

Student's Name

Professor's Name

Class

Date



BREAKING STEREOTYPES: THE GENETICALLY SUPERIOR ATHLETES

Millions of people are living in the world contributing to the glory of various spheres of life. Music, cinema, medicine, business, science, literature – all spheres have their own outstanding individuals who have had enough abilities to stand out among others. When it comes to sports, many names arouse including Mike Tyson, Tiger Woods, Kelly Slater, Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan, Diego Maradona, and many others. The world of sports has its own laws, rules, and regulations. It is the world where endurance, perseverance, patience, faith, strength, and speed form a perfect basement for a wide range of achievements. Many people have contributed to the glory of sports and left a trace in history. Today, athletes from different corners of the world continue reaching heights of sports and prove that every nation has its own heroes. Nowadays, one of the most pressing issues of sports is whether success depends on belonging to a certain race.

To be precise, contemporary world holds various opinions on whether Africans are genetically superior to white sportsmen. It is a fact that Blacks have already greatly contributed to the glory of sports. Some people are confident that Blacks can achieve success in sports easier than whites because of their physical abilities. “There is no such thing as the genetically superior Black American athlete. Indeed, the very notion itself conjures up images of the brute, all physical and no brains athlete who has been

programmed to perform successfully in athletic contests” (Smith 120). When people talk about black athletes, they imagine tall, strong, and muscular stature born with one aim: expressing excellence and strength. However, there is no such term as ‘genetically superior genes.’ When people talk about noticeable predominance of Blacks in sports, they tend to say that physical advantage not only has influenced psychological development of an individual but also resulted in a lack of mental capacity. However, there is no connection between intellectual development and sport achievements. It is a widespread idea that Blacks succeed in sports because they cannot perform in other spheres of life as well as in sports. Sometimes, Blacks arouse in people’s imagination a pointless idea that physically strong sportsmen are brainless. It is a stereotype that athletes cannot succeed in science or other spheres of life where mental abilities are in great demand. This stereotype revolves in minds of thousands of people. Nevertheless, these two facts do not have scientific justification. Many black athletes have proved their skills in sports and that is why, they are of particular interest for discussion.

There are many reasons why Blacks have entered the world of sports numerously and why they have not concentrated their efforts in other spheres of life. One of the ideas is that the dominance of Blacks in sports is a result of mass unemployment over the last decade. Many African-Americans had to turn to another way of gaining success: sports. In the field of sports, there are many Blacks who have contributed to the development of tennis, running, boxing, football, and basketball. They have found ways to prove that they have enough acumen to become successful in a vital part of contemporary life. However, society has aroused a range of doubts about achievements of Blacks in sports. Few people support the idea that Blacks have succeeded in sports due to grueling workouts, endurance, and persistence.

“... regardless of race or socioeconomic status, or some of the many other things that people believe in when it comes to athletic abilities or lack thereof, the athlete – Black or white – must train and perform to be a superior athlete if one is determined to compete at the

college/university level and in professional sports” (Smith 122).

Many years ago, there was an idea that Blacks did not have enough abilities to achieve excellent results in sport competitions. Nowadays, when Blacks are gaining more success in sports than whites, society has proposed a theory stating that geographical origin of the person predestines his/her success in sports. There is a thought that success of Blacks is a result of natural abilities gained at birth. Nevertheless, there are different points of view on this disturbing topic. Basketball is the most appropriate example to examine the origin of an athlete as an influential factor in sports achievements.

The history of different kinds of sports counts many outstanding players, but the history of basketball takes a special place among the things making Blacks proud of themselves. The topic of genetically superior athletes is the most common topic for basketball. Blacks have an opportunity to express their excellence in various kinds of sports, but when it comes to basketball, critics start discussing Blacks with a special predilection. The first dark-skinned player entered basketball in 1947 and caused changes in the history of basketball. It was an Asian-American player Wataru Misaka. The first African-American player Harold Hunter signed a contract with NBA team in 1950. Today, basketball counts only 17 percent of the white players. As a result of numerous achievements in basketball, this game has become a game for black men. Many people have contributed to the glory of basketball including Michael Jordan, Shaquille O’Neal, LeBron James, and many others. Their names have become symbols of superiority, strength, grace, faith, and persistence. Nevertheless, there are a lot of critics who support the idea that all achievements of Blacks have a genetic basement. According to this idea, Blacks are genetically endowed to perform well in basketball.

