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Racial stacking in the National Football League : 1979 and 1995

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**RACIAL STACKING
IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE:
1979 AND 1995**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Human Performance

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Gregory Allen Ward

August, 1997

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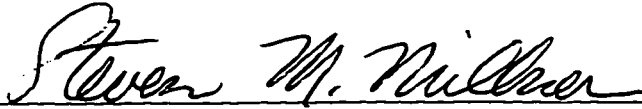
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ABSTRACT

RACIAL STACKING IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE: 1979 AND 1995

by Gregory Allen Ward

The purpose of this study is to assess and describe the racial composition of specific player positions—quarterback, center, offensive guard, running back, defensive back and wide receiver—and the underlying factors that impact players' opportunities at each position in the National Football League for the 1995-1996 season. The expansion of the National Football League to 30 teams and the inclusion of other minorities will enable the researcher to analyze trends and patterns that may have hindered Blacks in gaining leadership positions in the National Football League in the past. The study will consist of 1,590 subjects in the National Football League during the 1995-1996 season. The study will follow Williams' and Yousser's (1979) study on race and position assignment in professional football. The data will be analyzed by descriptive statistics that will determine the percentages of each racial group that occupies central and non-central positions in the National Football League.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate the pursuit of my education to my mother, Cordelia, and my father, Allen Ward, my sister, Lynn Ward, my grandmother, Margaret Johnson, and the Henderson family.

I would like to dedicate this research to Marquis Hazel, so that he can benefit from my educational experiences, and go on to become the best individual he can be.

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Table of Contents

	Page
Dedication.	v
Acknowledgements.	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Statement of Purpose.	4
Hypothesis.	4
Delimitations.	4
Limitations.	4
Definitions.	5
Need for the Study.	6
Summary.	7
Chapter 2 Review of Literature.	8
Position Segregation in Football and Other Sports.	8
The Media's Portrayal of Blacks in Football and Other Sports	24
Unwarranted Stigmas and Stereotypes of Blacks Occupying Leadership Positions in Football and Other Sports.	30
Summary.	33
Chapter 3 Methodology.	34
Subjects.	34
Procedures	36
Design.	37

Analysis of Data.	40
Summary.	40
Chapter 4 Results	42
Discussion.	45
Chapter 5.	46
Conclusions	46
Summary	47
Future Recommendations	47
References.	49

List of Tables

	Page
1. Racial Composition by Position, Williams and Yousser (1979)	38
2. Racial Composition by Position, Ward (1995)	39
3. Racial Composition by Position including numerical data, Williams and Yousser (1979).	43
4. Racial Composition by Position including numerical data, Ward (1995).	44

Chapter I

Introduction

Sport is presumed to be egalitarian because of its accessibility across racial, ethnic, and social class boundaries (Eitzen & Sage, 1982). Since the end of World War II, Blacks have dramatically increased their numbers of participation in the three major sports in America: baseball, basketball, and football (Eitzen & Sage, 1982). In 1947, Jackie Robinson set the precedent for all Blacks by breaking the color line in professional baseball. Since that time other famous Black professional athletes--Henry Aaron, Jim Brown, and Oscar Robertson--excelled at and made significant contributions to their sports (Johnson, 1991). Although many Blacks were becoming successful within the sports institution, discriminatory practices stifled Blacks from assuming leadership positions in sports (Johnson, 1991).

Rather than being free from racism, sport is a microcosm of society that also has similar racial problems. Since the 1950s, Blacks have been positionally segregated in each of the three major American sports (Loy & McElvogue, 1970). In football, Blacks were identified as having speed, quickness, and other natural abilities that made them excel at the running back, defensive back and wide receiver positions (Williams & Yousser, 1979). Management, coaches, and the media have perpetuated the belief that Blacks have lacked the cognitive and decision making skills to play certain other positions (Braddock, 1989, Rainville & McCormick, 1978). Other stereotypes have

hindered Blacks from advancing to upper management positions within sports (Jones, 1987).

A number of actions in 1987 by well-known members of the sports industry depicted the stereotypes that some whites had in regard to Black athletes. First, Jones (1987) referenced a remark made by the former Dodger executive Al Campanis' on ABC Nightline News, when Campanis stated that Blacks "lack the necessities to be field managers or general managers." This may be a popular belief among many executives, however most remain silent. Occasionally, this silence is broken (Killion, 1993) as evidenced when Marge Schott, the owner of the Cincinnati Reds, was overheard in a conference call remarking, "[S]he had a nigger work for her once and that he did not work out because he could not read nor write. [B]efore she would hire another nigger to work for her she would rather hire a trained monkey." The common thread extends to Jimmy the Greek, a popular 1980's sports personality (Rowe, 1988), who stated, "Black athletic prowess dates back to slavery, in which the slave owner would breed his big Black men to his big Black women so that he would have a big Black kid." Jimmy the Greek further hypothesized, "[T]he thigh situation accounted for Black success, and Black athletes do not have to work or to think the way white athletes do." All three of these prominent sports figures were held accountable for their public comments and were disciplined accordingly.

The impact of the comments made by these prominent sports figures may be most notably observed in the absence of Charlie Ward and Tommie Frazier from the respective

1994 and 1996 National Football League drafts. Price (1994) asserted that the absence of the 1993 Heisman Trophy winner Charlie Ward, a quarterback on the 1994 Florida State Seminoles National Championship football team, confirmed the suspicion that the NFL takes fewer chances on Black quarterbacks as opposed to white quarterbacks. Price indicated that Ward was taller than Jim McMahon and had a stronger arm than Joe Montana, both of whom were successful white NFL quarterbacks. Price stated that former San Francisco 49er tight end Jamie Williams stated, "I can't believe that happened. It hit an emotional chord with Black Americans. It gave everybody a sour taste." Price concluded that Ward's omission from the 1994 NFL draft indicated that management in the NFL had placed an invisible ceiling on Black athletes playing the quarterback position. This invisible ceiling may also have extended to Tommie Frazier's omission from the 1996 National Football draft. Dufresne (1995) noted that Frazier led his Nebraska Cornhuskers team to a 33-3 record, and two back-to-back National Championships. In addition, Dufresne emphasized that Frazier was also the Most Valuable Player of the prestigious East-West Shrine college All-Star Football game. Both of these individuals had the intellectual capabilities and talents to lead their respective college teams to National Championships.

Statement of Purpose

1. To determine if any change has occurred in 1995, using Williams' and Yousser's (1979) study as a reference, regarding Blacks occupying leadership player positions in the National Football League.
2. To determine the racial makeup of the non-central positions--running back, defensive back, and wide receiver--and the central positions--the quarterback, center, and offensive guard--for the 1995-1996 National Football League season.
3. To evaluate the impact of ethnicity on player position assignments.

Hypothesis

16 years later, Blacks are occupying leadership positions in the National Football League.

Delimitations

The study will be limited to National Football League Players from the 1995-1996 regular season who started in the central positions--quarterback, offensive guard, and center--and in non-central positions--running back, defensive back, and wide receiver.

