

Editorials & Comments

Sports, Values And Common Sense

by Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Editorial Writer

In 1946, the year after America won the Great War that supposedly saved the world for democracy, black athletes were beginning to be integrated into the nation's major professional sports - basketball, football and baseball. David DuPree, of The Washington Post stated clearly what has happened in these past 33 years when he wrote, "Three-fourths of the NBA's players are black, and in pro football and major league baseball, where ratios are 1-in-3 and 1-in-5, one cannot imagine a decent all-star team that is not disproportionately black."

Behind this data is the apparent misconception among too many black youth that they can all become a Reggie Jackson, an O.J. Simpson or a David Thompson and earn a million dollars a year salary. This occurs while other data reveals that only 1,500 blacks are earning a living in professional sports. This includes players, coaches and others and few hardly make a million a year.

However, there is a more disturbing aspect to the sports-participation-madness that appears to have captured the imagination of too many black youth.

At another level of sports - particularly in the American Football Association - we see yet another league formed with a disproportionate number of blacks also. The Charlotte Chargers, the local entry in the AFA, has a team roster of 40 players of which 30 are black. Ironically too is the fact that the players have reportedly received \$450 to-date in take home pay since the Chargers' first tryout camp on April 21 in spite of promises of earning \$4,000-5,000 "moonlighting" as an AFA football player.

Disrupted Practice

The disappointing pay situation and recent announcement that NFL players earn an estimated \$63,000 yearly undoubtedly led to a week-long salary dispute two weeks ago that disrupted practice and resulted in the Chargers' first official game loss under the revised AFA stand-

ings. Equally frustrated about losing their first game to Jacksonville by a 29-14 score led Charger quarterback Ellsworth Turner to reportedly say, "To hell with the money, let's just play. It's the first year. If we get paid, we get paid - if we don't, we don't."

Probably influencing Turner's thinking and his teammates was their sense of pride and the fact that their teammate Mike Cox was at that time in the midst of a 3-week tryout with the NFL's Buffalo Bills. That is, many Carolina Chargers' players and others in the AFA are

hoping for that last chance for recognition and possibly a tryout

with an NFL team and the big salary opportunity.

Recognizing even before the salary dispute that many of the players needed paying jobs to support themselves led the Chargers' management to assign defense line coach Will Holthouser the responsibility of finding the players employment.

While there has been some apparent difficulty in finding jobs for the players because of conflicts with practice and game schedules, some players, in Holthouser's reported comment, "screwed up" on the jobs they were given while some others who sincerely want to work can't find jobs. This too gives the impression that many Chargers' players are simply living in that dream world of a little AFA Carolina Chargers' glory and a glimmer of hope for recognition and one last chance of getting a tryout opportunity with an NFL team.

Dubious Glories

This raises serious questions about values and common sense in many black communities. Tennis pro and former U.S. Open and Wimbledon champion Arthur Ashe has noted that too many blacks overrate sports and the opportunities it provides. As he says, "I strongly believe the black culture expends too much time, energy and effort raising, praising and (encouraging) our black children as to the dubious glories of professional sports."

While professional sports is like a revolving door for many youth - out of the den of poverty to limited fame, glory and money and back in after a few years - it nevertheless offers enough role models to cause many black youth to believe that they too can make the big time. While this is fine for those few who do succeed and it is consistent with the American dream, it is a tragedy for the 90 percent who fail and often become so disappointed they won't try anything else.

The fact is, while there is a greater chance for the typical black youth to become a lawyer, doctor, teacher, brickmason or machinist, we don't instill the kind of academic discipline into our youth that is needed to explore these options.

A career pursued in professional sports is good if you have the talents of a Julius Erwin, the foresight of an O.J. Simpson and the wisdom of an Arthur Ashe. If you don't have these, at least consider some other options that are there, available and something youth can be equally proud of and even more successful in. Let's keep a good thing - professional sports - in perspective.

"It is up to us, Blacks who care about the Black future, to impose order where none exists today, and we have to do it. Our lives have always been more worthless than white ones in the eyes of our country, and our country does not really care about the chaos in our neighborhoods as long as that anarchy does not spill over the lines of demarcation.

We have to do it because we cannot ask our old people to spend the rest of their lives passing through a gauntlet of muggers."
Oride Combs, N.Y. Magazine



The Level Of Fear Is Shocking

as i see it

Boat People: Docking In Charlotte

by Gerald O. Johnson

The boat people have docked and some of their permanent shore leave appears to be the Grier Heights area of Charlotte. The boat people are of course the Vietnam refugees that fled their country several years ago to get away from the North Vietnamese. The refugees fled by way of boat and have been afloat several years trying to get a free world country to accept them.

