



# Are We One?:

## The Ontario University Athletics Anti-Racism Report

IDEAS Research Lab

**IDEAS**  
Research Lab

Indigeneity  
Diaspora  
Equity &  
Anti-racism in  
Sport

OCTOBER 2021



# Letter From the President

August 16, 2021

In August 2020, Ontario University Athletics (OUA) established the Black, Biracial, and Indigenous (BBI) Task Force in an effort to better support these under-represented and racialized communities within the conference. Stemming from the fantastic initial work of this group, which included five core recommendations to the OUA Board of Directors, came a partnership with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education (FKPE) Indigeneity, Diaspora, Equity, and Anti-Racism in Sport (IDEAS) Research Lab, led by Dr. Janelle Joseph.

At the heart of the partnership with the IDEAS Lab has been the OUA Anti-Racism Project, an undertaking that aspired to shed light on members' experiences with racism. By collecting responses, conducting interviews, and compiling tangible takeaways across our membership, the IDEAS Research Lab turned this vast research into what can be viewed as a strong foundation to support future strategic action and help make the conference a more inclusive and safe community for all.

The success of this project could not have been achieved without the support of our 20 member institutions, so I also want to commend our membership for their involvement. The active engagement demonstrated across the research process was instrumental to its success, and thanks to the thousands of student-athletes, coaches, and administrators across the province who took the time to share their insights, this imperative research includes a more complete, accurate representation of our stakeholders and their experiences.

The entire OUA community is thankful for the opportunity to work with the IDEAS Research Lab, not only because of the exemplary work done within the Anti-Racism Project, but because of what it will mean moving forward for the entire university sport landscape in Ontario and beyond. With this invaluable research in hand, we are truly motivated and better informed to help address real change in the OUA.

Sincerely,



**Gord Grace**  
President & CEO



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The IDEAS Research Lab, led by Dr. Janelle Joseph, appreciates the financial, photograph, and research resources provided by Ontario University Athletics. This project could not have been completed without the support of Gord Grace, Jackie Chan, Mathew Davies, Naz Nazari, Chris Verlaan and David Frizzell. The final report was improved through input from many scholars, university sport administrators, coaches, and student athletes who provided feedback that will enable tangible tools for anti-racist change in Canadian university sport. Thank you.

Thank you, University of Toronto graduate students. Research project coordination by Sabrina Razack and Braeden McKenzie. Statistical analysis by Devin Bonk. Interviews and Focus Groups facilitated by IDEAS Research Lab Research Assistants, all of whom are current or former OUA athletes or coaches: Deniece Bell, Alexander Bimm, Devon Bowyer, Michelle Brownrigg, Fiona Huang, Hediye Karimian, Alyssa McQuaid.

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# Executive summary



## Who?

Ontario University Athletics (OUA), the first multi-sport organization of intercollegiate athletics in Canada and the largest conference within USports with over 11,000 student athletes, coaches, and administrators.

## What?

A research study led by Dr. Janelle Joseph and the Indigeneity, Diaspora, Equity, and Anti-racism in Sport (IDEAS) Research Lab to discover the OUA racial demographics, experiences and knowledge of racism, and strategies for change.

## Findings?

Stop believing racism is only at another school or on another team. Racism is part of every OUA program. Racism can be obvious/overt or subtle/hidden. Hiring and recruitment can be unfair, leaving out excellent racialized student athletes, coaches, and administrators who can bring success to Ontario universities. Not every community member understands what racism is, or how white privilege operates, and many athletes suffer silently. Most institutions lack transparent anti-racism policies and reporting processes.

## What is next?

Tools for change outlined in this report center around **4 pillars**:

Education	Recruitment	Support	Accountability
Training must be ongoing, integrated, and requires moving through discomfort	Networks must be expanded and job descriptions re-written for recruiting the best talent	Mental health, financial awards, and equity-devoted staff members must account for racialized student and staff needs	Racial demographic data and clear processes for reporting racism must be shared publicly

## Community Building/Outreach

Advertising the study included [a one-minute promotional video](#) created by the OUA and IDEAS Research Lab, promoted on social media (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook), and digital posters. Liaison committees, one for student athletes, coaches, and administrators, with representatives from each OUA university, shared details of the project with their communities. Over 40 presentations to teams, sports, and entire university athletic departments raised awareness about the importance and scope of the project.

## Questionnaire

IDEAS Research Lab created, using REDCap, an optional questionnaire, which was distributed online to over 11,000 members separated into three cohorts: student athletes, coaches, and administrators. A demographic census addressed specific questions about age, year of study, year of play/employment, financial assistance, sport, gender, and racial identification. Other questions examined experiences and insights about (anti-)racism in the OUA.

## Interviews and Focus Groups

Focus groups (n=9) of 2-8 purposefully selected people (n=30) provided opportunities for OUA members to discuss and reflect on their experiences with others who shared the same student athlete, coach, or administrator status. Individual interviews (n=77) allowed for more in-depth conversations. Questions expanded on experiences and insights about (anti-)racism in the OUA elicited from the questionnaire with a focus on knowledge of racism, stereotypes, myths, barriers to anti-racism, and tools for anti-racist change. All interviews and focus groups were videorecorded and transcribed verbatim and every university was represented.

## Coding and Analysis

Data analysis followed an inductive approach, using NVivo 12 as a data management tool. Specific examples were combined to reveal general concepts based on repetition among participants within and across each university. Data were understood within an interpretivist framework, which prioritized participants' words and questionnaire choices as accurate representations of their individual experiences. **This report highlights participants' voices.**

01



# Racial Demographics

# 01 Racial Demographics

## Questionnaire Participation

The Questionnaire was completed by **5001 OUA members in total**, accounting for nearly **45%** of the estimated 11200 people in the OUA membership: 9000 student athletes, 2000 full and part time coaches, and 200 administrators. A typical response rate for this kind of questionnaire is **17%-55%** (Baruch & Hotom, 2008). Interest in the project was high, indicated by 497 respondents agreeing to participate in an interview and/or focus group to talk about their experiences – an incredible nearly **10%** conversion. Due to time, scheduling, and bugetary constraints of the project, as well as eventually hearing similar stories (data saturation), 107 participants were included in interviews and focus groups, including all 20 Athletic Directors. The broadest range of racial, groups, genders, and roles (student athlete, coach, and administrator) were included.



### Number of Questionnaire Responses by Role



For accurate self-representation of racial categories, multiple entries in many racial categories were permitted on the questionnaire, in keeping with contemporary social science data collection methods. For instance, an OUA member may have self-identified as both Black and South Asian, and they may or may not have also selected biracial. Any member who chose more than one racial identity was categorized as biracial. Given that the complexities of race shift with ancestry, geography (urban vs. rural), context, hair texture, and skin colour, extensive qualitative interviews were conducted to learn of the complexities of how race

and (anti-)racism operate within and across white and racialized groups. For example, some biracial athletes experienced toxic anti-Black racism and others had their East Asian heritage discounted or denied because of the way they look. Much more research is required on the experiences of bi- or multi-raciality within Canadian university sport. For the purposes of this study, which examines whiteness, privilege, and discrimination against racialized persons as a main axis of power, we have presented data for specific racial groups or for White vs. Racialized where relevant.

### Overall Race Breakdown n= 5001



## 01 Racial Demographics

# Disproportionate Hiring of White Coaches and Administrators

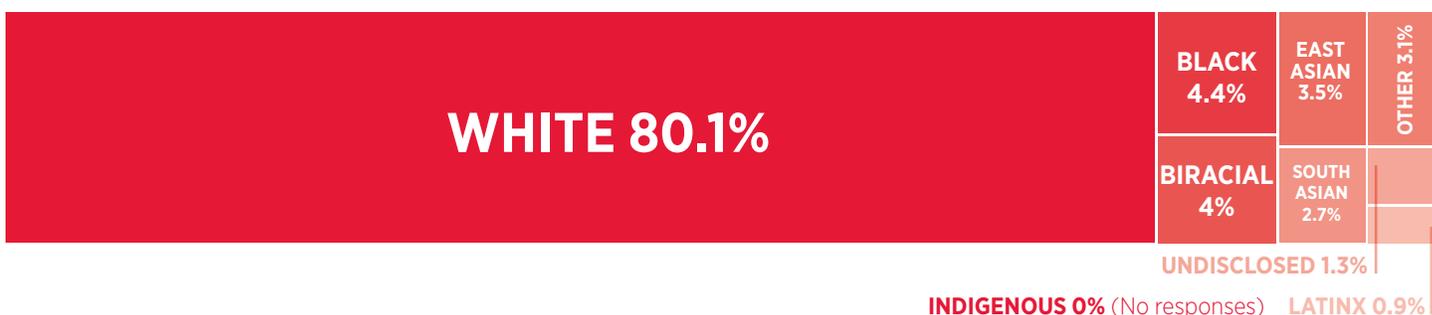
Student Athletes n = 4058



Coaches n = 716



Administrators n = 227



The questionnaire responses demonstrate disproportionate representation of White coaches and White administrators compared to White athletes. Whites comprise **71.3%** of the student athlete population. That figure rises to **78.5%** for coaches and **80.1%** for administrators. Zero Indigenous administrators responded to this survey. Importantly, focus groups and interviews revealed that racialized individuals who are in coaching (<22%) are often paid on limited seasonal salaries, stipends, or they simply volunteer. Similarly,

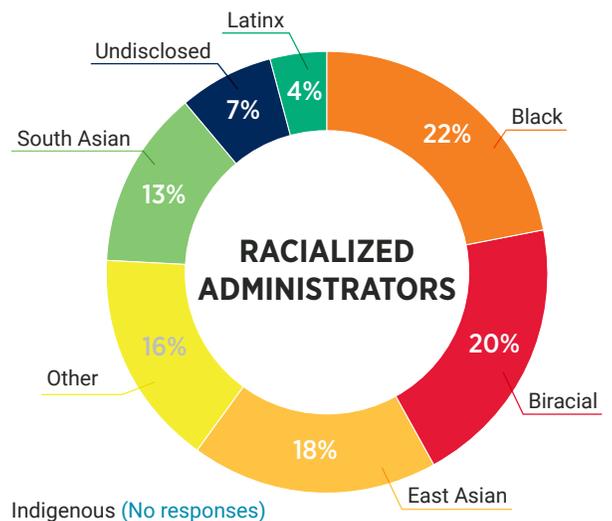
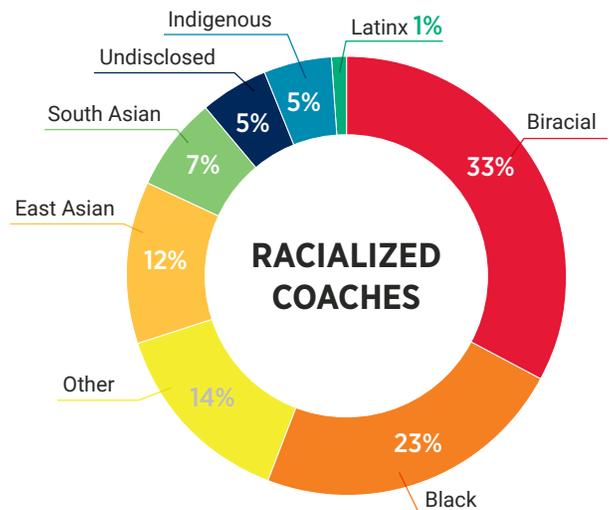
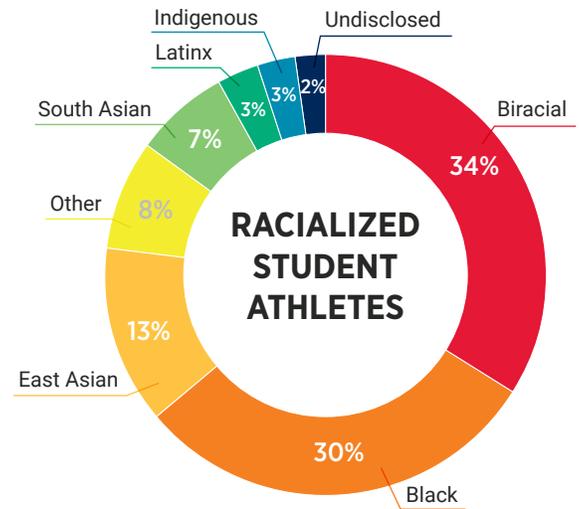
racialized administrators (<20%) more often occupy assistant, part-time, or entry level positions, meaning they earn the lowest salaries of OUA members. This finding echoes extensive research on universities in Canada that show low rates of recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotion of racialized student, staff, and faculty, despite large pools of candidates to draw from (see Henry & Tator, 2009; Henry et al., 2017; Smith & Bray, 2019).

# 01 Racial Demographics

## Limited Diversity Among Racialized Coaches and Administrators

Racialized administrators represent greater diversity than racialized athletes, but the total numbers of survey respondents must be kept in mind. The nearly **16-22%** each of Black, Biracial, East Asian and 'Other' administrators each represent between 7 and 10 people. In interviews, many administrators described the stress related to being the 'only one' in their department or institution and the additional burdens that were placed on them to lead anti-racism and equity initiatives and to support racialized students. East and South Asians are more likely to be seen as 'leadership material' than those who identify as Black and Biracial. East and South Asians combined are **13%** of student athlete questionnaire respondents, but are over-represented among coaches (**18%**) and administrators (**31%**). Black and Biracial questionnaire respondents who account for **64%** of racialized student athletes are only **55%** of racialized coaches and only **44%** of administrators.

