

**Author:** Rebekah M. Andrews

**Title:** Why Racial Segregation Occurs Within U of I Sports?

**About the Author:** Hello my name is Rebekah M. Andrews and I'm an African-American student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I plan on majoring in advertising and becoming a successful creative in that field. However, I'm a hard worker and dedicated to mostly everything i commit to. In addition, when conducting this research project i was dedicated to finding why racial segregation would occur within U of I sports and the findings that i collected were very interesting to me and i hope it will interest others and be very beneficial to their knowledge.

**Keywords :** Segregation, Discrimination is spots, Football

**Abstract:** My research project is about “Why racial segregation occurs within U of I sports?” It discusses the issues of racial segregation and the discrimination that occurs within U of I sports. My research reports consisted of an annotated bibliography of journal and IDEALS sources, analysis of public text, a survey, interviews, and an analysis of picture documents. These different, but very valuable research methods helped me get closer to defining why racial segregation occurs in sports. I mainly focused on the racial segregation that occurs amongst Whites and African Americans in U of I sport teams. With the use of these 6 themes I will elaborate on how I found that racial segregation has occurred in sports with the information provided by my research reports. These 6 themes are: comfort zone/socialization, class and opportunity, background history, U of I sports before and after, stereotypes-positions, and lastly racial segregation, which will bring us to a conclusion as to why racial segregation occurs within U of I sports.

**Initial Exercises :**

**Question:**

### Research Question Proposal

When dealing with sports the question that would run through my head is

why different sports seem to represent certain races. Diversity is something that seems to be lacking in athletics. Why is this so? How can this be changed? These are just a couple questions that make me wonder about how race is viewed in sports. Looking at the U of I's athletic teams, a question that I would create is why racial segregation exists in sports. The article, "Racial Formations," by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, helped play a part as to why I thought of my question. When Omi and Winant stated, "Skin color "differences" are thought to explain perceived differences in intellectual, physical and artistic temperaments, and to justify distinct treatment of racially identified individuals and groups," this statement was something I found very interesting (17). It resembles how people can view another person's capabilities just by their race. To gain the information I need for my question I will most likely examine photos of different athletic teams, interview a few sport players, and survey people with a few questions about racial segregation within sports. In addition, I will try to find information from articles that will give me more knowledge of the issue. Overall, I will try my best to make a conclusion as to why racial segregation in sports would even seem to take place on the U of I campus or better yet how it links to reflecting sports players in the media.

**Plan:**

**Research Plan**

1. Interviewing is a research method that I will be using for my research report. Being that I plan to research why racial segregation exist in sports, I will interview some students who are involved in the U of I's athletics as well as students who attend the university. With interviewing some sports members on the U of I campus I will be able to have a better grasp as to why

segregation occurs. I will examine how they interact with one another, if they segregate themselves into different racial groups on the team, and how they feel about the racial construct of the team. When I interview some of the students on campus I will ask them what type of racial group they think defines a basketball team, baseball team, golf team, or etc. Why do different sports seem to consist of different racial groups? Another question that may come up is how race has changed over the years within sports. As I interview these students and team members I will learn from their point of view, which could possibly help or alter any thoughts I may have had on this issue originally.

2. Using surveys is a research method that will contribute to my research project. I will survey a few students that are on the campus. A few questions that I will ask on the survey will revolve around: What is the racial content of basketball team members and if it's made up of Hispanics, African-Americans, Whites, or Asian-American? How could U of I help create more racial diversity within sports? How many years would you estimate that racial segregation within U of I athletics have been going on? Those types of questions are just examples of how my survey might look. This survey will give me various opinions that can help me understand the way different people view race in sports. It will compose of information that I feel would help me along this journey. I also think with surveys it would be more likely that people will tell the truth because their name wouldn't be

written on the paper. Overall, the survey method should turn out well.

3. Analyzing public text in the Daily Illini will give me information about how sports are on the U of I campus are viewed. It's a source that I will use to quote certain statements that relate to my topic and it will give me knowledge of what has already occurred with racial segregation within sports. I'll try to obtain valid information that could help me determine how race plays a part with different sports. I will examine how different sports are explained in the articles. When reading the articles, I will possibly see what types of descriptions are given about the team members. Analyzing the public text in the Daily Illini will show how students view the U of I sports team and hopefully it will discuss important information that will help my research project.
  
4. Analyzing official University documents on webpage's, and pictures that appear on the U of I sports website, I will examine information and pictures that represent the different sports teams. Looking at these pictures will give me representation of the racial content of different U of I athletic teams. Viewing the different amount of different races on certain teams will help give a visual representation of the race separation on U of I teams. Hopefully it will help me obtain information that will illustrate why racial segregation in sports takes place on the U of I campus or in the media in general. The official University documents on webpage's that I view should expand my knowledge of the sport teams and how they represent peoples'

opinions on race within sports. All in all this type of method will help my research project by providing sport related information.

**Data:**            **Annotated bibliography of journal and IDEALS sources**

Gregg, Robert. "Personal Calvaries: Sports in Philadelphia's African-American Communities,

1920-60." *Culture, Sport, Society* 6.2/3 (2003): 88-115, 28. EBSCO. U of I Library. 13

March 2008.

Hibbler, Sharrell. "In Which University Spaces Are Students More Likely to Interact Across Racial/Ethnic Lines?" *Diversity on Campus/Equity and Access*. 15 Dec.

2005. 13 March 2008. <<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1900>>. IDEALS. U of I Moodle.

Lemus, Sergio. "Racial Climate and Spatial Segregation: The Experience of

Minority Students." *Diversity on Campus/Equity and Access*. 13 Feb 2008. 13 March

2008. <<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3594>>. IDEALS. U of I Moodle.

Lewis Jr., Richard. "Racial Position Segregation." *Journal of Black Studies* 25.4

(1995):431, 16. EBSCO. U of I Library. 13 March 2008.

McPherson, Barry D. "The Segregation Playing Position Hypothesis in Sport: An

Alternative Explanation." *Social Science Quarterly (Southwestern Social Sciences*

*Association)* 55.4 (1975): 960-966, 7. EBSCO. U of I Library. 13 March 2008.

**Summary/Proposal:**

**“Personal Calvaries:Sports in Philadelphia's African-American Communities, 1920-60.”**

This article describes the relationship between sports and community. According to Calvaries:Sports in Philadelphia's African-American Communities, 1920-60, “Moving beyond the semi-professional sporting teams that developed within the communities, it describes the institutions that were established to help channel players into these teams.” Instead of focusing on famous athletes such as Jackie Roberson, this article wants to provide information about the communities of where these athletes have come from. It wants to discuss the unwritten history of the lowest class society. This article seems to explain sports as a sense of hope for a lower class community. I plan on using this article to display how segregation links to society and class. I will also discuss how a person’s background, especially African Americans who play sports, contribute to how segregation has formed within sports.

**“In Which University Spaces Are Students More Likely to Interact Across Racial/Ethnic Lines?”**

A study done by a student, Sharrell Hibbler, explains in this article the racial interaction of students at a university and why people of different races choose to hang around a certain crowd of people. According to Hibbler, through the process of “six interviews and observations in different university buildings, the study finds that both common interests and certain university spaces encourage interaction between

people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.” Discussing the acknowledgment that students can have strong ethnic solidarity bonds and the idea of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic community shows why segregation can occur. Talking about self-segregation, this article will help me understand why people of different races choose to interact with certain people. This will help me explain why in sports team members self-segregate themselves from certain people on the team. With the use of this article, I will possibly be able to discuss how there can be ways to get around this racial separation as well.

