick got fired from being the 49ers quarterback, and now in 2021, after the Black Lives Matter protest that we saw shake the world after the murder of George Floyd, the kneel that Kaepernick did

in 2016 became a worldwide symbol, but this brings us back to the 1968 Olympics, the fist. This fist for black power that John Carlos and Tommie Smith did, that had been used by Kaepernick while kneeling in 2016, had no become the brand of the Black Lives Matter movement and one that is now recognised world wide.

This leads us back into how branding may be able to help make a positive change, "A brand is a person's gut feeling

about a product, service or company. It's a gut feeling because we are all emotional, intuitive beings, despite our best efforts to be rational... the brand is defined by individuals." (Marty Neumeier, 2003). This quote from 'The Brand Gap' book, shows how individuals create a brand and I believe the people around the Black Lives Matter movement, dating back to Jesse Owens, all show how these individuals helped create this movement or brand, something that people

can easily resonate with because now when you see this symbol you are reminded of the history behind it.



"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of colour... To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."

Colin Kaepernick, 2016.

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In this survey, the objective is to find out what sports people watch and if consider that racism is still prevalent in it. By doing this, it should give me a good base to go into interviews, and will also lead me forward in my research to what the public sees about their sports and to see if there are any correlations with certain answers or words used.

Y

QUESTION 1

QUESTION 2

QUESTION 3



The first three questions were the basics, gender and age and race, this is to get a consensus on the demographic that is replying to the survey and may show me why answers are influenced a certain way From 30 answers I got a response from 70% male and 30% female.

When looking at ages, 50% were 21-25, 20% were 26-30 and 31-39, and the final 10% were 40 and above. The reason for these age brackets are they tend to have similar opinions to each other due to their generational habits.

The race of the person answering was also taken into account with 70% being white and 30% being black, this could show why answers were made in a certain way as minority communities will see the racism towards them and players in sports more than a non-minority possibly would

In these question, it was my goal to find out what sport was the favourite of the person answering the question and if they believed racism still existed, this would grant me an insight into which sports have either tackled racism or still have it prevalent within their sports.

QUESTION 4



QUESTION 5



Looking at the results, what is something that stands out to me that the minority-dominated sports seem to have the most racism still existing in them, which present a growing issue that it's not the sport but the fans that come along with it.

QUESTION 6

FOOTBALL

From the football answers, I got a lot of similar responses from all of the participants, many stating that the media would ridicule minority players and then praise a white player for doing the same. The answer that stood out to be the most to me was, “recent several players have been racially abused for their performance or their political alignment such as Marcus Rashford.”. This gives me a basis to investigate further on if racism within football and the UK if I decide to take this route, however, it also highlights a major problem within sports and how if you’re a minority player if you do not perform well, instead of being criticised for how you played, you are instead met with racial abuse.

To avoid me assuming why they answered the previous questions the way they did, I ask the participants why they believed this, and I have had picked a response from each sport chosen, to dig deeper into their choices.

NBA & NFL

The NBA and the NFL are the two American based sports that were voted for in the survey, they accumulated 20% of the voting, in both sports 100% of the voters said they believed racism existed within the sports. The replies to why they thought this was based around the Black Lives Matter movement, “viewership in the NBA has gone down and speculation is its due to the kneeling for the national anthem for the BLM movement”. This shows that sometimes racism isn’t coming in the form of words or physical altercation, people want to ignore the movement and ignore that racism exists, which within sports can be understandable, its a form of escapism and entertainment, the public sometimes don’t want to be reminded of the real world. Comments similar to this one were attributed to the NFL, “Since Colin Kaepernick took the knee, there has been a The tension between NFL fans who disagree and agree with the matter.”. There seems to be a disconnect between fans who understand what the Black Lives Matter movement means and those who see it as disrespecting American culture and the flag that they adore.

