

Chapter 5

Ethnicity and Race in Canadian Sport

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Daniel Igali waves our national flag at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games after winning Canada's first-ever gold medal in freestyle wrestling. Reuters

We all have individual characteristics that differentiate us from or connect us to others. Hair colour, gender, height, skin colour, ethnicity, and eye colour are a few examples of such characteristics. Think of how you would describe yourself for a minute. When we thought about this question, Vicky described herself as female, brown haired, hazel eyed, 5'4", urban Canadian, and white. Susan described her physical attributes in a similar way, but she lives in a rural community. Yet as each of us live out or "do" our lives, those individual characteristics are continually reshaped by our experiences. For example, Vicky recalls how some children have considered her tall, while adults often claim that she is short. Her eye colour varies with what she wears, and her ethnicity has been shaped by years in the Canadian north and the specific cultural practices she learned there and continues to do. She is also often quizzed about her race, because of her research into First Nations peoples. Susan notes that her studies of Canadian immigrants and children in those immigrant families help her to reflect on what is meaningful in her own life, having been raised within a large extended Italian Canadian family. So while, when asked, we can each describe our individual characteristics, that description changes over time and from the perspectives of others. We continuously construct the ways we see ourselves, and

that involves the social world in which we live. Our individual characteristics are much less definitive than we might at first think.

Some of these characteristics take on a particular social significance in our society. While eye colour remains unimportant at a social level, characteristics such as ethnicity and skin colour—or race—have become socially constructed markers of difference. Persistent patterns of unequal treatment have developed around them, in North American society and in sport. Individuals assigned those characteristics get identified as part of a group that shares traits differentiating it from others. Our sense of ourselves is thus constructed in relation to groups we believe are similar to or different from us.

We know ourselves and our culture in part through our bodies. For example, as we “do” physical activities, such as sports, we shape, reinforce, or challenge the understanding we—and others—hold about our racial and ethnic identities. Students in a physical education class learning basketball all perform the same activities, but the ways those movements reinforce or challenge each individual’s sense of his or her own race and ethnicity influences the meaning assigned to those movements and the enjoyment felt or not felt within the class. After school, an Asian youth may head to a program where she participates with others from her ethnic background in activities tied to her cultural roots. Through this process, she reinforces the importance of her ethnic identity in a manner that was not possible in her earlier gym class on basketball. A black male student practising with the school basketball team at the end of the day feels confirmed as a talented athlete as he emulates the playing styles of his favourite NBA players. Another student heads home to spend time with her family, having no interest in afterschool athletics. Day after day, these students continue to know themselves and to represent themselves to others through their involvement or noninvolvement in physical activities.

This chapter explores the relationships among movement, race, and ethnicity in Canada. It builds on two assumptions. First, we believe that movement opportunities in Canada, such as sport, potentially provide the opportunity for all individuals to generate a feeling of pride in their cultural heritage. However, the sport system has been structured so that some individuals—specifically white Canadians of European descent—are privileged to feel racial and ethnic pride more so than others, although these hegemonic patterns (like all social relations) are slowly changing. Second, we encourage our readers to enter into a reflective process through which they can better understand how ethnicity and race are constructed in our society and in sport. By doing so, they can more knowledgeably shape their own identities while honouring the individual identities desired by others—prerequisites for shifting existing hegemonic, unequal ethnic and racial relations and creating an inclusive, multicultural sport system in Canada.

ETHNICITY AND SPORT IN CANADA

The Concept of Ethnicity

Sport is one of the most popular leisure activities Canadians enjoy. Whether we enjoy sport as spectators, as recreational participants, or as elite athletes, Canadians are extremely interested and invested in sports. Our ethnic identity shapes and is shaped by

our sport participation. Ethnicity refers to the values, beliefs, and behaviours we share in common with a subcultural group to which we most closely identify based on common country of origin, language, religion, or cultural traditions (Hutchison, 1988). Ethnicity takes into account our religious practices, our clothing, our accents and language, the food we eat, and what we value as a result of our cultural heritage. Ethnicity, like race, has social significance in our society. To understand ethnicity and sport we need to know about ethnicity in general and how one's ethnic identity may influence decisions and preferences around sport participation. We also benefit from knowing about past trends and theory developed to explain trends or beliefs about ethnicity.

Everyone can be linked to at least one ethnic group, whether it is one of the dominant European, white, English- or French-speaking groups, or one of the more than 200 other ethnic groups known to exist in this country (Statistics Canada, 2011). The scope of Canada's extraordinary national diversity was evident in the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) when more than 20% of the population reported being foreign born and 19.1% of Canadians identified themselves as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2013c). Thanks to unprecedented levels of immigration, especially in Canadian "arrival cities" (Saunders, 2010), 13 ethnic groups surpassed the 1 million mark in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). As new immigrants arrive in Canada from non-Western countries and as the number of people who identify with diverse racial and ethnic groups grows, ethnic diversity in sport is one of the many parts of social life that is changing.

Diversity Theories

With the passing of the Multiculturalism Act of 1988, Canada officially declared its support for cultural freedom of minority peoples. The term *cultural pluralism*, first introduced in 1915 by Horace Kallen, refers to the approach our country takes with regard to receiving and welcoming immigrants. It means that in Canada, we support newcomers in preserving their cultural identity if they choose to do so (Glazer, 1970). Our approach differs from that of our neighbours to the south. In the United States, immigrants are expected to shed their unique cultural practices, adopt new ones based on the values and beliefs of the host country, and as a result of this process of assimilation contribute toward building a better nation. This second approach is commonly referred to as the *melting pot* perspective (Glazer, 1970). Cultural pluralism, on the other hand, recognizes that for many newcomers meaningful experience incorporates "stubborn chunks" of cultural practice and preference, and is more like a chowder than a melting pot" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 219). Some aspects of life, of course, do change with immersion in the host culture. But other cultural "chunks" remain intact and provide the basis on which some minority people create cultures "in between" that of the dominant majority and the cultures known to the migrants in their homeland (Bhabha, 1994; Hollingshead, 1998).

As a result of our legislation, Canadians officially support physical cultural practices like sport, dance, music, and religious expressions that are meaningful to people of all minority cultural groups and are meaningful to the experience of leisure. However, Claude Denis (1997) challenges this description of Canada, instead labelling it a "whitestream" society because it has been primarily structured on the basis of European white experiences. In keeping with Denis's hegemonic framing of the nature of ethnic and race relations in

Canada, academics and practitioners have only recently begun to explore the meaning of leisure from the perspective of immigrant groups, as well as ethnic minority physical activity practices and the challenges they face related to discrimination, racism, and indifference from dominant group Canadians in mainstream sport.

In spite of Canada's policy of multiculturalism, many immigrants and those who identify as racial and ethnic minority people strive to take on characteristics of their host culture to improve the likelihood that they will "fit in." *Assimilation* is the term used when immigrants adopt the culture of the dominant group (Li, 1990). The underlying assumption of assimilation theory is that ethnically distinct cultural traditions are detrimental to one's ability to fit in and that it is not desirable to be different. This assimilationist approach, which reproduces existing hegemonic social relations, is problematic because it normalizes mainstream cultural practices as the "appropriate" behaviour for all. As well, as new immigrant groups arrive in places like Canada, looking and sounding different from dominant groups, it is not always possible to fit in and become like the majority since race, culture, and behavioural diversity sets newcomers apart. In our discussion, "dominant" refers to those people in Canada who hold the power to make decisions and to exert control over others.

