Racial Divide on the Track: An Exploration into Race and Athleticism within the Sport of Track and Field

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Title: Racial Divide on the Track: An Exploration into Race and Athleticism within the Sport of Track and Field

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction

Race and athleticism is a topic that is not taken lightly in today's society. Simply mentioning both terms, race and athleticism together, can cause ears to perk and tempers to flare. This is evident in the countless literature, television specials, and panel discussions that exist or have taken place arguing over the definition and overall conception of human races. Race and its implications are heavily debated within both the biological and social sciences. This paper explores race and athleticism within the sport of track and field by examining various theories from both the hard sciences and the social sciences. Through the gathering of empirical data and looking specifically at the implications race has within the sport of track and field, we can begin to better understand the relationship between race and athleticism. This project provides a unique approach and can contribute greatly to the overall debate surrounding the issue.

This topic became an interest of mine during a sunny Saturday afternoon accompanied by my parents while attending a high school track and field meet. I was at the meet to cheer on my little brother while he competed in a few races. It was during the start of the two-hundred meter sprints when my mom asked why I think African Americans tend to compete in more sprinting events, versus events involving longer distances. It was a vague question, and one I have never given much thought about and did not have a legitimate answer for. But after giving it some thought, it becomes worth asking; especially considering an overwhelming majority of the competitors in that two-hundred meter race appeared to be of African American decent, while later that same day not a single African American was present among any of the competitors for either the mile or two mile events.

When reflecting on my personal experience, competing within various distance events in the sport, it is difficult to pin point anymore than a couple of instances when I competed against an African American. Growing up in a suburb of Philadelphia our high school and track and field team would have been considered racially diverse, especially when compared to some of the wealthier districts within the remote area. Even my college, an institution that has a more diverse student body than compared among its peers, still does not have a single African American distance runner on its track and field team. This witnessed "racial divide" trend seemed to be consistent over my years of competition in various meets at many different locations. It has always struck me as a little strange that there had always been a stronger concentration of more African Americans competing within sprinting events. From my own experience and conversations with other athletes it has been something that many other track and field athletes are conscious of. The danger is the implications this "racial divide" on the track can have on any individual athlete.

Half a century ago it was once a common belief that African Americans did not possess the "intelligence" to compete within events longer than a 200 meter sprint (Entine 2000). Of course today claims like this are dismissed as completely outrageous and racist, but it's important that recognition be given to the racial tensions that do still exist within the sport of track and field even today.

Racism is defined as the belief that distinctive human characteristics and abilities are determined by one's race and that these characteristics and abilities of particular groups/races are seen as superior to other races. I suspect that many track and field athletes have different preconceptions of athletes with different racial backgrounds and

I'm interested in exploring why. Why are African Americans perceived as being faster than their white competitors and why don't African Americans compete in long distance events?

These may seem like very ambitious questions, and anyone remotely familiar with the topic of race and athleticism knows the many controversies and heated debates surrounding the issue. My mother's observation and question had sparked my interest in this subject, and left me eager to search for answers. Anecdotically, I have observed racism on the track over the years, but I am interested in what other athletes think. Does this racial thinking exist among track and field athletes, and if it does what could be causing it? To gather insightful data on the subject I wanted to find out why athletes are competing in the sport of track and field and what causes them to compete within particular events? This should ultimately allow some unique insight into the overall racial debate and the "racial divide" witnessed on the track.

It's important that "race" as an actual biological concept also be examined. The concept of race can be puzzling, and even today it still has many scientists and scholars strongly divided over its social and biological implications. It is important to gain an understanding for the overall racial debate within academia, and why race is considered by many to be not based on biological fact, but rather a socially constructed concept.

II. Theory Back Ground

A Synopsis of the Race Debate

The racial debate was first introduced to me in a Human Evolution course, and the topic then, as it does now, puzzled me. It is clear that most scientists are in agreement that variation within our genes is not as vast as it would need to be for true human "races"

to exist (i.e. biological subspecies), thus race is socially constructed. Yet many are quick to point to the undeniable physical differences among populations that exist in separate geographical locations on our planet (skin color, hair color, height, build, ext.). For example, if one was in a room with a Scandinavian, an Asian, and an African. It wouldn't be too difficult to correctly match an individual with the region that he/she originated from (Diamond 1992). Do these obvious differences imply that there are in fact genetic differences?

The scientific definition of "race" in the *American Heritage Dictionary* (2005:520) illustrates many of the surrounding issues and concerns when attempting to assign meaning to a word as perplexing as "race," especially within the scientific community.

> **Race (rās) 1a.** An interbreeding, usually geographically isolated population of organisms differing from other populations of the same species in the frequency of hereditary traits. A race that has been given formal taxonomic recognition is known as a subspecies. **b.** A breed or stain, as of domestic animals. **2.** Any of several extensive human populations associated with broadly defined regions of the world and distinguished from one another on the basis of inheritable physical characteristics, traditionally conceived as including such traits as pigmentations, hair texture, and facial features. Because the number of genes responsible for such physical variations is tiny in comparison to the size of the human genome and because genetic variation among members of a traditionally recognized racial group is generally as great as between two such groups, most scientists now consider race to be primarily a social rather than a scientific concept.

It is important to acknowledge that although this definition sums up most of the opinions of those within the scientific community regarding the validity of human biological races, it is not inclusive of everyone. There are many within the scientific community who continue to believe in the validity of racial variation (Entine 2000; Gill 2000; Sarich and Miele 2004; St. Louis 2003; Rushton 2000). One leading advocate is J. Philippe Rushton a professor of psychology at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, who has published many articles and papers arguing for the validity of at least

three biological races (subspecies) of humans; Mongoloid, Negroid, and Caucasoid (Ruston 2000). Another strong advocate of race as a genetically produced phenomenon is George W. Gill, a forensic anthropologist, who is a strong opponent for teaching and recognizing the idea behind the reality of human race, and continues to conduct research within the field of forensic racial identification.

Forensic anthropologists can with a very high degree of accuracy determine the geographic racial identity (white, black, American Indian ext.) of a victim. Forensic Anthologists use various bone analysis methods (femur traits, mid-facial measurements ext.) in conjunction to prove to gain an accurate understanding of a racial identification (Gill 2000).