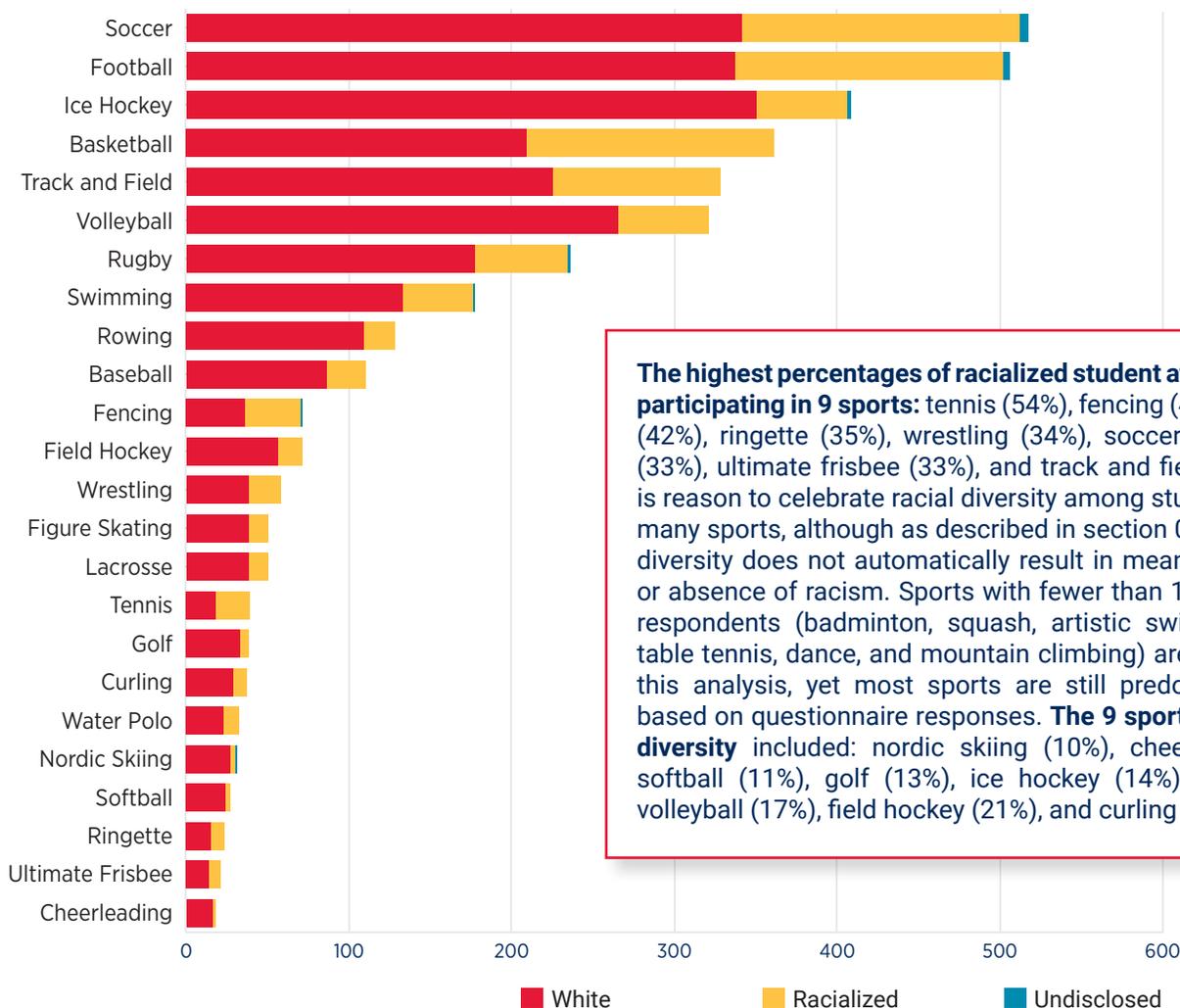
What can account for this disparity other than systemic racism?  
Are we one?



# 01 Racial Demographics

## Athlete Diversity in Few Sports

Racial representation is one marker of equity. Sports that are more diverse have more opportunities for cross-cultural learning and capture the talent of the many racial groups in the province. The questionnaire responses by student athletes to sport played and racial identification, grouped into white and racialized categories, shows that most sports are predominantly White.



**The highest percentages of racialized student athletes reported participating in 9 sports:** tennis (54%), fencing (49%), basketball (42%), ringette (35%), wrestling (34%), soccer (33%), football (33%), ultimate frisbee (33%), and track and field (31%). There is reason to celebrate racial diversity among student athletes in many sports, although as described in section 03 of this report, diversity does not automatically result in meaningful inclusion or absence of racism. Sports with fewer than 10 questionnaire respondents (badminton, squash, artistic swimming, sailing, table tennis, dance, and mountain climbing) are excluded from this analysis, yet most sports are still predominantly White based on questionnaire responses. **The 9 sports with the least diversity** included: nordic skiing (10%), cheerleading (11%), softball (11%), golf (13%), ice hockey (14%), rowing (15%), volleyball (17%), field hockey (21%), and curling (21.6%).

“ Is it reasonable to think that you’re going to bring one BIPOC student athlete onto your team of 20 and that person is going to feel like they have a place there? ”  
—Yohannah (White, administrator, woman)

02



# Questionnaire Responses

## 02 Questionnaire Responses

The questionnaire aimed to assess, at a large scale, what are the **experiences and understandings of racism** across the OUA.

# How common is racism where you work/play in the OUA?

### Athletes:



n = 4058  
Each figure represents 1%



Not at all



Somewhat

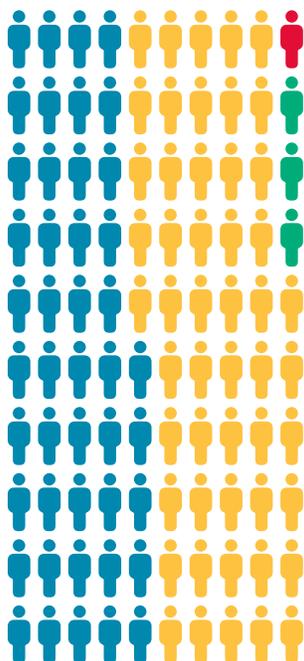


Very



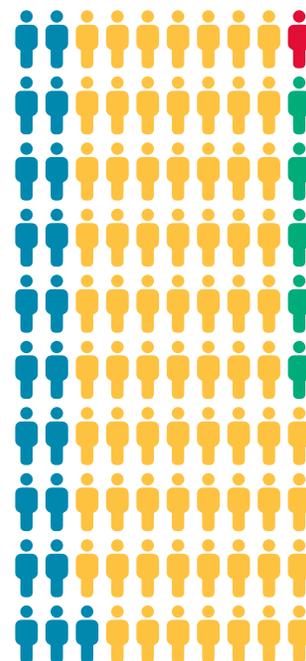
Extremely

### Coaches:



n = 716  
Each figure represents 1%

### Admins:



n = 227  
Each figure represents 1%

The questionnaire responses show that while the same proportion (1%) of each group sees racism as “extremely common,” there is a large percentage of student athletes (52%) who see racism as “not at all common.” This is concerning because student athletes, 72% of whom identify as White, are in part responsible for creating the cultures within their sports. Those who do not believe racism is common are completely unaware of the ways Canadian ‘everyday racism’ operates (Este et al., 2018), and specifically unaware of the violences

student athletes face (Gabay, 2013; James, 2005; James et al., 2013; Joseph, 2015; Joseph, 2020). The dozens of examples provided below by OUA members reveal that racism is occurring. Administrators, to whom athletes may report or share incidents of racism, are more likely (73%) than coaches (51%) or athletes (44%) to see racism as “somewhat common,” which gives hope that they may be able to create change in the OUA with respect to anti-racism education, policy, and processes of reporting racist incidents.

## 02 Questionnaire Responses

### Have you been really upset (angry, sad, frustrated, infuriated, annoyed, etc.) about something racist that you experienced?

Across all groups (student athletes, coaches, and staff), over **41%** said 'never'; however, we should be very concerned about the minority among those who said "a lot" **8.9%**, "most of the time" **1.7%**, or "all of the time" **2.5%**.

Of those who said they are really upset "all of the time," **31.5%** identify as Black.

“

I've been called the n-word on the field. And the referee heard it and didn't send that player off. I'm kind of wondering like why? ... Because now you put me in position where if I respond I'm putting my team at a disadvantage. So, I have to wait, bag my anger, and deal with it after the game. Makes no sense.

—Lion (Black, athlete, soccer, man)

”

### Did you receive a full (\$4500) or partial award, experience financial need, or rely on casual, part-time work, or financial help from caregivers to meet financial needs?

Based on chi-square tests of the responses to the questionnaire, White athletes and racialized athletes are equally likely to report relying on casual/part-time work. However:

 White Athletes

 Racialized Athletes

 were **less** likely than  to experience **unmet financial needs**.

 were **less** likely than  to receive a **provincial award**.

 were **more** likely than  to receive **full or partial athletic awards**.

 were **more** likely than  to report **relying on financial help from caregivers**.

## 02 Questionnaire Responses

### Have you encountered racism within mental health services?



Of 3818 responses...

1713 answered yes.

### Have you utilized onsite offices to assist with race related incidents?



Of 3818 responses...

only 62 have used onsite offices.

Mental health services and anti-racism supports within OUA universities are sometimes devoted to student athletes, but more often are offered through general student health services or employee assistance programs. These are not always safe spaces for racialized people.



## 02 Questionnaire Responses

# Barriers to Reporting Racial Incidents

Few OUA members move race related incidents through official channels.

“ We don’t have ... the process in place for me to escalate these issues if I find that it happens.  
–Christine (Black, administrator, woman)

### Lack of process

### Fear of reprisal

“ A lot of people feel like they can’t speak on it, because they don’t want to ruin that person’s reputation and/or [they] don’t want their coach to penalize them. –Jessica (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

“ There’s no reporting tool or promotion of a reporting tool. Nothing from my knowledge. –Lion (Black, athlete, soccer, man)

### Lack of tools

### Lack of shared understanding of racism

“ People who want to say something don’t feel equipped to say something.  
–Barbara (White, administrator, woman)

“ I told my athletic director, I told the HR advisor, and nothing’s been done by them. Nothing’s happening.  
– Jordan (Black, administrator, man)

### Ambiguous consequences

### Unclear jurisdiction

“ If I am discriminated by another team or another player or coach like what do they have in place?  
–Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

“ Sometimes it doesn’t happen when they play their sport, it can happen on campus when OUA has no jurisdiction.  
–Cleo (White, administrator, woman)

### No jurisdiction

### Lack of trust

“ In the past I would manage or do an investigation. So that process has changed [and] has led to a lack of trust because we can’t be transparent. –Fleur (White, administrator, woman)

“ Athletes are more likely to report instances of racism if they’re able to report it anonymously.  
–Sammy (White, athlete, water polo, woman)

### No anonymity

### No support

“ [Less] willingness to report for individuals who don’t feel like they’re supported. –Christine (Black, administrator, woman)

03



# Examples of Racism

## 03 Examples of Racism

For those who believe racism happens ‘not at all’ be advised: **Racism in the OUA takes many forms.**

Overwhelmingly, the examples shared by student athletes, coaches, and sport administrators fall into the category of ‘microaggressions’. These are “the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue, 2010, p. 5). The gestures, jokes, or mistreatment described below were (at times) indirect; nevertheless, they are deeply felt by racialized members of the community and perpetuate exclusion.

The examples that follow include:

- A. **Implicit Racism and Microaggressions**
- B. **Explicit and Overt Racism**
- C. **Mistreatment and Differential Treatment**
- D. **Assumptions of Athlete Wealth and Poverty**
- E. **Player (non-)Recruitment**
- F. **Lack of Support for Athletes and Administrators**
- G. **Athlete Additional Labour**
- H. **Discriminatory Hiring Practices**
- I. **Coach Stressors**



*All identifying information has been removed from quotes, in some cases the university or sport is redacted from the participants words or identity, or more general information is substituted.*

### A. **Implicit Racism and Microaggressions**

Although perpetrators may have expressed racist words or behaviours unintentionally, some student-athletes were **so disheartened they ended up transferring** to schools with more racial diversity, while many others **suffered in silence** with negative impacts on their health, athletic performances, and grades (and consequently their athletic awards).

“

The women on the team kept petting [a Black player’s] hair like she was a dog.

—Jade (Biracial, athlete, field hockey, woman)

“

I’m Asian, so, you know, a couple of the coaches always sort of poke fun and say, ‘Oh, you know well, what sport, would you really play, aside from badminton?’ and things like that.

—Kaleigh (East Asian, administrator, woman)

## 03 Examples of Racism

### A. Implicit Racism and Microaggressions continued

“

Oh my God you don't even need to wear sunscreen, you're Black enough.

—Lion (Black, athlete, soccer, man)

Players are not always told that their exclusion is based on race. Nevertheless, many shared examples of implicit racism that had **significant effects on their mental health**.

“

I've had teammates who are darker than me find it really difficult to find a house ... [or] had experiences with racism within their residence like on their floor with their roommates. And like obviously that affects your mental well-being and your mental health, especially when it comes to where you're living. And if it's something you're experiencing very often it bleeds into your athletics and your ability to perform.

—Jade (Biracial, athlete, field hockey, woman)

Steph, who identifies as Biracial, experiences harm when teammates question her race.

“

I remember being in the changing [room] a couple times and people will be making comments and they'd be like “wait [Steph] how Black, are you? But are you really that Black?”

—Steph (Biracial, athlete, woman)

“

People assume that I know how to braid hair and that I'm down to like braid the hair of my teammates for competitions. ... A lot of people, reduce like my athletic ability to being Jamaican.

—Jessica (Biracial, athlete, woman)

Tehosennake is fed up with misunderstandings. **A powwow is a sacred social celebration**, often involving various styles of dance, food, and craft vendors—not a 'side meeting'.

“

I've had to police people's language in a certain way, you know, like how people sometimes say we're having a powwow, and that means like a little side meeting? It isn't strictly speaking anger[ing] me at all, it's just, you can choose better words.

—Tehosennake (Indigenous, coach, man)

Many racialized OUA members described the woeful ignorance of perpetrators and **repeatedly experienced feelings of anguish, despair, and frustration**. Students indicated that **White coaches were often unaware** of the impact jokes and microaggressions had on individuals under their care.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### B. Explicit and Overt Racism

Student athletes reported that some racism was obvious and **demanding a zero-tolerance approach** from the OUA and their athletic departments. They especially lamented that officials and coaches sometimes appeared ill equipped to handle grievances and/or simply chose to ignore overt incidents. Non-reactions from coaches perpetuated feelings of isolation and loneliness among athletes, especially those who were the only racialized person on their teams.

