Coaching Boys INTO MEN®

CoachesCorner.org

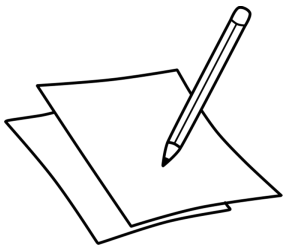
Advanced Coaches Clinic

Coaching Practices to Address Racism in Sports

Time: 2 hours

Goals: This training will support coaches to be able to better:

1. Understand and empathize with the experiences of their athletes.
2. Advocate for their athletes academically, emotionally, and mentally.
3. Discuss issues of racism with their athletes from an informed perspective.
4. Make connections between racism and CBIM's core content on gender-based violence and healthy dynamics.
5. Reflect on how coaching practices can create safe, supportive environments for our athletes or unintentionally send harmful messages around race, manhood, and aggression.



Worksheets Included:

1. Connections of Race and Sports Across History
2. Defining Race w/ Discussion Questions
3. Defining Racism w/ Discussion Questions
4. Defining Racial Justice w/ Discussion Questions
5. Healthy and Harmful Coaching Practices on Racism w/ Historical Examples

For training demos and additional guidance on delivering Advanced Coaches Clinic materials, check out our Learning Collaborative recordings at:

https://www.coachescorner.org/healthy-relationships-advocates/#collab

! *Important Note on Prior Knowledge*

This training presumes that the coaches at the training believe that racism is a problem. However, it does provide basic definitions and doesn't require extensive prior knowledge about racism. Consider the experience, knowledge, and needs of your community and what will make the content most accessible. Other useful training materials on racism and equity can be found at Rise to Win: https://risetowin.org/what-we-do/educate/index.html#resources

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Acknowledgments:

FUTURES extends special appreciation to the **One Love Foundation** who provided critical support in writing, revising, and sharing content. More One Love content can be found at JoinOneLove.org.

Section 1 Warm Up Brainstorm and Questions

5 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the introduction to coaches.
Spend a few moments allowing coaches to introduce themselves with the prompts, then cover the agenda and ground rules for the session. Finish by sharing the final note.

Introduction to Section 1: Warm Up Brainstorm and Questions

The purpose of this training is to create a deeper understanding of how racism impacts our teams, our coaching, and sports more broadly so that we can all take action to stop racist abuse and build healthy, supportive teams. To do this, we will zoom out to understand the broader picture of racism in America--its history, different components, and examples specific sports. Then, we will bring the conversation back to our teams and coaching practices, focusing on the concrete ways that we can bring these lessons into our work as CBIM coaches and positive mentors seeking to prevent violence and build safer communities.

Introduction Prompts:

Tell us a bit about yourself and why you believe this training is important for you.

It is important for coaches to continue building skills to:

- Understand and empathize with the experiences of their athletes.
- Advocate for their athletes academically, emotionally, and mentally.
- Discuss issues of racism with their athletes from an informed perspective.
- Make connections between racism and CBIM's core content on gender-based violence and healthy dynamics.
- Reflect on how coaching practices can create safe, supportive environments for our athletes or unintentionally send harmful messages around race, manhood, and aggression.

AGENDA:

1. Warm Up on Sports and Race History
2. Defining Race and Racism
3. Coaching Practices to Address Racism
4. Scenario on the Role of Coaches
5. Closing & Takeaways

GROUND RULES AND GUIDELINES to create a welcoming environment where coaches are both encouraged to take risks and consider others' experiences:

1. No shaming or blaming. We're not here to create an environment where "you know it or you don't." We're here to learn how to be the best coaches we can be.
2. Take personal responsibility for learning and respect. Because we are not blaming one another, it is important that we take responsibility for our impact on others and when we have done wrong.
3. Speak from personal experience and avoid generalization. Use "I" statements to prevent assuming what others are thinking and feeling.
4. Acknowledgement of how personal this topic is. We will respect and listen openly to others, not be defensive, and speak as openly as possible about our own experiences.
5. Finally, we will start from the place of acknowledging that racism and discrimination exist. We can come from different experiences and amount of time spent discussing this topic, but this is a space where we will work *constructively* towards how we, as coaches, can address racism.

Final Note: This is about building healthy teams, creating supportive environments for our athletes of color, and addressing racial bias and racism amongst our athletes and teams.

Section 2 Warm Up Brainstorm and Questions

10 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the section introduction to coaches.
Ask the coaches to brainstorm out loud using the warmup question, then turn to Coach Handout Page 1 for examples. Then, spend 5 minutes covering the debrief talking points.

Introduction to Section 2: Warm Up Brainstorm and Questions

Before getting into definitions and what we can *do* as coaches, let's first take a moment to think about where we've come from in sports, the climate that we are coaching in, and *why* we are talking about racism in the first place.

Warm Up Question:

What are examples or moments from recent history (say, the last 60 years to present examples) that highlight something about race or racism in sports?

- To clarify, these do not need to be examples of racism in sports; they can also be moments where sports and issues of race intersect. This is not a time to analyze, but to brainstorm.

