3I S. Keino Miller, Indiana University Bloomington & Jessica David, Indiana University Bloomington
“Intergenerational Trauma and the Reclamation of the African Spirit through Sport”

In this paper, we argue that athletics and athletic competition can not only serve as a conduit to physiological health and well-being, but also forge identities of resistance and resilience for Black Americans. Furthermore, we assert that if athletics is infused with cultural traditions that affirmed Black Identity, coaches and parents may encounter increased levels of cultural awareness, collective identity and self-efficacy; all of which are critical elements to induce healing and consciousness. Since the late 1800’s, “Black Athletic Identity” and expression has been critical to providing a counter narrative to the myth of White supremacy over African bodies and minds. Each successful attempt to prove this belief false has been heralded as a victory for oppressed people around the globe. This paper emphasizes the emergence and utility of athletic participation as a protective factor aimed at redressing the effects of Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome.

3I Chishamiso Rowley, Ashford University
“Game Changers: The Contemporary Social Construction of the Black Athlete”

In 2015, 30 African-American members of the University of Missouri football team joined with student activists to pursue removal of Tim Wolfe, president of the University of Missouri. This action was taken in response to racism that was said to exist at the University and subsequently led to the presidents’ resignation. Other Black athletes have taken similar actions in the past 2 years, pushing back against narratives of good behavior and exceptionalism that arguably enshrine them. This presentation will examine the contemporary social construction of the Black athlete; presenting the findings of an exploratory, content analysis of news reports and social media posts related to activism on the part of Black athletes that occurred during 2014-2015. It will offer suggestions for future areas of study informed by a paradigm of scholar activism that is specifically intended to respond to the social justice concerns of communities of color.

3I Andrew Surya, Queen’s University
“The 2015 University of Missouri Protests: Intersections of Race, Sport, and Politics”

This paper analyzes the protest by the University of Missouri’s football team that occurred in response to racism on its campus. Black students had been the targets of numerous racist incidents and, in response to the university administration’s lack of an adequate response, had been calling for President Timothy M. Wolfe to resign. After several weeks of protest, the football team joined the effort, vowing not to play until Wolfe left office. The events of the boycott are examined through a social movement theory lens, highlighting the unique intersection of race, sport, and politics in an event that was able to challenge racial hegemony. I situate the protest within the larger context of the Black Lives Matter movement and assess what scholars of sport can learn from this particular mobilization of sport in the name of social change.

3I Rhema Fuller, University of Memphis & Kwame Agyemang, Louisiana State University
“Activism and the Division III Black Male Athlete”

After a period of silence (Agyemang, 2012), recent years have seen an increase in Black athletes addressing social issues (e.g., University of Missouri football players). However, the majority of scholarly inquiry and media coverage on Black athlete activism tends to focus on high-profile Olympic,
professional, and college athletes (e.g., Schmittel & Sanderson, 2015). As a result, the role of activism in less-visible Black athletes (e.g., NCAA Division II and III athletes) remains under-examined. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to examine activism in a less-visible Black athlete population. Interviews were conducted with 10 Division III Black male athletes to begin to understand their perceptions, intentions, and actions related to activism. The results revealed that participants viewed their social involvement as community service more so than activism. Furthermore, participants believed that their coaches would not be supportive of activism if it negatively affected the perception of the athletic program. Finally, participants questioned whether they possessed the social capital to bring about meaningful social change. This session will raise important issues with respect to activism including the difference, if any, between community service and activism and the role of social capital when attempting to produce meaningful change as an activist.

31 Joseph N. Cooper & Charlie Macaulay, University of Connecticut
"From Muhammad Ali to Mizzou: Lessons Learned and Future Directions for Black Athlete Activism"

The life and legacy of Muhammad Ali reflects the immeasurable impact of Black athlete activism. In the spirit of athlete activism, the football players at the University of Missouri leveraged their power and platform as high profile athletes at a Division I institution in the United States (U.S.) to generate institutional change at their university. Historically, Black athletes have played a pivotal role in stimulating social justice and racial uplift in society. The plight of Black athletes in sporting spaces has often reflected the conditions of Blacks in the broader society whereby their bodies and labor have been exploited within the web of inequitable arrangements that privilege elite Whites. Given the heightened visibility of sports in society, Black athletes have a unique platform whereby they can leverage powerful influences that attract widespread media attention. Sociohistorical events including parallels between Black athlete activism and broader social movements such as the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement of the 21st century will be discussed. Using critical race theory and strategic responsiveness to interest convergence (SRIC) as analytical tools, this presentation will highlight key elements associated with effective Black athlete activism efforts: 1) clear vision and core purpose, 2) organization and strategic decision making, 3) bold leadership and courage, 4) connection with racial and sociopolitical empowerment groups, and 5) economic leverage. Historical instances of Black athlete activism will be highlighted as well as future directions for Black athlete activism will be discussed.