Anti-Asian sentiment was common and increased during the COVID-19 pandemic:

“

**Overhearing a teammate say “ch\*\*\*-ch\*\*\*” when referring to like Chinese people or Chinese culture.**

—Jessica (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

“

**I had a co-worker physically run away from me. They ran and hid in their room and closed the door ... based on COVID shaming, which is very real.**

—Logan (East Asian, coach, man)

“

**[Racism is] specifically tied to COVID and how it’s perceived that these [Asian and International] students are bringing COVID into the communities. And we’ve dealt with a lot, with very abusive and racist behaviour to students being kicked out of their housing strictly because of their ethnicity.**

—Gordon (White, administrator, man)

Anti-Black racism takes overt forms with **no reaction from coaches or referees**:

“

**He was basically told to go back to the cotton fields and called the n-word in the game.**

—Ryan (White, athlete, soccer, man)

Messi describes a White coach explaining a scouting report about a player of colour who was labelled in writing as ‘dumb’.

“

**[For] the white guy it’s like: “oh he’s young, you know, like just he’s inexperienced, he can learn, he’s a rookie” ... all these sorts of things and like in a scouting report, I’ll be in a meeting and coach will be like, “oh yeah, you know so-and-so he’s just so [profanity] dumb, like he’s just [profanity] dumb, he’s got no clue,” describing a coloured guy.**

—Messi (South Asian, coach, man)

When racialized athletes are consistently described as ‘dumb’ by leadership in a meeting, without intervention, a **toxic work environment is created** and teams miss out on incredible athletic talent.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### C. Mistreatment or Differential Treatment

Several racialized OUA members described a feeling, a look, or not being selected for captain, jobs opportunities, or awards. **Blatant mistreatment took place both on and off the field**, individually, and within the structure of the athletic department or sport.

Davis explains the unfair structures and patterns of donations:

“ We repeatedly saw donor dollars go to like predominantly white teams and it’s like, okay, I don’t know if we can call that racism, but I can call that differential treatment.

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)

Davis goes on to compare the Head Coach hiring process for a Black (track) and a White (hockey) coach. Both candidates were already in the role as Interim Head Coach and he described them as “both fantastic” in their careers.

“ The full-time hockey coach went through a 30-minute interview process, was hired days later, standard process. Our head coach who has coached [track] at the Olympics, Adidas sponsored, a high level coach, went to the States. He interviewed twice, hours long [for] our two-week process.

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)

Though it is impossible to draw conclusions from just one example, Davis describes the discrepancy as a longstanding pattern at the university.

Mistreatment was sometimes ‘hidden’ or behind the backs of the victims.

“ At times, other coaches and athletes are speaking in another language, and they are saying derogatory things towards their competition that are racially motivated.

—Thomas (White, coach, fencing, man)

“ Our coach making inappropriate comments about Indigenous athletes, not on our team, but on our women’s soccer team, saying that they don’t look Indigenous. And we were like ‘How can you be questioning their identity?’

—Denice (Black, athlete, track and field, woman)

This kind of comment can have an impact by creating a toxic environment and ideas of **mistrust between a player and their coach**, even if the racism is directed towards another group.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### D. Assumptions of Athlete Wealth & Poverty

Athletes, coaches, and administrators presented dozens of examples of the ways racism and classism intersected for diminished experiences or exclusions. In the first instance, some racialized athletes were assumed to have access to financial resources they did not have:

“

You know my players, when we sign them, they want to put out a press release ... [but] unless you do this letter of intent, where you have to pay \$50 online with your credit card, you don't get to do this press release. And I said “That's ridiculous! Like what?! Why don't we get the kid in and then we'll take care of the \$50 fee,” because I know there's some Black kids with their parents ... they don't have a credit card and it's really hard.

—Johnson (Black, coach, basketball, man)

A seemingly neutral admissions policy that puts the onus on young athletes to pay a seemingly low fee, has a great impact on certain athletes. Although this is not explicitly a racial issue, Johnson has witnessed a disproportionate impact on some of the Black recruits he wants to bring into the university system. While it may appear that all student athletes are being treated fairly, the outcome may be differential treatment along racial lines.

“

You know, typically on our team, the White athletes just were more affluent in a sense that they had those support systems. A lot of our Black athletes who had single parents or were commuting, or didn't have financial support the same way that many of the other White athletes had ... were hired to work part time jobs. ... White coaches would never understand the impact that would have on their training and like why they had to work those extra hours and how it affected their performance.

—Serena (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)



## 03 Examples of Racism

### D. Assumptions of Athlete Wealth & Poverty continued

Christine and Candace outline the ways that white privilege and class privilege among many coaches and administrators translates to their own comfort within the university and an inability to 'see' or understand why some students face hardship.

“

You don't always see that there are all of these hidden challenges ... that could be affecting the socioeconomic status of your students. And so you just assume [some racialized students are] lazy, not trying as hard, not getting it right, as opposed to positioning that population as requiring additional support, working through financial hardship, not having support at home to kind of grow academically at the same pace as others.

—Christine (Black, administrator, woman)

“

I think the biggest part [of anti-racism] is really understanding the athletes that we have. So, for instance we're [traveling abroad] and it's going to cost I don't know \$3,000 each plan [air, hotel, tournament fees]. ... A lot of our White athletes are easily just able to throw [in] \$3000. ... But it's not [as] easy for our Black athletes.

—Candace (Black, coach, basketball, woman)

Certainly not every Black athlete will struggle to pay \$3000 with one week's notice. Rather than perpetuating a stereotype of an impoverished Black athlete, this report invites administrators, coaches, and athletes to consider how educationally and economically privileged assumptions may differentially impact racialized players, particularly if that player is the 'only one' on their team.

Anti-Black racist assumptions can lead to players getting left out of special opportunities, such as training camps in the United States.

“

Our coach literally told all of the other White athletes that he wasn't going to invite her because he didn't think she could afford it.

—Serena (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

Making assumptions regarding certain athletes related to poverty or coming from a low socioeconomic background or racialized neighbourhood are inappropriate and unnecessary. In Ontario certain neighbourhoods do have higher rates of racialization and poverty, a broader issue of structural racism that must be addressed. However, within the OUA, assumptions of the connection between race, neighbourhood, and poverty can function to exclude.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### E. Player (Non-)Recruitment

Examples of differential treatment in recruitment illustrate another wider issue at the intersection of race and class for the OUA. The funnelling system into university for most sports relies heavily on private schools, clubs, and pay-to-play systems. Each of these methods **overwhelmingly select athletes from middle- to upper- class families** with many opportunities and resources available to succeed in sport and university. Several coaches acknowledged that their process is not conducive to creating a diverse team. Noting that many athletic departments are cash strapped, one of the responsibilities of coaches is to fundraise, which can make some coaches beholden to parent-donors (and their student athlete) for their continued support.



“

It was like very clear that on our team all of the affluent white athletes, whose parents were donating to the program, our coaches like almost like sucked up to them.

—Serena (Bi-Racial, athlete, track and field, woman)

Club-level athletes whose parents make donations are more likely to be recruited.

“

I can tell you that none of the athletes we've recruited over the past five years have been high school level athletes.

—Beth (White, coach, volleyball, woman)

Similarly, Candace explains that **recruitment relied on well-established networks** with club coaches or players who apply directly to the coach.

“

I mean we didn't really recruit that [much], to be honest. The best time to go recruit is to watch the [secondary] schools. They have the best athletes. They have the best talent. That's where you see [the sport] come alive for young women. ... [Instead] we would look a lot at the Barrie teams, like Simcoe was a big team. ... We didn't go as much for Brampton or [Mississauga] Saga. ... What we typically end up doing is recruiting people ... that have written our program a big letter, sent some video, and then they're on the team somehow.

—Candace (Black, coach, basketball, woman)

## 03 Examples of Racism

### E. Player (Non-)Recruitment continued

Shauna explains that personal intervention by an athletic director is sometimes necessary to **advocate for racialized student athletes** who otherwise don't get recruited, in this case, because of a 0.5% difference in secondary school grades.

“

The white student got in, the black student did not, and so I phoned over to [Business School] and I said “[recruiter name], I don't understand this. It's 0.5% right?” He didn't know. It was totally a numbers thing. ... And immediately [the Black student] was accepted. ... There's so many who don't have the opportunity to ... have someone help them with their statement of intent. They don't have anyone to help them with how to navigate that [admissions process].

—Shauna (White, administrator, woman)

Shauna clarified that many white athletes have recognizable names, families who are donors, and support through the application and education processes. This differential treatment translates to differential athletic, financial, and academic outcomes.



## 03 Examples of Racism

### F. Lack of Support for Athletes and Administrators

Many racialized athletes expressed feeling tokenized and not as supported by coaches and their peers. When instances of racism occurred, they felt that leaders didn't understand and that White perpetrators were offered more protection than the racialized complainants.

“

**the reason why a lot of why some players fall through the cracks with some coaches is because the coaches don't understand the players.**

—Johnson (Black, coach, basketball, man)

“

**There's some players that have come from that rural town, let's just say [town] Ontario, which is a farm town and [are] trying out for this rugby team in the big city. ... There might not be one, not even a single minority at their high schools. ... [A player] described to me that she would sense that there'd be like this discomfort.**

—Q (White, coach, rugby, man)

“

**[In] our sports clinic for athletes, often times like when me and some of my friends that are also racialized people, when we walk in we're always met with eyes. You know people are staring at us like 'what are you doing here?' and ... even somebody asked [my teammate] like "Oh are you lost?" kind of to imply that she doesn't belong there, and she's been a member of the track and field team for more than two years.**

—Denice (Black, athlete, track and field, woman)

Jordan describes the stress of experiencing racism by colleagues and nothing being done:

“

**It just became unbearable ... I was like being harassed so much ... then my whole demeanor changed my mental health changed. I was, my anxiety was spiking, I was [having] sleepless nights ... I would ask for staff or ... for actual resources, asked for help, none of it was given to me.**

—Jordan (Black, administrator, man)

## 03 Examples of Racism

### F. Lack of Support for Athletes and Administrators continued



Even when coaches and athletes try to get help, their efforts are often thwarted. Katie explains that another student-athlete said something offensive to her and their teammates. The offended students spoke up for themselves and told the coach who held a meeting and advised them to ‘swallow it’:

“

The girl was crying. ... She perceived it as “we came on aggressive” and we were [told] to kind of swallow it and you know tell her ... “it’s okay,” because she doesn’t know better, because she grew up in [small town] and she’s never been around Black people.

—Katie (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

Brady explains that **no one at the university could help** a student who was being punished despite being the target of racism.

“

[A player] was racially profiled by one of the cafeteria ladies who was saying that, you know, she felt unsafe with him there. ... He was put a position where now he had to apologize to her and was suspended from certain restaurants on campus even though, like really, he actually did nothing.

—Brady (Indigenous, coach, man)

Without adequate training to recognize racism or sufficient clear policies and processes in place to deliver appropriate consequences, racialized athletes and administrators will continue to see their universities and the OUA as unsupportive when it comes to dealing with racism.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### G. Athlete Additional Labour

Some racialized athletes pointed out that issues of race and racism were not centred before 2020. Several racialized student athletes led activist and networking groups that were formed in hopes of building a collective movement around race and anti-racism issues and to ignite necessary change with athletic departments (e.g., [University of Toronto's BIPOC Varsity Association](#)) and across USports (e.g., [Athletes for Change](#)). The athletes described documenting their concerns, speaking directly to athletic and university administrations, and garnering attention from leaders who could work to initiate essential transformations. The additional labour of this activism should not go unrecognized:

“

**This is a real struggle. All of it lands on the students' shoulders.**

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)

Several athletes showed how the institution refused to respond, even when they were trying to do the anti-racism and retention work of the institution.

“

**One teammate ... wanted to post [Black Lives Matter] on our skiing social media page. But then she posted it, and then we had to take it down because the university was like “our account is not a political activism page.”**

—Marry (White, athlete, nordic skiing, woman)

“

**We were held back from putting out any ... support of the Black Lives Matter ... or messaging against Asian hate crimes ... and I think that's ... a problem because it's not a political message to say I support BIPOC communities.**

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)

**The labour of generating belonging cannot fall exclusively to unpaid students.**

In fact, there are many resources on university campuses that explicitly state the ways racialized communities are supported, included, and valued. Supportive anti-racism messages should be aligned with university human resources and equity messaging; however, such messages were not allowed at multiple OUA institutions. When messages did go out, **some students assessed that there were no anti-racism experts involved** because the messages were weak and did not address the university's or athletic department's accountability for creating an unwelcoming environment in the first place.

“

**After the George Floyd death, [the university] released a statement that was beyond tone deaf and just was outright stupid, so they actually made us start this [Black student] group, because we needed to take action and show that we belong here.**

—Troy (Black, athlete, basketball, man)

## 03 Examples of Racism

### H. Discriminatory Hiring Practices

“

I started going to school, playing at school. And then playing [and coaching] pro ... and then basically, making my way to this [senior administrator] job somehow. But honestly, a lot of luck, I am blessed ... if I have a shortfall it's understanding where racism is within the organization that I'm running.

—Tommy (White, administrator, man)

For White-identified OUA members the path to obtain a position as a head coach or leader within administration appeared smooth. Most were either offered a position without a formal interview or were explicitly encouraged to apply. They admitted they a) possess a significant amount of power to hire paid assistant coaches, recruit athletes, and essentially design an athletic program of their liking; and b) had not considered issues of race in their hiring to be 'urgent' until pressure mounted from racialized student athletes and coaches in 2020. If playing and coaching positions are steps on the ladder to well-paid leadership roles, barriers to racial inclusion have long-term impacts for individuals and their communities.

28 The IDEAS Report: Are We One?

“

Every time I applied I would get the goalposts removed .... They said you needed a master's so I went back and got my masters. They said you needed a level three [certification], so I went back and got my level three. ... Then I became a facilitator to be able to coach the coach. Still wasn't able to get in as a full-time.