**“Racial Climate and Spatial Segregation: The Experience of Minority Students.”**

This research proposal was written by Lemus as a project that would investigate how socialization changes among minority students when they come to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. With this research process, the student planned to research how “racial” differences affect student socialization. Lemus states, “the goal of this research is to see what the university administration is doing to create a less negative “racial” climate as well as to investigate students’ everyday responses to that racially charged environment.” Lemus used a few methodologies such as: structured/unstructured interviews, focus groups, and participant-observation to conduct this research. Looking at the information provided from this research proposal, I hope to relate this racial socialization as to how different members on sport teams socialize with one another. It might help me understand how to associate different people’s reactions to certain situations or

people.

### **“Racial Position Segregation”**

When reading the article, “Racial Position Segregation,” it discusses changes in the nature of racial discrimination in intercollegiate football in the United States. It shows “emphasis on discriminations against Black players; Impact of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Proposition 48; Racial stacking; Player distribution; Recruitment processes; Comparison between black and white starters and reserves.” Stereotypes can be a key factor to racial segregation. The racial positions that are given to people show that race is an important determinant in athletic competitions. In addition, this is a great source that will show how racial discrimination, with the use of stereotypes, could cause team members to interact in certain ways. It will give me information to help me elaborate on how racial segregation can occur because of discrimination. Discriminating against a certain ethnic group could cause the people who are being discriminated against to come together or in this case racially segregate themselves. When doing my interviews or surveys, these stereotypes that I see in this article will help me relate to the stereotypes that are said about U of I athletics.

### **"The Segregation Playing Position Hypothesis in Sport: An Alternative**

#### **Explanation."**

This article focuses on the racial segregation by playing position in sports. It suggests that involvement in specific sport roles by members of minority groups may be self-induced, are not assigned to them by open discrimination by white leaders within the sport system. McPherson describes “the socialization process for

individuals in minority groups appears to have a differential pattern and outcome. That is, differences in socializing agents, social structure and group-influenced personal traits and expectations exist and should be considered in any attempt to describe and explain black involvement in white social institutions such as sport.” With Blacks involvement in amateur and professional sports, it showed them extremely successful in a wide variety of sports, especially baseball, basketball, boxing, football and track and field. Though Blacks seem to be superior to Whites in sports there is not really any physical differences which could account for this supremacy. Alternatively, investigators have suggested that the success of the black in athletic competition is related to environmental forces, cultural influences, or sociological and psychological differences. Using this information will help me describe the differences amongst black and whites and how segregation occurs. Learning the influences on blacks in athletics will help contribute to my topic. I will be able to compare these differences to the information that I find in my research project. This article seems very beneficial for my research.

## "Athletic Department halftime booking causes controversy" by Nick Escobar

<http://media.www.dailyillini.com/media/storage/paper736/news/2005/03/16/News/Athletic.Department.Halftime.Booking.Causes.Controversy-894992.shtml>

### **Analysis of the Daily Illini article "Athletic Department halftime booking causes controversy"**

The “Athletic Department halftime booking causes controversy” article was about a

controversy with the SoulEssence singing group performing at the Women’s

Basketball half-time show. “The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics [(DIA)]

works to find entertaining acts for University sporting event halftime shows.

Problems do arise, though, which is what happened to the a cappella singing group

SoulEssence on Feb. 27.” Soul Essence was asked to perform at the University of

Illinois Women's Basketball game. Soul Essence is a minority, female a cappella

group. When the group received notification to perform for the Black History Month

for half time show they took on the task. “SoulEssence planned to perform the Negro

National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which contains the word "God." The group also planned to sing a song called "Thank You, Lord." However, they were later disappointed to find out they weren't going to be able to sing for the show because their songs involved God and that religious content could offend people. Thus, "The athletic department wanted them to sing "America the Beautiful," but the group decided to excuse themselves from the event."

This article displayed that racism existed within the performance of an African-American group performing for the half-time show. When reading in between the lines, it illustrated that the DIA's probably rejected the group from singing songs that represented the culture of African Americans. They just disregarded that it was African American History month and wanted the group to sing songs about America. "Aaron Troy, senior in business and business manager for the a cappella group The Other Guys, said that his group has had nothing but positive experiences working with the DIA" and that "[He'd] never talked to any other performers who have had problems with the DIA." The Other Guys group is mainly an all White a cappella group. But why would SoulEssence have to have complication with the DIA? The question that I would raise in this situation would be did race have to do with anything? This was not a good image on the behalf of the DIA. It looked as if they didn't want the culture of Africans represented so they used the excuse of "God" to make things seem non-racists. This shows that it could have possibly been segregating these individuals from their culture because it wasn't what the majority (Whites) wanted to hear on Black History Month. However, that's just a view and

that shouldn't be the case.

I will use this information to illustrate that sports is a controlled environment. It may also help me explain why there is a certain racial makeup of players on different sports. In this case the higher power seemed to be the DIA .They controlled the environment for the half time show. Thus, they created what entertainment they wanted to be displayed in the show. In my research project, I could relate how in sports there are coaches and they choose what type of players they want to put on their team. The way the DIA went about choosing the performers and how coaches go about choosing their players could be a linking as to how segregation exists in sports. In both cases it can be about who they want and what they feel will make the show the best in their eyes. It's interesting how majority of basketball players are black, but it was hard for a majority black group to perform at this event. Even yet it's interesting that years ago the majority of basketball players were White. As my research continues, I hope to come to come to a conclusion as to how race has changed within sports over time. Overall, racial factors can be a cause for segregation to occur in sports.

### **Survey Report-Segregation Within Sports**

I surveyed an athlete, and a diverse amount of people on the U of I campus such as: Blacks, Whites, and Latinos. The people I surveyed were both male and female as well. I wanted to gain as much information as I could from different people's perspectives. I had 11 questions total on my survey. Surveying fourteen people, my results were very interesting. There were sometimes when I surveyed a

person that they voiced their opinion on racial segregation because it seemed as if they had a strong view point on the topic. There was one person who felt that there was nothing the University could do about the way sports are configured. However, that person said that that the University places people in sport teams with people they can feel comfortable around. That seemed kind of contradicting. That type of reply would lead me to think that segregation happens because of a person's comfort zone within the sports teams. But what about when you look at sports outside of the team and how it has progressively changed from one race to another. Looking at basketball and football the racial construct of the team has changed throughout the years. However, I will be better able to view the racial construct when I analyze some picture documents of different sports.

