
The Stereotypes About Race And Gender In Sports

Despite the idea that neither race nor gender can make a person being inferior or dominated by others, many people still fosters traditional stereotypes relating to racism and sexism in order to create cleavages and discrimination in our world today. One of the most common areas where gender and racial stereotypes have been established is sports. Being a professional athlete is a coveted dream for many, but one with numerous barriers to entry that have hindered people based on their economic status, sex, and race. (Doyle & Colin-Thome, 2019) Toxic race and gender stereotypes not control and limit only women's participation in sports; negative stereotypes also used as a weapon against all athletes. This paper will focus on women, people of color, and the intersection of gender and race in sports; also, encourage to realize that physical differences do not affect ability to experience and play sports of individuals.

Besides general stereotypes relating to race in sports that we can hear every day such as "Black people are better at basketball," "Dominicans naturally excel at baseball," "Asians are excellent dancers," or "White men can't jump!" (Desmond and Emirbayer 2010: 44), society also constructed aggressive gender stereotypes in the same field such as "You play like a Woman". We could see that stereotype as one that was demeaning towards women and undervaluing female athletes' talent compared to their male counterparts.

Early on, we have learned to associate things that commonly appear together and expect them to inevitably coexist: men and athleticism, for instance, or black males and basketball. Gender roles have been described as society's shared beliefs that apply to individuals on the basis of their socially identified sex and are thus, related to gender stereotypes. (Eagly, 2009) Even though some of those associations are matched, however, they do not reflect the whole facts.

In the western world, while men are expected to be independent, strong, competent, and athletic, women are supposed to be weaker, and was about being at home for cooking and caring for children. The ideas that "girls don't sweat" and "girls don't get dirty" began to be challenged in conjunction with being a female and being an athlete. In other words, women are generally thought to be communal, or warm, caring, and interdependent - while men are perceived as inferior in communal qualities (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989). As males are demonstrated as "masculinity" and females are stuck with "feminine" depiction, the complementarity intends to reinforce male superiority and female subordination, also, making them acceptable to put females at disadvantage, restriction, and inequality. (Jost & Kay, 2005; Rudman & Glick, 2001)

As a society, our beliefs have cast all such things, and thus, athletics, competition, and sportsmanship have been supposed appropriate qualities within only the manly domain. Men who play professional sports are called heroes who live and breathe their games, while women who participate in sports still have to do the mission of being mothers or wives first, then being athletes second. Additionally, the toxic race and gender stereotypes forced female athletes must be well prepared for dealing with how they are perceived by the public because, most of the times, their looks producing more press than their skills.

A few athlete stereotypes relating to race and gender might sound credible since stereotypes

are often seen as necessary as ways of simplifying the overwhelming number of stimuli one constantly receives from the world (Ladegaard, 1998). However, in fact, they are not entirely true. While sports centered around physicality and contact, racial differences do not affect at all about the performances of athletes. Over the decades, we have been familiar with some well-known race and gender stereotypes including “Blacks are good athletes”, “Asians are inferior at sports compared to the rest of the world”, and “All women's sports are inferior to men's sports”, etc. Those ideas are not completely wrong since over 60% of the total male athletes of color compete in basketball and football, while only 28% of the total white male athletes compete in the same things. (Race and Sport) Likewise, in a study compared African American youths' perceptions of encouragement for sports participation, a result came out that relative to White, Hispanic and Asian youth, African American youth are more likely to receive encouragement for sports participation from their family members. (Shakib & Veliz, 2012) As the result showed that African American families tend to push their children towards sports during their childhood, there is not surprising to know that most athletes in the U.S. are blacks, and ironically, because of that, society has believed that all blacks have natural talents at sports. Some even characterized black male athletes as superior because of their high thighs that go up into their back. (Laurence, 2018)

