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Report: Study suggests racial bias in calls by NBA referees

AP

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2 May 2007

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The Canadian Press

English

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NEW YORK (AP) _ An academic study of NBA officiating found that white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players, The New York Times reported on its website Tuesday night.

The study by a University of Pennsylvania assistant professor and Cornell graduate student also found that black officials called fouls more frequently against white players than black, but noted that the tendency was not as pronounced.

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at Penn's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, said the difference in calls "is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew."

The study, conducted over a 13-season span through 2004, found that the racial makeup of a three-man officiating crew affected calls by up to 4{ per cent.

The NBA strongly criticized the study, which was based on information from publicly available box scores, which show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

"The study that is cited in the New York Times article is wrong," president of league and basketball operations Joel Litvin told The Associated Press on Tuesday night. "The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**."

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

Litvin said the NBA's study, using data from November 2004 to January 2007, included some 148,000 calls and included which official made each call. The Times said the NBA denied a request by **Wolfers** and Price to obtain that information, citing its confidentiality agreement with the officials.

The study also found differences in everything from a decrease in scoring to a rise in turnovers depending on the officials' race.

"Player-performance appears to deteriorate at every margin when officiated by a larger fraction of opposite-race referees," **Wolfers** and Price wrote.

But the key finding was in regard to foul calls, saying "black players receive around 0.12-0.20 more fouls per 48 minutes played (an increase of 2{-4{ percent) when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three."

The NBA has an observer at each game and closely monitors its officials, who are required to file reports after each game they work and are expected to be able to explain each potentially controversial call they have made.

Litvin said in an original version of the paper, dated March 2006, **Wolfers** and Price came to the conclusion that there was no bias. He added that the NBA's research "all prove beyond any doubt in our minds that these guys are just flat wrong."

"They reached conclusions in their own papers that are unsupported by their own calculations," Litvin said.

Wolfers and Price are set to present the paper at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists on Friday and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday. The Times said they will then submit it to the National Bureau of Economic Research and for formal peer review before consideration by an economic journal.

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NBA, some players dismiss study on racial bias in officiating

By NANCY ARMOUR

AP National Writer

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2 May 2007

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Associated Press Newswires

English

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Kobe Bryant says he's never noticed any evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star joked Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

Bryant, Cleveland Cavaliers standout LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it.

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin."

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA box scores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1-2 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though the NBA is made up of predominantly black players, less than 40 percent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

"I don't think there's any prejudice or racial stereotype," the Bulls' Chris Duhon said. "I think all our officials are great. I don't think any of them are racist in any way. They just call the game. If it's a foul, it's a foul. If it's not, there's no call."

"I don't think it's possible to really be biased in your calls because if (you are), I think it would be way obvious if you're doing that."

Wolfers and Price analyzed officiating crews, based on boxscores, not individual referees. The NBA, after getting a draft copy of the paper last year, did its own study. Using data from November 2004 to January 2007, the league reviewed some 148,000 calls along with which official made each call.

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But **Wolfers** said they analyzed calls made by all-white officiating crews and all-black officiating crews, and the results were the same. The study also didn't verify the exact race of players and referees, saying, "We simply noted whether a player or referee appeared black, or not." But **Wolfers** said the sample was large enough so that wouldn't be a factor.

"That's a lot of diagnostic evidence," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "If you have a conclusive evidence you want to come out with, you can almost make statistics prove what you want to prove."

"If you go in with that it's about race, maybe you find the things you're looking for."

Union chief Billy Hunter hasn't read the study, but said he wasn't surprised by its results. There is bias everywhere in society, Hunter said, so why should the NBA be immune?

But Hunter also said he's never gotten any complaints about discrimination.

"No, never heard, never gotten one," he said. "I know (commissioner David Stern) wouldn't tolerate any conscious bias, racist act by a referee or by anybody else."

Wolfers and Price are to present the paper at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists on Friday and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday. They hope it will eventually be published in an economic journal.

AP Basketball Writer Brian Mahoney in New York and AP Sports Writers Tom Withers in Cleveland, Andrew Seligman in Chicago, Doug Alden in Salt Lake City and Bob Baum in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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SUBCONSCIOUS RACISM DO NBA REFEREES HAVE RACIAL BIAS?

418 words

2 May 2007

ABC News Now: World News Now

English

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ISRAEL, DEMOCRATS, US TROOPS, BAGHDAD, IRAQ, VETO, CONGRESS, PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT, TZIPI LIVNI, HEZBOLLAH, INTERNATIONAL JUDGES, DARFUR, SUDAN RUBBER BULLETS, IMMIGRATION MARCH

NBA REFEREES, CELL PHONE

GRAPHICS: WEBCAST TODAY

GRAPHICS: SUBCONSCIOUS RACISM

WHITE HOUSE, CONGRESS DEMOCRATS, VETO, TIMETABLE, HARRY REID, SENATE

GRAPHICS: POLITICS OF WAR

SHLEMON WARDUNI, YONADAM KANNA, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, IRAQ, CHRISTIANS

NBA REFEREES, 'THE NEW YORK TIMES', JUSTIN **WOLFERS**, MARK CHAPMAN

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(OC) And now to a story we noticed in "The New York Times" about race and basketball. It is a story that goes well beyond the sports pages. Here's ABC's Rob Simmelkjaer.

ROB SIMMELKJAER (ABC NEWS)

(VO) Racial bias, often subconscious, has been observed in many aspects of American life, from employment, to dating, to law enforcement. But basketball officiating? A new academic study by a professor at the University of Pennsylvania suggests a racial bias in the number of fouls called by NBA referees. The author studied NBA games from 1991 to 2004. They concluded that white referees called proportionately more fouls against black players, while black refs blew slightly more whistles against whites. Professor Justin **Wolfers** led the study.

GRAPHICS: ON THE PHONE

PROFESSOR JUSTIN **WOLFERS** (UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA)

What I think this paper is about is not basketball. I think it's about actually trying to find the context where you're least likely to find any of these sorts of biases. If we see it even among the highly professional referees on the NBA, then by (inaudible), doesn't it make you worry about people applying for jobs at the local, at the local stores?

ROB SIMMELKJAER (ABC NEWS)

(VO) The NBA has responded, saying they've done their own study, which shows no racial bias in foul calls. But some who study race relations say such a disparity, if it exists, wouldn't be surprising. "Why should the NBA," they ask, "be any different than other settings in which people often bring subconscious racial attitudes to the table?"

PROFESSOR MARK CHAPMAN (FORDHAM UNIVERSITY)

All people have certain biases, even if they are subconscious, certain preconceived ideas about other people. And we bring that into our interactions with other human beings. The best thing we can do is to embrace the constructive criticism without responding defensively.

ROB SIMMELKJAER (ABC NEWS)

(VO) Defense, it may win NBA championships, but may not be as useful in yet another American conversation about race. Rob Simmelkjaer, ABC News, New York.

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Sports

Study suggests referee bias ; NOTEBOOK

Seattle Times News Services

325 words

2 May 2007

The Seattle Times

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English

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Note

* Former Houston guard Mario Elie interviewed for the Charlotte Bobcats' coaching job. "All I can do is wait," Elie told Houston's KRIV-TV.

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NBA, some players dismiss study that on racial bias in officiating

BY NANCY ARMOUR

AP

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The Canadian Press

English

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Sports

BASKETBALL ; STUDY SUGGESTS REFEREE BIAS

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Former Houston Rockets guard Mario Elie interviewed for the Charlotte Bobcats' vacant head coaching job.

Former Tulane and Miami coach Perry Clark was hired as the new men's head coach at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, coming off its first NCAA Tournament appearance.

The father of Arizona State women's player Aubree Johnson was killed in a motorcycle accident in Tecate, Mexico, that also left her mother injured.

Zach Bruce, 6-foot-8 center at Highline CC, signed a letter of intent to play for Western Washington University.

Rich McBride, a former Illinois player who hopes to play professionally overseas, was told by an Urbana, Ill., judge he cannot drink alcohol for two years as part of his sentencing for drunken driving.

AUTO RACING

Talladega bans 14 fans

Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama has permanently banned 14 fans from the speedway following their arrests Sunday for throwing objects on the track after Jeff Gordon's victory in the Aaron's 499.

A number of fans began throwing beer cans after Gordon won the race under caution, eclipsing the career wins total of the late Dale Earnhardt - a Talladega favorite.

Race driver Tracy Hines was in stable condition after surgery for injuries from an off-road motorcycle crash Monday night on his property in New Castle, Ind.

ETC.

Liverpool in Champions final

Liverpool advanced to the final of the European Champions League, beating visiting Chelsea 1-0 to force penalty kicks and then winning the shootout 4-1. In the May 23 final in Athens, Greece, Liverpool will play Manchester United or AC Milan.

Petr Schastlivy scored midway through the third period, and Russia held on for a 5-4 win over Finland at the hockey world championships in Moscow. In Mytishi, Jaroslav Bednar scored the winning goal with 1:08 remaining to lift the Czech Republic to a 4-3 victory over the United States.

Louis Vuitton Cup racing in Spain was postponed Tuesday by strong winds.

Swimmer Ian Thorpe, a world and Olympic champion who retired last fall, has been granted an open-ended extension to provide medical information to Australian investigators probing irregularities in a May 2006 urine sample.

German cyclists will be required to give DNA samples if they want to compete at the Olympics. The move is designed to reduce doping in the sport, the German cycling federation chief said.

A British forensic laboratory said it is analyzing toxicology tests done on the slain coach of Pakistan's national cricket team, but has not yet reached any conclusions on whether poison was involved.

NORTHWEST

UW tennis earns NCAA bid

The Washington men's tennis team (16-6) received an at-large berth to the NCAA championships and will face Wisconsin (15-10) in the first round on May 11 in South Bend, Ind.

The Washington-Wisconsin winner will face Notre Dame (24-3) or Butler (14-9) on May 12 for a berth in the 16-team NCAA finals in Athens, Ga., on May 17-22.

It's the Huskies' 13th consecutive NCAA berth, all under coach Matt Anger.

UW sophomore Danielle Lawrie has been named pitcher of the week in Pac-10 softball for the third time this season after winning three of four decisions and striking out 39 batters to run her season total to 335 - second in team history behind her freshman total of 387.

Evan Bernier, a University of Minnesota transfer from Woodinville who attended Inglemoor High School, joined four other swimmers signing letters of intent to compete for the Huskies next fall. Bernier is an NCAA and U.S. nationals qualifier, and his top times in the 200 freestyle (1:36.79), 100 butterfly (47.73) and 200 IM (1:48.37) would rank in the program's top 10.

Seattle Pacific gymnast Sarah Sullivan was awarded an NCAA postgraduate scholarship for winter sports participants.

Puget Sound won the Northwest Conference All-Sports Trophy for the second year in a row, with the highest point total in eight years.

DAILY BRIEFING

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Race and NBA referees: The numbers are clearly interesting, but not clear

MIKE LOPRESTI

666 words

2 May 2007

Gannett News Service

English

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Today's news from the academic world is that NBA referees may be closet racists.

And now, back to the playoffs ...

Or not. We should ponder the idea that a referee's subconscious will note the player's complexion, before the decision can be made whether the contact was blocking or charging.

That's the analysis from a professor at Pennsylvania and graduate student at Cornell, according to The New York Times. They say they have sufficiently studied box scores, statistical correlations and other numerical whatnots to declare white officials call more fouls on black players than they call on white players. And black officials call more fouls on white players than they call on black players, though the margin is closer.

Intriguing findings on an important topic that demands study.

But let us be blunt.

The authors of the report bloody well better be sure of their conclusions, before they hit all the talk shows.

This is not your normal booing of the officials because of a missed goal tending. This is a strike at their souls, on an issue that is 99 44/100ths percent sure to stir emotions. The subject of race always does, whether concerning jobs or housing or crime ... or calls for hand checking.

So what are we supposed to believe now about the whistler- blowers? Blaming them is old sport. They are supposedly swayed too often by the home crowd ... the intimidating coach ... the aura of a star. Dallas Mavericks owner -- and noted referee critic -- Mark Cuban has enough grievances in his mind to take some of them before the World Court.

Now we are to believe they act according to race?

Or maybe this is just another reflection of all of us; and how easy it is to treat different people differently, in ways we don't even know or understand.

The research is impressive in scope, but troubling on some of the details. It analyzed fouls calls by officiating crews, but not by individual officials, so did not take into account exactly who called what. The NBA conducted its own study, looking at individual calls, and claims there was no significant evidence of bias.

Depends on which side you believe. Doesn't it almost always happen that way?

No thick academic report should be needed to make us realize how deeply race permeates American life. But whether the deck is stacked in a league that is so predominantly African-American is another matter. There would seem to be far too many variables to claim that. And not that many white players.

"Basically it suggests that if you spray painted one of your starters white, you'd win a few more games," Pennsylvania professor Justin **Wolfers** told The New York Times of his research.

A proper deduction, or hyperbole from a guy with a treatise to sell?

Consider the 13 years his study covered from 1991-2004, and the top eight players from each of the 26 teams who advanced to the NBA Finals. Of those 208 players, only 25 were white. So if racial bias was deciding games, it wasn't getting teams deep into the playoffs.

I have never sensed this as a major problem in the NBA, but then I have never been called for a foul. The dilemma here is not to conduct the research, but what to do with the results.

Hire more African-American officials, one academic told the Times. But wouldn't that ignore the finding that differences cut both ways, from black official to white player as well as the other way around?

If racial issues were easier to solve, maybe we'd all be better at them. But this is an NBA world nobody should want, where after a close and heated victory, a team must answer the question: Did you win because of defense or race?

--

Contact Mike Lopresti at [mlopresti\(AT\)gns.gannett.com](mailto:mlopresti(AT)gns.gannett.com).

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Racial bias claimed in report on NBA refs

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

596 words

2 May 2007

Charleston Gazette

P1B

English

(Copyright 2007)

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The study, conducted over a 13-season span through 2004, found that the racial makeup of a three-man officiating crew affected calls by up to 41/2 percent.

The NBA strongly criticized the study, which was based on information from publicly available box scores, which show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

"The study that is cited in the New York Times article is wrong," president of league and basketball operations Joel Litvin told The Associated Press on Tuesday night. "The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**."

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

Litvin said the NBA's study, using data from November 2004 to January 2007, included some 148,000 calls and included which official made each call. The Times said the NBA denied a request by **Wolfers** and Price to obtain that information, citing its confidentiality agreement with the officials.

The study also found differences in everything from a decrease in scoring to a rise in turnovers depending on the officials' race.

"Player-performance appears to deteriorate at every margin when officiated by a larger fraction of opposite-race referees," **Wolfers** and Price wrote.

But the key finding was in regard to foul calls, saying "black players receive around 0.12-0.20 more fouls per 48 minutes played (an increase of 21/2-41/2 percent) when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three."

The NBA has an observer at each game and closely monitors its officials, who are required to file reports after each game they work and are expected to be able to explain each potentially controversial call they have made.

Litvin said in an original version of the paper, dated March 2006, **Wolfers** and Price came to the conclusion that there was no bias. He added that the NBA's research "all prove beyond any doubt in our minds that these guys are just flat wrong."

"They reached conclusions in their own papers that are unsupported by their own calculations," Litvin said.

Wolfers and Price are set to present the paper at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists on Friday and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday.

The Times said they will then submit it to the National Bureau of Economic Research and for formal peer

review before consideration by an economic journal.

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Sports Desk; SECTA
Study of N.B.A. Sees Racial Bias In Calling Fouls

By ALAN SCHWARZ; Pat Borzi contributed reporting from Minneapolis and John Eligon from East Rutherford, N.J.

2,318 words

2 May 2007

The New York Times

Late Edition - Final

1

English

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CORRECTION APPENDED

A front-page article on Wednesday about an academic study that detected a racial bias in the foul calls of referees in the National Basketball Association noted that The New York Times had asked three independent experts to review the study and materials from a subsequent N.B.A. study that detected no bias.

The experts, whose names the authors of the two studies did not learn until after the article was published, all agreed that the study that detected bias was far more sound. That study was conducted by Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics.

After the article was published, The Times learned that one of the three experts, Larry Katz of Harvard University, was the chairman of Mr. **Wolfers**'s doctoral thesis committee, as Mr. **Wolfers** had acknowledged in previous studies. Because of this, Mr. Katz should not have been cited as an independent expert.

An updated version of the **Wolfers**-Price study added acknowledgments for Mr. Katz and a second expert The Times had contacted, David Berri of California State University-Bakersfield. They were thanked for brief "helpful comments" about the paper they made to Mr. **Wolfers** via e-mail messages after reviewing it for The Times. These later comments would have been mentioned in the article if editors had known about them.

CORRECTED BY THE NEW YORK TIMES Sat May 05 2007

An academic study of the National Basketball Association, whose playoffs continue tonight, suggests that a racial bias found in other parts of American society has existed on the basketball court as well.

A coming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell University graduate student says that, during the 13 seasons from 1991 through 2004, white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players.

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, found a corresponding bias in which black officials called fouls more frequently against white players, though that tendency was not as strong. They went on to claim that the different rates at which fouls are called "is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew assigned to the game."

N.B.A. Commissioner David Stern said in a telephone interview that the league saw a draft copy of the paper last year, and was moved to do its own study this March using its own database of foul calls, which specifies which official called which foul.

"We think our cut at the data is more powerful, more robust, and demonstrates that there is no bias," Mr. Stern said.

Three independent experts asked by The Times to examine the **Wolfers**-Price paper and materials released by the N.B.A. said they considered the **Wolfers**-Price argument far more sound. The N.B.A. denied a request for its underlying data, even with names of officials and players removed, because it feared that the league's confidentiality agreement with referees could be violated if the identities were determined through box scores.

The paper by Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price has yet to undergo formal peer review before publication in an economic journal, but several prominent academic economists said it would contribute to the growing literature regarding subconscious racism in the workplace and elsewhere, such as in searches by the police.

The three experts who examined the **Wolfers**-Price paper and the N.B.A.'s materials were Ian Ayres of Yale Law School, the author of "Pervasive Prejudice?" and an expert in testing for how subtle racial bias, also known as implicit association, appears in interactions ranging from the setting of bail amounts to the tipping of taxi drivers; David Berri of California State University-Bakersfield, the author of "The Wages of Wins," which analyzes sports issues using statistics; and Larry Katz of Harvard University, the senior editor of the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

"I would be more surprised if it didn't exist," Mr. Ayres said of an implicit association bias in the N.B.A. "There's a growing consensus that a large proportion of racialized decisions is not driven by any conscious race discrimination, but that it is often just driven by unconscious, or subconscious, attitudes. When you force people to make snap decisions, they often can't keep themselves from subconsciously treating blacks different than whites, men different from women."

Mr. Berri added: "It's not about basketball -- it's about what happens in the world. This is just the nature of decision-making, and when you have an evaluation team that's so different from those being evaluated. Given that your league is mostly African-American, maybe you should have more African-American referees -- for the same reason that you don't want mostly white police forces in primarily black neighborhoods."

To investigate whether such bias has existed in sports, Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price examined data from publicly available box scores. They accounted for factors like the players' positions, playing time and All-Star status; each group's time on the court (black players played 83 percent of minutes, while 68 percent of officials were white); calls at home games and on the road; and other relevant data.

But they said they continued to find the same phenomenon: that players who were similar in all ways except skin color drew foul calls at a rate difference of up to 4 1/2 percent depending on the racial composition of an N.B.A. game's three-person referee crew.

Mark Cuban, the owner of the Dallas Mavericks and a vocal critic of his league's officiating, said in a telephone interview after reading the paper: "We're all human. We all have our own prejudice. That's the point of doing statistical analysis. It bears it out in this application, as in a thousand others."

Asked if he had ever suspected any racial bias among officials before reading the study, Mr. Cuban said, "No comment."

Two veteran players who are African-American, Mike James of the Minnesota Timberwolves and Alan Henderson of the Philadelphia 76ers, each said that they did not think black or white officials had treated them differently.

"If that's going on, then it's something that needs to be dealt with," James said. "But I've never seen it."

Two African-American coaches, Doc Rivers of the Boston Celtics and Maurice Cheeks of the Philadelphia 76ers, declined to comment on the paper's claims. Rod Thorn, the president of the New Jersey Nets and formerly the N.B.A.'s executive vice president for basketball operations, said: "I don't believe it. I think officials get the vast majority of calls right. They don't get them all right. The vast majority of our players are black."

Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price spend 41 pages accounting for such population disparities and more than a dozen other complicating factors.

For the 1991-92 through 2003-4 seasons, the authors analyzed every player's box-score performance -- minutes played, rebounds, shots made and missed, fouls and the like -- in the context of the racial composition of the three-person crew refereeing that game. (The N.B.A. did not release its record of calls by specific officials to either Mr. **Wolfers**, Mr. Price or The Times, claiming it is kept for referee training purposes only.)

Mr. **Wolfers** said that he and Mr. Price classified each N.B.A. player and referee as either black or not black by assessing photographs and speaking with an anonymous former referee, and then using that information to predict how an official would view the player. About a dozen players could reasonably be placed in either category, but Mr. **Wolfers** said the classification of those players did not materially change the study's findings.

During the 13-season period studied, black players played 83 percent of the minutes on the floor. With 68 percent of officials being white, three-person crews were either entirely white (30 percent of the time), had

two white officials (47 percent), had two black officials (20 percent) or were entirely black (3 percent).

Mr. Stern said that the race of referees had never been considered when assembling crews for games.

With their database of almost 600,000 foul calls, Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price used a common statistical technique called multivariable regression analysis, which can identify correlations between different variables. The economists accounted for a wide range of factors: that centers, who tend to draw more fouls, were disproportionately white; that veteran players and All-Stars tended to draw foul calls at different rates than rookies and non-stars; whether the players were at home or on the road, as officials can be influenced by crowd noise; particular coaches on the sidelines; the players' assertiveness on the court, as defined by their established rates of assists, steals, turnovers and other statistics; and more subtle factors like how some substitute players enter games specifically to commit fouls.

Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price examined whether otherwise similar black and white players had fouls-per-minute rates that varied with the racial makeup of the refereeing crew.

"Across all of these specifications," they write, "we find that black players receive around 0.12-0.20 more fouls per 48 minutes played (an increase of 2 1/2-4 1/2 percent) when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three."

Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price also report a statistically significant correlation with decreases in points, rebounds and assists, and a rise in turnovers, when players performed before primarily opposite-race officials.

"Player-performance appears to deteriorate at every margin when officiated by a larger fraction of opposite-race referees," they write. The paper later notes no change in free-throw percentage. "We emphasize this result because this is the one on-court behavior that we expect to be unaffected by referee behavior."

Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price claim that these changes are enough to affect game outcomes. Their results suggested that for each additional black starter a team had, relative to its opponent, a team's chance of winning would decline from a theoretical 50 percent to 49 percent and so on, a concept mirrored by the game evidence: the team with the greater share of playing time by black players during those 13 years won 48.6 percent of games -- a difference of about two victories in an 82-game season.

"Basically, it suggests that if you spray-painted one of your starters white, you'd win a few more games," Mr. **Wolfers** said.

The N.B.A.'s reciprocal study was conducted by the Segal Company, the actuarial consulting firm which designed the in-house data-collection system the league uses to identify patterns for referee-training purposes, to test for evidence of bias. The league's study was less formal and detailed than an academic paper, included foul calls for only two and a half seasons (from November 2004 through January 2007), and did not consider differences among players by position, veteran status and the like. But it did have the clear advantage of specifying which of the three referees blew his whistle on each foul.

The N.B.A. study reported no significant differences in how often white and black referees collectively called fouls on white and black players. Mr. Stern said he was therefore convinced "that there's no demonstration of any bias here -- based upon more robust and more data that was available to us because we keep that data."

Added Joel Litvin, the league's president for basketball operations, "I think the analysis that we did can stand on its own, so I don't think our view of some of the things in **Wolfers**'s paper and some questions we have actually matter as much as the analysis we did."

Mr. Litvin explained the N.B.A.'s refusal to release its underlying data for independent examination by saying: "Even our teams don't know the data we collect as to a particular referee's call tendencies on certain types of calls. There are good reasons for this. It's proprietary. It's personnel data at the end of the day."

The percentage of black officials in the N.B.A. has increased in the past several years, to 38 percent of 60 officials this season from 34 percent of 58 officials two years ago. Mr. Stern and Mr. Litvin said that the rise was coincidental because the league does not consider race in the hiring process.

Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price are scheduled to present their paper at the annual meetings of the Society of Labor Economists on Friday and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday. They will then submit it to the National Bureau of Economic Research and for formal peer review before consideration by an economic journal.

Both men cautioned that the racial discrimination they claim to have found should be interpreted in the

context of bias found in other parts of American society.

"There's bias on the basketball court," Mr. **Wolfers** said, "but less than when you're trying to hail a cab at midnight."

Photos: Minnesota Timberwolves guard Mike James, left, said he did not think he was treated differently by white and black officials. Commissioner David Stern says a league study demonstrates "there is no bias." (Photos by left, Jim Mone/Associated Press; Lawrence Jackson/Associated Press)(pg. D3)

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NBA, some players dismiss study that on racial bias in officiating

By NANCY ARMOUR

AP National Writer

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Associated Press Newswires

English

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CHICAGO (AP) - Kobe Bryant says he's never noticed any evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star joked on Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it.

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell University graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin."

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA box scores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1-2 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though the NBA is made up of predominantly black players, less than 40 percent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

"I don't think there's any prejudice or racial stereotype," the Bulls' Chris Duhon said. "I think all our officials are great. I don't think any of them are racist in any way. They just call the game. If it's a foul, it's a foul. If it's not, there's no call."

"I don't think it's possible to really be biased in your calls because if (you are), I think it would be way obvious"

if you're doing that."

Wolfers and Price analyzed officiating crews, based on boxscores, not individual referees. The NBA, after getting a draft copy of the paper last year, did its own study. Using data from November 2004 to January 2007, the league reviewed some 148,000 calls along with which official made each call.

"The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**," said Joel Litvin, president of league and basketball operations.

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

But **Wolfers** said they analyzed calls made by all-white officiating crews and all-black officiating crews, and the results were the same. The study also didn't verify the exact race of players and referees, saying, "We simply noted whether a player or referee appeared black, or not." But **Wolfers** said the sample was large enough so that wouldn't be a factor.

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BASKETBALL: STUDYING THE OFFICIALS

Sports

NBA calling foul over study of refs; Research finds white refs assess more penalties against blacks, and black officials hand out more to whites

Associated Press

584 words

3 May 2007

The Globe and Mail

S2

English

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NEW YORK -- An academic study of National Basketball Association officiating found that white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players, The New York Times reported yesterday.

The study, by a University of Pennsylvania assistant professor and a Cornell University graduate student, also found that black officials called fouls more frequently against white players than black, but noted that that tendency was not as pronounced.

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at Penn's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, said the difference in calls "is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew."

The study, conducted over a 13-season span through 2004, found that the racial makeup of a three-man officiating crew affected calls by up to 4½ per cent.

The NBA strongly criticized the study, which was based on information from publicly available box scores. The box scores show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

"The study that is cited in The New York Times article is wrong," Joel Litvin, the NBA's president of league and basketball operations, told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**."

"The short of it is, **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

Litvin said the NBA's study, using data from November of 2004 to January of 2007, included 148,000 calls and included which official made each call. The Times said the NBA denied a request by **Wolfers** and Price to obtain that information, citing its confidentiality agreement with the officials.

The study also found differences in everything from a decrease in scoring to a rise in turnovers depending on the officials' race.

"Player performance appears to deteriorate at every margin when officiated by a larger fraction of opposite-race referees," **Wolfers** and Price wrote.

But the key finding was in regard to foul calls, saying "black players receive around 0.12-0.20 more fouls per 48 minutes played [an increase of 2½ to 4½ per cent] when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three."

The NBA has an observer at each game and closely monitors its officials, who are required to file reports after each game they work and are expected to explain each potentially controversial call they have made.

Litvin said in an original version of the paper, dated March of 2006, **Wolfers** and Price concluded there was no bias. He added that the NBA's research "all prove beyond any doubt in our minds that these guys are just flat wrong."

"They reached conclusions in their own papers that are unsupported by their own calculations," Litvin said.

Wolfers and Price are to present the paper at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists tomorrow and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday.

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NBA, Some Players Dismiss Referee Study

By NANCY ARMOUR

AP National Writer

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Associated Press Newswires

English

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If referees are whistling Kobe Bryant for more fouls because of the color of his skin, he's never noticed it. "I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star jokingly said Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

But Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it. The NBA also refuted the study, saying its own analysis showed no racial bias in officiating.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin."

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA boxscores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1/2 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though the NBA is made up of predominantly black players, less than 40 percent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

"I don't really think it's relevant as far as our game," Cavaliers guard Larry Hughes said. "We have the same discussions with white refs as we do with black refs. It's no different. I definitely wouldn't say that a white ref has it out for the black guys in the league. It's not possible in our game as fast as we move."