The current social taboo that surrounds the subject of race has suppressed open discussion on a subject that many feel deserves greater attention and unemotional debate (Courtis 2004). Jared Diamond (1992:111) raises the point, "that even today, few scientists dare to study racial origins, lest they be branded racists just for being interested in the subject." What is the cause of this fear? There is not a clear explanation, but an undeniable contributing factor is the history of race science (Entine 2000). When looking at race from a historical perspective, these fears appear to be much more legitimate. This is especially true considering that the last time race was seriously scientifically studied it perpetuated into the pseudo-sciences of craniology and phrenology. Both of these pseudo-sciences aided in the growing belief in social-Darwinism and the eugenics movement in Europe at the time (Entine 2000). These two pseudo-sciences were instrumental in the way we conceive of "race" today. Many of "our popular conceptualizations of race are derived from these 19th and early 20th century scientific

formulations—based on externally visible traits, primarily skin color, features of the face, and the shape and size of the head and body, and underlying skeleton" (AAPA Statement 1996:569).

The problem with formulating races based on visible external traits is that it does not work well. Many scientists feel it is impractical to separate and group individuals into "races" based only on physical characteristics that really do not apply to everyone within a particular geographic region. They argue that avoiding certain characteristics from overlapping is virtually impossible. This is because the formation of racial classification systems are based on continuous traits; traits that exist to some degree in everyone (i.e. skin color). Because each of these "continuous traits" fall along a continuum, it needs to be socially agreed upon where divide lines will be drawn to form distinct categories (Coakley 2004).

Another foundation for the social constructionist argument is that much of the biological variation among distinct populations involves only modest degrees of variation in the frequency of shared genetic traits (AAPA Statement 1996). Evidence from DNA genetic analysis indicates that most physical variation, about 94%, lies within conventional racial groups. This means that geographic "racial" groupings differ from one another by only 6% of their genes (American Anthropological Association 1998). According to Jared Diamond (1996:111) the only biological contributing components to what is known as human racial variation consists of skin color, the color and form of the eyes and hair, body shape, amount of facial hair (in men), amount of body hair, the size and shape and color of a women's breasts and nipples, the form of her labia and buttocks, and the size and angle of a man's penis. This may seem like a lot of variation for only

being "derived" from 6% of the overall genetic variation between geographic "racial" groupings. Not to mention the examined differences among bone structure, displayed through the methods used by forensic anthropologist to determine the "race" of a victim.

This topic is extremely controversial and as illustrated by this quick glimpse into the racial debate, more questions are generated than answers. But as stated earlier, race is only half of this project's overall equation, the other half involves athleticism and when these two terms are used in collaboration it typically stirs unrest among many.

Race and Athleticism

Whenever the terms race and athleticism are mentioned in conjunction with one another it is likely to generate some social discourse and great concern. A recent example involves the statement recently made by Air Force Academy football coach Fisher DeBerry after discussing a 48-10 loss to Texas Christian.

> It's very obvious they had a lot more Afro-American players than we did and they ran a lot faster than we did. It just seems to me to be that way, that Afro-American players can run very, very well. That doesn't mean that Caucasian kids and other descendents can't run, but it's very obvious to me that they run extremely well" (Moss, 2005:1).

This statement caused Deberry social embarrassment and a lot of ridicule, but he was fortunate, especially when compared to a predecessor who ruined his career over similar comments.

Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder was a prognosticator on CBS's NFL pre-game show. In 1988, Jimmy made the following comments at a National Football Conference:

> The Black is a better athlete because he's been bred to be that way….During slave trading; the slave owner would breed his big men and woman so that he would have a big black kid, see. That's where it all started (Entine 2000:72).

These comments cost Jimmy his job with CBS and attracted intense media attention. Although both of these comments came from the realm of football, similar comments

have also been made in the competitive world of Track and Field. Carl Lewis, one of the world's all time best sprinters has been quoted as saying that "Blacks—physically in many cases—are made better" (Entine 2000:4). Even Sir Roger Bannister, a retired physician, who in 1954 became the first person to break the four-minute mile barrier, made a statement in a 1995 news article that Black African and African American sprinters have "certain natural advantages" over white rivals (Associated Press 1995). Surprisingly even Banister as a man of science failed to supply any real evidence backing the claim.

As mentioned earlier, through DNA genetic analysis, scientists have discovered that about 94% of the physical variation among humans lies within conventional racial groupings. This means that geographic "racial" groupings differ from each other by only 6% of their genes (American Anthropological Association 1998). This is greatly accepted among the scientific community as proof that biological races do not exists. But this evidence does not suggest that there are not any physical traits that can not be associated with any particular isolated population. From a genetic perspective it is theoretically possible for a small isolated population to produce offspring with a narrower range of physical types (or traits). As an example of this some refer to the Pygmies of the Central African Republic, whom would be considered "black" by standard American racial categories. Because of the Pygmies' short stature, a physical trait commonly associated with this small isolated population, some assume that they may not be very likely to excel in a sport were height would be extremely advantageous, such as basketball (Graves 2000).

Like the pygmies, it could theoretically be possible for a remote and isolated population to have developed traits that could produce an athletic advantage. Some within the scientific community feel it could be possible for an isolated population has developed all the traits and possess all the genes required that would produce an individual who would excel in a particular sport or a variety of events (Graves 2000). Many reference the success of Kenyans at long distance running as a possible example. This is because the majority, three-fourths of Kenya's star runners can trace their ancestry to an isolated mountainous region known as the Kalenjin region. An even smaller district within the Kalenjin region, called Nandi, has produced about half of the world-class Kalenjin athletes (Entine 2000). Could this small isolated population have a genetic advantage in long distance running? Some claim they do and some that they don't. On the other hand, even though it could be theoretically possible for an isolated population to have developed traits that may aid in the performance of a particular sport/event, it is essential to remember that genes are only one part of what is needed for the population to excel in athletics. Joseph Graves (2000), an evolutionary biologist, brings up the point that social factors such as poverty, disease, and cultural influences may prevent an isolated population from ever discovering such genetically influenced talents.

There are a number of social theories that explain why African Americans seem to excel in certain sports. One involves racial stratification among economic wealth. It is the belief that African Americans excel in sports that require the least amount of expensive equipment and formal training, for example basketball over golf (Hunter 1996). Basketballs are relatively inexpensive and a large number of people can play a game with only one ball, in comparison to the expensive clubs needed for one person in

the sport of golf. The thinking is that different learning conditions in African American and Caucasian communities lead to different sport preferences and priorities (Hunter 1996). These "learning conditions" include "cultural experiences, environment, stereotypes, expectations from others, and self-expectations, which all aid in creating a self-schema on participation and physical activity choices" (Hunter 1996:25).