Limitations

The study will be limited to the National Football League players who were on the active 53 man rosters on the opening day of the 1995-1996 regular National Football League Season.

Definitions

Active roster - each NFL team consists of a 53 man roster.

African American - people of African descent who were born in United States.

Asian American- people of Asian descent living in the United States, including people of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other Asian heritage.

Black - an inclusive term for people of African descent, including people from the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa.

Centrality - “non-central” or “central” a term designating the frequency with which a member of a group participates in interaction with other team members. Also the number or range of other members with whom he interacts (Loy and McElvogue, 1970).

Discrimination- the unfavorable treatment of categories of persons on arbitrary grounds (Loy and McElvogue, 1970).

Latino - people from the countries of Central America, South America, and the Spanish speaking Caribbean. The term Latino also includes Mexican Americans.

Race - a term to distinguish among human beings based on physical characteristics, primarily skin color.

Racism - the predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group (Jones, 1987).

Samoan - people from the group of islands in the South Pacific who are born either in the United States or the islands.

Segregation - The exclusion of certain categories of persons from specific social organizations or particular positions within organizations on arbitrary grounds (Loy and McElvogue, 1970).

Stacking - the disproportional allocation of persons to central and non-central athletic positions on the basis of race or ethnicity (Tolone, 1987).

Stereotype - certain generalizations reached by individuals that create societal expectancies (Strout, 1992).

White - people of European descent who were born in the United States.

Need for the Study

In 1979, Williams and Yousser conducted a study that focused on race and position assignment in the National Football League. Williams and Yousser identified the center, offensive guard, and quarterback positions as positions requiring the most intelligence, leadership and having the most control on the outcome of games. Since that study, Blacks have continued to make-up the majority of participants in the National Football League. Including Williams and Yousser's (1979) study, all studies on racial stacking in sports have exclusively examined Blacks and whites. However, this study will collectively examine Blacks, whites, and other racial groups who have made a significant impact in the National Football League.

Because the National Football League expanded to 30 teams for the 1995-1996 season, and included all racial groups, the division of labor in the National Football League can be examined to see if any connection exists between the respective

treatments of racial minorities in sports and society. Additionally, it is essential to determine, some 16 years after the 1979 study, if any progress and/or change has been achieved with regard to Black football players in the NFL occupying positions that involve decision making and leadership responsibilities.

Summary

Chapter I is a brief historical analysis of Black participation in sport. Although Blacks have made many significant contributions in sports, their occupancy in decision-making positions in sports has been very limited. Statements made by some influential sports figures--Al Campanis, Marge Schott, and Jimmy the Greek--may have provided some insights into the thinking that contributes to Blacks' absence from leadership positions in their respective sports. Williams and Yousser's (1979) research on race and player position assignment must be replicated in 1995 because of the continued increase in the participation of Blacks in the National Football League.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Position Segregation in Football and Other Sports

College football is a sport in which Blacks are under-represented in the quarterback, center, and offensive guard positions. However, they are over-represented in the running back, wide receiver, and defensive halfback positions (Williams & Yousser, 1975). In 1975, Williams and Yousser conducted a study that examined the division of labor in college football. The researchers focused on grossly disproportionate racial representations in each position, and investigated the underlying factors for their occurrence in college football. The researchers mailed out a questionnaire to 30 head coaches. Fifteen coaches responded, and a total of 785 players were studied. In addition, 19 coaches were interviewed to determine the relative importance of individual characteristics for each position. Williams and Yousser found that the coaches were consistent in matching their racial stereotypes to the positions that players of each race occupied. The coaches stereotyped the Black positions--running back, defensive halfback, and wide receiver--as requiring physical speed and quickness. The coaches stereotyped the White positions--center, guard, and quarterback--as requiring reliability, quick mental comprehension, and thinking ability. Based on their assessment, Williams and Yousser concluded that the division of labor in college football was drawn along racial lines.

In 1979, Williams and Yousser then conducted a study ascertain whether or not the division of labor in high school, college, and professional football was similarly divided along racial lines. To determine the racial representation in each position, Williams and Yousser mailed a questionnaire to 30 head coaches of over 1,000 football players in four college conferences in the Midwest and West. The same questionnaire was sent to three head coaches of 190 high school players in the Midwest. In addition, all 26 teams in the NFL were given the questionnaire. Over 1,144 professional football players responded. The central positions were quarterback, offensive guard and center. The researchers again divided the positions into central and non-central categories. The non-central positions were running back, wide receiver, and defensive halfback. Williams and Yousser again identified three distinct positions that White and Black characteristically occupied. Williams and Yousser indicated that nearly 89% of Whites in high school, 96% in college, and 81% in the professional leagues occupied the central positions. Williams and Yousser found that the coaches assigned a disproportionately large number of players of one race to particular positions. Their research showed that the coaches viewed certain positions as characteristic of a particular racial group.

According to Tolone (1987), racial stacking has emerged, even within the context of a desegregated sport. Tolone studied how race was related to position allocation within three major college football conferences. Tolone obtained data from the media guides of the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten Conference, and Pacific Eight Conference with regard to the 1972 and 1982 season. Race was obtained from the

players' photographs. The quarterback, center, guard, and the middle linebacker were identified by Tolone as the central positions. Blacks were under-represented in the central positions, but were over-represented in running back, wide receiver, and cornerback positions, during the 1972 and 1982 seasons. Tolone also reported that Blacks were placed in non-central positions because they were perceived as lacking the skills needed for the central positions. The skills that Tolone identified as necessary for the central positions were leadership and the ability to think quickly. Tolone acknowledged that Blacks occupied central positions at major black institutions when sport was segregated.

Similarly to college football, stacking was quite prevalent in professional football. Best (1987) compared the effects of position segregation, career length, experience, pension benefits, and severance pay on Black and White players. Best analyzed the 1982 season of the National Football League. Data were gathered from the press guides from all 28 teams. A total of 1,508 players were in the league. Seven hundred and six of them were White, and 802 of them Black. The controlled variables of Best's study were the player's race, position, experience and career length. All data were taken from the press guides. Best found that position segregation continued even though the number of Black players increased. The number of Black players increased from 67.3% to 76.7% of defensive backs, 55.3% to 75.7% of wide receivers and 65.2% to 83.6% of running backs. Even with the increase in Black participation, the quarterback, center, and kicker positions remained exclusively White. More Black players played the linebacker

position. Reasons for this increase in Blacks occupying the linebacker position were the substitution pattern and the defensive style, which used four instead of three linebackers. Best noted that players occupying central positions were more likely to have longer careers than players in non-central positions. As a result, White players would receive a greater pension benefits and severance pay. Best reasoned that comparing career earnings between Blacks and Whites in each position would be quite futile, since few Blacks played in the central positions, and, therefore, had shorter careers and less financial earnings.