When it comes to success, there are always doubts and criticism from people who stay behind it. It is easier to consider outstanding sportsmen gifted from nature than to accept their hard work on the road to fame. Basketball is not a game where origin can be the only source of further achievements. A term ‘natural athlete’ means that a person was born with a set of abilities necessary

to perform in sports at a high level. This set of abilities includes strength, endurance, speed, stamina, coordination, and good reaction. Athletes with these abilities can easily handle workouts of different complexity. It is a widespread opinion that Blacks have all reasons to succeed in sports. They have all necessary abilities to train hard and achieve better results than their white colleagues. The key to success in basketball is that an athlete should train hard and gain excellence in performance, and nature has a little to do with superiority. Hard work is the key to all achievements. Critics do not pay attention to other factors of success except origin.

The issue of racial differences has obtained an international level. Many critics, fans, team owners, players, and journalists believe that Blacks have a wide range of sports achievements due to their physical abilities. Theories about the influence of race differences on sports results have no scientific proof. There is no evidence for replication to prove that Blacks are genetically superior athletes. However, African players and athletes continue contributing to the glory of sports in many spheres. A question about superior genes will always be flustering minds of the society. People chose to believe a theory that Blacks can achieve better results with fewer efforts than whites. Nevertheless, society has never paid enough attention to the aspect of training.

Many young black athletes failed to become legendary sports stars in their youth. Basketball is not a game which requires a minimum set of abilities. It requires hours of hard work and dedication. However, not only basketball requires a lot of efforts to gain success; the world of sports is for those people who have enough life energy, power, and endurance to achieve the goal. It is impossible to gain success only with the help of origin. If society wants to find a key to the success of Blacks in sport, it is reasonable to investigate the connection between trainings and achievements rather than believe unjustified theories.

Most of the achievements of Blacks in sports have a logical explanation. Sport requires a lot of attention if athletes have an aim to perform at a good level.

Physical characteristics distract society from an essential factor of sports achievements: personal qualities. People forget about such qualities as dedication, patience, discipline, persistence, faith, and endurance. Regardless of race, athletes spend most of the time training to gain their goal. Some critics and scientist believe that all athletes have equal opportunities in sports. It is not a secret that at birth, some black athletes gain more flexibility or endurance than white athletes. At the same time, they can use these gifts to integrate in the process of trainings easier and faster than other athletes. The key to success is a proper combination of personal qualities and trainings. The one who wants to become a legendary athlete should not excuse his/her failures in sports at the expense of race. Theory of superior genes has no justification and does not take other factors of sport achievements for reasoning success of Blacks.

Blacks chose sports as a source giving opportunities to show their best and express their abilities. It is a fact that unemployment is the main reason why Blacks chose sports as a way of self-affirmation. It is a perfect opportunity for Blacks to find best ways to use their natural abilities. Sports may be one of those few spheres of life where Blacks can express their superiority and show their excellence. Today, basketball is an area where Blacks feel that they can use their natural abilities at the fullest. Whites can compete in different kinds of sports, but time has proved that basketball is a game for black men. In basketball, whites lack abilities and persistence to gain success. Sports give Blacks more life chances than other spheres of life. Once Blacks realize that sports can give them a lot of life changes, they concentrate their skills and efforts on basketball. It is important to dedicate time to the most productive areas of life. The level of athlete's performance in sports is equal to the level of his/her salary, fame, and recognition. However, it is hard to predict the level of athlete's income when he/she retires. Only few can continue working in sports in spheres of mass media or authorship. At the same time, every year gives society new names of black athletes who show excellent results in sports.

It is an advantage for Blacks to act as the myth about genetic superiority is

true. The dominance of Blacks has a range of logical explanations. One of the reasons why Blacks chose sports as the center of their efforts developed historically. Many decades Blacks were enslaved and they obeyed the races which considered Blacks one of the lowest estates. Times have changed, but Blacks still suffer from the lack of opportunities in various spheres of life. Once Blacks had realized that they can prove their significance, they centered their skills and natural abilities on sports. It is an advantage for black athletes to act as myth is true. It may be one of the sources giving them strength and powers to gain sport achievements. However, there is no justification to prove the superiority of genes. Science does not explain which genes are responsible for endurance, strength, or flexibility. It is impossible to state that Blacks have superior genes, when science cannot state which genes can predefine a success in sports. Blacks gain better results in sports than whites because of physical differences defined by different environments. Individuals gain many abilities according to their activity, diet, and environmental factors that influence their development. The secret of Black athletes' success is in intensity of trainings and the way of life. African athletes dedicate a lot of time to trainings in order to perform at a high level. History and culture predestined the fate of Black athletes. They cannot give away an opportunity to express their strength, and they cannot betray their ancestors who struggled to increase the level of respect to the black community. No matter whether science is going to find superior genes of black athletes or not, Blacks seem to use and enjoy their obvious dominance in sports.

Work Cited

Smith, Earl. *The Genetically Superior Athlete: Myth or Reality*. 1990. PDF file.