Selected Historical Intersections of Sports and Racism

1900s

Jack Johnson, the first Black man to win the world heavyweight title
Johnson won the world heavyweight title in 1908 and held the title until 1915. He defied racial stereotypes and destroyed myths of white superiority, particularly by defeating "the great white hope," Jim Jeffries and living a lifestyle of wealth. He died in 1946 from a car accident, as the nearest hospital that treated Black patients was 25-miles away. (1)

1968

Black Human Rights Protest at the Olympics
Tommie Smith and John Carlos won first and third place, respectively, in the 200-meter race. On the winner's podium, they silently bowed their heads and raised their gloved-fists during the American National Anthem. Smith explained the right black glove signified the power within Black America; the left signified Black unity. Both athletes wore black socks without shoes to signify their poverty. Carlos wore his jacket unzipped - a violation of Olympic etiquette - to show solidarity with working class Americans. Carlos also wore beads to honor the victims of lynchings. Smith and Carlos were suspended by the International Olympics Committee, dropped from the US Olympic team, and given 48 hours to leave Mexico. (2)

2000s

Ongoing Racism Directed Towards Serena Williams

In 2001 at the Indian Wells final, fans shouted boos and racial slurs at the 19-year-old Williams. Over more than a decade, reporters have consistently referred to her with aggressive and animalistic terms: "savage," "Amazonian," "gorilla," and more. Following the 2018 US Open Finals, The Herald Sun, an Australian newspaper, published a racist, stereotypical depiction of Williams as an "angry Black woman throwing a tantrum" after she received what was widely considered to be an unfair code violation. Williams has been tested for performance-enhancing drugs more than twice as often as her non-Black peers. (3)

2000s

The Treatment of Michael Vick vs. Ben Roethlisberger

In 2007, Michael Vick, a Black NFL quarterback, was found guilty of involvement in a dog fighting ring. The NFL suspended him indefinitely without pay and he retired in 2017 after teams refused to sign him because of his “image”. Meanwhile, Ben Roethlisberger, a white NFL Quarterback, was accused of rape in 2008 and 2010. He did not dispute the 2008 allegations. Rather, one case was settled outside of court and the other was dropped. The NFL suspended him for four games. In 2015 Forbes named Roethlisberger the 11th-highest-paid athlete in the world. He remains a quarterback in the NFL as of 2021. (4)

2016

Kneeling & the National Anthem

Likened to the actions taken by Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics, in 2016 Kaepernick - a Black NFL quarterback - knelt during the national anthem at the start of an NFL game to protest police brutality and racial inequality in America. When asked about his decision to not stand, Kaepernick explained “I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder.” Kaepernick has not played in the NFL since 2017, with no team being willing to sign him. (5)

2018

Lebron James Activism & the “Shut Up and Dribble” Comment

In 2018, during a Fox News reporter Laura Ingram commented on Lebron James' recent statements supporting Collin Kaepernick's choice to kneel during the Anthem. Ingram said, “It’s always unwise to seek political advice from someone who gets paid $100 million a year to bounce a ball. Keep the political comments to yourselves...shut up and dribble”. In 2019, James reclaimed the Ingram “shut up and dribble proclamation and developed a new docuseries entitled “Shut Up and Dribble”, in which athletes basketball players have helped to bring about social change and make their own statements in the current political climate. (6)

Sources: 1. NPR 2. Vox 3. The Quint 4. Sports Illustrated 5. The Washington Post 6. NBC News

Debrief Questions:

1. ***What do these examples illustrate about what racism is?***
2. ***What do these examples illustrate about why we need to discuss racism?***

Debrief Talking Points

- Race and sports have always been connected. Not only because athletes have used sports as a platform to take a stand against racism, but because racism exists in the arena of sports as a whole (commentary about it, ownership of professional teams, and stereotypes within).
- If we are not talking about race and racism as mentors and coaches, we're missing a critical aspect of our athletes' experiences and their relationship to current events.
- Our athletes' mental health, academics, opportunities, and safety are all impacted by racism. As mentors and adults in the lives of young people, we have a responsibility to understand the impacts of racism and what we can do to support our athletes. This is about redefining the role of coaches, particularly White coaches.

Section 3 Defining Race and Racism

50 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the introduction with coaches. Then, turn to Coach Handout Pages 2a-8b with coaches. Coaches should only look at the definitions and discussion questions, not examples. Instruct coaches to fill in the "key talking points" column as you go through this activity. Facilitate all 3 activities: Defining Race, Defining Racism, and Defining Racial Justice.

Introduction to Section 3: Defining Race and Racism

Before discussing **how** our coaching practices can challenge racism and make our teams and communities safer, it's important to begin from a common understanding of **what** racism is and where we are today.

ACTIVITY 1 - DEFINING RACE

Step 1: Ask a coach to read the definition and history of race out loud:

"Race is a human-invented, shorthand term used to describe and categorize people into various social groups based on characteristics like skin color, physical features, and genetic heredity. Race, while not a valid biological concept, is a real social construction that gives or denies benefits and privileges."

Prior to the 1600s, the term "race" was used to "identify groups of people with a kinship or group connection." However, the current ways that race is used to identify groups were developed over centuries based on "the false notion that "white" people were inherently smarter, more capable, and more human than nonwhite people…[and] This [new] categorization of people became a justification for European colonization and subsequent enslavement of people from Africa." (1)

Step 2. Ask the following discussion questions, make sure to touch on the key talking points throughout the discussion.

Discussion Question:

What reactions do you have to this definition? Is this the definition you learned growing up? What questions do you have about this definition?

Key Talking Points

Racism is not only about the language we use and the actions that individuals take.