—Devo (Black, coach, man)

VS

All racialized coaches were former amateur and professional players who had volunteered, worked part-time, completed education and/or assisted for many years with few ever ascending to the role of head coach. They describe systemic racism as integrated throughout the hiring procedure from (invisible) job postings to (biased) interviews. Once hired into the institution they also noted retention is difficult because, unlike their white colleagues, they live in excessive scrutiny and fear of reprimand for their coaching decisions, worry about being alienated or ostracized for speaking up against injustice, and are exhausted from navigating racist communities on and off campus.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### H. Discriminatory Hiring Practices continued

The data from interviews with coaches and administrators prove a clear need to **examine and change OUA hiring policies and practices**. Some coaches and administrators who worked as assistants, affiliates, and part-time were hard to reach due to their precarity, lack of availability, and additional constraints presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many salaried coaches and administrators described discrimination in OUA hiring.

Colby and Messi insist that White coaches who get the interview or the job do not face the same scrutiny, nor do they match the qualifications of many racialized coaches.

“

Listen, I coached in the pros ... I have three degrees ... some of my mentors are guys that were in the [professional league]. I still needed to get a Master's degree.

—Colby (Black, coach, man)

“

There are some jobs, I didn't even get interviewed for and they're interviewing [White colleagues with losing records] where I'm like 'I have more experience!' I've won more at an academic school. Our guys are all graduating. I'm getting endorsed by my athletic director and head coach, but I'm not getting my foot in the door.

—Messi (South Asian, coach, man)

It is obvious to many coaches that the leadership of OUA sports and universities is predominantly White.

“

[At] an information session for all the coaches, and you look around and vast majority are white, the vast majority are men, and it doesn't look like our student body.

—Thomas (White, coach, fencing, man)

“

Well, I think, if you look at Ontario university sport, the majority of the athletic directors are all white, right? You look at the majority of the head coaches they're all going to be White, the administration [too]. ... You can always say it's a 'good old boys' kind of club right? ... You know it can be challenging right for others from marginalized communities to get in.

—Cedar (Indigenous, coach, man)

To break the cycle of discrimination in hiring requires renewed attention to policies, practices, job descriptions, and the required qualifications for coaches.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### I. Coach Stressors

Because racialized coaches were often the ‘only one’ at their institution, some experienced feelings of loneliness and believed others assumed they were a ‘token,’ that is, undeserving or unqualified for their role. They also felt a burden to be the spokesperson for anti-racism efforts and support person for racialized athletes, even athletes on other teams or in other sports.

Black coaches understand their jobs to be ‘at risk,’ so many do not take risks. They describe excessive scrutiny that makes their jobs especially difficult.

“

**You don’t get to make the same mistakes that white coaches make by dealing with the players, or slacking, or losing. They’re going to find a way to fire you, so you gotta tow the line. That’s the way that a regular Black person functions.**

—Johnson (Black, coach, basketball, man)

“

**Black coaches have to be that much better to gain respect and to gain accolades and credibility ... to get the job, to keep the job, to be recognized, to not get fired, and to you know to be able to stay in your position. I think it’s a so much lower threshold [for a White coach] to be able to keep your job and gain recognition.**

—Noah (Biracial, coach, basketball, man)

Lyle insists he never has to wonder whether he was hired for his race but recognizes that as a privilege not everyone enjoys.

“

**That’d be a hard feeling to live with, where you don’t know ... how others perceive why you hired.**

—Lyle (White, administrator, man)

Devo tried every strategy he could to find a head coaching job. He sought out individual mentorship:

“

**As I started to reach out, I started to realize that not only were there were no Black [head] coaches, but all of the Black assistant coaches were being asked to carry the load ... [other] coaches are looking for me for answers ... and sometimes I don’t have them.**

—Devo (Black, coach, man)

The ‘load’ is programmatic, policy, and emotional labour to create inclusive, welcoming environments and acknowledge existing racism. **Change is often led by dynamic leaders.** Tiresome work achieved mixed results since racialized coaches were expected to have a high level of understanding of race and racial issues and significant **time to comfort, support, advise, and educate players**, other coaches, and their departments—along with maintaining a winning record.

## 03 Examples of Racism

### I. Coach Stressors continued

Racialized players demand racialized coaches relate to them, mentor and nurture them, and exist in their organization. Research from the United States (e.g., Carter-Francique & Olushola, 2016) is reinforced here, showing that Black coaches play an essential role in Black university student athletic and academic success. In the OUA, Jamal was recruited for his coaching abilities as well as his ability to recruit Black men specifically:

“

He reached out to me when I was in [United States] and basically said ... “Look, we have issues here [at my university] and we need more Black folks. I’m having troubles recruiting black guys and I think you and I, working together can help that.

—Jamal (Black, coach, basketball, man)

The additional responsibility and burden placed on racialized coaches in the OUA was seen as an advantage, but rarely acknowledged or financially compensated.



04



# Knowledge of Racism

## 04 Knowledge of Racism

This research distinguishes specific examples of racism in the OUA (i.e., **what** is racism?; see page 16) from specific knowledge about **how** and **why** racism continues to occur. Both are required to mobilize anti-racist transformations in the OUA. This section is devoted to exploring the structures which perpetuate, enable, and overlook the experiences of racism outlined above. The evidence shows an inordinate (and concerning) reality that stereotypes, myths, and white privilege cause racialized individuals in the OUA to experience differential treatment. We must address knowledge of race and racism throughout the conference if we are to shift inequitable access to training, rehabilitation therapy, mental health resources, financial awards, or opportunities in leadership positions on athletic, coaching, or administration teams.

The examples that follow include:

- A. Denial of Racism
- B. Knowledge of Stereotypes
- C. Myth of Black Athlete Durability
- D. Myth of Black Athlete Low Intelligence
- E. White Privilege in Leadership



### A. Denial of Racism

Many White participants juxtaposed acknowledging that racism existed within the OUA with expressions of never having personally experienced, dealt with, or witnessed these instances. Despite many administrators and coaches having worked for more than 20 years in university sport, racism was an absent-presence. Participants referenced 'blindness,' naiveté, or not knowing where to look, which highlights a concerning trend: those in positions of power within the OUA, who often have no personal experience handling or witnessing instances of racism, are those who make decisions regarding anti-racist practice and policy.

Avoiding 'blindness' has ableist connotations. Rather, 'race-evasiveness' is a more accurate term to capture ways that the refusal to acknowledge race functions in society (Annamma et al., 2017).

For example, Cassie and Sean share, with some hesitation, that they have not seen racism:

“

I haven't witnessed it. I've heard stories and, again, I think that the reason I haven't necessarily witnessed, it is because of how white my sport is. ... I've heard stories of other people, friends from other sports, but in volleyball it just it hasn't happened around me.

—Cassie (White, coach, volleyball, woman)

“

I have to say no [racism] and hopefully it's not blindness.

—Sean (White, administrator, man)

## 04 Knowledge of Racism

### A. Denial of Racism continued

Lyle is aware of anti-sexual harassment training that directly addresses behaviour expectations within the OUA, but is not sure how prevalent racism is at his university:

“

**I naively like to think that you know racism doesn't occur to the same extent that [inappropriate sexual behaviour] does. At least good god, I hope it doesn't!**

—Lyle (White, administrator, man)

Although the leadership in his athletic department was predominantly White, Sam does not believe race is a factor in hiring:

“

**I can't say ... I've ever been presented a situation where white privilege has made someone a more qualified [candidate] for a job or has gotten someone a job.**

—Sam (White, administrator, man)

Though Jillian insists she has never “seen it firsthand,” as an athlete or administrator, she believes if she had seen racism she “would not have let it happen”:

“

**When you're going up through sport you don't necessarily [see it] ... Never in my career have I had a complaint due to racism brought forward to me in any of my roles. ... I hear it only because of the stories we're hearing now, you know with what's gone on in the last year or stories you read in the paper. That's where you hear it.**

—Jillian (White, administrator, woman)



The assumptions that racism exists in the United States, or only at those universities about which public reports have been shared (e.g., Joseph 2014; Joseph, 2020) allows racism to perpetuate. Canadian discourses of multicultural inclusion limit discussions of how our institutions remain exclusionary (Joseph et al., 2012; Thobani, 2007). Fear of being misunderstood or ostracized makes student athletes, coaches, and administrators less likely to come forward to share their experiences. Similar to the shifting ideas about concussion and sexual harassment, public acknowledgement of ‘hidden’ racism will help the entire OUA community to prevent racial injustice.

## 04 Knowledge of Racism

### B. Knowledge of Stereotypes

Although the specific stereotypes may shift, a system of meanings attributed to race remains consistent in Canada. This constellation of racist stereotypes that permeate across the OUA makes it harder for racialized athletes to experience success. In the examples below, participants recognize that perceptions of an athlete or coach's ability, role, character, strength, or intelligence are often made based on the individual's race or ethnicity.

A stereotype is an oversimplified idea about a specific group that shapes our behaviour toward that group, often in unconscious ways (Omi & Winant, 2015).

“

**I started a young Black quarterback and ... there were some alumni and there was even [comments] from the head coach: “are you sure he’s gonna be able to do it?” ... it kind of brought out the worst in people.**

—Trevor (White, coach, football, man)

A stereotype that is often leveraged against Indigenous people and students in Canada is a misunderstanding and weaponization of the Federal Indian Act (Bailey, 2016).

“

**Being Indigenous experiencing things like “Oh well you don’t even pay to go to school” or “You don’t have to pay taxes” when, like, I do both of those things. So that’s, you know, something that I definitely experience quite a bit.**

—Moby (Indigenous, athlete, woman)

Denice and Lion report specific negative assumptions about Black athletes revealed through comments by coaches:

“

**[Administrators] basically said, like “Oh wow we’re surprised that we didn’t get any noise complaints from you all.”... and “We’re surprised that you guys didn’t get kicked off the plane.”**

—Denice (Black, athlete, track and field, woman)

“

**There’s never been a Black women’s basketball player on the basketball team. ... [Coaches are saying] “I don’t want to work with the hard-headed, stubborn, talented but stubborn black basketball player. I want players who listen and run and play for the team.”**

—Lion (Black, soccer player, man)

### SPOTLIGHT:

## C. Myth of Black Athlete Low Intelligence

A specific myth many Black student athletes reported was based on assumptions that they were not academically qualified, talented, or intelligent enough to be successful in university. This stereotype often manifested subtly, but was no less harmful to players:

[The coach] would just presume that like, yeah, “the white players are smart, they’re going to be fine. We really need to hone in on the black players to make sure that they’re the ones passing [academic courses].” And if we did well, it was almost like “Oh!”, like it was a shock.

–Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

[White athletes] were afforded the right to you know, be seen as being more intelligent or being seen as having more like precedence than us. And it wasn’t out loud, it wasn’t overt, but somehow through interactions of me trying to explain things ... there was just like an insinuation of us being less smart.

–Kyra (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

People would be like, “Oh I didn’t think you were in computer science!” kind of poking at, you know, I don’t think you could be in a difficult program.

–Jade (Biracial, athlete, field hockey, woman)

These types of comments reinforce literatures on Black schooling in Canada that suggest Black students are more likely to get positive reinforcement for sports but not academics, and to be streamed into non-science/math subjects (James, 2005; James & Turner, 2017). ‘Scientific racism’ was used for centuries to justify racial hierarchies and transnational slavery with labels of Black intellectual inferiority and academic laziness. The legacy of colonial understandings of racial differences in mind and body is the perpetuation of the myth of the ‘natural black athlete,’ especially on predominantly White campuses (Hawkins, 2010). This myth has also been demonstrated among Indigenous student athletes in Ontario hockey (Blodgett & Schinke, 2015).

### SPOTLIGHT:

## D. Myth of Black Athlete Durability

There is a widespread myth that Black athletes have endured more emotional hardships and are more resilient, physically strong, and psychologically tough than other athletes.

Our coach [believed] that black athletes were more durable than white athletes, that we were less prone to being injured, that we jump higher, run faster and ... I've had, you know, two ACL tears, multiple ankle injuries. I was very injury prone. ... Everything that was said was explicitly like you know "Black girls are just so strong." ... "You are just so athletic that it's really hard for you guys to get injured."

—Kyra (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

Understanding oneself as resilient is a source of strength; however, Harriet suggests that Black athletes may portray themselves as durable, even when physical injuries or the stress of academics, racism, or life in general are negatively impacting performance.

Sometimes [Black student athletes] won't seek help and I'm pushing them for help ... and they're just like "We just plow through that's what we do, that's what my family does, that's what my culture does." ... I feel confident in saying that I can push them [towards mental health resources] ... because of my identity ... and I don't know if other coaches, would be able to."

—Harriet (Biracial, coach, basketball, woman)

Serena describes a situation she witnessed where two athletes were injured:

The coach listened to the White athlete and was like "Okay go get physio. You know you need to take time off and take this seriously." But the White coach said to the Black athlete "You're tougher than this" ... Basically saying she was exaggerating, and all of this stuff and she ended up having a career ending injury because of the coach not listening. So I think there always is this kind of conception that like Black athletes are tougher physically.

—Serena (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

The Myth of Black Athlete Durability prevents some coaches from encouraging the necessary attention to athlete mental health and injuries.

Harriet believes a shared racial identity allows her to have a different relationship with some athletes than other coaches. This ongoing Myth of Black Athlete Durability is directly connected to the relative lack of racialized coaches, lack of education on racist stereotypes, and the issue of white privilege in leadership in the OUA.

## 04 Knowledge of Racism

### E. White Privilege in Leadership

To gauge knowledge of how racism operates, it was not only important to explore members' understandings of discrimination, but also privilege. White privilege emerges in a system of white supremacy in which "whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted" (Ansley, 1989, p. 993). White privilege is evidenced by who feels comfortable, celebrated, and centered in the OUA.