When asking the question "how could U of I create more racial diversity within sports?" Three people came to the argument that coaches are looking for talent and the best are the best players and race shouldn't be an issue. Thus, the best talented people should play on the sport their talented at. Eight people came to the argument that U of I could recruit a variety of students from different schools to make sport teams more racially balanced. I asked "how many years would you estimate racial segregation within U of I athletics have been going on?" One person said, "In recent history zero, at least not on purpose" It intrigued me that they said "not on purpose" because that unconsciously seemed as if that person felt that segregation could have occurred within U of I sports. The real question is how does a person know whether or not something is done on purpose? The answer to this

question would have to come from the history of sports and the racial construct of segregation in society and class. I received a range from 10yrs to 70yrs to always with majority of the people who answered the question. A few of the people I surveyed probably didn't know much about the year span of racial segregation in sports. So, it would be difficult for me to go off the information I received for that question. So I hope to find out more information within the year span that racial segregation and the integration of diversity could have occurred on the U of I athletics.

Majority of people felt race "sometimes" affects how people view athletics on the U of I's campus. A greater part of the survey participants chose neither agree nor disagree when asked if they felt team members in basketball, football, or golf are discriminated against. However, the second answer that was close to the majority was that they agreed. These results show that people either didn't want to answer the question, or had no thought on it. Twelve people thought it was true that "segregation occurs because of a person's comfort zone" and that "segregation in sports happens because of what people think other races are capable of. On the last question majority of the people didn't agree or disagree to whether U of I had great amount of diversity within the sport teams. I hope to find whether U of I has a great amount of diversity within sports through the use of my interviews and analysis of picture documents. By doing so, I will see how diversity plays a role into how segregation can occur within sports. Overall, I felt that most of the participants in the survey agreed that segregation does in some manner occur in sports and it's up to me

to illustrate how that is so.

### **Pictures from the Archives**

Title: 1924 Varsity Football Team

Date: ca. 1924

Description: Team photograph, which was used for the 1926 Illinois yearbook, of the 1924 University of Illinois Varsity Football team featuring several notable individuals including Coach Bob Zuppke (3rd row, 2nd from right), Harold 'Red' Grange (2nd row, 1st on left), and Earl Britton (2nd row, 3rd from right).

<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/archives/archon/index.php?p=digitallibrary/digitalcontent&id=3205&q=football>

Title: Mens' basketball team warms up before first game in Assembly Hall (March 4, 1963, vs. Northwestern)

Date: Mar 4 1963

<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/archives/archon/index.php?p=digitallibrary/digitalcontent&id=536&q=basketball>

Title: 1924 Illinois Men's Golf Team

Date: ca. 1924

Description: 1924 Men's Varsity Golf Team which finished up the season as dual-meet champions.

<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/archives/archon/index.php?p=digitallibrary/digitalcontent&id=2769&q=golf>

### **Illinois Photo Gallery**

[http://fightingillini.cstv.com/view.gal?id=16828&template=player\\_gallery](http://fightingillini.cstv.com/view.gal?id=16828&template=player_gallery)

### Analysis of Picture Documents

When viewing pictures in the “Illinois Photo Gallery,” some pictures reminded me of the “Athletic Department halftime booking causes controversy” article that talked about the controversy with the SoulEssence singing group performing at the Women’s Basketball half-time show. It was interesting to view pictures of African Americans performing during the half time at the “2007 Illini Madness” basketball game, but they couldn’t perform on one of the biggest historical days for African Americans, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. However, as I continued to look through pictures the diversity of the team members began to show through the pictures. At the “view by sport” section of the “Illinois Photo Gallery” there’s a link that says “Men’s Basketball.” Just by looking through the men’s basketball pictures one can see that majority of the players are most likely African-American. There were a few White basketball players, but not as much as African-American players. Compared to the 1963 picture of the U of I basketball team I found in the Archives there was definitely a contrast in the racial makeup of the U of I basketball team. In this 1963 picture, the “men’s’ basketball team warms up before the first game in Assembly Hall (March 4, 1963, vs. Northwestern)” I see that majority of the basketball team members in this photo are White and there is only one African-American. By viewing the photos Segregation could have occurred because at one point in time African-Americans didn’t have the opportunity to play sports as much as Whites. Since there were few of African Americans on sports back in history they probably

clung together because they could have felt like the outcast on the team. Just how African-Americans probably felt like that Whites on the U of I team currently may feel the same way because they are now the minority on the basketball team.

After clicking this link and you go through the 2007 Illini Madness you should click “view other gallery” then “view other sport’ galleries” You should then see “view by sport” and click the link “Football” and then click and view the pictures in the “Dec. 27 2007 Illini hit and press conference” link. These pictures can show a more recent view of the racial content of the U of I Football team compared to the pictures of the football team in the previous years. In the Archives there was a team photograph, which was used for the 1926 Illinois yearbook, of the 1924 University of Illinois Varsity Football team. In this photograph the team was made up of All White players. However, currently it shows that the U of I Football has majority African-American players on the team. The reason for this change could be that as time went by integration of Blacks as well minorities begin to attend the University. This slow transition from White dominating the football field to African-Americans taking over may not just be based off skill, but it can be based off the preference of the coach or what society labels as good football team. This drastic difference of race is illustrated through the pictures that can be viewed through the links under the “Football” link. I will use this information to explain how the race in sports has changed throughout the years. African-American may have come to prove that they can excel in sports but I would hope to use my interviews to get better information that can provide valid reasoning behind my research.

When going back to “view by sport” click men’s golf then click on the section where it says “Olympia field Illni Invitational Awards Ceremony” in the right upper hand corner of the screen. These photos that are illustrated shows nothing really hasn’t changed much with the racial content of the golf team during the year s. Looking at the “Illinois Men's Golf Team” in 1924 majority of the players were White and looking at the Golf players in recent history the players still remain to consist of White players. In Golf segregation most likely wouldn’t exist because there doesn’t seem to be a different race on the team to segregate against. However, this can show like all these pictures, segregation can occur because of the environmental forces, cultural influences, or sociological and psychological differences that are taught to different races. When viewing golf I see it as a high class sport and it has to do with the business field. When looking at the work society most people are influenced, at least I was told that you should learn how to play golf or tennis for business purposes in my sociology class.

Overall, these pictures illustrate that segregation in sports has to do with environmental changes with race, class, and the history of the racial make-up of sports. I have come to a conclusion that I can’t determine the exact time segregation has been going on in sports on the U of I campus because it’s the way a person looks at the situation. If a person sees that in 1924 U of I didn’t give African-Americans the opportunity to join the football or basketball team let alone attend the school, which can be a mark as to how segregation could have occurred. This reason would show that Whites were segregating African-Americans as well as minorities from

having the opportunity to join such activities. However, another person could say that segregation has occurred ever since the first African-American joined a basketball team or football team. It's interesting how one African-American on one team can change the whole racial make-up of a team for years to come.

#### Interview questions

1. Have you experienced racial segregation with in sports?
2. How do you view racial segregation in sports on the U of I campus?
3. Do you think a person's background has to do with why racial segregation could happen in sports?
4. How do you think coaches go about picking their players, is it solely on skills or do you think race is involved with the selection?
5. Do you think the university looks a variety of students to recruit for their team or are they just certain schools that they recruit from?
6. If you were to describe the sports on the U of I campus, how would you describe the race of basketball, football, and golf teams' members on each sport and why do you think that is the case?
7. What would you say is the racial makeup of the track team?
8. Seeing how in 1924 or so majority basketball and football players at the U of I were White what do you think has changed?