Banks (1979) examined the characteristics that were necessary for a Black coach to secure a job on a major college football staff. Banks gathered his data by sending out questionnaires to Black coaches in 1977. In addition, Banks noted that knowledge of the game, recruiting, and the personality of the coach were essential characteristics for a coach to obtain a position. Most interesting, Banks emphasized that a coach's ability to communicate with others and solve the social problems of Black student athletes would be a major benefit. Banks indicated that a Black coach's participation on the collegiate level as a former football player significantly contributed to his chances of securing a coaching job at a major program. Banks indicated that the majority of the Black coaches who responded to the questionnaire coached non-central positions--running back, defensive back, and wide receiver. Banks reasoned that becoming a graduate assistant at a major college program is a stepping stone to securing a full-time assistant position.

Banks concluded that Black coaches were capable of coaching the central positions—quarterback, center, guard, and linebacker. However, they lacked the opportunity.

Latimer and Mathes (1985) examined the social background and educational, athletic, and career characteristics of Black Division I college football coaches. The researchers indicated that the Black coaches came from a lower socioeconomic family structure than the White coaches. The researchers reported that the educational backgrounds of Black and White assistant coaches were similar; however, the White head coaches possessed more advanced degrees than Black coaches. The researchers indicated that the Black coaches had the opportunity for more prosperous and promising collegiate careers than the White coaches. Yet despite more accolades and recognition than White coaches for their college achievements, the Black coaches only coached the non-central peripheral positions that they had played in college. The researchers noted that the over-representation of Black coaches coaching the non-central positions is due to their personal success at non-central positions on the college level. In addition, the researchers noted that Blacks are used predominantly to coach these positions because the percentage of Black athletes who play these positions is relatively high. The researchers concluded that this practice could be a form of discrimination, since Blacks aren't given much opportunity to play central positions. Thus, Blacks get pigeonholed in their coaching opportunities as well. Furthermore, the researchers' data indirectly support Edwards (1982) contention that, at the college level, discrimination restricts Black access to certain roles in college sport.

The National Football League (NFL) is another institution where Blacks are under-represented as assistant and head football coaches. Braddock (1989) studied the influence of race on the National Football League managerial recruitment. Braddock's study focused on the racial distribution of former players as assistant coaches and head coaches in the NFL. Braddock compared race to achieved characteristics—education, leadership ability, and competence. In addition, Braddock estimated the proportion of Black players who might be selected as head or assistant coaches, if race were not a factor in the selection process. Braddock concluded that assistant coaching experience is a major prerequisite for players to become head coaches. Additionally, Black players were under-represented in the central leadership positions. Braddock indicated that coaches spent a greater amount of time working with central position players. As a result, closer ties formed between the coach and players in the central positions. In turn, coaches recommended these players as “good” coaching prospects to upper management. Braddock concluded that despite these trends, the number of Blacks selected to become coaches should be proportional to the number of Blacks in the total player population.

Demak (1991) examined the problem of why Black coaches lack the upward mobility to become head football coaches in the National Football League. Demak interviewed Tony Dungy, the Kansas City Chiefs' secondary coach, and Jimmy Raye, the Los Angeles Rams' passing game coach. Demak indicated that both Dungy and Raye were disappointed with the lack of Black coaches in the league. Dungy stated, “It seems people feel that once they get one Black coach there is no need for another. It's like,

‘[W]ell we feel we’ve done our job and we’ve reached our quota.’ Raye also indicated that this is a popular and widespread belief held by many NFL executives. He stated that although he was interviewed five times for head coaching positions, four of the interviews were based solely upon affirmative action. Demak concluded that Black coaches must strive to become offensive coordinators, who ultimately decide the play calling. Demak further reasoned that this hands-on leadership experience by Black coaches would enable them to participate and display some of the significant characteristics necessary to become a head coach.

Clay (1994) reviewed some substantive solutions that would enable Blacks to work in decision-making positions in professional sports. Clay indicated that team owners must broaden their pool of coaching candidates beyond former players. Furthermore, Clay reasoned that team owners must be sensitive and honest about issues such as sexism and racism in their organizations. Clay indicated that team owners must hire individuals based on their qualifications and not the color of their skin. Clay suggested that Black ownership may be beneficial. Clay concluded that public pressure for diversity at all levels of sports might be the only long-term catalyst for change.

Mihoces (1994) examined the reasons why more Blacks were playing the quarterback position in the Canadian Football League than in the National Football League. Mihoces indicated that there are 16 Black quarterbacks on the rosters of 12 Canadian Football League teams. Mihoces asserted that Canadian Football League football fields are 11 and 1/2 yards wider than NFL fields, which requires that

quarterbacks be able to run, as well as pass. In the NFL, Mihoces emphasized that the quarterbacks are mainly pocket passers and mobility is valued only as a last resort. In an interview with Mihoces, James Harris, assistant general manager of the New York Jets, asserted that some NFL teams are developing offensive schemes that are suited for mobile passers. Harris indicated that Randall Cunningham and Warren Moon have established themselves as pure quarterbacks. He concluded that since more Blacks are now playing within pass-oriented offenses, there will be an increase in the number of Blacks playing quarterback positions in the NFL.

Price (1994) examined the attributes of Steve "Air" McNair that arguably make him the best quarterback, Black or White, big school or small school, in college football. Price indicated that although he played at Alcorn State, a predominantly Black college with an enrollment of 3,300, McNair's combination of arm strength, speed, and decision-making abilities classifies him as the nation's best college quarterback. Price further observed that the NFL scouts have anointed McNair as the best quarterback ever to come out of college. Price noted that McNair's discipline in staying within the pocket and his operation within a pro-style offense, coupled with his physical attributes, are the characteristics that the NFL prizes greatly. Price noted that McNair's entrance to the NFL will be the standard bearer for a new generation of Black NFL quarterbacks.

Kroichick (1995) concluded that certain Black quarterbacks in the past--Vince Evans, Randall Cunningham and James Harris--are clearing the way for future Black quarterbacks in the NFL. Kroichick focused on Jeff Blake, the rapidly improving starting

quarterback for the Cincinnati Bengals. Kroichick indicated that Blake credited Evans for the opportunity to play quarterback in the NFL. Kroichick reasoned however, that there are still some people in power who view a leadership position as being only available to white athletes. Kroichick asserted that Doug Williams, a former Superbowl MVP, proved that skin color had nothing to do with his success. Kroichick concluded that Blake's success will enable more Blacks to play quarterback in the NFL.

ABC Nightline News (1995) aired a segment titled, "Where are the Black Quarterbacks in the NFL?" Forrest Sawyer of ABC News stated that in the NFL, the team leader and field general-the quarterback in most cases is white. Arman Keteyian of ABC News interviewed John Wooten, a player personnel director for the Philadelphia Eagles; Jamie Williams, a former member of the San Francisco 49ers championship team; and Don McPherson, a former member star collegiate Black quarterback at Syracuse University. Keteyian emphasized that there are only seven Black quarterbacks in the NFL out of a total of 91. Williams reasoned that owners might be uncomfortable putting a Black male in a decision-making position. McPherson reasoned that the owners and general managers have an "old boy" network in which they are concerned primarily with their images and that, in some ways, they see white quarterbacks as symbols of their respective cities and teams. Wooten disagreed, reasoning that if the player has the ability, he should be given the opportunity to play.