Racism refers to prejudice combined with power, established to provide opportunity and wealth to one group by exploiting and disempowering other groups. For example, low-cost mortgages on houses in the 1950s were legally denied to people of color, building generational wealth amongst White families in the United States while impoverishing communities of color. This is what “White Supremacy” refers to: Not just individual acts of violence, but a system that advantages White people economically and socially as a whole by disadvantaging people of color.

Acknowledging the systemic nature of racism is important because it emphasizes this is the air we breathe and the policies we all live within. No one is immune from learning damaging messages. No White people are immune from the material and social benefits (or lack of barriers) that racism affords them.

Often, these systems are made to feel inherent or normal. For white people, the devastating, every day impacts of racism can be more easily ignored and made invisible. For people of color, these impacts can be internalized to feel like their fault or deserved. As adult mentors, it is important to demystify these systems for our youth.

Step 3: Conclude with the following talking points:

- It’s important to recognize that often, race is simply defined as a “difference” that has no significant meaning or impact. Media and education has often said that “color” shouldn’t have an impact on how we see or treat people.
- While it is true that race is not “biological” or “inherent,” we live in a history where race has been created and used as a tool to socially and economically categorize, dehumanize, and commit violence against people. It is very “real.”
- If we don’t acknowledge the history of how race--as a system--was created, we will ignore the purpose that race plays in our society and the impact it has on our athletes who take in these messages and live with the impacts of racism.

Activity 1 Sources: 1. National Museum of African American History and Culture

ACTIVITY 2 - DEFINING RACISM

Step 1: Transition from Defining Race to Defining Racism by sharing:
So, what do we do about this long-standing history of how we define race? And what, specifically, do we do as coaches and within sports? We must address how race works at different levels through an understanding of Racism and Racial Justice. The following definitions are from RacialEquityTools.Org.

Step 2: Ask a coach to read the definition of racism out loud:

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

Step 3. Ask the following discussion questions, make sure to touch on the key talking points throughout the discussion.

Discussion Question 1:

In your own words, why is racism different from prejudice, hatred, or discrimination? Why do you think the definition calls out the words "systemic" and "institutional?"

Key Talking Points

Racism is not only about the language we use and the actions that individuals take.

Racism refers to prejudice combined with power, established to provide opportunity and wealth to one group by exploiting and disempowering other groups. For example, low-cost mortgages on houses in the 1950s were legally denied to people of color, building generational wealth amongst White families in the United States while impoverishing communities of color. This is what "White Supremacy" refers to: Not just individual acts of violence, but a system that advantages White people economically and socially as a whole by disadvantaging people of color.

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Discussion Question 2:

What are examples of systemic or institutional racism?

Key Talking Points

The Federal Housing Administration's policies which blocked loans and forbid the sale of suburban homes to Black Americans between 1930s-1960s, enabling modern segregation and the creation of massive racial wealth inequality. (1)

The mass and disproportionate incarceration of black Americans founded in ideological beliefs connecting blackness to criminality. The United States will incarcerate 1/3 Black men in their lifetimes compared to 1/17 White men. (2)

The disproportionate impact of COVID on Black, Latinx, and Native communities due to the poverty, lack of healthcare access, segregation, limited economic opportunities, and food deserts (amongst other factors) created by past and present racism. For example, infection rates of Black Americans 5 times and death rates 2 times those of White Americans. (3)

Our justice system disproportionately sentences and wrongly convicts Black men for sexual violence. Compared to the leniency with which our system treats many white men, such as Brock Turner, these observations represent the racist ideas that Blackness is equated with criminality and Whiteness is equated with innocence. (4)

The disproportionate economic impact of COVID on women of color due to the costs of childcare, service and hospitality industries hit hardest, and generational wealth divides. The percentage of unemployed women of color is double that of white women. (5)

Discussion Question 3:

What are examples of cultural values, beliefs, language, or behaviors that are rooted in racism?

Key Talking Points

At the core of these beliefs that support racism is the *idea* that one group is superior to another and has the right to control the other. Here are a few historical and present examples:

News and academic journals in the 1800s and 1900s persistently asserted that white people were more intelligent and civilized than black and indigenous people, justifying things like Indian Boarding Schools, the effect of which are still being felt.

The term “welfare queen” was popularized by Ronald Reagan in the 1970s. Founded in the racist stigmatization of Black single mothers as lazy, this belief fueled discriminatory policies towards poor people across the country.

A White teacher telling their student of color, “You’re so articulate,” asserting the assumption or belief of inferior intelligence. For example, the real young Black football player represented in The Blind Side, Michael Oher, said that the film portrayed him “as dumb instead of as a kid who had never had consistent academic instruction and ended up thriving once he got it.”

White people using the N word or other racial slurs, not understanding the historical context that makes the word so painful for Black people and representative of White superiority.

White coaches, teachers, or schools making comments or banning Black hair styles by saying that they don’t “look professional.” This asserts that White hair is normal and creates a basis for discrimination.

A doctor or coach assuming that black patients or athletes have a higher pain tolerance than white counterparts, which is based in the belief that race is biological. This is one factor contributing to higher rates of Black maternal mortality rates.

Discussion Question 4:

What are examples of institutional or cultural racism within sports?

Key Talking Points

In 2017, 70% of the NFL was Black, but only 25% of quarterbacks were. This discrepancy is founded on the belief that quarterbacks need to be white due to whiteness being more associated with intelligence than blackness.