Sociologist Harry Edwards argues that African American dominance in sports has got nothing to do with a racial biological/physiological athletic advantage. American society is so stratified on the basis of skin color that access to power, prestige, and money are all impacted by one's race. This is why there appears to be a higher dominance of black athletes in sports all together. Whites have greater access to alternative high-prestige positions and their talents are distributed over a boarder range of endeavors (Edwards 1973). Thus, according to Edwards the issue can be ultimately boiled down to opportunity. There are simply more opportunities for whites when compared with African Americans.

As illustrated, the concept of race is greatly debated and when combined with athleticism is bond to create some controversy. There are many theories that have been laid out by numerous scholars that attempt to explain the racial athletic phenomenon that many athletes and spectators have/and continue to observe even today. These theories however are grounded in the race debate and are either considered supporting the argument for biological racial validity or the argument for the social construction of race. Again, by approaching the race debate from the unique angle of exploring why track and field athletes are competing in the sport and within particular events, we can begin to better understand and combat racial generalizations and racial preconceptions.

III. Objective

Each of the racial comments made by Fisher DeBerry, Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder, Carl Lewis, and Sir Roger Bannister illustrate many of the shared frustrations among scientists who debate over race and athleticism. Each one of these assertions are made based on no scientific evidence, but rather casual empirical observation (Hunter 1996). It is within this same realm that this project began, based entirely on my "racial" observations made on a sunny Saturday afternoon track and field meet. When conducting preliminary research on this topic, it became clear that there was a lack of research conducted examining race and athleticism within the sport of track and field. I failed to come across any collected data on the reasons why athletes are participating in the sport of track and field or any reasons for participating within particular events. By collecting some of my own data in this area, I hoped to generate some insight and possible causes for the racial divide I have witnessed over the years. These results could either support or oppose either the biological or the social conception of "race."

I started with two main objectives. The first was to verify my initial impressions by acquiring a greater understanding of other athletes' racial perceptions within the sport of track and field and what could be causing these perceptions. The second objective was to examine why athletes competed within the sport of track and field, and within particular events and how reasons for participation relate to the observed "racial divide" on the track. Both objectives when explored through exploratory research methods could open up avenues for further research on race and athleticism within track and field.

IV. Methods

To access these two objectives further, I created an interview script consisting of fourteen questions. The majority of the questions in the interview were focused and designed to gain an understanding for why athletes participate within the sport and in particular events. Many of the questions were non-bias and open-ended, giving each participant an opportunity to give their own responses and reasons behind track and field participation. The open-ended responses were followed by a series of questions that asked each participant to rate given explanations for participation in the sport and within particular events. Each reason that participants were asked to rate were based on those either proposed as social pressures by social scientists or instrumental reasons from my own observations, conversations, and experiences over the years.

Direct questions involving race were avoided when possible in order to prevent interview participants from feeling uncomfortable because of the sensitivity that is normally associated with the topic. If participants felt uncomfortable, it could result in skewed answers, especially if they were fearful of giving answers that might portray themselves as "racist." The only direct question within the interview script dealing directly with racial perception within the sport was question fourteen. Below is a copy of the interview transcript used during each athlete interview.

1) Name of College participant is attending: _____
2) Age:_____
3) Ethnicity (all read to participant):
   ___American Indian
   ___Asian
   ___Black or African American
   ___Hispanic or Latino
   ___Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   ___White, not Hispanic origin
   ___ Other (please specify_____)
4) Name of high school attended (& Location):
5) Year of graduation from high school:
6) Number of years participating in the sport of Track and Field:
   High School:_____

Spring Track:
Winter Track:

College:_____
Spring Track:
Winter Track:

7) Why did you join your high school/college track and field team?
Why not compete in any other sport?

8) Did you have relatives or friends, prior to you joining, who also competed in the sport of Track and Field?
If "yes" what events did he/she/they run?

9) On a 0 to 6 scale how would you rate the given reasons based on the influential impact they have had on your participation in the sport of track and field? (0=none, 3=neutral, and 6=extremely influential)

Joined because you wanted to be part of a team?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Joined because of social aspects (make friends)?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Joined because of pressure from family?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Joined because of pressure from friends?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Joined because of athletic ability?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6

10) How would you classify yourself within the sport of Track and Field?
(Could be more than one)
____Sprinter (50m-300m)
____Middle Distance (400m-1000m)
____Long Distance (1500m and up)

11) What particular events did you compete in?
Why did you compete in those particular events? Why not others?

12) On a 0 to 6 scale how would you rate the following reasons based on the influence they have had on you competing in the particular events that you do/did in Track and Field? (0=none, 3=neutral, and 6=extremely influential)

Friends competed in those same events?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Family competed in those events?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Could identify with individuals you competed in those events?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Share ethnicity with more of the individuals who compete in those events?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Felt that you wouldn't be good at competing in any other events?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6
Naturally fast in those events?
0------1------2------3------4------5------6

13) Which out of those events that you competed in where you best at?
What was your personal best time in that/those events?

14) Have you ever felt intimidated when competing against an opponent(s) of a different race/ethnicity in that event or any other events?
(IF YES) Based only on your initial observations what ethnicity would you classify the opponent(s) as?

___American Indian
___Asian
___Black or African American
___Hispanic or Latino
___Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
___White, not Hispanic origin
___Other (please specify_____)

(IF YES) What do you feel was the cause of the intimidation felt?

In addition to asking various questions, I constructed a "picture test" to measure athlete's initial observations of other athletes. At the conclusion of each interview the participant was given five pictures of track and field athletes. The pictures were presented to each participant one at a time and distributed in a completely random order for each interview participant. Before viewing any of the pictures, the participant was told that each pictured athlete was very competitive within one or more of the event categories listed (sprinter, middle distance, and long distance).

The event categories (sprinter, middle distance, long distance) listed for the picture test portion, are standard classifications used within the sport of track and field. A sprinter typically refers to any event that requires speed and swiftness, while middle distance requires a mix of speed and endurance, and long distance typically requires more endurance. Typically track and field teams will divide themselves into these three categories for training purposes. A sprinter consists of any events ran from 50 meters to 300 meters; middle distance is 400 meters to 1000 meters; long distance 1500 meters and up. It can be common for an athlete to be associated with more than one of these classifications, and it isn't unusual for a sprinter and distance runner to compete in a middle distance event, especially if a team is small and needs individuals to fill events for scoring purposes.