Keteyian of ABC News reported a story that focused on a Texas high school Black starting quarterback who was replaced by another player who happened to be

white. Keteyian stated, “[I]f ever an athlete fit the mold of an NFL quarterback of the future, it is Bobby Townsend, Jr., who is 6’6”, 225 pounds, and has a very strong arm.” During the previous season, Townsend had led his district in passing. Keteyian reported that during the spring, Townsend’s coach told Townsend that he would no longer be the team quarterback. His options were to play either defensive back or wide receiver or to quit the team. Keteyian further explained that the Townsend family felt that their son’s rights had been violated and took the matter to the local chapter of the NAACP. Keteyian reported that the coach insisted that race did not play a role in his decision. However, he admitted that he had been pressured by the community to make some changes. According to Keteyian, the coach had also received 42 letters from major colleges who were recruiting Townsend strictly as a quarterback. Keteyian further reported that Townsend did not personally receive any of the letters until he returned to the team as a wide receiver. Townsend was returned to the quarterback position in mid-season because his team had won only two out of its first five games. The NAACP reasoned that due to his absence, Townsend did not have the same opportunity to go to a major university, get an education, and perhaps to play in the NFL. Keteyian asserted that Townsend was a product of a system filled with hidden biases, as well as cultural and racial roadblocks.

As the segment “Where are the Black Quarterbacks in the NFL?” approached its conclusion, Forrest Sawyer interviewed Bill Walsh, who coached SuperBowl Championship teams with the San Francisco 49ers, and Warren Moon, quarterback of the

Minnesota Vikings. Moon, who spent six seasons in the Canadian Football League before entering the NFL, commented that racism and the old stereotype that Blacks lack the ability to lead people and make decisions are major factors behind the lack of Black quarterbacks in the NFL. Moon reasoned that Blacks are sometimes penalized for having too much athletic ability. He indicated that coaches put players in certain positions in which their athletic ability fit the position being played. Walsh also reasoned that the communication level between whites and Blacks in the past has not been as clean and concise as it is today. Walsh indicated that this positive change in communication between Black athletes and white coaches would allow the development of future Black quarterbacks.

Callahan (1995) examined the spectacular season of the all-purpose weapon Kordell “Slash” Stewart of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Callahan reported that Stewart excelled in all of the physical tests at the NFL combine for quarterbacks, yet scouts still doubted Stewart’s ability to play strictly quarterback. Callahan indicated that if Stewart wanted to switch positions, he would definitely have been a first round pick. Callahan indicated that Stewart was drafted in the second round by the Pittsburgh Steelers as a quarterback but also noted that Stewart’s superior talents enabled the Steelers to use him as a passer, runner, and receiver. Callahan indicated that Stewart questioned the NFL’s policy of investing its efforts in a white, 6’6” and 230 pounds quarterback rather than, a Black, 6’1” and 212 pound quarterback. Stewart stated, “[P]eople still think a Black guy isn’t going to be a smart quarterback, and that’s b.s. People have said to me, ‘[O]nce

they move you to wide receiver they won't let you play quarterback, well I will do all I can to play quarterback again." Callahan concluded that Stewart chose to play wide receiver because of injuries on the team and further reasoned that Stewart would eventually remove the "Slash" nickname from his job description by solely assuming the quarterback position that he has played at every level of his football career.

Dufresne (1995) examined the successful collegiate career of Nebraska quarterback Tommie Frazier, who posted a 32-3 record as the Cornhuskers' starting quarterback. Dufresne noted that Frazier's last collegiate game would be against the University of Florida. Many critics had wondered why Frazier, a native of Florida, did not attend Miami, Florida State, or Florida. Dufresne indicated that Frazier did not want to redshirt but to play immediately in Nebraska's option quarterback system. Frazier did not, as some claimed, leave Florida because he could not play within a pro style offense. However, Dufresne reported that option-oriented schools are not usually considered prep schools for the NFL. Dufresne additionally reasoned that Kordell Stewart's impact in the NFL (after emerging from an option-oriented school) could allow other quarterbacks from option-oriented offenses a chance to play within the professional ranks. Dufresne concluded that Frazier's outstanding record at Nebraska was not merely based on his running abilities, but also on his ability to make quick decisions. Dufresne reported that Frazier's leadership skills played a significant part in Nebraska's unprecedented back-to-back national championships.

Loy and McElvogue (1970) conducted a study that examined racial segregation in professional baseball and football teams. The researchers gathered data from the 1968 *Baseball Register* that listed all the players' roles and positions who played in at least 50 games during the 1967 season. The researchers used the Chi-square test for the two independent samples to determine the positions that each ball player played. A total of 187 players participated in the American and National Leagues. Ninety-four Whites played the infield positions, while only 19 Blacks played Central the infield. The Black players were predominantly located in the outfield. The researchers then gathered data from the official 1968 *Autographed Yearbooks of the American and National Football Leagues* that identified all of the starting offensive and defensive players, according to race and playing position. On the offensive and defensive teams, Blacks occupied only four and six of the central positions, respectively. Blacks were over-represented in the non- central positions. Loy and McElvogue indicated that there was no evidence that resulted in Black athletes having inferior ability in comparison to White athletes for any position assignment in baseball or football. In addition, the researchers concluded that the Black athletes did not select their positions based on their personal preferences. The researchers found that the segregation of the Black players into non-central positions is a function of centrality. Furthermore, the researchers determined that the Black players were excluded from the central positions because these positions encompassed high rates of interaction between players. Loy and McElvogue concluded that a major consequence

of segregation in baseball and football was a lack of upward career mobility in professional sports for Blacks.

Medoff (1977) conducted another study that examined stacking in professional baseball. Medoff used sociological and economic hypotheses to predict the positions that Blacks played. Medoff ranked the relative financial costs to obtain skill in each position. The pitcher and catcher positions were ranked the highest, followed by infield positions and outfield positions. Medoff indicated that Blacks chose positions in which the cost of acquiring the skills was the least expensive. Furthermore, Medoff found that Blacks lacked resources, particularly facilities, equipment, and coaching. On the other hand, Whites primarily came from well-financed neighborhoods that provided Little League and American Legion teams. As a result, White players were able to get the necessary coaching and learning they needed to play the central positions. Medoff's sociological hypothesis indicated that Blacks deliberately excluded themselves from positions that entailed responsibility, decision-making, and outcome control. Medoff suggested the sociological hypothesis would be inconsistent in the future, whereas the economic hypothesis would remain consistent.

