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Abstract:

Gender and race discrimination in all different sports are seen as two types of prejudice actions that are active and are seen in the lives of those people for significant time now. All different sports throughout the world display a preference towards either one gender or another and even have a type of favoritism that contributes towards a wage-pay gap for all professional sports players. Also, many sports over the years now display a liking of a certain race of sports players which results in a lot of tension of morale and wage pay. Laws that were adopted, like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made the effort to stop all types of discrimination. Certain laws, like the Equal Pay Act in 1963, made it illegal for different genders to be paid differently for similar actions. Back then, women and men, were known to be less important and discriminated in a way of being paid differently especially in professional soccer, which is why this law addressed this situation and was signed into law in the United States. Since then, progress has been made the women's team filing a lawsuit, however, it didn't fix the problem completely. Women still withstand lower wage-pay gap and assumptions due to not generating enough revenue, but even different races of players are still faced with the problems of wage-pay gap. A prime example of racial discrimination in professional basketball was the 1998 NBA lockout. Besides, player morale and athletic performance comes into play when the wage-pay gap discrimination plays a factor in sports. Both morale and performance in sports are affected due to gender and race discrimination not being taken care of. Wage-pay gap in sports caused by gender and race discrimination puts player morale and athletes' performance in affect. Ethics also comes into question when speaking about these types of discrimination. However, the unacceptable behavior or acts puts ethics in sports into question, as well as inviting unethical decision making.

I. Introduction:

When people hear the word “discrimination”, they believe it’s directed towards one specific thing to a human. Discrimination affects more parts of the human life than most people actually think it does. Many people create bias opinions about others in ways like how they act, what they believe in, especially the most common is what they look like, and other things. Although these things aren’t the only thing that describes what discrimination is. Discriminatory feelings can originate from what is ingrained into the world: race, gender, age, disability, religious, etc. Throughout all different professional sports, discrimination has been noticed, but more importantly present. Any discrimination causes issues not only with the team, but with the players as well including their morale and even their performance. Looking really in depth, race and gender discrimination stand out the most in professional sports for quite a time now. It’s very interesting to see how men and women are treated along with how being white/black or whatever race you are, and it is easy to understand why these issues from discriminatory actions happen among these two groups. It also brings in the idea of wage-pay gap between these two groups as well and how badly does it affect them.

Being part of sports team as an adult or maybe even a young adult, even in 2021, it is clear as day that there are sports where male players dominate and then there are sports where women players dominate. From the past to now, one can see that there has been in improvement in some areas. With there being gender biases, this leads to how and why some decisions are made regarding who gets paid more in specific sports and even how fans, teammates, or any other person treats them. On the other hand, speaking about race discrimination, there have been erratic decisions and words being said in sports due to the desire for either black, white or Asian players and how race can be an effective factor towards why someone gets paid more in sports.

Racism causes others to make bias opinions about whether or not a specific professional sports player is receiving or noticing such a wage-pay gap, but it is assumed that it is because of their race. Allowing this behavior to continue can cause a lot of tension in professional sports and also cause players morale and performance to be incredibly affected. As mentioned before, Wage-pay gap is another thing that needs to be looked at when players are not being treated equally in their professional sport. Wage-pay gap discrimination must be acknowledged and fixed in any professional sport in order to limit the impact of players morale and performance and discriminatory actions that would occur. The people who have the role of leadership on the team and whoever the coach is, are the ones that have the ability on how to limit the discriminatory actions that happen in sports. Standing by a professional sport that is highly diverse in terms of race and gender helps protect such professional sports from any kind of discriminatory accusations, specifically wage-pay gap. Therefore, Gender and Race discrimination that are present in professional sports like soccer and basketball produce a Wage-pay gap discrimination that contributes to impacting player morale and athletic performance.

II. Historical Gender and Race Discrimination in Professional Sports

Discrimination is not new to our society; these feelings of prejudice have been present in all aspects of life for over one hundred years. Discrimination is the distinguishing differences of treating someone or a group of people who are equally productive as inferior based on their race, sex, national origin, age or other characteristics. This is one of many definitions of discrimination, but this one explains what discrimination was like in the past and what it is like now. Gender discrimination which leads to wage-pay gap in professional sports is widespread. “The gender pay gap is especially prevalent in the historically male-dominated industry of

professional sports” (Zerunyan 231). This has been going on for a while now and it is making it much more difficult for female athletes to compete individually or as a team without worrying about the wage-pay gap. Dating back to the 1900’s is when gender discrimination in sports all started. In 1963, John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law. “Although the law finally recovered women’s basic right to equal pay for substantially equal work, the problem did not disappear” (Zerunyan 235). Women were being paid significantly less than men were in the 1900’s and even just being discriminated against was still not going away. Other forms of discrimination were being discussed as well, therefore gender discrimination was not the only form.