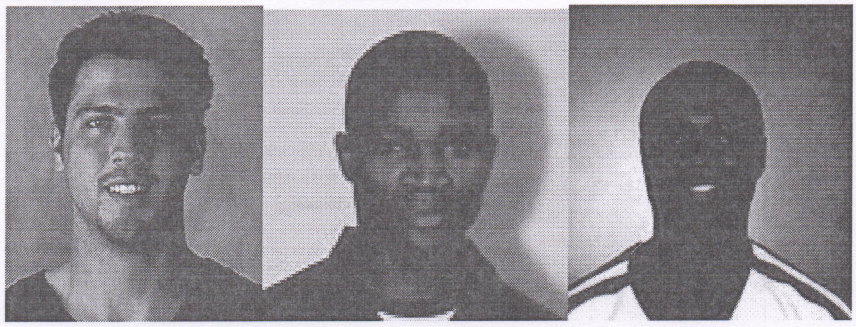
During the picture test, every participating athlete was asked to rate each picture on a 0 to 6 scale, gauging the ability of each pictured athlete within each specified event category. The participating athlete was asked to rate the competitiveness of each pictured athlete based solely on initial impressions. The scale used was standardized for all questions within the interview that required a numerical rating response, thus participants

were already familiar with the scale and its ratings prior to the picture test portion. On the scale a 0 was equivalent to no ability within an event category and a 6 was equivalent to being very competitive. The specific picture test instructions and scale used are displayed below.

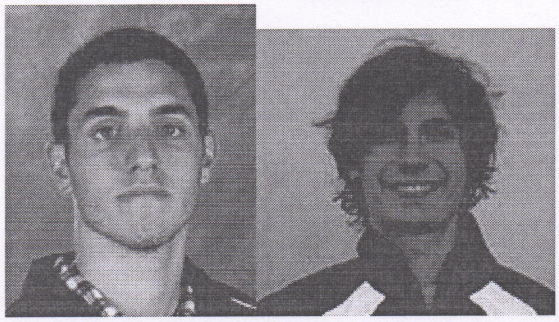
> Each of the pictured individuals are very competitive in one or more of the event categories listed below, please evaluate each photo and select the event category you feel they would be most competitive in based only on your initial observation from each photo (0=no ability, 3=undecided, and 5=very competitive)
>
> Sprinter (50m-300m)
> 0------1------2------3------4------5------6
> Middle Distance (400m-1000m)
> 0------1------2------3------4------5------6
> Long Distance (1500m and up)
> 0------1------2------3------4------5------6

Below are each of the five pictures used for the test. Each facial picture shown to participants was taken from the internet. During the test, participants were unaware of each pictured athlete's ethnicity and track and field history, the test was solely based on athletes' initial impressions of each photo. Picture one is of an individual who was a competitive high school sprinter, who is currently a quarter-back for an arena football team. Picture two is of a competitive middle distance runner, whose ancestry can be traced back to Africa where he is also a prince of a small tribe. Picture three is an African American sprinter who competes at a big name University, and pictures four and five are also very competitive middle-distance and distance runners competing at big name universities as well.

Picture One **Picture Two** **Picture Three**



Picture Four **Picture Five**



V. Data Gathered

Thirteen male track and field athletes were interviewed for this project. Because of time restraints, the sample was limited to current and past track and field athletes that are currently attending Albright College. In fact, all but two of the athletes interviewed are currently participating within the sport. Seventy-seven of the participants competed at the high school level. Track and field experience within the sport ranged among participants from one year to eight years, averaging around five years of experience. The average age of those whom participated was twenty, and ages ranged from 18 to 22. Only three of the participants classified themselves as minorities (23%).

The first group of tables displays the results from the picture test. The tables display the percentages that were derived from the competitive ratings ascribed to each pictured athlete in each event category. Each percentage that was calculated is based on ratings of 4 or higher (competitive to very competitive) on the 0 to 6 scale.

Results for the Sprinter Event Category **Percentages based on ratings 4 or higher (competitive to very competitive)** **Based on a 0 to 6 sale (0=none, 6= very competitive)**					
Picture	 **Picture One**	 **Picture Two**	 **Picture Three**	 **Picture Four**	 **Picture Five**
Percentage	66.6%	58.3%	92.4%	38.5%	41.6%

Results for the Middle Distance Event Category **Percentages based on ratings 4 or higher (competitive to very competitive)** **Based on a 1 to 6 sale (0=none, 6= very competitive)**					
Picture	 **Picture One**	 **Picture Two**	 **Picture Three**	 **Picture Four**	 **Picture Five**
Percentage	69.2%	76.9%	69.2%	83.3%	77%

Results for the Long Distance Event Category **Percentages based on ratings 4 or higher (competitive to very competitive)** **Based on a 1 to 6 sale (0=none, 6= very competitive)**					
Picture	 **Picture One**	 **Picture Two**	 **Picture Three**	 **Picture Four**	 **Picture Five**
Percentage	8.3%	33.3%	25%	53.9%	41.7%

The following two tables specifically deal with the data gathered from the interview. The interview data is sorted by question, with similar responses grouped together. The following tables were created so that responses could be clearly interrupted and patterns in the data could be more easily assessed and analyzed.

The table below was used to sort the data that was recorded in response to the open-ended question asking athletes about the reasons they joined their high school/college track and field team. The answers given were grouped based on the most

commonly cited reasons. Some participants gave an answer that fit into more than one category; this is why a particular interview participant appears more than once on the table (i.e. participants A and D).

Question: Why did you join your high school/college track and field team?
*More than one category could have been mentioned as a response by one participant

Category of Response	**Interview Participant**	**# times each category was mentioned by a participant**
Had Friends who competed	A B G	3
To get in shape for another sport	A C F J K L	6
Had Family who competed	G	1
General enjoyment of Activity (running/competition)	D E F H J	5
Started in Junior High (one of the only sports offered)	D E F H J M	6
Miscellaneous	C (thought it was easy) D (quit another sport) E (no interest in other sports) H (no interest in other sports) K (doctors advice)	5

The next table displays the recorded responses to the question asking athletes why they compete in the particular events that they do. The participating athletes gave three similar responses, as illustrated on the table below. Similar to the last table some interview participants appear more than one category because they gave a response that fit in more than one of the categories listed.

Question: Why did/do you compete in those particular events?
*More than one category could have been mentioned in a response by a participant

Category of Response	**Interview Participant**	**# times each category was mentioned by a participant**
Advised by Coach	C D H I	4
Not good at any other events	A G K L M	5
Ability (talent/comfort/more competitive)	A B C E F G J K M	9

VI. Analysis and Discussion

The data overall that was collected gave me mixed reactions; ideally it would have been much more advantageous to have had a larger sample size. Some of the questions asked did yield some surprising results, especially the open-ended ones. Other questions didn't give the desired results that they were specifically designed to collect. Overall, the data that was obtained does give some intriguing insights into the reasons for athletes joining their high school and/or college track and field teams, and the causes/forces that may be influencing them to participate within particular events.