RUGBY & ATHELETICS

On both Rugby and Athletics, they responded with 100% saying they didn’t believe that racism existed in their sports, this led me to look at their comments to see why they believe this but also look at may be why this is the case. One comment came back that to me stood out the most, stating “In rugby, I believe that there’s no racism because fans can stand next to each other without fighting and just enjoy the sport, yes there can be jesting but no one takes it personally. This means that players aren’t subject to personal attacks, they are only criticised for the game to throw them off while playing, not to demean them”. This could be a possible avenue to look down at how fans in different sports act around each other, in rugby stadiums, all fans are mixed, whereas football is all separated in fear of fighting amongst fans of opposing sides. Another comment I found interesting was, “Rugby is a white-dominated sport in Europe, however when you

look at the countries that are top of the rugby, it’s New Zealand & South Africa, who have the most minority players in the sport, and many rugby fans that don’t bother them because they don’t see race, they just see elite players.”. From this comment, I can take that the rugby community is very acceptant of minority players, and from my knowledge I feel this could be impacted by 1995 South African World Cup, that was held in a country rife with racial tension and Nelson Mandela being at the front of it.



*“Sport has the advantage that it reaches
areas that cannot be reached by politicians”
- Nelson Mandela, 1995*



In these interviews, I wanted to get perspective from both sides of the aisle on the issue of Black Lives Matter within sports. I decided to interview one person who was for BLM and one who was against it, this would give me a holistic view on the topic and allow me to engage in considering each argument moving forward. Both participants asked to be kept anonymous for their interviews, they will also both be asked the same questions. During these interviews, I would react to someone was saying and challenge their position, this ended up with differing questions within each interview to allow me to delve deeper into their thinking.

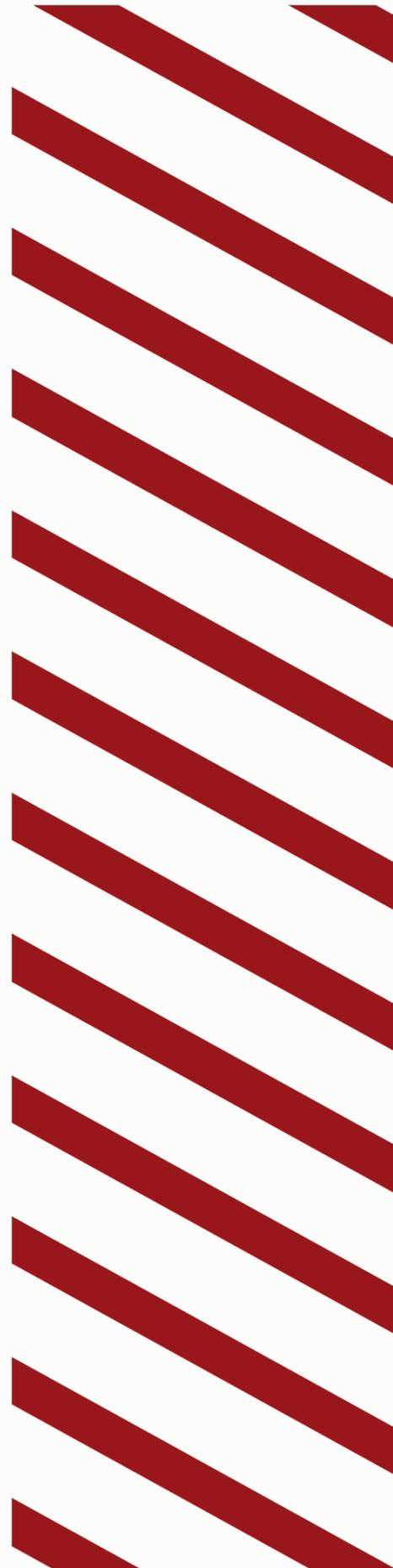
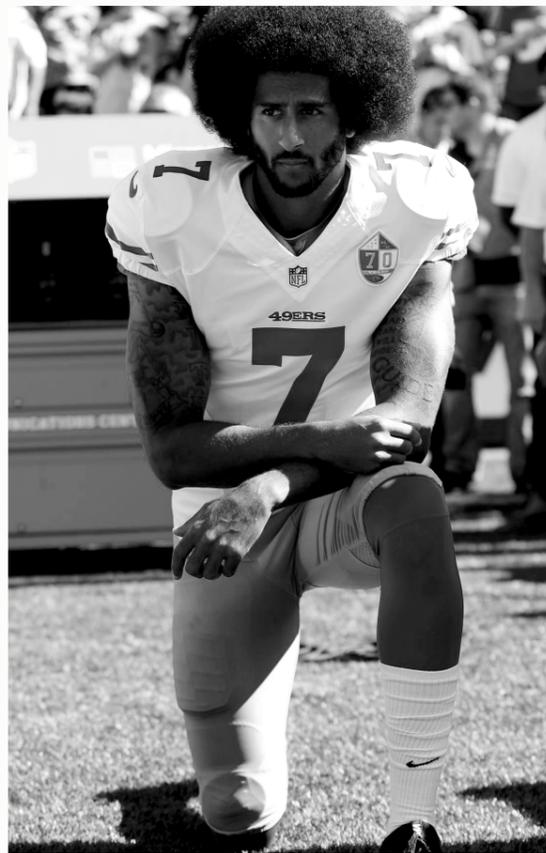
INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW 1