Terminology used in this discussion is worth explanation. We use the word *minority* when referring to people who identify with non-European-white groups and individuals. We realize the problematic nature of this term, since most of the world's population is non-European-white. However, in Canada most people identify as European-white, and since terms like *minority racial and ethnic groups* tend to be commonly used in Canada we continue to use these terms.

In trying to understand the behaviour of ethnic minority people, researchers have relied primarily on two theoretical perspectives: *marginality theory* and *ethnicity theory*. Marginality theory suggests that the differences in participation in dominant cultural activities are due to the poverty experienced by many minority racial and ethnic people, which is a function of the discrimination they face in accessing training and education as well as jobs. Therefore, under-participation in activities like sport is thought to be due to their marginalization in society. This perspective helps explain why some minority group Canadians do not choose the same sports as the dominant majority population. However, it falls short when applied to those immigrants and ethnic minority people who are not poor and who have somewhat different sport participation patterns, such as South Asian Canadians who play field hockey, cricket, and other sports that are not popular among dominant group Canadians but are growing in popularity among people who identify with Canada's ethnic populations (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). For example, the popularity of cricket is on the rise across Canada, and in 2012 Cricket Canada is reported to have proposed that a cricket stadium be built in Toronto (Maclean's, 2012).

Ethnicity theory is based on Washburne's (1978) thesis that differences in leisure between dominant and minority populations are the result of variations in the value systems and social norms of the minority groups. This approach suggests that ethnic subgroups interact with dominant cultural groups for school, jobs, commerce, and when needs cannot be met within the subgroup. However, many ethnic minority people maintain their distinct cultural traditions and pass them along to their children and subsequent generations. Using this approach, researchers compare behaviours such as sport participation patterns of ethnic minority people to the leisure experience of dominant group members. Problematic here is

that the leisure of the white, Eurocentric majority is held as the norm and minority people are considered as “others” for the sake of comparisons, similar to the “whitestream,” hegemonic approach mentioned earlier. This approach fails to explore the unique opportunities for leisure evident in minority cultural groups as a result of their cultural heritage.

We have found that “whitestream sport” is a useful concept for analyzing race and ethnic relations in Canadian sport because it emphasizes that the existing hegemonic sport system is primarily structured by and most effective for individuals who align with white, European values. Additionally, marginality theory identifies that poverty plays a role in limiting access to mainstream sport for some minority ethnic groups. Finally, ethnicity theory emphasizes that the differing value systems of immigrant Canadians can lead to different preferences for sport or different ways of organizing and playing mainstream sports. The pattern of immigration trends in Canada helps to explain how whitestream Canadian society has been created, and also how it is challenged by increasingly diverse minority group Canadians.

Immigration Trends

In the early part of the 20th century, Canada’s economic, industrial, agricultural, and commercial growth and development was fuelled by many waves of immigrants seeking a better life than what was available in their countries of origin. Canada recruited its first large wave of immigrants from Great Britain, Europe, and the United States. However, changes to immigration patterns occurred in the last decades of the 20th century and first years of the 21st century when migration flows shifted. New waves of immigrants tended to move from “east” to “west” (i.e., from former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries to the United States, Canada, and Israel), and from countries of the “south” to countries of the “north” (such as from South Asia to Canada) (Chiswick & Miller, 2002). The immigrants of the new millennium often look and sound different from the dominant groups, and their distinctiveness in terms of skin colour, language, clothing, religion, and other cultural practices has often resulted in their marginalization.

To learn the language skills necessary for job attainment and to achieve a sense of belonging, immigrant groups may initially cluster into concentrated areas of similar immigrants or ethnic enclaves. Here they find important sources of social support, whether that be in employment opportunities, leisure such as sport participation, education, or shelter (Chiswick & Miller, 2002; Rosenberg, 2003). Ethnic enclaves and institutionally complete ethnic communities have been well established in Canada since the earliest minority group settlers arrived here (Breton, 1964). Communities considered to have high levels of institutional completeness are those in which a range of social supports and relevant services are available to minority people, and often these are delivered within well-established ethnic enclaves. This is what happened in the case of early Jewish, Italian, and German immigrants who formed small communities or enclaves in some of the major Canadian cities. Within the enclaves, people were able to access culturally and ethnically relevant social services, familiar food, and familiar religious and cultural traditions, all delivered in the language of their homeland and by people with common ethnic roots. For example, late 19th- and early 20th-century Jewish immigrants to Toronto settled primarily in the district known as St. John’s Ward, where they experienced abysmal housing conditions but had the benefit of social supports such as language, religion, food, music, and other cultural goods that were familiar to them and which facilitated their settlement

(Rosenberg, 2003). Sport organizations operated by ethnic community associations provided youth important opportunities for affirming membership within their own ethnic group and for drawing together people from diverse ethnic groups around common sport interests (Rosenberg, 2003). Those who enter a host community without the help of friends and family members from their country of origin may find they have no alternative but to try to assimilate quickly into the dominant society, although that process is likely to be extraordinarily challenging (Chiswick & Miller, 2002).

We note that among second- and third-generation immigrants there does not seem to be the same degree of interest in living within an enclave. This may be attributed to the high level of educational accomplishments of the children of many groups of immigrants, which is particularly evident in studies of children of immigrants from China, South Asia, and other Asian groups. However, difficulties in achieving job mobility are evident among Afro-Caribbean blacks and some other minorities relative to their educational achievements (Reitz, Zhang, & Hawkins, 2011).

The available information from the 2011 census does not distinguish between those who report a single ethnicity and those who report multiple ethnic identities, which masks our ability to clearly understand the complexity of ethnic identity in Canada. This identification with more than one ethnic minority group, sometimes referred to as *hybridity* or *part cultures* (Bhabha, 1994), is a growing trend that will undoubtedly affect the participation of Canadians in cultural activities and sporting events in years to come. For example, Dallaire's studies of youth participants in the Francophone Games in Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick found that the youth tended to identify themselves as having hybrid identities or a "melange of francophoneness and anglophoneness" (Dallaire & Denis, 2005, p. 143). These youth, like the South Asian youth in Tirone and Pedlar's study (2000), construct and reconstruct their identities, drawing upon their inherited traditions and upon the cultural traditions of the dominant group in which they are immersed for much of their school and social lives. While francophone youth in Dallaire's studies participated in the same sports as are offered at the Olympics, other minority youth drew upon the traditional sports they learned from their minority community. As minority youth "do" sports such as field hockey and cricket, common among youth in South Asia, and sports like dragonboat racing and martial arts that originated within minority communities, dominant group youth are also able to access these nontraditional sports, thereby changing the nature of some sport participation in Canada.

Not all immigrants and ethnic minority people choose to live in places where other minorities like themselves also live. Chiswick and Miller (2002) explain the value of immersion into the dominant society where ethnic minority people gain exposure and social capital necessary for career development and economic success. Young immigrants and children of ethnic minority families are often immersed in or at least familiarized with dominant cultural practices because they usually attend schools with peers from a vast range of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Schools therefore provide opportunities for learning the values and beliefs of diverse peers and for learning the priorities of the institutions with which minorities are expected to conform. Sport is very much a part of the Canadian school system; for many ethnic minority youth, school is often the place where they first encounter sport participation.