The picture test was designed to be completely exploratory and it wasn't clear from the beginning what results it would yield. Despite not being confident about the results this test would produce, I still wanted participants to take it because I thought it may prove to be an effective way to help gauge an athlete's racial perception of another athlete regarding event placement. I also thought the test would help verify my impression of racial tension on the track.

As already stated and displayed earlier, two pictures were of African, and African American decent (pictures two and three). One of the pictures was of direct African decent, a college middle distance track and field plenum who is also a prince to an African village. The other was a sprinter of African American decent who competitively competes within sprinting events at a big name University. These two pictures were mixed with three "white" or "non-black" athletes; one distance runner, one middle distance runner, and one ex-sprinter/arena football player. Participants were unaware of the ethnicity and track and field history of each pictured athletes, the photos were given

competitive ratings based only on participants' initial impressions. The goal of this test was to explore the impression many track and field athletes may have regarding African Americans excelling at sprinting versus longer distance events.

The table below illustrates the percentages for each event category of each pictured athlete. Each percentage was tallied by adding the percentages of the four or higher ratings ascribed to each picture, a rating of competitive to very competitive. At first glance the data does not appear to illustrate the desired results. As illustrated on the table below, the middle distance category received the most "competitive" ratings for the majority of the pictures. It seems that the middle distance category was viewed by participating athletes as the category that would be most competitive for each non-African/non-African American pictured athlete. But despite the middle distance category, the results still yield some interesting data.

All Three Event Categories Combined
Percentages based on ratings 4 or higher (competitive to very competitive)
Based on a 1 to 6 sale (0=none, 6= very competitive)
Highlighted is the highest percentage of each picture

Picture	 Picture Two (African)	 Picture Three (African American)	 Picture One	 Picture Four	 Picture Five
Sprinter	58.3%	92.4%	66.6%	38.5%	41.6%
Middle Distance	76.9%	69.2%	69.2%	83.3%	77%
Long Distance	33.3%	25%	8.3%	53.9%	41.7%

It is worth mentioning that the two pictures that were of African and African American decent do not have the sprinter category as their highest percentage category on the table. However, they did both receive ratings of more than 50% within the sprinter category and the African American (picture three) had 92.4% of participating athletes think he would be competitive within sprinting events. It's also interesting that few participating athletes felt that both the African (33.3%) and African American (25%) athletes would be competitive in the distance event category.

As for the middle distance category being highly "favored" for almost all three non-African/African American pictured athletes, could have been the result of participants viewing the category as a "neural point" between sprinting and long distance events. Thus, an unsure participant could have settled for this category when torn between labeling the pictured athlete as either a sprinter or distance runner.

It was also noticeable that a few of the participants felt a little uncomfortable while taking the picture test, which could have resulted in them not recording honest answers. Some of the participants made comments during the test that alluded to the very racial mentality/perceptions that I was trying to collect empirical data on. For example, one participant when shown picture three, the athlete of African decent, gave an abrupt grin looked up and said "you know this one is a sprinter." Another participant after realizing that the pictures were of track and field athletes of different racial backgrounds immediately shook his head and responded with "this is so wrong," while proceeding to go back to second guess pervious recorded responses. It was no secret among those I interviewed what my intentions were with this test. Also, many of them, whom I

personally knew, could have been concerned about the racist perception that would be conveyed if answers were based entirely on their initial observation.

It's clear that the results from the picture test did give some insight into the racial perceptions of a few track and field athletes regarding race and athleticism within the sport. This is illustrated by the results gathered, both the African and African American pictured athletes were considered to be more competitive within the sprinting event category among participating athletes. Although the sample size was small, I don't think the data that was generated by this test should become completely overlooked; one may just need a more covert/less obvious method to gather more empirical data supporting the existence of these racial tensions among athletes within the sport.

The most telling results I was able to gather revolved around the explanations cited for why participating athletes decided to participate within the sport. The following table illustrates the various reasons participating athletes' assigned influential value based on the impact each had on them joining/participating in the sport of Track and Field. The highlighted percentage was highest rated reason for joining.

Percentages of given reasons for why athletes joined high school/college T&F team. Percentage calculations based on responses rated 4 or higher on the 0 to 6 scale (influential to extremely influential)

Given Reason	Percentage
Pressure From Family	15.4%
Pressure From Friends	23.1%
Athletic Ability	92.3%
Social Aspects	61.6%
Wanting to be part of a team	53.9%

By exploring some of these reasons, one can better understand the possible causes of the "racial divide" witnessed on the track. As mentioned there are a number of social theories that explain why African Americans seem to excel in certain sports. One involves racial stratification among economic wealth. The belief that African Americans excel in sports that require the least amount of expensive equipment and formal training an example being basketball over golf (Hunter 1996). Different learning conditions in African American and Caucasian communities lead to different sport preferences and priorities (Hunter 1996). These "learning conditions" include "cultural experiences, environment, stereotypes, expectations from others, and self-expectations, which all aid in creating a self-schema on participation and physical activity choices" (Hunter 1996:25). But does this socialization process or these "learning conditions" really affect an individual's participation within the sport of track and field?

The two most cited reasons given by the athletes I interviewed had little to do with these "learning conditions." The two reasons they gave for running track and field was to "get in shape" either for personal reasons or for another sport, or because "it was one of the only sports offered at the junior high level." But, when cross examining this data with other data collected, it was interesting to discover that all but one of the athletes interviewed had at least one relative or friend who competed within the sport of track and field prior to them joining. Could this have been an influential characteristic that the athletes aren't conscious of? When asked to rate the influential impact pressure form friends and family had on them joining the sport, nine (69.2%) ranked family as having no influence and 77% claimed that friends had little influential impact on them participating within the sport. As displayed on the table above, only 15.4% (family) and

23.1% (friends) of participating athletes felt that pressure from family and friends was influential in them joining the sport. This may not indicate that athletes aren't influenced at all by family and fiends; they may just not consider them as being an "important" influential factor when deciding to participant within the sport of track and field.