**Nepotism:** the practice among those with power of favoring relatives or friends, especially through hiring.

**Meritocracy:** the idea that people are hired based on their skills, abilities, or accomplishments.

Davis and Christine understand white privilege as nepotism combined with a false meritocracy, which lead to privileging predominantly White administrators and coaches in hiring:

“

Some days I'm surprised I got this job. Typically it's like friends of friends who got hired, or people that don't look like me. ... [Because] the majority of individuals who hold those positions of power like that are predominantly white, the diversity [hiring] doesn't happen.

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)

“

We think it is a merit-based [system], “This person had the best qualifications” and it's like, yes, but how much suppression have others had to not maybe shine as brightly, or just not [be] considered based on biases we're not even aware of?

—Christine (Black, administrator, woman)

Cameron and Shauna note older age and identifying as a man compound the white privilege of leadership:

“

In many cases [the leadership is] the old old old boys club. And the people that are making the decisions are a bunch of white-haired white dudes in the back rooms.

—Cameron (White, coach, track and field, man)

“

In terms of white privilege, I think it's everywhere. ... One of the things that's most difficult is that it's not recognized ... we have a lot of people who are much older than I am, who have been around for a long time. ... The way they grew up, in the way they also came through the university, I think that there is a systemic racism that is embedded within them. ... Some of them are aware and don't care. And then, some of them are not aware.

—Shauna (White, administrator, woman)

One of the objectives of the OUA Anti-racism Project is to bring awareness to issues of systemic racism and white privilege so that leaders can make different choices.

## 04 Knowledge of Racism

### E. White Privilege in Leadership continued

Jasmeen declares only some students enjoy the privilege of having service providers that share their identities:

“

We have one mental health resource for the student athletes and it's a White woman, and I think that having someone who is able to give you those services that looks like you is a privilege.

—Jasmeen (Black, athlete, soccer, woman)



Moby notes that white privilege in the conference translates to exalting mainly White athletes:

“

I'm thinking of like who's chosen as a captain ... I guess being an Indigenous person you were never noticed. Even if you were a stand-up player, you weren't picked as the OUA athlete of the week or picked for OUA all-star teams or things like that despite maybe your coaching staff having put your name in or having said “no, you deserve to be up there.”

—Moby (Indigenous, athlete, woman)

“

I think we had about a team of 100. I'd say there were maybe 10 black athletes. And I want to say, for maybe one of four years [24 to 48 captains] we had a black captain.

—Serena (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

White individuals in the OUA enjoy the privilege of being able to complain and be heard:

“

A complaint brought forward by BIPOC individuals ... [is] absorbed completely differently than a [complaint from a] White administrator, a White coach, or White student athlete.

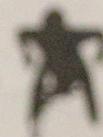
—Fleur (White, administrator, woman)

Many racialized OUA members report **not being heard** or a **lack of action** arising from their complaints, resulting in having to be strategic in their communications and leaning on each other for support. **This additional labour comes at a cost.**

05



TORONTO



# Tools for Anti-Racist Change

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

Student athletes, coaches, and administrators provided hundreds of suggestions to improve anti-racism within the OUA. This report has outlined who is in the OUA (01: Demographics), what participants have experienced (02: Questionnaire Responses and 03: Examples of Racism), and how and why racism persists (04: Knowledge of Racism). In this section, the report turns to the questions of what next and how? It is clear from participant responses that immediate change is required and desired by many OUA members, but many of the most tangible tools are missing or unknown. The principles of Critical Race Theory clarify that transformation is the goal of anti-racism work (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Rather than make ‘recommendations’ that might sit on a shelf or in a digital folder, four areas that require immediate attention are outlined including:

**05.1 EDUCATION** – create a social media campaign to generate buy-in, shift culture, and build awareness of what racism looks like; provide ongoing educational tools

**05.2 RECRUITMENT** – remove unnecessary experience and education barriers from job descriptions while intentionally mentoring and recruiting qualified BIPOC candidates

**05.3 SUPPORTS** – create and hire for a position devoted to anti-racism for case management and programming, hire racialized students, implement mental health supports

**05.4 ACCOUNTABILITY** – collect data on racial demographics and anti-racism initiatives within the OUA, specify zero-tolerance racism policies, publicly commit to specific changes



**Note:** This icon alerts you to an **actionable Tool for Change!**



**I’m so sick of hearing the word ‘recommendation.’ Recommendation? No. We need to make some &\*\$%# changes!**

–Wayne (Black, coach, football, man)



## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### 05.1 Education

Education in the OUA takes many forms including in-person and virtual training, workshops, online quizzes, social media videos, townhall sessions, and healing circles. The breadth of suggestions made by OUA members to improve anti-racism education are highlighted below. The message that education is essential, should be mandatory, and taught by experts was repeated by dozens of interviewees. However, in order to be successful, strategies must be put in place to advance community buy-in, particularly with older members or those from less cosmopolitan areas. Additionally, education should not repeat the same information or format year after year. The examples that follow explain that anti-racism education must:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| (1) include all stakeholders          | (5) harmonize with other training       |
| (2) take time and deep engagement     | (6) integrate with other supports       |
| (3) <u>not</u> be quick or impersonal | (7) be consistent across the conference |
| (4) be mandatory                      | (8) merge with anti-colonial education  |

See page 51 for Anti-Racism Education Reflection Questions

### Anti-racism education must include all stakeholders

Participants expressed concerns that anti-racism education doesn't typically reach those who need it most.



We have to be very aware of how we talk to people who don't see themselves as racist, and we don't want to shut down the conversation ... that's a delicate balance, because you still have to get to those people.

—Thomas (White, coach, fencing, man)



The biggest barrier [is] people that are [not] willing to make changes because they either don't want to or they don't understand why they need to.

—Jessica (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

Some administrators advocated for hearing directly from those who have experienced racism to motivate change.



Young people's experiences that I would never have comprehended, when they are articulating those situations to me, it is very effective.

—Tommy (White, administrator, man)

However, putting the onus on the most vulnerable in an organization to share their pain has been found to be an ineffective singular strategy to making long-lasting change. While stories of racism might spark empathy, they must be paired with structural change.



Training that includes case studies based on the complexities of real events that teammates and colleagues work on together, followed by a debrief facilitated by an expert, would build trust and deepen anti-racism content knowledge.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism **education** must take time and deep engagement

Sammy suggested posting videos of OUA racism and suggestions for anti-racist action on social media.



A good place to start would be social media because, like it's really easily accessible and people see it all the time. Just kind of like posting [videos] ... shows its importance and to help create that buy-in ... so that athletes aren't so quick to dismiss it.

–Sammy (White, athlete, water polo, woman)

Training requires multiple, extended sessions.



It would take more than one training session to do these things ... because it's not the same as like a doping seminar where you go through an hour or two and you're told not to dope. Like it's deeper than that, so that's definitely a barrier, to try to kind of give this education in a meaningful way with time restraints of athletes.

–Kyra (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)



it would be great to have an annual conference. ... A four day intensive training on anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-homophobia, equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, like all of these issues. ... People could book that as a professional development and really get into it, right? And have the time to reflect and prepare. ... The OUA can partner with one institution to offer that every year. ... People really want to understand, but two-hour things are not going to do it.

–Barbara (White, administrator, woman)

Anti-oppression education must first establish a community of learners who can be vulnerable together and take risks to expand their base of knowledge. All participants must examine the ways they have been taught to believe they should be favored and privileged, consider how they are implicated in systems of oppressions, and understand the ways discrimination results in different consequences within and across groups (Kumashiro, 2000).

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism **education** must not be quick or impersonal

OUA members reiterated many times that training has to reflect real-life situations they might encounter and be meaningful enough to be memorable.

“

A lot of times when there is training, it might be very vague, very impersonal, very quick, you know “Check the box! Okay, everyone’s trained so no more problems!”

—Marjorie (Biracial, athlete, field hockey, woman)

“

It can’t just be, “let’s do this training at the beginning of August, every year.” There needs to be ongoing professional development, ongoing discussions.

—Aimee (Biracial, coach, field hockey, woman)

“

That education piece can’t just be limited to one day. It can’t. It’s got to be an ongoing ... part of our everyday life. ... We have them for formidable years in their life, right? We want them leaving better people. Well, this [ongoing training] is part of it.

—Michael (White, coach, football, man)

OUA members expressed desire for ongoing, transformative education led by a professional expert in anti-racism.



## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism education must be mandatory

Mandatory training was suggested to gain a shared understanding of what racism is in OUA settings where some people are completely unaware of what individual offensive behaviour is, or how structural racism is embedded in recruitment, hiring, scholarships, and in daily sport settings of the OUA.



**There's no anti-racism training in the OUA, so people don't even have the baseline of being educated.**

—Sammy (White, athlete, water-polo, woman)



**The situation that I was in, right, and the excuse that my coach gave to this white athlete who said these overtly racist things—had we had some type of training and we had some type of mutual understanding about, you know, what is being racist, what is offensive language ... how do we be agents of change, how to be, you know, allies ... I think that situations like that probably wouldn't have come up and probably would have been dealt with more, I think, with more justice.**

—Kyra (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)



**Education should specifically address the need to be accountable for racist words and jokes.**



**There was no animosity between the two kids, right? It was just in their mind this is appropriate language on the playing field. ... The glaring omission for me was the lack of education and training opportunities, right, for even myself to be able to communicate with my players [about racism].**

—Michael (White, coach, football, man)



**The language that we speak, how we interact with our athletes, how we interact with ourselves as coaches and administration and understanding that and understanding our biases that we bring in. So for me it's going to be important that we do that as a staff.**

—Devo (Black, coach, man)

In order to understand how to resist racism at the level of daily language, training across all staff is necessary.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism education must be mandatory continued

“ [Anti-racism training] should be mandatory. 100%. The same way that we have to go through anti-harassment, training or LGBTQ-friendly training, or just sportsmanship training in general.

—Taj (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

Nigel and Parker emphasize that the absence of anti-racism training means the absence of awareness, especially for those who have little exposure to racism.



Educating the community on examples of microaggressions would broaden knowledge of acceptable comments and behaviour.

“ Sometimes they think that they’re not racist, but then they might say little things here and there, then realize “Oh, maybe I shouldn’t have said that.” And I think that it really should be mandatory. ... Sometimes people are too uncomfortable talking about race, because they don’t want to offend anybody.

—Nigel (Black, athlete, basketball, man)

“ Anti-racism initiatives and training is necessary because it would help direct people on how they should act and respond to racism. There are situations where people may do or say something racist, but they aren’t aware that it is offensive.

—Parker (Black, athlete, track and field, man)

Mercedes clarifies that anti-racism education is not only an issue for athletes:

“ It would be good, I think, if the OUA made it mandatory to have like not only just the coaches, teammates, but [also] the umpires, athletic directors, like everybody involved in sport to do some sort of training on this. Whether that’s you know watching a module about like what microaggression are ... [or] showing what diversity is, and just like what other cultures are that are here, and embracing that, instead of like what I said before: colour blindness. Like people saying “Oh I don’t see colour!”

—Mercedes (South Asian, athlete, softball, woman)

When people say “I don’t see colour,” they might mean they don’t judge others on the basis of skin colour. However, not “seeing” colour might also mean people don’t acknowledge the racism OUA members face and, therefore, don’t invest in changing existing inequitable systems. Anti-racism education helps to decrease the silences related to racism.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism education must harmonize with other training

Understanding the ways racism intersects with homophobia and sexism requires anti-racism-focused training in addition to harmonizing anti-racism education with other already existing and embedded OUA educational initiatives. Currently, several participants identified “no training” on anti-racism.

“

We go through extensive training for anti-doping. We go through extensive training for, you know, sexual conduct ... and consent. Like we go through all this training and then you know, in terms of, in terms of race, you know there’s no training.

—Michael (White, coach, football, man)

“

If you recognize hazing as important with training, then racism is also important by that same token. So for me, [anti-racism training] should be an obligation for anyone working in USports.

—Lion (Black, athlete, soccer, man)

Addressing racism across existing training would demonstrate accountability for how racism is part of the OUA culture and is not separate from any other equity issue.

“

If you’re talking bystanders training, right, any of the misogynistic comments ... there’s usually a lot of racial slurs that that come into it.

—Rex (White, administrator, man)



We’re going to [integrate] that with our rookie incoming training, so kind of how we have like bystander training and sexual assault training, to incorporate with that racial and diversity training as well.

—Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

Student athletes, coaches, and administrators need tools to understand how misogyny and racism are connected and how to react when they hear slurs of any kind. Anti-racism training should be integrated with other training.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism education must integrate with other supports

Mandatory OUA training must be accompanied by local university supports: zero-tolerance racism policies, mental health professionals equipped to deal with issues related to race, and strategies for recruitment and retention of racialized student athletes, coaches, and administrators.

“

The goal shouldn't be to kind of put people in training and then send them out in the world ... the goal should be to change ... The things that support the training they've received [should be] there and in place so that they can take the training out into a larger environment.

—Michael (White, coach, rowing, man)

OUA members are demanding that the additional anti-racism resources provided by the OUA are provided by experts who are racially diverse.

“

[Anti-racism education] should include more BIPOC experiences ... it would be helpful to have BIPOC individuals running it.

—Daniela (East Asian, athlete, hockey, woman)

“

You can't expect a department that is not diverse to then teach me about anti-racism.

—Avery (Black, administrator, woman)



#### Create online educational resources.

Coach Devo advocates for integrated training similar to other online education portals he has permanent access to. He suggests online anti-racism education should be no different than other coaching resources:

“

Sometimes I have a question that, if I can go somewhere and at least whether it's a portal, I can see a video, I can read a book, I can go to the podcast to get some information ... [If] somebody asked a question, 'How do I deal with hearing the N word in the locker room?' ... being able to go somewhere [online] to get that support to get those questions answered ... I think that would be so important, so powerful.

—Devo (Black, coach, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism **education** must be consistent across the conference

The message from OUA members was loud and clear. Although each university has control over its own education, across the OUA leadership, guidance and consistent messaging is needed.



