

BLACK ATHLETES IN POST-WORLD WAR II AMERICA

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Jim Brown and Racism at Syracuse University, 1953- 1970

During the mid-1950s, numbers of white citizens in the northern sections of the U.S. viewed the emerging racial strife in the South with a certain degree of smugness. Many believed that, while racism was rampant in the South, it was a relatively minor problem in most areas of the North. Sport had been on the cutting edge of integration in the northern states in the post-World War II era and many in that region may have presumed that racism was a minor problem. This paper will focus on athletics at Syracuse University and the career of one of its best known athletes, Jim Brown, to assess the degree of discrimination and racism that affected African-American athletes at that time. Syracuse was a large school with a prominent educational and athletic history in one of the nation's most liberal states.

Jim Brown attended Syracuse University from 1953 to 1957 and participated in four sports: football, basketball, lacrosse, and track. After his graduation in 1957, he aided football coach Ben Schwartzwalder with recruitment and in 1970 became involved in a dispute between the football coaching staff and African-American players, who complained about racism and threatened to boycott the team. This paper will explore the racial climate at Syracuse both before Brown's arrival on campus and during the years 1953-1957 when he was a student-athlete at the school. It will examine Brown's experiences at Syracuse as a student and athlete and his reaction to racial conditions at the school both at the time he attended and upon reflection in later years. I will also highlight his role in the dispute concerning the boycott of the football program by African-American athletes in 1970.

The main theme of the paper is that racism was deeply entrenched at Syracuse University and particularly in its athletic programs, and had been for many decades before Brown arrived at the university. In football, Syracuse mainly scheduled teams,

which had few if any black athletes and seldom had more than one African-American on its own varsity team. In basketball, the Syracuse coach adhered to a policy of no more than two black players on the starting team or on the floor at any given time. Despite his later reputation of being somewhat of a radical in terms of racial issues, Brown's reaction to racism at Syracuse as an undergraduate and during his attempt to mediate the 1970 football boycott was largely moderate, restrained, and conciliatory.

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Racial Progress or Changing Roles: Positional Segregation at a Southeastern Conference Football Program

This study examined the stacking patterns of a football program at a Southeastern Conference (SEC) institution. It questioned whether the phenomenon of stacking still exists. To accomplish this, a thirty-three year period was examined to track the stacking patterns. It revealed that Black representation in central positions increased. An explanation for this occurrence suggest that Blacks' increased representation in the quarterback positions is not because of racial progress but because the role of the quarterback has changed requiring them to be great playmakers, very mobile, and great passers.

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Bedazzle Them with Brilliance, Bamboozle Them with Bull: Harry Edwards, Black Power and the Revolt of the Black Athlete Revisited

On October 7, 1967, a group of Afro-American athletes and Black Power activists, led by Harry Edwards, formed the Olympic Committee for Human Rights (OCHR). The formation of the OCHR was in response to an informal survey, conducted by Edwards, to assess the attitudes of world-class athletes regarding the problems black athletes faced specifically and issues affecting the black community in general. A specific objective of the OCHR was to organize a boycott of the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, Mexico. This organizational effort, called the Olympic