It was interesting that participants ranked their own athletic ability as the highest influential factor for joining the sport with 92.3% seeing it as an influential factor contributing them their participation. Athletic ability overall out ranks both the yearning to be a member of a team and joining for social aspects. Although the data shows that an individual's athletic ability is considered to be an extremely influential reason for them competing within particular events, I don't think that this data can be interpreted as data that alludes to the fact that Athletes run in particular events because they are "naturally" superior within those events, such as thinking that African Americans are "naturally" faster in sprinting events. I come to this conclusion for two reasons, one is that based on the "personal best" times of each participating athlete mentioned during the interview, all were in proximity to one another despite a participant's race. The other is that the category labeled as "athletic ability" that was used when shorting open-ended responses encompassed more than just the participant's perception of themselves within the event category that they compete in. This category also accounts for answers that dealt with competitive comfort within the events they compete in, and an athlete's perceived competitiveness within those events. This was done because each of those factors has influence on an individual's overall "athletic ability" and performance. But, this doesn't mean that data should be dismissed or over looked. The data clearly shows that more athletes participate within the sport because of athletic ability.

Some may wonder why there appears to be higher concentrations of African Americans competing in certain sports? Sociologist Harry Edwards's argument, mentioned earlier, dismisses the belief that this is the result of a racial biological/physiological athletic advantage, but rather is the result of different obtainable opportunities within a racial stratified society. There are simply more opportunities for whites when compared with African Americans (Edwards 1973). Is this concept applicable to the sport of Track and Field? Are the opportunities on the track the same for both African Americans and Whites alike?

Within track and field one would suspect that there is ample opportunity for individual athletes to pursue and compete within the events of their choosing. Yet many of the athletes interviewed claimed they competed within the events that they do because they were advised to by a current or former coach. Track and Field coaches weren't included in my sample, so no data exists exploring why coaches are placing athletes in particular events. One could suspect that coaches place individuals in events that they think the individual athlete will have the most success, for both themselves and the team. But social factors could also be at play here as well, such as the various "learning conditions" mentioned earlier. I vividly remember two responses given by interview participants to the open-ended question regarding why they ran in particular events. Both responses alluded to the fact that they were consistently told throughout childhood, before ever running a single event, that they were "built to be a long distance runner." One said he joined the sport because everyone told him he would be a good long distance runner, including his childhood pediatrician, all well before he had ever competed in a single event. The other said he was placed in distance events because he was a "scrawny

little white kid," referencing that "scrawny little white kids" obviously make better distance runners than sprinters. Are both of these individuals falling victim to expectations placed on them by others? This question got me to wonder if there is a cultural aspect at work, maybe athletes compete in certain events because they can identify with more of the individuals who are also competing in those same events.

To explore if cultural factors are at play, I asked athletes to rate a number of "cultural factors" that could have been influential in them joining particular events. Below are the percentages of the various cultural reasons given to each athlete participant to rate. The highlighted percentage was the highest rated influential factor, which was not cultural.

Percentages for the reasons given for why T&F athletes compete within particular events. Percentage calculations based on responses rated 4 or higher on the 0 to 6 scale (influential to extremely influential)

Given Reason	Percentage
Friends competed within those events	61.5%
Family competed within those events	15.4%
Could Identify with others who competed within those events	46.2%
Shared ethnicity with more individuals who compete in those events	30.8%
Naturally Fast/Talent in those events	76.9%

To explore if cultural identity maybe influencing individuals to participate in certain events, I asked athletes if they joined events because they could identify more with the individuals who are also competing within those same events. The thinking was

that there are certain universal characteristics and cultural expectations, which may influence athletes into competing as a sprinter, middle distance, or long distance runner. The results to the question were virtually split down the middle with six athletes feeling it had little influence on them, two being neutral, and the remaining six viewing it as an influential or higher. Only 46.2% of the participating athletes considered it to be an influential factor. Later in the interview I asked participants if they joined particular events because they could identify more with the ethnicity of individuals who also competed within those same events. Four athletes saw ethnicity as not an influential factor (a rating of 0) and only four considered it to be influential (a rating of 4), a percentage of 30.8%. Sixty-one percent of participating athletes did view friends as being an influential factor. The highest rated percentage on the chart had nothing to do with cultural factors; it again deals with an individual's ability. It was the idea that participating athlete's are naturally competitive within the events that they compete in and exhibit some type of talent. Thus, according to the data cultural identity isn't a strong influential factor towards athlete participation within particular events. But it should be realized that some did consider the various stated cultural factors as influential.

The last question asked of each participating athlete was whether they had ever felt intimidated when competing against an opponent of a different race/ethnicity in any of the events they had previously competed in. The table below was used to sort the data gathered for those athletes that responded to the last question asked in the interview.

Question: Have you ever felt intimidated when competing against an opponent(s) of a different race/ethnicity in that event or any other events?

Answer Given: Number of Athletes	**If Yes, Ethnicity of the athlete**
Yes: 4	African American (3) White (1)
No: 9	

It is interesting that four athletes responded yes to the question. The most telling results came from the responses received that try to explain the causes for these racial intimidation feelings. One athlete explained how easy it is to tell when someone will be fast; "it is how they carry themselves and their overall physique and attitude before the race." In a joking matter one athlete claimed he never felt intimidated by a member of another race/ethnicity because he always felt like he had "the upper hand," making reference to the fact that he was African American. When asked why he thought that was, he explained how everyone knows blacks are fast. Another athlete who responded didn't feel intimidated necessarily because of ones ethnicity, but simply because they where just flat out fast. One participant took it further by explaining one can simply tell by the build; "the longer he is the more white, and the shorter he is the more African," which may seem like a harsh racial generalization, but brings to mind the "scrawny little white kid" comment that was made by another participant and mentioned earlier. It's the idea that to be competitive in an event, one must possess a certain build, which athletes seem to be associating with certain "racial" groups (blacks, whites ext.)

The data overall does not convey the idea that many of the participating athletes share this same perception, because only four out of the thirteen athletes interviewed responded by saying they did feel intimidated by an athlete of a different race/ethnicity. But this information is still insightful and does set the foundation for further research, especially further exploration regarding the possible correlation between athletic perceptions of race and athletic build.

Conclusion:

This project started with two objectives. The first was to verify my initial impressions by obtaining a better understanding of athletes' racial perceptions within the sport of track and field and what could be causing them. The second objective was to examine why athletes competed within the sport of track and field and within particular events. Through this exploratory research the data gathered examined each of these objectives closely and from the data found some interesting results regarding the "racial divide" on the track. The interview data seems to support the idea that track and field athletes consider biological ability as an important factor within the sport, for both competing in the sport and within particular events.

Race, based on the data gathered, is viewed as a biological factor among track and field athletes. It appears that there is a racial perception/impression among track and field athletes regarding event competitiveness, as unveiled through the results of the picture test. The test overall showed that more participating athletes rated the African and the African American pictured athletes as more competitive in the sprinting event category versus the long distance event category. Also, my observations of participating athletes during this test also alluded to this phenomenon, with some athletes making racial comments throughout the test. The last interview question also highlighted some of these same racial perceptions/impressions, with athletes making reference to racial athletic build, and the idea that African Americans are "faster" than their white competitors in sprinting events. Although these racial perceptions within the sport can not be associated with every competitive athlete competing in the sport, the evidence does display that it is a belief held by some. Of course further research would need to be

conducted on a larger scale to gauge how rampant these perceptions/impressions may be throughout the track and field community.