#### **Interview**

I interviewed two people from different sports teams and racial backgrounds. Being that they both were involved in sports on the U of I campus, I thought it would be nice to hear their opinions on race segregation in sports. When interviewing these individual I received different viewpoints as well as similarities on how race

segregation exist in the U of I sport teams.

Interview one:

When conducting my first interview, I was looking to hear interesting opinions on the questions that I was preparing to ask. In addition, I was hoping to learn something new or gain some type of new outlook through a different point of view. As I began to interview my first interviewee, the first question that I asked was, “have you experienced racial segregation with in sports?” He replied by stating yes and no. Being that he was involved on one of the U of I sports teams he said that during practice he doesn’t experience racial segregation. However, “outside of his sport [he] never really hangs out with African-Americans, but during practice he tends to hang with them.” A question that rose in my mind is how you can consider being a part of a team hanging out. Being a part of a team seemed more like control environment for conversing with a different race more than hanging out and I would assume that most people on sports team socialize with one another because they are encouraged to work together. Because in order to hang out with someone I would think that you would have to go somewhere to do so. The real issue at hand is for a person to step outside of their comfort zone and socialize with a different race because it was that person choice to do so. He also stated that he feels teammates get along because they have something in common, but when it comes to outside of his sport he doesn’t feel that people of different races would have much in common. Thus, he stated he felt that people probably automatically assume that a person doesn’t have things in common. I asked “how do you view racial segregation in

sports on the U of I campus?" He said, "that it only happens socially don't witness it a lot." The way he described racial segregation happening in sports was that "African- Americans hung out with African-Americans and Whites hung out with Whites" An example he gave me was that when looking on one of his teammate's facebook page there were pictures of other teammates who were on the same sport as him, but the people in the picture were all Black. This showed that White teammates weren't invited to whatever event these African-Americans were doing.

As I continued to interview I asked him "Do you think a person's background has to do with why racial segregation could happen in sports?" He replied, "yes, because if you come from a more diverse background you could be more likely to hang out with a different race because you feel more comfortable." Another question I asked was "how do you think coaches go about picking their players, is it solely on skills or do you think race is involved with the selection? He personally said, "solely on skills." "They look at statistics from competitions, don't think race is a factor"

Asking "If you were to describe the sports on the U of I campus, how would you describe the race of basketball, football, and golf teams' members on each sport and why do you think that is the case?", I received a statement that, "football team is half Black and White, basketball team mostly Black, and golf team all White" I also received a layout of how the positions are given to different players on the team and I will elaborate on this positioning in my research project. When I asked, "Seeing how in 1924 or so majority basketball and football players at the U of I were White what do you think has changed? He believed that African-Americans were giving the

opportunity to play sports such as basketball and football and they proved they were good in the sport. He also stated that “clearly there was a time where they were better” thus, his opinion would make me believe that this racial change occurred because African-Americans at some point in time proved they had better skills in sports. However, he didn’t think race was involved with the change. It seemed as if my interviewee believed that a person’s comfort zone and background history would cause racial segregation to occur in sports more than anything.

Interview two:

As I move on to my other interview I began by asking the same questions. “Have you experienced racial segregation within sports?” He said, “yeah, everybody gets along, but sometimes during dinner a lot of White players sit together. It’s not something that you would do on purpose.” With the last sentence of his statement it leads me to believe that people don’t do things on purpose, but they do things by habit. This is similar to what my first interviewee said when stating that “[he] never really hangs out with African-Americans, but during practice he tends to hang with them.” However, my second interviewee stated that he hung out with teammates of a different race outside of football. I found it interesting when he said that during practice, when the team goes on break teammates tend to socialize with people of their own race. This is where a person’s comfort zone and habit would kick into place. I asked “how do you view racial segregation in sports on the U of I campus?” and he began to go into detail by stating, “Most people view football and basketball players as the Black athletes. Basketball has 3 or 4 White players and they hang out

with the Black players.” He believed that “the basketball team really doesn’t segregate themselves because it’s only 13 to 14 basketball players and there around each other more.” However, when talking about football he said that “the football team has about one hundred players” thus, they’re not around each other as much because there are too many people to converse with on the team. That would make it more likely that racial segregation would occur on the football team than on the basketball because the basketball players really don’t have much of a choice to choose who they would want to hang out with. When it came down to golf, he said that with “golf only being White players it’s hard to have segregation.”

I asked “How do you think coaches go about picking their players, is it solely on skills or do you think race is involved with the selection?” He said, “both, some coaches might not want to admit it. Of course you’re going after the best, but some coaches don’t give the credibility to White skilled position players such as wide receivers, running back, and defensive back, and consist of speed and agility. White skilled player don’t get looked at because they feel he’s not fast enough. White players are usually quarterbacks and lineman. There’s not that many White skilled players on the U of I team. The White skilled players on the team consist of 2 defensive backs, 2 running backs, 3 receivers and none of them play.” I felt that was interesting how African-American may have come to prove that they can excel in sports, but now it looks as though Whites have to prove that they can excel in order to make the team. Asking “Do you think the university looks a variety of students to recruit for their team or are they just certain schools that they recruit from?” He said,

“They recruit from a variety of schools such as public, catholic, and private school. School wise it was kind of diverse.” When I got to the last question and asked, “Seeing how in 1924 or so majority basketball and football players at the U of I were White what do you think has changed?” He stated, “The opportunity that the African-Americans had in the 70’s is what has changed. In the 70’s, teams were still majority White. People saw Blacks as more skilled and they were able to get the opportunity to go to the University” He had some of the same answers as my first interviewee as well as other interesting information that I will discuss in my research report. I feel as if my second interviewee believed a person’s comfort zone, the amount of different races on the team, a person’s background history, and positions given by coaches would contribute to why racial segregation occurs in sports.

I hope to use all this information that I have gained from these interviews and elaborate on these certain topics I feel my interviewees expressed to help explain why racial segregation occurs.

**Discuss:                    Why Racial Segregation Occurs Within Sports?**  
**Introduction:**

When looking at the U of I athletics most people would assume that sport team members work together, communicate, and have strong unity. However, would anyone admit to seeing racial segregation within sports? How would this unity describe the racial segregation that seems to occur

within the U of I sports. During the process of research on why racial segregation occurs in sports, I conducted different research reports to help me explain my topic. My research reports consisted of an annotated bibliography of journal and IDEALS sources, analysis of public text, a survey, interviews, and an analysis of picture documents. These different, but very valuable research methods helped me get closer to defining why racial segregation occurs in sports. I will mainly focus on the racial segregation that occurs amongst Whites and African Americans in U of I sport teams.

There are 6 themes that I feel will help explain why racial segregation happens within sports on the U of I campus. With the use of these 6 themes I will elaborate on how I found that racial segregation has occurred in sports with the information provided by my research reports. These 6 themes are: comfort zone/socialization, class and opportunity, background history, U of I sports before and after, stereotypes-positions, and lastly racial segregation, which will be what brings together the previous themes to form the conclusion. I hope to answer question like, what happens in sports that some people fail to realize. Do these players actually communicate with one another outside of the sport? Is race a factor in sports? Why do different sports seem to consist of different racial groups? What intrigues me the most is whether or not these different sports display racial segregation and how this is so. At the end of this research project hopefully all these themes that I will provide will bring us to a valid

conclusion as to why racial segregation occurs in U of I sports such as basketball, football, and golf.