Immigration trends in recent decades are quite different from those of the past 150 years. This change is evident in data collected for the 2011 census, in which 6.2 million people, or 19.1% of the national population, identified themselves as members of a visible

minority group. This represents an increase from the 2006 census and is attributed to the large numbers of new immigrants from non-European countries. The three largest visible minority groups in Canada are South Asians, Chinese, and blacks, followed by Filipinos, Latin Americans, Arabs, South East Asians, West Asians, Koreans, and Japanese (Statistics Canada, 2013c). As more and more newcomers and visible minorities become immersed in Canadian society, their sport traditions and preferences will likely continue to have an impact on how sport is experienced in this country.

Ethnic Minority People and Sport in Canada

Since many of the early 20th-century white settler groups were not British or French, they brought with them a number of sports that were not familiar to dominant group Canadians as part of their distinct traditional cultural practices. For example, Estonians, Finlanders, and people from the former Czechoslovakia introduced modern and rhythmic gymnastics to Canada after World War II, and Southeast Asians have made popular a number of their traditional sports such as tai chi and karate (Burnet & Palmer, 1988). In those early days, sports clubs and teams were sponsored by some ethnic communities and churches to engage the youth of the community in meaningful activity and to shelter participants from discriminatory practices of dominant sport and recreation associations (Kidd, 1996b; McBride, 1975). Exclusionary practices of dominant group sports associations gave rise to sports teams and clubs sponsored by workers' movements and political organizations whose membership was composed of minority ethnic workers. These included sports teams supported by Canadian communists in the 1920s and 1930s (Kidd, 1996b).

Ethnic sport associations remain a valued part of institutionally complete Canadian ethnic communities. These associations provide important opportunities for youth to experience sport and leisure activities similar to those of dominant group peers within organizations that their parents support. In a study of children of immigrants from South Asia, Tirone and Pedlar (2000) learned that during school years prior to university, South Asian clubs and associations were an important venue for sport and physical activity for many of the youth. Several participants in that longitudinal study, which began in 1996, described how they and their families participated in sports such as badminton and volleyball with other South Asian families who rented public gymnasium space exclusively for use by their group (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). Stodolska and Jackson (1998) describe a similar pattern of sports provision and participation in Polish Canadian ethnic clubs.

Sport and recreation participation is beneficial for new immigrant youth, providing opportunities for social integration with other youth in their neighbourhoods. It is the source of both embedded and autonomous social capital. *Embedded social capital* refers to the connection between people based on trust and common values, which serves to unite people within an enclave or ethnic group. *Autonomous social capital* is the trust and respect that can develop between people of diverse backgrounds and that leads to opportunities for people from an enclave to interact outside of their homogeneous group (Woolcock, 1998). While high levels of embedded social capital mean people within a homogeneous group are well connected to one another, those connections may not provide group members with information and connections they desire to be recognized and to prosper outside of the enclave. Autonomous social capital is useful when people want to interact and be recognized for their skills and potential outside of an enclave.

There are several reasons why ethnic sport associations have continued to exist. Sports teams, music, cuisine, language, and other cultural traditions are an expression of group identity (Burnet & Palmer, 1988). These ethnic sport organizations also provide a supportive environment. For example, worker sport associations and ethnic clubs provided sport and physical activities for early immigrants who were ridiculed and excluded from mainstream sport associations (Kidd, 1996b). More recently, sport associations like those sponsored by Canadian South Asian cultural associations provide youth with the benefits of sport participation as well as opportunities to meet other South Asian youth their own age in competitive environments their parents support (Tirone, 2000). Ethnic sport associations thus serve to protect participants from the harassment some people experience in mainstream sport.

The popularity of ethnic sports is no more evident than in the sport of soccer. Harney (cited in Burnet & Palmer, 1988) describes participation of ethnic groups in soccer in Toronto in the 1970s. His account describes the 78 teams in the Toronto District Soccer League at that time, more than three-quarters of which displayed ethnic emblems or the names of various countries as team names, such as First Portuguese, Croatia, Serbia White Eagle, Hungaria, and Heidelberg. In the winter of 2005–2006, this multicultural approach was linked to hockey for the first time. An inaugural Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championship was held, where 16 teams of Toronto-area players competed for their “home country,” such as Russia, Finland, Serbia, Japan, China, Korea, Native Canadians, Poland, Greece, and Italy. This tournament launched the new Toronto-based Canadian Multicultural Hockey League (Lewi, 2006). Participation has grown over the years to the point where there were three divisions in the 2013–2014 championship tournament: Culture Cup (women), Heritage, and Premier.

Early ethnic sport associations have, historically, valued competitive success as well as positive group identity. Ethnic sports teams that displayed ethnic insignia often recruited players based on ability and not ethnicity. Seeking the most skilled players, ethnic sports clubs often accepted players of diverse ethnic backgrounds—as was the case when Finnish Canadians, recognized for their skills, were encouraged to take up Canadian sports (Kidd, 1996b). Ethnic minority athletes have been and continue to be a source of pride for their ethnic group. Participation in sports by ethnic minority athletes provides them with opportunities to engage in and experience the values of other cultures, including those of dominant group members.

Ethnicity, Poverty, and Access to Sport

While few Canadians would argue against the health and social benefits of most sport participation, especially for children, we have not been able to ensure the participation of all children in healthy physical activity and sport. Poverty has long been known to prevent many Canadian youth from participating in organized sports, and often children in poor families have little or no access to unorganized sports and recreation (Frisby et al., 2005; White & McTeer, 2012). Recent immigrants experience poverty at higher rates than Canadian-born workers, and the wage gap between these two groups in the years between 1980 and 2005 increased steadily (Statistics Canada, 2009). In 2003, 80% of new immigrants reported that they found work in Canada during the first two years of residency in this country, but only 42% of them found work in the fields in which they had trained, and many of these people work at jobs that provide little more than subsistence wages (Statistics Canada, 2003). A study of poverty among Torontonians indicates one-third of the immigrant families in Toronto in 2001 lived in higher-poverty neighbourhoods, and that number represents an increase of

400% between 1981 and 2001 (United Way of Greater Toronto, 2004). The same study reports that visible minorities were eight times more likely to live in poverty than they were in 1981. Far fewer children in low-income families participate in sport compared with children in high-income families (Frisby et al., 2005). Ethnic minority youth in low-income families can also face additional limitations because of parental priorities that emphasize academic pursuits and discourage participation in sports (Rosenberg, 2003; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000).

Discrimination

Another barrier to sport participation that affects some ethnic minority Canadians is discrimination, both situational and systemic. In a study of leisure and recreation of teenagers who were the children of South Asian immigrants, racism and indifference were noted as reasons why some youth stopped participating in sports (Tirone, 2000). That group explained how, when faced with overt racism or situations in which they were criticized or ridiculed because of skin colour, clothing, or religious practices, no one in a position of authority attempted to intervene in the situation. In another study of new immigrants to the Halifax area, a young university student who emigrated from the Middle East explained that he felt discrimination played a part in why he was not able to play soccer for his high school team. He had been an accomplished soccer player in his homeland prior to emigration, and when he arrived in Halifax as a high school student he attempted to try out for the school soccer team but was told that all positions were filled and he was not given a chance to demonstrate

Box 5.1

Immigrants and Sport

New immigrants and other Canadians who identify with diverse ethnic, racial, and religious groups benefit from involvement in sport, leisure, and recreation in many ways. For example, sport and recreation provide opportunities for newly arrived immigrants to meet their neighbours and peers at school, to learn and practise English or French, and to engage in activity that contributes to their physically active and healthy lifestyles. Susan Tirone's studies of immigrants and their children illustrate some interesting and unique patterns of sport involvement of immigrants. For example, in a study she conducted with co-researcher Lori Livingston in Halifax in 2007, they learned about immigrants who are involved in recreation and elite-level sports and coaching. In that study it was evident that immigrants from diverse ethnic, racial, and religious groups engage in sports as part of their leisure, as a means to gain acceptance and a sense of belonging in their communities, and in some cases as a source of income for those who immigrate to be professional coaches (Livingston, Tirone, Miller, & Smith, 2008; Tirone, Livingston, Miller, & Smith, 2010).