Jameson spoke about the racial abuse he has witnessed at games, but feeling powerless to do anything, “In a crowd surrounded by riled up sports fans, if you question something an opposing fan is doing to a player, fans around that person will protect their own before they agree with the opposite side, this creates an unhealthy environment.”(Jameson, 2021). In this statement, he is correct that environments at sporting events can be very hostile and usually require law enforcement to be around, which also includes security for the ground it is being played at.

When Jameson continued to speak about racial abuse within sports he stated that the sporting industry has ignored this problem for a very long time and believed that it has been ‘ingratiated within the sporting community’ giving racist the green light to express their opinions as they are backed by whoever is on their sides.

The first interview was conducted with a Pro-Black Lives Matter advocate and sports fan for Swansea City Football Club, who had recently experienced racial abuse towards a player Yan Dandha after an FA lose to Manchester City, this interview came at a time where me and the participants felt it was very relevant. We will refer to this person as Jameson. Jameson stated, “ Do you see why we need the BLM movement in sports because they are the one attacked the most, not by just fans, but media covers players in certain ways that allow them to hide racism within their writing or coverage.”(Jameson, 2021). At this point, I challenged the notion of tarring the fans with the same brush, this was to keep a discussion balanced, to which Jameson replied, “ Isn’t that what they do to us? Make us feel all the same and not acknowledge their own faults and blame all the problems on minorities.”(Jameson, 2021).



INTERVIEW 2



The second interview was with someone who was against the Black Lives Matter movement and disagreed with it appearing in sports, this person requested to be anonymous in fear that they would be labelled something they are not, so for now, we will call this person Nick, which promoted me to my first question that differed from interview 1, which was, ‘why do you fear you would be labelled something’, to this they replied, “There is a clear disconnect from what the BLM movement should of been about and what it is, rioting and disgracing heroes like Winston Churchill has out of bounds, I understand slave statues but not a war hero within the UK. But if I say this publicly I’m slated as a racist” (Nick, 2021). Understanding Nicks position is fairly logical, it makes sense, but, miscommunication is huge on both sides which were shown in interview 1 and the investigation into racism in sports. Nick continued, “I agree with the premise of BLM, but the action I do not condone.” (Nick, 2021). Nick is referring to the riots that plagued America during the first lockdown after the brutal murder of George Floyd. Being an American from Boston, but had moved to Wales when he was 12, Nick is an NFL fan,

giving me a chance to ask his opinion of the Washington Football Team situation, “I believe it was unnecessary to change, it was a well-established team and in my opinion, it paid homage to that community... However, I am not Native American, and if they felt offended by it I understand. If the team had racial connotations to my skin colour (African American) I too would want it changed, but ‘The Washington Football Team’? They could’ve come up with something better than that.”(Nick,2021).

At the end of both interviews, I asked the participants how sporting teams could use design to make their fans are more aware of racial issues within sports. Here are their responses:
“Information is key, understanding to respect players and also the team as a whole is essential, not everyone is going to like to see it but addressing the problem is better than ignoring it.” “Create something that is for everyone, catering to one side will antagonise the other, it’s a hard ask but look at the Washington Football Team, they have rebranded the team and majority of the fans don’t like it as it’s boring and too safe.”

This can help further the investigation and the allow a look into the current situation at The Washington Football Team.

OVERVIEW



**THE
WASHINGTON
~~REDSKINS~~
PROBLEM**

