

Investigating the Informal and Unwritten Rules of Sport

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My current research focus is geared toward investigating and understanding the informal/unwritten rules that exist within sport and impact black intercollegiate athletes. The purpose of this research is to discover the potential harmful or beneficial effects of these rules and specifically the effects had on the athletes' mental health, athletic performance, and academic achievement. I have begun conducting literature reviews that tackle this research inquiry, but what I have found is limited in the academia realm. This challenge has encouraged inclusion of literature that interprets unwritten rules from alternative perspectives for example, Sociology's social norms, Education's hidden curricula, and sports media. To effectively integrate these perspectives while dealing with a vulnerable and protected participant population, I've considered using a mixed methods approach which will ideally create space for me to gather data and reach a larger number of black intercollegiate athletes, while also affording me the ability to learn about these athletes in a more full and personal manner. The quantitative portion of my study would consist of surveys that are distributed to current black intercollegiate basketball players (male and female), while the second portion will consist of interviews with former black intercollegiate athletes. Because these athletes are living very unique experiences, I felt it necessary to guide my study with an intersectionality theoretical framework that considers and recognizes multi-faceted individuals. I anticipate finding results that will help shape better treatment, assessment, and support of black student-athletes in and out of their universities.