Wolfers and Price analyzed officiating crews, based on boxscores, not individual referees.

After the NBA got a draft copy of the paper, it did its own study. Using data from 3,482 games from

November 2004 through January 2007, the Segal Company, an outside consulting firm, reviewed more than 155,000 calls along with which official made each call. Race -- of either officials or players -- had no statistically significant bearing on the number of fouls called, according to the NBA study.

The NBA also analyzed data based on playing time. The more minutes played, the study found, the harder it became to find a pattern in fouls called against a player.

"The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**," said Joel Litvin, president of league and basketball operations.

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees," Litvin said. "... This is a fundamental flaw in the **Wolfers/Price** analysis making it nearly impossible to determine if, in fact, race affects play calling."

But **Wolfers** said they compared the calls made by all-white officiating crews and all-black officiating crews, and the results were the same as in the overall study. The study also didn't verify the exact race of players and referees, saying, "We simply noted whether a player or referee appeared black, or not." But **Wolfers** said the sample was large enough so that wouldn't be a factor.

"That's a lot of diagnostic evidence," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "If you have a conclusive evidence you want to come out with, you can almost make statistics prove what you want to prove.

"If you go in with that it's about race, maybe you find the things you're looking for."

Union chief Billy Hunter hasn't read the study, but said he wasn't surprised by its results. There is bias everywhere in society, Hunter said, so why should the NBA be immune?

But Hunter also said he's never gotten any complaints about discrimination.

"No, never heard, never gotten one," he said. "I know (commissioner David Stern) wouldn't tolerate any conscious bias, racist act by a referee or by anybody else."

Stu Jackson, the league's disciplinarian for on-court actions, agreed.

"I can say I've never heard a coach or a player or a team official reference race as a reason why they didn't approve of a ref's performance," Jackson said.

Wolfers and Price are to present the paper at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists on Friday and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday. They hope it will eventually be published in an economic journal.

AP Basketball Writer Brian Mahoney in New York and AP Sports Writers Tom Withers in Cleveland, Andrew Seligman in Chicago, Doug Alden in Salt Lake City and Bob Baum in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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Sports
Racial Bias? Players Don't See It

Associated Press
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3 May 2007
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Kobe Bryant says he's never noticed any evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star joked yesterday. "That's reverse racism probably."

Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it.

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin."

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at Penn's Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players [collide] on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA box scores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4.5 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

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The Washington Post

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MIKE WISE

Sports

Doing a Number on NBA Refs

Mike Wise

1,330 words

3 May 2007

The Washington Post

FINAL

E01

English

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Ask any old-time referee, most of whom are white: The two most reviled players in the history of the NBA by officials were Rick Barry and Christian Laettner. It had nothing to do with their race, which is white. It had everything to do with the content of their on-court character, which ran between whiny and insufferable.

Rasheed Wallace is well on his way to supplanting both players, but not because he's black; Wallace morphed into a persecuted fool every time he got called for a foul. He dropped f-bombs on the people who blew the whistles. He made himself unlikable and, therefore, more apt to being thrown out of a game.

Referees, like most of us, prefer to be liked. They treat those who publicly disrespect them worse than others, irrespective of their race.

But new, empirical data by an academic research team roundly disputes that logic. Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at Penn's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a graduate economics student at Cornell, have written a paper saying white referees call fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players. They also state that the findings of their research worked the other way, too, but that black officials don't do white players wrong as much.

It's important to understand that the NBA has evolved into the most color-blind league in professional sports and one of the most colorblind enterprises in American society. From ownership to the mail room, it annually earns top honors for its commitment to diversity at all levels. It's equally important to delve into the **Wolfers** and Price study, to see if a genuinely compelling case for racial bias among officials exists. It doesn't.

When you get through the data, this is nothing more than a numbers facade, an extrapolation of facts employed to meet a desired end. At the center of the study is a huge fallacy: that referees want to punish players who don't look like them.

Consider this fact: Whether two black officials and one white official refereed a game or whether two white officials and one black official refereed the game does not matter. The study does not specify who made the call. Their data was gleaned from box scores. This is a crucial distinction: Specific calls made by specific referees were not used during evidence gathering.

For **Wolfers** to tell the New York Times, "Basically, it suggests that if you spray-painted one of your starters white, you'd win a few more games," is provocative and definitely sells his work. But it's ultimately hollow, bordering on academic and social irresponsibility. The study was first reported by the Times yesterday.

"I'm an economist, I'm not in public relations," **Wolfers** said in a telephone interview when asked about the quote. "We're not calling anyone a racist or a redneck or anything like that. What we are saying is, even in a workplace as racially diverse as the NBA, there are implicit biases none of us are even aware of that show up. We ask the question: Is there something deep in the recesses of your brain that when you see actual contact on the court, does the skin color of the players involved affect how you interpret the messages your eyes are sending your brain?"

It's a great question. Unfortunately, over 43 pages and an addendum, it never gets answered. Instead, we get, "While our individual-level results suggest that players earn more fouls under opposite-race referees, it

may be simply that referees redistribute fouls across team members, charging opposite-race players for fouls committed by their own-race teammates."

In other words, **Wolfers** and Price surmise, Dick Bavetta thinks all black players look alike.

We also learn that "Hispanics, Asians and other groups are not well represented among NBA players or referees, and throughout the paper we refer to non-blacks somewhat imprecisely as white."

Somewhat imprecisely? Never mind Yao Ming and Manu Ginobili, who get to be white in the study. What of mixed-race players such as Mike Bibby and Jason Kidd? What ethnicity are their fouls filed under?

"The major statistic growing out of this issue is the number 10 -- the rating I give **Wolfers** for self-promotion," NBA Commissioner David Stern predictably said yesterday from his Manhattan office. Stern conducted his own study in March, which actually takes into account which official calls which fouls. Stern maintains there is no racial bias in officiating based on his data. The league won't release its specific findings based on a confidentiality agreement between the league and its officials.

Of course issues of race run thick in the NBA -- as they do in most businesses in America. You can find conscious evidence of racial identification by talking to any player on any given day.

Shaquille O'Neal once told me that his image in the black community would take a beating if he were dunked on by a white player. He did not term it as racism, simply saying: "I can't go back to the barbershop and not get killed by everyone if that happens. I don't know whether it's sociological or what, but you don't want to get flushed on by a white guy in the league."

Mark Cuban, the Dallas Mavericks' owner, actually buys into what much of **Wolfers** and Price's study suggests. "It would be statistically impossible for a group of 60 individuals to not have any biases based on race or any number of different criteria than it would be to have a marginal bias," Cuban said in an e-mail. "I don't believe it to be a conscious bias, but I do believe everyone of us has different levels of bias, no matter how hard we work to overcome them."

Referee Joey Crawford was suspended two weeks ago for the remainder of the regular season and playoffs. He went too far, Stern deemed, during an encounter with San Antonio star Tim Duncan, a complainer of great renown.

Crawford is the epitome of a hotheaded zebra -- the white, curmudgeonly moral arbiter who plays God more often than he plays referee. He also is the man prominent black players were openly campaigning to reinstate in locker rooms last week.

The Mavericks believe Danny Crawford, one of the league's most competent officials, has it out for them. Crawford is black. Dirk Nowitzki, the Dallas star, is white.

If black players made up 83 percent of minutes played in the NBA from the years the original study was conducted -- 1991 to 2004 -- who else to calls fouls on? If white referees made up 68 percent of the work force during those years, that leaves just 32 percent of other officials to make calls. (Black referees now make up 38 percent of officials.) This isn't sociological science; it's basic math and it's insulting to the people who do their jobs and don't see color.

Factors such as players' positions, playing time and all-star status were taken into account in the study. (I'd love to see a study of referees who gave Michael Jordan bail-out calls or who let Patrick Ewing take more steps than most Al-Anon meetings). What wasn't taken into account: that white players increasingly are jump-shooters.

How many whites play the positions where you get fouled the most, specifically centers and slashers? The careflessness needed in addressing such a hot-button topic never comes through in **Wolfers'** and Price's study. You only hope Wallace and Nowitzki don't skim it and began holding it up as exhibit A in their continued persecution as NBA players. That would be a bigger shame than publishing such a study.

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SPORTS

Sam Donnellon; Are NBA refs whistling Dixie?

831 words

3 May 2007

The Philadelphia Daily News

4STAR

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English

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THE HEADLINE cried wolf. The story begged for dialogue.

An academic research study encompassing 13 NBA seasons found racial bias in the calls white officials made, and racial bias in the calls black officials made.

This would seem to be a good launching point for one of those national discussions on race that was supposed to be an offshoot of the sordid Don Imus affair. Except that the NBA countered that study with its own 2 1/2-year exam, and guess what?

It gave itself a big, fat A-plus.

"The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**," Joel Litvin, the league president for basketball operations, told the Associated Press Tuesday.

"The study," he said, "is wrong."

"He's a clown," said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and co-author of the study.

Well, that was a short dialogue now, wasn't it?

Wolfers and a Cornell graduate student named Joseph Price looked at NBA seasons from 1991-92 through 2003-04 and concluded that fouls per minutes played was higher for black players when white officials made the calls and - although by a lesser ratio - the opposite was true when black officials made the calls. (The NBA's study included November 2004 through January 2007.)

Neither man is indicting the NBA for racism. Indeed, the statistics suggest the league has less of a problem than the world in which it exists. Yesterday, **Wolfers** touted the league as a "great laboratory" in which to examine issues of racial harmony.

"There's bias on the basketball court," **Wolfers** told the New York Times. "But less than when you're trying to hail a cab at midnight."

The real problem with the report might be in findings that suggest the results of games are affected by such bias.

That, of course, directly impugns the integrity of the NBA product.

Methinks this made the NBA a tad defensive.

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews," Litvin told AP. "Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

Here's one problem. **Wolfers** and Price's data, based on box scores, are public. **Wolfers** and Price's paper can be found, with an array of graphs and tables, on **Wolfers'** Web site (<http://bpp.wharton.upenn.edu/jwolfers/>).

Papers/NBARace.pdf). This weekend, it will be presented at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists and the American Law and Economics Association, their formal peers.

The NBA study, which is said to itemize 148,000 calls made, has not been released. Nor will it be, Litvin said, citing confidentiality issues with its officials.

Question: If no bias was found, wouldn't those officials want to waive that confidentiality pact?

Wolfers and Price submitted their data to the NBA about a year ago, seeking a critique and dialogue, Wolfer said. They got this instead.

"I find it sad," Wolfer said yesterday of the NBA's reaction. He said he asked to see Litvin's study on his own dime, even offered to sign a confidentiality agreement, but was denied.

"I'm happy to have my paper scrutinized for all the right reasons," **Wolfers** said. "We're scientists. Litvin runs a business."

That business, more than any other sport, has touted its racial harmony. Recently, a very public spat between referee Joe Crawford and San Antonio Spurs star Tim Duncan led to a suspension (Crawford) and a fine (Duncan), and created friction between the league's officials and the NBA office. In the Spurs' playoff game Saturday in Denver - with commissioner David Stern in attendance - officials called three defensive 3-second violations, flagged Denver coach George Karl for leaving his coaching box, cited a player for not tucking in his uniform, and threw in a slew of petty calls to boot.

Duncan? He finished the game without a foul. A playoff game.

What an odd array of coincidences.

Coincidence or not, this might not be the best time for a discussion about referee bias, or even whether such a thing exists. And that's too bad. For if black, white, Asian and Hispanic reporters let their own biases seep subliminally into their jobs - and they do - it would seem to follow that NBA officials might, too.

Anyway, it would have been a way to kick off this national discourse on race we're supposed to be having.

Maybe in another 13 years, when another one of these studies is released, we can get it started. *

Send e-mail to

donnels@phillynews.com.

For recent columns, go to

<http://go.philly.com/donnellon>.

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SPORTS

Stephen A. Smith; Biased refs? Let's discuss something serious instead

Stephen A. Smith; Inquirer Columnist

804 words

3 May 2007

The Philadelphia Inquirer

CITY-D

C01

English

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Allow me a few moments of your time regarding an issue that is a waste of time.

Race is usually relevant to me. There usually is some sensitive issue to address, some reason to disseminate a message in an effort to generate understanding and better relationships among the masses.

But not today, in the aftermath of a report in yesterday's New York Times about racial bias involving NBA referees. Not today, after a study that asserts that white officials called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against whites.

This is a waste of time.

According to the article, a University of Pennsylvania professor and a graduate student from Cornell University conducted a study of NBA officials from 1991 to 2004 and concluded that white officials inherently held prejudices against black athletes. They pointed out that white males make up 68 percent of NBA officials, that 30 percent of the time, games were officiated by three white males. Three-man black officiating teams were present just 3 percent of the time.

The study by Justin **Wolfers**, assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell grad student in economics, goes on to claim that wins and losses were "noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew."

Never mind what the study shows. We can leave that to commissioner David Stern and the league office. Or to the Society of Labor Economists and the American Law and Economics Association: **Wolfers** and Price are scheduled to present their paper to them this weekend.

I'd rather ask why.

Why do we need to address such frivolity, a report devoid of anything substantive enough to accuse anyone of anything, as far as I'm concerned? Why now, in the midst of NBA playoff action, further diverting attention away from the games?

More important, just weeks after dealing with the rape case involving Duke's lacrosse team, along with Don Imus' firing and the repercussions that won't go away, why should anyone care about this report at all?

Especially when we're getting a perceived - as opposed to a real - problem.

On the face of it, there are a lot of problems with this report, the most obvious that **Wolfers** and Price took more than a decade to reveal something that no one considered a problem.

In my 11 years covering the NBA, speaking to hundreds of players, I have never - ever - encountered a player who looked at the officials covering this league and claimed they were racist.

Never!

When Allen Iverson complained about Steve Javie, he wasn't talking about Ron Garretson, another white referee. Same when Tim Duncan cursed at Joey Crawford. Every player has officials he doesn't like, and vice versa. But they also understand that sports is as close to a meritocracy as we can get these days.

"The paper, the study, is completely wrong, as far as we're concerned," NBA president Joel Litvin said yesterday. "We've proven it through our own studies. We believe their studies are inferior. Their methodology is inferior. And we don't have any problems publicizing our findings of the more than 148,000 calls over a 2 1/2-year period we looked into studying ourselves. We know which referees made which calls against which players. Our data is extensive, and it's thorough. We are not concerned about it all."

If only black America could say the same thing.

The truth is, we can't. No one can, because reports like this serve to alienate and polarize instead of mobilize and bring people together. Every time something benign is translated into some sort of conspiracy, it does more to instill excuses in a black community that is continuously in search of evidence as to why it feels disenfranchised. Meanwhile, it provokes the uncomfortable combination of fear and disgust from a white populace that is exhausted from trying to figure out what it can or can't say and do.

In the end, we all go our separate ways, carrying our cynicism, vitriol and stress back into private confines, believing things will just never change. Meanwhile, air time, print space and recognition go to numbers-crunchers and theorists looking to create discussion where there is no need for it.

I'd love to ask why again, to figure out what the point is in all of this.

But I've had trouble catching a cab for the last 20 years.

I'd love to see what the stats would say about that.

Contact columnist Stephen A. Smith at 215-854-5846 or ssmith@phillynews.com.

Read his recent work at <http://go.philly.com/stephensmith>.

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The study states fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1/2 percent when the number of whites on a refereeing crew went from zero to three.

The authors analyzed officiating crews based on boxscores, not individual referees. Joel Litvin, president of league and basketball operations, says there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls based on the NBA's own study. Using data from November 2004 to January 2007, the league reviewed more than 155,000 calls along with which official made each call. Kobe Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed the academic study. "I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," Bryant said Wednesday. By NANCY ARMOUR

the associated press

Kobe Bryant says he's never noticed evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star joked Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls .

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin. "

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co- author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a grad student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA boxscores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1/2 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though the NBA is made up of predominantly black players, less than 40 percent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

"I don't think there's any prejudice or racial stereotype," the Bulls' Chris Duhon said. "... They just call the game. If it's a foul, it's a foul. If it's not, there's no call. "

Wolfers and Price analyzed officiating crews based on boxscores, not individual referees.

After the NBA got a draft copy of the paper, it did its own study. Using data from 3,482 games from November 2004 through January 2007, the Segal Company, an outside consulting firm, reviewed more than 155,000 calls along with which official made each call. Race - of either officials or players - had no statistically significant bearing on the number of fouls called, according to the NBA study.

The NBA also analyzed data based on playing time. The more minutes played, the study found, the harder it became to find a pattern in fouls called against a player.

"The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**," said Joel Litvin, president of league and basketball operations.

But **Wolfers** said they analyzed calls made by all-white officiating crews and all-black officiating crews, and the results were the same. The study also didn't verify the exact race of players and referees, saying, "We simply noted whether a player or referee appeared black, or not." But **Wolfers** said the sample was large enough so that wouldn't be a factor.

"That's a lot of diagnostic evidence," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "If you have a conclusive evidence you want to come out with, you can almost make statistics prove what you want to prove."

Union chief Billy Hunter hasn't read the study, but said he wasn't surprised by its results. But he also said he's never gotten any complaints about discrimination. The story goes here ...

THE STUDY NBA's response Players' response

Document NFLK000020070503e35300021

SPORTS

Study suggests bias by referees NBA

Alan Schwarz
The New York Times Media Group
738 words
3 May 2007
International Herald Tribune
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21
English

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An academic study of the National Basketball Association suggests that racial bias found in other parts of American society exists on the basketball court as well.

A forthcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell University graduate student says that, during the 13 seasons from 1991 through 2004, white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players.

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, found a corresponding bias in which black officials called fouls more frequently against white players, though that tendency was not as strong.

They went on to claim that the different rates at which fouls are called "is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew assigned to the game."

The NBA commissioner, David Stern, said in an interview by telephone that the league had seen a draft copy of the paper last year and was moved to do its own study this March using its own database of foul calls, which specifies which official called which foul.

"We think our cut at the data is more powerful, more robust, and demonstrates that there is no bias," Stern said.

Three independent experts asked by The Times to examine the **Wolfers**-Price paper and materials released by the NBA said they considered the **Wolfers**-Price argument far more sound.

The NBA denied a request for its underlying data, even with names of officials and players removed, because it feared that the league's confidentiality agreement with referees could be violated if the identities were determined through box scores.

The paper by **Wolfers** and Price has yet to undergo formal peer review before publication in an economic journal, but several prominent academic economists said it would contribute to the growing literature regarding subconscious racism in the workplace and elsewhere, like in searches by the police.

The three experts who examined the **Wolfers**-Price paper and the NBA's materials were Ian Ayres of Yale Law School, author of "Pervasive Prejudice?" and a specialist in testing for how subtle racial bias, also known as implicit association, appears in interactions ranging from the setting of bail amounts to the tipping of taxi drivers; David Berri of California State University- Bakersfield, author of "The Wages of Wins," which analyzes sports issues using statistics; and Larry Katz of Harvard University, senior editor of The Quarterly Journal of Economics.

To investigate whether such bias has existed in sports, **Wolfers** and Price examined data from publicly available box scores. They accounted for factors like the players' positions, playing time and All-Star status; each group's time on the court (black players played 83 percent of minutes, while 68 percent of officials were white); calls at home games and on the road; and other relevant data.

But they said they continued to find the same phenomenon: that players who were similar in all ways except skin color drew foul calls at a rate difference of up to 4.5 percentage points depending on the racial composition of an NBA game's three-person referee crew.

Mark Cuban, the owner of the Dallas Mavericks and a vocal critic of his league's officiating, said in an interview by telephone after reading the paper: "We're all human. We all have our own prejudice. That's the

point of doing statistical analysis. It bears it out in this application, as in a thousand others."

Asked if he had ever suspected any racial bias among officials before reading the study, Cuban said, "No comment."

Two veteran players who are African-American, Mike James of the Minnesota Timberwolves and Alan Henderson of the Philadelphia 76ers, each said that they did not think black or white officials had treated them differently.

"If that's going on, then it's something that needs to be dealt with," James said. "But I've never seen it."

Rod Thorn, president of the New Jersey Nets and formerly the NBA's executive vice president for basketball operations, said: "I don't believe it. I think officials get the vast majority of calls right. They don't get them all right. The vast majority of our players are black."

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NBA, some players dismiss study on racial bias in officiating

By NANCY ARMOUR

AP National Writer

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3 May 2007

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Associated Press Newswires

English

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If referees are whistling Kobe Bryant for more fouls because of the color of his skin, he's never noticed it.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star jokingly said Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

But Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it. The NBA also refuted the study, saying its own analysis showed no racial bias in officiating.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin.

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA boxscores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1/2 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though the NBA is made up of predominantly black players, less than 40 percent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

"I don't really think it's relevant as far as our game," Cavaliers guard Larry Hughes said. "We have the same discussions with white refs as we do with black refs. It's no different. I definitely wouldn't say that a white ref has it out for the black guys in the league. It's not possible in our game as fast as we move."

Wolfers and Price analyzed officiating crews, based on boxscores, not individual referees.

After the NBA got a draft copy of the paper, it did its own study. Using data from 3,482 games from November 2004 through January 2007, the Segal Company, an outside consulting firm, reviewed more than 155,000 calls along with which official made each call. Race -- of either officials or players -- had no statistically significant bearing on the number of fouls called, according to the NBA study.

The NBA also analyzed data based on playing time. The more minutes played, the study found, the harder it became to find a pattern in fouls called against a player.

"The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**," said Joel Litvin, president of league and basketball operations.

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees," Litvin said. "... This is a fundamental flaw in the **Wolfers/Price** analysis making it nearly impossible to determine if, in fact, race affects play calling."

But **Wolfers** said they compared the calls made by all-white officiating crews and all-black officiating crews, and the results were the same as in the overall study. The study also didn't verify the exact race of players and referees, saying, "We simply noted whether a player or referee appeared black, or not." But **Wolfers** said the sample was large enough so that wouldn't be a factor.

"That's a lot of diagnostic evidence," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "If you have a conclusive evidence you want to come out with, you can almost make statistics prove what you want to prove."

"If you go in with that it's about race, maybe you find the things you're looking for."

Union chief Billy Hunter hasn't read the study, but said he wasn't surprised by its results. There is bias everywhere in society, Hunter said, so why should the NBA be immune?

But Hunter also said he's never gotten any complaints about discrimination.

"No, never heard, never gotten one," he said. "I know (commissioner David Stern) wouldn't tolerate any conscious bias, racist act by a referee or by anybody else."

Stu Jackson, the league's disciplinarian for on-court actions, agreed.

"I can say I've never heard a coach or a player or a team official reference race as a reason why they didn't approve of a ref's performance," Jackson said.

Wolfers and Price are to present the paper at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists on Friday and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday. They hope it will eventually be published in an economic journal.

AP Basketball Writer Brian Mahoney in New York and AP Sports Writers Tom Withers in Cleveland, Andrew Seligman in Chicago, Doug Alden in Salt Lake City and Bob Baum in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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Sports

Position on foul calls is offline

Bob Ryan

Bob Ryan. Boston Globe

1,733 words

3 May 2007

The Boston Globe

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C.1

English

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Justin **Wolfers** is an economist with the renowned Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, and he certainly has impressive academic credentials.

The 34-year-old Australian is an authority on everything from capital punishment to divorce law to the growing practice of betting on political elections, and this past January, David Leonhardt of The New York Times declared him to be "one of 13 young economists who is the future of economics."

His life is about to change. It is one thing to be published in scholarly tomes such as the Quarterly Journal of Economics, and it is another when the latest research paper you have written is previewed on the front page of the Mother Ship down there on West 43d Street, as it was yesterday. And it is quite another when what you will be publishing is a treatise whose basic premise is that there is "evidence of a pervasive own-race bias" on the part of NBA officials in making calls.

Wolfers and coauthor Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student, maintain in a research paper entitled "Racial Discrimination Among NBA Referees" that "In theory, this may be driven by black or white referees, and either by referees biased toward players of their own race or biased against those of other races." Now the real bombshell: "This bias is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial mix of the officials assigned to the game."

How large? Maintain Messrs. **Wolfers** and Price, "Had the league instead employed a race-normal refereeing pool, we estimate that this would have changed the outcome of about 1.8 percent of all games."

Wolfers and Price offer data they claim comes from "box-score information from 1991-92 to 2003-04, encompassing over a quarter of a million observations in games during which more than 600,000 fouls were called."

Wolfers is not doing this because he is a great basketball fan. "I prefer baseball," he explains. He and his partner are doing this because they are up to something far more important than micromanaging 13 seasons worth of loose-ball fouls and block/charge decisions. They have a larger purpose.

What **Wolfers** and Price are attempting to do is demonstrate that even in an enterprise as racially harmonious as the NBA, people will act with what they label as an "implicit bias" that is so ingrained they truly can't help themselves. Says **Wolfers**, "The referees are good people, like you and me, who are doing their darnedest not to be biased, but wind up being so, anyway." These researchers insist white referees inherently favor white players and black referees inherently favor black players, and they claim they have the irrefutable data to back up this premise in the form of those 600,000 calls.

They feel the NBA is an ideal test case in which to demonstrate how ingrained racial bias is in our society. "We study the NBA," they write, "because it is a particularly useful laboratory in which to find convincing evidence of own-race bias."

Wolfers says he is prepared to be attacked by people like, well, me. He is a scientist. I am an observer of basketball. He is ready to overwhelm all the mes of the world in mountain ranges of data. I am ready to explain basketball to him and I am also prepared to explain to him that what he may feel are "facts" are not really facts at all.

I am not here to dispute the fact that racial bias exists in our society. I am here to say the **Wolfers**-Price premise of studying NBA officiating calls from spreadsheets is not a way to demonstrate it.

Here is what I know about NBA officials: In any given game, they are important, at least as important as a good player in determining the outcome. This is so because they determine who will play and how the game will be played.

Here's something else I know about NBA officials: To most any NBA player, coach, general manager, or owner, referees can be divided into two categories. They either stink or don't stink too much. I don't think the players would object much to calling their own fouls, as they did on the playgrounds where they learned the game. I base this non-scientific observation on 38 years of covering the NBA.

And here's another thing about officials, and for this one I am indebted to colleague Dan Shaughnessy: In those 38 years, during which I have had countless conversations with NBA people on the general subject of officiating, not once - not once - have I heard anyone, black or white, denounce a referee on the basis of his race or suggest that the reason he stunk so badly, or (on rare occasion) performed so well, was due to the color of his or her skin. Not ever. It's a complete nonissue, a thorough nonstarter, a 1,000 percent irrelevant concept.

I don't care if these esteemed academics monitored 6 trillion calls. If they didn't understand basketball, it wouldn't matter. Do they possibly believe all calls are equal? Is it possible they think a call at the buzzer that might decide the outcome is the same as a second-quarter loose-ball foul against a backup center that results in no free throw or possibly two missed ones? Analyzing officials by looking at total calls is a farce, regardless of who has made those calls. **Wolfers** and Price cannot tell me they have carefully analyzed those 600,000 calls well enough to separate them into all the appropriate categories. So there is no way they know which games were affected by which calls, individually or cumulatively.

Do they understand that many a 2-point game is really a 10-point game and many a 10-point game is really a 2-point game? Do they have any idea what I'm talking about when I say that? Every good basketball fan certainly does. I've also seen many a box score that looks "fair and balanced" to the naked eye when I know from, yes, careful observation that it had been anything but. Do they know what I'm talking about when I say this? Every good basketball fan certainly does.

So the idea of analyzing referees from looking at total anything's is foolish and impractical. And that's before we even get to the race thing.

Start with the idea that anything pertaining to the general conduct of an NBA game will be skewed far more black than white. It is a black man's league in which white players are assumed to be inherently inferior until proven otherwise. (Oh, that reminds me. The only conversation I've ever had with a referee involving race on the court was in Boston with Ken Hudson, a black official who observed in 1970 that white referees were unfairly calling fouls on rookie Dave Cowens when he blocked shots because they weren't used to seeing a white guy jump that high. So, factor that in here somewhere.) The league is more than 80 percent black, and this means we are decades past the time when every black player in the league had to be a player of great significance. There are very good black players, so-so black players, and just-hanging-on black players, just as there are matching white players. Only not so many.

May I also ask, and I'm not trying to be a wise guy, how our intrepid researchers account for mixed-race players, who are entering the NBA in greater numbers? Do light-skinned, mixed-race players get calls darker-skinned players don't? And what about mixed-race officials? (We'll table Yao Ming for now.) Can you not see now how absurd this all is?

Since the issue is fouls, let's talk about fouls. I can't overwhelm you with data, but I can offer you a few things.

Let's examine the 2006 NBA Finals. Miami defeated Dallas in six games. Dwyane Wade was the MVP, and deservedly so. Wade is black. The games were officiated by 12 men in various mixes of three-man crews. Ten were white. Two, Ed F. Rush and Dan Crawford, were black.