Curtis and Loy (1978) conducted a study that examined how a player's race correlated with the position that he played in baseball. Curtis and Loy gathered data by reviewing all of the published studies and reports that they found on the topic of stacking. The researchers gathered a total of nine studies that focused on stacking in professional baseball. The studies covered the periods from the late 60's to the mid-70's. Each study

showed findings of significant stacking. Through the late 60's and mid-70's , studies consistently found that Blacks were under-represented in central positions--infield and pitcher. As the years passed, there was a slight increase in Blacks playing first base. However, Blacks were still used primarily to occupy the outfield positions. The playing positions for Whites remained unchanged.

Fabianic (1984) examined minority managerial appointments in relation to the playing position background of players. Fabianic included Hispanic players along with Black players to project the frequency of minority managers in relation to their playing position. Fabianic divided the players' positions into two distinct groups. The high interactive group included all of the infield, and the catcher. The low interactive group consisted of the outfield positions. The White players constituted 72.6% of the high interactive group, a group which was deemed as having the cooperative skills, knowledge, and decision-making abilities that are often associated with managerial roles. Fabianic indicated that since 29.1% of the total baseball population in 1980 was minority, this representation should be reflected in managerial positions. However, in 1980, only two managers were classified as minority. Fabianic concluded that the data confirmed a legacy of discrimination against minority groups.

Jiobu (1988) examined racial inequality within the labor market of professional baseball. Jiobu's study focused on the length of the playing careers of Black, Hispanic, and White players. Jiobu collected data from Topps Company, which published a picture collection of players from the years 1951-1985. The researcher implemented the survival

analysis which provided data regarding a player's team membership. In addition, the survival analysis supplied the players' age at entry, position, and performance levels--batting average, slugging average, and on base percentage. Jiobu concluded that the size of the Hispanic group did not pose a threat and evoke any discriminatory measures. Jiobu concluded that White fans would not support a predominantly Black team. As a result, Jiobu reasoned that management had placed an invisible ceiling on the percentage of Black players. Jiobu reasoned that management terminated the careers of Black players who were on the decline but retained White players with similar abilities.

Basketball is another sports institution in which a player's race correlates with the position he plays. Leonard (1987) conducted a study that examined the relationship between the race and position of 644 student athletes at 47 NCAA institutions. Leonard labeled the central positions--center, guard and point guard. The non-central positions were small forward and power forward. Leonard's control variables included playing status, NCAA division, year in school, sex and scholarship status. Leonard's study indicated that Blacks were over-represented at the guard and forward position but increased at the center position. Leonard attributed the disappearance of stacking in college basketball to changes in the way positions are viewed as affecting the outcome of the game.

Eitzen and Furst (1989) examined women's collegiate volleyball and the racial stacking that is associated with the setter and hitter positions. The researchers identified the setter as the central position because it involves handling the pass and the positioning

of the ball so that the hitter can accurately strike the ball. The researchers noted that the setter must exhibit leadership, intelligence, emotional control, and the ability to handle pressure. The researchers identified the hitter position as entailing agility, reaction, and the ability to jump well, which all are physical characteristics. They examined all of the female volleyball players in Division I schools. The researchers used media guides to calculate the players' races and positions. The researchers indicated that Black volleyball players were under-represented at the setter position and over-represented at the hitter position. The researchers concluded that prevailing negative stereotypes of Blacks influenced the coaches to "naturally" select Whites for the central positions and Blacks for positions that emphasized physical attributes.

The Media's Portrayal of Blacks in Football and Other Sports

Rainville, Roberts, and Sweet (1977) examined sport's announcers' speech patterns to determine if covert racial prejudice was used for identifying Black and White players. The researchers gave subjects transcripts of an NFL game. The researchers indicated that the subjects were able to distinguish the Black players from White players because of the stereotypical remarks that were made by the sports announcers—remarks which focused upon the physical size and lack of rhythm of a player. The researchers reasoned that stereotypical remarks made by announcers proved that the average viewer was able to form favorable impressions of White players and unfavorable impressions of Black players. Thus, they concluded that covert racial prejudice was apparent in the announcers' speech patterns.

Rainville and McCormick (1978) conducted another study that measured subtle forms of prejudice in television broadcasts of nationally televised football games. Rainville and McCormick studied the audio tape recordings of 16 televised NFL games from all three major networks. All of the announcers in each game were White. The researchers examined the announcers' speech patterns and categorized them into three major groups. These groups consisted of description, attribution, and announcer related. The description group identified White players as receiving significantly more play-related praise than Blacks. In addition, the accomplishment of Black players on the field were overshadowed by the negative comments that highlighted their non-athletic behaviors. The attribution group identified White players as receiving significantly more praise for their cognitive skills than Blacks. Black players received more negative speculation than Whites in the announcer-related group. Rainville and McCormick found that negative elements built into the black players' reputations had a greater impact on the listener than did positive components. Furthermore, Rainville and McCormick concluded that the announcers' irrationally believed that White players were superior to Black players.

Braddock (1978) reviewed the lack of coverage that Black college football teams in Division II had received in comparison to predominantly White Division I teams. Braddock indicated that Black colleges were labeled as playing an inferior brand of football by the sports media, and predominantly White colleges were labeled as being more competitive and superior. Braddock expressed this assumption because the NCAA

and ABC sports televised over 200 college NCAA football games, only four of which involved Black colleges. Braddock discovered that there was an equal number of Black players from both predominantly White and predominantly Black college football teams in the National Football League. From their overall statistical dominance, Braddock indicated that the Black college football players achieved greater professional success than their White counterparts. Braddock concluded that the popular notion that White Division I teams play a better quality of football than the Black division II teams is no longer credible.

Braddock (1978) examined biased coverage in print journalism by comparing coverage accorded to Black and White collegiate athletes at selected institutions. The two institutions from which Braddock gathered data were the University of Maryland and Howard University. He analyzed the number of articles in the *Washington Post*, article length, article placement, heading focus, and athlete's image to determine the possibility of biased coverage. In all of the aforementioned categories, the University of Maryland, a predominantly White institution, received far greater exposure and routine coverage than Howard University. Braddock suggested the notion that the University of Maryland participates on a more competitive and prestigious level than Howard University should be considered as a plausible reason that might warrant more favorable coverage. In addition, Edwards suggested some possible causes of biased sports reporting. He indicated that the sports reporter might have his own personal prejudices. He reasoned that sports reporters may often be restricted by the conservative orientations of their

editors. Edwards concluded that the Black athlete not only has to overcome the improbable odds of achieving fame and success in sports, but he also has to battle institutional discrimination in the American press.