### **Themes**

1. Class and Opportunity
2. Background History
3. Comfort Zone/Socialization
4. U of I sports Before and After
5. Stereotypes-Positions
6. Racial Segregation (conclusion)

### **Class and Opportunity**

A person's class and opportunity contributes to why racial segregation occurs within U of I sports such as basketball, football, and golf. When researching how racial segregation occurs in sports on the U of I team, I came across an article that helped explain a deeper view on why it occurs. The research I did for my annotated bibliography of journal and IDEALS sources lead me to find Robert Gregg's article, "Personal Calvaries:Sports in Philadelphia's African-American Communities, 1920-60." This article describes the relationship between sports and community. If a person looks at the different communities in society a person is usually ranked by class. According to Gregg, "institutions...were established to help channel players into these teams."(2). Instead of focusing on famous athletes such as Jackie Roberson, this article wants to provide information about the communities of where these athletes have

come from. It wants to discuss the unwritten history of the lowest class society. This article seems to explain sports as a sense of hope for a lower class community. Even though this article provides information from a long time ago, there are still racial segregation issues that are involved with class currently. With the help of this article I can display how segregation links to society and class. When looking at sports according to class, golf would represent the high class community and basketball and football would represent the middle and lower class communities. Usually, in the United States the high class represents a majority of White people with a few African-Americans, while the middle class represents both African-Americans and Whites; the lower class usually represents African-Americans and a few Whites. These sports that people of different races play are usually the sports their communities offered to them the most or what they were taught to play. Depending on a person's class could depend on the sports that were offered to that particular person.

According to Greg, "engaging in sports necessitated that [African-Americans] come to understand their class, gender, and racial position in society."(1). Being that majority of our society consist of White people everything pretty much is given to Whites because of White privilege and that includes sport opportunity. However, in the past and currently "sports played a vital role in bringing together black communities. Although the sporting institutions were dominated by leading members of the community, the participants and many of the most successful sportsmen and women

came from poor backgrounds, and sport became their avenue to acceptance and prestige within(certainly not outside) the community” (Gregg 1-2). This statement implies that sports brought about success for lower class minorities in their community. However, even though they might be viewed as having a good reputation in their community that doesn’t mean they are viewed that way in society because, the “leading members of the community (Whites representing the high class)would always seem to have the upper hand. This could explain why in today’s sports coaches (“leading members”), whom are mostly White, are over both men’s basketball and football teams, which mostly consists of African-Americans as the successful players (“sportsmen”).

I interviewed two people from different sports teams and racial backgrounds. Mike was White on the U of I track team and William was an African-American on the U of I football team. Being that they both were involved in sports on the U of I campus, I thought it would be nice to hear their opinions on race segregation in sports. When interviewing these individual I received different viewpoints as well as similarities on how racial segregation exist in the U of I sport teams.

Through the use of my interviews I was able to see how, mainly, opportunity was given to African-Americans on the U of I basketball and football team. When it came to the U of I golf team I was able to make an inference on how it applies to didn’t racial groups and how it represents class. I interviewed Mike on April 2, 2008. In my interview I asked, “Seeing

how in 1924 or so majority basketball and football players at the U of I were White, what do you think has changed? Mike believed that African-Americans were given the opportunity to play sports such as basketball and football and they proved they were good in the sport. He also stated that “clearly there was a time where they were better” thus, his opinion would make me believe that this racial change occurred because African-Americans at some point in time proved they had better skills in sports. However, he didn’t think race was involved with the change. However, I think differently and this racial change will be better explained with the use of the background history theme.

When interviewing William on April 3, 2008, I got to the last question and asked, “Seeing how in 1924 or so majority basketball and football players at the U of I were White what do you think has changed?” William stated, “The opportunity that the African-Americans had in the 70’s is what has changed. In the 70’s, teams were still majority White. People saw Blacks as more skilled and they were able to get the opportunity to go to the University” This opportunity that African-Americans received as well as minorities was an additional factor as to how segregation started to occur in sports. For example, I assume that during the 1920’s or so most African-Americans didn’t even have the opportunity to attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This opportunity that wasn’t given to African-Americans as well as minorities is segregation in itself. However, with African-Americans slowly integrating into a majority White basketball and

football team it's reasonable to say that racial segregation between different races began to occur when the opportunity of having different races was presented on the teams.

When it came down to golf, William said that with "golf only being White players it's hard to have segregation." This statement triggered in my mind that a person's class could be involved with the sport golf. In today's working society most professional business careers involve a person being able to play golf as well as tennis. These professional business men usually rank within a high class category. Focusing on golf, most business trips are known for having friendly meetings over a game of golf. It's rare that you see African-American men participating in this sport. It's also rare that you see a large amount of African-American men in high positions in the business field. Thus, golf could be a reflection of how a person's class can affect the sports a person plays and how sports and society is racially segregated by class.

### **Background History**

Under the class and opportunity theme, I talked about how William said "people saw Blacks as more skilled and they were able to get the opportunity to go to the University." This skillfulness of African-Americans didn't just come from anywhere it was because of the way they were brought up, which is also known as a person's background history. A typical White person probably lives in a nice community with a lot of opportunities presented to them. However, when it comes to African-

Americans as well as minorities most of them don't have stable communities that support them with a lot opportunities. Thus, they way Whites and African-Americans view sports and they way they interact with one another on the U of I sport teams can be seen differently through their eyes because of the environments they were brought up around.

Another article I found when researching for my annotated bibliography of journal and IDEALS sources was, "The Segregation Playing Position Hypothesis in Sport: An Alternative Explanation." This article focuses on the racial segregation by playing position in sports. It suggests that involvement in specific sport roles by members of minority groups may be self-induced and are not assigned to them by open discrimination by white leaders within the sport system. McPherson describes "the socialization process for individuals in minority groups appears to have a differential pattern and outcome. That is, differences in socializing agents, social structure and group-influenced personal traits and expectations exist and should be considered in any attempt to describe and explain black involvement in white social institutions such as sports" (3). With Blacks involvement in amateur and professional sports, it showed them extremely successful in a wide variety of sports, especially baseball, basketball, boxing, football and track and field. Though Blacks seem to be superior to Whites in sports there is not really any physical differences which could account for this supremacy. "Alternatively, investigators have suggested that the success of the black in athletic competition is related to

environmental forces, cultural influences, or sociological and psychological differences” (McPherson 3). For example, in black communities it is more likely that sports such as basketball and football were surrounded by African-Americans as an influential sport to help African’s make it in society. Using this information will help me describe the differences amongst black and whites and how segregation occurs. For instance, “on August, 1968, questionnaires were completed by 96 white athletes and 17 black athletes who were competing in the Olympic Track and Field trials at Lake Tahoe. The differences between the two groups [were as follows:] significant others [help influence black athletes.] It was noted that compared to white athletes, the black athletes:

(a) before high school, received more encouragement (positive sanctions) from the mother than the father, thereby suggestion that matriarchal domination is present; (b) before high school, considered their peers to be most influential as role models; (c) in high school, received the most encouragement to participate in sport from track coaches and peers; (d) more frequently reported that they had an idol in high school and that the idol was a successful track and field athlete etc...(McPherson 6 ).