Wade attempted 97 free throws in six games. In case you don't know basketball, that's a tremendous amount. The game-by-game breakdown: 10, 14, 18, 9, 25, and 21. Both his lowest (9) and highest (25) totals were in games refereed by all-white crews. In the three games where a black official was working, Games 2, 3, and 6, he attempted 14, 18, and 21. Would you like to hang your hat on any of this? I sure wouldn't. All it says is that a healthy Wade goes to the hoop a lot and people of all colors tend to notice when he does.

I'm wondering where this white-on-black officiating bias shows up. I did a quick study of free throws attempted per game over the last 11 years. In each year, the top five players in free throws attempted have been black, and usually it's nine out of 10, or more. The only white player showing up anywhere near the top in this category is Dirk Nowitzki, and he's yet to make the top five. And, as **Wolfers** and Price have pointed out, white officials now account for 68 percent of the workforce.

Mr. **Wolfers** and Mr. Price are, no doubt, sincere people, and they have a valid premise as it pertains to our society. I am certain that inherent racial bias exists. **Wolfers** urged me to look at the data before making up

my mind. Sorry. He has facts that aren't facts. The NBA is simply not the appropriate laboratory to demonstrate his premise that he thinks it is. This study is a needless distraction.

He should have asked the principals. Some referees stink. Some stink less. Some are white. Some are black. It goes no deeper than that.

Good try, though.

Bob Ryan is a Globe columnist. His e-mail address is ryan@globe.com.

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Sport

Race affects calls by refs

113 words

3 May 2007

Townsville Bulletin

1 -

42

English

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AN academic study of NBA officiating found that white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players, The New York Times reported.

The study also found that black officials called fouls more frequently against white players than black, but that tendency was not as pronounced.

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at Pennsylvania's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, said the difference in calls 'is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew'.

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Document TOWNBU0020070503e35300026

SPORTS

Players counter study, say refs are not biased

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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The Star-Ledger

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35

English

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NOTEBOOK

Kobe Bryant says he's never noticed any evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star joked yesterday. "That's reverse racism probably."

Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it.

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin."

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA box scores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1/2 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

* The Portland Trail Blazers recognized early on that guard Brandon Roy's last name was an acronym for Rookie of the Year.

Roy lived up to it, leading all rookies with averages of 16.8 points, 4.0 assists and 35.4 minutes in 57 games, and yesterday he was awarded the NBA's Eddie Gottlieb Trophy.

Toronto's Andrea Bargnani finished second and Memphis' Rudy Gay was third.

* Add Stan Van Gundy to the growing list of candidates for the Charlotte Bobcats' coaching job.

Van Gundy interviewed this week, his first coaching interview since resigning from the Miami Heat in December 2005.

He remains under contract with Miami through the end of next season, but Heat president Pat Riley allowed Van Gundy to interview when Bobcats general manager Bernie Bickerstaff asked.

Document NSL0000020070503e35300043

Albany Times Union, N.Y. Brian Etkin column

By Brian Etkin, Times Union, Albany, N.Y.

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News

623 words

3 May 2007

Times Union (MCT)

English

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

May 3--Your first reaction may be the same as David Stern's: to dismiss the findings. Surely NBA referees call 'em as they see 'em without regard to skin tone. To think otherwise is to dent the belief that sport is a meritocracy in which you're either good enough on a given day, or not, as judged by a colorblind scoreboard.

But a study by a pair of Ivy League academics found that from 1991-2004 white NBA referees called fouls with more frequency against black players than against white players (it also found that black referees called fouls with more frequency against white players, though this tendency was more faint).

The paper by Penn professor Justin **Wolfers** and Cornell grad assistant Joseph White has yet to undergo formal peer review (think coach's challenge -- reviewed by guys in tweed jackets). But three experts interviewed by The New York Times, which reported the story Wednesday, found it statistically sound, sounder than a study the NBA conducted after seeing a draft of the paper last year.

Stern doesn't want to believe this, and if any pro league deserves the benefit of the doubt it's the NBA, which has always been a leader in diversity hiring.

You may not want to believe this, either.

But why should it be so hard to believe?

Studies have found racial bias in law enforcement and judicial process, in the workplace and on the street, in car pricing and mortgage approvals. One found teams that wear black uniforms are penalized more than those that don't. In our culture, the color white is associated with goodness, black with villainy.

So the surprise isn't that white NBA referees may subconsciously discriminate against black players. The surprise would be if they didn't.

"If most other sectors of our society prove to have biases, why should sport be any different?" said Peter Roby, director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society. "If there's anything disappointing about it, it is that we believe sport can create a great common denominator where people of all walks of life might find something that can bring them together instead of separate them. From that standpoint you'd like to think that this is not happening.

"But if you think of the NBA as a business, similar to other sectors in society, then it's not necessarily surprising or all that earth-shattering."

If we believe NBA referees discriminate against rookies and favor All-Stars, if we think they're influenced by home crowds and coaches who chew on their ears, is it not a logical assumption that when forced to make instantaneous judgment calls they'd be influenced by subconscious racial biases, too?

Mike Alvaro, the Albany resident and president of the College Basketball Officials Association, couldn't disagree with the assertion more, he said. "You train, you do the best you can in certain situations, it's blank faces. ... It's just absurd to think anybody cares what color anybody is."

No one's suggesting white referees consciously call fouls more frequently on black players than on white players.

I don't think in this space I've ever consciously allowed a person's color to influence my opinion of him. But I have subconscious racial biases. We all do, influenced by our upbringing and society. Some of us try to overcome them by not denying their existence.

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The Philadelphia Inquirer Stephen A. Smith column

By Stephen A. Smith, The Philadelphia Inquirer
McClatchy-Tribune Regional News
823 words
3 May 2007
The Philadelphia Inquirer (MCT)
English
Distributed by McClatchy - Tribune Information Services.

May 3--Allow me a few moments of your time regarding an issue that is a waste of time.

Race is usually relevant to me. There usually is some sensitive issue to address, some reason to disseminate a message in an effort to generate understanding and better relationships among the masses.

But not today, in the aftermath of a report in yesterday's New York Times about racial bias involving NBA referees. Not today, after a study that asserts that white officials called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against whites.

This is a waste of time.

According to the article, a University of Pennsylvania professor and a graduate student from Cornell University conducted a study of NBA officials from 1991 to 2004 and concluded that white officials inherently held prejudices against black athletes. They pointed out that white males make up 68 percent of NBA officials, that 30 percent of the time, games were officiated by three white males. Three-man black officiating teams were present just 3 percent of the time.

The study by Justin **Wolfers**, assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell grad student in economics, goes on to claim that wins and losses were "noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew."

Never mind what the study shows. We can leave that to commissioner David Stern and the league office. Or to the Society of Labor Economists and the American Law and Economics Association: **Wolfers** and Price are scheduled to present their paper to them this weekend.

I'd rather ask why.

Why do we need to address such frivolity, a report devoid of anything substantive enough to accuse anyone of anything, as far as I'm concerned? Why now, in the midst of NBA playoff action, further diverting attention away from the games?

More important, just weeks after dealing with the rape case involving Duke's lacrosse team, along with Don Imus' firing and the repercussions that won't go away, why should anyone care about this report at all?

Especially when we're getting a perceived -- as opposed to a real -- problem.

On the face of it, there are a lot of problems with this report, the most obvious that **Wolfers** and Price took more than a decade to reveal something that no one considered a problem.

In my 11 years covering the NBA, speaking to hundreds of players, I have never -- ever -- encountered a player who looked at the officials covering this league and claimed they were racist.

Never!

When Allen Iverson complained about Steve Javie, he wasn't talking about Ron Garretson, another white referee. Same when Tim Duncan cursed at Joey Crawford. Every player has officials he doesn't like, and vice versa. But they also understand that sports is as close to a meritocracy as we can get these days.

"The paper, the study, is completely wrong, as far as we're concerned," NBA president Joel Litvin said yesterday. "We've proven it through our own studies. We believe their studies are inferior. Their methodology is inferior. And we don't have any problems publicizing our findings of the more than 148,000 calls over a 2 1/2-year period we looked into studying ourselves. We know which referees made which calls against which players. Our data is extensive, and it's thorough. We are not concerned about it all."

If only black America could say the same thing.

The truth is, we can't. No one can, because reports like this serve to alienate and polarize instead of mobilize and bring people together. Every time something benign is translated into some sort of conspiracy, it does more to instill excuses in a black community that is continuously in search of evidence as to why it feels disenfranchised. Meanwhile, it provokes the uncomfortable combination of fear and disgust from a white populace that is exhausted from trying to figure out what it can or can't say and do.

In the end, we all go our separate ways, carrying our cynicism, vitriol and stress back into private confines, believing things will just never change. Meanwhile, air time, print space and recognition go to numbers-crunchers and theorists looking to create discussion where there is no need for it.

I'd love to ask why again, to figure out what the point is in all of this.

But I've had trouble catching a cab for the last 20 years.

I'd love to see what the stats would say about that.

Contact columnist Stephen A. Smith at 215-854-5846 or ssmith@phillynews.com.

To see more of The Philadelphia Inquirer, or to subscribe to the newspaper, go to <http://www.philly.com>.

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EDITORIAL
AN OH-SO-TECHNICAL FOUL

251 words
3 May 2007
New York Daily News
SPORTS FINAL
38
English

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As additional evidence that those in the ivory towers have too much time on their hands, we offer a forthcoming paper in which Justin **Wolfers**, assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Joseph Price, a Cornell economics grad student, purport to prove that white National Basketball Association refs call fouls on black players more than they call fouls on white players - and vice versa.

The eggheads, per The New York Times, "accounted for factors like the players' positions, playing time and All-Star status, each group's time on the court (black players played 83% of the minutes, while 68% of officials were white); calls at home games and on the road; and other relevant data." What they claim to have found in these assumption-filled stats - which the NBA challenges with its own "relevant data" - is that all-white reffing teams charge black players with 2.5% to 4.5% more fouls than are called on white players. And the opposite when the refs all are black.

Wolfers and Price actually conclude that "the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew assigned to the game." Yikes. Someone must explain why none of this has ever been noticed by refs, players, coaches, broadcasters, sportswriters, fans, Spike Lee or the gamblers down at the Sleeps With Fishes Social Club. Perhaps it's because the differences, if they exist, are so minuscule as to be utterly irrelevant.

Document NYDN000020070503e3530003I

SPORTS

Study on NBA refs off the mark

Dan Daly, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

857 words

3 May 2007

The Washington Times

C01

English

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With the NBA playoffs just beginning to percolate, the last thing anybody wants to read about is referees. (Unless, of course, the referee is Richard Steele, and he's trying to keep Kobe from rabbit punching Shaq.)

But two newspaper stories yesterday, 2,000 miles apart, shined a bright, distracting light on the league's whistle blowers. The first, in the New York Times, cited an academic study suggesting that race - both the official's and the player's - affects the calling of fouls. The second, meanwhile, in the Rocky Mountain News, noted that Tim Duncan hadn't drawn a single personal in Game 3 of the Spurs-Nuggets series - and wondered whether the officials might have been mocking David Stern, in attendance that night, for suspending ref Joey Crawford after a run-in with Duncan.

Yup, it was quite a day for the NBA. The overseers of its games were called into question, and the overseer of its overseers, the commissioner, was called into question. Raise your hand if you'd rather talk about Dirk Nowitzki's missing jumper or the impending Pistons-Ben Wallace reunion.

Let's deal with the Times' story first. To begin with, any issue of fairness in sports, of the levelness of the playing field, is worth raising. If NBA referees aren't calling 'em both ways, black as well as white, the world should know. But frankly, the figures cited by Justin **Wolfers** and Joseph Price, guaranteed to get a lot of attention in the coming days, aren't all that damning, more an indication of an imperfect basketball world than a bigoted one.

Over a 13-season period (1991-2004), **Wolfers**, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton school of business, and Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell, found that "black players receive around 0.12-0.20 more fouls per 48 minutes played [an increase of 2 1/2 to 4 1/2 percent] when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three." They also, the Times reported, "found a corresponding bias in which black officials called fouls more frequently against white players, though that tendency was not as strong."

The upshot? "Basically, it suggests that if you spray-painted one of your starters white, you'd win a few more games," **Wolfers** told the paper.

Two more games, roughly. Depending on the player and the paint.

What was missing from the data **Wolfers** and Price compiled, however, was who whistled each foul - that is, which referee. So their conclusions involve a certain amount of conjecture (games often being officiated by racially mixed crews). There's also no indication they took into account that white refs might call a game differently from black refs - just as whites tend to play the game differently from blacks. What a white ref might consider excessive contact, a black ref might not. It's the same with baseball umpires and strike zones. Leagues want officiating to be uniform, but there's only so much they can do.

Could it be - and I'm just playing devil's advocate here - that blacks are called for more fouls because they're simply more aggressive? I just checked the final stats for the 2006-07 regular season. There are only two whites among the top 50 in steals, Manu Ginobili (23rd) and Kirk Hinrich (35th). There are just nine whites, moreover, among the top 50 shot blockers. Might not this at least partially explain the Foul Imbalance? Or, in these tabloid times, must we blame it on something insidious like subconscious racism?

One more thing: Am I the only one who thinks **Wolfers** and Price are missing - by several miles - the big picture? Here they are, crunching their numbers, worrying about blacks in the NBA being assessed 0.12 more fouls per 48 minutes than whites, while one of their fellow Ivy League schools, Harvard, is in the headlines for having no black head coaches among its 41 varsity sports. (A situation the university just "remedied" by hiring Tommy Amaker to coach men's basketball.) Granted, an NBA study is sexier - and might even get a professor tenured sooner - but still ...

As for the other officiating story, the one involving Bob Delaney's crew Saturday night, well, it just makes you shake your head. Maybe a group of refs really would thumb their noses at the commissioner like that - give

crybaby Duncan carte blanche but bring down the hammer on everybody else (e.g. the Nuggets' George Karl for leaving the coaching box). Rocky Mountain News columnist Dave Krieger certainly has no trouble believing it. "If it's true," he wrote, "it ... represents a threat to the integrity of the game"

Memo to Delaney and his Merry Band of Whistle Blowers: You guys had better not do it again, that's for sure. Justin **Wolfers** and Joseph Price might be watching.

Caption: A published study said referees call fouls more frequently against players of a different race. [Photo by Associated Press]

Document WATI000020070503e3530003w

NBA is crying foul

By Desmond Conner, The Hartford Courant, Conn.
McClatchy-Tribune Regional News
694 words
3 May 2007
The Hartford Courant (MCT)
English
Distributed by McClatchy - Tribune Information Services.

May 3--Joel Litvin, the NBA's president of league and basketball operations, was fielding calls left and right in New York on Wednesday following a published report that said white referees called fouls against black players at a greater rate than they did against white players.

Litvin was cool as a cucumber during an interview with The Courant in which he pooh-poohed a New York Times article and the findings of the two economists who conducted the 13-season study, Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a graduate student at Cornell.

The study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"These are academics and they went about doing a flawed study and they came out with a false conclusion. It's as simple as that," Litvin said. "Our players and ex-players are dismissing this and as a factual matter we've dismissed this because we've got better data than **Wolfers** and Price do. We did our own study and it proved that they're wrong and we're right."

Last year, Litvin said, the NBA received a completely different version of the study.

"They concluded that there is no bias," he said.

Two of the league's best players, the Lakers' Kobe Bryant and the Cavaliers' LeBron James, discounted the new report.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," Bryant said. "That's reverse racism probably."

James was even more blunt.

"It's stupid," he said.

The Times said **Wolfers** and Price analyzed box scores for each player's performance, including minutes played, rebounds, shots made, shots missed, fouls etc.

The paper went on to say the two concluded that blacks played 83 percent of the minutes and that three-person officiating crews were entirely white 30 percent of the time. Sixty-eight percent of the officials are white.

The economists determined that black players receive from 0.12 to 0.20 more fouls per 48 minutes when the number of white officials doing a game increases from zero to three.

But nowhere in the article did **Wolfers** or Price address the fact that the 430-450 player league is predominantly black, which could have been a simple and obvious explanation for the discrepancies they found.

Litvin said the NBA set out to prove the study factually wrong when it caught wind that the report was about to be released.

"We were not studying this issue at all until we heard somebody had done a paper of their own and came to this conclusion," Litvin said "That struck us all as crazy and we did the study and we proved that it was wrong."

The NBA's study was based on data it collects during the course of evaluating its officials. Litvin said the league reviews every call made in every game and the information is then put into a database for the

purpose of training refs.

"But it's also useful in a situation like this when someone is making an accusation that's not true," he said. "We were able to go back and look at every single call made for the past 21/2 years, 150,000 calls, and identify as to every call whether the ref was white or black and whether the player was white or black."

Wolfers and Price told The Times they requested this information but were denied. The league cited its confidentiality agreement with officials.

"**Wolfers** and Price didn't have that information," Litvin said. "Theirs was based entirely upon box scores and so they didn't know who made the call and so that alone ... it's impossible to make a determination about race affecting calls without the information that we have."

To see more of The Hartford Courant, or to subscribe to the newspaper, go to <http://www.courant.com> .

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Sports

Racial bias? Not by refs, players say

Nancy Armour
Associated Press
352 words
3 May 2007
Chicago Sun-Times
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English

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Kobe Bryant says he never has noticed any evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

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Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players association.

Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown put it this way: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

Said James: "It's stupid."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

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SPORT
CALL BIAS NOT HARD TO BELIEVE

Brian Etkin
609 words
3 May 2007
Times Union
THREE STAR
C1

English
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Your first reaction may be the same as David Stern's: to dismiss the findings. Surely NBA referees call 'em as they see 'em without regard to skin tone. To think otherwise is to dent the belief that sport is a meritocracy in which you're either good enough on a given day, or not, as judged by a colorblind scoreboard.

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Mike Alvaro, the Albany resident and president of the College Basketball Officials Association, couldn't disagree with the assertion more, he said. "You train, you do the best you can in certain situations, it's blank faces. ... It's just absurd to think anybody cares what color anybody is."

No one's suggesting white referees consciously call fouls more frequently on black players than on white players.

I don't think in this space I've ever consciously allowed a person's color to influence my opinion of him. But I have subconscious racial biases. We all do, influenced by our upbringing and society. Some of us try to overcome them by not denying their existence.

Brian Etkin can be reached at 454-5457 or by e-mail at bettkin@timesunion.com. Check out his blog at [http:// blogs.timesunion.com](http://blogs.timesunion.com).

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Sports
NBA, players dismiss study on racial bias

The Associated Press
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NEW YORK

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Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the colour of our skin.

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

Looking at NBA box scores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4 1/2 per cent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

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Sports

Players dismiss academic study's evidence of racial bias in referee calls; Upcoming paper analyzed box scores from a 13-year period through 2004

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The Associated Press
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"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

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Analyzing NBA box scores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 41/2 per cent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though the NBA is made up of predominantly black players, less than 40 per cent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

Document EDJR000020070503e3530001i



Bad Calls: Race Bias on the Basketball Court?

3,181 words

3 May 2007

NPR: Talk of the Nation

English

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NEAL CONAN, host:

This is TALK OF THE NATION. I'm NEAL CONAN in Washington.

Tomorrow's meeting of the Society of Labor Economists promises to be a bit more lively than usual. Two academics - Justin **Wolfers** and Joseph Price of the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell, respectively - will present a study that finds evidence of racial bias in foul calls of referees in the NBA.

White refs, they say, call more fouls against black players. To a lesser degree, black refs called more fouls on white ball players. A report on the study in yesterday's New York Times set off enormous controversy and reaction. It was written by Times staff writer Alan Schwarz, a familiar voice on this program. He joins us in a moment.

If you have questions about that study, about how its findings with what you see on the basketball court and in American society, give us a call - 800-989- 8255. 800-989-TALK. Email is talk@npr.org. Or you can join in on our blog at npr.org/blogofthenation.

Alan Schwarz joins us from the Argo Network in New York City. He's the author most recently of "Once Upon a Game: Baseball's Greatest Memories." And Alan, I guess it's been a pretty couple of - busy couple of days for you.

Mr. ALAN SCHWARZ (Staffer, The New York Times; Author, "Once Upon a Game: Baseball's Greatest Memories"): Yeah, it's been a bit of a whirlwind over the past 36 hours. It's nice to catalyze debate, I just wish that the debate had raised our standards rather than lowered them.

CONAN: Well, what do you mean by that?

Mr. SCHWARZ: Well, I think that most - the reaction that we have seen at the New York Times has been 90 percent people just saying, I don't believe it. It's not - you know, I've never seen it, therefore, they're just stirring up trouble, as if we had written the story on the back of a napkin on Monday night.

We don't just print anything that crosses our desk. We saw this as something worthy of our review. We took a look at it. We said, okay. We sent it to three of the top minds in the country in this field - Ian Ayres of Yale, David Berri of Cal State-Bakersfield, and Larry Katz, the former chief economist at the labor department and the senior editor of The Journal of Quantitative Economics at Harvard University. And they all said that this was correct.

It is not a matter of interpretation whether there are more foul calls against white and black players depending on the race of the refereeing crew. It is a fact that was discovered. Now, we can talk about the interpretation of it. We can talk about how to handle, what to call it - what to do with anything at all about it. But it is an incontrovertible fact that people are not willing to simply accept.

CONAN: Well, you see a lot of responses from NBA players, some coaches as well who said, look. If this is happening, I don't see it.

Mr. SCHWARZ: Well, I think that - look, let's just assume that they're not just saying that because they fear retribution. Let's just assume they're saying that because they believe it's true, okay, which I think is very fair and very plausible. However, it has been shown that this type of implicit association bias or variance in behavior on the part of white and black people towards white and black people is not detectable by the people doing it or receiving it.

They are too close to the situation, and therefore they have no way of telling whether what happened was a result of racial bias or not. It's too small. It's too subtle. In the same way, you can't ask a human being standing on earth is the earth round, because it's too close. They can't tell.

And you know, it's just something where I understand that players and referees and basketball people and fans say, hey, it's - I've never seen it. Well, I mean, if you want to find out if there's lead in your lake, you don't ask the fisherman. You have an expert from the outside who understands the science of detecting whether there's lead in water to come in and do it. And that's what happened here.

CONAN: And seemed interesting that one of the purposes of this study, just going beyond it, was the National Basketball Association is one of the most diverse, if not the most diverse entertainment industry in this country.

Mr. SCHWARZ: Yes.

CONAN: The vast majority of players are black. I guess the number of referees is about 38 percent of the referees are black, which is, I guess, roughly double their percentage in the general population and roughly half their percentage in the National Basketball Association.

Mr. SCHWARZ: There's no question. I will state unequivocally that the NBA has been known and has probably earned its reputation as the most progressive major sports company and past time in America. No question about it.

However, that doesn't mean they are immune from the human traits that exist between everybody's - or most people's ears in the year 2007. That - we have found out that this tendency to favor members of your own race, whether you're white or black, has existed in police searches; in the setting of bail amounts; in whether kidneys are transplanted, in whether you can walk off the street and ask to use the bathroom in a store.

It has been shown that however subtle and unnoticed it can be to the people doing it and receiving it, that it exists. We're not that far removed from 1964 no matter how much we like to think so. And given that, this was a story not specifically about NBA referees; it was a story about human beings who happen to referee NBA games and how a trait we are learning that exists in other parts of society apparently exists in basketball as well.

CONAN: Well, unsurprisingly, perhaps, the NBA has taken it as a bit of an attack. Earlier today, NPR's Steve Inskeep spoke with David Stern, the commissioner of the National Basketball Association. The full interview will air tomorrow on MORNING EDITION.

But in speaking with Steve Inskeep, Commissioner Stern made it clear that he does not agree with the study's findings. We're going to listen to a clip, an excerpt from the interview.

Mr. DAVID STERN (NBA Commissioner): We actually have the data of individual officials and individual calls for the last two and a half years, and so knowing this was going to be coming out, we ran the data and came up with something which I think is disappointing to the authors and to the New York Times but says quite starkly that there is no bias amongst NBA officials. And that's the real story here.

CONAN: So he says he's got better numbers than you do, Alan.

Mr. SCHWARZ: May I respond? He's suggesting - and I certainly do not speak on behalf of The New York Times, I would certainly prefer that this be said by my editor, Tom Jolly or Bill Keller, the executive director - but I certainly would take issue with Commissioner Stern's suggestion that we were disappointed. We were not disappointed by the data. We and our experts were far and away unconvinced that the data which they gave us was sufficient, and the analysis which they conducted was proper to believe that their findings were as credible as that which was vetted by our expert panel.

I think that it's the NBA that's most disappointed here and is placing that label on us when it is wholly inaccurate.

CONAN: Let's get some listeners involved in this conversation. 800-989-8255, email is talk@npr.org. This is Chad, Chad with us from Salisbury, Maryland.

CHAD (Caller): Hello. How are you doing?

CONAN: Very well. Thanks.

CHAD: I thought it would be common practice – I've been watching NBA for years. You watch Larry Bird play, Larry Bird got a lot of calls. And it kind of went both ways, but not as – not as much as Larry Byrd got compared to what the Jordan got or a Magic Johnson got. And you even see it in college basketball. Look at the charge called that Duke get. You see the same charge go down the other end - it won't be called.

CONAN: Mm-hmm.

Mr. SCHWARZ: Well, one thing I want to point out that the authors of the paper would point out here if they were here, is that their paper did not find one player who had specifically been discriminated against. They did not find one referee who could be pinpointed as being beyond the level of randomness, had behaved in any way that was anything other than within the bounds of what could be reasonably expected. It was only in the aggregate that you could see the pattern, that white and black players drew fouls at different rates when being officiated by different-race refereeing crews. It was only the analysis of 600,000 little pixels that could paint this picture. The players, and the officials, and the team officials, right now who are reacting to this story, and the fans have only seen 22, 26 of these pixels. It's as if they have their faces plastered up against a 50-foot television screen and are saying, hey, I don't see the sunrise, I only see a couple of dots. Well, you're not standing anywhere close to far back enough to be in any position to tell.

CONAN: Interesting, and Chad, thanks very much for the call. Interestingly, the variance was relatively small, about four percent more foul calls by white officials on black players. But the authors of the study said this is statistically significant, it makes a difference which team wins games and which team loses games. And I think part of the reaction was due to a quote that was in your article from Mr. **Wolfers**. Basically, he said, it suggests that if you spray painted one of your starters white, you'd win a few more games.

Mr. SCHWARZ: Yeah. He did give a good quote there, didn't he?

CONAN: Yeah.

Mr. SCHWARZ: But the point is, is that – was the bias or the variance – which is a little bit of a less incendiary term that can be used as well – was the variance huge? No, it was not, but it was far beyond what could be expected from randomness. There was a reason why this variance exists – existed. They tested over a dozen plausible other reasons that basketball fans will trot out there. They'll say that hey, there are more black players than white players in the NBA; more minutes are played by black players. What about the fact that more centers are white? And centers tend to draw more fouls than other positions. What about the fact that some players come off the bench specifically to commit fouls? All of these things were taken into account, and no matter what they did, no matter how they looked at it, what angle they looked at it from – the only thing that changed the numbers was if you changed the race of the players and the officials. It's just the way it was.

CONAN: We're speaking with Alan Schwarz, the author of a piece that was published in yesterday's New York Times which has caused a lot of controversy, "Study of NBA Sees Racial Bias in Calling Fouls." If you'd like to join us, 800-989-8255. Email is talk@npr.org.

And you're listening to TALK OF THE NATION, which is coming to you from NPR News.

Let's get another caller on the line. This is John, John with us from New Plymouth in Ohio.

JOHN (Caller): Hi.

CONAN: Hi.

JOHN: Hey. I have to admit right off the bat that I have not seen the study. Most of what I've heard has come from talk radio, sports radio, just yesterday. And it sounds like maybe some of the things I initially heard maybe aren't panning out. I heard a much smaller percentage. I heard it was like below one percent, and you guys are claiming - what is it – like, four percent, is that right.

CONAN: Neither one of us is claiming anything. It's the two academics who did this study.

JOHN: Well, you know what I'm saying. I mean, that's what you're telling me. I haven't seen the report. But I guess – two things. One – and your guest kind of addressed this – about the strategies of the game, how fouls are not just, you know, necessarily referees picking on players, but it's actually a tactic in the game that coaches will send players out to foul players. You're saying that's been factored into the equation. But one thing, you know – and this is just, you know – is it possible that as a group, that – is it possible that black players might be more inclined with a higher athletic, you know, game in general? I know it might sound racist, but, you know, it's a more aggressive style whereas a lot of white players are more, you know, shooters as opposed to, you know, driving...

Mr. SCHWARZ: Let me chime in, because – that is an extraordinarily intelligent question, and one that has been asked not nearly often enough, and I'm glad you brought it up. Yes. Some players and perhaps African-American players have a different style of play in aggregate than white players. That's quite possible. They tested for that.

