



## Off the Mark

by George Gilder

In early September, in nearly every city and town in America, football coaches perform a rough sort on their charges. Without any notion that they are performing a sinister act that will beget a cascading series of effects angrily denounced as racist in the U.S. media, the coaches line up their recruits for a 40-yard dash. And in almost every town, the result is the same. If there are any black boys in the group, they usually win the race.

This ritual has many consequences. Among them are black dominance of most of the more glamorous running roles in football, and U.S. global dominance in sports requiring leg speed. Another result is the regular investigative report on racism in American athletics conducted by reporters professionally blind to the obvious facts of black superiority in running speed.

The latest example is *USA Today's* four-part series on Race and Sports, which ran from December 16 to 19. Like previous series in *Sports Illustrated* and the *New York Times*, the reporters begin and end by doggedly denying the totally obvious black genetic advantage in sprint speed. Ignoring this crucial factor and artfully probing the paranoia of blacks taught from childhood to see racism everywhere, the reporters can build up a shocking and sensational case for widespread discrimination in sports.

*USA Today* tried to deny the sprint speed difference by citing the occasional white sprint star and by arguing that racist white American athletes avoid the dashes out of aversion to blacks. But

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blacks dominate the dashes everywhere they compete, including countries such as France, Britain, and Canada, which have few blacks for whites to avoid. For two decades now, some 95 percent of the world's dashmen listed in the *Track and Field News* Top 100 rankings have been black. History's top ten 100-meter times are all by blacks, including a black Briton and a black Cuban.

Recognize this fact of life and nearly all the claims of racism in sports collapse. Sprint speed, for example, explains relatively low black representation at quarterback in football. Because sprint speed is so valuable and cannot be much enhanced by training, coaches cherish their sprinters. Sprinters are not "stacked" on the bench for years awaiting their chance to play quarterback. Indispensable at several key positions, they get to play right away. If an athlete with sprint speed fails to win the quarterback slot, he can play an array of other prestigious positions; without sprint speed, a white quarterback sits. With no alternative role, the non-sprinter will struggle harder to master the array of skills at quarterback than the sprinter will.

On Yale's unbeaten football team in the mid-1960s, the slow Brian Dowling (B.D. of "Doonesbury" fame) was picked for quarterback over Calvin Hill, who weighed 220 pounds and could run 100 yards in 9.6 seconds. Despite Hill's complaints of racism, the coach's decision to shift a big 9.6 sprinter to fullback had no more to do with racism than Hill's later success as a fullback in the NFL, where Dowling failed. In the Canadian league, where quarterback is more a running position, blacks do better at quarterback than in the U.S., where it

is a throwing position. The "leadership stereotyping" blamed by *USA Today* has nothing to do with it. This pattern prevails in other sports: in baseball, superior sprint speed explains higher black batting averages and stolen base records and only proportionate representation in positions where throwing or agility are the key. People gifted with sprint speed have less motive to undergo the arduous and specialized training required to pitch or play catcher.

*USA Today* tried to find racism even in track and field, a sport ruled entirely by objective standards of performance. Track and field shows the same black dominance in events based on sprint speed and the same merely proportionate representation elsewhere that is ascribed to racism when found on football and baseball teams. In track and field, sprinters have less motive to master the intricacies of pole vaulting or javelin throwing.

Ever alert to bizarre evidence of racism, *USA Today* claimed that declining white performances at 800 meters were attributable to "white flight" in the face of the rising dominance of blacks in the event. But similar declines have occurred in several other track events with few American blacks. If the reporters want to know the reasons for the decline, perhaps they might begin by considering that the American media covers track and field chiefly as an extension of the drugs and steroids beat.

The ingenuity of the American media in discovering and promoting racism knows no bounds. In their analysis, whites are racist because they lose to blacks in the 100; whites are also racist because they succeed against blacks at quarterback. Basketball is racist



# A First Class Eurocrat

by David Brooks

Brussels

because it is dominated by blacks; golf is racist because it is dominated by whites. College teams are racist because they "exploit" black athletes and fail to educate them; the NCAA is racist because it insists that blacks unqualified for higher education be excluded from college teams.

