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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2020 Volume II: Teaching about Race and Racism Across the Disciplines

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## **Collusion in the Owner's Box: How Racism and Oppression Have Built the American Sports Industry**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 20.02.06, published September 2020  
by Sean Means

The following unit analyzes the world of college and professional sports from a social justice lens. It identifies how race, power and politics play a part in athletic organizations, and how athletes have sacrificed their own careers to make the lives of others better. It begins by analyzing the for-profit enterprise of college football and its lack of equitable representation of people of color within its coaching ranks. The unit provides numerical data that defines college football's system, its power players and its lack of equity in the top spots in The Power-5 Conferences. The unit transitions towards the boxing ring and Muhammad Ali, widely respected for his accomplishments within the ropes, his greatest bout was produced by the United States Government, the fight was held within the chambers of The Supreme Court, his career on the line.

Next student voice is highlighted on the campuses of Syracuse and The University of Wyoming. This section examines the students request for justice along with the responses by administration and coaches. This is followed by the drama, decisions and consequences that shaped the players' futures. Lastly, the unit rolls the ball of justice onto the hardwood, reliving a time before Kaepernick, where the NBA dealt with its own peaceful protest against party-line-patriotism via blackball and coercion. The content of the unit is followed by a number of diverse articles, resources and activities that provide the class with a number of entry points to analyze standard based literature, facilitate informed.

(Developed for U. S. History and College in High School U. S. History, grade 11, and Social Justice, grade 12; recommended for U. S. History and College in High School U. S. History, grade 11, and Social Justice, grade 12)

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