Anderson and Condor (1984) examined the coverage of Black and White athletes given by *Sports Illustrated* over the 21 year period from 1960-1980. The researchers focused upon feature articles that included outstanding performances and in-depth personal profiles of individual athletes. The researchers indicated that White athletes were accorded more feature articles than Black athletes. In addition, the researchers noted that White athletes had more in-depth profiles than Black athletes. The researchers indicated that in 1981, the final year of the study, Black athletes did have more coverage than their White counterparts. The researchers reasoned that Black athletes benefited from increased coverage from their participation in American sports. The researchers concluded that in sports such as boxing, basketball, and track and field, Black athletes received greater coverage than White athletes. The researchers reasoned that this greater coverage of the Black athlete was attributable to the over-representation of Black athletes in these particular sports. Anderson and Condor concluded that the media's role should be to undo the racial stereotypes of Black athletes in sports dominated by White athletes.

Bryant and Levy (1993) performed a content analysis of *Sports Illustrated* and *Sport Magazine* to determine the amount of coverage that was given to Black athletes. The researchers compared overall population percentages of Blacks in the United States for the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, and 90's to the percentages of Black athletes that appeared

in photographs and advertisements in *Sports Illustrated* and *Sport Magazine*. During these years, Black athlete coverage in photographs from both magazines exceeded the overall population percentage of Blacks. The researchers suggested that the treatment of Blacks in advertisements exemplified racial bias in marketing. The researchers concluded that the magazines could alleviate racial stereotypes by increasing positive pictorial representations of Blacks in advertisements. The researchers charged that it is the magazines' responsibility to re-analyze their marketing and demographic techniques so that the general public can be educated regarding the important roles that Blacks have in society.

Evans (1996) also examined the lack of Black representation in the media. Evans indicated that 30 years ago Texas Western's all-Black college basketball team defeated an all-White Kentucky team for the national championship. He reported that in 1966 there were no Blacks as sports reporters or journalists at any White-owned media publications or media outlets. He indicated that the 1996 Kentucky championship basketball team consisted mainly of Blacks, and yet very few Blacks reported on the game. Evans stated, "[Y]ou can count the Black sports columnists on two hands." He reasoned that racism exists today as it did some 30 years ago. He further reasoned that the Black athlete has changed the face of society and is largely responsible for today's billion dollar sports industry. Evans concluded that the greatest change in racial balance has occurred on the basketball court and that changes in coaching, athletic administration, and the media certainly have not kept pace.

Lombardo (1978) examined the perpetuation of Black stereotypes that were reflected by the Harlem Globetrotters, a professional basketball team that consisted of Black athletes. He indicated that the Brute stereotype represented the Black male as a primitive form of Homo Sapiens that yielded to uncontrollable violence and powerful sexual impulses. He identified the Sambo stereotype of Blacks as immature, lazy, fun-loving, and good-humored children. Lombardo reasoned that the Harlem Globetrotters' style of play capitalized on clown-like behaviors that were encouraged by management. He noted that the owner's recruitment policy involved signing players who had dark skin, big lips, wide eyes, and long arms. He concluded that management failed to understand the social ramifications of promoting the team's style of play. He emphasized that the negative characteristics of the Sambo image was perpetuated by the Harlem Globetrotters and that this reinforced the White man's stereotypes of the Black race.

Maguire and Wozniak (1987) examined racial and ethnic stereotypes in the media's coverage of professional wrestling. Over a 12 month period the researchers focused on televised professional wrestling and the stereotypical images that were associated with the wrestlers. When Iranians and Russians participated in professional wrestling, the researchers indicated that these groups were depicted as being unethical because of their country's involvement in world affairs. Furthermore, the researchers noted that Black wrestlers were characterized as being uncivilized and having animalistic tendencies. The researchers indicated that these stereotypes in professional wrestling correlated consistently with the racism that persists in society.

Unwarranted Stigmas and Stereotypes of Blacks Occupying Leadership Positions in Football and Other Sports

Killion (1994) discussed some of the reasons that Stanford University hired Tyronne Willingham to replace Bill Walsh to rebuild their football program. Killion identified Willingham as a highly organized disciplinarian who could potentially revitalize a fallen program. Killion indicated that Willingham's ties to Stanford—he was an assistant under Dennis Green—and his NFL coaching experience have provided Willingham with the necessary tools to be a successful college football coach. Killion stated that in its selection of Willingham, Stanford should be commended for its commitment to diversity. She also asserted that Stanford is a model for other universities in regard to their commitment to diversity. Even though there are 107 Division I-A football programs, there are only four Black head coaches in the Division I-A ranks. Killion emphasized that Willingham is a qualified head coaching candidate, but, most importantly, he will be a role model to student athletes, especially to Black student athletes, who comprise over 46% of the student athletes in Division I-A athletics.

Price (1996) examined the long road that Tony Dungy traveled to become NFL head coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Price indicated that Dungy's first encounter with racism was in high school. Dungy's best friend, a Black athlete, was not elected co-captain of the football team with him. Initially, he and the other Black athletes quit the team, in response to this action. However, they were persuaded to rejoin the team. Price indicated that Dungy was an accomplished option quarterback who subsequently took his

talents to the University of Minnesota. Dungy matriculated to the NFL's Pittsburgh Steelers, but was then asked to switch positions from quarterback to defensive back. Price reported that Dungy agreed with the move at that time but later realized that there was something peculiar about the over-abundance of White quarterbacks.

Price indicated that upon Dungy's retirement, Dungy became an assistant coach at the University of Minnesota and then an assistant with the Pittsburgh Steelers. At the age of 28, he was one of the youngest defensive coordinators in the NFL. After his stint with the Steelers, he coached the Kansas City Chiefs and Minnesota Vikings. Price indicated that Dungy's defensive units were renowned for their cohesiveness and mental toughness. Price noted that Dungy's Minnesota Vikings unit intercepted more passes and scored more touchdowns than any other NFL defensive unit from 1992 to 1995.

Price concluded that racism was a major factor that prevented Dungy from landing a head coaching position in the NFL during the last decade. One NFL executive told Dungy that he would have to shave his beard to get a head coaching position because the beard portrayed Dungy as an angry Black radical. Price also suggested that Dungy's soft-spoken demeanor was another deterrent to his becoming an NFL head coach. Yet Dungy was highly regarded and respected by his colleagues and peers. Price stated that Dungy's personal experiences with racism included being stopped by the police, being detained for six hours in jail, and receiving derogatory messages and letters containing racial slurs. Nonetheless, these negative experiences did not deter Dungy's rise to a head coaching position in the National Football League.

Price credits Dungy's success--his unprecedented six year 3.6 million dollar contract to coach the Tampa Bay Buccaneers--to his Christian faith, preparation, and his father's words of advice suggesting that "[P]rejudice can destroy dreams but it can be quietly beaten."

Geracie (1994) discussed the various stereotypes that are associated with Black coaches of top-rated basketball programs. Geracie indicated that Nolan Richardson, a Black coach of the National Championship winning Arkansas Razorbacks in 1994, was identified as a great recruiter and motivator. In addition, Geracie pointed out that many of Richardson's non-Black colleagues were labeled as being great technicians and intelligent coaches. Geracie indicated Richardson's successful records at the high school and the community college levels warranted a reputation as an intelligent coach. Geracie concluded that unfair stigmas and stereotypes are placed upon Black coaches and that not enough credit is given for their knowledge and ability to teach the game.