The whole point of the study was looking at what happens to the same player. What happens when Joe Smith – actually, there is a Joe Smith; I don't mean to be picking on him – what happens when Joe Schmoie, okay, is – when that player who presumably has the same style of play regardless of refereeing crew – I think we have to assume that for the moment, okay? We can test that later, but for now, we're not going to go with it. That same player drew different numbers of fouls whether the crew was all white or all black or two to one in either direction. It was the same player. They tested for that. I think one of the most dispiriting things that I've witnessed – and this caller is not exhibiting it – so caller, I don't want you to think that I'm saying this about you – is people have been so unbelievably dismissive.

Don't you think that these guys know what they're doing? Can't you at least give them the benefit of the doubt to listen to their explanations for what they've done? I can tell you right now that 60 to 70 percent of the response that I've gotten has been from people saying, hey, idiot, there are more black players in the NBA. Duh. Well, as an educator at heart, it's very difficult for me to sit here and witnessing my students riot. It's really awful.

CONAN: One of the things I found interesting was a quote you had in your piece from Ian Ayres of the Yale Law School, author of "Pervasive Prejudice," an expert in testing for how subtle racial bias, also known as implicit association of peers in interactions. And he said, I would be more surprised if he didn't exist – he said about the implicit association of bias in the NBA. There's a growing consensus that a large proportion of racialized decisions is not driven by any conscious race discrimination but that it's often just driven by unconscious or subconscious attitudes. When you force people to make snap decisions, they often can't keep themselves from subconsciously treating blacks different than whites, men different from women.

JOHN: (Unintelligible) is the NBA – is the pressure going to ratchet up on them to release their own internal study, because I'd love to see, you know, what they've really got and compare these, you know, these two studies and find out what's – what the difference is.

Mr. SCHWARZ: Well, I certainly do not speak on behalf of the NBA. What they sent us, which – as far as I know, we do not have permission to release in raw form although if they're listening, they're certainly more than welcome to tell me one way or the other, they have my number – basically, it was not convincing to three people, experts, drop-dead experts...

JOHN: (Unintelligible) study.

Mr. SCHWARZ: ...who know – so the same people who judged the **Wolfers** and Price study, judged the NBA study, and they said – and unfortunately, yesterday, it got to the point where they needed to be far more specific. They said that the NBA study was not done properly, it did not look at things the way you have to in order to truly test for this, and therefore it really didn't hold any water. It's a shame. We wish that we could have assessed – we could have gotten a more – well, I don't want to express any disappointment. It's just – just the NBA didn't come close to clearing the bar it needed to clear it for us to believe their findings. I know they believe their findings.

JOHN: They're going to have to.

Mr. SCHWARZ: But they have to convince outsiders to believe their findings, and I invite them – certainly, as we did, privately, two and three weeks ago, I invite them to let people who know what – really know what they're doing. Yup.

CONAN: We need to go.

JOHN: Bye.

Mr. SCHWARZ: Okay.

CONAN: All right. John, thanks very much for the call. And let me remind you, there'll be an interview with NBA commissioner David Stern on NPR's MORNING EDITION with Steve Inskeep tomorrow morning. Alan, thanks very much for your time. We know you're extremely busy.

Mr. SCHWARZ: My pleasure, Neal. Anytime.

CONAN: Alan Schwarz, staff writer for the New York Times, author of the book "Once Upon a Game: Baseball's Greatest Memories." He joined us today from the Argos studio in New York City.

Ira Flatow will be here tomorrow with SCIENCE FRIDAY. We'll see you again on Monday. I'm Neal Conan. This is TALK OF THE NATION from NPR News.

Document TOTN000020070504e35300005

News; International

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice Meets With Syrian Officials; Slavery and the Queen

Richard Quest, Zain Verjee, Paula Zahn, Larry Smith, Ali Velshi, Glenn Beck, Jim Acosta

8,634 words

3 May 2007

CNN: Paula Zahn Now

English

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PAULA ZAHN, CNN ANCHOR: Good evening, everybody. Glad to have you with us tonight.

Here's what we're bringing out in the open tonight.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice now talking with officials from Syria and Iran -- is that a sign of desperation over the chaos in Iraq?

Plus, what is my colleague Glenn Beck doing in the middle of a protest march? The answer involves some really raunchy language.

And, 400 years after Jamestown, should Queen Elizabeth apologize because the British brought in slaves?

A few months ago, the Bush administration pointedly ignored advice to reach out to Iran and Syria to help stop the bloody chaos in Iraq. Well, today, that changed. At a conference in Egypt, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with her counterpart from Syria, and at least exchanged pleasantries with an official from Iran.

So, what's out in the open, progress or desperation?

To find out, we sent State Department correspondent Zain Verjee, and she sat down with the secretary of state just a short time ago.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

ZAIN VERJEE, CNN STATE DEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Talks with the enemy for Iraq's sake.

CONDOLEEZZA RICE, U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE: They were substantive. They were professional and businesslike.

VERJEE: After a two year deep freeze, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke with Syria's foreign minister to get Damascus to stop turning a blind eye to insurgents crossing its borders into Iraq.

RICE: He said that he understands that Syria has no interest in an unstable Iraq. But, of course, actions speak louder than words. And I'm hoping that they will carry through.

VERJEE: The Bush administration bashed House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for reaching out to Syria last month, saying she was rewarding bad behavior. (on camera): Did you just do that?

RICE: OK, it's one thing to go to Damascus and to have those pictures that suggests a relationship that doesn't exist with Syria. This was really very, very limited to Iraq.

VERJEE (voice-over): And despite the hype over a possible Iran- U.S., officials say Rice just exchanged smiles and hellos when she ran into Iran's foreign minister over lunch.

(on camera): Do you want to have more candid discussions, potential one-on-one, in this context with...

RICE: We're not...

(CROSSTALK)

RICE: We're not seeking a bilateral with Iran, nor are they seeking one with us. But the real breakthrough is

that we are all here together at this conference to support Iraq.

VERJEE (voice-over): Disappointing to many here, hoping the thaw between the U.S. and Iran could ease tensions in the region. Rice admitted that the Shia-led government of Prime Minister Nouri Al- Maliki is not delivering on promises to include Sunnis into the political process to ease sectarian tensions.

But the Bush administration is reluctant to threaten the Iraqi government with consequences, if they don't live up to their word.

RICE: They do need to deliver, and they do need to deliver more urgently. Our concern has been that we don't want to limit our own flexibility.

VERJEE: Iraq's Sunni neighbors are not as patient.

(on camera): The message that you have been sending to Iraq's Arab neighbors is that look, there has been progress in Iraq. But many Arab leaders are saying, we just don't see it.

RICE: I talked with Prince Saud, the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, and with others about the fact that we are seeing a reduction in sectarian violence. We are seeing greater even-handedness.

VERJEE (voice-over): And she told Arab leaders here stability in the Middle East depends on a secure Iraq.

RICE: It is really in their self-interest to have an Iraq that is stable, an Iraq that can be a force for fighting terrorism in the region. It's not going to do anybody any good if Iraq is in chaos.

VERJEE: She says the situation in Iraq is not perfect, but:

RICE: The fact is that we have no choice, for our own security, as well as for the security of the region, to support this government and to help them make it work. VERJEE (on camera): Secretary Rice says, it's important to reach out to those who have a hand in Iraq's future, even if it means sitting down with countries the U.S. considers trouble.

Zain Verjee, CNN, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

(END VIDEOTAPE) ZAHN: So, is talking with the enemies like Syria and Iran really the way to peace?

P.J. Crowley was a special assistant for national security under President Clinton. Jed Babbin worked in the Defense Department during the elder President Bush's term.

Glad to have both of you back with us tonight.

P.J. CROWLEY, DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND HOMELAND SECURITY, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS: Hello, Paula.

JED BABBIN, FORMER DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY OF DEFENSE: Hi.

ZAHN: Jed, I'm going to start with you.

You heard the secretary of state fiercely defend her meeting with the Syrian foreign minister. Do you think it will yield anything positive in Iraq?

BABBIN: No, not hardly.

I mean, we have been trying things like this long before the Iraq operation. I mean, Warren Christopher was going on his hands and knees to beg Father Assad back in 1993 to do something positive. We have been having back-channel discussions with them all along. They do not have the interests we have.

Mrs. Rice -- Ms. Rice is making a very fundamental mistake in thinking that the Syrians have any interest in a stable Iraq. It's just flat wrong. And she's making a big mistake by approaching it that way. Talking to these folks is probably not a bad idea. But you need the mailed fist in the velvet glove. And she's not it.

ZAHN: All right. I see you have got P.J. laughing with that one.

Has she made a fundamental mistake here, in thinking that the Syrians are looking for a stable Iraq?

P.J. CROWLEY, DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND HOMELAND SECURITY, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS: Well, look, it's very nice to see that either Condi Rice is being allowed to or is actually now doing her job. She is the senior diplomat for the United Nations of America.

We need more days like this, if we're going to dig ourselves out of the hole that we find ourselves in, in Iraq and the Middle East. I mean, four years ago, Jed and his neocon crowd thought that the Middle East would be self-ordering. We knock off Saddam Hussein, and everything would fall neatly into place.

Now we understand that we have to work hard at this. Condi Rice did the right thing today. We need -- but this has to be not just a one-off opportunity. We need to have a larger conversation with all of the neighbors to Iraq, including Syria, including Iran, over months, if not years, to try to find a way out of Iraq in the short term, and to resolve some of the larger issues that we face in the long term.

ZAHN: Jed, you said you didn't specifically have a problem with her talking with the Syrian foreign minister, but she might -- made a fundamental error in believing that he would do anything -- make Iraq any better.

I want to play something that President Bush had to say when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi traveled to Damascus to talk to the Syrians.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We have made it clear to high-ranking officials, whether they be Republicans or Democrats, that going to Syria sends mixed signals.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ZAHN: So, the secretary of state didn't travel to Syria, but she certainly reached out to the Syrians today.

BABBIN: Well, but the point, Paula, really is that the secretary of state is the authorized representative. Ms. Pelosi was playing at diplomacy. And her excellent adventure in Damascus did nothing but demean the United States.

Ms. Rice is making a fundamental mistake here. And, as much as P.J. wants to hope that something good is going to come out of this, hope is not a policy. We're making a fundamental mistake by just talking to these people this way. We should talk to them, but not this way. We are admitting weakness. And Ms. Rice is essentially pleading for Syrian help. You're absolutely not going to get it that way.

ZAHN: And, P.J., Syria being a state sponsor of terror...

CROWLEY: Of course, yes.

ZAHN: Poke -- poke some holes in what Jed is just saying here.

CROWLEY: Well, look, I mean, you know, Condi Rice has been allowed, because you have had some removal of hard-liners and obstructionists, like Donald Rumsfeld, John Bolton. Now you're seeing that, for example, we engaged North Korea, and now you have at least a piece of paper that -- and a process. It doesn't guarantee success, but at least now the situation, arguably, is not going to get worse.

BABBIN: Another piece of a paper, another piece in our time. (CROSSTALK)

CROWLEY: And, Jed, through his means, we have focused on regime change for six years. It's got us absolutely nothing. We're spending \$9 billion a month in Iraq. We have lost more money and more people than we did on 9/11.

If we're going to resolve the situation in the Middle East, it's not going to be done by occupation. It's not going to be done by military means. It's going to be done through diplomatic means, political means, economic means. And, so, the kinds of things that Condi Rice is doing, we need more days like today. But it needs to be sustained, with a clear message over an extended period of time, if we're going to succeed.

BABBIN: We have been doing this...

ZAHN: Gentlemen, we have got to leave it there.

You ruined Jed Babbins' day with that, but we will bring you back to debate more on another night.

P.J. Crowley and Jed Babbin, appreciate your time.

What does Condoleezza Rice have in common with Rosie O'Donnell and Osama bin Laden, but not President Bush? Here's a hint. It has everything to do with influence, or lack of it, according to a magazine.

And a little bit later on: why the Reverend Al Sharpton led a protest through New York, and why my colleague Glenn Beck joined him.

Plus, look who's on our side of the big pond tonight. There he is, our man from London in person, Richard Quest himself.

Welcome back, Richard. Welcome home.

RICHARD QUEST, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Good evening to you, Paula.

In just a moment: When does an apology not involve saying the words "I'm sorry"? When it comes from Queen Elizabeth II. I will tell you all about the state visit. The first day, it's under way.

PAULA ZAHN NOW continues.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ZAHN: Out in the open tonight; outrage over hip-hop. Coming up in a little bit, will marches like this that you're going to see shortly get rappers to clean up their acts?

But, first, why would Justin Timberlake make anyone's list of the world's most influential people, when President Bush doesn't? Is it because the president is a lame duck or this is a lame list?

Well, the list is the annual "TIME" 100, and it hit newsstands -- or will hit newsstands tomorrow.

To bring the selection process out in the open, here's "TIME" magazine's deputy managing editor, Adi Ignatius.

Welcome. Good to see you.

ADI IGNATIUS, DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR, "TIME": Hi, Paula.

ZAHN: So, how do you decide who makes the list, Adi?

IGNATIUS: Well, you know, several months ago, I asked for nominations from all our correspondents around the world -- we also talked to experts in various fields -- for who they think -- remember, this is a list of the most influential people in the world. So, you can't -- you can't quantify the way you would with, say, a Fortune 500 list.

We got lots of nominations, had a list of maybe 1,000 people, you know, all worthy, and then whittled that down over the past several months to the 100.

ZAHN: All right.

So, was President Bush in the original 1,000?

IGNATIUS: Yes, he was in the original 1,000.

ZAHN: All right.

And was there any debate not -- about not having him last until you hit 100?

IGNATIUS: Sure. There was plenty.

I mean, the office of the presidency carries a lot of influence just by itself, the bully pulpit. You know, Bush has squandered a lot of that built-in influence. He had no coattails in the national election. There are prominent Republicans who are moving away from him. He's down in the opinion polls.

People are -- are moving away from him on Iraq. So, you know, we thought, even for a lame-duck president, this is a low ebb for influence in the presidency.

ZAHN: We're going to put some of the latest approval ratings up to -- to bear out the point you were making about some of his personal negatives.

But, when you look at these numbers, and then take a look at some of the other people -- and we're going to move to that graphic now -- who made your list, we're having trouble understanding why, despite all those things you have just said, Condoleezza Rice and General David Petraeus would make the list, and -- and Roger Federer, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and still not the president.

IGNATIUS: Well, I think the point is that you define influence a lot of different ways.

Sure, we could have put 100 heads of state on the list. But influence is more than just whether you're the leader of a country or a dictator. It's -- there's also soft influence. And that's from artists. That's from entrepreneurs. That's from entertainers.

And, you know, in terms of how our lives are affected and transformed, it's not just from -- from sort of top leaders. So, I -- I have no problem having examples of sort of soft influence on a list that does include, you know, big leaders as well.

ZAHN: How much heat are you taking because the president didn't make this 100?

IGNATIUS: Well, it's funny. Well, it's a good question, because, every day, in the press, there's a piece that says, you know, the president has -- has lost influence, is down in the polls, you know, can't get this done, can't get that done.

And, then, we do this list that says he's not among the most influential, and everybody says, hey, what are you doing? You know, in fact, I think our list reflects what -- what is happening in the world and what all of us are seeing and reading every day.

ZAHN: Adi Ignatius, our audience will get to see your magazine tomorrow, when it hits the newsstands. Thanks so much for your time tonight.

IGNATIUS: OK. Thank you.

ZAHN: The members of my "Out in the Open" panel influence plenty of people, even though they didn't make the -- "TIME"'s list this time.

(LAUGHTER)

ZAHN: Darrell Ankarlo hosts a radio talk show in Phoenix, Arizona's KTAR-FM. Crystal McCrary Anthony co-hosts the BET cable network's program "My Two Cents." And Michael Eric Dyson teaches humanities at the University of Pennsylvania.

And, Crystal, I'm going to start with you tonight.

You heard what Adi just said about the reasons why President Bush did not make the list, waning influence because his -- his personal approval number is down, doesn't have coattails...

CRYSTAL MCCRARY ANTHONY, AUTHOR & COMMENTATOR: Sure. Sure.

ZAHN: ... many members of the Republican Party running away from him. Do you buy that?

(CROSSTALK)

ANTHONY: Well, two things kept going through my mind, rather dismal. But I don't think his publicists are as good as those other folks, number one.

(LAUGHTER)

ANTHONY: Number two...

(CROSSTALK)

(LAUGHTER)

ANTHONY: Number two, I really don't think that anyone is taking him very seriously now. Are we viewing him really as the president now, going to the lame-duck argument?

I just don't think that -- you know, part of me feels this was -- what was going on with "TIME" magazine? What were they trying to tell us by this serious dis, which it cannot be taken as anything other than that by the -- by the White House.

ZAHN: Is that how you read it, Darrell?

DARRELL ANKARLO, RADIO TALK SHOW HOST: Absolutely. Stop and think about it for a minute.

Osama bin Laden makes the list. Barack Obama makes the list. Hillary Clinton makes the list. And the president of the United States, who can decide, oh, I don't know, a little thing called the Supreme Court and what will happen there, the Iraq timetable, the Afghanistan timetable, whether we go to war or not, he doesn't make the list?

Popularity numbers down, we all get that, but he's still one of the most influential men, not just in this country, but the world. And I see it as an agenda to marginalize the president. And it just proves to me that "TIME" magazine simply doesn't matter anymore.

ZAHN: Is that what you -- the way you see it, Michael...

MICHAEL ERIC DYSON, PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA: No, I don't.

ZAHN: ... the irrelevance to the magazine, or do you see this as the irrelevance of the president, as some see it?

(CROSSTALK)

DYSON: Right.

I don't "TIME" magazine is irrelevant. Since you're going to deal with hip-hop later, one late rapper said, I went from ashy to classy. I guess the president has gone from classy to ashy here.

The reality is, popularity is not influence. Influence is critical. It's determined by what you're able to impose upon another human being, a situation or an institution. And I must agree. Even though I think I, in spirit, agree with "TIME" magazine's dis of the president, which is long overdue, the reality is, he is an awfully influential person.

I had a tete-a-tete with the president, so to speak. He called me out on national television. I have been audited this year. He has tremendous influence in my life and, I suspect, in the lives of millions of others.

(LAUGHTER)

ZAHN: Oh, you are really respecting him tonight.

(LAUGHTER)

ZAHN: Oh, we get that, Darrell.

(CROSSTALK)

DYSON: Oh, listen here. Oh, no, no. The influence is deep on me.

The reality is, he's not very popular, but he is extraordinarily influential, because even his crass indifference to the claims and cause of so many people who suffer means that he has tremendous influence over the lives of millions of people.

ANTHONY: I think this is a continuation of a message being sent.

ANKARLO: And I think that's the problem, Paula.

It's turned into -- it's turned into a popularity contest. And, as your editor just explained, well, it's not supposed to be about popularity. It's supposed to be about influence.

And that is the point here. You may be upset with the president. He may be having problems in the ratings, but he's still a very powerful man. And I'm just amazed that he doesn't make the list. It is a major disrespect to our commander in chief.

ZAHN: Do you find is disrespectful? We heard what you said at the top. I'm not clear on where you fall on that.

(CROSSTALK)

ANTHONY: Well, I do find it to be disrespectful, but I also think that it's a sign of how disenchanting the country is with President Bush.

ZAHN: But these are journalists. These aren't magazine editors making these decisions.

ANTHONY: I know. But they're citizens. They're -- they're angry. They're upset about Iraq. They're upset about health care. They're upset about poverty and education, lack of educational opportunities. And look who is in office. And just -- he's going to get blamed for that. And he hasn't done a whole lot to put himself in a situation to get out of that blame.

DYSON: And that disrespect that they ostensibly showed him is no greater than or not nearly equal to the disrespect he's shown to the political process and the ability to...

ANKARLO: Yes, but it doesn't count.

DYSON: ... forge coalitions.

(CROSSTALK) DYSON: Let me finish -- forge coalitions and connections between Americans, the way the president should do.

So, he's wasted and squandered his influence.

ZAHN: Darrell, a quick final thought, 10 seconds.

ANKARLO: Yes, but -- yes, real quick.

He says he talked to thousands of people. He had 1,000 people on the list. And here, we're -- we're hearing that he hasn't made the list because he hasn't been influential in these areas. Most definitely he has. And, if they're reporters, as they claim to be, they have to report the facts.

And, "TIME" magazine, you blew it this time.

ZAHN: And we need to report the fact that "TIME" magazine happens to be owned by our parent company of CNN.

DYSON: You're very influential.

(CROSSTALK)

ZAHN: That would be the Time Warner Corporation, right?

(LAUGHTER)

DYSON: Very influential.

(CROSSTALK)

ZAHN: Darrell Ankarlo, Crystal McCrary Anthony, Michael Eric Dyson, thanks.

ANKARLO: But, Paula, you matter.

DYSON: Thank you.

ZAHN: We will keep our fingers crossed for the three of you next year.

(LAUGHTER)

ZAHN: Well, maybe the 200 list.

(LAUGHTER)

ZAHN: Britain's Queen Elizabeth is also on "TIME"'s list of the world's most influential people. She just happens to be here in the colonies tonight to celebrate the town that started it all.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

QUEEN ELIZABETH II, UNITED KINGDOM: We are now in a position to reflect more candidly on the Jamestown legacy. Human progress rarely comes...

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ZAHN: Out in the open next: Did she or didn't she apologize for the British bringing slaves to Jamestown?

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ZAHN: Well, tonight, Britain's Queen Elizabeth is in our country, her fifth visit here as queen -- her first stop, Virginia.

(MUSIC)

ZAHN: Whew. That music just blasted my eardrum out.

First stop was in Virginia to mark the 400th anniversary of the first English settlement in the New World. But what we're bringing out in the open now is what some African-American leaders were hoping to hear from the queen, an apology for slavery.

In case you missed high school history, or don't remember much of it, the British started the slave trade in Virginia.

And Richard Quest is at the Jamestown Memorial Church tonight. Always good to have him here in our country.

So, the big question tonight, did she or didn't she, Richard?

QUEST: If only it were that simple, Paula.

The truth is, whether it's aboriginals in Australia, Maori in New Zealand, Native Americans in the United States, everybody wants the queen to apologize for colonial wrongdoings.

And, as she made clear today, there's more than one way to say, well, maybe we're sorry.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

QUEEN ELIZABETH II: Human progress rarely comes without cost. And those early years in Jamestown, when three great civilizations came together for the first time, Western European, Native American, and African, released a train of events, which continues to have a profound social impact, not only in the United States, but also in the United Kingdom and Europe.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

QUEST: You have to read between the lines.

Just listen, Paula. She got in Western Europe, Native Americans, Africans. She talked about human progress without cost. So, yes, she apologized, as much as you're ever going to hear from Queen Elizabeth II.

ZAHN: It sounds like there was an awful lot of political correctness on display here today, as well as all of the obvious pomp and circumstance.

QUEST: Paula, let me tell you, there are few stories that are more difficult than this. You can't call Native Americans Indians, so she has to be careful. We can't talk about the first settlement in the New World, because it was the old world, because the indigenous populations were here already.

She can't be seen to forget about changes and about slavery and the abolition of slavery. So, the whole -- the whole visit is a mine field of difficulty, political correctness, not offending anybody.

In the last two or three days, Paula, several organizations have contacted CNN to protest about this or that or the other, what the queen will say, won't say, will do, won't do. And that, perhaps, is why this visit is so important.

ZAHN: Hey, did you get to shake her hand today?

QUEST: No. I have shaken it in the past. And, as you know, Paula, she shakes your hand, not you shake hers.

ZAHN: Oh, I do remember that pesky little rule of protocol.

Richard Quest, thanks so much. Have fun with the queen in the days to come.

QUEST: Thank you. Thank you.

ZAHN: All right.

So, back to our question of the night: Should the queen apologize for slavery?

Let's ask a couple of guests now, Dwight Billingsly, a columnist for "The Saint Louis Post-Dispatch" -- he's also a Republican committeeman in Missouri" -- and delegate Dwight Clinton Jones, a Democrat who is chairman of Virginia's Legislative Black Caucus.

Welcome, both.

Delegate Jones, are you disappointed the queen didn't apologize? DWIGHT CLINTON JONES (D), VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATOR: It would have been extremely nice and gracious of the queen to have said a kind word or to have specified an apology.

But I guess your previous speaker was right, when she -- when he said that she came as close as he possibly could to making an apology.

ZAHN: Mr. Billingsly, you said that slavery wasn't personal. It was history. And, yet, there was a lot of flak back in January when Delegate Frank Hargrove said that blacks should just get over it.

And although he went on to say that's not exactly what he really meant to say, we have Delegate Donald McEachin saying this: "Leaders and heads of state have a responsibility to set the tone. And it would be a welcome move for the queen to express regret."

Wouldn't that have set the proper tone on this trip?

DWIGHT BILLINGSLY, COLUMNIST, "THE SAINT LOUIS POST-DISPATCH": Well, Paula, I don't think it would have at all. There's nothing to apologize for.

America has evolved into the kind -- has evolved into the kind of country that all of us who live here can be proud of, offering unparalleled opportunity to all people. And black people benefit from that as well.

There's nothing she has to apologize for. Perhaps maybe some of the formed -- the newly-formed Western African nations might want to apologize for having sold their people into slavery, if you want to go back that far. You can take this thing into the realm of ridiculousness.

ZAHN: Well, what about that, Delegate Jones? A lot of people are saying that this is just pointless that people were demanding this of the queen. You have had Tony Blair, President Clinton, lots of heads of state, -- or at least say on the record slavery was wrong. What more do you want?

JONES: Well, that's kind of a short view.

If you had been there today, it was a wonderful panoramic view of the vastness of our culture. The Indian tribesmen and the chiefs were there. Seventeen members of the Legislative Black Caucus, that I'm the chairman of, were there, along with the other members of the General Assembly.

And it's important for us to recognize that slavery did happen. It is a part of our history. It does not mean that we're celebrating it. It does not mean that we are overemphasizing it.

But, in order for us to know where we're going, we have to know where we have come from.

ZAHN: But, Mr. Billingsly, isn't that the charge here tonight, that this is exactly what has happened, that, yes, this was a horrible scourge, but folks have to move on?

(CROSSTALK)

BILLINGSLY: Look, look, Paula, everybody -- everybody who has gotten past maybe the third grade knows slavery happened. It did happen. I don't think anybody would deny that.

But I brought with me tonight a copy of America's apology to black people. And it's called Amendment 13 to the United States Constitution, that says neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as punishment shall ever exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction. They passed -- that was an apology --

JONES: That was an -- that was not an apology for slavery. That's an amendment to the constitution.

BILLINGSLY: That was the apology of people who went through slavery who were slave owners to people who were slaves. For -- you know, maybe --

JONES: That's not an apology for slavery.

BILLINGSLY: Why don't you ask the building and trades unions to apologize to black people for keeping them out of good-paying jobs so your children won't have to debase themselves by begging white people of their generation for an apology.

JONES: It's important I think, Paula, for African-Americans as well as America to recognize that we have a balanced approach to how we proceed as a culture.

PAULA ZAHN, CNN ANCHOR, PAULA ZAHN NOW: All right.

JONES: We need to proceed as...

BILLINGSLY: That doesn't mean anything. We proceed to be the greatest culture in the history of the world. You interrupted me in my last set of comments.

ZAHN: Unfortunately, I got to proceed to a commercial break, but I appreciate both of you joining us tonight. Dwight Billingsly, thank you, Delegate Dwight Clinton Jones, thank you as well. Tonight is outrage over hip-hop and some of the raunchy lyrics. That is not only out in the open tonight. He is marching through the streets.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REV. AL SHARPTON: Can't have standards for some and when it comes to women and African-Americans, you don't have standards.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ZAHN: We'll ask headline prime colleague Glenn Beck why he was marching right alongside Reverend Al Sharpton. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ZAHN: The controversy of rap music back out in the open tonight. And I want to warn you, whenever we cover stories about this, the language and images that you're going to see may offend some of you. The Rev. Al Sharpton has just wrapped up a protest march through Manhattan. He's calling on the huge corporations that own the major recording companies to ban racist and sexist language. Jim Acosta now joins us live from New York's Columbus Circle with the very latest. He's about 175 yards from this very studio. Jim, what's going on out there?

JIM ACOSTA, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Well, not much right now, Paula. But to those who ask why Al Sharpton goes after Don Imus, but does not go after the rap music industry, the reverend responded today. Earlier this afternoon, he held what he billed was a decency, a march for decency here on the streets of New York and he organized this protest to coincide with James Brown's birthday, yes James Brown the entertainer. So Sharpton, along with some of Brown's family members and about several hundred other protesters took to the streets of Manhattan, taking their march past the headquarters of some major music companies here in the city starting with Sony music and heading past Universal music and Warner Music. The reverend did not pull any punches, using some very strong language to call on those companies to crack down on offensive lyrics.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Nigger, ho and bitch should be a standard just like anti-Semitic terms, just like homophobic terms, just like any other terms. You can't have standards for some and when it comes to women and African-Americans, you don't have standards.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ACOSTA: And one of the protesters out here this evening was rap pioneer Kurtis Blow. Blow told us in a quick interview that we did this afternoon that if he can have a successful career in rap music, then so can today's generation.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KURTIS BLOW, RAPPER: I'm one of the oldest hip-hoppers you probably will meet, and I've recorded over 150 rap songs. And I've never used profanity. So I'm -- I'm living proof that there is the responsibility. That it is possible that you can have a career in rap music and totally, totally have some integrity with your music.