**Our athletes and our student leaders receive far more education, training and levels of expectation than staff on campus do ... the OUA as a conference could do very well to have standardized training and approaches for their coaches, staff, and student athletes because those are your peers, those are your like-minded individuals. I think it will have a lot more impact if it's conference wide.**

—Eric (White, administrator, man)



**[We need] an educational opportunity that is embedded into the OUA all together.**

—Cee Elle (White, coach, lacrosse, woman)



**OUA says here's our plan, and this is what we're going to do this year. ... It's about setting expectations for the whole team behaviour that these things shouldn't happen in the first place and then talking to coaches about how you continue to reinforce that and embed that.**

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)

OUA-wide training would help to set the standard for what is considered appropriate behaviour at every school within varsity and other programs. This would build capacity at multiple levels and sites of the organization, arming OUA members with the competence, confidence, and motivation to engage in anti-racism work on a daily basis, to be effective allies, and to provide positive sport experiences for all.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racism **education** must merge with anti-colonial education



Because every OUA sport is linked to historically colonial universities, anti-racism work on campus must also be anti-colonial. Tehosennake, an Indigenous coach, is doubtful that colonial institutions really want to change. He claims educating student athletes about anti-racism would require more than education within sport:

“

[Universities] would have to change curriculum and delivery of education across Canada, and how they teach about Black issues, Indigenous issues and so on. You'd have to change that. I think there has to be an economic rebalancing of things if you were to go really far with this [anti-racism] idea ... I'm not certain that they can move without being really shaken up at the core of their foundation. ... [Universities] still reinforce the same hierarchical status quo. ... It clouds their idea of what is just and what can be tolerated as injustice.



To avoid reinforcing harms for racialized students, Tehosennake adds that OUA anti-racism education must be paired with other anti-colonial justice transformations in athletic funding, health services, and student affairs supports.

“

Simultaneously also like I find that these trainings don't often alter the material conditions for the people that are involved.

Furthermore, accountability is essential if we consider whose lives are at stake in racist environments. Those with the most power to make change are typically not those who are survivors of racism.

“

They can choose to act differently if they want to, but there's nothing really to force them to do this. ... There's no reason for them to alter their lives.

The reason for White leaders to alter their lives is that change starts at the top and in the OUA, We Are One.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-Racism Education Reflection Questions

1. Does the OUA/athletic department communicate the importance of racial equity and anti-racism training as a part of all student, coach, and staff members' ongoing professional development?
2. Do coaches, managers, team personnel, and leaders receive innovative and multi-media education on anti-racism and anti-oppression?
3. Are current coaches willing (and supported) to enhance their competencies to coach and mentor racialized athletes? Do new hires demonstrate skills and experience in working with racialized athletes?
4. Does the OUA/athletic department ensure that the skills learned through anti-racism training are implemented across the organization?
5. Does the OUA/athletic department connect training to other structural transformations in sport and education?

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### 05.2 Recruitment

Recruitment of racialized student athletes, coaches, and administrators was outlined as a pervasive issue across the entire OUA. Diversifying recruitment is essential for the OUA to capitalize on the extensive talent of racialized people throughout the province and country and to ensure that everyone in the organization feels represented by those in power. The examples that follow explain that anti-racist recruitment requires:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>(1) specific strategies for student athletes</b> | <b>(6) removing barriers from job postings</b>      |
| <b>(2) following best practices in hiring</b>       | <b>(7) expanding sources of candidates</b>          |
| <b>(3) engaging experts</b>                         | <b>(8) diverse hiring committees and candidates</b> |
| <b>(4) intentional hiring plans for coaches</b>     | <b>(9) attention to retention techniques</b>        |
| <b>(5) paid internships to develop coaches</b>      | <b>(10) job specificity</b>                         |

See p. 64 for *Anti-Racist Recruitment Reflection Questions*

#### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires specific strategies for student athletes

For student athletes, as mentioned in section 03, the ‘race’ issue is linked to ‘class’ since Black and Indigenous students in particular are more likely to be found in public high schools as opposed to private schools or pay-for-play clubs. Recruiting racialized athletes will require some coaches to break well-established patterns of recruitment and spark new relationships with coaches, parents, and athletes.



##### Encourage open tryouts.

Jamal explains that potential student athletes who have emailed but are not recruited are encouraged to do a walk-on tryout because it changes the narrative about university and sport access, especially in racialized communities.



I almost always take one kid from the try out, just so that they get the experience. ... I just want it to be a known fact that ‘hey man, somebody got taken last year out of the tryouts.’ ... So every year somebody’s going to always get a chance to at least see what it’s like to be with the team.

—Jamal (Black, coach, basketball, man)



##### Recruit for and advertise racial differences — if they honestly exist — in consultation with the racialized athletes chosen.



Why would you feel like you could try out, or you would have an opportunity, if you don’t see yourself there [represented in athletic department media]? ... Media and pictures of the same people means that we’re just giving the same people the opportunities and not opening it truly for everybody.

—Cee Elle (White, coach, lacrosse, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires specific strategies for student athletes continued



**Celebrate racialized student accomplishments. OUA media are great recruitment tools.**



I don't think the OUA should use the acronym by BIPOC if they're not going to include Indigenous and other People of Colour. ... When the OUA highlights the teams [with Indigenous athletes] don't even get presented. ... A lot of players who do succeed and do put in the work don't get their recognition. ... I don't think I've ever seen an Indigenous person be put on the OUA [media].

—Moby (Indigenous, athlete, rugby, woman)



**Use social media on channels known to racialized student athletes.**



[Use] social media to kind of connect more people being like “hey, these are all the Black athletes from like north of everywhere ... this is who you can connect to ... if you want to get into the sport.”

—Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

Lisa notes that Black students coming from different types of schools shared with her different socialization experiences and varied comfort in predominantly white OUA environments.



We need to look at how we recruit student athletes and what our conversation looks like and understand that there is a difference [between private and public high school graduates] and that that difference means that our conversations need to be different.

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)



We have to do a much better job recruiting BIPOC student athletes and maybe some of those strategies are different than if we were recruiting white students. ... How do we increase the number of Indigenous student athletes within OUA? What is a sport that represents indigenous athletes across Canada? [Lacrosse] is not an OUA sport.

—Alana (White, athlete, track and field, woman)

Alana and many other coaches suggested a close examination of a) which sports are offered and b) the racial demographics of who is playing those sports as the first steps in making a change to both. To assume that recruiting conversations would be the same with all groups and for all universities and all sports is naïve. Some coaches need support to consider how their conversations might shift for specific communities.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires following best practices in hiring

Racialized administrators find it difficult to be hired and to advance into leadership positions. Many respondents emphasized the necessity for changes ‘across the board.’

“

That’s the critical part, right, is having those correct and proper hiring practices that account for diversity and ... then making that standard across the board that everyone [in the OUA] has to follow.

—Tehosennake (Indigenous, coach, man)



Having some kind of basic [hiring] guidelines like that would be a start. And then there are lots of trainings for people doing the hiring to make sure that they’re doing it in a less biased way.

—Theo (White, administrator, man)

“

One thing I heard with the OUA that was happening was that the hiring practices weren’t sort of standardized, wasn’t best practice. It was very much so dependent on who they knew, based on what they had done, in what context, and what framework, from who’s telling the story.

—Brian (East Asian, athlete, baseball, man)

Following best practices in anti-racist hiring includes widely advertising jobs, inviting qualified racialized candidates to apply, and asking questions about anti-racism and equity competencies of all candidates, which would reduce nepotism and increase hiring for racial diversity in the OUA.



## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires engaging experts

If coaches or administrators don't have the tools or expertise to hire for a diverse staff, they should engage experts on campus.



Engaging your equity inclusion office on all hiring practices and proactively recruiting a diverse staff so that every member—every corner of your locker room has someone they can look up to and sees a path to being involved in the sport long term if they so desire. I think this is something that we absolutely have to do.

—Moe (White, coach, football, man)



What do I need to make sure that people feel good in a space? I think I need more racialized staff. I need more racialized people in positions of power, more visibility. ... Any decisions that we're making and we need to make sure that we've consulted with and had input from the people that will be affected by that decision. And I think that goes across the board, like racial, gender diversity, all of that stuff is just so valuable.

—Penelope (Biracial, coach, swimming, woman)



We end up not reflecting the student life for those students who are coming here if we don't know it, we haven't lived it, we're not bringing those experiences to our decision making.

—Gordon (White, administrator, male)



Consult racialized staff and students on decisions.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires intentional hiring plans for coaches

Coaches are role models and leaders for all athletes. Madison emphasized that support from leadership was key to the plan to hire more racially diverse coaches.



We need more BIPOC coaches like number one. ... There are invisible barriers. Knock them down. Make the change. ... My athletic director's a female. I think with that comes an understanding of not being at the table, right, as a woman. ... She's been behind me with the decisions that we've made. ... To truly create a safe space where people can be themselves there's just, there's got to be representation and leadership. That's the number one. It's just a non-negotiable. [Hiring BIPOC coaches is] the first thing I did within my team. ... And I was very forthcoming as to why I was doing it, why it was important.

—Madison (White, coach, rugby, woman)



Until we are intentional about hiring Indigenous and Black and women in our coaching ranks and until we hire a lot of them so that they become role models and that our young female athletes and male athletes ... see themselves in their coaches, we will never be able to break this down.

—Barbara (White, administrator, woman)

Devo is certain that hiring more racialized coaches or administrators will translate to improved anti-racist practice and policy because of a shift in conversations at leadership tables.



Getting more [racialized] coaches or administration [in] those leadership positions, right, to have those voices ... in the room, being able to share those discussions, be a part of that policy building can definitely help.

—Devo (Black, coach, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires paid internships to develop coaches

The next generation of coaching candidates needs to learn the tools of the trade.

“

There needs to be some educational piece to help some young Black leaders grow up and be prepared for these roles.

—Trevor (White, coach, football, man)

“

Create some grad type positions ... smart great kids that have earned our respect over four or five years, keep them around for a couple more as a Grad Assistant and get them a little bit of resume building coaching experience.

—Moe (White, coach, football, man)

We must invest in training future coaches. Many coaches described the necessity of having a financial cushion (another job, parental or partner support) that enabled their volunteer hours or certification processes.



Invest some work-study money or some tuition waivers into you know hiring BIPOC coaches ... and groom them and mentor them so they can ... [create a] bigger pool that we can select from. ... Our schools and the OUA, has a responsibility to look at internships and look at the grassroots level of trying to attract future leaders.

—Michael (White, coach, football, man)

“

You got to help support an individual who truly wants to coach. You have to financially support them in jumping through those hoops [\$5,000, 18-month certification processes] to get the qualifications, so that they are able to enter ... give them the chance to, you know, develop their coaching style and skill.

—Amanda (Indigenous, coach, track and field, woman)

Funded positions could be developmental and dedicated funds for racialized coaches would also be welcomed.



[Create a] funded position for minority assistant coaches that are wanting to get into coaching full time and see that as a passion.

—Noah (Biracial, coach, basketball, man)

“

I like to see the university come out with ... a fund to hire more diverse coaches.

—Sean (White, administrator, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires removing barriers from job postings

Operational strategies to diversify coaches include removing barriers from job postings and hiring processes. This will allow the OUA to capitalize on excellence and winning records among potential racialized candidates.



#### Remove barriers from job postings.



Are we doing enough to invite racialized administrators, [to recruit] people to apply, or to be interested in these types of roles? ... We've had that conversation with our Vice President ... you [must] remove barriers from a job posting ... the way our coaching role is evaluated, they require five-years' experience coaching at the OUA or USport level. ... There are just going to be ... great coaches who just don't have that experience.

—Eric (White, administrator, man)



'University degrees preferred' that eliminates [candidates]. That creates a whole social economic barrier.

—Yohannah (White, administrator, woman)



We need to be more intentional. We're recreating the job descriptions and the list of job requirements. Here we need to be more open to accepting and ... determining equivalencies.

—Moses (White, administrator, man)



Rather than suggesting supporting 'all' students is sufficient, recruit for people with specific experiences supporting racialized student athletes. Explicitly invite candidates to self-identify as racialized. Institutions must have strategies to transform statements into actions.



I just get a list of names with links to their CV and resume. We don't collect information on [race]. ... If you have a diversity statement in your hiring practice, but you have no way to identify if your applicant pool is diverse, then really the statement is just semantics, just something you put on paper.

—Eric (White, administrator, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires expanding sources of candidates

Prior to the interview process, work must be done to distribute job postings to qualified racialized candidates and support is needed to develop a network of potential candidates.



Partner with community organizations such as the [Black Canadian Coaches Association](#) to secure an online list of qualified racialized coaches in every sport.



The constant challenge ... [is] of finding a diverse pool of qualified coaches. ... Where do I go to hire a diverse swim coach? Where do I go to hire diverse hockey coach?

—Sean (White, administrator, man)

Cassie emphasizes that conveying care to potential candidates is an essential, but sometimes neglected, element of the hiring process.



You're maybe not calling it [targeted hiring]. Maybe over there you're calling it something different, but you're doing it all the time. So get the heck out there and find ... women of colour, in this case. You know and bring them in and let them know that there is a space for them, and that you do care about them. You do value them, and you can see them in this position. But I think you'll struggle with that if none of your coaching staff represents [racial diversity].

—Cassie (White, coach, volleyball, woman)

The feeling created in the interview process can pay dividends in future hiring as racialized coaches share their experiences and impressions of institutions that implement anti-racist and inclusive practices. Some OUA members emphasized that hiring for diversity must be an active choice.



Should [two candidates] both be qualified, I think that's when you look at the question of what we're trying to increase: our quota for diversity. Let's look at like race and gender and sexual identity or orientation and all of that type of stuff to increase like diversity and representation.

—Jessica (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)



It's one of those things that's proven over and over again, if you interview people of colour, then you end up hiring more people of colour.

—Theo (White, administrator, man)

Over the 2020-2021 athletic season, changes in the OUA demonstrate that qualified racialized coaches exist in most sports. Racialized coaches shared repeatedly that they are not being given a fair chance.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires diverse hiring committees

A diverse hiring committee could shift the outcome of recruitment processes:



Maybe it's being more public [transparent] ... on what that process was like, maybe having a mandatory diverse hiring group.