Killion (1994) indicated that the University of California's Black basketball coach Todd Bozeman has been unfairly labeled as merely an under-handed recruiter and not a brilliant technical coach. Killion attributed Bozeman's youth and race as positive factors in his ability to recruit top-notch athletes. His youth enables him to relate to them, as opposed to the majority of college coaches who are older and White. Killion suggested that the diversity, environment, exposure and academics of the University of California are significant and tangible tools that Bozeman has available to attract blue chip student athletes. Killion concluded that the coaching industry has overlooked

Bozeman's direct and personal involvement in recruiting. Bozeman handles recruiting himself rather than delegating it to an assistant coach. Moreover, Killion noted that this strategy employed by Bozeman will in turn pay major dividends as the University of California becomes a national collegiate basketball powerhouse.

Summary

The review of literature in this section has provided the foundation for the theory that Blacks are hindered from occupying leadership positions in professional football. Factors including position segregation, the media's influence, and unwarranted stigmas and stereotypes may explain the restricted number of Blacks that occupy leadership positions in football and other sports.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The methodology of this study was patterned after the Williams and Yousser's (1979) study on race and position assignment in the National Football League. Unlike the Williams and Yousser (1979) study, other minorities and racial groups will be included in this study to determine the impact of their presence on position assignment among Blacks and Whites.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were taken from the 1995-1996 National Football League season. The subjects included were Blacks, Whites, and members of other racial groups, all of whom who were on the 53 man rosters for each team.

The National Football League is divided into two conferences. The National Football Conference and the American Football Conference are comprised of a total of 30 teams. The American Football Conference (AFC) is divided into three divisions. The AFC Central division is comprised of the Cincinnati Bengals, Cleveland Browns, Houston Oilers, Jacksonville Jaguars, and the Pittsburgh Steelers. The AFC East division is comprised of the Buffalo Bills, Indianapolis Colts, Miami Dolphins, New England Patriots, and the New York Jets. The AFC West division is comprised of the Denver Broncos, Kansas City Chiefs, Oakland Raiders, San Diego Chargers, and the Seattle Seahawks.

The National Football Conference (NFC) is also divided into three divisions. The NFC Central division is comprised of the Chicago Bears, Detroit Lions, Green Bay Packers, Minnesota Vikings, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The NFC East division is comprised of the Arizona Cardinals, Dallas Cowboys, New York Giants, Philadelphia Eagles, and the Washington Redskins. The NFC West division is comprised of the Atlanta Falcons, Carolina Panthers, New Orleans Saints, Saint Louis Rams, and the San Francisco 49er's. The total number of subjects is 1,590 professional football players.

Williams' and Yousser's (1979) study focused upon selected football players and provided the racial composition that existed with each position. Williams and Yousser identified the central positions as center, offensive guard, and quarterback. The central positions were defined as requiring decision-making, leadership, and good judgment. The center's responsibilities include hiking the ball to the quarterback and, most importantly, communicating offensive assignments to his other offensive linemen. This center's job is necessary for a successful offense. The offensive guard's responsibilities entail carrying out certain blocking assignments and, more importantly, protecting the blind side of the quarterback during pass protection. The quarterback's responsibilities include communicating with the offensive coordinator and head coach. In addition, the quarterback implements and communicates the game plan to his teammates. His responsibilities extend to handing off the ball to the running back and/or throwing the ball to one of his offensive targets, plus reading defensive schemes.

Williams and Yousser identified non-central positions as the defensive back, wide receiver and running back. These non-central positions are primarily oriented to physical characteristics—strength, speed, quickness, agility, and the ability to jump well. The defensive back’s responsibilities consist of covering the wide receiver, intercepting passes thrown by the quarterback, and giving support on the run. Wide receivers’ responsibilities entail finding the open seams on the field, catching the ball, making first downs, and scoring touchdowns. The running back’s responsibilities extend to gaining first downs, scoring touchdowns, and minimizing turnovers.

Williams and Yousser focus upon these selected football players will be also analyzed and replicated in this study to determine the racial compositions of the various positions that existed in 1995.

Procedures

The 1995-1996 National Football League season rosters were obtained through the *America On-line Internet System*, the *1996 Annual Football Guide*, and the *Official National Football League 1995 Record and Fact Publication*. All three publications listed the following statistics for each player: number, position, height, weight, date of birth, years of experience, and college attended.

The publications enabled the researcher to identify the football players who occupied central and non-central positions for the 1995-1996 season. *The Sports Illustrated 1994* and *1995 Multimedia Sports Almanac* computer discs were also utilized to identify starters and non-starters and the racial compositions of the football players

who occupied central and non-central positions. Another factor that aided the researcher to identify the football players' racial identities were the colleges attended. Since some professional football players attended historically Black institutions, one can be reasonably certain that these athletes are Black.

Design

The research design will be patterned after Williams and Yousser's (1979) study, which focused on the number and percentage of Black and White professional football players who occupied either a central or non-central position. Unlike Williams' and Yousser's study, this study will include minorities and other racial groups to determine their impact on stacking in the central and non-central positions.

Williams and Yousser were able to identify the starters and non-starters by using questionnaires that were sent to the NFL headquarters.

Once Williams and Yousser identified the numerical totals for Black and White football players who started in central and non-central positions, the researchers constructed a table that examined the number and percentage of Black and White professional football players who started in either central and or non-central positions. The table was categorized into two sections: positions and racial composition. The non-central positions--running back, defensive back, wide receiver--and a subtotal for non-central positions were displayed vertically along with the central positions--center, offensive guard, quarterback, and subtotal for the central positions (see Table 1).

Table I

Racial Composition by Position

Positions	N-B	% B	N-W	% W	Total N
Defensive Back					
Running Back					
Wide Receiver					
Subtotal Non - central Positions					
Center					
Offensive Guard					
Quarterback					
Subtotal Positions					

Note. Williams' and Yousser's (1979) study. N-B denotes the number of Blacks. % B denotes the percentage of Blacks. N-W denotes the number of Whites. % W denotes the percentage of Whites. Total N denotes the total number of football players that occupy non-central and central positions.

Table II

Racial Composition by Position

Positions	N-B	% B	N-W	% W	N-O	% O	Total N
Defensive Back							
Running Back							
Wide Receiver							
Subtotal Non - central Positions							
Center							
Offensive Guard							
Quarterback							
Subtotal Central Positions							

Note. Ward's (1995) study. N-B denotes the number of Blacks. % B denotes the percentage of Blacks. N-W denotes the number of Whites. % W denotes the percentage of Whites. N-O denotes the number of others. % O denotes the percentage of others. Total N denotes the total number of football players that occupy non-central and central positions.

Analysis of Data

The statistical procedure of this study will be patterned after Williams and Yousser's (1979) study. Williams and Yousser utilized descriptive statistics to determine the percentages of each racial group occupying central and non-central positions.