ACOSTA: And not to be forgotten, also in the crowd this evening were dozens of school-aged girls who also joined the call for the hip-hop world to clean up its act.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'm out here because I'm tired of being called names in music and I don't like it at all.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ACOSTA: And we should mention that Al Sharpton did conclude his march out here in front of the Time Warner center in New York, thinking that Time Warner still owns part of Warner Music Group. In fact, we checked with the folks here at Time Warner today and the company no longer owns any part of Warner music. Paula?

ZAHN: He certainly got an audience in front of our building tonight. Jim Acosta, thanks so much. One of the people marching with Reverend Sharpton tonight is Headline Prime's Glenn Beck. You know him. And I spoke with him about that a little bit earlier on today.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ZAHN: Let me get this straight. Reverend Al Sharpton is the same guy who as recently as 10 years ago, told record executives not to cave in to the right-wing pressure to censor lyrics. It was their first amendment right to say what they want, to sing what they want. Does he have the credibility to have any impact of removing this language from hip hop?

GLENN BECK, CNN ANCHOR: You're asking a guy who 12 years ago was a flaming alcoholic. Do I have any credibility to even answer that question? I do believe he believes as well as I do that rap is a poison in

our society and it doesn't matter what color you are. I think it's important for all of us, however, to start to unite and stop looking for people we completely agree with on everything. We're not going to find those people. Those people are plastic. Let's find the people who say, you know what? I may not agree on your policies, but I agree on your principles on this, this, and this. And on those principles I'll unite with you.

ZAHN: You're going to have to target a much broader audience if you're going to make any dent at all in this battle. Let's --

BECK: Oh.

ZAHN: Let's show our audience a concert from Trinidad, "Billboard" charts number one rapper, Akon right now where he pretty much simulates having sex. Akon is backed by Universal Studios. He was a guy who was featured on "American Idol," one of the most watched television shows in American history. What does that tell you about what you're up against in changing public opinion?

BECK This is where I think Al Sharpton is wrong. He's going after the record companies. He says I'm not going to go after the artists. First, here's the first step wrong. You're not going to go after the artist, but you went after Don Imus, I mean artist as well. So that doesn't make sense to me. But going after the record companies, the problems lie in the families. The problem lies in me allowing my kids to witness that, to watch that, to consume that. We've got to target the families. We have to -- we have to wake each other up and say this stuff is poison. It is poison. When we stop wanting to consume it, it will go away. ZAHN: What does that say about the American public, that (INAUDIBLE) guys like Akon?

BECK: I think it says frightening things. I says a couple of things. It says that either parents are completely disconnected from what their kids are watching. Either that or it's says that the parents don't think it's a problem, and that's an even bigger problem.

ZAHN: Well, what about the opinion of someone like Russell Simmons that has been marketing this stuff for years? Let me put up on the screen what he had to say about what you consider highly offensive lyrics. Quote, the difference between those words coming out of a rapper's mouth and his mouth is that when a rapper says them, they are not racial. If I walk to a black man on the street and say, N with a blank expression, nine times out of 10 he would hug me. That is a fact. How do you counter that message?

BECK: You have to counter it with this. Bull crap. You as a news reporter, you're a journalist. You couldn't even use that word on a news program, not because of some journalistic standards, but because it's wrong. Don't tell me that you as a journalist can't use that word, but you can use it in everyday conversation. It's either right or it's wrong. Let's stop with the grays. There are a lot of things in life that are black and white and this is one of them.

ZAHN: Glenn Beck. Good luck. And he's done. He's resting his tired feet at this hour.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ZAHN: Tonight, we're going to bring some disturbing news about pro basketball out in the open. Coming up next, are the referees showing racial bias? Plus a little bit later on, a CNN hero who takes old computer parts and recycles hope.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ZAHN: Tonight, the possibility that racial bias is influencing the outcome of NBA games is out in the open. It's an explosive debate started by researchers who studied 14 years of box scores. They say their numbers prove that referees have an unconscious racial bias. CNN sports correspondent Larry Smith has more.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

LARRY SMITH, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The NBA prides itself on being the most progressive league in the country. Seventy percent of its players are African-American. It has more minority head coaches and team and league executives than any other sport. But that harmony is being questioned by an academic study done by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a graduate student from Cornell University. It claims white referees call more fouls on black players than white players. And black refs blow the whistle more on white players. JUSTIN WOLFERS, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA: The effects are reasonably subtle. It took us 14 years of data and 600,000 foul calls to be really comfortable with our results. These are referees who undergo tremendous training and tremendous feedback and have incredible incentives to get rid of any of these biases. Yet we still find something here.

SMITH: The study examined box scores of NBA games from 1991 to 2004 and showed that black players got up to 4.5 percent more fouls than white players and that teams that had the most black players won

slightly fewer games. Current and former players say that while racism may still be a fact of life in America, they don't see that on the court.

CHARLES BARKLEY, FMR NBA PLAYER: Racism does exist in our society, but there are always going to be more calls against black players because there are more of them.

KENNY SMITH, FMR NBA PLAYER: I think the one thing that most players would say inside that box, that's probably the court, so to speak, is the only place and the only sanctity where you feel that your teammates don't look at your color, your referees. Maybe the fans do, but the players and everyone else don't.

SMITH: The NBA saw the study before it was released. The league itself examined the play from November 2004 to last January and says it found no racial bias. But an NBA executive said the academic study quote, only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees. This is a fundamental flaw in their analysis making it nearly impossible to determine if, in fact, race affects play-calling. **Wolfers** contends that regardless of if it was a white or a black referee making the calls, players were affected differently each night depending on the racial make-up of the entire officiating team.

WOLFERS: I think a more reasonable response from the NBA would be to be to say this is very interesting analysis and it shows how far we've come and that really as to other context (ph), we're doing really well.

JASON KIDD, NEW JERSEY NETS: The game is so fast, I don't think they have time to see who is, you know, what color they just called a foul on, I mean, of the person. They just are calling what they see.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

SMITH: The NBA says that it will not release the details of its study due to reasons of confidentiality. Paula, it should be noted that 38 percent of the NBA's referees are black. That's up from 34 percent a couple of years ago, an increase that took place long before this issue became black and white. Let's go back to you.

ZAHN: Lots of numbers to absorb and create that picture. Larry Smith, thanks so much.

Right now we're going to move on and take a quick biz break. The Dow closed up 29 points setting yet another record. The Nasdaq gained seven, the S&P earned six, closing above 1,500 for the first time since the dotcom boom. General Motors feeling the pain from the sub-prime mortgage meltdown. First quarter profits were down 90 percent compared to last year. GM owns 49 percent of mortgage lender GMAC.

With the average price of gas nearing \$3 a gallon, some Democrats in Congress say it's time to pass a Federal law against gas price gouging. Most states already ban it. We'll be right back with more.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ZAHN: And welcome back. This week, Larry King is celebrating his 50th year in broadcasting. He's got a special show coming up for all of us in just a few minutes. He's got a great week going this week Larry.

LARRY KING, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Thank you. I'm very proud of it with George Tenet and Katie Couric hosting me. And having Oprah on on Tuesday night. And then tomorrow night, Bill Maher is going to host the special toast with a lot of surprise guests. They surprise me. But tonight I guess is the creme de la creme. It's the CNN presents production that's -- I'm just a hired hand. And Ryan Seacrest and Anderson Cooper are the co-hosts and it's two hours. And what they've done, a very unique idea, they've taken pop culture in the 50 years and combined it with -- as seen through my eyes the pop culture of the United States and world through those 50 years of broadcasting. I started in 1957. And then in conjunction with that, they've released the DVD called the greatest interviews, which is available on Amazon and lots of places and on my show, they give you a phone number you can call to get it and this is over 300 interviews, tin types of interviews that we've conducted throughout the years. So it's been quite a week and I can't believe it.

ZAHN: Well, congratulations. You don't look like you've been at this 50 years, Lar.

KING: Thank you. In fact, I don't feel it. The funny thing is, I remember the first day I was on like yesterday. Where did it all go? Where did time go? Don't you feel time just --

ZAHN: It just marches by so quickly.

KING: What happened? What happened?

ZAHN: What happened? We'll have to revisit it all on videotape, Larry. Look forward to your show tonight.

KING: Thank you. Enjoy it.

ZAHN: We'll put up that number for your videotape as well.

KING: You're a doll. Thank you, dear.

ZAHN: Have a good show. We'll put that number up.

We're turning our focus now to the weekend and Saturday's 133rd running of the Kentucky Derby. Twenty horses will be in the race and for one owner, Churchill Downs is a really long way from his first career. Ali Velshi has tonight's life after work.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ALI VELSHI, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): The Kentucky Derby, the run for the roses. It's the horse race of horse races. Jim Scatuorchio is betting on Scat Daddy, a horse he co-owns. Jim says investing in horses is as risky if not more so than trading stocks.

JIM SCATUORCHIO, CO-OWNS RACE HORSES: I worked on Wall Street for over 30 years in one particular firm, Donaldson, Lufkin, Jenrette, and all of those years I had some involvement in horse racing.

VELSHI: While he worked on Wall Street, Jim invested in race horses with small groups of people. He liked it and made enough money off of it that she decided to spend more time and more money on the ponies after he retired in 1998.

SCATUORCHIO: I was fortunate enough to get involved with a horse called TelltheCat (ph) that was successful in the partnership I was in. After that, went on my own. And then right about the time I retired, came up with a horse called More Than Ready that ran the 2000 derby and finished fourth and now it's more of a business.

VELSHI: Scatuorchio now owns about 30 horses and he says that can be more unruly than the traders he used to manage on Wall Street. Despite it being a business, don't think Scatuorchio is immune to the emotions of race day.

Owning a race horse is an experience like nothing you've ever experienced. When you stop getting cotton mouthed two minutes before they go into the gate, then you probably shouldn't own any race horse any more. I still get it. It's quite a thrill.

VELSHI: Ali Velshi, CNN, New York.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ZAHN: Saturday is going to be quite a race.

The man I want you to meet next hasn't retired. He's found a way to help people by actually using computer parts that no one else wants. You've got to see this guy's story. It's next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ZAHN: This week and all this year, we're shining a spotlight on some very special people. Each one of them has a remarkable story. We call them CNN heroes. James Burgett was once a homeless addict. Now he's helping others on the road to recovery, while trying to save the environment.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

JAMES BURGETT: This is tape two. The corporate motto is obsolescence is a lack of imagination. If we don't reuse our waste now it's all that future generations will have.

My name is James Burgett. I have been collecting electronic waste and giving away computers for the last 13 years. I hire people that are outside of the normal employment stream. I teach them how to build the computers. I have been pretty much on my own since the age of 14. I slept on people's floors. I slept in various places. I started pulling computers out of dumpsters, refurbishing them and trying to sell them. The objective was to fund my drug habit. Every time I made any money I immediately stuck it up my nose or in my arm. I quit doing drugs because I found that giving away computers gave me a self-image that made it so

I didn't need to do so.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: He's very adamant to giving away for free. This is one of the things that he wants to do, he can do and he will do.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You're not going to ruin it. This is your computer. If you ruin it we'll give you another one.

BURGETT: We hire convicts. We hire people with psychiatric histories. We hire people with drug histories. All you really need to do is give them something that they can say, I'm not a parasite today. These are the best feelings we've had since we did drugs.

Just checking in Aaron. Got anything I need to know?

It's all gravy. OK. We take things that are considered broken and we then repurpose, refurbish. This applies to me. This applies to my staff. This applies to every computer we give away. Every single thing you see here, somebody, somewhere, decided it no longer had value and they were wrong.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ZAHN: We know a hero. That wraps it up for all of us here tonight. Thank you so much for joining us. We'll be back tomorrow night for a special hour on rehab for the rich and famous and not so famous. Hope you join us then.

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Sports

Players reject claim of racial bias by refs

The Associated Press

358 words

3 May 2007

The Grand Rapids Press

All Editions

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Kobe Bryant says he's never noticed any evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star joked Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it. The NBA also refuted the study, saying its own analysis showed no racial bias in officiating.

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin.

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co- author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Document GRPR000020070504e35300032

Black NBA players dismiss referee bias

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1,063 words

3 May 2007

Charleston Gazette

P4B

English

(Copyright 2007)

If referees are whistling Kobe Bryant for more fouls because of the color of his skin, he's never noticed it.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star jokingly said Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

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"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA boxscores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 41/2 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though the NBA is made up of predominantly black players, less than 40 percent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

"I don't really think it's relevant as far as our game," Cavaliers guard Larry Hughes said. "We have the same discussions with white refs as we do with black refs. It's no different. I definitely wouldn't say that a white ref has it out for the black guys in the league. It's not possible in our game as fast as we move."

Wolfers and Price analyzed officiating crews, based on boxscores, not individual referees.

After the NBA got a draft copy of the paper, it did its own study. Using data from 3,482 games from November 2004 through January 2007, the Segal Company, an outside consulting firm, reviewed more than 155,000 calls along with which official made each call. Race - of either officials or players - had no statistically significant bearing on the number of fouls called, according to the NBA study.

The NBA also analyzed data based on playing time. The more minutes played, the study found, the harder it became to find a pattern in fouls called against a player.

"The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**," said Joel Litvin, president of league and basketball operations.

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees," Litvin said. "... This is a fundamental flaw in the **Wolfers/Price** analysis making it nearly impossible to determine if, in fact, race affects play calling."

But **Wolfers** said they compared the calls made by all-white officiating crews and all-black officiating crews, and the results were the same as in the overall study. The study also didn't verify the exact race of players and referees, saying, "We simply noted whether a player or referee appeared black, or not." But **Wolfers** said the sample was large enough so that wouldn't be a factor.

"That's a lot of diagnostic evidence," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "If you have a conclusive evidence you want to come out with, you can almost make statistics prove what you want to prove."

"If you go in with that it's about race, maybe you find the things you're looking for."

Union chief Billy Hunter hasn't read the study, but said he wasn't surprised by its results. There is bias everywhere in society, Hunter said, so why should the NBA be immune?

But Hunter also said he's never gotten any complaints about discrimination.

"No, never heard, never gotten one," he said. "I know (commissioner David Stern) wouldn't tolerate any conscious bias, racist act by a referee or by anybody else."

Stu Jackson, the league's disciplinarian for on-court actions, agreed.

"I can say I've never heard a coach or a player or a team official reference race as a reason why they didn't approve of a ref's performance," Jackson said.

Wolfers and Price are to present the paper at meetings of the Society of Labor Economists on Friday and the American Law and Economics Association on Sunday. They hope it will eventually be published in an economic journal.

AP Basketball Writer Brian Mahoney in New York and AP Sports Writers Tom Withers in Cleveland, Andrew Seligman in Chicago, Doug Alden in Salt Lake City and Bob Baum in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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Document CGAZ000020070505e35300019

Tim Sullivan
SPORTS
Racial bias not what it used to be, evidently

Tim Sullivan
955 words
3 May 2007
The San Diego Union-Tribune
R,E,S,F
D.1
English
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Perhaps this is progress. Perhaps the detection of racial bias in NBA officiating through multivariable regression analysis is a sign that it's not so obvious and overt anymore.

When you have to sift through 13 years of statistical data to identify a race-based problem in the assessment of personal fouls, it suggests that discrimination grows ever more subtle in the games we play. It suggests a shift from the conscious to the subconscious; from the ignorant to the inadvertent; from Selma toward Utopia.

A study released Tuesday by Wharton professor Justin **Wolfers** and Cornell graduate student Joseph Price alleges "appreciable differences" in the outcome of NBA games based on the racial composition of the respective teams and refereeing crews.

Inasmuch as any discrimination by officials is odious and any of their calls are potentially decisive, anything that impugns their integrity or impartiality is troubling. Yet since this study was inhibited by the inability to assign individual calls to individual referees, some of its data is inconclusive. None of its conclusions rises to the level of scandal or, realistically, even surprise.

Box scores do not identify which ref blew what whistle, and the NBA has declined to share the proprietary data that could further illuminate the issue. While the NBA's resistance to transparency undercuts Commissioner David Stern's claim that the league's in-house study shows "no bias," the numbers presented by **Wolfers** and Price should elicit more curiosity than controversy.

Though the study shows that black players are charged with fewer fouls than white players per 48 minutes, 4.33 to 4.97, **Wolfers** and Price found that black players receive "around 0.12-0.21 more fouls per 48 minutes played (relative to white players) when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three."

This discrepancy certainly qualifies as a concern, but it was not the authors' aim to provoke outrage. These guys are academics, after all, not talk show hosts.

"People have misread our paper to say we're calling someone somewhere a racist," **Wolfers** said last night in a telephone interview. "The paper's being painted as making points we weren't making.

"We are explicitly of the view that we think, and we don't know for sure, that this is an implicit bias. ... There still exist barriers. We want to understand where they come from. The NBA is a really interesting laboratory because it's the last place you would expect to find this."

Historically the most progressive of the major sports leagues, and currently comprised of roughly 80 percent black players, the NBA is naturally sensitive to the slightest suggestion of bias. Hypersensitive, perhaps. Like the block/charge call, the difference between an arithmetical anomaly and true statistical significance is sometimes a matter of interpretation.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA Players Association, told The Associated Press. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin.

"I don't know that I've ever felt there was a racial component to officiating."

Wolfers would argue that his hypothesis is narrower than that; that he's searching for subconscious

influences in split-second decisions and not broad patterns of prejudice; and that his findings are consistent with race-related studies in high-pressure police work.

If you find the study that detects no racial bias, you should probably assume its authors haven't studied very hard.

"There's bias on the basketball court," **Wolfers** told The New York Times, "but less than when you're trying to hail a cab at midnight."

Sixty years since Jackie Robinson integrated baseball, professional sports come as close to color-blindness as any segment of American society. Though baseball's current effort to attract more black athletes may be driven as much by marketing as morality, it carries the implicit acknowledgment that here is a talent pool worth tapping.

Here, too, is progress. Though Robinson broke in with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, the major leagues were not fully integrated until Pumpsie Green joined the Boston Red Sox on July 21, 1959. The National Football League's Washington Redskins were all-white until 1962.

Not until 1970, four years after his memorable monochromatic defeat against Texas Western, did Kentucky basketball coach Adolph Rupp recruit the school's first black player. That same year, Alabama's Bear Bryant brought John McKay's USC Trojans to Birmingham, ostensibly to show the locals how much apartheid was hurting his football program.

Less than 40 years later, the landscape is decidedly different. Among the beauties of modern athletics is its meritocracy. If you can't hit, your family connections can't help you. If you can't catch, your net worth means nothing. If you can run fast enough, your race is the 100 meters, skin color notwithstanding.

Though Martin Luther King Jr. decried the "tranquilizing drug of gradualism," there is no comparison between the hurdles confronting today's black athletes and those faced by their forebears. Racial prejudice will always be with us, but instead of George Wallace spouting division with impunity, we have Don Imus spouting derision and getting silenced.

This is progress. But it is not paradise.

"I'm entertained no matter how many fouls there are," Justin **Wolfers** said. "But by jingo, if the most professional evaluators in our society are making these mistakes, what about the others?"

Document SDU0000020070505e3530001r

SPORTS
ACADEMIC STUDY DISPUTED BY LEAGUE

Associated Press
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Augusta Chronicle
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NEW YORK - An academic study of NBA officiating found that white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players, The New York Times reported in Wednesday's editions.

The study by a University of Pennsylvania assistant professor and Cornell graduate student also found that black officials called fouls more frequently against white players than black, but noted that tendency was not as pronounced.

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at Penn's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, said the difference in calls "is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew."

The study, conducted over a 13-season span through 2004, found that the racial makeup of a three-man officiating crew affected calls by up to 4 1/2 percent.

The NBA strongly criticized the study, which was based on information from publicly available box scores, which show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

"The study that is cited in the New York Times article is wrong," president of league and basketball operations Joel Litvin told The Associated Press on Tuesday night. "The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**."

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

Litvin said the NBA's study, using data from November 2004 to January 2007, included some 148,000 calls and included which official made each call. The Times said the NBA denied a request by **Wolfers** and Price to obtain that information.

Document AGCR000020070508e3530001j

The New York Times

SPORTS OF THE TIMES

Sports Desk; SECTD

N.B.A.'s Denials Overlook A Larger Point

By HARVEY ARATON

965 words

4 May 2007

The New York Times

Late Edition - Final

2

English

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So much for the racial dialogue the Imus-Rutgers imbroglio was supposed to provoke.

Though I guess words like idiotic and ridiculous and, in effect, shut up, qualify as honest discourse, albeit of the shock-jock variety.

Let me say right from the start that I am not here to champion a 13-year study by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell University graduate student that found that white referees in the N.B.A. had called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players, and a corresponding but lesser bias by black refs against whites.

Not as a basketball issue, anyway.

Regarding the impact on the outcome of N.B.A. games and the integrity of the sport, my many years of being inside the arena tell me there are way too many variables beyond mere data solely extracted from box scores to draw meaningful conclusions from this. But as a study of the human condition, it is fascinating, and who among its critics qualifies as the authority on how the brain stores information and makes that split-second call?

The main findings of the as-yet-unpublished paper -- by Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics -- were reported Wednesday in The New York Times, setting off a fusillade of denunciation by the N.B.A., its coaches, players and some members of the news media.

The league countered with a study of its own, no doubt prepared in haste to counter **Wolfers** and Price, and one that concluded, in the words of Commissioner David Stern, "No demonstration of any bias here."

None? Whatsoever? Not possible? N.B.A. referees are not subject to the same betrayals of the subconscious as the rest of the human race? Must be a mighty rigorous psychological testing regimen these guys undergo before they are handed a whistle.

Countering the predictable backlash in the wake of the exhausting Imus episode, Mark Cuban, the maverick who owns the Mavericks, told The Times: "We're all human. We all have our own prejudice. That's the point of doing the statistical analyses. It bears it out in this application, as in a thousand others."

No wonder Cuban has made a gazillion dollars in business, while Charles Barkley, foremost among the smirking naysayers, specializes in gambling in Las Vegas and in making politically incorrect wisecracks on television, many of them advancing the very biases and stereotypes he can't believe some referees might have stored deep in their craniums.

It is understandable why the N.B.A. is sensitive to the study and to the inevitability of incendiary overstatement, like the one by **Wolfers**, who said, "Basically, it suggests that if you spray-painted one of your starters white, you'd win a few more games." But making the N.B.A. the guinea pig for such a study can also be perceived -- or spun -- as complimentary.

By Stern's own admission, his league is always held to a higher standard on racial and social issues, and has historically bent over backward to meet them. So if I were him and were presented a statistical anomaly no graver than a foul differential of up to 4.5 percent (in favor of whites), I'd say, Is that all?

I'd say: If the officials in our league -- which has been outrageously ahead of the racial curve in all personnel

aspects, ownership included -- produced that number irregularity in a country as politically and socially polarized as this one, imagine what our competitors would score. Imagine some of the numbers the authors of the study would find in corporate workplaces far less enlightened than ours.

The N.B.A. has long been a sports industry leader, but let's not get carried away here, it is no racial utopia. It is the same league that several years ago was guilty of air-brushing Allen Iverson's tattoos from the cover of an in-house magazine, that has alternately embraced and beat down on the hip-hop culture, and that over the years has had to recalibrate marketing strategies, like Dr. J. and Jordan creating in midair, as a predominantly black league catering to a largely white audience.

Black players have long been sensitive to public perceptions and news media coverage of them. In recent years, after failure in the international arena, there is an entirely new front in the never-ending battle against preconceived notions and outright bias.

Remember Jeff Van Gundy's accusations two years ago -- for which Stern fined him \$100,000 -- that officials were targeting the Chinese center Yao Ming? How many critics do you think were waiting for Dirk Nowitzki to come up short last night with Dallas facing elimination at Golden State to recycle the "soft European" chant?

N.B.A. officials may be stalwart professionals, but they miss calls all the time because, first and foremost, they are imperfect people, which should also tell us they are vulnerable to the same hidden prejudices most of us would be embarrassed by if we were put to the Implicit Association Test.

But in the final analysis, my guess is that N.B.A. refs are far more likely to make their most critical judgments -- correctly or not -- based on what they've been conditioned to believe about the player more than the color of his skin. And don't expect the box score to tell you how they overlooked that push-off on the dribble and that extra last step to the rim.

Email: hjaraton@nytimes.com

Document NYTF000020070504e3540006u

Sports

Study commits foul ; Data suggesting refs are biased is incorrect

Mike Wise / The Washington Post

450 words

4 May 2007

The Grand Rapids Press

All Editions

D2

English

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WASHINGTON -- Ask any old-time referee, most of whom are white: The two most reviled players in the history of the NBA by officials were Rick Barry and Christian Laettner. It had nothing to do with their race, which is Caucasian. It had everything to do with the content of their on-court character, which ran between whiny and insufferable.

Rasheed Wallace is well on his way to supplanting both players, but not because he's black; Wallace morphed into a persecuted fool every time he got called for a foul. He dropped f-bombs on the people who blew the whistles. He made himself unlikable and, therefore, more apt to being thrown out of a game.

Referees, like most of us, prefer to be liked. They treat those who publicly disrespect them worse than others, irrespective of their race.

But new, empirical data by an academic research team roundly disputes that logic. Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a graduate economics student at Cornell, have written a paper saying white referees call fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players. They also state that the findings of their research worked the other way, too, but that black officials don't do white players wrong as much.

When you get through the data, this is nothing more than a numbers facade, an extrapolation of facts employed to meet a desired end. At the center of the study is a huge fallacy: that referees want to punish players who don't look like them.

Whether two black officials and one white official refereed a game or whether two white officials and one black official refereed the game does not matter. The study does not specify who made the call. Their data was gleaned from box scores. Specific calls made by specific referees were not used during evidence gathering.

For Wolfer to tell the New York Times, "Basically, it suggests that if you spray-painted one of your starters white, you'd win a few more games" is provocative and definitely sells his work. But it's ultimately hollow, bordering on academic and social irresponsibility. The study was first reported by the Times on Wednesday.

"The major statistic growing out of this issue is the number 10 - - the rating I give **Wolfers** for self-promotion," NBA Commissioner David Stern said Wednesday from his Manhattan office. Stern conducted his own study in March, which actually takes into account which official calls which fouls. Stern maintains there is no racial bias in officiating.

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Sports

Foul! Study on NBA officiating is nonsense

BRYAN BURWELL

759 words

4 May 2007

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Third Edition

D1

English

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Because the subject matter of race in sports and society is so potentially combustible and provocative, most Americans are either too strident or squeamish to engage in any meaningful dialogue about the most important conversation of our generations. The standard conversation is usually delivered in two basic and totally useless methods: with the subtlety of a sledgehammer or with the trepidation of break dancing in a minefield.

Apparently, another popular alternative is high-minded stupidity.

That's the first emotion that hit me when I heard, then read the front-page story in The New York Times about a stuffy academic study that claims NBA referees show racial bias in their officiating. The study claims white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white ones, and that black refs do the same against white players.

"It's stupid," NBA star LeBron James said.

"Out of all the surveys I've heard in my life, this might be the stupidest one I've heard," former NBA legend Charles Barkley told ESPN Radio. "It's irresponsible and asinine."

I couldn't agree more. Allow me to join in on the bashing. I tried wading through the 43-page study and was stunned by any volume of mind-numbing nonsense. What these two rather high-minded fellows did was waste 31 tedious pages worth of scholarly mumbo jumbo and 12 pages of convoluted charts and graphs on a subject that could have been perfectly captured in about three small words.

Garbage. Pure garbage.

In his exhaustive academic study, Penn professor Justin **Wolfers** offers his lofty goal of trying to discover how same-race preference affects every aspect of American life. While the endeavor might have been fueled by the noblest of intentions, the study reduced it to utter silliness by chasing rats in room full of cats when a cheese factory was next door.

This study is just one big blunder and a tremendous disservice to a significant cause. Why in the world would he waste his precious time exploring one of the few arenas in society where they have it right? Why the NBA? Why, when there are far more weighty and relevant arenas and targets on our social landscape (the court system, the law enforcement system, hiring in the work force, admissions policies in higher education, grading and evaluations in the public and private secondary school systems), would **Wolfers** and his graduate assistant Joe Price go after NBA game officials to examine whether they are instigators of overt or subconscious racial bias?

There's one overriding bit of evidence that **Wolfers** and Price obviously ignored or never knew in the first place: I've covered professional basketball off and on for 30 years. Not once in any of those three decades have I heard one player, coach, team or league official ever accuse an NBA referee of being racially biased, and neither did anyone else I talked to among my peers who also are NBA lifers.