Twitter users, fans, and sports commentators labeling Black athletes like Serena Williams "gorilla," the n-word, and "a beast"--ideas which dehumanize and assert the superiority of white people.

In 2021, while 80% of the NBA is non-white, just 13% of NBA majority owners are people of color, representing an enormous racial wealth disparity.

Common language within sports that refers to Black athletes in terms of "natural ability" compared to White athletes who "work hard" or have "sports intelligence."

A coach of a predominantly White, suburban team telling their team to "be careful" of another team from a city of predominantly athletes of color. For example, saying that these teams are "more aggressive."

Women from professional sports, including those like the WNBA that are predominantly women of color, being paid substantially less than their male counterparts. This is representative of both sexism and racism.

The NCAA not paying their athletes, who in many sports are predominantly athletes of color, despite the work of these athletes making substantial money for primarily White executives.

Step 4: Conclude with the following talking points:

- Our athletes are all confronting racism, whether as those who benefit from it or those who are disadvantaged by it. We have a responsibility as adult mentors to support our athletes of color to thrive and our white athletes in understanding their role in creating a healthier, more just world free of racism.
- Racism creates trauma that impacts relationships, academics, employment, and more for our young people. It's essential that we understand racism and reflect on how we can be informed about this trauma so that we can support our athletes.

Activity 2 Sources: 1. NPR 2. The Sentencing Project 3. Journal of American Medical Association 4. American Bar Association 5. University of New Hampshire

ACTIVITY 3 - DEFINING RACIAL JUSTICE

Step 1: Transition to Defining Racism from Defining Racial Justice by sharing:
To understand what our roles as mentors and coaches are and deepen the role that each of us has towards addressing racism, one framework that we can use is "racial justice." Racial Justice is often discussed in the media, but it's important that we define it and discuss it for ourselves given our discussion of what racism means and how it functions to systemically advantage and disadvantage groups.

Step 2: Ask coaches to try to define what "Racial Justice" means-- what are elements of what justice looks like?

Step 3: Ask a coach to read the definition of Racial Justice out loud:
"The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond "anti-racism." It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures." (1)

Step 4. Ask the following discussion questions, make sure to touch on the key talking points throughout the discussion.

Discussion Question 1:

What are examples (past and that we can dream of) of "systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity" - sports and not sports-specific?

Key Talking Points

Examples of recent systemic and positive actions:

- The United States instituting a Child Tax Credit in 2021, which provides $3,000+ yearly to working families with children. These types of policies can play a large role in addressing economic strains and opportunity barriers, such as how COVID has impacted employment of women of color due to the cost of child care.

- In 2021, Los Angeles Unified School District 1/3 of its school police officers, with the newly available resources providing school safety coaches, health and human services, restorative justice coordinators, culturally-relevant curricula, and ethnic studies across 53 schools.

- In 2021, the Cleveland MLB team changed their team name from the Indians to the Guardians, representing a shift away from disrespectful and stereotypical language towards Native people in the U.S.

- The broad movement towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within companies and education. Despite many DEI positions not having substantial power, this still represents a shift in culture and possibility for positive policy change.

Additional examples of more actions that could be taken:

- Teaching about racism--language, behaviors, history--with young people through our schools and in our families.
- Ensuring that all Americans are able to vote. It was only 50 years ago that the U.S. voted to allow people of color to vote. Much more needs to be done to address barriers to voting.
- Addressing the ongoing effects of racial wealth disparities and segregation through housing and workforce development policy.

Discussion Question 2:

What role do you believe coaches play in "proactively" addressing racism?

Key Talking Points

- Coaches set the tone for what behavior and language is acceptable. Coaches can communicate that harassment, exclusion, and racist stereotypes are not ok.
- Creating space for athletes to discuss current events and acknowledging the impact that nation-wide racism has on athletes' experiences.
- Advocating for policies in athletic programs, schools, and the broader community that promote equity and equal opportunity such as greater mental health services or alternative disciplinary procedures.

Step 4: Close this section with the following talking points:

- Racism impacts every level of our communities. Racism takes place between individuals and through economic, educational, and social systems. In order to create positive change, we must focus on how we can play a meaningful role in the areas that we have influence: With our families; our communities; our schools; and in this case, our teams.
- Everyone can play a role towards advancing health, equity, and racial justice!
- On our teams, we as mentors and coaches play a role in creating a healthy environment for our athletes. That means creating a consistent space for them to grow and acknowledging the impacts of racism and trauma.
- During the next section, we'll discuss specific practices that can create healthy or harmful spaces for our athletes.

Section 4 Coaching Practices to Address Racism

30 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the introduction with coaches. Then, turn to Coach Handout Pages 10-12 with coaches. Coaches should use the blank worksheet (Coach Handout Page 10) to brainstorm answers to questions. Then, discuss the content of Coach Handout Pages 11 and 12 and ask the debrief questions.

Introduction to Section 4: Coaching Practices to Address Racism

Building on the discussion about Racial Justice, let's talk about what we can do as coaches with our teams. As we get into specific practices, remember that the purpose of this is to create healthier, trauma-informed environments for our athletes where they can thrive, be open, and create a culture of growth and communal responsibility with one another. Many athletes and adults don't see racism as an important issue. We all have a role to change that.