Several countries set up temporary refugee camps until permanent residents could be established. Several countries are now beginning to make provisions for these refugees, including the United States.

Charlotte happens to be one of the focal points for getting the refugees settled in the Southeast. This settlement procedure is being carried out by the Catholic Social Services. So far all of the refugees remaining in Charlotte have been placed in the Grier Heights area.

Well, since none of the Catholic Social Services people live in Grier Heights and since none of the Grier Heights people are on the Catholic Social Services, the Grier Heights residents wanted to know why they were so lucky to be chosen as the new refugee camp. The Grier Heights community felt that it was unfair for the Catholic Social Services to use their community without notifying them.

The disenchantment over the refugees' arrival does not



Gerald O. Johnson

stop with the people of Grier Heights. A group of veterans feel that the refugee invasion is unfair because the country cannot afford to pay the \$250 for each of them. Plus they feel a little uneasy about V.C.'s walking the streets since all V.C.'s look alike, you know! One of those V.C.'s might be the enemy.

Quite a few blacks not living in Grier Heights object to the refugees coming to Charlotte. It seems that "these" people are taking all the jobs from Black folks and getting a better education than Black folks. Wow!...in just a few weeks, too. V.C.'s learning English in a day and Negroes can't learn it in a lifetime. Hence, black folks feel that the secret formula for smarts is being released without them knowing about it.

"Seems this town ain't big enough for two minorities, partner." We uns wuz here first.

Seriously, if I didn't know

the characters in this scene, I could swear we were talking about the Klan and Black people in the 1960's. The words are exactly the same. The sentiment, the hate, the fears, the bigotry, even the ignorance has manifested itself in this situation.

This country has accepted refugees, aliens, everybody and his mother since the very beginning. Each of us could probably trace our roots from this country. We were formed by refugees escaping to this country for freedom.

Ironically, these refugees are unwanted and they didn't ask for freedom or democracy. We (U.S.) under the auspices of stopping communism, fought in their country, destroyed their land, and devastated their lives, because we didn't want them to come under a communistic regime. Since we were unable to win the war, their land was taken and they were unable to return.

Now, for a people that has gone through this because of poor U.S. politics, we are saying tough manure.

"We are refusing the refugees because of the recession," is a popular excuse, especially among Christians. Well, I am willing to wager that the influx of these refugees will have little or no impact on unemployment. It is time for you Christians to stop preaching the doctrine and start living it.

"Wasted tax dollars" is still another excuse. The tax situation would be exactly the same See Boat on Page 10

The Black Beat

Census Bureau Missed 7.7 Percent Of Black Population

by Milton Jordan
Special to the Post

On April 1, 1970 while thousands of census takers counted the nation, Robert Whitfield fed a Vietnam-contacted heroin habit on Chicago's skid row.

Because of his transient lifestyle then, Whitfield, now 39, most likely was one of nearly 1 million black men the government estimates it didn't count 10 years ago.

"I know I didn't fill out no census form," said Whitfield recently during an interview in Charlotte where he arrived just a few weeks ago with about \$5 in his pocket. "I was so strung out on drugs and hung out in the street so much, they probably didn't even see me."

As nearly as the Bureau of the Census, a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce, can estimate, it missed 5.3 million persons, or about 2.5 percent of America's more than 200 million people during the last count. But more significantly, the census missed 7.7 percent of the country's black population, and probably a like number of other ethnic groups, such as Hispanics and Chinese. The largest undercounted group, the Bureau estimates, was the nearly 2 million black men the

count missed. Categories of the uncounted include transients, persons hiding from the police or angry spouses, persons living in situations in violation of regulations or laws, and persons who just don't like to answer questions.

For example, a public housing family with an unregistered relative living in the apartment isn't likely to include this person on the census questionnaire.

Another example would be pimps, who handle most of the prostitution business in larger cities, and who census takers agree are the hardest people around to get information from.

The census undercount has far-reaching implications because:

- + Congress uses Census Bureau population data to apportion the membership in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- + Population is included in the formula that decides how much federal revenue sharing money a state gets.
- + The number of people 18 years old and older who have less than five years of schooling determines the amount of federal money each state gets under the Adult Education Act.



