

# Policy Through the Life of Arthur Ashe: Historical and Contemporary Analysis of Racially Discriminatory Policy in U.S. Athletics



Capstone Site: The Arthur Ashe Oral History Project, The Arthur Ashe Legacy Fund at The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in partnership with Virginia Interscholastic Association Heritage Association (VIAHA)

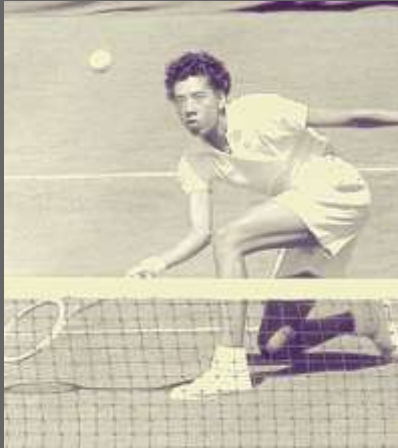
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Teacher: Dr. Milondra Coleman, John Marshall High School

# Problem Statement

Black tennis players have faced and continue to face racial discrimination which may contribute to mental health challenges



Althea Gibson: first African-American tennis star, male or female, to break the color barrier in the virtually all-white, highly privileged professional tennis world.

- 1956: First Black person to win the French championship (today's French Open).
- 1957: She won Wimbledon and U.S. National (today's U.S. Open) championships.

Source: <https://www.workers.org/2015/09/21897/#>

Source: <https://insucurrent.nova.edu/2014/02/25/female-black-athletes-who-made-history/>

# Policy Context: History of Racial Discrimination In Sports

- Arthur Ashe was born in Richmond, Virginia on July 10, 1943.
- Born in segregation-era Richmond, Arthur Ashe's experiences navigating racial discrimination in sports motivated him to become an activist later in his life.



# Policy Context: Brook Field Park



Althea Gibson and Dr. Robert Johnson  
(Photo courtesy Lange Johnson)



Arthur Ashe and Coach Dr. Robert Walter Johnson  
(Photo courtesy Lange Johnson)

# Policy Context: Byrd Park and the Virginia Interscholastic Association (VIA)



Tom Chewing



Byrd Park 1952

Source: Oral History Interviews with Tom Chewing (Ashe Oral History Project) and Lucious Edwards (John Marshall Capstone Team)

Source: <https://arthurashe.ucla.edu/2020/07/02/tom-chewing-and-segregation/>

Source: [https://richmond.com/from-the-archives/article\\_a093bb39-9257-5531-913d-5f15e13d0934.html](https://richmond.com/from-the-archives/article_a093bb39-9257-5531-913d-5f15e13d0934.html)

# Policy Formation: The Country Club of Virginia (CCV)



Source: New Member Changes the History of Elite Richmond Club's Course; Arthur Ashe: A Life

Country Club of Virginia White Tennis Players: Source: [https://richmond.com/from-the-archives/from-the-archives-country-club-of-virginia/collection\\_68da034e-0896-11e6-b676-71580b0cbde1.html](https://richmond.com/from-the-archives/from-the-archives-country-club-of-virginia/collection_68da034e-0896-11e6-b676-71580b0cbde1.html)

Source (CCV): <https://www.facebook.com/The-Country-Club-of-Virginia-James-River-Clubhouse-186326574762998/>

# Policy Formation: Transitioning from Historical to Contemporary Analysis



# Policy Formation: An Example of Racial Discrimination

## Venus and Serena Williams



- Targets of outrageous racist and sexist comments
- Compared to animals
- Called the N-Word
- Mocked for body type

Source: Despite decades of racist and sexist attacks, Serena Williams keeps winning

Source: <https://www.workers.org/2015/09/21897/#>

Source: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12552-021-09334-3>



# Policy Analysis: Demographics and The Next Generation of Tennis Players

- Social Forces
- Systemic Barriers
- United States Tennis Association Statistics: The sport of tennis comprised of 77% White, 9% Black, and 14% Hispanic.
- Underrepresented among Black adolescents tennis participants
- Black vs. White adolescents likelihood of playing tennis