SIDE NOTE: *We recognize that all of our roles to address racism depend on our own race. The way a Black coach speaks about (and feels comfortable speaking about) racism will be different than a White or Asian coach. As coaches and mentors, consider where you feel you have power and what feels difficult in changing culture, intervening in racist language or stereotypes, and what seems feasible for you.*

Coaching Practices to Address Racism - Brainstorm

What are ways that coaches can promote healthy, trauma-informed environments for athletes that address, interrupt, and educate around racism?

What are ways that coaches may promote harmful environments for athletes that perpetuate racism?

Coaching Practices to Address Racism - Guide

Healthy *Coaching Practices to Address Racism*	***Harmful*** *Coaching Practices that Reinforce Racism*
1. **Taking responsibility for harmful, racist language and behaviors on your team.** Whether it is a coach, athlete, or other who says something wrong, stating that this behavior is unacceptable sends a key message to your team.	1. **Overlooking or downplaying racist language or behaviors.** Whether from athletes, refs, or parents, ignoring racism sends a message that racism--and its impact on your team--are acceptable.
2. **Offering care, support and acknowledgement to your athletes on issues related to racism.** Being aware of local/national news and regularly checking-in with our athletes who are experiencing trauma can go a long way.	2. **Yelling consistently, shouting at, or demeaning athletes.** This can be re-traumatizing and does not support positive self-image. Note: this does not mean never raising one's voice or holding players accountable.
3. **Listening to your athletes on issues of racism.** Young people are leaders on social issues. Being open to learning with your athletes around racism can support our development as trusted adults.	3. **Being defensive and unreceptive around racism.** If a player or coach says that something is racist, believe them and take action. Defensiveness builds distrust.
4. **Avoiding shame & prioritizing learning and accountability.** We all internalize racist ideas from our systems and culture. We can take meaningful action as individuals while not blaming individuals.	4. **Making statements or decisions based in racial assumptions of aggressiveness or intelligence.** Assigning positions or punishments through unconscious bias exacerbates racist messages and impacts on athletes.
5. **Supporting your athletes' advocacy.** Talk to your athletes about social movements and provide opportunities to speak up. Do they want to say anything/send a message?	5. **Blaming victims of racism for racist abuse.** Similar to blaming rape on what women wear, racist violence or abuse on what people of color wear places responsibility with victims, rather than those with power to create real change.
6. **Advocating at the local level for positive actions and policies** to address racism, such as those that push for equitable funding for schools and Advocating for anti-racist policies and funding within schools and coaches associations.	6. **Assuming deficit amongst athletes & referring to sports as the "out."** Even if sports are an avenue for advancement, holistically supporting athletes' intellectual and emotional growth is essential to counteract the systemic barriers of racism and prevent a dynamic of "white saviorism."

Coaching Practices to Address Racism - Examples

Positive *Examples of Coaching Practices in Sports*	***Negative*** *Examples of Coaching Practices in Sports*
1. Greg Popovich (San Antonio Spurs) publicly acknowledged in 2017 the ways that racism has played in benefiting him while hurting his black team members. A sports franchise banning fans who sing racist chants, compared to those who only post on social media condemning the fans.	1. Despite his success, college basketball coach Bobby Knight used physical and emotional abuse against his players, including using racist language and choking an athlete. While being strong--and even yelling--can be important as a coach, Knight set a harmful example of what it means to be aggressive, competitive, and a man.
2. Doc Rivers supported his team (Los Angeles Clippers) amidst the racist statements of the owner, Donald Sterling in 2014. He created space for his players to discuss their experiences and their choice to wear shirts in protest.	2. In 2021, reports confirmed that NFL coach Jon Gruden used a number of slurs over years. These included the N word, homophobic slurs, and misogynistic beliefs. This represents how respect and healthy behaviors have to be about everyone or they apply to no one.
3. Coach John Thompson (first Black coach to win national championship in college basketball) protested NCAA Prop 42 and 48 in 1989 which discriminated against black athletes on the basis of grades, despite the NCAA saying it did not.	3. In 2017, a high school coach kicked two of his players off the team for kneeling during the national anthem. Then, the NFL's Texans awarded the coach $2,500. Both actions--by the coach and the Texans--sent a clear, harmful, and stifling message to Black athletes across the country.

Debrief Questions:

1. ***After reading those examples, do you have any questions about why these practices are healthy or problematic?***
2. ***Identify the practices that are most important and the practices that are most uncomfortable and explain why.***

Section 5 Scenarios on the Role of Coaches

20 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Read the introduction with coaches. Then, read the first scenario to the group and ask discussion question. If time, read and discuss the additional scenarios. Cover the key talking points.

Scenario 1: Throughout a game you are coaching, a parent of a player on the opposing team, who is White, has been yelling at the ref and your players. The ref asked the parent to cut it out, but the parent gets more riled up, stands, and then calls one of your athletes a racial slur. Others look uncomfortable, but are silent. The ref tamely tells that parent to stay seated, but takes no further action.

Discussion Question:

How would you respond in the moment and how would you respond in the days following the incident?

Additional Scenarios:

Scenario 2: There is a protest--a student walkout--planned at your team's school led by the Black Student Union against unfair disciplinary procedures against students of color. A few of your players have said they will walkout. One of your assistant coaches says that he thinks the protest is stupid and is pushing you to bench or suspend any athlete who walks out.

Scenario 3: During practice, you overhear a conversation that a few of your players are having about different football positions. The subject of why there are so many White quarterbacks in the NFL comes up and one of your athletes laughs and says, "We all know why most quarterbacks are white, right?". His friends chuckle and get on with practice.

