Beyond the Podium Protest:
Race, Gender, and the Politics of Pleasure at the 1968 Olympics

Cleo Boyd

June 1, 2022
University of Virginia, Corcoran Department of History

Introduction:

Dusk had fallen on the Olympic stadium in Mexico City by the time the medal winners in the Men's 200 meter dash approached the victory stand. The race, which had taken place earlier that evening on October 16, 1968, had been thrilling. In front of 48,000 spectators Tommie Smith of the United States won the event in "spectacular" fashion. He surprised and delighted the crowd when he took the lead with 50 meters left in the race. With "giant even strides," Smith gapped the rest of the field so smoothly and decisively that he was able to run the final meters of the homestretch with his arms raised in triumph, savoring his victory. A "jubilant smile" broke the concentration on his face as he appeared to float effortlessly across the finish line. Smith's "stirring performance" had taken him through 200 meters in world record time ahead of his teammate, John Carlos, who had finished in third place after being passed by Peter Norman of Australia just before the finish line. It was an extraordinary race. But Smith's victory was quickly overshadowed by the awards ceremony that followed. Indeed, the "single and singularly powerful image" of two Black American athletes--Smith and Carlos--poised on the Olympic podium with their heads bowed and black gloved fists raised defiantly in the air, has come to both define and transcend the 1968 Games.[1]

When Smith, Carlos, and Norman re-entered the "brilliantly lighted Olympic Stadium" to accept their medals, all three men were wearing white badges which read Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR). These badges signaled their support for the movement of Black male

[1] George Strickler, "SMITH AND SEAGREN WIN GOLD MEDALS: WORLD TRACK MARKS FALL IN 3 EVENTS AT OLYMPICS TOMMIE RACES 200 METERS IN:19.8 TWO AMERICANS WIN GOLD MEDALS IN TRACK TOMMIE RUNS 200 IN:19.8 WITH MUSCLE PULL." *Chicago Tribune*. Oct 17, 1968; For video footage of the race see Jim Muchmore,"Tommie Smith - Men's 200m (WR) - 1968 Olympics." *YouTube* video, 0:58. August 28, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cI8KVFHkCzU; For more video footage and Smith's memories of the race see Team USA, "Freedom for Gold - Gold Medal Moments: Tommie Smith." *YouTube* video, 2:50. July 30, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kvn6txTn1Tg&list=RDfEg3uNqsTYQ&index=15 Douglas Hartmann, *Race Culture and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and their Aftermath,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), xiv; "2 Accept Medals Wearing Black Gloves," *New York Times*, Oct 17, 1968.

athletes and their supporters in the United States who had spent the year prior to the 1968 Games organizing around demands for domestic and global racial justice.[2] On the podium, wearing their badges, the men formed a picture of interracial, international solidarity which subverted the nationalism of the awards ceremony and appropriately represented the spirit of the OPHR.[3] After receiving their medals the men turned to face the American flag which stood "in bold relief against a deep blue background of the Mexican sky." As the Star-Spangled Banner rang out across the stadium both Smith and Carlos bowed their heads and raised black gloved fists into the air.[4] According to one reporter the stadium "rocked with boos and cat-calls" as the men, unswayed, held their pose for the entirety of the national anthem.[5]

In the days following the protest, Smith and Carlos were met with understanding and support from many of their teammates and other athletes in the Olympic Village.[6] However, many other observers understood their protest as a "childish" insertion of politics where they did not belong and believed they had "marred what the entire sports world regard[ed] as one of history's most solemn of all athletic rituals." [7] Similarly, both the International Olympic

---

[2] The demands of the OPHR ranged from desegregation of athletic facilities domestically to banning South Africa from the Olympic Games while it remained an apartheid state.

[3] The OPHR embraced interracial and international coalitions. For instance, in the lead up to the 1968 Olympics, the group worked with the all white men's rowing team from Harvard University, they released a statement in support of a student group from Mexico City University, which was planning a demonstration at an Olympic site, and they remained attentive to the human rights violations in South Africa and Rhodesia.

[4] Sam Lacy, "Lacy Hits 'Protest' at Olympics," *Afro-American*, Oct 19, 1968; Strickler, "SMITH AND SEAGREN WIN GOLD MEDALS."

[5] Shatner Method. "Black Power Salute Rocks 1968 Olympics - ABC News - October 17, 1968." *YouTube* video, 3:30. November 13, 2018 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZttN9hPvx4; Will Grimsley, "Black Athletes Protest at Games in Name of Dignity, Justice and Humanity," 1968, quoted in Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete,* 50th Anniversary ed. (Urbana, Chicago, Springfeild: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 110.

[6] Wyomia Tyus and Elizabeth Terzakis, *Tigerbelle: The Wyomia Tyus Story,* (Brooklyn: Akashic Books, 2018),172-82; "U.S. women dedicate victory to smith, carlos," *New York Time,* Oct 21, 1968; 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports. Asked to reflect on the podium protest, many of the athletes who were on the track and field team at these games and witnessed the protest first hand remember there being a widespread feeling of support for Smith and Carlos among other athletes. A few athletes accuse the press of having turned the podium protest into a bigger (and more negative) story than had been on the ground in the Olympic Village.