# Policy Analysis

## Naomi Osaka: Black Lives Matter (BLM) & Mental Health

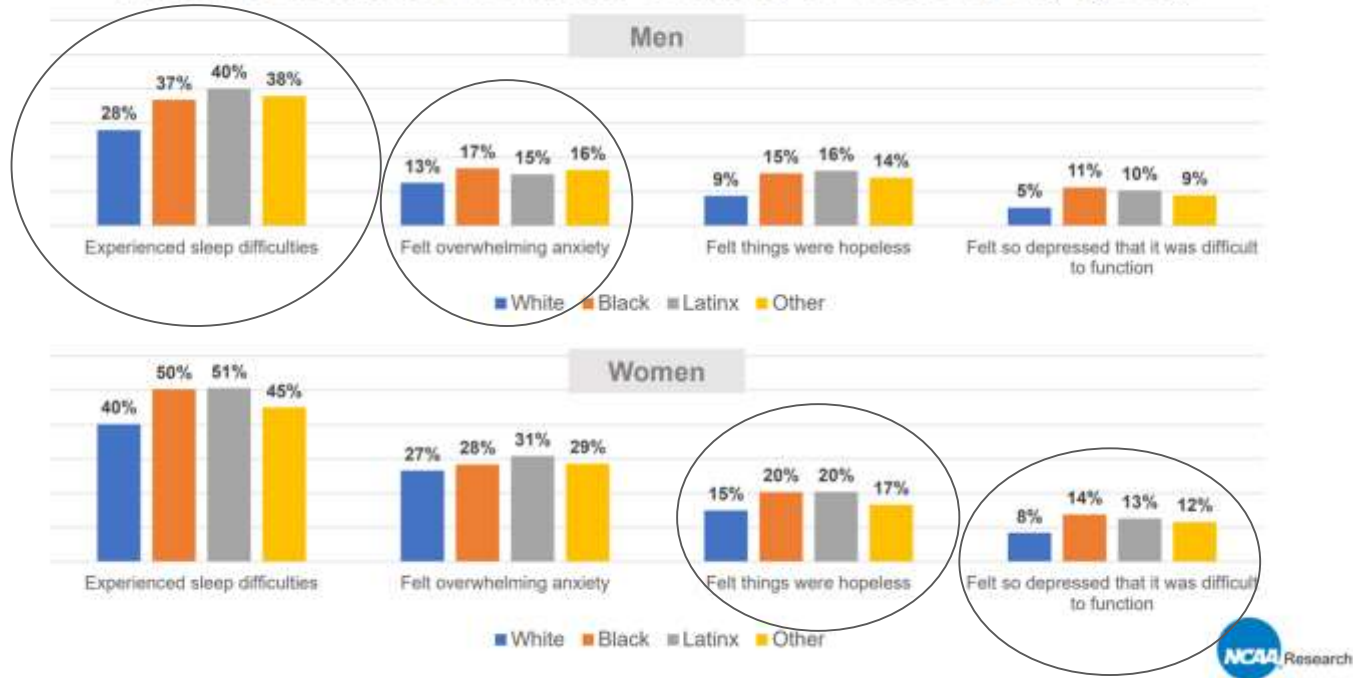


Source: <https://time.com/6077128/naomi-osaka-essay-tokyo-olympics/>

Source: <https://www.nst.com.my/sports/tennis/2018/09/409767/naomi-osaka-wins-us-open-after-beating-serena>

# Policy Analysis: Mental Health Challenges During COVID

**Mental Health Concerns During COVID-19 Pandemic**  
 (Percent of Participants Who Endorsed "Constantly" or "Most Every Day" by Race)



# Policy Suggestions from Black Student Athlete Interviews

**STIGMA:** Quote from interviewee: “I guess like players try to hide it because they always want to show the coach they are here to go and for them, so like they probably don’t speak on it as much because of that. So, they keep it into their self.”

**TOUGHNESS:** Quote from interviewee: “It’s about toughness, man, it’s about, you gotta, I feel like some people, some people get so used to living the lifestyle of being a tough guy that even when they are not trying to be, they are. You know? So, some people it’s just they pride. They can’t let nobody see you down. So, you don’t really want to go talk to nobody about nothing like that because you don’t want anybody to see you down.”

**SILENCE:** Quote from interviewee: “I feel like they know, they know it could play a big factor if it ever gets to that point, but, you know realistically we don’t talk about mental health.”

Source: <https://athleticdirector.uconn.edu/articles/black-fb-student-athletes-perceived-barriers-to-seeking-mental-health-services/>

# Recommendations

- Addressing the Mental Health of Athletes
- Colleges and Universities
- Athletic Departments



Coco Gauff Advances to 2022 French Open Finals



Source: <https://athleticdirector.com/articles/black-fb-student-athletes-perceived-barriers-to-seeking-mental-health-services/>

THANKS  
FOR

IN FOCUS 'A blessing and a curse'



LISTENING



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Details the history of Brook Field park, a segregated park for which Arthur Ashe's father was a supervisor and onsite caretaker. The Ashe family lived on the park grounds and it was where Ashe first learned to play tennis.

Harris, J.F. (1992, April 27). New member changes the history of elite Richmond club's course. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1992/04/27/new-member-changes-the-history-of-elite-richmond-clubs-course/5b6368ce-16e2-467e-a0a6-708dfbecade/>

Provides a history of the Country Club of Virginia, an institution which did not accept its first Black member until 1992. For context, this is the year before Arthur Ashe passed away.

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Describes an incident at Indian Wells Tournament in which Serena was severely heckled and called the N-word as well as histories of racially stereotyping Serena, including sexualizing her body.
- Held, A. (2019, February 25). Controversial Serena Williams cartoon ruled 'Non-Racist' by Australia's Press Council. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/25/697672690/controversial-serena-cartoon-ruled-non-racist-by-australia-s-governing-press-bod>  
Depicts political cartoon that many criticized as racially stereotyping Serena as an “angry Black woman” while also white-washing Naomi Osaka by making her appear as if she is blonde.
- BBC. (2019, February 25). Serena Williams: Cartoon accused of racism cleared by press watchdog. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-47352854>  
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Osaka, Naomi (2021, July 18). It's okay to not be okay. Time. <https://time.com/6077128/naomi-osaka-essay-tokyo-olympics/>  
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