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)

“

The hiring committee needs to be diverse, like, right away. ... Let's just put someone of colour or a woman or you know diversity on your hiring committee. I don't think a lot of policy has to change for that. That's a short term, immediate impact. ... I know who was on the hiring committee was three white men for a men's hockey coach. And I made a comment about wouldn't it be great if we hired a woman of colour as the assistant coach and someone laughed, and I was like, I'm not kidding.

—Madison (White, coach, rugby, woman)

A diverse committee might bring unique perspectives on a candidate's experiences or responses to questions. However, it should be noted that when there are few racialized staff or athletes, a mandatory diverse hiring panel puts excess burden on those who are racialized to be on committees; and if their opinions are not considered genuinely, feelings of tokenistic inclusion can reproduce a toxic environment.



## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires attention to retention techniques

After staff and coaches are recruited, keeping them requires an active effort to reduce toxicity in their environment. Cassie shares that cultural awareness is key to reducing taken-for-granted white privileges and increasing retention:

“

All kinds of things that you can take for granted, like some of the images that are up in our building ... what kind of food, you have catered at that [orientation] event ... do we have events where we connect outside of the workplace together?

—Cassie, (White, coach, volleyball, woman)



**Consider alternate work arrangements.**

“

[The head coach] being open to me coaching with young children that was huge for me and gave me confidence that, when she left her role, I was then asked to be the head coach and ... they said, ‘well our budget isn’t very big, how are we going to do [child care]?’ So we looked at different ways, and together we came up with the idea of ... [hiring a babysitter]. She took care of my kids, she traveled with us. Anything I needed she was there at all our tournaments and so forth, and that support was immeasurable.

—Harriet (Biracial, coach, basketball, woman)

Implementing policies that support racialized coaches who are parents demonstrates a commitment to bringing one’s ‘whole self’ to work.

“

It does make financial sense to have healthier workplace but it’s harder to translate that into direct financial like incentive to show them, ‘hey if you don’t have people quitting all the time, the toxic workplace that we have, then it’s actually a lot less money to train and hire and do that, over and over again.

—Theo (White, administrator, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires attention to retention techniques continued

To retain student athletes, institutions must find ways to support their mental health. Joining a diverse community reduces stress for some racialized student athletes.



If I knew I was coming into a team with another—or a few more people like me, I'd feel less like an outsider I guess in my first year, [less] like you have to try extra hard to like fit in.

—Daniela (East Asian, athlete, hockey, woman)



Create resources and opportunities racialized student athletes say they need. Brady suggests the solution is 'so simple': listen.



Listen to racialized members of our, you know community. ... Our student athletes [want] experiential learning. ... To work co-op three different semesters in your degree is really going to set them up for a tonne of success and make them way more employable, help them get into professional school, grad school.

—Brady (Indigenous, coach, man)

Brady described an existing co-op program that depends on first-semester university grades and suggests that some racialized student athletes who may have less family financial support, longer commutes, or are living on campus for the first time in a new, predominantly white environment may not make the cut without additional supports.

Recognizing these differences among students could help to adjust the supports available and increase retention for racialized student athletes in experiential learning opportunities.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **recruitment** requires job specificity

The few racialized coaches and administrators will burn out if they are relied upon to do every job related to equity in addition to the roles for which they were hired.



**Support that's needed is for those poor few people that are in there, who are being incredibly leaned on right now. ... One of our senior managers is really the only BIPOC person we have in our athletic department and so it's just been assumed it's his role, that he is now leading all of these [anti-racism] topics.**

—Trevor (White, coach, football, man)



**Obviously we need to have more diversity in our hiring, but we also need to not have this expectation that people are going to be ready to go and 'hit the ground running'. They need support, they need an onboarding plan, they need professional development. Anybody needs that.**

—Aimee (Biracial, coach, field hockey, woman)



**Some of these BIPOC people that are [completing tasks] well out of their job description and now they're struggling to keep up in their current roles as well because we're all relying on people to make decisions for us because we, rightfully so, don't think that us with our White privilege are in a position to make these decisions.**

—Trevor (White, coach, football, man)

Retention strategy requires ensuring people feel supported in their work and are doing the work they were hired for. Taking on additional tasks that White coaches and administrators are unable to do increases the burden on racialized OUA members.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-Racism Recruitment Reflection Questions

1. Does the OUA/athletic department have and clearly communicate hiring policies, follow established equity practices, use consistent question sets and include a diverse hiring committee?
2. Do all coaches, managers, and leaders receive equity or anti-racism training and education on supporting racialized student athletes?
3. Are hiring managers enabled to create job postings, target BIPOC candidates, create diverse hiring panels, learn the racial diversity of the pool, and set goals regarding hiring for diversity?
4. Does the organization offer flexible or family-friendly coaching arrangements (co-coaching/job sharing, childcare support, caregiver arrangements) and target racialized parents for hiring?
5. Does the OUA/athletic department have accountability measures in place to ensure that hiring for diversity is promoted?
6. Does the OUA/athletic department facilitate a mentorship program for racialized coaches, listen to the needs of racialized student athletes and staff, and implement their suggestions?
7. Are racialized athletes, coaches, and administrators whose images are being used for advertising and whose labour often drives anti-racism initiatives adequately compensated and supported?

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### 05.3 Supports

The supports needed by students, coaches, and administrators are varied and necessary. To protect mental, financial, spiritual, and physical health for all, supports should be put in place to respect human dignity and ensure a fair experience for all OUA members. Supports must include:

- (1) financial awards for racialized student athletes
- (2) administrators devoted to anti-racism
- (3) culturally competent mental health professionals
- (4) mental health professionals of many races
- (5) racialized student athlete groups
- (6) paying student athletes for advocacy labour
- (7) mentorship opportunities

See p. 74 for Anti-Racist Recruitment Reflection Questions

### Anti-racist **supports** must include financial awards for racialized student athletes

The minimum average for scholarships limits students who may not be able to maintain the necessary grades. Respondents to the questionnaire indicated that racialized students are less likely to rely on family for additional funding. They may have to work part time to support themselves or their family members. A neutral approach to financial awards neglects the intersections of class and racialization, a well-known phenomenon in Canadian society.

Without the requisite grades to receive athletic funding awards, athletes make difficult choices that sacrifice their sleep, grades, and overall health.

“

[Athletes say] “I’m likely going to have to go pick up a part time job somewhere else to make up for the money I didn’t get. And you’re telling me I’ve got to spend more time on my grades to get my grades higher.” ... We’re making it harder and harder for them to achieve that 2.67 [grade point average]. That I see as a barrier to being able to gain that financial access.

—Noah (White, administrator, man)

On September 16, 2021, the OUA committed to a new bursary program for Black and Indigenous Student Athletes. This report indicates that such a change will be welcomed across the province.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** must include financial awards for racialized student athletes continued

“

You might be coming into a program in social sciences and [it] only requires you to have a 76 maybe to get into it. But if you don't get an 80% you don't get access to the scholarship and I think what we're finding is [a] disproportionate amount of BIPOC athletes are not qualifying for scholarship assistance.

—Trevor (White, coach, football, man)



If athletes qualify for their program, they should be 'academically qualified' to earn an athletic award. A confidential and respectful system could be devised to account for financial need.

Some racialized students need additional scholarship opportunities and support to create successful applications:

“

Taking into account people's financial situations and maybe providing other ways to gain scholarships. Just because I know personally I've tried to write papers for scholarships, but you don't always get picked for those.

—Maive (Black, athlete, soccer, woman)



When gender equity is prioritized, especially with additional funding initiatives, racial equity should be an intersectional consideration:

“

[There] was an initiative to [provide funding to] try and keep people from going to the States. ... But if you look at the demographics of women's hockey players ... I felt that there were privileged young people that were in a pretty good financial situation and they still felt entitled to the max [funding] when you were recruiting them. ... That could be better distributed to another female athlete maybe in another sport.

—Rex (White, administrator, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** include administrators devoted to anti-racism

Participants shared the OUA's commitment to the values of EDI [equity diversity and inclusion], which includes anti-racism, and insisted that the enormous amount of EDI work requires a devoted staff member who can attend to student needs.



**I would like to see a BIPOC [EDI] director or coordinator at every different university.**

—Cal (White, administrator, man)



**Being able to have a third party or some type of ... equity officer that students could go to when they feel like their rights have been infringed upon. Because when somebody says a racist comment or somebody feels like a racist comment has been made towards them it's hard to bring up ... without defensiveness coming up, especially when it comes to authorities.**

—Kyra (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

This person could have a role that involves programming, case management, and listening.



**Hire on a full time officer of equity ... somebody that students would be able to go to when they feel that there's been a microaggression, or some type of wrongdoing, to advocate on their behalf to senior administration.**

—Katie (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)



**[A] specific person to go to at each university ... [if] you have a problem with race or like something's happening, you need someone to talk to [there] is actually a place you can go.**

—Nigel (Black, athlete, basketball, man)

An EDI director would not only support racialized athletes. Lisa notes that all athletes need ongoing education and support to stop racism.



**You could really do both planning and ... on the ground kind of work with the team. Be there with them ... helping our young student athletes gain a much better perspective on ... how their actions and their privileges and other things all go into this mixing pot in terms of creating an environment that some people aren't comfortable in.**

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** include administrators devoted to anti-racism continued

The EDI director should be a full time position.



This is important enough that someone should be assigned to it, and that person can't have 40 hours a week of other work that they are responsible for ... [otherwise] it's just not going to get done or ... accomplish any change.

—Michael (White, coach, rowing, man)



A full time position around EDI ... [leaves me] feeling confident in knowing we have somebody in our department who handles these things. I can report [racism] to my boss ... and I have support.

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)



You have to have someone in that role on your campus to be able to help and navigate. ... It takes time [to] cultivate those relationships, it takes time to do the work behind the scenes, it takes time to understand and sift through and listen. ... It's not like you can just take this on half-out. It's not a part time position.

—Missy (White, administrator, woman)

The administrator could lend their anti-racism expertise to coaches and administrators.



I'm the one that's educating based on intersectionalities, marginalism, oppress[ion] ... and that is well outside of my scope. ... I don't think I should be the one having the conversation. ... At the senior leadership table, I would argue that [EDI director] should be there. Not just through hiring, not just for policy development, but through those decision-making processes.

—Sean (White, administrator, man)



Having that knowledge and that true support, [some]where I can go to and not have to take that burden of feeling that it has to be me all the time.

—Devo (Black, coach, man)



Someone consistently in an EDI role within the athletic department that was checking in, holding people accountable ... creat[ing] this space to make it feel more diverse ... would change the way that people show up every day.

—Harriet (Biracial, coach, basketball, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** must include culturally competent mental health professionals

Easily-accessible mental health professionals who are aware of cultural differences, systemic racism, and intersectional identities are essential. Racialized student athletes need:



**Mental health support specifically for BIPOC athletes. ... When you bring forth those [racism] concerns and those incidents, it's really mentally draining to talk about all of this, and to kind of deal with those things on the day to day.**

—Jackie (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)



**Mental health support that you could turn to. Somebody that's outside of your sport because I think there's also the huge stigma of like not being [tough].**

—Arianna (East Asian, athlete, fencing, woman)



**Speaking [to] someone without a sport background makes it difficult, because they might not understand the sport language you use or the experiences. So I think that definitely would have been such a huge help for me as a student.**

—Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)



**Advice and counseling or even just [to] speak on why something happened or why it upset them, if even if they don't want to report it as like an incident, you know just to have someone say like "that sucked" and "I validate that you went through that and I'm sorry."**

—Jessica (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)



**Coaches also noted their need for mental health resources.**



**It just doesn't exist. We don't talk about it. Most of our coach education is about how we can be better for athletes, but none of it is about how we can be better for ourselves. So way more support [is needed].**

—Cassie (White, coach, volleyball, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** must include mental health professionals of many races

Racial representation among mental health professionals on campus was an additional concern.

“

The same as our White kids do, [racialized student athletes] want the experience to talk to people who have similar backgrounds and experiences that they've had ... and that helps them when they come to transition to university life or deal with challenges that they may be overcoming, or [discovering] different strategies to try.

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)

“

There are several student athletes, teams, that seek the mental health support on our campus and when I inquired [whether] there's anybody within the institution that is BIPOC [the response was,] “Oh yeah, she's full” and I'm like “There's one?! There's one lady in the university?! What do you mean?” Wow! There's a lot of work to do, especially since our campus is very diverse.

—Harriet (Biracial, coach, basketball, woman)

Participants suggested increasing the hiring of racialized mental health professionals, which may require coordination with campus health services:

“

I've had BIPOC friends [who] don't feel like they're supported enough where they don't feel like they have people to talk to since like the coaching staff wouldn't be BIPOC or diverse or they'd be the only player that's diverse on their team, so ... just increasing the mental support.

—Daniela (East Asian, athlete, hockey, woman)



Hiring more mental health counselors who understand the experiences of the people who are coming to them. ... For example, an Indigenous person having a counselor-therapist who is Indigenous themselves. ... [If] they don't understand the experiences they can't necessarily counsel that person as well as somebody who would be Indigenous. ... My experience with our [varsity athlete] counselors is that they've all been white women.

—Barbara (White, administrator, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** must include student athlete groups

Student athletes expressed the critical importance of having access to a racial affiliation group within athletics for social networking, mentoring, and anti-racism advocacy.

Although they may be ‘the only’ at their institution, Moby is certain athletes would benefit from connecting with people from their racial group at other universities.

“

I’m sure there’s Indigenous athletes in the OUA or within [my university] ... they were just never on my team. ... I just never really interacted with them.

—Moby (Indigenous, athlete, woman)

“

I truly believe strength in numbers in terms of making change ... Our [BIPOC student] group may not have any contact with any of [the other universities] and so there’s so much, that can be learned through cross learning and that ability to work together, because you know, at the end of the day I guarantee all of the different groups on campuses are fighting for the same things.