Various reasons were explored for why athletes compete within the sport and its particular events. To determine why athletes join a particular sport, various reasons were explored. Social "learning conditions," including family, friends, and ethnicity did not yield high ratings regarding the influential impact they had on participating athletes deciding to partake in the sport of track and field, or in particular events. The number one reason for joining/participating was an individual athlete's own perceived athletic ability. This data should not be interpreted as evidence to support a biological/physiological racial argument, because the data collected did not include biological data; the focus was on individual athletes' thoughts and impressions collected through survey methods. It should also not be overlooked that twelve out of the thirteen participants had friends and/or relatives who competed within the same events as they did. Although this project provided a unique perspective into the racial debate by exploring the "racial divide" on the track, certainly one can conclude that further research needs to be conducted.

The overall data is arguably inconclusive, and no real generalizations can be made claiming that any groups of social factors or physiological/biological factors are key contributors to the observed "racial divide." But this data does raise some very interesting questions and ultimately sets the foundation for future research to take place. Future research desperately needs to be conducted within the area, especially research that would include a broader and more diverse sample size. If further research were to continue, more creative techniques and methods for gathering the desired information

from various participants would need to be utilized. This is especially true considering the problems encountered dealing with participant comfort levels surrounding specific questions dealing with race/athleticism. Having participants rate various factors based not only on influence but importance could have also aided in my analysis when interpreting the data gathered. In the future, more research is needed exploring in the unconscious social factors and the influential implications they can have on participation within the sport. This could be an insightful addition to the data already collected.

A sense of wonder is important if complex questions will ever one day be solved, and it was my sense of wonder that lead me on the path to explore this topic in depth. If asked today the same question that my mom rose a year ago, I still don't feel I could give a legitimate answer to such a perplexing issue. This is partly because I don't think there is a simple contributing factor that aids to the overall "racial divide" witnessed on the track. However, I have acquired some insights into what some of those potential contributing factors may be.

Science may one day not always be vehemently divided over race and athleticism, but there are steps that need to be taken before that day comes. Personally, I credit the thoughts and fears of those scholars who openly and willingly conduct research in the area of race and athleticism. These scholars challenge traditional thinking, invoke passionate debate, and test social comfort levels. The social taboo that currently surrounds racial topics need to be consistently challenged in order to prevent the subject from becoming suppressed by closed discussion and debate fueled simply by emotions. Race as a topic, considering its difficult and trying history, so rightfully deserves more.

Appendix

The following tables display the various descriptive statistical data for each picture. The data is based on the competitive ratings that were ascribed to each pictured athlete by the participating athlete. The table displays the number of participants (N) that gave an answer for each event category. The table also has the minimum and maximum ratings, as well as the mean and standard deviations for each event category. Again, each event category was rated on a 0 to 6 scale (0 = no ability, 3 neutral, 6 very competitive). The event category highlighted represents that event category with the highest average competitive rating.

Descriptive Statistics for Picture One

Event Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sprinter	12	2	6	3.75	1.138
Middle Distance	13	2	6	3.85	.987
Distance	12	0	4	2.33	1.073
Valid N (listwise)	12				

Descriptive Statistics for Picture Two

Event Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sprinter	12	2	6	4.08	1.240
Middle Distance	13	3	5	3.92	.641
Distance	12	0	5	2.83	1.697
Valid N (listwise)	12				

Descriptive Statistics for Picture Three 

Event Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sprinter	13	3	6	4.54	.877
Middle Distance	12	1	6	3.83	1.193
Distance	12	0	5	2.25	1.603
Valid N (listwise)	12				

Descriptive Statistics for Picture Four 

Event Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sprinter	12	1	5	3.33	1.155
Middle Distance	12	3	6	4.25	.866
Distance	13	0	5	3.15	1.676
Valid N (listwise)	12				

Descriptive Statistics for Picture Five 

Event Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sprinter	12	1	6	3.33	1.614
Middle Distance	13	3	6	4.15	.899
Distance	12	0	6	3.33	1.826
Valid N (listwise)	12				

The next section of tables for the picture test display the results of each event category for each individual pictured athlete. Each table displays the number of times a particular rating was given within the event category (the frequency). The table also displays the percentage and cumulative percentage for each given rating. Some of the tables display a missing value because one participant didn't supply an answer for every event category listed under each picture. The first group of tables in this section displays the results for the sprinter category. The highlighted rows on these tables represent the ratings that were attributed as competitive or higher (a rating of 4 or higher on the 0 to 6 scale)

Results of Sprinter Category for Picture One

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	2	15.4	16.7	16.7
	3	2	15.4	16.7	33.3
	4	6	46.2	50.0	83.3
	5	1	7.7	8.3	91.7
	6	1	7.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results of Sprinter Category for Picture Two

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1	7.7	8.3	8.3
	3	4	30.8	33.3	41.7
	4	1	7.7	8.3	50.0
	5	5	38.5	41.7	91.7
	6	1	7.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results for Sprinter Category for Picture Three

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	1	7.7	7.7	7.7
	4	6	46.2	46.2	53.8
	5	4	30.8	30.8	84.6
	6	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Results for Sprinter Category of Picture Four

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	7.7	8.3	8.3
	2	1	7.7	8.3	16.7
	3	5	38.5	41.7	58.3
	4	3	23.1	25.0	83.3
	5	2	15.4	16.7	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results for the Sprinter Category of Picture Five

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	7.7	8.3	8.3
	2	4	30.8	33.3	41.7
	3	2	15.4	16.7	58.3
	4	1	7.7	8.3	66.7
	5	3	23.1	25.0	91.7
	6	1	7.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

The next set of tables displays the data gathered for the middle distance category. This data is displayed in the same table format used previously for the sprinter category. The highlighted rows on these tables represent the ratings that were attributed as competitive or higher (a rating of 4 or higher on the 0 to 6 scale).