Tirone's longitudinal study of leisure in the lives of children of immigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh reveals the difficulties and tremendous advantages young South Asians encountered as they pursued sport, recreation, and leisure. For the youth in that study, it was evident that sport has the potential to facilitate inclusion for some young people while it is the source of exclusion and discrimination for others, as we explain in this chapter. Sport and leisure may also be a tremendous opportunity for young people to explore the traditional cultural practices of the ethnic groups they identify with and to introduce these traditions to their non-South Asian friends.

Tirone's work illustrates that young people who develop a level of comfort in situations where they interact with people of many different cultures, religions, and with people of varying races are well positioned for careers and other civic roles in which they will need to interact across cultures. Sport is an ideal venue in which young people can develop an understanding of and appreciation for cultural diversity (Tirone, 2010; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000).

his skills. He satisfied his love for the game by volunteering as a coach for youth soccer, and upon entering university was recruited to play varsity soccer (Tirone, 2005).

Ethnic identity has thus shaped and been shaped by sport participation in Canada. While participants from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds can benefit from their involvement in sport, leisure, and recreation (see Box 5.1), barriers to sport participation based on ethnic identity are often compounded by racism. The next section explores ways that racial identity shapes and has been shaped by sport participation.

RACE AND SPORT IN CANADA

The Concept of Race

Unlike the concept of *ethnicity*, *race* is a term used to establish socially constructed distinctions between groups of people based on their genetic heritage. These distinctions, marked by skin colour, take on social significance because of differences assigned to members of these groups. For example, we could look at a group of people and assume that some are white, black, Aboriginal, or Asian. It is, however, the belief that the colour of their skin indicates immutable differences between them that makes race a socially significant category in our society. We might look to white people for leadership, black people for athletic talent, Aboriginal peoples for environmental guidance, and Asian Canadians for academic excellence. By assuming that race automatically gives individuals an advantage in some areas more so than others, we are reproducing race-based understandings of human behaviour.

Skin colour has taken on social meanings in North America that hegemonically privilege white people over others. A hierarchy of privilege/discrimination has thus been created—commonly referred to as *racism*. Carl James explains it this way:

Racism . . . is an uncritical acceptance of a negative social definition of a group identified by physical features such as skin colour. People justify their racist attitudes and perceptions by associating perceived differences between groups with the presence (or absence) of certain biological characteristics and social abilities. (James, 1996, p. 26)

Racial classification systems and ideas about race emerged in the 16th and 17th centuries while Europeans were exploring and claiming imperial dominion over different parts of the world. As they encountered people who appeared and acted differently, these strangers were placed in an evolutionary hierarchy. Those most similar to the European explorers were judged to be the most evolved and civilized, and whiteness became the norm by which others were judged. The exploitation of people from other “races” thus became hegemonically justified on the basis of their presumed inferiority relative to Europeans.

Social Darwinism extended Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection into the social realm. This theory provided British and American social theorists with a scientific tool for determining the superiority of some races over others, and thus with a justification for endorsing racial inequality (Booth & Tatz, 2000). The presence of slavery in Canada, beginning in 1628 (Spence, 1999), and the colonization and legislative regulation of First Nations within North America reinforced the subservient position of blacks and Aboriginal peoples relative to Canadians of European descent in similar ways. This race logic eventually became institutionalized as a racial ideology involving “skin colour with other traits including intelligence, character, and physical characteristics and skills” (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009, p. 262).

Identification by race is not, however, a straightforward process. What did it take, for example, for someone to be considered white, black, Aboriginal, or Asian, and what were the consequences? The social constructedness of this process can be seen in the ways that race was defined for and applied to different groups in Canada. For example, historically, just “one drop of black blood” identified individuals as black, even though they may have had white ancestors. This was even put into legislation in some cases. For example, in Virginia in 1924 “the Racial Integrity Act said that ‘if a child has one drop of negro blood . . . it cannot be counted as white.’” (Trembanis, 2008, note 7, p. 283)

In contrast to this, the British North America Act, which constituted Canada as a country in 1867, identified “Indians” as a race apart from other Canadians and placed them under federal jurisdiction. The Indian Act of 1876, which controlled almost every feature of Aboriginal social life, served to separate them further from other Canadians on the basis of race. Treaties were the third factor regulating Aboriginal life. Here again, the underlying premise was that Aboriginal peoples had an “uncivilized nature” that must be altered before they could enjoy full civil rights. Everyday practices, like performing traditional dances, were outlawed. It was not until 1960 that First Nations, as a race, could vote federally in Canada (Paraschak, 1997).

Chinese migrants were treated differently yet again. They were forced to pay a head tax to enter Canada beginning in 1885, and in 1902 a Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration concluded that Asians were “unfit for full citizenship . . . obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state” (Wickberg, 1988, p. 416). Chinese and East Indian Canadians were not given the right to vote until 1947.

In contrast to these examples, being white in North American society has remained relatively unmarked. White people rarely have to think of themselves in racial terms—they are privileged by race. They have access to opportunities in society without having to worry that their race will be a barrier. However, they may be treated differently because of their ethnic background. For example, on *Hockey Night in Canada* Don Cherry often comments on the differences among—and suitability of—professional hockey players who are Francophone, Anglophone, or European, even though all these athletes would be considered “white” by race (Langford, 2004).

Tiger Woods, a prominent professional golfer of mixed black, Asian, Aboriginal, and white heritage, brought the complexity of defining individuals by race to public notice in 1997. After his successful first year on the tour, and his win at the Masters Tournament specifically, the press heralded him as a successful black golfer. Tiger, however, eventually clarified publicly that he had developed a different racial description for himself as a youth, based on his actual background. He called himself a *Cablinasian*, to reflect his CAucasian, BLack, INdian, and ASIAN genetic heritage. In this way, he highlighted two important points: Racial labels can be assigned to people without those labels being accurate, and the way individuals view themselves may be quite different from the racial category assigned to them by others.

Racial Patterns in Canadian Sport

Canada has an early history of discrimination by race in amateur sport. Cosentino (1998) argues that while *class* formed the basis of amateurism in England, in Canada *race* also became a powerful definer of who could compete. This was evident as early as 1835, when black jockeys were banned from competing at the Niagara Turf Club. The first big regatta in Nova Scotia, in 1826, offered prizes “for first and second class boats and a canoe race for

Indians . . . which was considered the most entertaining . . . [and] remained part of the Nova Scotian scene until at least 1896" (Young, 1988, pp. 87–88). In 1880, Aboriginal players were excluded from competing in amateur competitions for lacrosse—a game that had originated in Aboriginal culture! A special league for black hockey players titled "The Colored Hockey League" was formed in Halifax in 1900, becoming the seventh league in that city—and the first one overtly defined by race (Young, 1988, p. 31). As late as 1913, the Amateur Athletic Association of Canada opted to ban blacks from competing in Canadian amateur boxing championships, since "Competition of whites and coloured men is not working out to the increased growth of sport" (Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, quoted in Cosentino, 1998, p. 13). Even the first definition of an amateur in Canada, created by the Montreal Pedestrian Club in 1873, noted that no "labourer or Indian" could be given that designation.