This is an example of how most African-Americans are influenced in their communities to participate in sports compared to their White peers who are more so influenced to get an educated career. Even though there are White athletes one can see that majority of athletes are considered African-American. That same visual can be seen when looking at the U

of I basketball team. Learning the influences on blacks in athletics show that “The social environment in which the black is socialized exerts a profound influence on his life-style, including his recreational pursuits. [It’s] suggested that that majority of blacks are forced to develop their athletic skill in a sports ghetto. [It’s also] reported that ghetto youth are being deprived of the opportunity to establish worthy leisure habits” (McPherson 3). This statement represents the fact that people have these habits because of the environment their place into and even though this is information that was research years ago, it still applies to our time period today.

When my interviewee Mike stated that “clearly there was a time where they [African Americans] were better,” I was able to find some information that provided how some African-Americans entered the sports scene. There was a time where African-Americans didn’t have the opportunities as they do today and this can be illustrated with the article by Gregg. I found interesting information on the history on how African-Americans and sports. The article stated:

African Americans also played American football in nineteenth century Philadelphia. Lincoln University was famous for an undefeated record in 1898. However, no black football clubs existed in the city until the formation of clubs at the YMCA and the Settle Houses in the 1920’s. Instead, individual African Americans were accepted onto and recruited for mostly white school and college teams. Black participation in sport during the

nineteenth century, then, had some similarities with the situation today. In certain sports, boxing and football in particular, the skills of black sportsmen were beginning to be celebrated and colleges and promoters attempted to benefit by including them on their teams” (Gregg 5).

This information implies that because African-Americans were being viewed as better sportsmen in different sports, they were able to be accepted into colleges and by promoters because of their skills. African-Americans were excluded from sports for so long that it's no wonder that they are so successful. Being that they had to prove they were great in order to make a team still applies in today's world. Different races are taught to support one another and stay together, but if the people they are supporting is the same racial make-up of them, then it could be difficult for them to adjust to stepping out to communicate with different races. Thus, racial segregation occurs because of this unity or social factors that a different race may have gained from their background.

### **Comfort Zone/Socialization**

A person's comfort zone involves common interest, how a person was learned to socialize with different races, and habitual characteristics such as: hanging out with a certain group of people. When looking at the basketball, football and golf team, a person's comfort zone has plays a part on how team members interact with one another as well as segregate themselves from one another. Conducting my first interview, I was looking to hear interesting opinions on the questions that I was preparing to ask. As

I began to interview Mike on April 2, 2008, the first question that I asked was, "have you experienced racial segregation with in sports?" He replied by stating yes and no. Being that he was involved on one of the U of I sports teams he said that during practice he doesn't experience racial segregation. However, "outside of his sport [he] never really hangs out with African-Americans, but during practice he tends to hang with them." A question that appeared in my mind is how can a person consider being a part of a team hanging out? Being a part of a team seemed more like a controlled environment for conversing with a different race more than hanging out. I would assume that most people on sports teams socialize with one another because they are encouraged to work together because in order to hang out with someone you would have to go somewhere besides practice to do so. The real issue at hand is for a person to step outside of their comfort zone and socialize with a different race because that person chooses to do so. Mike also stated that he feels teammates get along because they have something in common, but when it comes to outside of his sport he doesn't feel that people of different races would have much in common. Thus, he stated he felt that people probably automatically assume that a person of a different race doesn't have things in common with them. Automatically assuming how a person character is where a person can go wrong. However, this can be fixed by stepping outside of your comfort zone and making an effort to get to know someone rather than assuming what a person's character is already about.

As I moved on to my second interview with William on April 3, 2008, I began by asking the same questions. "Have you experienced racial segregation within sports?" He said, "yeah, everybody gets along, but sometimes during dinner a lot of White players sit together. It's not something that you would do on purpose." With the last sentence of his statement it leads me to believe that people don't do things on purpose, but they do things by habit. This is similar to what my first interviewee said when stating that "[he] never really hangs out with African-Americans, but during practice he tends to hang with them." However, my second interviewee stated that he hung out with teammates of a different race outside of football. I found it interesting when he said that during practice, when the team goes on break teammates tend to socialize with people of their own race. This is where a person's comfort zone and habit would kick into place. I asked "how do you view racial segregation in sports on the U of I campus?" and he began to go into detail by stating, "Most people view football and basketball players as the Black athletes. Basketball has 3 or 4 White players and they hang out with the Black players." He believed that "the basketball team really doesn't segregate themselves because it's only 13 to 14 basketball players and there around each other more." However, when talking about football he said that "the football team has about one hundred players" thus, they're not around each other as much because there are too many people to converse with on the team. That would make it more likely that racial segregation would occur on the football team than

on the basketball because the basketball players really don't have much of a choice to choose who they would want to hang out with. When it came down to golf, he said that with "golf only being White players it's hard to have segregation."

During the time span of March 28th to March 29th of 2008, I surveyed an athlete, and a diverse amount of people such as: Blacks, Whites, and Latinos. I surveyed a few Black and White Students who were in the Busey and Evans lounge. I mainly received feedback from females in this dormitory. I also went to late night at ISR to survey students and the students who took my survey there were Latinos, Whites and a few Blacks. I'm assuming that some of these students were of different grade levels as well because of the random surveying I conducted. I wanted to gain as much information as I could from different people's perspectives. I had 11 questions total on my survey. Surveying fourteen people, my results were very interesting. There were sometimes when I surveyed a person that they voiced their opinion on racial segregation because it seemed as if they had a strong view point on the topic. There was one person who felt that there was nothing the University could do about the way sports are configured. However, that person said that that the University places people in sport teams with people they can feel comfortable around. That seemed kind of contradicting. That type of reply would lead me to think that segregation happens because of a person's comfort zone within the sports teams. Sharrell Hibbler explains in the article, "In Which University Spaces Are

Students More Likely to Interact Across Racial/Ethnic Lines?” the racial interaction of students at a university and why people of different races choose to hang around a certain crowd of people. According to Hibbler, through the process of “six interviews and observations in different university buildings, the her study finds that both common interests and certain university spaces encourage interaction between people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds” (Hibbler). Discussing the acknowledgment that students can have strong ethnic solidarity bonds and the idea of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic community shows why segregation can occur. This information provided in this article also explains why racial segregation can occur within sports as well. For example, if the university didn’t encourage different races to be involved in the football team, then Whites and African-Americans would probably not have the opportunity to socialize with a different race when it comes to sports. However, because outside the sport team teammates of a different race hang out with people of their own race more often, this teammate interaction in and outside of sports can be due to the common interest they have with that person.

### **U of I Sports Before and After**

Racial changes that have occurred over time can be a contribution as to why racial segregation occurs within sports. In my research I analyzed Nick Escobar’s article “Athletic Department halftime booking causes controversy” in the Daily Illini. Escobar’s article was about a controversy with the SoulEssence singing group performing at the

Women's Basketball half-time show. "The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics [(DIA)] works to find entertaining acts for University sporting event halftime shows. Problems do arise, though, which is what happened to the a cappella singing group SoulEssence on Feb. 27." Soul Essence was asked to perform at the University of Illinois Women's Basketball game. Soul Essence is a minority, female a cappella group. When the group received notification to perform for the Black History Month for half time show they took on the task. "SoulEssence planned to perform the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which contains the word "God." The group also planned to sing a song called "Thank You, Lord." However, they were later disappointed to find out they weren't going to be able to sing for the show because their songs involved God and that religious content could offend people. Thus, "The athletic department wanted them to sing "America the Beautiful," but the group decided to excuse themselves from the event.