Results of Middle Distance Category for Picture One

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1	7.7	7.7	7.7
	3	3	23.1	23.1	30.8
	4	7	53.8	53.8	84.6
	5	1	7.7	7.7	92.3
	6	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Results of Middle Distance Category for Picture Two

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	3	23.1	23.1	23.1
	4	8	61.5	61.5	84.6
	5	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Results of Middle Distance Category for Picture Three

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	7.7	8.3	8.3
	3	2	15.4	16.7	25.0
	4	7	53.8	58.3	83.3
	5	1	7.7	8.3	91.7
	6	1	7.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results for Middle Distance Category of Picture Four

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	2	15.4	16.7	16.7
	4	6	46.2	50.0	66.7
	5	3	23.1	25.0	91.7
	6	1	7.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results for Middle Distance of Picture Five

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	3	23.1	23.1	23.1
	4	6	46.2	46.2	69.2
	5	3	23.1	23.1	92.3
	6	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

The last group of tables from the picture test display data for the distance category; this data is also displayed in the same format used for both the sprinter and middle distance categories. The highlighted rows on these tables represent the ratings that were attributed as competitive or higher (a rating of 4 or higher on the 0 to 6 scale).

Results of Distance Category for Picture One

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	7.7	8.3	8.3
	1	1	7.7	8.3	16.7
	2	4	30.8	33.3	50.0
	3	5	38.5	41.7	91.7
	4	1	7.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results of Distance Category for Picture Two

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	7.7	8.3	8.3
	1	2	15.4	16.7	25.0
	2	2	15.4	16.7	41.7
	3	3	23.1	25.0	66.7
	4	1	7.7	8.3	75.0
	5	3	23.1	25.0	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results of Distance Category for Picture Three

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	15.4	16.7	16.7
	1	2	15.4	16.7	33.3
	2	3	23.1	25.0	58.3
	3	2	15.4	16.7	75.0
	4	2	15.4	16.7	91.7
	5	1	7.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

Results for Distance Category of Picture Four 

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	7.7	7.7	7.7
	1	2	15.4	15.4	23.1
	2	1	7.7	7.7	30.8
	3	2	15.4	15.4	46.2
	4	4	30.8	30.8	76.9
	5	3	23.1	23.1	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Results for Distance Category of Picture Five 

Based on a 1 to 6 scale (0=none, 3=undecided, 6=very competitive)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	7.7	8.3	8.3
	1	1	7.7	8.3	16.7
	2	1	7.7	8.3	25.0
	3	4	30.8	33.3	58.3
	4	2	15.4	16.7	75.0
	5	1	7.7	8.3	83.3
	6	2	15.4	16.7	100.0
	Total	12	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	7.7		
Total		13	100.0		

The following set of tables displays where used to interpret data generated by the close-ended questions in the interview that asked participating athletes to rate already given reasons for participating in Track and Field. The table below displays the sated reasons the descriptive statistics for all the numerical responses that were rated for each reason given. The table has the number of participants that gave a response (N), given the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation.

Descriptive Statistics

Given Reason	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
To be part of a Team	13	2	5	3.38	.961
Social Aspects (Making friends)	13	0	5	3.23	1.641
Pressure from Family	13	0	4	.92	1.605
Pressure from Friends	13	0	6	1.69	1.932
Athletic Ability	13	3	6	4.77	.832
Valid N (listwise)	13				

The next group of tables breaks down the data further by displaying the frequency, percentage, and cumulative percentage for the various ratings for each reason given. The rows that are highlighted are the number of athlete participants that rated a particular reason as influential or higher (rating of 4 or higher). Each reason given was rated on a 0 to 6 scale (0 was none, 3 neutral, and 6 was extremely influential).

Wanted to be part of a Team

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	3	23.1	23.1	23.1
	3	3	23.1	23.1	46.2
	4	6	46.2	46.2	92.3
	5	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Social Aspects (making friends)

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	15.4	15.4	15.4
	2	1	7.7	7.7	23.1
	3	2	15.4	15.4	38.5
	4	6	46.2	46.2	84.6
	5	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Pressure form Family

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	9	69.2	69.2	69.2
	1	1	7.7	7.7	76.9
	3	1	7.7	7.7	84.6
	4	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Pressure form Friends

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	5	38.5	38.5	38.5
	1	2	15.4	15.4	53.8
	2	3	23.1	23.1	76.9
	4	2	15.4	15.4	92.3
	6	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Athletic Ability

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	1	7.7	7.7	7.7
	4	3	23.1	23.1	30.8
	5	7	53.8	53.8	84.6
	6	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

The set of similar tables display the ratings assigned for why they compete within the particular events that they do. The first table displays the descriptive statistics for each given response, which includes the number that responded (N), minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation.

Descriptive Statistics

Given Reason	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Friends Competed	13	0	6	3.31	2.057
Family Competed	13	0	4	1.31	1.653
Could Identify	13	0	5	2.85	2.035
Shared Ethnicity	13	0	5	2.46	1.808
Not Good at any other events	13	0	6	3.38	2.468
Naturally fast/talent	13	0	6	4.38	1.710
Valid N (listwise)	13				

The next group tables break down even each given reason, displaying the number of athletes that gave a particular numerical rating (the frequency) , and the percentage and cumulative percentage. The rows that are highlighted are the number of athlete participants that rated a particular reason as influential or higher (rating of 4 or higher). Each reason given was rated on a 0 to 6 scale (0 was none, 3 neutral, and 6 was extremely influential).

Friends competed within those events

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Rating Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	3	23.1	23.1	23.1
	3	2	15.4	15.4	38.5
	4	4	30.8	30.8	69.2
	5	3	23.1	23.1	92.3
	6	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Family competed within those events

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	7	53.8	53.8	53.8
	1	1	7.7	7.7	61.5
	2	1	7.7	7.7	69.2
	3	2	15.4	15.4	84.6
	4	2	15.4	15.4	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Could identify with individuals who competed within those events

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	3	23.1	23.1	23.1
	1	1	7.7	7.7	30.8
	2	1	7.7	7.7	38.5
	3	2	15.4	15.4	53.8
	4	2	15.4	15.4	69.2
	5	4	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Shared Ethnicity with more individuals who also compete in those events

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	4	30.8	30.8	30.8
	3	5	38.5	38.5	69.2
	4	3	23.1	23.1	92.3
	5	1	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Would not be good in any other events

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	3	23.1	23.1	23.1
	2	3	23.1	23.1	46.2
	4	1	7.7	7.7	53.8
	5	2	15.4	15.4	69.2
	6	4	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

Natural Fast/talent

Based on a 1 to 6 scale
(0=none, 3=neutral, 6= extremely influential)

Ratings Given by Athletes		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	7.7	7.7	7.7
	3	2	15.4	15.4	23.1
	4	3	23.1	23.1	46.2
	5	3	23.1	23.1	69.2
	6	4	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	13	100.0	100.0	

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