Key Talking Points:

1 It's critical to never let a moment of racist language, assumptions, or general disrespect go unaddressed. Sometimes this means speaking out in the moment and sometimes it means addressing these situations after the fact. It can be as simple as saying, "That's not ok" or "That language is unacceptable on my team." It can (and should) be as deep as opening conversation to learn, educate, and change ideas and behaviors that are racist.

2. There is no "perfect" response to these and other situations. Everyone will respond in our own ways based on our personalities and our identities. Every situation is contextual to our relationships with the others involved--refs, coaches, athletes, parents, and more.

3. While responding differently is ok, it is essential that all our responses represent integrity, respect, and the intention to positively address racism. Responses can differ, but our dedication to the safety and health of our players and community cannot waver.

Section 6 Conclusion

5 minutes

DIRECTIONS: Have the coaches pair up and share their reflections (or share with the whole group if not too large). Extend your appreciation to the coaches for their time, and reinforce the key messages of the training.

Final Reflection Question:

What is one thing this training has made you reflect on?

Key Messages:

- The critical role that coaches play as role models and in establishing norms of what is and is not acceptable.
- The importance of taking action against racism in the moment and supporting athletes through discussion and ongoing care.
- The need for consistent self-reflection, particularly for white coaches, on how all coaching practices are either healing or re-traumatizing.

Selected Historical Intersections of Sports and Racism

1900s

Jack Johnson, the first Black man to win the world heavyweight title

Johnson won the world heavyweight title in 1908 and held the title until 1915. He defied racial stereotypes and destroyed myths of white superiority, particularly by defeating “the great white hope,” Jim Jeffries and living a lifestyle of wealth. He died in 1946 from a car accident, as the nearest hospital that treated Black patients was 25-miles away. (1)

1968

Black Human Rights Protest at the Olympics

Tommie Smith and John Carlos won first and third place, respectively, in the 200-meter race. On the winner’s podium, they silently bowed their heads and raised their gloved-fists during the American National Anthem. Smith explained the right black glove signified the power within Black America; the left signified Black unity. Both athletes wore black socks without shoes to signify their poverty. Carlos wore his jacket unzipped - a violation of Olympic etiquette - to show solidarity with working class Americans. Carlos also wore beads to honor the victims of lynchings. Smith and Carlos were suspended by the International Olympics Committee, dropped from the US Olympic team, and given 48 hours to leave Mexico. (2)

2000s

Ongoing Racism Directed Towards Serena Williams

In 2001 at the Indian Wells final, fans shouted boos and racial slurs at the 19-year-old Williams. Over more than a decade, reporters have consistently referred to her with aggressive and animalistic terms: "savage," "Amazonian," "gorilla," and more. Following the 2018 US Open Finals, The Herald Sun, an Australian newspaper, published a racist, stereotypical depiction of Williams as an "angry Black woman throwing a tantrum" after she received what was widely considered to be an unfair code violation. Williams has been tested for performance-enhancing drugs more than twice as often as her non-Black peers. (3)

Selected Historical Intersections of Sports and Racism

2000s

The Treatment of Michael Vick vs. Ben Roethlisberger

In 2007, Michael Vick, a Black NFL quarterback, was found guilty of involvement in a dog fighting ring. The NFL suspended him indefinitely without pay and he retired in 2017 after teams refused to sign him because of his “image”. Meanwhile, Ben Roethlisberger, a white NFL Quarterback, was accused of rape in 2008 and 2010. He did not dispute the 2008 allegations. Rather, one case was settled outside of court and the other was dropped. The NFL suspended him for four games. In 2015 Forbes named Roethlisberger the 11th-highest-paid athlete in the world. He remains a quarterback in the NFL as of 2021. (4)

2016

Kneeling & the National Anthem

Likened to the actions taken by Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics, in 2016 Kaepernick - a Black NFL quarterback - knelt during the national anthem at the start of an NFL game to protest police brutality and racial inequality in America. When asked about his decision to not stand, Kaepernick explained “I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder.” Kaepernick has not played in the NFL since 2017, with no team being willing to sign him. (5)

2018

Lebron James Activism & the “Shut Up and Dribble” Comment

In 2018, during a Fox News reporter Laura Ingram commented on Lebron James' recent statements supporting Collin Kaepernick's choice to kneel during the Anthem. Ingram said, “It’s always unwise to seek political advice from someone who gets paid $100 million a year to bounce a ball. Keep the political comments to yourselves...shut up and dribble”. In 2019, James reclaimed the Ingram “shut up and dribble proclamation and developed a new docuseries entitled “Shut Up and Dribble”, in which athletes basketball players have helped to bring about social change and make their own statements in the current political climate. (6)

Sources: 1. NPR 2. Vox 3. The Quint 4. Sports Illustrated 5. The Washington Post 6. NBC News

Defining Race

Definition and History of Race

"Race is a human-invented, shorthand term used to describe and categorize people into various social groups based on characteristics like skin color, physical features, and genetic heredity. Race, while not a valid biological concept, is a real social construction that gives or denies benefits and privileges."

Prior to the 1600s, the term "race" was used to "identify groups of people with a kinship or group connection." However, the current ways that race is used to identify groups were developed over centuries based on "the false notion that "white" people were inherently smarter, more capable, and more human than nonwhite people…[and] This [new] categorization of people became a justification for European colonization and subsequent enslavement of people from Africa."