This pattern of exclusion by race is discussed by Robert Pitter (2006) in relation to hockey, which he sees as part of broader systemic racism in Canadian sport. He details the long history of both Aboriginal and black participants in hockey, along with the delay of their entrance into the National Hockey League (NHL) until 1953 for Aboriginals, when player Fred Sasakamoose joined the league, and 1958 for black players, when Willie O'Ree joined. Racist treatment followed these athletes into the NHL as well. "Aboriginal players depict a Canadian hockey subculture in which racist behaviours are endemic, ranging from routine use of the nickname 'Chief' to pointedly demeaning and hostile treatment" (Pitter, 2006, p. 130). Black players also faced racial taunts and actions within hockey. For example, P. K. Subban of the Montreal Canadiens, who is black, was the target of racist tweets on social media after he scored the winning overtime goal against the Boston Bruins in the 2014 playoffs (Associated Press, 2014). Other players, like Herb Carnegie (1919–2012), were simply banned from playing in the NHL because of the colour of their skin.

The racist mistreatment and exclusion of people of colour from sport can be understood, in part, as ethnocentric distortion (Paraschak, 1989), which further extends hegemonic expectations within Canadian sport by race. When whitestream cultural practices are naturalized as the "norm," select sporting practices of individuals become reframed by those in positions of power as different, less desired, and thus not worthy of support. Aboriginal athlete Tom Longboat, for example, was one of Canada's most successful marathoners in the decade prior to World War I. Despite his many successes, he was accused by his managers and in the media of not training consistently or rigorously enough. Bruce Kidd (1983) ably identifies and debunks the ethnocentric bias embedded in those comments. He analyzes Longboat's training regimen and shows that it was different from, but not inferior to, common training practices of that time period.

In a similar manner, a government review of the Native Sport and Recreation Program in 1977, five years after its inception, criticized Aboriginal recreation organizers for including inappropriate "cultural" activities. While occasional nonsport activities "such as pow wows, music festivals and native cultural traditions workshops" (Paraschak, 1995, p. 4) occurred, the vast majority of activities were Euro-Canadian in orientation but offered within an all-Aboriginal context. Thus, "it is likely that the concerns of government were primarily based on the structure adopted for sport competitions rather than the activities played" (Paraschak, 1995, p. 5). The non-whitestream structuring of such activities, along with the refusal by the National Indian Sports Council to "assimilate" into the National Sport and Recreation Centre, undercut this program's legitimacy within whitestream Sport Canada expectations because these actions did not align with Eurocentric

expectations tied to sport. In effect, the actions of Aboriginal organizers were distorted by Euro-Canadian bureaucrats who suggested that their activities were not legitimate because they did not fit within whitestream, Eurocentric understandings of sport.

Despite the presence of these racist underpinnings in sport, Canada has also been a country where black athletes have, at times, found acceptance more readily than in the United States. Jackie Robinson broke the longstanding colour barrier in Major League Baseball by playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. However, the president of the Dodgers, Branch Rickey, actually signed Robinson in October 1945 to play professionally for the minor league Montreal Royals. While Robinson played for Montreal that first year, he experienced intense racism during games in the United States. In Montreal, however, he had great fan support:

Robinson's play made him a beloved sports figure in Montreal. Children hounded him for autographs, while adults poured into the ballpark to see him steal bases and score runs. As a Montreal sportswriter noted, "For Jackie Robinson and the city of Montreal, it was love at first sight." (Scott, 1987, p. 37)

Three decades later, Warren Moon was able to play professional football as a black quarterback in Canada when that opportunity was not available in the United States. At this point in National Football League (NFL) history, there had only been three black quarterbacks in the starting role: Fritz Pollard (1920), James Harris (1969–1977), and Joe Gilliam (1974) (*Burnaby Now*, 2013). Researchers (e.g., Best, 1987; Leonard, 1987) have demonstrated in a number of sports, including professional football, that during this time decision makers appeared, in accordance with racist ideological beliefs, to be positionally segregating or "stacking" blacks in the athletic running positions because they were supposedly "natural" athletes, while only whites were "stacked" in central, leadership positions, such as quarterback, centre, and middle linebacker, simply because they were assumed to have the ability and intellect to fill such positions.

Warren Moon's treatment by the NFL aligned with this racist belief. After being selected as the 1978 Rose Bowl Most Valuable Player in his role as quarterback, Moon was completely overlooked by the NFL in its 1978 US college draft. As a result, he came to play with the Edmonton Eskimos in the Canadian Football League and won five Grey Cups with them. In 1984 he became the highest-paid player in football when he joined the Houston Oilers of the National Football League (Mullick, 2002), and in 2006 he became the first black quarterback inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

These examples demonstrate different ways that race has been given social meaning in Canadian sport. Such meanings are indicative of broader societal race relations. Frideres (1988), writing on racism in Canadian society, noted that "Racism in Canada from 1800 to 1945 was reflected in restrictive immigration policies and practices regarding non-white immigrants, particularly the Chinese, Blacks and Jews, and by the treatment of native peoples" (p. 1816). Racist sport practices during this time period would thus have reinforced and been shaped by broader understandings of race. Canadian attempts to address racial inequity through legislation coalesced in the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, where equality rights in the public domain were entrenched in Section 15:

Equality Rights

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular,

without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Human rights commissions have also provided a legal avenue for addressing racial inequities in Canada. Participants and administrators who wish to make sport a more welcoming—and legislatively aligned—place for all can benefit by understanding the social construction of race and racism in sport.

Race and Ethnic Relations

In society, individuals always act in relation to others. The possibilities within which we live are thus formed through the “social relations” that exist between individuals and groups. Through social relations, rules are (re)produced concerning how things work and how resources can be distributed. They thus become “power relations,” because those rules always provide for or privilege some people over others. Race and ethnic relations are a particular type of power relation—they privilege individuals on the basis of race or ethnicity. As noted in Chapter 1, power is “the capacity of a person or group of persons to employ resources of different types in order to secure outcomes” (Gruneau, 1988, p. 22).



Rayane Benatti is a 9-year-old Quebec girl sent off the pitch in Gatineau for wearing a hijab in July 2012. She was told that she could not play in the tournament at a local park because her headscarf was a safety hazard.

Bruno Schlumberger/Ottawa Citizen. Reprinted by permission.

It was also noted that there are three measures of power in sport: the ability to structure sport, to establish sport traditions, and to define legitimate meanings and practices associated with dominant sport practices. These measures of power, differently shaped by race and at times by ethnicity, can be seen when looking at mainstream sport and at race-structured sporting opportunities such as all-Aboriginal sport competitions.