It is obvious that whites in America desperately want blacks to succeed. From Michael Jordan to Bill Cosby, from Magic Johnson to Eddie Murphy, from Whitney Houston to Toni Morrison, from O.J. Simpson to Arsenio Hall, blacks who excel whites in important fields win the most sincere votes of all: the unimpeachable vote of the marketplace. Conclusively refuting the idea that white Americans resent black athletes is the ever-increasing popularity of professional basketball and football during the very period that blacks have moved to dominance. Despite constant charges of racism, whites still flock to watch black athletes perform; whites continue to invest in mostly black teams.

Americans even supported affirmative action until it became obvious that its chief beneficiaries were not deserving blacks but litigious whiners, black and white, male and female, and their obnoxious lawyers. As Thomas Sowell has pointed out, the latest civil rights law will be bad for blacks, since it deters businesses from moving to black areas, which become a litigation trap. But the law will be wonderful for lawyers, who can sue virtually any company in the country with more than fourteen employees, if one of them is black or female and disgruntled. Now the media seem determined to make athletics, too, an arena of racial bitterness and litigation.

Nonetheless, U.S. athletics still offer an inspiring display of American racial amity—a continual enactment of the American dream. Today, sports are inherently a worthier field to cover, more valuable morally and aesthetically than most contemporary art, music, films, and drama chiefly because these other fields have been befouled by leftist politics and nihilism. The best way for sports reporters both to defend their beat and to fight racism is by spurning the phony sanctimony and cynicism of the front of the paper—by merely telling the dramatic stories of athletic achievement by multiracial teams performing before enthusiastic multiracial crowds. □

You probably won't get to meet an official of the European Community unless you get bumped to first class on a transatlantic flight. You'll recognize the Eurocrat by his featureless brow, his colorless hair, his look of habitual contentedness. As he approaches, you notice the buttery complexion of his cheeks, the mark of a diet rich in subtle sauces. He has about him the cultivated smell of one who is particular about his toilet.

He sets his Loewe briefcase on the seat next to you, and then folds his suit jacket in a practiced four-step maneuver, so that it won't crease even if the plane should go down in a ball of flames. He meticulously fastens his seatbelt, opens his briefcase, and removes a document entitled "The Budgetary Implications of the DG IV VAT Harmonization White Paper: An IGC Perspective." He pulls out a silver mechanical pencil and makes tiny checkmarks, one centimeter each, next to each paragraph as he reads.

He summons the flight attendant and asks, "Which whites do you have?" She returns with a bottle, which the Eurocrat inspects over his glasses. He lets out a sigh to indicate the gut-wrenching pain such a vintage will cause him. "All right, if that's all you have."

You try to make conversation, and ask him how this business of creating a United States of Europe is going. He assures you that the new European architecture is not an affair that can be summarized in black and white. It is nuanced, complex.

You want to be frank. You know that

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the idea of bringing down trade barriers is a noble one. You keep reading that the EC bureaucracy is trying to limit state subsidies to coddled European industries. You keep reading about free-market endeavors sponsored by the EC. "But," you say in closing, "I still can't believe that a group of repugnant technocrats such as yourself can be anything other than evil."

He is not offended. He is above the crude cut and thrust of argument and dispute. In fact, seeing a dull flight in front of him, he decides to let you in on the secret, the real force that drives European unification. "I just hope my Discretion Officer doesn't hear about this," he says.

European unification is not a German racket as some British conservatives think, he explains. Nor is it a pretext for French domination. In reality the unity process is a tool of Belgian cultural hegemony.

If the Belgians are not competent enough to organize a twentieth-century phone service, you wonder, how could they organize a conspiracy to dominate Europe?

The Eurocrat smiles at your naïveté. "When European unity is achieved under the aegis of the Eurocracy, what sort of European citizen will have been created?"

Everybody knows the answer to that: "A shapeless man passing out his life in an environment prearranged for his comfort, sunk in a stupor caused by beer and well-regulated food products, passively going to work in some bureaucratic post-for-life, and never troubling himself with things about which he has no expertise, such as self-government."

"Remind you of anyone?" our man asks.