On the other hand, race discrimination is widely known for being the act of individuals or groups not accepting a worker of a particular race, whether that is being white or black, don’t have the same skill level as someone who is a different race. This form of discrimination has also been around for decades. Although, white athletes in professional sports can also experience some form of race discrimination, race discrimination affects black athletes more than white athletes, because black athletes were always being discriminated against and seen as inferior to white athletes. Being white or black and facing these discriminatory feelings also lead to such a wage-pay gap back then. In sports history, race discrimination always led to wage-pay gap because one race could’ve had been better at the sport with more skills and also a specific sport could’ve been fully played by a majority of a particular race. Speaking in terms of historical background, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. Regarding the Civil Rights Act of 1964, in specific served a purpose to stop race discrimination for employment. “Professional athletes are not independent contractors—they are employees of the team they play for and the league that

oversees the team” (Dennis 357). Professional athletes are considered employees, so they also face race discrimination in the sport they play. This act and having it signed into law were a small step to try and fix the form of race discrimination problem for employment. All this information emphasized about assuming and not accepting particular races of individuals or groups is the reliable source of where discrimination is coming from and the specific race in sports were a substantial reason why wage-pay gap discrimination was such an important effect. Discrimination of athletes is found to be very cruel and impacts them as they play the sport they love.

When revisiting the discussion, if these forms of discrimination are still to this day present, many believe that regarding gender, women are as equal as men and play at the same athletic level as them and continue to improve. However, the wage-pay gap is still important, yet this may be the most important discrimination which results from gender discrimination. This form of discrimination still exists in the world we live in today. Even regarding the race discrimination, it seems that there hasn't been any progression and still remains in professional sports. The people have tried fighting and fixing this problem by filing lawsuits and even protests, some people also may not feel the need to fix the problem. Overall gender and race discrimination producing a wage-pay gap causes a separation in all sports and this separation impacts athletes morale and performance causing professional athletes to act the way they do.

III. Gender Discrimination produces a Wage-pay Gap Discrimination in Soccer

It is very vital to understand where discrimination came from and where it happens. An individual or group of people can feel discriminated against when they are treated poorly and differently than someone else, almost like they are being compared to someone. It is safe to say

that gender discrimination accusations and discriminatory behavior began to become an issue, producing a wage-pay gap. “While the number of women working in sport has increased in recent years, the industry remains male dominated” (Hindman 64). Focusing in on women specifically, the professional sports now have women’s leagues, for example: soccer, basketball, baseball, tennis, and golf. Women are vulnerable to gender discrimination because they are the ones who are seen as inferior to men and even less entertaining. Women have been discriminated for years now and although they might not be physically impacted, they are for sure mentally impacted. It’s safe to say that this must come to an end and that things need to be done in order to stop whether it’s a law or a stand that’s taken by the women in general. Therefore, professional soccer, hopes to embrace equal opportunity by making sure men and women are paid equally for equal work, but it doesn’t seem to be going in the right direction.

Even till this day professional sports, specifically soccer, is the gateway to gender discrimination. “Megan Rapinoe is one of the most elite women’s soccer players. In addition to being named to the US Women’s National Team (USWNT) roster for over ten years, she was also a key part of the team that won the FIFA Women’s World Cup in 2015, the most prestigious title in women’s soccer” (Rowan 920). For example, the sport soccer, was mainly focused on men even though the women’s national soccer team was more successful whether it was tournaments or regular friendly games. In soccer, gender discrimination sometimes creates a competitive nature where men try to compete to be better than women and not focus on being a good team while still getting all the attention. The US Women’s National Soccer Team suffer from not just discrimination, they also suffer from poor playing conditions. Women’s soccer sees it all, however, it all starts with unequal playing conditions being the beginning of the unequal treatment they face compared to men. Women have been “given” fewer opportunities as athletes

in professional sports in contrast to the number of opportunities that has been given to men (Kosofsky).

Among many attempts to try and fight against gender discrimination the USWNT finally said enough is enough. “In a wage-discrimination complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in March, five top players on the women’s team accused U.S. Soccer of paying them and their teammates about a quarter of what their counterparts on the men’s national team receive” (Das 2016). It’s been a long time coming that these players were eventually going to file a lawsuit. This lawsuit goes to show that it eventually affected the players and how they believe women should be paid equally as men are for the amount of equal work, they both do. Furthermore, since the lawsuit from women’s soccer team it gained attention from other players and teams in other sports, making them reach out for guidance in effort to win similar gains in pay. All of this work conducted from the women’s team by trying to fix the wage-pay gap discrimination eventually contributes to impacting player morale and athletic performance. Eventually athletes speak out and not only does gender discrimination which produces a wage-pay in paychecks, yet also where they play, how often, how they train, medical treatment, coaching received, and even how they travel (Das 2019). Women are seeking a change and they won’t give up as we continue to see their morale and performance being impacted.