Whitestream Sport

As was mentioned earlier, Claude Denis (1997) uses the term *whitestream society* “to indicate that Canadian society, while principally structured on the basis of the European, ‘white,’ experience, is far from being simply ‘white’ in socio-demographic, economic and cultural terms” (p. 13). Extending his term, the rules of mainstream, or “whitestream,” sport have been primarily shaped by individuals of white European heritage in ways that privilege their traditions, practices, meanings, and sport structures. This is an example of *institutionalized racism*, since the structure of the system, if followed, will always produce outcomes that discriminate against those who are not white—it will privilege white people of European heritage over others.

Differential treatment of individuals by race has occurred in whitestream sport in various ways. For example, the ability of George Beers in 1860 to create and then institutionalize lacrosse rules in a manner that he found meaningful, as opposed to the ways the game was played by Aboriginal Canadians, demonstrates his privilege by race over the originators of the game of lacrosse (Cosentino, 1998, p. 15). As well, during this time period black and Aboriginal athletes were banned from competing against white Canadians in a wide variety of sports. If they did compete, descriptors such as “Indian” or “coloured” were added after their name to indicate that they were different from, and subservient to, white competitors.

When overt discrimination was eliminated in sport, other more subtle forms of racism remained. The organization of sport privileged those activities that were played in international competitions, including the Olympics and world championships. The federal government criteria for funding sports reflected this; physical activities that fell outside the whitestream model were not seen as legitimate and were denied federal funding. For example, the Northern Games Society, which has organized yearly Inuit and Dene traditional games festivals in the Northwest Territories since 1970, was informed by letter in 1977 that their federal sport funding would be stopped. The letter pointed out that the Games activities, which had their origin in Aboriginal cultures, were not deemed to be “legitimate sport” according to the parameters of the funding agency. Aboriginal organizers argued that their traditional activities were also sports, but they had less power over defining “legitimate” sports, and thus lost their funding (Paraschak, 1997).

Another drawback to whitestream sport in Canada is the sense of discomfort that is experienced by many marginalized peoples in mainstream sport experiences. Both individual and institutionalized racism in hockey were detailed in a 1991 TSN documentary, *Hockey: A White Man’s Game?* Ted Nolan, an Aboriginal NHL player, spoke of the racism he faced from his teammates as a teenager and the isolation he felt as a result. Other Aboriginal players spoke about the racial slurs they endured while playing. And they spoke about the structure of hockey in Canada, which took them far away from their families and support systems, and how that structure made it more difficult for them to succeed in light of their own cultural practices. Since Aboriginal players were not able to structure sport in preferred ways, they found it difficult to feel part of or to succeed in professional hockey.

Robidoux (2012) extends and updates this analysis through his examination of First Nations men's hockey in Canada. He explores disruptions in hockey practices that point to "border thinking," which entails the perceptions formed by individuals along the borders between mainstream and culturally distinct local practices. Robidoux documents ways that Aboriginal cultural values are being proactively expressed through hockey in First Nations settings under Aboriginal control, rather than merely reproducing Euro-Canadian understandings of the sport, supporting his argument that hockey is "a key site for cultural enunciation, not cultural capitulation." (p. 5) Pitter (2006), in his discussion of Aboriginal and black hockey players in and outside of the NHL, affirms that we need to reassert "the accomplishments of non-whites in hockey, as well as the obstacles they have had to struggle against" (p. 135) to address the current distortion in our knowledge about the history of hockey in Canada. This includes non-white groups such as the Chinese, who are one of the largest visible minorities in Canada yet are largely absent from the NHL. He does mention the few Asian players who have played in the NHL, including Larry Kwong, who played one game in 1948 for the New York Rangers, as well as more recent athletes such as Paul Kariya, Jamie Storr, and Manny Malhotra.

Mary Louise Adams (2006) points out one way that successful black hockey players are made invisible in terms of race. She writes about how, in the 2004 Stanley Cup finals, Jarome Iginla, the black team captain of the Calgary Flames, was profiled in the *Globe and Mail* with a photo headlined "Canada's Captain, Canada's Team." Adams points out that here was an opportunity to "shift hockey's limited racial narratives and, by association, maybe shift notions of Canadianness a little bit too" (p. 75) by acknowledging the ways that "Canada's Captain," being black, represents the changing face of an increasingly multicultural country. Yet the newspaper article made no reference to race, except for a comment in the sidebar by Iginla about having grown up as the only black hockey player on his team. This newspaper article thus reinforced, she argued, that hockey contributes to whiteness in the Canadian imaginary: "[T]he neglect of race seems naively hopeful, reflecting the beliefs that race doesn't matter in sport's meritocracy, that race is not an important Canadian issue" (Adams, 2006, p. 75). This approach to erasing visible minorities' contributions, which could otherwise generate a more multicultural understanding of the sporting landscape in Canada, aligns uncomfortably with the way that Ben Johnson was portrayed in the media as an outstanding Canadian athlete when he won gold at the 1984 Olympics, yet was reframed as a Jamaican Canadian once he was found to have taken steroids and stripped of his medal.

Another reason why some Aboriginal people feel uncomfortable in whitestream sport is the tradition of using Indian mascots for sports teams. This issue is laid out clearly in a 1997 documentary on American Indian mascots in sport titled *In Whose Honor?* (Rosenstein, 1997). Through looking at one case study—Chief Illiniwek, the mascot for the University of Illinois—the documentary points out the devastating impact this stereotypic Indian mascot had on Aboriginal children and the efforts required to try to eliminate it. Relevant to our discussion on whitestream sport are the accounts of how the Indian mascot was created by white students at the university, how the actions of Chief Illiniwek are portrayed as "authentic" even though they are constructed by the performer and often degrade Native traditions, and the comments by white alumni and administrators about the importance of the Chief as part of "their" traditions. More recently, ongoing legal efforts by anti-mascot protesters to have the Washington Redskins lose its trademark protection were bolstered by a "letter from 10 members of [the United States]

Congress who want the name changed because it is offensive to many Native Americans” (Canadian Press, 2013). However, this letter was unable to sway NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, who feels the team’s name is a “unifying force that stands for strength, courage, pride and respect . . . [fostering] fan pride in the team’s heritage” (Canadian Press, 2013). A subsequent letter, signed by 49 US senators, was sent in May 2014 urging Goodell to change the Washington Redskins’s name because “it is a racist slur and the time is ripe to replace it,” thereby sending a clear message “that racism and bigotry have no place in professional sports” (*Windsor Star*, 2014, p. B5).

Patterns of differential treatment based on race have been documented in various professional sports. The Centre for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University (now called the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport), for example, has provided a Racial and Gender Report Card since 2001 that reports on progress in the elimination of discrimination, both among the players and in the administration of sport within the various professional and university men’s and women’s sports leagues operating in North America:

The Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC) is the definitive assessment of hiring practices of women and people of color in most of the leading professional and amateur sports and sporting organizations in the United States. The report considers the composition—assessed by racial and gender makeup—of players, coaches and front office/athletic department employees in our country’s leading sports organizations, including the National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), Major League Soccer (MLS) and Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA), as well as in collegiate athletic departments. (Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, n.d.)

On occasion, efforts have been taken directly by professional sports leagues to address the under-representation of minorities in administrative positions in professional sport. This under-representation is one legacy of the racial ideology that saw people of colour as unfit for leadership and thinking positions. For example, the Rooney Rule, implemented by the NFL in 2003, was one attempt to address the lack of visible minority coaches in the league. At that time, about 65% of players were black, but only about 6% of teams had minority coaches. The controversial rule stipulated that NFL teams must interview at least one minority candidate for head coaching and senior management positions. While this rule led to an increase in minority coaches in the NFL, it only required that a minority candidate be interviewed, which made it a superficially symbolic action at times when the team management already knew who they would be hiring as their next coach. In 2012, for example, no minorities were hired to fill eight coaching and seven general manager positions.