This article displayed that racism existed within the performance of an African-American group performing for the half-time show. When reading in between the lines, it illustrated that the DIA's probably rejected the group from singing songs that represented the culture of African Americans. They just disregarded that it was African American History month and wanted the group to sing songs about America. "Aaron Troy, senior in business and business manager for the a cappella group The Other Guys, said that his group has had nothing but positive experiences

working with the DIA” and that “[He’d] never talked to any other performers who have had problems with the DIA.” The Other Guys group is mainly an all White a cappella group. But why would SoulEssence have to have complication with the DIA? The question that I would raise in this situation would be did race have to do with anything? This was not a good image on the behalf of the DIA. It looked as if they didn’t want the culture of Africans represented so they used the excuse of “God” to make things seem non-racists. This shows that it could have possibly been segregating these individuals from their culture because it wasn’t want the majority (Whites) wanted to hear on Black History Month. However, that’s just a view and that shouldn’t be the case.

This information illustrates that sports is a controlled environment. Escobar’s article helps explain why there is a certain racial makeup of players on different sports. In the article, the higher power seemed to be the DIA .They controlled the environment for the half time show. Thus, they created what entertainment they wanted to be displayed in the show. In sports there are coaches and they choose what type of players they want to put on their team. The way the DIA went about choosing the performers and how coaches go about choosing their players could be a linking as to how segregation exists in sports. In both cases it can be about who they want and what they feel will make the show the best in their eyes. It’s interesting how majority of basketball players are black, but it was hard for a majority black group to perform at this event. Even yet it’s interesting that

years ago the majority of basketball players were White. As my research continued, I hoped to come to a conclusion as to how race has changed within sports over time. Overall, racial factors can be a cause for segregation to occur in sports and the information I found when researching picture documents helped explain how this racial change occurred.

When viewing pictures in the “Illinois Photo Gallery,” some pictures reminded me of Escobar’s article that talked about the controversy with the SoulEssence singing group performing at the Women’s Basketball half-time show. It was interesting to view pictures of African Americans performing during the half time at the “2007 Illini Madness” basketball game, but they couldn’t perform on one of the biggest historical days for African Americans, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. However, as I continued to look through pictures the diversity of the team members began to show through the pictures. At the “view by sport” section of the “Illinois Photo Gallery” there’s a link that says “Men’s Basketball.” Just by looking through the men’s basketball pictures one can see that majority of the players are most likely African–American. There were a few White basketball players, but not as much as African-American players. Compared to the 1963 picture of the U of I basketball team I found in the Archives there was definitely a contrast in the racial makeup of the U of I basketball team. In this 1963 picture, the “men’s basketball team warms up before the first game in Assembly Hall (March 4, 1963, vs. Northwestern)” I see that majority of the basketball

team members in this photo are White and there is only one African-American. By viewing the photos, it seems that segregation could have occurred because at one point in time African-Americans didn't have the opportunity to play sports as much as Whites. Since there were a few of African Americans on sports back in history they probably clung together because they could have felt like the outcast on the team. Just how African-Americans probably felt like that Whites on the U of I team currently may feel the same way because they are now the minority on the basketball team.

When looking back at my survey I asked the question "how could U of I create more racial diversity within sports?" Three people came to the argument that coaches are looking for talent and the best are the best players and race shouldn't be an issue. Thus, the best talented people should play on the sport they are talented at. Eight people came to the argument that U of I could recruit a variety of students from different schools to make sport teams more racially balanced. I asked "how many years would you estimate racial segregation within U of I athletics have been going on?" One person said, "In recent history zero, at least not on purpose" It intrigued me that they said "not on purpose" because that unconsciously seemed as if that person felt that segregation could have occurred within U of I sports. The real question is how does a person know whether or not something is done on purpose? The answer to this question would have to come from the history of sports and the racial construct of

segregation in society and class. I received a range from 10yrs to 70yrs to always with majority of the people who answered the question. A few of the people I surveyed probably didn't know much about the year span of racial segregation in sports. So, it would be difficult for me to go off the information I received for that question.

Majority of people felt race "sometimes" affects how people view athletics on the U of I's campus. A greater part of the survey participants chose neither agree nor disagree when asked if they felt team members in basketball, football, or golf are discriminated against. However, the second answer that was close to the majority was that they agreed. These results show that people either didn't want to answer the question, or had no thought on it. Twelve people thought it was true that "segregation occurs because of a person's comfort zone" and that "segregation in sports happens because of what people think other races are capable of. On the last question majority of the people didn't agree or disagree to whether U of I had great amount of diversity within the sport teams. With the use of my interviews and analysis of picture documents it helped me discover whether U of I has a great amount of diversity within sports. The picture documents that I talked about early gives a visual of the racial diversity in basketball, football, and golf teams currently and also a different time frame of the racial change. In addition, the interview information I provided previously in the comfort zone section of my paper discusses how diversity is represented in the sports on the U of I campus. Overall, I felt that most of

the participants in the survey agreed that segregation does in some manner occur in U of I sports.

### **Stereotypes-Positioning**

When people look at sports, a person's race in relation to that sport may appear in their minds. Most people would assume that basketball players are majority African-American and that golf players are mainly White. However, why is this so? The reason can be due to the stereotypes people have for a certain race. People may believe a certain race to be superior to another when their involved in sports on the U of I campus as well as sports in society. When reading the article "Racial Position Segregation" by Richard Lewis Jr., it discusses changes in the nature of racial discrimination in intercollegiate football in the United States. It talks about how "racial stacking refers to situations in which African American players compete for peripheral positions whereas central positions are reserved for White players. Unequal opportunity implies that the entrance requirements into college football and more rigorous for African American athletes than for their White counterparts when athletic ability is equal." His article gave me vital information that helped me uncover how stereotypes can affect teammates positioning as well as how it links up to racial segregation in sports. (Lewis 431-432)

In Lewis article it stated that Black football players are overrepresented in peripheral positions and White players are overrepresented in central positions. In more explanation:

Loy and McElvogue...asserted that racial discrimination in professional sports is positively related to the centrality of position. For football, they determined that for the offense, center, guard, and quarterback are central positions. These positions require the occupant to exhibit the personal qualities of poise, refined athletic skills and the ability to make rational decisions. The remaining offensive positions of tackle, flanker back (slot-back, wingback), running back, fullback, tight end, and wide receiver are peripheral. In contrast, these peripheral positions are rarely mentioned with respect to team leadership. Rather, peripheral positions are characterized by strength, quickness, and aggressiveness (physical attributes) (Lewis 433).