IV. Race Discrimination produces a Wage-pay Gap Discrimination in Basketball

Among the many different forms of discrimination that can take place in professional sports, race discrimination is one form that can tend to be overlooked and seen as insignificant as others. Although, it is in professional basketball that a lot of racial discrimination is being talked

about. Racism has always been around, but it marked history of the National Basketball Association that black players weren't admitted to the league upon the startup of the NBA in 1946. After four years, they finally admitted black players into the league and containing many of star players. For example, "In basketball, salaries of such super-stars as Wilt Chamberlain, Oscar Robertson, Bill Russell, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar are referred to, and it is also commonly added that few white players receive salaries which compare with the income of these outstanding black players" (Mogull 11). Altogether, this type of behavior should be justified and first of all shouldn't even exist in the first place. It came as no surprise that race discrimination was going to happen in professional sports that the league favored white players. According to a specific study, "Studies using 1984-1986 NBA season data suggested that salaries for black players were approximately 14 percent to 20 percent lower than those of comparable white players" (Hill 81). White players seemed to be getting more pay than blacks due to the color of their skin. With that being an issue, black players morale and performance was impacted from the wage-pay gap in which caused chaos in the league. However, back then race discrimination was not the only issue with the NBA, it also seemed that as soon as black players were finally accepted into the NBA, they also were victims of unequal salaries (Wen 933).

When talking about the race discrimination in professional basketball in the world we live in now, it was a little different from what it was when the league first started as some might see it. Regardless of the time period, even though the feelings of racial discrimination quickly changed when the NBA slowly began to become more populated by black players, the racial discrimination problems began to heat up. In 1998, racial discrimination and how powerful it was, caused the NBA to shorten their season which also produced an unwelcomed NBA atmosphere. "The 1998 NBA lockout, involving a league full of white team owners and an 80%

black union, was seen by many players as a racial confrontation” (Kahn and Shah 444). Despite whether it’s the team owners or players, this is driven by people not understanding what it means to be discriminated against. The whole race discrimination being present in the NBA led the blacks to boycott some would say and fight for higher salaries. They eventually had to make a wage change during the 1998 NBA season. However, beginning in 2001-2002, most of the league was now 80% black. It’s safe to say that racial discrimination is now being brought upon the white players in professional basketball players which is still not acceptable, when it was the other way around. “And of the 42 players who had signed contracts as of the 2001-2002 season with annual salaries of more than \$10 million (the top decile of the league’s 415 players), 37 (88%) were black” (Kahn and Shah 444). Racial discrimination in professional basketball causes a high percentage of players being unhappy due to the unequal pay. Yet no one knows the reason why that is, maybe it’s because black players are progressively getting better than white players or they are don’t want to see people upset. When it comes down to seeing what some the causes of discrimination are, it easy to see that the competence area of black or white players is a key reason as to why the wage-pay gap discrimination is present within professional sports and why one race gets more than the other.

It is possible that black players could be better in comparison to white players, in professional basketball which could be why most of the league is heavily populated by black players. Something that could also potentially be less known to world is that sometimes race discrimination in professional basketball can be driven by fan preference and team manager/owner and not just for personal reasons like many may assume. More importantly, the racial discrimination within professional basketball and even it producing a wage-pay gap aggravates the players morale and athletic performance. Race discrimination can cause players

morale to be outstandingly low because of them getting a lot of hate comments towards them which could lead to an even bigger problem. Also, from racial discrimination in professional basketball which leads to wage-pay gap can contribute to impacting athletic performance. Elite players in professional basketball who have experience racial slurs and hate comments directed towards them cause them to lose focus and impacts the way they play. This unacceptable behavior that happens in the NBA which impacts players performance would result in a short-term effect or even a long-term effect. Another reason why players performance could be affected is mainly due to the wage-pay gap that was being dealt with in the NBA. A prime example of this was when the NBA had a lockout due to seeking changes in individual player salaries. The whole point of the lockout was to figure fix the current problem of wage-pay gap and even the race of the players had an impact on it. Even till this day race discrimination still occurs even with the many attempts to take a stand against it. In professional basketball, whether it is a white player or black player that is in the league experience a wage-pay gap and that discrimination itself contributes to the impact of player morale and athletic performance (Kahn and Shah).