Discussion Question:

What reactions do you have to this definition? Is this the definition you learned growing up? What questions do you have about this definition?

Notes:

Defining Race

Key Ideas

Racism is not only about the language we use and the actions that individuals take.

Racism refers to prejudice combined with power, established to provide opportunity and wealth to one group by exploiting and disempowering other groups. For example, low-cost mortgages on houses in the 1950s were legally denied to people of color, building generational wealth amongst White families in the United States while impoverishing communities of color. This is what “White Supremacy” refers to: Not just individual acts of violence, but a system that advantages White people economically and socially as a whole by disadvantaging people of color.

Acknowledging the systemic nature of racism is important because it emphasizes this is the air we breathe and the policies we all live within. No one is immune from learning damaging messages. No White people are immune from the material and social benefits (or lack of barriers) that racism affords them.

Often, these systems are made to feel inherent or normal. For white people, the devastating, every day impacts of racism can be more easily ignored and made invisible. For people of color, these impacts can be internalized to feel like their fault or deserved. As adult mentors, it is important to demystify these systems for our youth.

Defining Racism

Definition of Racism

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

Discussion Question 1:

In your own words, why is racism different from prejudice, hatred, or discrimination? Why do you think the definition calls out the words "systemic" and "institutional?"

Notes:

Defining Racism - Discussion Question 1

Key Ideas

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Defining Racism

Discussion Question 2:

What are examples of systemic or institutional racism?

Notes:

Defining Racism - Discussion Question 2

Key Ideas

The Federal Housing Administration's policies which blocked loans and forbid the sale of suburban homes to Black Americans between 1930s-1960s, enabling modern segregation and the creation of massive racial wealth inequality.

The mass and disproportionate incarceration of black Americans founded in ideological beliefs connecting blackness to criminality. The United States will incarcerate 1/3 Black men in their lifetimes compared to 1/17 White men.

The disproportionate impact of COVID on Black, Latinx, and
Native communities due to the poverty, lack of healthcare access, segregation, limited economic opportunities, and food deserts (amongst other factors) created by past and present racism. For example, infection rates of Black Americans 5 times and death rates 2 times those of White Americans.

Our justice system disproportionately sentences and wrongly convicts Black men for sexual violence. Compared to the leniency with which our system treats many white men, such as Brock Turner, these observations represent the racist ideas that Blackness is equated with criminality and Whiteness is equated with innocence.

The disproportionate economic impact of COVID on women of color due to the costs of childcare, service and hospitality industries hit hardest, and generational wealth divides. The percentage of unemployed women of color is double that of white women.

Defining Racism

Discussion Question 3:

What are examples of cultural values, beliefs, language, or behaviors that are rooted in racism?

Notes:

Defining Racism - Discussion Question 3

Key Ideas

At the core of these beliefs that support racism is the *idea* that one group is superior to another and has the right to control the other. Here are a few historical and present examples:

News and academic journals in the 1800s and 1900s persistently asserted that white people were more intelligent and civilized than black and indigenous people, justifying things like Indian Boarding Schools, the effect of which are still being felt.

The term “welfare queen” was popularized by Ronald Reagan in the 1970s. Founded in the racist stigmatization of Black single mothers as lazy, this belief fueled discriminatory policies towards poor people across the country.

A White teacher telling their student of color, “You’re so articulate,” asserting the assumption or belief of inferior intelligence. For example, the real young Black football player represented in The Blind Side, Michael Oher, said that the film portrayed him “as dumb instead of as a kid who had never had consistent academic instruction and ended up thriving once he got it.”

White people using the N word or other racial slurs, not understanding the historical context that makes the word so painful for Black people and representative of White superiority.

White coaches, teachers, or schools making comments or banning Black hair styles by saying that they don’t “look professional.” This asserts that White hair is normal and creates a basis for discrimination.

A doctor or coach assuming that black patients or athletes have a higher pain tolerance than white counterparts, which is based in the belief that race is biological. This is one factor contributing to higher rates of Black maternal mortality rates.

Defining Racism

Discussion Question 4:

What are examples of institutional or cultural racism within sports?

Notes:

Defining Racism - Discussion Question 4

Key Ideas

In 2017, 70% of the NFL was Black, but only 25% of quarterbacks were. This discrepancy is founded on the belief that quarterbacks need to be white due to whiteness being more associated with intelligence than blackness.

Twitter users, fans, and sports commentators labeling Black athletes like Serena Williams "gorilla," the n-word, and "a beast"--ideas which dehumanize and assert the superiority of white people.

In 2021, while 80% of the NBA is non-white, just 13% of NBA majority owners are people of color, representing an enormous racial wealth disparity.

Common language within sports that refers to Black athletes in terms of "natural ability" compared to White athletes who "work hard" or have "sports intelligence."

A coach of a predominantly White, suburban team telling their team to "be careful" of another team from a city of predominantly athletes of color. For example, saying that these teams are "more aggressive."

Women from professional sports, including those like the WNBA that are predominantly women of color, being paid substantially less than their male counterparts. This is representative of both sexism and racism.

The NCAA not paying their athletes, who in many sports are predominantly athletes of color, despite the work of these athletes making substantial money for primarily White executives.

Defining Racial Justice

Definition of Racial Justice

"The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond "anti-racism." It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures."

Discussion Question 1:

What are examples (past and that we can dream of) of "systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity" - sports and not sports-specific?