In 2014, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver was applauded for taking a strong public stance against the racist behaviours of Donald Sterling, owner of the Los Angeles Clippers. Sterling was recorded on April 25, 2014, “scold[ing] his mistress for bringing African-Americans to games, namely [Magic] Johnson” (Jenkins, 2014, pp. 70–71). NBA players, the general public, and sponsors were all outraged at his racist comments. Silver announced on April 29 that Donald Sterling was banned for life from associating with the Clippers organization or any NBA activities. He was also fined \$2.5 million, the maximum amount allowed under the NBA constitution, with those funds going to organizations dedicated to anti-discrimination and tolerance efforts. Silver added that he would also encourage the board of governors to force Sterling to sell the team. He finished by saying, “We stand

together in condemning Mr. Sterling's views. They simply have no place in the NBA" (TMZ Sports, 2014). Silver's rapid and punitive actions against Sterling's racist comments and previous behaviours were praised widely in the media as an appropriate way to address racism in professional sport (Jenkins, 2014).

In Canadian amateur soccer, there has recently been controversy over the banning by the Quebec Soccer Federation of youth wearing turbans because they are "unsafe." The director general of the provincial organization, when asked about its decision, commented that "if Sikh kids want to play soccer while wearing a turban there's an easy solution: they can play in their own yard . . . the reason to maintain the ban is for player safety reasons. . . . When asked how many injuries have been linked to turbans [the director general] said there are none" (Associated Press, 2013). Outrage was expressed across the country, including protests by soccer players on one team whose members all donned turbans to play. The Canadian Soccer Association suspended the Quebec Federation for refusing to overturn this decision. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) then addressed the issue. In its ruling, FIFA specifically addressed Canada and said that men's head coverings were permitted as long as they met safety standards and complied with rules such as being the same colour as uniforms. The rule applied "in all areas and on all levels of the Canadian football community," FIFA said (Peritz, 2013). The Quebec Soccer Federation subsequently revoked its decision to align with the FIFA rule clarification.

Whitestream sport, then, provides varying opportunities for athletes depending on their race. This differential treatment can be overt, such as racial slurs that make participation uncomfortable for those groups. But discriminatory treatment is also, at times, built into the existing system of sport. In Canada, for example, the discriminatory treatment of French Canadians in the NHL has been explored in terms of salary discrimination, entry discrimination, under-representation at certain positions (or "stacking"), and under-representation on certain teams. For example, Longley (2000) completed a study that looked at all French Canadians playing in English Canada or the United States on NHL teams from 1943 to 1998. His analysis identified an under-representation of French Canadian players on English Canadian versus US teams. After discounting many other explanations, Longley provides support for the thesis that French-English tensions may lead English Canadian teams to discriminate against French Canadian players. This explanation was strengthened when the degree of under-representation on English Canadian teams was shown to be greater during seasons when sovereignist political threats in Quebec were highest. This research demonstrates that ethnicity, as well as race, affects sporting opportunities. Marginalized groups have thus had to look elsewhere for alternative sport opportunities—or to create some themselves.

Doing Race, Doing Racism

Race as a socially constructed idea becomes naturalized (i.e., accepted as "truth") as individuals, on a daily basis, behave as if it were true. West and Zimmerman (1991), in their discussion on "doing gender," point out that this process involves individuals behaving in appropriately masculine or feminine ways, "but it is a situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production" (p. 14). Applying this concept to race, "doing race" means that individuals act in relation to each other in ways that confirm their socially constructed beliefs about race. It is through the acting out, the "doing" of race on a day-by-day basis, both in terms of our own

race and the race we assign to others, that we maintain a society where race has social meaning and consequences.

Stereotypes—rigid beliefs about the characteristics of a racial group—take on importance as we live or “do” them into existence by operating as if they were true. Spence (1999), in his study of black male athletes in a Canadian high school, heard from these youth that their teachers encouraged them athletically but not academically. This treatment fits with the stereotype that blacks as a race are athletically more and academically less gifted than whites. As these athletes worked hard on athletic competence and gained status through their success, they had less time to give to academics, and thus their actions reinforced the stereotype. All the while, they and their teachers were “doing racism.” This pattern was furthered as black youth identified other black youth who focused on academics as “acting white” or “selling out” (Spence, 1999, p. 92) Through such labelling, the youth were undercutting their peers’ efforts at academic success, thus further reproducing the stereotype that they were innately racially gifted in athletics and unsuited for academics.

“Doing race” can also be carried out in ways that offer positive race-connected meanings to members of a group, providing them with a form of cultural expression that is uniquely their own. Majors (1990), for example, identified “cool pose” as a creative way that black men express their masculinity in a society where opportunities are limited and racism is institutionalized. Wilson (1999) describes the expression of cool pose in sport:

Sport, particularly basketball, are sites where young Black males symbolically oppose the dominant White group and create [a positive race-connected] identity by developing both a flamboyant on-court language (now popularly known as “trash talking”) and a repertoire of spectacular “playground” moves and high-flying dunks. (p. 232)

While this way of “doing race” was initially generated by black male youth, Wilson also discusses ways that this style has been incorporated by sport marketers to sell to a mass audience, and in particular to sell the Toronto Raptors basketball team. These advertising messages, he argues, undercut the resistant symbolic message that cool pose provides black males, while potentially reinforcing stereotypic black male images to Canadian audiences. In this instance, sport marketers were “doing racism.”

Race-Structured Sport Systems

Opportunities for sport created by and for racial groups outside mainstream society have a long history in Canada. When Aboriginal or black athletes were banned from whitestream sports, they often countered with the creation of their own leagues and competitions, limited to participants from a specified racial background. This provided organizers with the opportunity to assign their own meaning to sport and to develop traditions in keeping with Aboriginal, black, or Asian cultural understandings. And it created opportunities for marginalized groups to play sports when they did not have that chance in the mainstream sport system.

An example of a race-structured sporting event would be the North American Indigenous Games, first held in 1990 in Edmonton. These international Games, restricted to those of verifiable Aboriginal ancestry, “stress fun and participation while encouraging our youth to strive for excellence” (Aboriginal Sports/Recreation Association of BC, 1995). The Games include only mainstream sports, because the intent is to provide a

stepping-stone to national- and international-level sport competitions; however, the cultural program showcases various traditional games and dances as well. The 2002 Games in Winnipeg had more than 6,000 participants celebrating Aboriginal culture as well as competing in sporting events organized by Aboriginal sports organizations. The Games have been held at sites in Canada (five times) and the United States (two times); the summer 2014 Games are scheduled for Regina, Saskatchewan.

Through this event, Aboriginal sportspeople experience more “power” in sport than is found in the whitestream system—they are in charge of its structure, its practices and meanings, and the traditions they will continue into the future. Unfortunately, these race-structured opportunities rarely qualify for the kinds of financial and material rewards given to “legitimate” whitestream sport, although the Canadian government has acknowledged

Box 5.2

A Strengths-Based Examination of Aboriginal Peoples' Physical Activity Practices in Canada

Examinations of Aboriginal peoples' practices related to physical activity in Canada often begin by talking about the problems or barriers they face. This approach is called the *deficit perspective* because it keeps the focus on what is not working well and looks to experts to fix the problems. The *strengths-based perspective*, which comes out of social work, counters the deficit perspective because all analyses start by looking at what is being done well—the strengths of the group in question. Resources are then identified in their environment that can be drawn upon to further those strengths. Experts become only one resource among many who work with the group so that their hopes for the future may be realized.