What do most pro ball players think are the most popular reasons why the striped shirts do them in? Here's a more accurate sampling of the accusations generally hurled towards the refs:

They're old. They're blind. They're stupid. They're old, blind and stupid. They stink. They really stink. They didn't stink all that much today.

Of course, NBA referees are none of those things. I've covered basketball on every level for 34 years, and no one does it better than NBA refs. Are they perfect? No. No one is. Refs make bad calls. But the trouble with this study is that the professor admits he's not a student of the game. If he was, he'd understand what statistics rarely show about whether a game is being called fairly and accurately.

A bad ref can call a foul that by rule is precise and correct and still be wrong as can be. A good ref can ignore a foul that by rule should be called and that ref got it right. In other words, bad refs can hijack a game and hide behind the rulebook, and there's nothing in all those 43 dull and laborious pages that will reflect that.

Numbers can lie. Statistics can be coerced into saying anything you want them to. I just did a not-so-academic study myself. The results? Hockey refs apparently call more penalties against white players than black ones. Alert the media.

Document SLMO000020070504e354000cu



Sport
Gone Troppo

79 words
5 May 2007
The Courier-Mail
1 - First with the news
127
English
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"We're not calling anyone a racist or a redneck. But we ask: Is there something deep in your brain that when you see contact on the court, does the skin colour of the players involved affect how you interpret the messages your eyes are sending your brain?"

Justin **Wolfers**, a US professor of business and public policy, on a paper he helped write about refs' calls in the NBA

[CML_T-20070505-1-127-754563]

Document COUMAI0020070504e3550005f



Stern criticizes researchers, New York Times over referee study

By BRIAN MAHONEY

AP Basketball Writer

613 words

4 May 2007

11:33 PM

Associated Press Newswires

English

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) - NBA commissioner David Stern criticized a study regarding racial bias among league officials and the New York Times for printing it, saying racism "doesn't exist in the NBA."

Speaking before Friday's Game 6 of a playoff series between Toronto and New Jersey, Stern said of the report: "My major concern about it is that it's wrong."

"This is a bum rap, that's all," Stern said. "This is a bum rap, and if it is going to be laid on us it should be laid on us by basis of some people who are purported to be scholars in a publication that purports to hold us up to a higher standard -- a little bit more should have been done."

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"David Stern is a better business executive than I am. But this is what I've been trained to do."

The NBA did its own study, which it sent to **Wolfers** on Friday afternoon, over a more recent 2 1/2-year span that included which referee made each call.

Stern seemed more annoyed with the Times, saying it "behaved very badly, very badly" and criticizing the timing of its story and saying the experts it interviewed had conflicts of interest.

"When we have gone to the expense of saying you raised a fair subject, let us analyze it ourselves and may we share the data with you and obviously they had a deadline because the information was so fresh it ended in 2003," Stern said. "They had to rush into publication. Why? Because they wanted to get good play on the front page of the New York Times. We're not buying it.

"Am I sensitive to the subject? Yeah. But the New York Times should be held to the standards to which it (pronounces) itself."

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"As long as the assignments of crews to games is random, Justin doesn't have to know the official's (race) in order to know an all-white crew calls less fouls on white players than an all-black crew," said Derek Neal, an economics professor at the University of Chicago who was in the audience for **Wolfers'** presentation.

"It doesn't matter who officiates. You get the same number of fouls called on black players. But if the officials are all black, there are more fouls called on white players. And if the officials are all white, there are less

fouls called on white players."

AP National Writer Nancy Armour in Chicago contributed to this report.

5

Document APRS000020070505e355000bt

The New York Times

Editors' Note
Metropolitan Desk; SECTA
CORRECTION APPENDED

252 words
5 May 2007
The New York Times
Late Edition - Final
2
English
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CORRECTION APPENDED

A front-page article on Wednesday about an academic study that detected a racial bias in the foul calls of referees in the National Basketball Association noted that The New York Times had asked three independent experts to review the study and materials from a subsequent N.B.A. study that detected no bias.

The experts, whose names the authors of the two studies did not learn until after the article was published, all agreed that the study that detected bias was far more sound. That study was conducted by Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics.

After the article was published, The Times learned that one of the three experts, Larry Katz of Harvard University, was the chairman of Mr. **Wolfers**'s doctoral thesis committee, as Mr. **Wolfers** had acknowledged in previous studies. Because of this, Mr. Katz should not have been cited as an independent expert.

An updated version of the **Wolfers**-Price study added acknowledgments for Mr. Katz and a second expert The Times had contacted, David Berri of California State University-Bakersfield. They were thanked for brief "helpful comments" about the paper they made to Mr. **Wolfers** via e-mail messages after reviewing it for The Times. These later comments would have been mentioned in the article if editors had known about them.

CORRECTED BY THE NEW YORK TIMES Sat May 05 2007

Document NYTF000020070505e35500023

The Washington Post

washingtonpost.com

Sports

Stern Blasts Racial Bias Study, Paper's Decision to Publish It

Associated Press

367 words

5 May 2007

The Washington Post

FINAL

E05

English

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* WARNING: The NBA reminded teams in a memo this week that they are not allowed to discourage their players from competing in international competitions, shortly after Manu Ginobili said the Spurs did just that.

Ginobili recently announced that he wouldn't play for Argentina, the defending Olympic champion, in this summer's regional Olympic qualifier in Las Vegas. He wrote on his Web site that San Antonio requested he skip the event, saying that Coach Gregg Popovich gave "rather understandable arguments."

"We told him we didn't want him to go," Popovich said. "Why would we want him to go?"

WP20070505NBAN5

Document WP00000020070505e3550002e

NBA-Stern-Ref-Bias

CP

230 words

4 May 2007

10:10 PM

Broadcast News

English

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(AP)

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Document BNW0000020070505e35500056

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BY BRIAN MAHONEY

AP

609 words

4 May 2007

10:07 PM

The Canadian Press

English

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AP National Writer Nancy Armour in Chicago contributed to this report.

20070504CPCPS1336

Document CPR0000020070505e35500089

SPORTS

NETS, JEFFERSON STEAL FIRST-ROUND SERIES WIN NBA PLAYOFFS ROUNDUP

From wire dispatches

464 words

5 May 2007

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

REGION

C-7

English

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Richard Jefferson saved the New Jersey Nets from another trip to Toronto -- and sent them instead to the second round.

Jefferson made the go-ahead basket with 8.3 seconds left, stole a pass on the next possession, and New Jersey beat the Raptors, 98- 97, last night at Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, N.J., to win this Eastern Conference first-round series, 4-2.

After underachieving for most of the season, the Nets put it together down the stretch and head to Cleveland for Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals tomorrow.

Jason Kidd finished with 18 points, 15 assists and 8 rebounds for the Nets, averaging a triple-double for the series. Jefferson scored 24 points and Vince Carter added 21 despite shooting 6 of 19 from the field.

Chris Bosh had 23 points, 9 assists and 7 rebounds for the Atlantic Division champion Raptors. But Jose Calderon's pass to him was intercepted by Jefferson, sending the Raptors to their ninth consecutive road postseason loss.

After four dismal games in New Jersey this season, Bosh was terrific this time, scoring 13 points in the fourth quarter. He banked in a jumper with 47 seconds left, giving the Raptors a 97-96 lead.

But after a timeout, Jefferson drove into the lane and rose over Bosh for his layup. The Raptors then tried to find Bosh cutting to the basket, but Jefferson came away with Calderon's pass and put the Nets back into the conference semifinals. They lost to Miami in that round last year.

Toronto got inspired efforts from banged-up point guards T.J. Ford and Calderon, who combined for 33 points. But the best point guard on the floor, as usual, was Kidd, who averaged 14 points, 13.2 assists and 10 rebounds to become the first player to average a triple-double for a series since he did it against Boston in the 2002 Eastern Conference final.

Note

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Document PPGZ000020070505e35500052

SPORTS

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From wire dispatches

480 words

5 May 2007

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

REGION

C-7

English

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"We're just a confident group," Jefferson said. "I wouldn't say that we felt we're as good as anybody, we just feel that if we're healthy, we can compete with anyone. That's not saying we can beat anyone, I said we can compete with anyone. That means if we do the things that we need to do, if we execute the way we execute and stay healthy, our record shows where we are and where our place is."

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Document PPGZ000020070505e3550006d

SPORTS

Stern doesn't see things in black and white

IAN O'CONNOR

969 words

5 May 2007

The Record

Early Edition

S01

English

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EAST RUTHERFORD If a legitimate study using conclusive data showed that NBA referees blew one whistle for white players, another whistle for black players, David Stern said he would welcome that study and the important discussion it would inspire.

I don't believe him.

I do believe Stern is basically a fair man, a smart executive and a good commissioner.

I also believe he is a control freak. And if statistics were available that proved otherwise decent, God-fearing people made split-second, pressure-packed decisions based on the color of someone's skin, Stern would rather not know it.

He couldn't control it, that's why. Stern can maintain labor peace in the NBA. He can make his superstars into goodwill ambassadors of his global aims. He can suspend brawling players, disrespectful owners and self-important refs.

But Stern cannot alter human nature. He cannot change the human condition as easily as he can change the zone defense rules.

If a professional official with a pure heart can't help himself or herself from observing a play under the basket and issuing a verdict based on the race of the athletes making or defending that play, what, exactly, is Stern supposed to do about that?

Absolutely nothing. And that worries Stern. That angers him. It's why he put on such a demonstrative show for reporters before Friday's Game 6 of Nets-Raptors at Continental Arena, where two white men and one black man were selected to officiate a game thoroughly dominated by African-American stars.

Stern was red-hot over a published study in The New York Times that concluded NBA refs are seeing black and white in living color. The study was the work of a Wharton School economist, Justin **Wolfers**, and a Cornell grad student, Joseph Price. **Wolfers** and Price analyzed 14 seasons and 600,000 foul calls, using box scores that did not identify which official made what calls.

In short, they concluded that white refs favor white players, and that black refs favor black players to a lesser degree. With black players accounting for 83 percent of the on-court minutes in the chosen time period (1991 through 2004), and with white refs accounting for 68 percent of the assigned crews, that qualifies as a problem.

A big problem.

But to Stern, it qualifies only as "a bum rap." He belittled the study's authors as "so-called scholars," claimed his own mathematicians refuted the report with superior data and committed all sorts of flagrant fouls against The Times.

"The newspaper of the Duke lacrosse players and Judith Miller," Stern said. One of his aides forgot to whisper the words Jayson Blair in his ear.

"They've behaved very badly," Stern said of the newspaper.

I don't know if the **Wolfers**-Price report is accurate. I sure don't know if Stern's hired actuaries are to be believed when they're paid to protect the league's profit margins.

But if seemingly colorblind human beings are wired on a deeply subconscious level to favor those who look like them in a jump- ball situation, I'd like to know it.

And I'd bet Stern wouldn't. Eight years back, while I sat in his Fifth Avenue office, Stern conceded that his marketing plans in the early '80s were compromised by the perception that his league was "too black."

"I'm a big boy," the commissioner said Friday night. "I've been around. I know that if you're African-American, you may get stopped more. You may have trouble getting a cab. Your arrest rates may be interesting to watch.

"But I'm telling you that a study that purports to make that claim for our referees ... just doesn't fly."

Hmmm. Cab drivers and police officers make decisions based on race, yet NBA refs never do?

Just the other night, Dick Bavetta, a white ref, signaled for a double technical foul on Utah's Mehmet Okur, who is white, and Houston's Juwan Howard, who is black. Howard was outraged.

He gave a hard foul on Okur, who rose to his feet and shoved Howard. The Rockets' forward didn't retaliate, but felt Bavetta's wrath, anyway.

In all my years of watching NBA games, this sequence marked the first time I even remotely considered the possibility that a white ref made a subconscious decision to penalize a black player based on the color of that player's skin.

And that thought only passed through my mind at the speed of sound or the speed by which the Dallas Mavericks folded like a lawn chair because of the **Wolfers-Price** study.

Is this good? Bad?

I don't know. I do know that the NBA has provided more opportunity for black executives, coaches and officials than any other major American sport.

I also know that many of its worst moments Kermit Washington punching Rudy Tomjanovich, Latrell Sprewell choking P.J. Carlesimo, Ron Artest inciting a riot - have been charged by a racial undercurrent.

"It's always a fair discussion to talk about race and society," Stern said, "and no one has to lecture the NBA on that subject, because we understand it."

The commissioner understands race, and its permanent place in the daily NBA discourse (see Las Vegas, All-Star game hysteria). But he doesn't understand everything about basic human behavior, if only because nobody does.

Would Stern really want to know if his white refs called a certain foul on Vince Carter that they wouldn't call on Steve Nash?

Not unless he could change it.

The Ian O'Connor Show is every Sunday, 9-10 a.m., on 1050 ESPN Radio

Document REC0000020070505e35500005

Sports

Jefferson propels Nets to series win in six games

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

434 words

5 May 2007

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Third Edition

B16

English

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INTERNATIONAL PLAY - The NBA reminded teams this week they are not allowed to discourage their players from competing in international competitions, shortly after Manu Ginobili said the San Antonio Spurs did just that.

A memo dated May 2 was sent to all NBA clubs. According to a person familiar with the document, it read: "This is a reminder that, under the NBA's agreement with FIBA, NBA teams are required to permit their players to play in certain major national-team competitions, provided that adequate insurance is obtained.

"These include the Olympics, world championships, continental championships (such as the European Championships), and relevant qualifying tournaments."

Ginobili recently announced that he wouldn't play for Argentina in this summer's regional Olympic qualifier. He wrote on his Web site that San Antonio requested he skip the event.

NBA Playoffs

Document SLMO000020070505e3550001j

Sports

Jersey upends Raptors; NBA PLAYOFFS I Jefferson scores key late basket as Nets eliminate Toronto

Associated Press

625 words

5 May 2007

Vancouver Sun

Final

H7

English

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.

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Colour Photo: Lucas Jackson, Reuters / Toronto Raptor Chris Bosh drives to the basket in a loss to New Jersey on Friday. ;

Document VNCS000020070505e35500059

Sports

Jefferson lifts Nets ; Roundup | Forward's late layup and steal earn N.J. a matchup with Cavs

628 words
5 May 2007
The Seattle Times
Fourth
D4
English

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. -- Richard Jefferson's ankle injury was one of the many reasons the New Jersey Nets underachieved this season.

Watching Jefferson rise for the go-ahead basket and leap for the clinching steal was a reminder that he's healthy -- and the Nets look pretty good, too.

Jefferson made a layup with 8.3 seconds left, stole a pass on the next possession, and New Jersey beat the Toronto Raptors 98-97 on Friday night to win the first-round series 4-2.

The Nets won 10 of 13 down the stretch, knocked off the Atlantic Division champions and head to Cleveland to face LeBron James and the Cavaliers in the Eastern Conference semifinals starting Sunday.

And New Jersey, in the second round for the fifth time in six years, believes it is much better than the average No. 6 seed.

"We're just a confident group," Jefferson said. "I wouldn't say that we felt we're as good as anybody, we just feel that if we're healthy, we can compete with anyone. That's not saying we can beat anyone, I said we can compete with anyone. That means if we do the things that we need to do, if we execute the way we execute and stay healthy, our record shows where we are and where our place is."

Jason Kidd finished with 18 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds for the Nets, averaging a triple-double for the series. Jefferson scored 24 points and Vince Carter added 21 despite shooting 6 of 19 from the field.

"R.J. saved us on both ends of the floor," Carter said.

Chris Bosh had 23 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Raptors. But Jose Calderon's pass to him was intercepted by a leaping Jefferson, sending the Raptors to their ninth consecutive road postseason loss.

"We executed the play we wanted," Bosh said. "Richard Jefferson made a super athletic play. If that ball gets over him, we probably win the game."

Stern critical of referee study

Commissioner David Stern criticized a study regarding racial bias among league officials and the New York Times for printing it, saying racism "doesn't exist in the NBA."

Stern said of the report: "My major concern about it is that it's wrong."

"This is a bum rap, that's all," Stern said. "This is a bum rap, and if it is going to be laid on us it should be laid on us by basis of some people who are purported to be scholars in a publication that purports to hold us up to a higher standard -- a little bit more should have been done."

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, found that white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players.

The study, conducted over a 13-year span through 2004, was based on information from publicly available box scores, which show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

The NBA did its own study, which it sent to **Wolfers** on Friday, over a more recent 2-1/2-year span that

included which referee made each call.

Stern seemed more annoyed with the Times, saying it "behaved very badly, very badly."

photo; Caption: Bill Kostroun / The Associated Press : Nets' Richard Jefferson (24) shoots for two of his 24 points against the Raptors on Friday in East Rutherford, N.J. Jefferson also made the winning basket. (0401718217)

Document SETL000020070506e3550001v

SPORTS
Nets bounce Raptors

Associated Press
369 words
5 May 2007
Kitchener-Waterloo Record
Early
E1
English
Copyright (c) 2007 Kitchener-Waterloo Record.

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.

Richard Jefferson saved the Nets from another trip to Toronto -- and sent them instead to the second round.

Jefferson made the go-ahead basket with 8.3 seconds left, stole a pass on the next possession, and New Jersey beat the Raptors 98-97 last night to win the first-round series 4-2.

After underachieving for most of the season, the Nets put it together down the stretch and now head to Cleveland for Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals tomorrow.

Jason Kidd finished with 18 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds for the Nets, averaging a triple-double for the series. Jefferson scored 24 points and Vince Carter added 21 despite shooting 6-of-19 from the field.

Chris Bosh had 23 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Atlantic Division champion Raptors. But Jose Calderon's pass to him was intercepted by Jefferson, sending the Raptors to their ninth straight road post-season loss.

STERN SLAMS STUDY

NBA commissioner David Stern criticized a study regarding racial bias among league officials and the New York Times for printing it, saying racism "doesn't exist in the NBA."

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NEWS; This version of the story ran in the Early Edition.

Document TKWR000020070505e3550002j

TOP STORIES

'NYT' Hit By NBA Chief on 'Bias' Story, Admits Expert Not 'Independent'

E&P Staff and The Associated Press

Online

707 words

5 May 2007

Editor & Publisher

English

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NBA commissioner David Stern criticized a study regarding racial bias among league officials -- and the New York Times for covering it on its front page this week, saying racism "doesn't exist in the NBA."

The Times then ran an editors' note in its Saturday paper, disclosing that one of the "independent" experts it hired to judge the judge had ties to one of the creators of the study.

The paper said it had learned that one of the three experts, Larry Katz of Harvard University, was the chairman of the doctoral thesis committee for one of the study's authors, and "should not have been cited as an independent expert."

Speaking before Friday's Game 6 of a playoff series between Toronto and New Jersey, Stern said of the report: "My major concern about it is that it's wrong."

"This is a bum rap, that's all," Stern said. "This is a bum rap, and if it is going to be laid on us it should be laid on us by basis of some people who are purported to be scholars in a publication that purports to hold us up to a higher standard -- a little bit more should have been done."

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The NBA did its own study, which it sent to **Wolfers** on Friday afternoon, over a more recent 2 1/2-year span that included which referee made each call.

Stern seemed more annoyed with the Times, saying it "behaved very badly, very badly" and criticizing the timing of its story and saying the experts it interviewed had conflicts of interest.

"When we have gone to the expense of saying you raised a fair subject, let us analyze it ourselves and may we share the data with you and obviously they had a deadline because the information was so fresh it ended in 2003," Stern said. "They had to rush into publication. Why? Because they wanted to get good play on the front page of the New York Times. We're not buying it."

"Am I sensitive to the subject? Yeah. But the New York Times should be held to the standards to which it (pronounces) itself."

The Times' editors' note today reads as follows.

*

A front-page article on Wednesday about an academic study that detected a racial bias in the foul calls of referees in the National Basketball Association noted that The New York Times had asked three independent experts to review the study and materials from a subsequent N.B.A. study that detected no bias.

The experts, whose names the authors of the two studies did not learn until after the article was published, all agreed that the study that detected bias was far more sound. That study was conducted by Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics.

After the article was published, The Times learned that one of the three experts, Larry Katz of Harvard University, was the chairman of Mr. **Wolfers**'s doctoral thesis committee, as Mr. **Wolfers** had acknowledged in previous studies. Because of this, Mr. Katz should not have been cited as an independent expert.

An updated version of the **Wolfers**-Price study added acknowledgments for Mr. Katz and a second expert The Times had contacted, David Berri of California State University-Bakersfield. They were thanked for brief "helpful comments" about the paper they made to Mr. **Wolfers** via e-mail messages after reviewing it for The Times. These later comments would have been mentioned in the article if editors had known about them.

1003581404

Document EDPB000020070508e3550002h

SPORTS

JEFFERSON'S SHOT GIVES NETS SERIES

Associated Press

366 words

5 May 2007

Augusta Chronicle

CAROLINA

C05

English

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. - Richard Jefferson saved the Nets from another trip to Toronto - and sent them instead to the second round.

Jefferson made the go-ahead basket with 8.3 seconds left, stole a pass on the next possession, and New Jersey beat the Raptors 98-97 Friday night to win the first-round series 4-2. After underachieving for most of the season, the Nets put it together down the stretch and now head to Cleveland for Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals on Sunday.

Jason Kidd finished with 18 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds for the Nets, averaging a triple-double for the series. Jefferson scored 24 points and Vince Carter added 21 despite shooting 6-of-19 from the field.

Chris Bosh had 23 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Atlantic Division champion Raptors, who lost on the road in the postseason for the ninth time in a row.

STERN SPEAKS OUT: NBA commissioner David Stern criticized a study regarding racial bias among league officials and the New York Times for printing it, saying racism "doesn't exist in the NBA."

Speaking before Friday's Game 6 between Toronto and New Jersey, Stern said of the report: "My major concern about it is that it's wrong."

"This is a bum rap, that's all," Stern said. "This is a bum rap, and if it is going to be laid on us it should be laid on us by basis of some people who are purported to be scholars in a publication that purports to hold us up to a higher standard - a little bit more should have been done."

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The study, conducted over a 13-year span through 2004, was based on information from publicly available box scores, which show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

Document AGCR000020070508e35500052

Sports
Around the NBA

From Our Press Services
From Our Press Services
238 words
5 May 2007
The Commercial Appeal
Final
D3
English

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Stern critical of study citing bias by referees

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The study, conducted over a 13-year span through 2004, was based on information from publicly available box scores, which show only the referees' names and contain no information about which official made a call.

Wolfers presented the study Friday at the annual meeting of the Society of Labor Economists in Chicago.

- From Our Press Services

Document MMPH000020070508e35500034

San Mateo; Sports
Jefferson, Nets moving on up in playoffs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

415 words

5 May 2007

The Oakland Tribune

English

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Richard Jefferson saved the Nets from another trip to Toronto — and sent them instead to the second round.

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Chris Bosh had 23 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Atlantic Division champion Raptors. But Jose Calderon's pass to him was intercepted by Jefferson, sending the Raptors to their ninth straight road postseason loss.

Toronto got inspired efforts from banged-up point guards T.J. Ford and Calderon, who combined for 33 points. But the best point guard on the floor, as usual, was Kidd, who averaged 14 points, 13.2 assists and 10 rebounds to become the first player to average a triple-double for a series since he did it against Boston in the 2002 Eastern Conference finals.

Stern criticizes ref study

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — NBA commissioner David Stern criticized a study regarding racial bias among league officials and the New York Times for printing it, saying racism "doesn't exist in the NBA."

Speaking before Friday's Game 6 of a playoff series between Toronto and New Jersey, Stern said of the report: "My major concern about it is that it's wrong."

"This is a bum rap, that's all," Stern said. "This is a bum rap, and if it is going to be laid on us, it should be laid on us by basis of some people who are purported to be scholars in a publication that purports to hold us up to a higher standard — a little bit more should have been done."

Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics, found that white referees called fouls at a greater rate against black players than against white players.

Document OKLD000020070505e355000oa

SPORTS

On the NBA; Black, white, and shades of gray

David Aldridge; Inquirer Columnist

939 words

6 May 2007

The Philadelphia Inquirer

CITY-D

E11

English

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Certainty is disconcerting.

The true believer, in anything, causes you to reassess your convictions. Are you really sure? Is there no room for doubt?

Justin **Wolfers** is a true believer, as certain as he is of his own name that there is something wrong with NBA officials.

"Ask any expert to review the evidence," the Penn Wharton School business and public-policy professor said by phone Thursday. During a 20-minute conversation, he made the same point over and over: This isn't **Wolfers'** opinion. These are, he said, facts.

Wolfers and his partner, Cornell University doctoral candidate Joseph Price, are publishing a study that purports to prove a consistent pattern of racial bias on the part of NBA referees. **Wolfers** and Price studied box scores from all regular-season NBA games from the 1991-92 season through the 2003-04 season - a period in which there were roughly 600,000 calls made by officials.

Wolfers and Price maintain that their analysis proves that during this period, black players received between 0.12 and 0.21 more fouls per 48 minutes relative to white players when the number of white referees officiating a game increased from zero to three. (All-white crews constituted 30 percent of the crews in the study.)

They also claim that black players scored fewer points and committed more turnovers when playing in games officiated solely by white referees, and that the difference meant that, on average, teams with all-black lineups won around two fewer games per season.

White players also were discriminated against in games officiated by all-black referee crews, **Wolfers** and Price say, but not by as much, and not as often, since all-black crews constituted only 3 percent of officiating crews.

Their findings, they say, indicate unconscious bias on the part of referees; the white officials don't go into the game looking to make calls against black players. **Wolfers** and Price compare the behavior they claim NBA referees exhibit to that of companies that fail to promote or hire more members of minority groups, to judges deciding whom to sentence, and to police officers who decide whom to arrest.

"Theories of discrimination used to be pretty simple," **Wolfers** said. "It used to be one group hated the other group. There was malice. Thankfully, those types of bias have receded. [But] there's an emerging consensus in psychology and law that there may be unconscious forms of bias. We're trying to determine if that's empirically valid. . . . Our expectation was that we weren't going to find anything."

The head of the referees' union, Lamell McMorris, declined to comment Thursday. But the NBA, as you might expect, vehemently disputed the findings, which were first reported last week by the New York Times. The league pointed out that **Wolfers** and Price did not have access to individual referees' calls when perusing the box scores, so they didn't know which official made which call.

By contrast, the league's revised referee-evaluation system has charted each individual call for the last few years. But the league, when asked by **Wolfers** and Price to share that data, refused. Instead, it requested an outside analysis of about 148,000 calls made from the start of the 2004-05 season through January of this year.

You won't be surprised to find out that the league-requested study found no evidence of racial bias among NBA referees.

"Bias is not a fact," NBA general counsel Joel Litvin said by telephone Thursday. "Bias is a conclusion that [**Wolfers**] has drawn from analyses based on flawed data. We never said his data is false. [But] they can't figure out, they have no idea - but we do - as to each individual call, who's making the call, black on black, white on white. . . ."

"To your question, 'Can you definitively say there's no bias in calling?' Yes. We proved it with the data, data that is superior to theirs."

Litvin said that the league provided the Times with the data from its study, but that the data and other explanatory information were ignored.

Players have complained about referees for decades. But almost none have accused them of being covert racists.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," Kobe Bryant told reporters in Los Angeles. "That's reverse racism, probably."

There are other gray areas in this black-and-white story. For example, how did **Wolfers** and Price count players from mixed-race parentage, like Nets guard Jason Kidd? **Wolfers** says researchers looked at pictures of the players and made a determination (the researcher determined Kidd was black), and also used the recollections of an anonymous, retired referee. Players of non-black or non-white heritage, like Yao Ming, were counted as white for purposes of the study.

But how do you account for strategies like deliberate fouling at the end of games? And even if you accept the premise of bias, aren't the beneficiaries of that bias, most of the time, other black players - on the other team? So what would the point of the bias be?

Then again, why wouldn't the league release information that it claims definitively proves its referees are not biased?

For his part, **Wolfers** was unshaken.

"I'm so confident in the results that [you shouldn't] take my word for it," he said. "But certainly don't take their word for it."

Contact staff writer David Aldridge at 215-854-5516 or daldridge@phillynews.com.

Document PHLI000020070506e3560000I

Sports

NBA players scoff at study that finds bias in officiating

By Nancy Armour the associated press

852 words

6 May 2007

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

First Edition

C9

English

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Kobe Bryant says he's never noticed any evidence of racial bias when it comes to NBA officiating.

"I think I've gotten more techs from black refs than white refs," the Los Angeles Lakers star joked Wednesday. "That's reverse racism probably."

Bryant, LeBron James and four other NBA players dismissed an academic study that found evidence of racial bias in referees' calls, saying they've never experienced it.

According to an upcoming paper by a University of Pennsylvania professor and a Cornell graduate student, white referees called fouls against black players at a higher rate than they did against white players.

Their study also found that black officials called fouls on white players more frequently than they did against blacks, but the disparity wasn't as great.

"We obviously discuss officiating and our feelings toward it," said Utah Jazz guard Derek Fisher, president of the NBA players' association. "But I don't ever recall it being a racially motivated type of conversation where we felt like there were certain guys that had it out for me or him or whoever just because of the color of our skin.

