



CALIFORNIA SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR 2018 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s) David B. Rooney	Project Number 38271
Project Title The Influence of Athletes' Assumed Race on Perceptions of Potential Success	
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>Objectives/Goals The objective of this study was to determine if a high school athlete's assumed race, using name as a proxy for race, would influence subjects' perceptions of his potential success in college and professional sports.</p> <p>Methods/Materials Two online surveys were distributed to adult subjects. Each survey had two stories about high school athletes. After reading the stories, subjects were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the athlete would be recruited to and succeed in college and professional sports. In Survey A, the first story featured a talented high school basketball player named Jake (assumed to be White), and the second story featured an average high school football player named DeShawn (assumed to be Black). In Survey B, the first story featured a talented high school basketball player named DeShawn, and the second story featured an average high school football player named Jake.</p> <p>Results In 6 out of 8 scenarios there was a difference in the percent of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed about which athlete would be successful. Overall respondents had more confidence in DeShawn's potential to succeed in athletics than Jake's.</p> <p>Conclusions/Discussion This study confirmed past research showing that Black individuals are perceived to be more likely to succeed in sports than White individuals. This research showed that this is true even when race is not explicitly stated. Although the stereotype of Black individuals being more athletic may seem positive, all stereotypes have negative impacts. Interventions are needed to make people aware of their biases and to educate them about the harmful effects of these biases.</p>	
Summary Statement I showed that Black athletes are perceived as more likely to succeed than White athletes when names are used as a proxy for race.	
Help Received I received help in designing my surveys and analyzing data from Corinne McDaniels, PhD, MPH, CHES, Director of the Institute for Public Health, San Diego State University	