

From the Editor's Desk

ON SLAVERY:

--Victor E. Blue, *Editor*

Most historians would agree that slavery was "abolished" with the implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. Some would even suggest the system was perpetuated by the sharecropping arrangement between white farmers and former slaves. I contend that the system is still alive today—only in the form of major college sports.

Basketball, in many ways, has replaced sharecropping. Many young black hoop stars are lured into the system with the promise of fame, success, money and a professional career. However, somewhere along the line, the big-time (plantations—err) universities forgot that these students are actual students and should be required to have the same qualifications as non-athletic students. Is the basketball playing student's first priority academics or winning? I hope that Loyola-Marymount did not place this burden on Hank Gathers. Is winning basketball games more precious than life itself?

Although many schools argue that they have taken the kid from the streets and given him the opportunity to make it to the pros (and make millions), the sad reality is that often the university does not prepare these students to be productive citizens. If I were an inner city basketball star signed by a major school, my main goal would be to make money; however, universities should place a higher emphasis on academics for athletes.

When basketball becomes the life of a student-athlete, he does not feel that he has to comply with the same regulations as other students. You have to look only 25 miles to the east to find several prime examples. Although North Carolina State has one of the finest reputations in the country as a research center, its basketball program is probably one of the best examples of a 20th century sharecropping system. The school is already on two-year probation for recruiting violations and has recently been rocked with accusations of players receiving money and point-shaving incidents. How could Charles Shackleford or any other player receive money and no one know about it? If these accusations are true, I see no reason why the NCAA should continue to let NCSU field a men's basketball team.

The University of Maryland is also playing with fire—again. After the cocaine-induced death of Len Bias in 1986, the university committed itself to keeping a stern grip on the men's basketball team. Yet, in the last few weeks, allegations of NCAA violations have surfaced again. Why could the program not learn from the death of a player that shocked the entire nation.

Football programs also have their share of problems. I'm sure that Coach Mack Brown is facing pressure to win after two consecutive 1-10 campaigns. This should not be incentive enough for the school to admit any students with sub-par qualifications (the two black Richmond County players). Even if they are two of the most highly touted high school grid stars in the country. Where do we draw the line if they are admitted? It would be a totally different story if the university was recruiting them in order to help them become better students, but that is just not the case. The university is only considering admitting these two players because of their immense talent and expected contributions to our football team.

It is time for universities to stop making special allowances for athletes. In the long run it is more harmful to black athletes because they will face discrimination and other forms of racism in the real world. Black students should begin to focus more attention on how athletes are being treated. Whether or not athletes like the special treatment, they are not being prepared for life after college as well as non-athlete students.--

INSIDE Black Ink

--Positive Statistics for Black Under graduates at UNC

-- Proud To Be an African-American

--page 4

--Flashback Photos From the Ink's Files

--page 5

COVER STORY

--BSM ELECTIONS '90

--pages 6, 7

--Janet Jackson

--Point After Touchdown

--page 8

-- The year was 1968, the place--Mexico

--page 9

--Students on Racism and the American Dream

--page 10

--From the President's Desk

--page 11

Black Ink

"The Essence of Freedom is Understanding"

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About the Cover

The 1990 BSM presidential candidates Dana Lumsden and Sabrina Evans at the Old Well. Check out their platforms and further BSM election coverage on pages 6 and 7.

Photo by David Minton.

NELSON
MANDELA

About the Back

Recently freed African National Congress Leader Nelson Mandela, accompanied by his wife Winnie, gives an African power salute to the press at Archbishop Desmond Tutu's residence in Cape Town, South Africa.

Photo by World Wide Photo.