Notes:

Defining Racial Justice - Discussion Question 1

Key Ideas

Examples of recent systemic and positive actions:

The United States instituting a Child Tax Credit in 2021, which provides $3,000+ yearly to working families with children. These types of policies can play a large role in addressing economic strains and opportunity barriers, such as how COVID has impacted employment of women of color due to the cost of child care.

In 2021, Los Angeles Unified School District 1/3 of its school police officers, with the newly available resources providing school safety coaches, health and human services, restorative justice coordinators, culturally-relevant curricula, and ethnic studies across 53 schools.

In 2021, the Cleveland MLB team changed their team name from the Indians to the Guardians, representing a shift away from disrespectful and stereotypical language towards Native people in the U.S.

The broad movement towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within companies and education. Despite many DEI positions not having substantial power, this still represents a shift in culture and possibility for positive policy change.

Defining Racial Justice

Discussion Question 2:

What role do you believe coaches play in "proactively" addressing racism?

Notes:

Defining Racial Justice - Discussion Question 2

Key Ideas

Coaches set the tone for what behavior and language is acceptable. Coaches can communicate that harassment, exclusion, and racist stereotypes are not ok.

Creating space for athletes to discuss current events and acknowledging the impact that nation-wide racism has on athletes' experiences.

Advocating for policies in athletic programs, schools, and the broader community that promote equity and equal opportunity such as greater mental health services or alternative disciplinary procedures.

Coaching Practices to Address Racism - Brainstorm

What are ways that coaches can promote healthy, trauma-informed environments for athletes that address, interrupt, and educate around racism?

What are ways that coaches may promote harmful environments for athletes that perpetuate racism?

Coaching Practices to Address Racism - Guide

Healthy *Coaching Practices to Address Racism*	***Harmful*** *Coaching Practices that Reinforce Racism*
1. **Taking responsibility for harmful, racist language and behaviors on your team.** Whether it is a coach, athlete, or other who says something wrong, stating that this behavior is unacceptable sends a key message to your team.	1. **Overlooking or downplaying racist language or behaviors.** Whether from athletes, refs, or parents, ignoring racism sends a message that racism--and its impact on your team--are acceptable.
2. **Offering care, support and acknowledgement to your athletes on issues related to racism.** Being aware of local/national news and regularly checking-in with our athletes who are experiencing trauma can go a long way.	2. **Yelling consistently, shouting at, or demeaning athletes.** This can be re-traumatizing and does not support positive self-image. Note: this does not mean never raising one's voice or holding players accountable.
3. **Listening to your athletes on issues of racism.** Young people are leaders on social issues. Being open to learning with your athletes around racism can support our development as trusted adults.	3. **Being defensive and unreceptive around racism.** If a player or coach says that something is racist, believe them and take action. Defensiveness builds distrust.
4. **Avoiding shame & prioritizing learning and accountability.** We all internalize racist ideas from our systems and culture. We can take meaningful action as individuals while not blaming individuals.	4. **Making statements or decisions based in racial assumptions of aggressiveness or intelligence.** Assigning positions or punishments through unconscious bias exacerbates racist messages and impacts on athletes.
5. **Supporting your athletes' advocacy.** Talk to your athletes about social movements and provide opportunities to speak up. Do they want to say anything/send a message?	5. **Blaming victims of racism for racist abuse.** Similar to blaming rape on what women wear, racist violence or abuse on what people of color wear places responsibility with victims, rather than those with power to create real change.
6. **Advocating at the local level for positive actions and policies** to address racism, such as those that push for equitable funding for schools and Advocating for anti-racist policies and funding within schools and coaches associations.	6. **Assuming deficit amongst athletes & referring to sports as the "out."** Even if sports are an avenue for advancement, holistically supporting athletes' intellectual and emotional growth is essential to counteract the systemic barriers of racism and prevent a dynamic of "white saviorism."

Coaching Practices to Address Racism - Examples

Positive *Examples of Coaching Practices in Sports*	***Negative*** *Examples of Coaching Practices in Sports*
1. Greg Popovich (San Antonio Spurs) publicly acknowledged in 2017 the ways that racism has played in benefiting him while hurting his black team members. A sports franchise banning fans who sing racist chants, compared to those who only post on social media condemning the fans.	1. Despite his success, college basketball coach Bobby Knight used physical and emotional abuse against his players, including using racist language and choking an athlete. While being strong--and even yelling--can be important as a coach, Knight set a harmful example of what it means to be aggressive, competitive, and a man.
2. Doc Rivers supported his team (Los Angeles Clippers) amidst the racist statements of the owner, Donald Sterling in 2014. He created space for his players to discuss their experiences and their choice to wear shirts in protest.	2. In 2021, reports confirmed that NFL coach Jon Gruden used a number of slurs over years. These included the N word, homophobic slurs, and misogynistic beliefs. This represents how respect and healthy behaviors have to be about everyone or they apply to no one.
3. Coach John Thompson (first Black coach to win national championship in college basketball) protested NCAA Prop 42 and 48 in 1989 which discriminated against black athletes on the basis of grades, despite the NCAA saying it did not.	3. In 2017, a high school coach kicked two of his players off the team for kneeling during the national anthem. Then, the NFL's Texans awarded the coach $2,500. Both actions--by the coach and the Texans--sent a clear, harmful, and stifling message to Black athletes across the country.