The statistical procedure is calculated by taking the total number of Blacks who occupy a specific central and or non-central position and adding this numerical figure to the total number of Whites and others who occupy the same central and or non-central position. The sum of all three race categories will represent the total number of football players occupying that particular position.

The percentage of each race is calculated by taking the total number of football players who occupy a particular position, dividing it into each race individually, and multiplying by 100. This numerical figure represents the percentage of each race that occupies that particular central and or non-central position.

Summary

The methodology of this study followed the exact elements that were identified in Williams' and Yousser's study on race and position assignment in professional football. This systematic comparison enabled the researcher to obtain valid data and scientific evidence to determine if there has been any change in the number of Blacks occupying leadership positions in the National Football League 16 years later.

Williams' and Yousser's (1979) study examined the racial disparities between Black and White professional athletes occupying the central and non-central positions.

The present study also examines the racial differences between these two racial groups and other minorities. By comparing the percentage of Black athletes occupying central positions in 1979 to the percentage of Black athletes occupying central positions in 1995, the researcher will conclude whether any progress has been achieved in professional football in the last 16 years.

Chapter 4

Results

This study was constructed to compare Williams' & Yousser's (1979) study on race and position assignment in professional football and to determine if there has been any change in the number of Blacks occupying leadership player positions in the National Football League 16 years later. Williams and Yousser (1979) identified the central positions--center, offensive guard, and quarterback--as having the qualities of good judgment, leadership and outcome control. These researchers identified the non-central positions--defensive back, running back and wide receiver--as having the qualities that represent physical prowess qualities--power, strength, speed, quickness, agility, and the ability to jump well. Tables 3 and 4 will provide data from the two studies outlining racial stacking in the National Football League during the 1979 and 1995 seasons. The numerical figures are derived from the starting lineups of teams in the National Football League.

Table III

Racial Composition by Position

Positions	N-B	% B	N-W	% W	Total N
Defensive Back	53	73	20	27	73
Running Back	33	67	16	33	49
Wide Receiver	29	83	6	17	35
Subtotal Non - central Positions	115	73	42	27	157
Center	0	0	26	100	26
Offensive Guard	18	38	30	62	48
Quarterback	1	4	25	96	26
Subtotal Central Positions	19	19	81	81	100

Note. Williams' and Yousser's (1979) study. These are the numerical figures obtained from the starting lineups of the 1979 National Football League season.

Table IV

Racial Composition by Position

Positions	N-B	% B	N-W	% W	N-O	% O	Total N
Defensive Back	58	94	3	5	1	2	62
Running Back	47	92	4	8	0	0	51
Wide Receiver	61	98	1	2	0	0	62
Subtotal Non - central Positions	166	95	8	5	1	1	175
Center	7	23	23	77	0	0	30
Offensive Guard	23	38	32	53	5	8	60
Quarterback	3	10	27	90	0	0	30
Subtotal Central Positions	33	28	82	68	5	4	120

Note. Ward's (1995) study. These are the numerical figures obtained from the starting lineups of the 1995 National Football League season.

In 1979, 67% of the running backs were Black, and in 1995 there was an increase by 25% in the number of Blacks occupying the running back position. In 1979, 73% of the defensive backs were Black, and, in 1995 there was an increase by 21% in the number of Blacks occupying the defensive back position. In 1979, 83% of the wide receivers were Black, and, in 1995, there was an increase by 15% in the number of Blacks occupying the wide receiver position.

The results for the central positions are as follows. In 1979, zero percent of the centers were Black. In 1995, there was an increase by 23% in the number of Blacks occupying the center position. In 1979, 38% of the offensive guards were Black, and, in 1995, this percentage remained the same among Blacks who occupied the offensive guard position. In 1979, four percent of the quarterbacks were Black, and, in 1995 there was an increase of six percent in the number of Blacks occupying the quarterback position.

The other minorities and racial groups made a very slight impact upon their overall displacement among the central and non-central positions. In 1995, eight percent of the offensive guards were from racial backgrounds other than Black or White. The dominant racial background among the “other” group of professional football players was Samoan. There was one Mexican American who occupied the defensive back position, and one Asian American who occupied the offensive guard position.

Discussion

Some 16 years later, Blacks have continued to be the dominant racial group occupying the non-centralized and non-leadership player positions in the National Football League. Some improvement has been seen in Blacks occupying the center position, while only a limited amount of progress has been made in the quarterback position. A constant disproportionate growth still exists between Blacks and Whites occupying central and non-central positions in professional football.

Chapter 5

The first section of this chapter provides conclusions based on the results and discussion in chapter four. These conclusions summarize the factors that have caused the limited progress Blacks have made toward occupying leadership player positions in professional football. The second section of this chapter discusses recommendations for possible future studies.

Conclusions

In the present study, an attempt was made to determine whether any change or progress has been made for Blacks occupying leadership player positions since Williams' and Yousser's (1979) study on race and position assignment in professional football.

In 1979, a total of 73% of Blacks occupied non-central positions in professional football. In 1995, this figure rose to a total of 95%. In regards to the central positions in 1979, a total of 19% of these positions were occupied by Blacks. In 1995, this figure rose to 28%.

There are some factors that relate to the substantial increase of Blacks occupying non-central positions in 1995. The first factor extends to the invisible ceiling that management has created to limit the number of Blacks occupying leadership positions in professional football. The invisible ceiling is two-fold. First, it symbolizes the silent but prevailing notion of owners, coaches and general managers that Blacks are not intellectually capable of leading their team (Jones, 1987). Secondly, in order for the team to produce financially and continue to have capacity attendance, it may be

necessary for the team's leader to be representative of the city and team. In 1979, only one out of 26 starting quarterbacks was Black, and, in 1995, only three out of 30 starting quarterbacks were Black.

Another reason for the lack of Blacks occupying leadership player positions in professional football may be the lack of communication that exists between Black football players and the coaches that coach the central positions. Braddock (1989) and Sawyer (1995) reasoned that the formation of constant and consistent communication will enhance future opportunities for Blacks to occupy leadership positions in professional football.

Summary

The data suggests that discriminatory trends continue to restrict Blacks occupying leadership positions in professional football. By providing Blacks the opportunity to occupy the central positions, covert racial overtures, which are exemplified through the actions of management, may be dispelled.

Future Recommendations

There are several recommendations for future study:

1. Replicate this exact study, 15 to 20 years in the future, in order to determine the increase of Blacks occupying leadership player positions in the National Football League.
2. Professional baseball should also be studied to determine the representation of Blacks who occupy central player positions and management positions in that sport as well.

3. Establish a study that analyzes the number of former central and non-central position players and their advancement to head coaching positions in college and professional football.
4. Establish a study that analyzes the salary figures of players who do occupy central and non-central positions in football and baseball.
5. Collegiate athletics should be studied to determine if any change has occurred in the number of Blacks occupying central positions in the three major sports—football, basketball and baseball.

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