Asians are inferior at sports stereotype also due to their sporting achievements were not acknowledged with the same level of great interest as other races. The only achievement that they could get attention from the world probably only about ice-skating. Since most of Americans only watch basketball, all they know is numerous black male athletes and their successes in basketball. But if they look up Olympics competitions, they can see many athletes from Asia led the medals. Indeed, Asian dominance in athletics is everywhere around the World. During Olympics 2008, athletes from China led the gold medal count, South Korea and Japan were in the top 10. Back to 2012, China athletes also finished second overall, and South Korea was in the top five as well. (Martinez & Block, 2013) In addition, as the Asian stereotype, White have been seen as white-collar professionals. They're executives or business people who are not tough and tumble athletes. This stereotype is fueled by the greatness of three great white athletes including Samuel Berger, the world's first Olympic boxing champion, quarterback Benny Friedman, who was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2005, and Yuri Foreman, who held the WBA super welterweight title from 2009 to 2010. (Martinez & Block, 2013)

Moreover, many people believe the idea that women's sports are inferior to men's sports probably because they assumed that males and athleticly gift are more associated. But that's not entirely true. While there are many sports built for men, there are also sports made for women. For instance, we have Neal, Lia - a gold medalist in the breaststroke, Nagasu, Mirai - the first American woman to land a triple axel, and Shibutani, Maia - a two-time U.S. national champion, and the 2018 Olympic bronze medalist. (Doyle & Colin-Thome, 2019) These women's successes have proven the world that the negative athletic stereotypes relating to female and sports are not correct, moreover, it's possible not just for Asian American women, but for women as a whole to break down the barriers.

Based on those worldwide achievements, we can tell again that physical or biological differences cannot enhance or diminish the ability to compete of athletes. Black genetic do not help black athletes dominating sports, Asians' modest height cannot prevent them from being outstanding and successful in competitions, and Whites' bones are not that weak to cannot make a high jump. Also, gender discrimination in sports not affects women, but also men. Male

athletes who play “feminine” sports like ice-skating and dancing are often bullied since society expected them to be big, strong, and muscular to play “manly domain” sports.

In order to create more advance athletic opportunities for women, there are a couple of solutions. We can use media representation. As media consumers, we have the right to demand it providing equal appearance of athletes on news. The media needs to let women athletes as well as athletes of color participating and their successes in all sports news. More importantly, since a fact came out that black girls receiving fewer opportunities to participate in sports, also, missing out positive consequences of involvement in organized sports, therefore, every sport organizations must give a racial consideration in Title IX's mandate, establishing equality of access including plans and programs that encourages the participation of young girls of color in sports. (Pickett, Dawkins, & Braddock, 2012)

There are concerns have developed from negative athlete stereotypes, as well as from the “natural talent” myths. Based on a research, negative stereotypes relating to race and gender can make differences in the way athletes prepare for and perform in sports. When it comes to the negative stereotypes, athletes will have a fear that can take away their strength. There are also evidence proves that while facing a negative stereotype and focusing on avoiding failure, athletes can experience feeling weaker and loosing working memory capacity. (Stone, J., Chalabaev, A., & Harrison, C. K., 2012). Also, how the 'natural talent' myth can be used as a weapon against black athletes? According to Andrew Laurence, “Slurs and racism are routinely hurled at minority athletes, and the media often help fan the flames of abuse.” Besides, there is a research says African-American athletes are more likely to be portrayed negatively in the media than white athletes (DeCapua, 2015) and receive “significantly more negative coverage” in the form of hard news stories about domestic and sexual violence (Laurence, 2018).

In conclusion, the stereotypes about race and gender in sports are never true. Some are even aggressive while contain so much discrimination. Everyone is different and regardless of their gender or race, if they want to achieve their goals, they can do it by basically keeping practicing and devoting effort for it. Sports world used to give priority to the masculine domain, and there have been a legacy of group-favoritism bias against the female athletes. However, as many supports and civil rights out there available for women, traditional stereotypes for females have slowly been changing and eliminated. While there are still traditional athletic stereotypes prevent women and people of color from being professional athletes, my suggestion for them is just break free of those stereotypes because nobody can rob their right of the experience playing sports based on their physical differences.