Milton Jordan

- + The number of children 5 to 17 years old in poor families determines the amount of money allotted to counties under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- + The number of people unemployed or with low incomes determines whether a community qualifies for assistance under the Public Works Act.
- + Other federal programs that use census data to allocate money include The Housing and Community Development Act, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the National Health

Planning and Resources Development Act, and the Child Nutrition Act.

Census officials note that federal agencies often don't take the undercount into consideration when they use census data to help set an allocation.

"What happens then," said Bernard Douglas, a Charlotte-based community services coordinator with the Census Bureau, "is that money is allocated to an area based upon the population the census data says is there. But, then uncounted people show up and apply for the program. The program has a shortfall in money, and gets charged with not really working!"

To decrease the undercount in 1980, the Census Bureau has developed a community services program designed to better educate blacks and other ethnic groups on the value of the census. The education includes the fact that census information is totally confidential, unavailable to anyone but sworn Census Bureau personnel. These workers face five years imprisonment and/or a \$5,000 fine if convicted of revealing individual census information to any unauthorized person.

Though the Bureau's efforts are designed to educate and

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

TO BE EQUAL

Carter Links Energy And Idealism

President Carter came down from the Camp David mountaintop to speak directly to the American people in a way that few Presidents have ever done. He did more than just talk about energy; he preached a sermon, one the American people needed to hear.

For it isn't often a President steps back from immediate concerns to address the nation about things like morality, confidence in the future, and other intangibles.

And it isn't often a President condemns the self-indulgence and distorted values we see about us. The scorn with which the President spoke of the way many people confuse their personal identity with owning things was genuine. America has always been a materialistic society, but it is only in recent years that the equally strong strain of idealism has faltered.

There were two constant themes in the President's Sunday night speech and in his public talks shortly afterwards. One was the call to rekindle America's spirit and traditional values. The other was energy.

The two were linked because energy appears to be the issue of most immediate concern to most people, and because you can't preach a moral awakening in a vacuum. There's got to be an issue around which the nation can be rallied.

The President chose energy as that issue. Most people would agree with that choice. But I have my doubts.

Energy is not a moral issue. The price of a gallon of gas or the numbers of barrels of imported oil are not the stuff of which moral crusades are made.

Tapping the latent moral fervor of our nation and rekindling belief in American ideals needs a worthier subject. It needs a vision more inspiring than shortening the wait at gas stations.

Such a fitting vision is the vision of racial equality.

Racial equality and the battle to eradicate poverty and disadvantage is an issue that can rally the nation, especially if it is presented in the context of traditional American idealism and our dedication to human rights.

It's a vision that can't be lost in a maze of contradictory strategies for achieving energy independence. And it's a vision that would bring out the best in the American people and shake them loose from the selfish lethargy that undermines the moral fiber of the nation.

That vision could be backed with a positive agenda for the 1980s - an agenda that includes full employment, health and housing goals, a youth development policy and other national efforts to upgrade the quality of life for all.

In the process, such an agenda would overcome racial disparities and bring parity to the black and brown people who are disproportionately poor.

And it would revive confidence in America's traditional values of justice, brotherhood and equality.

That said, the President's energy program represents a strong new exercise of leadership. He has put together a clear package designed to deal not only with temporary energy problems such as we are now experiencing, but with the long-run problems.

motivate more people in all ethnic groups to cooperate with the census coming up in 1980, the primary thrust is aimed at blacks. Blacks are the country's largest minority, and also the most undercounted as far as federal officials can guess.

"Black people in America have never been accurately counted in the U.S. census for a number of reasons," said Douglas. "Census takers in the past were reluctant when it came to going into many black communities and actually counting people, and many blacks thought they were cheating the government by not being counted in the census, but we may have been cheating ourselves."

Douglas, who's responsible for training community services specialists for more than 30 North Carolina counties, about 15 counties in South Carolina, parts of Virginia and Washington, D.C., faces an uphill battle in many places.

Breaching the fears and other problems that produce the undercount is no easy task. "The biggest problem I face in trying to sell blacks in my area on the advantages of being counted in the census is dispelling the rumors," said Angela Hall of Columbia, S.C., who works in the state's middle 13 counties.

"Some people believe that white census takers just stand on the corners in black neighborhoods and estimate how many blacks live there. Some other blacks believe the census information can be used as part of the oppression black people face in this country."

In Washington, D.C., as in many major cities, the problem is apathy, according to Mary Brisker, a community services specialist in the nation's capital.

"It is hard to break through the apathy and hostility in a city like Washington," said Mrs. Brisker, "because some people just don't care, and others don't trust anything that has to do with the government."

But the community services workers, more than 200 of them nationally, chip away at the problem.



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