One strengths-based analysis, drawing on national survey data, government policies and reports, and research findings, identified four potential strengths tied to Aboriginal cultural practices. (Paraschak & Thompson, 2013):

1. A holistic orientation toward the way physical activity is carried out, stressing an integration of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual (see Lavalley's 2007 examination of the traditional medicine wheel and physical activity). This holistic orientation also views all types of physical activity as one concept, rather than separating out sport, recreation, active living, and physical education.
2. The strong emphasis on family and community as part of physical activity practices.
3. The third strength, two-eyed seeing, is originally a concept from Canadian Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, who recommends drawing on both traditional and Western

knowledge to provide the best solutions to any issue. In terms of physical activity, this can be seen in the engagement by Aboriginal participants in mainstream and all-Aboriginal sport systems, and in mainstream (Euro-Canadian-based) and traditional (Aboriginal based) forms of physical activity.

4. The commitment to self-determination in their approach to physical activity, which has led to the creation of all-Aboriginal events like the North American Indigenous Games and to the insertion of Aboriginal practices into mainstream sporting events, such as prayers to the creator before the start of an event, or a holistic orientation toward coaching, as explained in the *Aboriginal Coaching Manual*, which is a unit of the 3M National Coaching Certification Program.

These strengths provide a strong foundation upon which Aboriginal organizers can build to produce more effective opportunities for their participants. And in keeping with a two-eyed seeing approach, perhaps non-Aboriginal peoples can look at these strengths and incorporate them into mainstream sporting practices where appropriate to enhance the experience of non-Aboriginal participants as well. Incorporating these strengths into the mainstream sport system would contribute toward the 2012 Canadian Sport Policy vision, which is “A dynamic and innovative culture that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sport” and would help to further the policy's value of inclusion (Canadian Heritage, 2012, p. 5).

the presence of the all-Aboriginal sport system in Canada through federal policy and funding, as outlined in the 2002 (but not the 2012) Canadian Sport Policy and Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport from 2005.

People sometimes attach the term *reverse racism* to describe situations where normally privileged individuals—usually white people—are excluded from opportunities on the basis of race. For example, non-Aboriginal people cannot compete in the North American Indigenous Games, even though Aboriginal athletes can theoretically compete in mainstream sporting events. As directed by Section 15(2) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, however, efforts to address “the conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race” are seen as a necessary part of providing equality rights, because such efforts are required to help correct the imbalance created by unequal privilege in the first place.

This section on racism in sport has documented the individual and institutionalized racism present in whitestream sport in Canada. Race has been, and remains, an indicator or “marker” that provides meaning in our everyday sporting practices. In order to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of race, have opportunities to find meaningful participation in sport, race-structured sporting opportunities are currently needed to ensure that the sport system in Canada provides broadly for the needs of all Canadians. Until whitestream sport broadens even further and becomes truly inclusive, alternative race-structured opportunities should be celebrated and supported as part of the Canadian sport system. In this way, the institution of sport becomes a more welcoming practice reflective of the cultural meanings and traditions of all Canadians, regardless of race.

Conclusions

Race and ethnicity are aspects of our heritage that take on social meaning in Canadian society. These constructed meanings become naturalized each time we “do” them in accordance with the dominant beliefs around us. White people of European descent in Canada have been the most privileged in sport, with those from other racial backgrounds often discriminated against both overtly and through systemic racism. Whitestream hegemonic sport has emerged, legitimizing select activities such as Olympic sports and marginalizing other activities that do not fit within such understandings. Segregated sporting opportunities have likewise emerged, enabling organizers and participants from marginalized groups to structure their own experiences in sport in ways that foster pride in their cultural heritage, while giving the athletes opportunities to play that are not available otherwise. Legitimizing these sporting opportunities, and the alternative ethnic practices preferred by immigrants and their descendants, takes us one step further toward creating a sport system that is representative of all individuals in Canada.

A racial incident in hockey in 2011 reminds us that racism is still present in Canadian sport. In September, a banana peel was thrown onto the ice by a spectator during the shootout after a tied preseason NHL game in London, Ontario, which landed near Wayne Simmonds, a black hockey player originally from Toronto. Simmonds was able to score after the incident, but said that he was shocked: “I don't know if it had anything to do

with the fact I'm black . . . I certainly hope not. When you're black you kind of expect [racist] things. You learn to deal with it" (Canadian Press, 2011). The spectator eventually pleaded guilty and was fined \$200, but "[p]olice said there wasn't enough evidence to charge him with a hate crime, and his attorney told the court his client wasn't aware that tossing a banana at a black athlete could be seen as racist and hateful" (Weir, 2012).

In this case, one of our most successful Canadian athletes was inhibited from enjoying pride in his black heritage and skills because of racist behaviours by others in sport. We need to reflect on incidents such as this that still happen in Canada. To begin to resolve the issue, we need a clear definition of racism and discrimination that everyone associated with sport can understand, along with clearly articulated ideas about how everyone should respond when these things happen. Our outrage at such occurrences helps to ensure that we are promoting an inclusive sport system that enables all individuals to foster pride in their ethnic and racial identity. Our silence, on the other hand, reproduces a sport system where particular individuals—those who are privileged by white skin and European heritage—too often benefit while the rest of Canadians do not.

The social construction of race and ethnicity as integral aspects of sport, and of leisure more broadly, needs to be recognized if we are to find ways to decrease discrimination based on these factors. At the same time, the positive ways that our cultural identities can be shaped by movement need to be facilitated equally for all, regardless of race or ethnicity. As we look to others from different cultural backgrounds to see how they know themselves through movement, we will expand the ways that we can potentially know ourselves. In this way, we can help to shape as well as be shaped by the social meanings assigned to race and ethnicity in Canadian sport. And we will be more ready to help create equitable opportunities for all people trying to access meaningful sport in Canada by providing activities that honour the racial and ethnic differences between participants rather than erasing them.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Explore the sporting interests of minority group residents, including Aboriginal, Inuit, Métis, black, and other minority ethnic groups, in the community in which you live or study. Prepare a table that outlines the various sports, the groups interested in each sport, and the values connected to each sport.
2. If you encounter children from a minority ethnic family—identifiable from their distinct clothing and accents—what are some of the questions you might ask them to determine if there are factors that may prevent or restrict their participation in sport or physical activity? If you determine that they do indeed have special needs, how might you facilitate their involvement in sport or physical activity?
3. What are two ways that a coach, teacher, or sports administrator might respond to an incident of overt racism, such as name calling directed at a teenager in a basketball program?
4. How do you “do race” in your life? In sport?
5. Write about an incident where the social meanings attached to race influenced your life by either privileging you or providing a barrier to opportunities you wished to experience.

6. Write a code of conduct for sport that would align with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
7. How do race-structured sporting events address discrimination in mainstream sport?
8. Outline examples of how sporting performances can provide opportunities for decreasing racial distinctions and for increasing racial distinctions.
9. How do we account for the ethnic diversity evident in the LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) tour, where seven out of the ten top women golfers are Asian?

Suggested Readings

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