"I don't know that I've ever really felt that there was a racial component to officiating."

James put it this way: "It's stupid."

Chicago Bulls veteran forward P.J. Brown said: "Somebody's got too much time on their hands."

That misses the point, said Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School and co-author of the study.

"This is not a view that one set of people hates another set of people. This is implicit, unconscious biases," said **Wolfers**, who conducted the study with Joseph Price, a graduate student in economics at Cornell.

"You see two players (collide) on the floor and you have to call a block or a charge. Does the skin color of the players somehow shape how you interpret the signals your brain gives you?"

Analyzing NBA box scores from a 13-season span running through 2004, the study found that black players received fewer fouls per 48 minutes than white players, 4.33 to 4.97. But it also found that fouls on black players could increase as much as 4.5 percent in that time period "when the number of white referees on a crew went from zero to three."

Though most NBA players are black, less than 40 percent of its officials are black and they are randomly assigned to games in three-person crews.

"I don't think there's any prejudice or racial stereotype," the Bulls' Chris Duhon said. "I think all our officials are great. I don't think any of them are racist in any way. They just call the game. If it's a foul, it's a foul. If it's not, there's no call.

"I don't think it's possible to really be biased in your calls because if (you are), I think it would be way obvious if you're doing that."

Wolfers and Price analyzed officiating crews, based on boxscores, not individual referees. The NBA, after getting a draft copy of the paper last year, did its own study. Using data from November 2004 to January 2007, the league reviewed some 148,000 calls along with which official made each call.

"The fact is there is no evidence of racial bias in foul calls made by NBA officials and that is based on a study conducted by our experts who looked at data that was far more robust and current than the data relied upon by Professor **Wolfers**," said Joel Litvin, president of league and basketball operations.

"The short of it is **Wolfers** and Price only looked at calls made by three-man crews. Our experts were able to analyze calls made by individual referees."

But **Wolfers** said they analyzed calls made by all-white officiating crews and all-black officiating crews, and the results were the same. The study also didn't verify the exact race of players and referees, saying, "We simply noted whether a player or referee appeared black, or not." But **Wolfers** said the sample was large enough so that wouldn't be a factor.

"That's a lot of diagnostic evidence," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "If you have a conclusive evidence you want to come out with, you can almost make statistics prove what you want to prove."

"If you go in with that it's about race, maybe you find the things you're looking for."

Union chief Billy Hunter hasn't read the study, but said he wasn't surprised by its results. There is bias everywhere in society, Hunter said, so why should the NBA be immune?

But Hunter also said he's never gotten any complaints about discrimination.

"No, never heard, never gotten one," he said. "I know (commissioner David Stern) wouldn't tolerate any conscious bias, racist act by a referee or by anybody else."

Document SLMO000020070506e3560000v



Illinois Daybook

By The Associated Press

1,882 words

6 May 2007

07:00 PM

Associated Press Newswires

English

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Assignment Desks, Editors: The following events are listed for your planning purposes. Listing does not indicate AP coverage. Scheduled events are subject to change. Contact numbers are not for publication.

Sunday, May 6

GENERAL EVENTS CHICAGO-METRO:

CHICAGO -- NBA commissioner David Stern and Justin **Wolfers** author of study on racial bias in officiating, and sportscaster Mike North to appear on the Rev. Jesse Jackson's radio show. 7 a.m. Clear Channel studios. 233 N. Michigan Ave. Contact John Mitchell, his personal assistant, 773-255-9067.

CHICAGO -- Chicago Police and the members of the Gold Star Families celebrate St. Jude 75th Anniversary Memorial March. 8 a.m. Starts southbound on Museum Campus Dr. Contact: 312-745-6110.

CHICAGO -- Cardinal George celebrates Mass with Archbishop Pietro Sambi. 9:30 a.m. Holy Name Cathedral, State and Superior. Contact: 312-751-8227.

CHICAGO -- Author and speaker Tenzin Gyatso and the Dalai Lama of Tibet attend two public events. Contact: Jill Evans, 773-327-3830 ext. 104 or 103.

--9:30 a.m. "Eight Verses for Training the Mind." Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Millennium Park, 205 E Randolph Dr.

--1 p.m. "Finding Inner Peace in a World Full of Turmoil." Jay Pritzker Pavillion, Millennium Park.

PALATINE -- Organization of Chinese Americans Inc. celebrate tenth anniversary of of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Commemorative Bookmark "Top Ten," 11 am, Sikh Gurdwara Temple, 1280 Winnetka St. Contact: 312-635-0888.

CHICAGO -- Fieldsfanschicago.org protest and rally in support of Marshall Field's. 1 p.m. Under clock at corner of State & Washington. Contact: 312-927-4424.

CHICAGO -- Mass in honor of the Rev. George Clements, marking his 50th anniversary as a Roman Catholic priest. 3 p.m. Holy Angels Church, 607 E. Oakwood Blvd. Contact: George O'Hare, 630-235-8673.

CHICAGO -- Actor Louis Gossett Jr. is keynote speaker at reception and banquet honoring the Rev. George Clements marking his 50th anniversary as a Roman Catholic priest. 6 p.m. Hilton Hotel, 720 S. Michigan Ave. Contact: George O'Hare, 630-235-8673.

CHICAGO -- Rush University Medical Center, American Heart Association and American Stroke Association news conference on ways blacks can reduce their risk of stroke. 3 p.m. Holy Starlight Missionary Church, 3506 W. 22nd St. Contact: Kim Waterman, 312-942-7820.

CHICAGO -- Annual Cinco De Mayo Parade and Festival. 10 a.m. Douglas Park, 1401 S. Sacramento Ave. Parade begins at noon. Route begins at Damen and Cermak and travels west along Cermak to Marshall Boulevard. Contact: 773-843-9738.

SPORTS:

CHICAGO -- Fidelity Investments and the Chicago Cubs launch the 2007 Inspire the Future Program. 10:30

a.m. Wrigley Field, 1060 W. Addison. Contact: 312-558-1700 or 617-563-6864.

Monday, May 7

CHICAGO MAYOR RICHARD M. DALEY:

CHICAGO -- Mayor Richard M. Daley participates in ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Access Living headquarters. 11:10 a.m. First floor lobby, 115 W. Chicago Ave. Contact: 312-744-3334.

CHICAGO -- Mayor Richard M. Daley participates in signing of Chicago-Busan Korea sister cities agreement. Chicago Cultural Center, Preston Bradley Hall, third floor, 78 E. Washington. Contact: 312-744-3334.

GOVERNMENT STATE:

URBANA -- State Rep. Naomi Jakobsson, D-Urbana, makes monthly coffee shop stop. 9 a.m. Espresso Royale, 1117 W. Oregon St. Contact: 217-373-5000.

DOWNERS GROVE -- U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin D-IL meets with two mothers who suffered from postpartum depression. 10 a.m. Good Samaritan Hospital, 3815 Highland Ave. Contact: John Normoyle, 312-353-4178 or 773-386-6025.

CHICAGO -- ProActive Chicago Teachers & School Employees news conference on school violence. 10 a.m. Hotel Allegro, 171 W. Randolph. Contact: Deborah Lynch, 312-890-7713.

CHICAGO -- United States Postal Service and National Association of Letter Carriers kick off letter carriers food drive. 10 a.m. 433 W. Harrison St. Contact: Mark Reynolds, 312-983-8371 or 312-351-5868.

CHICAGO -- Relatives of two recently killed traffic control aides gather with other public safety workers for demonstration in support of proposal that would stiffen penalties for motorists who fail to obey their instructions. 10:30 a.m. Daley Plaza. Contact: Joanna Misnik 312-981-2411 or 312-339-0806.

GENERAL EVENTS CHICAGO-METRO:

CHICAGO -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns delivers remarks on specialty crops at the Organic Trade Association "All Things Organic" conference and trade show. 9:30 a.m. McCormick Convention Center, 2301 S. Lake Shore Dr. Contact: Keith Williams, 202-720-4623.

CHICAGO -- Coalition delivers message to Gov. Rod Blagojevich about transit. 10 a.m. James R. Thompson Center, Room 2-025 2nd floor, 100 W. Randolph. Contact: Brian Inmus, 312-364-0096 ext. 210.

LISLE -- Morton Arboretum holds news conference on "significant" corporate donation. 10 a.m. Thornhill Education Center, 4100 Illinois Route 53, follow signs to the west side. Contact: Gina Tedesco, 630-725-2103.

CHICAGO -- Deloitte announces mentoring program for CPS students. 10:30 a.m. Deloitte Chicago Office, 1st floor lobby, 111 S. Wacker Dr. Contact: 312-546-3512.

CHICAGO -- Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago opens the doors to its first permanent headquarters. 11 a.m. Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, 115 W. Chicago Ave. Contact: Gary Arnold, 312-425-2199.

CHICAGO -- IDOT officials launch a statewide campaign to urge motorists and bicyclists to share the road for National Bike Month. Noon. James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph St. Contact: Mike Claffey, 312-814-3957.

BROOKFIELD -- Student receives "Extraordinary Student" award from Kemps for volunteer and community service efforts. 1:30 p.m. St. Barbara School, 8900 Windemere Ave. Contact: Katie Dolan, 612-337-0087.

EVANSTON -- Special Olympic Chairman Timothy P. Shriver speaks at Northwestern University. 8 p.m. Ryan Family Auditorium at the Technological Institute, 2145 Sheridan Rd. Contact: Judy Moore, 847-491-4819.

GENERAL EVENTS STATE:

GAYS -- Funeral services for Cole E. Spencer, an Army private killed April 28 in Iraq. 1:30 p.m. Calvary

Baptist Church, 717 Front St. Burial will follow at Greenhill Cemetery on East Water Street in Sullivan. Media is asked to stage on Front Street, south of the church, for the funeral, and in the Sullivan Library parking lot on South Main for the burial. Contact: Moultrie County sheriff's office, 217-728-4386.

SPORTS:

GLENVIEW -- The LaSalle Bank Open hosts annual Media Day. 9:30 a.m. The Glen Club, 2901 West lake Ave. Contact: Marianne Caponi, 312-904-9816.

Tuesday, May 8

GENERAL EVENTS CHICAGO-METRO:

CHICAGO -- High school students face off in cooking competition sponsored by Careers Through Culinary Arts program. 9 a.m. Washburne Culinary Institution, South Shore Cultural Center, 7059 S. South Shore Dr. Contact: Karen Bishop, 312-505-2233.

CHICAGO -- Illinois Racing Board meeting. 10 a.m. 160 N. LaSalle St., Room C-5. Contact: 312-814-2600.

EVANSTON -- Chicago writer Stuart Dybeck lectures and reads from "Pink Ocean." 5:30 p.m. McCormick Tribune Center, 1870 Campus Dr. Contact: Wendy Leopold, 847-491-4890.

CHICAGO -- Chicago Public Schools host public hearings on capitol improvement program. 6 p.m. King College Prep, 4445 S. Drexel Blvd. Contact: 773-553-1624 or 773-553-1620.

GENERAL EVENTS STATE:

ZION -- Wounded Heroes Foundation breaks ground on home for wounded Marine. 10:15 a.m. Shepherds Crossing, 2409 Phillips Dr. Contact: 312-245-0202 ext. 531 or 312-286-1181.

SPRINGFIELD -- Substance abuse treatment advocates unveil report. 10:30 a.m. State Capitol Blue Room. Contact: Sharon Sheridan, 312-573-8223.

Wednesday, May 9

GENERAL EVENT CHICAGO-METRO:

EVANSTON -- Chicago writer Stuart Dybeck lectures and reads from "Pink Ocean." 5 p.m. Harris Hall, 1881 Sheridan Rd. Contact: Wendy Leopold, 847-491-4890.

CHICAGO -- Art history professor Joseph Koerner delivers lecture on Bosch's "The Garden of Earthly Delights." 6 p.m. Art Institute, 111 S. Michigan Ave. Contact: Josh Schonwald, 773-702-6421.

GENERAL EVENTS STATE:

SPRINGFIELD -- People Organized and Working for Electric Relief rally. 11 a.m. State Capitol rotunda. Contact: 618-997-9697.

CHICAGO -- Tiffany & Co. hosts cocktail reception for San Miguel Schools of Chicago to kick off "School of Rock" event. 6:30 p.m. Tiffany & Co., 730 N. Michigan. Contact: 312-944-7500.

Thursday, May 10

GENERAL EVENTS CHICAGO-METRO:

CHICAGO -- Northeastern Illinois University Campus Preview Day. 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Northeastern Illinois University, 5500 N. St. Louis Ave. Contact: Erika Krehbiel, 773-442-4226.

CHICAGO -- The Illinois Sports Facilities Authority hosts "Diamond in the Rough" K-8 grade chess tournament. 10 a.m. U.S. Cellular Field, 333 W. 35th St., award ceremony to crown the champs at 3:30 p.m. Contact: Melissa Robbins, 312-280-7702 or 773,550-8948.

CHICAGO -- Chicago Public Schools hosts public hearing on its capitol improvement program. 6 p.m. Crane Tech Prep High School, 2245 W. Jackson Blvd. Contact: 773-553-1624 or 773-553-1620.

EVANSTON -- Three singers and songwriters host "So You Want to Write a Song." 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Northwestern University, Lutkin Hall, 700 University Place. Contact: Wendy Leopold, 847-491-4890.

SPORTS:

CHICAGO -- Illinois football coach Ron Zook and other Illini coaches appear at the first stop of the 2007 Fighting Illini Meet n' Greet Tour. 7 p.m. U.S. Cellular Field. Contact: Cassie Arner, 217-244-3886

ORLAND PARK -- The Windy City Thunderbolts' second annual FanFest. 6 p.m. Georgios Comfort Inn, 8800 W. 159th St. Contact: Dan Rinder, 708-489-2255.

Friday, May 11

GENERAL EVENTS CHICAGO-METRO:

CHICAGO -- The Alzheimer's Foundation of America brings its Quilt to Remember to Grant Park. 5 p.m., the quilt will be on display through May 13, north rose garden, 337 E. Randolph St. Contact: Emily Carroll, 202-729-4244.

SCHAUMBURG -- Jane Seymour unveils her new home collection at style seminar. 6 p.m. The Great Indoors, Schaumburg, 1321 East Golf Rd. Contact: 847-847-8000.

Saturday, May 12

GENERAL EVENTS CHICAGO-METRO:

EVANSTON -- Northwestern University students to vie for \$25,000 in prizes for the best business startup idea. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Arthur and Gladys Pancoe Northwestern Healthcare Life Sciences Pavilion, 2200 Campus Dr. Contact: Wendy Leopold, 847-491-4890

LOMBARD -- Jane Seymour unveils her new home collection at style seminar for customers. 9:30 a.m. style seminar, The Great Indoors, Lombard, 2860 S. Highland Ave. Contact: 630-873-8000.

Sunday, May 13

GENERAL EVENTS CHICAGO-METRO:

CHICAGO -- Y-Me Mothers Day Race and media preview of the Awareness Garden, before race. 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. preview of garden, 9:15 to 12 p.m. race participants planting flowers. Contact: Lindsay Barrett, 212-337-4579 or 973--580-0793.

GENERAL EVENTS STATE:

CHAMPAIGN -- Jawed Karim, a graduate of the University of Illinois and a co-founder of YouTube, will be the speaker at the university's commencement on. He will speak at the 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. ceremonies at Assembly Hall, 1800 S. First St. Contact: 217-333-1085.

CHAMPAIGN -- The University of Illinois will hold commencement ceremonies at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Assembly Hall, 1800 S. First Street, on campus. The speaker at both will be YouTube co-founder and Illinois graduate Jawed Karim. Contact: Jeff Unger, 217-333-1085.

7

Document APRS000020070506e356000mb

The New York Times

Sports Desk; SECT8
Studying the N.B.A. Studies

381 words
6 May 2007
The New York Times
Late Edition - Final
10
English
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To the Sports Editor:

Re "Study of N.B.A. Sees Racial Bias in Calling Fouls," May 2: First, the paper by Justin **Wolfers** and Joseph Price does not answer the important question: Do blacks draw more fouls because they commit more fouls? The N.B.A.'s reciprocal study gets closer to the answer by determining the race of the officials calling each foul. But a better method would be to look carefully at each game and correlate the fouls that were called and those that were missed, with the race of the players and the officials.

Second, the study has not undergone formal peer review. Until then, experts' arguments are only speculation.

Third, Mark Cuban implies that the **Wolfers**-Price paper verifies his belief that racial bias is real. But even if the paper is statistically rigorous and defensible, does this imply that Cuban can detect a bias as small as 4.5 percent?

Michael H. Clark

Houston

To the Sports Editor:

Perhaps conclusions not discussed would place the studies in perspective. If white referees call more fouls on black players, the same numbers support a conclusion that black referees call fewer fouls on black players.

Either conclusion supports the continued transition of basketball from a game of skill on a wooden court into a rough-and-tumble, ball-palming scrimmage.

Douglas Brian Martin

Santa Monica, Calif.

To the Sports Editor:

When comparing the two studies of foul calling in the N.B.A., it is important to keep in mind that the statistical sensitivity for detecting small effects increases as the size of the data sample increases.

The study by **Wolfers** and Price, which reported detection of a small but statistically significant effect of racial bias on foul calling, was based on data from 13 N.B.A. seasons. The N.B.A.'s study, which did not find a similar trend reaching statistical significance, was based on data from only two and a half seasons.

The large reported difference in the size of data sample of the two studies may have compromised the ability of the N.B.A. study to confirm or refute statistically what **Wolfers** and Price found.

Martin F. Gardiner, Ph.D.

Greenville, R.I.

Document NYTF000020070507e356000i4

SPORTS

Study detailing refs' racial bias goes way off course / Numbers usually don't lie, but they do in this instance

JONATHAN FEIGEN

Staff

1,935 words

6 May 2007

Houston Chronicle

3 STAR ; 0

2

English

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The headline was a grabber. In the newspaper, on the news, all over ESPN. According to a study, there was racial bias in the way NBA games are officiated.

The study concluded that the degree to which black and white players are officiated differently is "large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew."

You can, if you choose to believe the study's statistics, notice a difference. But to see it, you need to look at and accept small fractions and bring absolutely no understanding of how those numbers apply to basketball.

It appears as if no one actually read the study. Slog through all that data, and it is easy to see that the study was full of holes and so lacking in perspective that it seemed as if the analysis was done by two accountants who had no idea what they were talking about.

The NBA quickly pointed out that the information used in the study was derived entirely from box scores so there was no way to know whether the call was made by a white or black official, or for that matter, if the black official agreed or disagreed with the call by the white official. The study based its conclusions on examples in which the crew was predominately or entirely of one race.

The NBA countered that its study looked at calls by each individual official rather than a crew as a whole.

But putting all that aside, the study based its conclusions on its finding that "black players receive about 0.12 to 0.2 more fouls per 48 minutes played when the number of white referees officiating a game increases from zero to three."

So if there is a starter who plays - let's say an average of 32 minutes, according to the study - every 7 1/2 games, then that player will be called for one more foul when the officiating crew is comprised of two or three white officials.

One foul every 7 1/2 games. And that does not even consider if that one extra foul every 7 1/2 games is committed by a black player fouling another black player, making it a little difficult for bias to intrude on judgment. When Utah's Derek Fisher was called for charging on the Rockets' Chuck Hayes, that would fall under the category of a black player committing a foul. But if bias had something to do with the call, how did referee Steve Javie know which way to point?

If anything, the study would seem to show there is insignificant evidence of bias.

(One of the study's authors, Justin **Wolfers** of the Penn Wharton School, stood by his work this weekend. He told the Philadelphia Inquirer that he is as certain as he is of his own name of his findings. "Ask any expert to review the evidence," he told the newspaper.)

When this story broke, no one in basketball seemed to believe a word of it.

While officials often are viewed as the enemies, no one seemed moved to even entertain the notion that there is a bias on the court. Players who never would side with officials consider the study a joke. Players who love to blame officials for anything from a missed free throw to global warming thought it was completely inaccurate.

Of all the places where racial biases exist, the basketball court is home to the fewest in number. That prevailing opinion probably made the study's conclusion, and the headline, so interesting, as an example of

the pervasiveness of bias. But so often, even if the numbers can be trusted, those who are counting them cannot.

Elie makes his mark

Mario Elie looks like the leader in the clubhouse for the Charlotte Bobcats' head-coaching job. Until the Toronto Raptors lock up Sam Mitchell, most jobs, including the one in Charlotte, will remain open.

Elie was one of the first interviews for the Bobcats' job before part owner Michael Jordan headed to the golf course. If Elie gets the job, it will because of a career move he made that until now had not worked out well.

Elie, who played for the Rockets for five seasons in the 1990s, left the bench in San Antonio to work for Golden State under the assumption that if he was to get a head-coaching position, it would much more likely be with a team such as the Warriors rather than the Spurs. He lost his job at Golden State when Don Nelson took over.

Not only did Elie pick up experience with a rebuilding franchise, he also won the blessing of Warriors general manager Rod Higgins, who remains close to Jordan.

And Scott Brooks, another former Rockets guard, could be the last one standing for the Sacramento Kings' job.

Kobe demands action

With a few days of the offseason failing to make him any more at ease with another disappointing season, Lakers guard Kobe Bryant has ordered the Lakers to improve.

Of course, this is often the mistake players and front-office types make after winning a few championships. They forget how tough it is to get that good.

Bryant assumed that the Lakers had built a champion-

ship team and, even without Shaquille O'Neal, would do so again. So how is that going?

"Do something, and do it now," Bryant said after the Lakers were eliminated by Phoenix in the first round of the playoffs. "Personally, for me, it's beyond frustration."

"Three years and still being at ground zero. This summer's a big summer. We have to see what direction we want to take this organization."

By Friday, he had made his demand clear.

"I just told (general manager Mitch Kupchak) this summer's about getting us to an elite level, doing whatever it takes to make it happen," Bryant told the Los Angeles Times. "This is a competitive city. We're used to winning titles, not just winning games and being in the first round."

"That's one of the things when I re-signed here, they promised they would build a contender and build a contender now. I don't want to have to wait any more than I already have."

All of this is shorthand for the Lakers not being willing to trade Andrew Bynum. The Lakers would not include him in a deal for Jason Kidd, who would have given them a much better chance to beat the Suns. They refused to make the deal, believing that Bynum could grow into their second star.

Bryant, however, does not want to wait. The Lakers no doubt are growing impatient, too, but it will take an elite player (Kevin Garnett?) to move the kid center.

Cuban exhibits calm

If there ever was an owner who would seem likely to overreact, it would be Mark Cuban. However, the Mavericks owner does not appear ready to panic after his top-seeded team's flameout against No. 8 Golden State.

He did that once when he decided not to sign point guard Steve Nash. At the time, Nash appeared to be on the wrong side of 30 with a bad back and an inability to defend, as Sacramento's Mike Bibby had just demonstrated.

While the Mavericks have done as well without him as they did with him, that decision is a reminder to not overreact after losing in the first round.

"I've been doing this long enough now that if you lose, you lose," Cuban said. "Whether or not you trust the guys you have, that's the key. I trust Avery (Johnson) and Donnie Nelson without question. I know the character of our players.

"It was an unfortunate matchup, and it didn't turn out the way we wanted. But we move on."

The Mavericks won't sit still, but because of one terrible series at the end of a great season, they won't start over, either.

Itching to coach again

Having sat out most of the past two seasons after stepping down as coach of the Miami Heat, Stan Van Gundy interviewed for the Charlotte job and said he is ready to get back to coaching.

Van Gundy still insists that he chose to leave coaching. Although he still has not commented beyond that about the decision, Heat coach Pat Riley certainly made it easier for him to make that choice.

"My wife and I have talked, and I think it's time to look and see what's out there and just evaluate each situation as it comes up," Van Gundy told the Florida Sun-Sentinel. "I'm starting to get the itch again, yeah. Pat has been very, very good in letting me have the opportunity to talk to people."

Van Gundy is signed as a consultant to the Heat through the 2007-08 season.

"I wasn't forced out," he said. "I'm actually looking forward to a time when I'm allowed to talk about it and not employed by the Heat, so people will know that I have no other reason, nothing keeping me from telling the truth, where they might actually believe what I have to say. Because what I've been saying all along is the truth."

Quote to note

The Mavericks' Dirk Nowitzki, who scored eight points on 2-of-13 shooting, was completely on target after Dallas lost to Golden State 111-86 in Game 6 and was eliminated in the first round of the playoffs:

"I didn't give my teammates anything in a deciding game like this. It's tough. It's so disappointing you can't even describe it. You play your heart out for six or seven months, and we win 67 games and it really means nothing at this point. I feel sorry for our whole organization, the players, the coaches and all the hard work you put in for so long a time. Really if you look at it now, it really means nothing."

...

24 seconds: Technically speaking, rule needs clarity

BACK when the NBA began the season calling technical fouls more strictly, it protested the phrase "no-tolerance rule." The league said the interpretations were part of a "respect-the-game" movement.

But it has become apparent that instead of titles and interpretations, the rules must be made clearer.

The league looked the other way for so long - with commissioner David Stern criticizing those who said things had gotten out of hand - that the adjustment, now that the NBA finally has gotten around to making one, has been painful.

So make it clear: If a player mocks the officials - from sarcastically clapping to, yes, derisively laughing - it's a technical foul.

That is not penalizing natural reactions in an emotional sport, as players complained in November. It actually is pretty clear - if you don't want the "T," don't do it.

The only question will be how many times Golden State's Stephen Jackson will get tossed before the league admits that maybe referee Joey Crawford, while perhaps going too far, was not such a loon after all.

jonathan.feigen@chron.com

Photo: NBA RULES: Golden State's Stephen Jackson and others will have to keep their emotions in check when it comes to interacting with game officials or risk being ejected under the league's "respect the game" movement.

Document HOU0000020070508e35600042

SPORTS

Study detailing referees' racial bias goes way off course / Numbers usually don't lie, but they do in this instance

JONATHAN FEIGEN

Staff

989 words

6 May 2007

Houston Chronicle

4 STAR ; 0

2

English

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jonathan.feigen@chron.com

Document HOU0000020070508e3560006j

NEWS

Corrections

International Herald Tribune

227 words

7 May 2007

International Herald Tribune

1

3

English

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An article Thursday about an academic study that detected a racial bias in the foul calls of referees in the National Basketball Association noted that The New York Times had asked three independent experts to review the study and materials from a subsequent NBA study that detected no bias.

The experts, whose names the authors of the two studies did not learn until after the article was published, agreed that the study that detected bias was far more sound. That study was conducted by Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor of business and public policy at the Wharton School, and Joseph Price, a Cornell graduate student in economics.

After the article was published, The Times learned that one of the three experts, Larry Katz of Harvard University, was the chairman of **Wolfers**'s doctoral thesis committee, as **Wolfers** had acknowledged in previous studies. Because of this, Katz should not have been cited as an independent expert.

An updated version of the **Wolfers**-Price study added acknowledgments for Katz and a second expert The Times had contacted, David Berri of California State University-Bakersfield. They were thanked for brief "helpful comments" about the paper they made to **Wolfers** via e-mail messages after reviewing it for The Times. These later comments would have been mentioned in the article if editors had known about them.

Document INHT000020070507e3570000o

SPORTS

Warriors' Jackson always draws reaction; Teams part with him; teammates have his back

Martin McNeal
675 words
8 May 2007
The Sacramento Bee
METRO FINAL
C2
English
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If those two guys -- **Wolfers** and Price -- who did the recently released study on NBA officiating really wanted to tackle an intriguing subject, they should have spent some time explaining the complex personality of Warriors swingman Stephen Jackson.

Consider that Jackson was ejected from one-third of the Warriors' six first-round playoff games against the Dallas Mavericks, fined by coach Don Nelson in both instances and still played a major, major role in Golden State's upset.

Moreover, much as he has been in four previous NBA stops -- New Jersey, San Antonio, Atlanta and Indiana -- no one loved Jackson more than his teammates.

This is the same guy who basically was available to the Warriors and any other team because Indiana was attempting to remodel its image. That image was shaped largely by two violent incidents in which Jackson was involved -- the 2004 brawl at the Palace of Auburn Hills in which he followed former Pacers teammate Ron Artest into the stands and a melee last fall outside an Indianapolis strip club in which Jackson admitted to firing a gun.

Jackson is the guy you either love or hate or love and hate. He was asked why the people who seem to love him unconditionally are his teammates past or present.

"That's because they know me," Jackson said following the series-clinching Game 6 Thursday, when he made his first seven three-point attempts en route to a game-high 33 points. "They are not reading a newspaper report or hearing somebody else talk about me. They know if I'm with you, then I'm with you, regardless of what (the situation) is."

Jackson spoke of how he didn't feel his ejection in the final seconds of Game 5 was justified. However, in the long term, he said, it didn't really matter.