[7] Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete,* 110-112; Lacy, "Lacy Hits 'Protest' at Olympics."; "Racial Displays at the Olympics" LA Times, Oct 24, 1968; "SILENT PROTEST AT OLYMPICS" *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1968.

Committee and U.S. Olympic Committee claimed to have been "disturbed" by their demonstration saying that it had been "unbecoming to the Olympic ideal." The U.S. Olympic Committee responded by suspending Smith and Carlos from the Olympic team and allegedly giving them "48 hours to get out of Mexico."[8]

The podium protest has become far less controversial over the more than 50 years that have passed since the 1968 Games.[9] Indeed, the action and the organization which inspired it are widely celebrated today, and the image of Smith and Carlos with their fists raised on the Olympic podium has become an enduring symbol of effective non-violent protest. The striking photograph of these men has been reproduced in a variety of contexts and its meanings and significance have been explored at length by scholars, journalists, and sports fans alike.[10] Through this process of celebration the podium protest has become iconic, dominating historical memory of the 1968 Olympics and serving as the main reference point for subsequent instantiations of athlete-activism.

Of course, both the podium protest and the movement out of which it grew deserve the attention they have received, and the courageous and incisive critiques of U.S. and global racism that members of the OPHR articulated have rightly been praised. However, narrow and exclusively celebratory focus on Smith, Carlos, and the OPHR has not only prevented other stories from being told, it has also meant that the limitations and weaknesses of their politics

[8] "Two negro athletes banished: Olympic officials expel 2 U.S. stars," *The Washington Post,* Oct 19, 1968 (accessed March 16, 2021); Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 86.

[9] However, while this particular protest from 1968 has come to be widely celebrated, new athlete-activism continues to be seen as controversial. For instance, in May, 2021 the International Olympic Committee announced that athletes were banned from wearing apparel with the slogan "Black Lives Matter" while competing at the Tokyo Olympics and that athletes who raise a fist or kneel during the playing of the national anthem will be punished. As justification they cited their own rule which says: "no kind of demonstration of political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas."

[10] Hartmann, *Race Culture and the Revolt of the Black Athlete,* 7-10. Hartmann traces the reproduction of the podium protest image from high school history textbooks, to posters, and T-shirts as well as books and films.

have not been fully explored, and that the multiple and varied ways in which sport operated as a terrain of struggle in this moment have not been considered.

The ideas and experiences of Black female athletes in particular have been continually overshadowed in both scholarly and popular historical accounts of the 1968 Games which tend to focus on the exclusively male OPHR.[11] Even when the problematic gender politics and practices of the organization have been acknowledged, the marginalization of Black women has inadvertently been reproduced in accounts which continue to center and prioritize the ideas of experiences of Black male athletes.[12] Where Black female athletes do appear in historical accounts of the 1968 Olympics, they tend to be depicted as less politically conscious and active than their male counterparts because they did not use sport as a "platform" on which to "speak out" as visibly or in the same ways as men in the OPHR. Further, some scholars have zeroed in on the performances of femininity that Black female athletes engaged in during this period (such as showing deference to male coaches or wearing makeup), suggesting that they provide evidence of their assimilationist or accommodationist attitudes.[13] The problem with this view is that it fails to consider the ideas and actions of Black women athletes on their own terms. Moreover, it fails to account for the way that resistance struggles are not always manifest in grand political gestures or contained in explicitly political organizations, but often play out in

[11] While this essay will focus on Black women athletes from the United States, other groups have also been marginalized in historical accounts and public memory of the Games. Most notably, the Mexican student protestors who used Mexico City's position in the global spotlight as Olympic host city to draw attention to their demands for political change and their opposition to the government's use of public funding for the building of Olympic infrastructure. Just 10 days before the Olympic opening ceremonies up to 3,000 of these students were murdered by government troops in what has become known as the Tlatelolco massacre.

[12] Some of these accounts include: Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete,* xxi-xxii; John Carlos, Dave Zirin, *The John Carlos Story*, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013), xviii; David K. Wiggins, *Glory Bound*: *Black Athletes in White America,* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997); Douglas Hartmann, *Race Culture and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and their Aftermath,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); Simon Henderson, *Sidelined: How American Sports Challenged the Black Freedom Struggle,* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013).

[13] Jeniffer H. Lansbury, *A Spectacular Leap: Black Women Athletes in 20th Century America,* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2014), 168-189. Cat M. Arial, *Passing the Baton: Black Women Track Stars and American Identity*, (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 10..

everyday life as people negotiate and push back against forces which they find constraining or oppressive.

Accounting for the rebellious behavior of Black female athletes in this period means recognizing that, as historian Robin D.G. Kelley has pointed out, "[p]olitics is not separate from lived experience or the imaginary world of what is possible." Rather, the political "comprises the many battles to roll back constraints and exercise some power over, or create some space within the institutions and social relationships that dominate our lives."[14] It also requires a deeper understanding of the potential of sport to function, like other cultural spaces, as a site in which precisely these types of "battles" and contests over power can take place, and in which "people can change and struggle" as well as imagine and act out more free and enjoyable ways of being in the world.[15]

Centering Black women athletes at the 1968 Olympics allows this more expansive politics of sport to be considered. By unsettling the iconic Smith-Carlos podium protest and bringing other memories of the 1968 Games into view, this paper looks beyond the potential of sport to be used as a "platform" and focuses instead on its ability to function as a site of cultural rupture and liberatory possibility.