“Peripheral positions” are usually played by majority Black athletes while central positions are most likely played by White athletes. This racial difference shows a sense of “racial stacking”: “Racial stacking refers to situations in which racial group members are relegated to specific team roles and excluded from competing for others” (Lewis 432-433). This statement reflects what William stated when I asked “How do you think coaches go about picking their players, is it solely on skills or do you think race is involved with the selection?” He said, “both, some coaches might not want to admit it. Of course you’re going after the best, but some coaches don’t give the credibility to White skilled position players such as wide receivers, running back, and defensive back, and consist of speed and agility. White skilled player don’t get looked at because they feel he’s

not fast enough. White players are usually quarterbacks and lineman.

There's not that many White skilled players on the U of I team. The White skilled players on the team consist of 2 defensive backs, 2 running backs, 3 receivers and none of them play." It's interesting how William thinks of the positions African-American's play as skilled, which would be considered the "peripheral positions", where as the article gave a better recognition to the "central positions." Stereotypes can be a key factor to racial segregation and these stereotypes can also explain how racial segregation occurs in sports.

The racial positions that are given to people show that race is an important determinant in athletic competitions. In addition, this is a great source that shows how racial discrimination occurs with the use of stereotypes because certain people assume that all African-Americans are fast and according to Lewis Jr.'s article, I can infer that White players would be seen as having leadership roles because of their position in the game. This statement makes it seem as if African-Americans aren't good enough for leadership roles however, they are well known to be used for their physical attributes. Discriminating against a certain ethnic group could cause the people who are being discriminated against to come together or in this case racially segregate themselves. Since William had acknowledged previously that "most people view football and basketball players as the Black athletes," it shows that these stereotypes that I see in this article relate to the stereotypes that are said about U of I athletics.

Barry D. McPherson article, "The Segregation Playing Position Hypothesis in Sport: An Alternative Explanation" was very interesting. With Blacks involvement in amateur and professional sports, it showed them extremely successful in a wide variety of sports, especially baseball, basketball, boxing, football and track and field. Though Blacks seem to be superior to Whites in sports there is not really any physical differences which could account for this supremacy. "An open letter to Donovan McNabb" by Kevin Spitz addresses Mr. McNabb so he can explain the statements that were made when it come to sports in terms of football as well as race. "In 2003 after the Eagles began 0-2, Rush Limbaugh, who was then working for ESPN on "Sunday NFL Countdown" said, "I think what we've had here is a little social concern in the NFL. The media have been very desirous that a black quarterback do well."In fact, Mr. McNabb, when black quarterback Vince Young was asked whether he was treated differently for his skin color, he said, "I really feel like myself; black or white quarterbacks, we all go through something because that is the life of a quarterback. You have to be able to handle all the pressure and you have to be able to handle the losses and you have to be able to handle the media saying this about you...If you can't handle it, then you have to get off that position and go play something else"(Spitz). From the type of statement, it seems as if even though stereotypes exist a person has to deal with them and manage to play their positions anyway. However, the positions that Blacks and Whites are given in sports show how racial

segregation is a factor in sports. According to Lewis:

Another possible explanation for racial stacking posits that scouts, recruiters, and coaches may hold racist stereotypes regarding both White and Black players. They may feel that Blacks tend to be poor leaders, do not think quickly enough, or do not perform well under pressure. Blacks are recruited for starting roles whereas Whites are recruited for both starting and back-up roles. Black athletes are generally not allowed entrance into collegiate football on the basis of being an “average” player. (435-436)

These type of stereotypes illustrated in that statement are reasons why racial segregation occurs within U of I sports. African Americans are seen to have high skills in football and basketball however; their intelligence is downplayed in contrast to their White counterparts. These stereotypes can affect the African-American players and cause them to separate from Whites on the team because they may not feel they are on the same level or they just tend to stick together and that’s vice versa for Whites. Stereotypes defiantly contribute to why racial segregation can occur within U of I’s football and basketball teams. It’s just a person choice on whether or not they want to admit it.

### **Racial Segregation**

Does racial segregation occur in U of I sports? I would say yes, but it occurs more so with football. These themes I’ve provided all represent and explain the factors that play a role as to why racial segregation occurs within the U of I sports. Looking at the class and opportunity theme it shows

that depending on a person's class could depend on the sports that were offered to that particular person. With African-Americans slowly integrating into a majority White basketball and football team it's reasonable to say that racial segregation between different races began to occur when the opportunity of having different races was presented on the teams. Shown in the background history theme, background history of different races can be another reason why racial segregation could occur within U of I sports. Most African-Americans are influenced in their communities to participate in sports compared to their White peers who are more so influenced to get an educated career. Since a person grew up in a different social environment it could affect the way they interact with others. Thus, segregating themselves from others could occur because of the habit of hanging around their own race due to their background history. Comfort zone/socialization theme is a factor in racial segregation because a person may feel that don't have much in common with a person of a different race, they may choose to segregate themselves. Thus, they hang around the people they are use to, which would most likely consist of people of their own race.

U of I sports before and after theme shows that racial segregation has been going on for years. However, when viewing the photos, it also illustrates and explains that racial segregation could have occurred because at one point in time African-Americans didn't have the opportunity to play sports as much as Whites. Since there were a few of African Americans on sports back in history they probably clung together because

they could have felt like the outcast on the team. Lastly the stereotypes-positions theme shows how stereotypes can affect the positions Whites and Blacks have in sports. Ultimately, stereotypes segregate different races into certain categories. Thus, those teammates who are segregated by position would most likely hang around those who are in their same category as well. To prove that my research was valid it would be nice to interview a coach to see how they feel about the topic. Yet, that's something that could be possibly done in the future. However, overall I feel my results all tie in together to explain why racial segregation occurs within U of I sports.

**EUI Links:** Hibbler, Sharrell. "In Which University Spaces Are Students More Likely to Interact Across Racial/Ethnic Lines?" Diversity on Campus/Equity and Access. 15 Dec. 2005. 13 March 2008. <<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1900>>. IDEALS. U of I Moodle.

Lemus, Sergio. "Racial Climate and Spatial Segregation: The Experience of Minority Students." Diversity on Campus/Equity and Access. 13 Feb 2008. 13 March 2008. <<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3594>>. IDEALS. U of I Moodle.

**Reflect:** The EUI research process was very beneficial to helping me learn how to conduct an ethnography research project. The most difficult process in conducting this research project was to look up the sources I needed to support my research. After I found everything I needed to support my research topic, everything else seemed to go smoothly. The research reports I conducted were great steps to help me configure the main research project. My research reports consisted of an annotated bibliography of journal and IDEALS sources, analysis of public text, a survey, interviews, and an

analysis of picture documents. The feedback that I received on my research reports from my comment group helped me create and think of different ideas as to "why racial segregation occurs within U of I sports."

Being that most of the work for this class was done over the internet with the use of Moodle, the online environment was a nice way to communicate with my comment group and it kept me focused on completing my research reports. What surprised me the most was how my research reports helped create majority of my research project. In addition, I was amazed at all the valuable information I learned from the research reports I conducted on my topic.

Conducting the surveys and interviews helped me receive different outlooks as to why racial segregation occurs within U of I sports. I found that the consent form process, that I had to have students who took my surveys as well as the people I interviewed sign, was quite an easy process. I'm very proud that I was able to create a well written research project on "Why Racial Segregation Occurs Within U of I Sports?" I will possibly archive my work because, I feel that it was well researched and it can help future students if they were to research a topic that was in relation to my research project.