—Noah (White, administrator, man)

An OUA student athlete group would combat loneliness across the province:

“

There’s a lack of racial unity in the OUA in terms of team to team. A lot of the Black players don’t really know each other. ... I’ll go to another team, and I see just a lone Black girl, ... how do I kind of tell her ‘hey I know what you feel’? ... [If] I did reach out, I think it would be like “Oh wow! Someone sees me.” ... [We could start] finding more ways that, like, student athletes can come together and connect.

—Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

Willow goes on to suggest that alumni could play a significant role in networking and support across the OUA.



Whether it’s large seminars or a way to kind of network, ... whether we continue to play sports after, [or] we kind of go into the work field, just being able to connect. ... [The OUA could] have Black alumni groups, ... [bring] a lot of the alumni and current students together and be able to share the experiences and help make change.

—Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** must include paying student athletes for advocacy labour

Student athletes said that this advocacy work supports university administration and demanded that work be remunerated.



**Our [university] hired BIPOC ambassadors for admission and transition. ... Can we hire [athletics-specific] BIPOC ambassadors? And can we integrate them into the [anti-racism] training?**

—Yohannah (White, administrator, woman)



**[If] administration wants Black student athletes to speak and to voice their opinions, they also need to start paying people properly because you can ask us for advice and ask us for suggestions, but that unpaid labor is also very taxing.**

—Renne (Black, athlete, track and field, woman)

Jessica notes that student groups across the OUA cannot legitimately operate without a budget.



**Funding towards like things like a [Racialized Student Association] for the OUA, to pay attention to what's going on with the OUA anti racism projects.**

—Jessica (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

Payment does not always have to be in financial form. Advocacy awards that recognize student leadership help to build resumes and create future opportunities.



**There's been so many student athletes that have done a lot of social justice work over the past year, you know, really trying to use [their] voice so we wanted to create an award to highlight those students.**

—Nigel (Black, athlete, basketball, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-racist **supports** must include mentorship opportunities

Racialized student athletes and coaches need mentorship opportunities to succeed in sports and their future careers. Mentorship takes many forms including one-on-one and group programs.

Serena emphasizes learning from each other and from alumni through communities of support:



**We've just tried to create this community of support ... whether it's through mentorship or through little engagement activities and alumni ... [to] help improve the experience of BIPOC athletes.**

—Serena (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

Arianna suggests mentorship should focus on life beyond sport:



**I think one also big area of mentorship that anybody could benefit from is like what else is out there for me? ... What is the life beyond university or the life beyond sport? I think, is also something that everybody could benefit from in the community.**

—Arianna (East Asian, athlete, fencing, woman)

Harriet notes the gendered and peer aspect of mentorship. Racialized women peer mentors help each other:



**I've always been coached by men, White men, like I've never had any diversity in terms of my mentors and actual supports outside there so it's more been my peer support group that has helped me along the way.**

—Harriet (Biracial, coach, basketball, woman)

Peer groups sometimes form organically, but intentional support from the OUA would help members to connect with each other, feel belonging, and build confidence in their skills.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-Racist **Supports** Reflection Questions

1. Does the OUA/athletic department offer financial awards for BIPOC student athletes?
2. Does the OUA/athletic department contribute to hiring and promoting culturally competent and racially diverse mental health professionals?
3. Do coaches and administrators have access to mental health and anti-racism programming as well as case management support and expertise?
4. Are all athletes, coaches, and administrators who engage in additional advocacy paid for their time and emotional labour?
5. Does the OUA/athletic department create positions for, and hire, full time administrators devoted to anti-racism?

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### 05.4 Accountability

Many participants advocated for accountability for anti-racism across all institutions and at all levels. The existence of an anti-racism policy in the OUA and in university athletic departments should outline actions, behaviours, and words that are not tolerated. To be held to account, students must have an opportunity to be heard and regular follow-ups should be done to ensure clearly stated goals and set outcomes are being met. Accountability includes:

- (1) clear rules about what is not tolerated
- (2) step-by-step processes to report racism
- (3) policy guidance from the OUA
- (4) consequences set for racist behaviours
- (5) collecting demographic data and setting goals
- (6) investing in relationships

See p. 83 for Anti-Racist Recruitment Reflection Questions

### **Accountability** for anti-racism must explicitly address acts of racism and their prevention



If anti-racism measures were made more clear and accountable, it would improve the OUA community.

—Parker (Black, athlete, track and field, man)



The racial violence policy ... needs to be like a framework, you know, in writing saying, like, “we won’t tolerate this.”

—Jade (Biracial, athlete, field hockey, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### **Accountability** for anti-racism requires clear rules about what is not tolerated

Participants noted that policy affects practice and advocated for a 'zero-tolerance' racism policy, which would reduce fear of being ostracized by their teammates or penalized by their coach for speaking up.



“

You might have somebody who has 10 informal complaints [against them] and you can't do anything unless a student decides to put what feels like their neck on the line and their name out there, which might be tough ... to go against an authority that might have say over how much you play. ... There's zero tolerance for stealing from the library, and you know, zero tolerance for sexual harassment and they will not accept any form of it. But ... when it comes to racist remarks or protecting students from being racially discriminated against, it's just so grey... it's not written anywhere.

—Kyra (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)



[Clearly outline] what our position is around equity, diversity, inclusion, safe sport, around what are acceptable behaviours and what we don't accept or expect as a sport community in the province. I think we need to have those very clearly defined.

—Sammy (White, athlete, water polo, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Accountability for anti-racism requires step by step processes to report racism

Student athletes, coaches, and administrators need to be aware of the process for reporting racism so that they can be accountable for helping themselves and assisting others.



**A step by step process. It might exist somewhere. I'm not saying it doesn't exist, but ... [it is] on us to like sift through thousands of pages of literature. ... The process is not effective.**

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)



**Each institution is so different on how they manage a reporting mechanism and deal with their complaints ... so it needs to be institution-specific.**

—Kristen (White, administrator, woman)

Many administrators recognized a clear reporting mechanism and understanding of the potential consequences would help to promote psychological safety, especially among student athletes.



**We need a mechanism where people feel that it's okay to come forward if they have heard [or] experienced something [racist], and that needs to happen at either the institutional or the league level.**

—Yohanna, (White, administrator, woman)



**People [should] feel like they have the support and ... know that there are already steps in place so that if something happens it's not difficult, it's not a roundabout process for someone to seek help.**

—Jessica (Biracial, athlete, track and field, woman)

A place within the OUA to report racism is the first step. OUA members also want to know that some action will be taken if they do report racism.



**There's nowhere for athletes to report instances of abuse, like from coaches or teammates. ... Athletes are more likely to report instances of racism if they're able to report it anonymously ... [or] in confidentiality, but [to people who] ... have power to take [a] course of action.**

—Sammy (White, athlete, water polo, woman)



**[We need] a procedure in place that might lead to something, and not just someone hearing, listening, and then saying "yeah I will handle it," close the door then never spoken [about] again.**

—Fleur (White, administrator, woman)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### **Accountability** for anti-racism requires policy guidance from the OUA

Members want a policy that supports reporting racism within their sport and university, guided by the OUA.



I actually don't have a problem with the notion that the OUA says, "you must have a policy around equity, diversity, and inclusion at your institution to be a member of our organization." ... There's going to be a base level that probably should be identified [by the OUA, with details] ... left up to you in terms of what you think is the most effective thing to do [for your institution].

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)

The more clear and standardized an anti-racism policy is across the conference, the more confidence OUA members will have that they know what steps to follow, what the repercussions will be, and that OUA members at every institution and sport facility will be treated fairly.



I don't think there's a stated 'here's the process you follow'.

—Lyle (White, administrator, man)



If this happens at an away game ... what jurisdiction does athletics have to bring that complaint ... up the channels of our hierarchy?

—Christine (Black, administrator, woman)



It needs to be OUA, or [a] third party should oversee how ... [a] school goes about resolving ... repeated incidences of [racism].

—Brian (East Asian, athlete, baseball, man)

OUA members want to be very clear about their jurisdiction and their reporting mechanisms.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Accountability for anti-racism requires consequences for racist behaviours

Doping, sexual harassment, and other infractions have very clear consequences in the OUA. Similarly for racism, OUA members would like to know: what are the consequences?



Very often things happen and there's no repercussions. It's just, kind of, people get like a little slap on the wrist. ... If 'X' happens, what is the results? So-and-so cannot coach anymore? Or you're not allowed to be a part of the team anymore? [Tell us] so that people understand what is acceptable behaviour.

—Jade (Biracial, field hockey player, woman)

The consequences for perpetrators, whether disciplinary or corrective, should be clearly laid out and the policy should be easy to find.



It needs to be a clear policy of if this happens, this is how it's being dealt so that they know that the steps are there.

—Missy (White, administrator, woman)



Punishment for being [racist is] just a slap on the wrist or suspension from practice or game. ... I've seen harsher punishments for unprofessional behaviour in the offseason.

—Daniela (East Asian, athlete, hockey, woman)



In some sports, the consequences for improper behaviour are very clearly outlined, proportional to the infraction, and followed. Clear statements and policies outlining consequences for racist behaviour should be expanded across every sport in the OUA.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Accountability for anti-racism requires collecting demographic data

Looking at photographs of players or administrators to determine race is an insufficient method of determining diversity. Many OUA members advocated for collecting statistical demographic information and experiential data to be able to document local improvements in racial diversity and inclusion.



We [have to] collect stats ... [and] it's all got to be voluntary. ... An advisory panel is important so that we can monitor a change and somewhere along the line I think we have to figure out how we're going to measure whether we're making an improvement or not, whether that be in representation or like the initiatives that we're putting in place. There has to be something that gives us a baseline and then we have to be able to ... see if we're getting better.

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)



When you're working in a department, where most of the staff is white, they don't want to approach it the wrong way ... [but] they would need to collect data. I mean it's hard to say because you don't really know ... of the BIPOC administrators, like how many of them have ever experienced racially charged encounters or have experienced racism?

—Kaleigh (East Asian, administrator, woman)

Data should be shared across the OUA for positive motivation and goal setting that leverages the competitive nature of athletic departments.



Keeping information public. ... Here's the percentage of Black student athletes in your locker room, here's the percentage of Black coaches in your coaches room, and showing that to us on a regular basis. ... If the OUA forces us to document where we're at and forces us to keep them in the loop ... and we can see where everybody else is at ... [we] can leverage that to have instant buy-in.

—Moe (White, coach, football, man)

Recognizing that each community is different, goals for 'good' racial representation will be unique for particular schools, sports, and teams.



A transparent process where students and employees know where they can look ... [for] numbers on demographics and knowing what ... good representation is.

—Davis (Black, administrator, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Accountability for anti-racism requires setting transparent goals

Based on data, athletic departments can set realistic goals to diversify particular teams or units.



**Making sure that every [policy, program] has outcomes that are identified is really important.**

—Barbara (White, administrator, woman)



**What are some policies and procedures we're actually going to put in place, and how are we going to educate on those so people know they exist and where to find them if they need them? ... There has to be an action plan, otherwise what the heck are we doing here? ... [We need] some sort of evaluation some sort of check-in.**

—Cassie (White, coach, volleyball, woman)

Every member of the institution should have a clear understanding of whether the university is merely making statements or actively recruiting for diversity.



**Walking through the athletic building like there's not that many BIPOC people, so I don't know if they're reaching out to try to hire BIPOC individuals or they're just stating about like wanting to be diverse, but then not reaching out.**

—Daniela (East Asian, athlete, hockey, woman)

The goals must be set by dynamic leaders who are willing to make changes and be held accountable.



**I think there needs to be fundamental change from government down ... the perception of concussions didn't change until [Rowan's Law]. Until there is accountability from the very top down, and educational processes in place, it's going to be a struggle.**

—Michael (White, coach, football, man)



**It starts with definitely administration, leadership, leadership beyond the coaches, beyond the person who hires coaches and their attitudes. And you work down administrative levels to coaching levels, I think they all have to be held accountable.**

—Brian (East Asian, athlete, baseball, man)

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### **Accountability** for anti-racism requires investing in relationships

Rather than rushing into decisions related to anti-racism planning, many administrators recommended slowing down, clearly defining goals within committees or task forces, and communicating those to the broader community. All stakeholders in an organization need to be involved for accountability.

“ We have an EDI committee now ... we have student athletes. So that’s part of it. ... Sport administrators, though, play the largest immediate role, because those are your decision-makers. ... So that’s where it would start, but it does have to include athletes, coaches, administrators, alumni, experts.

—Eric (White, administrator, man)

Student athlete leaders were celebrated for investing in their peer-to-peer relationships and driving anti-racist change, but wanted closer relationships with senior administrators or coaches to foster trust.

“ I’ve found that coaches have been more vocal about [bystander interventions] so that’s also allowed for more implementation to being like ... “make sure that you’re holding your teammates accountable and yourself accountable, that if you do get any situations that you are voicing up. You’re not being a bystander.”

—Willow (Black, athlete, basketball, woman)

“ Student athletes are not going to come to the coaches to talk about [racism if] that will set them apart from their teammates.

—Lisa (White, administrator, woman)

“ It would be a good start to kind of get acquainted with your athletes to hear what they need like how are you supposed to help someone if they don’t know who you are? ... [it’s] about being proactive and actually showing that you want that relationship.

—Moby (Indigenous, athlete, woman)

Anti-racism work is relationship work.

## 05 Tools for Anti-Racist Change

### Anti-Racist **Accountability** Reflection Questions

1. Is the importance of anti-racism and intentions to advance racial justice in the OUA communicated in all publications (internal and external)?
2. Does the OUA/athletic department have and publicly share a standardized 'zero-tolerance' anti-racism policy that outlines the consequences associated with racist behaviour across all sports?
3. Do captains, coaches, managers, team personnel, and leaders receive training on how to implement the policy, what steps to follow, and how to support those who have reported racism?
4. Does the OUA/athletic department collect demographic data, set racial equity goals, and create actionable implementation plans?
5. Does the OUA/athletic department ensure a safe and inclusive environment for racialized OUA members to 'voice up' and for all allies to contribute to working groups to make and evaluate change?

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