"They can kick me out of games and they can say whatever they want to say about me," he said, not explaining exactly to whom he was referring, "but they can't say I can't play this game."

Now, "they" might be able to say Jackson can finish playing all of those games, but that's another story. Jackson and his teammate, Del Campo High graduate Matt Barnes, have gone through a little mock pat-down before games. Jackson will put his hands behind his head as if handcuffed, and Barnes pats him down.

Jackson still has a pending case for probation violation, but in the interim, he's showing, once again, he's the guy you can love, hate, love and hate or love to hate. Pick one.

Yo, Geoff, think about it

Kings basketball president Geoff Petrie and right-hand man Wayne Cooper have been on a two-week European scouting trip. That's a long way to go looking for players when you think about how nearby Barnes has been during the past few years and they let him get away.

Sure, Barnes is a much-improved player since being traded to the Philadelphia 76ers in the 2005 Chris Webber deal. But Barnes and players with his skill set and mentality seem to be frowned upon by Petrie, who has established a reputation for finding talent and assembled a team early in this decade that should have been good enough to at least reach the NBA Finals.

Now that Petrie has shown he can find shooter after shooter after shooter, it's time for him to recognize that a team full of shooters is not good enough.

He has to find some guys like Barnes who will do whatever, whenever. Bring a couple of hard-nosed scrappers into the house who will get the job done even if they break a few pieces of furniture along the way.

Hustle, want-to and sheer guts can go a long way in competition.

The Bee's Martin McNeal can be reached at mmcneal@sacbee.com.

MARTY MAC'S WORLD

Document SBEE000020070509e35800013



Column: NBA Gets Race, Workplace Right

By NANCY ARMOUR

AP Sports Columnist

924 words

9 May 2007

07:55 PM

Associated Press Newswires

English

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This is the time of year the NBA hands out kudos to its players for jobs well done. MVP, rookie of the year, defensive team -- more trophies are being passed out than on Oscar night. Now it's the league's turn to get a pat on the back.

Say what you want about the dress code brouhaha or the study that came out last week suggesting racial bias among referees. When it comes to the touchy issues of race and workplace diversity, the NBA gets it. Better than most.

The NBA got an A- when it comes to the number of minorities and women in top jobs, according to the annual Racial and Gender Report Card. When the season began, 40 percent of the NBA's head coaches were black. It has the only black CEOs and presidents in men's pro sports, and three of its 30 teams have black general managers.

It also has the only black majority owner in professional sports in the Charlotte Bobcats' Robert Johnson.

"This is something to celebrate," said Richard Lapchick, director of the University of Central Florida's Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports, which issued the report card Wednesday.

"The NBA has helped to lay out a roadmap for society," Lapchick said. "We're a sports-loving country. If we can model successful behavior in terms of race and gender in the sports world ... my ultimate hope is that it's going to go the next step and impact corporate America and higher education in America."

It was only a few days ago that the NBA was caught up in a firestorm over an academic study that found evidence of racial bias among the league's referees. Players of every color were quick to say refs weren't biased, with Kobe Bryant even joking he might be the victim of reverse discrimination because he'd gotten most of his technicals from black refs.

The NBA has tried to shout down the study, insisting its own analysis of referees' calls showed no evidence of racial bias. Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania and co-author of the study, has been equally insistent that he's right and bias exists.

All of which misses the point.

The study wasn't about fouls or bad refs. Or even about basketball, really. It was about subconscious biases that might exist in our minds, no matter how enlightened we are. It was about the subtle ways we process information, oftentimes without even realizing it.

It was about what might well be the toughest hurdle to overcome if we're ever going to get to the point where the color of skin matters as little as eye color.

"If you think about it, and I do a lot, whether it was Magic announcing he was HIV-positive, we always change the debate," NBA commissioner David Stern said earlier this week. "It gets people to think about that, about whether there is subconscious bias. That's OK."

The NBA and **Wolfers** probably won't ever agree on whose analysis is right. And that's fine. But they can agree on the larger picture: That we're not yet a colorblind society.

No doubt the NBA still has room to improve. According to the report card, the percentage of women in the NBA office dropped for a third year in a row, and the percentage of female team vice presidents went down, too.

But at least it's making an effort. More important, it's getting results.

Despite the "Rooney Rule," there are only six black head coaches among the 32 NFL teams, and three black GMs. Commissioner Bud Selig has applied similar pressure in baseball and yet there are two, count them, two, black managers this season, and only a handful of Hispanics.

The NBA has never needed a "Rooney Rule" or its equivalent. Its history as the trendsetter for racial equality is long and consistent. Although it took until 2007 for two black head coaches to meet in the Super Bowl, Al Attles and K.C. Jones faced each other in the NBA finals way back in 1975.

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And for that it should be applauded.

Nancy Armour is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to her at narmour@ap.org

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When it comes to pro sports being colourblind, NBA does it the best

BY NANCY ARMOUR

AP

928 words

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The Canadian Press

English

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This is the time of year the NBA hands out kudos to its players for jobs well done. MVP, rookie of the year, defensive team _ more trophies are being passed out than on Oscar night.

Now it's the league's turn to get a pat on the back.

Say what you want about the dress code brouhaha or the study that came out last week suggesting racial bias among referees. When it comes to the touchy issues of race and workplace diversity, the NBA gets it. Better than most.

The NBA got an A- when it comes to the number of minorities and women in top jobs, according to the annual Racial and Gender Report Card. When the season began, 40 per cent of the NBA's head coaches were black. It has the only black CEOs and presidents in men's pro sports, and three of its 30 teams have black general managers.

It also has the only black majority owner in professional sports in the Charlotte Bobcats' Robert Johnson.

"This is something to celebrate," said Richard Lapchick, director of the University of Central Florida's Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports, which issued the report card Wednesday.

"The NBA has helped to lay out a roadmap for society," Lapchick said. "We're a sports-loving country. If we can model successful behaviour in terms of race and gender in the sports world ... my ultimate hope is that it's going to go the next step and impact corporate America and higher education in America."

It was only a few days ago that the NBA was caught up in a firestorm over an academic study that found evidence of racial bias among the league's referees. Players of every colour were quick to say refs weren't biased, with Kobe Bryant even joking he might be the victim of reverse discrimination because he'd gotten most of his technicals from black refs.

The NBA has tried to shout down the study, insisting its own analysis of referees' calls showed no evidence of racial bias. Justin **Wolfers**, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania and co-author of the study, has been equally insistent that he's right and bias exists.

All of which misses the point.

The study wasn't about fouls or bad refs. Or even about basketball, really. It was about subconscious biases that might exist in our minds, no matter how enlightened we are. It was about the subtle ways we process information, often without even realizing it.

It was about what might well be the toughest hurdle to overcome if we're ever going to get to the point where the colour of skin matters as little as eye colour.

"If you think about it, and I do a lot, whether it was Magic announcing he was HIV-positive, we always change the debate," NBA commissioner David Stern said earlier this week. "It gets people to think about that, about whether there is subconscious bias. That's OK."

The NBA and **Wolfers** probably won't ever agree on whose analysis is right. And that's fine. But they can agree on the larger picture: That we're not yet a colourblind society.

No doubt the NBA still has room to improve. According to the report card, the percentage of women in the NBA office dropped for a third year in a row, and the percentage of female team vice-presidents went down, too.

But at least it's making an effort. More important, it's getting results.

Despite the ``Rooney Rule," there are only six black head coaches among the 32 NFL teams, and three black GMs. Commissioner Bud Selig has applied similar pressure in baseball and yet there are two, count them, two, black managers this season, and only a handful of Hispanics.

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When it comes to being colorblind, NBA does it the best

Eds: First MOVED for AMs.

By NANCY ARMOUR

AP Sports Columnist

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San Francisco Chronicle

GWEN KNAPP
SPORTS

Discussion of bias needs give and take

Gwen Knapp
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10 May 2007
The San Francisco Chronicle
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The most intense NBA confrontation of the last week had nothing to do with the Warriors or Mark Cuban or even Steve Nash's copiously bleeding nose. It started with a front-page New York Times story about an academic project that found variations in foul calls based on the racial composition of the officiating crew, putting black players at a slight disadvantage.

The geek world was posting up on the jock world, and the elbows started flying furiously.

Indignant sportswriters, players and ex-players across the racial spectrum insisted that they had not seen a hint of bias and that the two Ivy League authors knew nothing about basketball. NBA Commissioner David Stern took to the airwaves and delivered high-brow trash talk. The league released results of a study it had commissioned, which came to the unsurprising conclusion that the academics were wrong.

With few exceptions, pundits latched onto the NBA's version, because it made what, on the surface, appeared to be good arguments. But that was the problem with the entire debate. People refused to look below the surface. In an era when the most pervasive form of bias also might be the least overt, they saw only what was in front of them and didn't question it.

Taking the league's report at face value, they missed some sloppiness in the first sentence of the summary. The NBA said its researchers examined 3,482 regular-season games from the beginning of the 2004-05 season through January 2007. But, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, only 3,144 games took place between those dates.

An NBA spokesman said Wednesday that data from the study had been updated through March 25, but no one had changed the dates on the media release.

As that missed error suggests, most sports commentators don't have enough understanding of statistical analysis to make a responsible call on these two studies. (In good conscience, we should disqualify ourselves as soon as we spot the word "coefficient.") People blew the whistle anyway, responding with gut instinct rather than healthy curiosity.

They relied on their years of experience around the game to reject the suggestion of racial bias. If it existed, they were sure they would have known better than anyone.

Never mind that the academic study covered 13,326 games in 13 seasons, three times what 44-year-old critic Charles Barkley could have seen if he had watched 100 games a year since birth.

Critics also assumed that the differences in foul calls would have been visible to the naked eye, even though the academics said the variation maxed out at 4 percent. That's their absolute worst-case scenario, the difference between all-white and all-black crews, and it's less than a quarter of one foul per player per game. That's microscopic, harder to spot than a needle in 30 haystacks.

Yet the ripple effects of that tiny, unrecognized variance could influence the outcome of a game. The Ivy League authors -- Penn economics professor Justin **Wolfers** and Cornell graduate student Joseph Price -- reported that performance statistics for black players declined in games refereed by predominantly white crews, perhaps a subliminal reaction to a virtually invisible bias.

"There are a lot of things in our lives that are hard to see, yet are real," said Brian Nosek, a University of

Virginia professor of psychology. "Most beliefs about what germs were in the 18th century said, 'That's ridiculous. How could there be these little tiny animals that make us sick?' So hospitals didn't have good hygiene.

"They didn't know it was relevant. It was only through research, through looking at the data over time, that it became clear that when doctors washed their hands, fewer people died."

Nosek doesn't claim to know whether the NBA referees harbor bias. He hasn't read either study. But he does know a lot about the connection between race and snap judgments, like the ones referees make every game. He and two other researchers have developed a test (see box) that measures subconscious preferences, which appear to be shaped by cultural surroundings, rather than what a person wants and tries to believe. The test on race shows that most people demonstrate a strong preference for white people.

So Nosek wasn't surprised about the referees' study that suggested bias. Neither was his younger brother, Kevin, who works on the opposite side of the geek-jock divide. Kevin played basketball at UC Davis and now coaches the Aggies as an assistant. He is intrigued by the academic report even though, like Barkley, his experience doesn't support its findings.

"As a player and coach, I don't think I have ever seen explicitly or felt explicitly any of that stuff, so I would agree with the players and how they're feeling," he said. "I think as players and coaches, we find plenty of reasons to be mad at the refs, and race isn't one of them."

His brother has educated him about subconscious bias, and Kevin finds it compelling. "I think this is something that we should, as a sport and a culture, look into," he said. "We'd be foolish not to look into it and if the findings are accurate, try to learn how to minimize them."

Likewise, the psychology professor has learned about his brother's job and been surprised by the extraordinary depth of social interaction among coaches and players, the level of understanding they have to achieve before a team can thrive. It goes beyond anything he could imagine.

The Nosek brothers sat down to dinner together last week in Davis, right after the New York Times story appeared. They talked about the refereeing study. They listened to each other. They didn't throw elbows. They felt safe discussing the issues.

Whenever he does public presentations, Brian tries to create the same calm for his audience. He reveals that his own test results frequently show a strong own-race, or pro-white, bias.

"People sort of stop and say 'OK, wait a second. If he's saying that he has these biases, then he's probably not accusing me of being a racist,'" Brian Nosek said. "This isn't that standard old 'Who's prejudiced and who's not?'"

Given time to consider their reactions, people can overcome the subconscious. Even better, though subjects can't talk themselves into a less biased test result, they can change the outcome fairly quickly by absorbing images of high-achieving members of groups that often are presented in a negative light. Watching Colin Powell give a speech and video of Leontyne Price singing an aria can shift views enough to register on the test.

Footage of Michael Jordan has a similar effect, Nosek said.

The NBA has long been a leader in shaping perceptions about race, which makes even the finest points of its operation fascinating. But in the discussion it provoked last week, too many people refused to look beyond what they already believed. They chose sides and vented fear and anger in every possible forum. They'd have been so much better off sitting at the Nosek dinner table.-----

Are you biased?

The Implicit Association Test examines reaction time in linking positive and negative words with images of different types of people: young and old, black and white, male and female.

To take a version of the test, go to implicit.harvard.edu. People who see themselves as race-blind tend to be disappointed in the results.

In his book "Blink," Malcolm Gladwell described repeating the test, trying to psych himself out of a mental state that consistently revealed a preference for white faces over black ones. He failed.

The most recent online results of the race test show that only 17 percent of participants have neutral

reactions. A full 70 percent show a preference for white faces.

Black participants contribute substantially to that 70 percent. According to one of the test's creators, University of Virginia professor Brian Nosek, anywhere from 40 to 50 percent of the black respondents have weighed in as pro-white.

E-mail Gwen Knapp at gknapp@sfchronicle.com.

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U. Penn: Study indicates racial bias in NBA refereeing

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U-WIRE-05/11/2007-U. Penn: Study indicates racial bias in NBA refereeing (C) 2007 Daily Pennsylvanian
Via U-WIRE

By Emily Babay, Daily Pennsylvanian (U. Penn)

PHILADELPHIA -- Usually, it's the antics of players like Ron Artest

that draw the ire of the National Basketball Association.

This time, however, the NBA has a slightly less athletic target: A University of Pennsylvania Wharton professor.

Business and Public Policy professor Justin **Wolfers** recently completed a paper with Cornell University graduate student Joseph Price that suggests implicit racial bias exists on the basketball court.

The NBA has responded by questioning the merits of the two scholars' research.

The professors analyzed foul calls for regular-season NBA games from 1991 to 2004, and, according to their research, white referees called fouls at a greater rate for black players than they did for white players.

Wolfers and Price found a less-strong but similar bias of black referees calling fouls more frequently against white players.

The paper claims that "the bias in refereeing is large enough that the probability of a team winning is noticeably affected by the racial composition of the refereeing crew assigned to the game."

Since The New York Times made the study a front-page story on May 2, the NBA has heavily criticized **Wolfers's** research, releasing its own study that the league says reveals no evidence of racial bias in foul-calling.

NBA records specify which referee called each foul -- information the

league used in its study but will not release to the public.

Wolfers, who has read the NBA report, said the league misinterpreted its own study.

"Their data shows they actually agree with me," he said. "Their statistics show there's evidence of own-race base."

NBA officials declined to provide further information for this article.

Wolfers also questioned the authority of NBA officials and players to criticize his work.

"None of these guys called me a bad basketball player," he said. "The called me a bad economist. Quite frankly, I think I'm a terrible basketball player. But I don't know that they're in a position to judge my economics." David Berri, a professor of applied economics at California State University-Bakersfield, wrote in an e-mail that **Wolfers's** analysis was well-tested and reasonable.

"**Wolfers**-Price offered several formulations of their model and kept returning to the same results," he wrote. "This suggests that they are on to something."

Experts cite **Wolfers's** limited data set of information available from box scores as the study's central flaw.

"I think they did good work, but they need to come a little bit closer to telling us more precisely who blew the

whistle," said Earl Smith, a sociology professor at Wake Forest University.

Smith added that, without knowing the race of the referee making the call, there is not enough information to draw definitive conclusions.

And some criticize the NBA for refusing the release the information necessary to do that.

"There are very easy ways of stripping all identification from NBA data and allowing other people to look at it, and they're not doing that," said David Karen, a sociology professor at Bryn Mawr College. "That makes them somewhat suspicious."

Allen Sanderson, a sports economist at the University of Chicago, added that the criticism **Wolfers** faces from the NBA is neither unexpected nor uncommon.

"The NBA, their official stance has to be, 'Of course there's no bias,'" he said, likening the paper to Penn Sociology professor Janice Madden's 2004 study on racial differences in the hiring and firing of NFL coaches -- differences the National Football League denied, even

when confronted with "pretty good evidence."

"The **Wolfers**-Price story is consistent with other stories in professional sports," Sanderson said.

But the implications of **Wolfers**'s study may reach far beyond the basketball court -- a place often noted as an example of objectivity,

with highly trained officials in a public venue.

"People in many domains are involved in the subjective evaluation of others," **Wolfers** said. "It makes you wonder where else [implicit racial bias] is being displayed."

Penn Sociology professor Camille Charles agreed.

"What's important here is that they're showing that, even in this place that we think of in such idealistic terms, as beyond racism, that it does happen here," she said. "This is still an issue that we as a society haven't dealt with."

##30##

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SPORTS

BARRIERS STILL REMAIN IN SPORTS

Shelly Anderson, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

845 words

13 May 2007

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

TWO STAR

C-2

English

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Tuesday is the 60th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's first game in Pittsburgh.

Three generations of sports fans have clicked the turnstiles and the remotes since Major League Baseball's color barrier was broken.

So why are we still defining those involved in major sports by skin color?

Make no mistake. We are doing that, even if we're not always terribly aware we are.

Mike Tomlin isn't just the new Steelers coach. He's the first black head coach in franchise history and one of a few in major college and pro football.

It was the same with Lloyd McClendon, the first black manager of the Pirates, although the owners of the Pirates weren't largely responsible for a league rule about interviewing minority candidates as the Steelers were with the "Rooney rule" in the NFL.

The results of two studies released this month hold a large mirror before us, one with a deep reflection.

An ESPN/ABC News poll looked at Barry Bonds as he closes in on Hank Aaron's all-time home run record.

Questions about Bonds inevitably deal in shades of dislike, based on his personality and suspected use of steroids, but the survey also showed delineation by skin color.

While 52 percent of respondents don't want the San Francisco and former Pirates slugger to break Aaron's record of 755 homers and 37 percent do, there was a larger gap when broken down by race.

Seventy-four percent of black fans in the survey are rooting for Bonds, while only 28 percent of white fans are.

Further, 37 percent of black fans believe Bonds used steroids, compared with 76 percent of white fans. And 46 percent of black fans think Bonds has been treated unfairly -- due to the steroids issue, his race and his personality, in that order -- while 25 percent of white fans think Bonds has been treated unfairly, mostly because of steroids and not at all because of his race.

That's an incredible disparity. We'd like to think as sports fans we're color blind. Perhaps we're just blind to the truth.

The other study, outlined in an academic paper by Penn professor Justin **Wolfers** and Cornell graduate student Joseph Price, showed that in the NBA, white referees called more fouls against black players, and black referees called more fouls against white players. The latter was not as pronounced as the former.

Several prominent NBA players have scoffed at the idea of racial bias among referees, but the authors of the study seem to think it's more a matter of subtle feelings unearthed.

Wolfers called the results evidence of "implicit, unconscious biases," according to the Associated Press.

The NBA did its own study, looking at data from November 2004 to January 2007, just after the 13 years of box scores used in the academics' study, and proclaimed no racial bias.

There was no accounting for who called how many fouls on Yao Ming.

It's possible we're looking too hard for blatant or premeditated forms of racism in sports.

For all the talk of looking under the surface to see the value of people, it could be that a real look there is where we'll find the racism.

Consider John Amaechi, the former Penn State and NBA basketball player.

In a bigoted world, this guy has three strikes against him. He's foreign-born. He's black. He's gay, as he informed the world in a recent book.

Speaking at an annual convention of the Republican Party's largest gay organization earlier this month, Amaechi said he has been shocked at the response to his coming out -- shocked that he hasn't had to duck from waves of verbal darts.

"I underestimated America. I braced myself for the wrath of a nation under God," the English Amaechi said, according to the AP. "I imagined that it would be a fire storm, that it would be some insane number of letters demanding my deportation or my death.

"And, in fact, 95 percent of the correspondence I've had have been overwhelmingly supportive and positive. But I will say that the [other] 5 percent that I've had have been unbelievably, viscerally, frighteningly negative."

No word on whether that 5 percent included any white NBA referees.

Or on how the lack of the anticipated fire storm -- outside of Tim Hardaway's stupid, hate-filled monologue -- affected sales of Amaechi's book.

Perhaps, on the surface, we don't really care if athletes, coaches and management are black, white, Asian, gay, straight or Libertarian, as long as they come across as decent people, although it's telling that gay athletes aren't lining up to go public during their playing days.

In reality, we probably have a long way to go. For now, sports can still be defined as black, white and misread all over.

Shelly Anderson can be reached at shanderson@post-gazette.com or 412- 263-1721.

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SI Players: LIFE ON AND OFF THE FIELD; THE WEEK
For the Record

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Gracious Goodbye

KIM CLIJSTERS was the WTA tour's Miss Congeniality, a perpetually cheery Belgian who will be remembered as much for her affability off the court as her tenacity on it. In recent years Clijsters, who turns 24 next month, suffered several nagging injuries (an ankle sprain, wrist tendinitis, knee strain), and she has long been frustrated by the tour's constant travel and the toll it took on her body. Still, in announcing her retirement last week, Clijsters focused on the bright side. "It has been more than fun, but the rackets are being hung up," she wrote on her website. "To retire before the age of 24, it is very young--but it was so beautiful."

Hemingway famously called retirement "the ugliest word in the language," but Clijsters was determined to leave the game before she turned 25. (She said last year that this season would be her last, but after a straight-set loss to Ukrainian qualifier Julia Vakulenko at a tournament in Warsaw last week she decided she had had enough.) Clijsters was one of the tour's most athletic players--her father was a World Cup soccer player for Belgium, her mother was a top gymnast--and in her prime she was a master of defensive tennis, forcing opponents to hit extra shots and pounding them with deep ground strokes. In 2003 she became the first player to be ranked No. 1 without winning a Grand Slam singles championship, and for years she carried the ignominious title of Best Player to Never Win a Major. After losing her first four Grand Slam finals, Clijsters finally got over the major hump when she dismantled Mary Pierce in the final of the 2005 U.S. Open.

Naturally, Clijsters also won the WTA tour's sportsmanship award a record six times. She has often talked about wanting to soon become a mother, and in July she will marry Brian Lynch, a former Villanova basketball player now playing in Belgium. "I'll remember her as Pocahontas's best friend; she was always level-headed, sensible, friendly and stayed clear of pettiness," says broadcaster Mary Carillo. "She was simply nice to have around."

Dismissed By several NBA players, an academic study that concluded that white referees call fouls on black players at a higher rate than they do white players. The report, written by Justin **Wolfers**, a public policy professor at Penn, and Joseph Price, a Cornell economics graduate student, was based on a study of box scores from 1991 to 2004 (The NBA conducted its own study using data from 2004 to '07 and said it found no evidence of bias.) The authors said the study shows evidence of "implicit, unconscious biases" rather than outright racism. "In my entire career, I never thought about whether or not a black ref or a white ref was out there," says Spurs guard Bruce Bowen (above). "And I never heard anyone else talk about it, either." Added LeBron James, "It's stupid."

Recommended By the California Highway Patrol, that drug charges be brought against Orlando Cepeda. The 69-year-old Hall of Fame first baseman was stopped for speeding near San Francisco on May 1. A CHP officer found marijuana and a white powder in Cepeda's 2001 Lexus. (Authorities said the powder appeared to be cocaine or methamphetamine, but it was still being tested.) The CHP recommended that Cepeda be charged with one felony count of possessing a controlled substance as well as two misdemeanors. As of Monday prosecutors were reviewing the case. Cepeda's lawyer told the AP that Cepeda, who in 1976 served 10 months in a Puerto Rican jail for smuggling marijuana, is innocent.

Undergone By Frank Torre, 75, a kidney transplant. The older brother of Yankees manager Joe Torre had the operation on May 1. During the 1996 World Series, Frank had a heart transplant and watched from the hospital as his brother led the Yankees to the title. Last weekend Frank, who spent seven seasons with the Milwaukee Braves and the Phillies, was moved into intensive care after developing pneumonia. "He's very uncomfortable, but I guess that's not unusual," Joe said after the surgery. "Everything seems to be going well."

Died At age 85, College Football Hall of Famer Alex Agase. An offensive guard and linebacker, Agase (below) was named All-America at two schools; he transferred from Illinois to Purdue after the 1942 season so he could take part in a Marine training program. After World War II--Agase was awarded a Purple Heart

and a Bronze Star for duty in Okinawa--he was named All-America for a third time, in 1946 Following a six-year pro career he took up coaching and led Northwestern to a 6--1 Big Ten record in 1970, when he was named national coach of the year. "Coach Agase impressed me most with his integrity, bluntness, wisdom and courage," said former SI writer Rick Telander, who played under Agase.

Died In his sleep at age 36, former linebacker Kevin Mitchell. A second-round pick out of Syracuse by the 49ers in 1994, Mitchell played 10 seasons for San Francisco, New Orleans and Washington. A preliminary autopsy showed that he died of a heart attack. "Anyone who knew him was touched by his smile, joy for life and love of his family," said Redskins owner Dan Snyder.

Proposed By the NCAA men's basketball rules committee, that the three-point line be moved back one foot, to 20' 9". When the three-pointer was instituted in 1987, teams attempted an average of 9.2 per game. By last year the number had grown to 18.9. The NCAA wants to spread the game and create more space for today's bigger players, but several coaches spoke out against the change, arguing that it will hurt parity. (The change must be ratified by a rules oversight panel later this month.) "One foot will make a huge difference, so you have to find great shooters, not just good shooters," said Duquesne coach Ron Everhart.

Banned By the St. Louis Cardinals, beer in their clubhouse. The move came after the death of pitcher Josh Hancock, who was killed when his car hit a stopped tow truck on a St. Louis interstate. Last week police said that Hancock's blood-alcohol level was 0.157, nearly twice the legal limit, and that he was talking on his cellphone at the time of the accident. (Marijuana and a glass pipe were found in his car, though it has not yet been determined if Hancock had drugs in his system.) "[Hancock's death] is probably a wake-up call to everybody," G.M. Walt Jocketty said. "The one thing [players] have to understand is they're not invincible."

Acknowledged By Italian cyclist Ivan Basso (left), that he is being investigated for doping and is cooperating with authorities. Basso, the reigning Giro d'Italia champion, was included on a list of cyclists who allegedly had contact with a Spanish doctor accused of running a Madrid blood-doping clinic. (The clinic was raided by Spanish police shortly before last year's Tour de France; more than 50 cyclists, including Basso, were banned from the Tour.) Basso was charged with doping by the Italian Olympic Committee last month. He quit the Discovery Channel team last week and said he won't defend his Giro title when the event begins this Saturday.

[BOX]

face=**They Said It**face=-**Bold**;

JOE KENNEDY, A's pitcher and former Devil Ray, explaining to the St. Petersburg Times how it feels to return to Tropicana Field: "I enjoy coming back here, especially when it's only for three days."

[BOX]

face=**Go Figure**face=-**Bold**;

2,276 Career strikeouts for Tennessee's Monica Abbott, who passed Texas' Cat Osterman for the NCAA softball record on Sunday.

19--78 Record of visiting teams in Game 7 of an NBA playoff series after the Jazz beat the Rockets in Houston last Saturday.

49 Pounds shed by Raiders defensive tackle Warren Sapp since the end of last season; he reported to minicamp at 285 pounds.

38 million Viewers who watched the NFL draft on ESPN, ESPN2 or the NFL Network, the most ever for the event.

1 Major leaguers suspended this year for testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs: Tampa Bay pitcher Juan Salas, who was banned on Monday.

.271 Batting average of Indians outfielder Trot Nixon entering play Sunday.

.338 Nixon's average after Monday's game; Nixon had eight hits--including his first career five-hit game--in two games against Baltimore.

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Jimmy Johnson was excused from jury duty because he had made plans to go fishing with Bill Parcells.

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BECHTEL | | STEPHEN CANNELLA |

[GREG NELSON (BOWEN)]; PHOTO | | [NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC MEDIA SERVICES
(AGASE)]; PHOTO | | [BOB MARTIN (CLIJSTERS)]; TWO PHOTOS | | [DAVID
GONZALES/STANFORD ATHLETICS (PIC THIS)]; PICTURE THIS MAY 4 Stanford beats UC Davis in the
women's rugby national semifinal.; PHOTO | | [MAURIZIO BRAMBATTI/EPA (BASSO)]; PHOTO | |
[MORRY GASH/AP (KENNEDY)]; PHOTO |

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