V. Ethics

In addition, Ethics and ethical decision making, is an aspect that all professional sports players face in professional sports. However, it is crucial that all players regardless of their gender, race, national origin, etc., within professional sports share the understanding of sports ethics in order to have a successful ethical culture. Ethics isn't just "the right thing to do," it has much more to it than just doing the right thing and it doesn't only apply to the workplace as I mentioned above there is sports ethics as well. "Another key feature of ethics is that it does not

apply only to oneself – it also applies to others” (Cynthia 2). Every individual professional sports player in addition to professional soccer and basketball experience and are affected by ethics. Ethics in all professional sports is decided based on how athletes and coaches follow the rules and guidelines, behaviors and attitudes of all athletes, and most importantly even compensating players fairly. All ethical decisions are reflected on athletes playing the sports and the owners, coaches, staff members, etc., of the team, but also even the outsiders regarding the fans watching the sports.

Rules and guidelines are used to create a fair game for both teams to have an equal opportunity. Everyone says they follow the rules and guidelines, but not everyone believes in the same rules and guidelines. Although, rules and guidelines always change in sports almost every year, they shouldn't affect the ethics in sports. Setting clear-cut rules and guidelines helps sports. However, even if you follow the rules and guidelines its essential to inspire other professional sports players and set a good example so that everyone maintains a healthy ethical sports culture. It is also essential to make sure what isn't acceptable in professional sports based on fairness, integrity, responsibility, and respect upheld by each individual and as a whole. All in all, when this isn't taken into consideration, problems like gender and race discrimination along with wage-pay gap occur in many areas of sports.

In addition, to the problems like gender and race discrimination that occur from ethics not taking into consideration, but more in-depth even wage-pay gap discrimination as well. In general, any sport that has problems with ethical decision making will struggle with the concept of ethics will lead to issues on trying to become successful. Along with discrimination, there is other things that happen in professional sports like unethical leadership, harassment, and wage-pay gap that all lead to discriminatory actions. For example, whoever the person with the most

authority is on the team like “the captain” or “the coach/owner” is that someone that can be looked up to, admired by, and even strive to impress by the other individuals on the team or anyone else watching the sport. However, if that person decided to act in such an unethical behavior, such as any discriminatory action issues will start to begin in sports. This unethical behavior is not one to be pushed under the rug, it’s one that needs to be taken care of and it’s noticeable everywhere. The unethical leaders with the unethical behavior are the main reason why discrimination of age and gender discrimination as well as wage-pay gap discrimination are present in sports because of the unequal opportunities that are provided by each individual athlete and the sport in general.

Lastly, there are even specific laws that were made to fix the issues of unethical behavior like discriminatory actions. Although, many professional sports and individual athletes still find a way around it. Even with these important laws out there they are still broken, for example, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but still the professional sports still act unethically. This unacceptable behavior needs to be fixed because it creates such a negative result especially the unequal pay that women face in professional soccer. Therefore, one unethical act or behavior can lead to another, eventually making the professional sport to fall apart and face consequences and always be known for being unethical. Regardless of the discriminatory action or even unethical behavior, it is always wrong and impacts all professional sports.

VI. Conclusion

The discussion surrounding discrimination of any and every kind can lead to controversy and a variety of questions. This type of behavior in professional soccer and basketball, is incredibly humiliating and can lead to more problems seen by the rest of world and this goes for

other professional sports as well. Any and every form of discrimination within professional sports is very unacceptable, unfair, and unethical, but gender and race are likely to be threatening compared to other types of discrimination present in professional sports. Gender and race discrimination which are the most common in professional sports deserve more attention in order to solve the problems that exist still to this day. A variety of efforts have been made in the past to help wage-pay gap discrimination in professional sports progressively get better. In reality, there are many discriminatory actions in professional sports like soccer and basketball that are just left up in the air. In professional soccer, most people label it as both male and female dominant sport, although women play it as well, women still face a wage-pay gap. Similarly, another professional sport like basketball which deals with wage-pay gap discrimination as well, has accusations being made surrounding the racial discrimination form and why black players are being paid more money than white players, and how these types of discrimination impact the player morale and athletic performance as well.

A main reason why wage-pay gap discrimination is so degrading is because a lot of times gender and race discrimination that occur in professional sports because of assumptions that are made about sex and even stem from racial thoughts. There are many concerns that encompass this kind of behavior in professional soccer and basketball. It is likely that these types of discrimination will not be relevant anymore in these professional sports if the people who have the leadership role and have the authority to make a permanent change. Player morale and athletic performance within professional soccer and basketball are impacted by the contribution of the unequal pay that either men/women or white/black face. Such little change like more diversity would help change everything especially the wage-pay gap. With such a world like today, a slight bit of acknowledgement and consideration could possibly fix the problem in

professional soccer and basketball regarding the gender and race discrimination. Overall, professional soccer and basketball are seen where gender and race discrimination exist and end up producing a wage-pay gap eventually leading to an impact towards player morale and athletic performance.

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