Through sport, Black women formed meaningful relationships with athletes from around the world. They cultivated and enjoyed their own physical power, took pride and pleasure in their own bodies, and reveled in the freedom of movement that sport afforded them. From the perspective of Black women athletes who competed at the 1968 Olympic Games, sport appears as a contradictory space in which racism and sexism are perpetuated, while at the same time new

[14] Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture Politics and the Black Working Class,* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 9-10.
[15] Stuart Hall, *Cultural Studies 1983 A Theoretical History,* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 190.

enjoyable and empowering subjectivities and solidarities are constructed. Black women's experiences of sport in 1968 hint at the radical potential of physical culture to disrupt cultural norms as well as to provide a life-affirming space in which to pursue fun, friendship, and self-actualization. This work therefore argues that it was not only masculinist politics that limited the project of Black male athlete-activists in this period, but a broader failure to appreciate the social and political significance of the *pleasures* as well as the problems of sport.

1. "They can't talk about history unless they speak my name:"[16]

As twilight approached on the evening of October 15, 1968, the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City was packed with "a rain-soaked crowd of 55,000."[17] It had stopped raining but the sky was gray and threatening further downpour as the finalists in the Women's 100 meter dash prepared for competition. Despite the weather, the crowd was enthusiastic. In the stands, near the start line where the women's race was about to begin, there were spectators "dancing and cheering and yelling...and having fun" while the athletes nervously moved through their pre-race warmups. As most of the women paced around grimly, apparently absorbed in the task ahead of them, one athlete appeared to be interacting with the raucous crowd. Wyomia Tyus, the reigning 100 meter Olympic champion from the United States, was standing near her starting blocks, dancing.[18]

Tyus was one of thirteen Black women from the United States who had qualified for the 1968 Olympics in track and field, one of three Black women to have qualified for the 100m final, and one of four Black women on the 4x100m relay team that would go on to win gold at these

[16] Wyomia Tyus quoted in Greg Milam et al. "Wyomia Tyus: The Story History Forgot," https://www.skysports.com/olympics/story-telling/15234/12360509/wyomia-tyus-first-back-to-back-olympic-100m-champion-on-recognition-protesting-and-having-no-regrets.
[17] Neil Amdur "Oerter Takes Record 4th Straight Olympic Gold by Winning Discus" *New York Times*, Oct 16, 1968; According to the Washington Post there was only a crowd of 40,000.
[18]Wyomia Tyus and Elizabeth Terzakis, *Tigerbelle: The Wyomia Tyus Story,* (Brooklyn: Akashic Books, 2018), 163.

Games.[19] Though remarkable, these statistics fit into a decades long tradition of Black female excellence in track and field (which was, in effect, the only Olympic sport open to Black women in this period).[20] This tradition reached back to the Los Angeles Olympics in 1932 when Tidye Pickett and Louise Stokes became the first Black American women to qualify for the U.S. Olympic team. Though they were denied the chance to compete at the Games after being replaced on the team by two white women, they qualified again in 1936 and competed in the Berlin Olympics.[21]

Pickett and Stokes were participating in a moment when women's track and field was widely popular in the United States, with meets attracting huge numbers of participants and spectators. In 1930, for instance, a meet held in Chicago attracted 1,500 female athletes and a crowd of 10,000 spectators. This popular enthusiasm--which crossed the color line, and encompassed many immigrant communities--had started gathering in the 1920s as opportunities to participate in sport expanded beyond "the rarefied atmosphere of amateur collegiate and club athletics." According to historian Susan K. Cahn, workers' and immigrant track clubs proliferated in this period and "[t]he playground movement created additional openings for working-class youngsters through playground meets and municipal track championships."[22] A

[19] 21 year old Barbara Ferrell ended up winning a silver medal in this race, finishing 0.1 seconds behind Tyus. She went on to make the Olympic final for a second time at the Munich Games in 1972. Margaret Bailes finished 5th in the final and joined Tyus and Ferrell, along with Mildred Netter, on the gold medal winning relay team.
[20] In 1968 only 14.2 percent of participants at the Olympics were women and there were only 7 sports (39 events, compared to 133 for men) available to them. These included aquatics, athletics, canoeing, equestrian, fencing, gymnastics, volleyball. Athletics was the only one of these sports that was, in practice, open to Black women in the United States. Athletics offered 12 events for women, the 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 80m hurdles, 4x100m relay, high jump, long jump, shot put, discus, javelin, pentathlon. Black women competed for the U.S. in 8 of these events; "Factsheet: Women in the Olympic Movement," PDF file, International Olympic Committee, July 23, 2021. https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Olympic-Movement/Factsheets/Women-in-the-Olympic-Movement.pdf.
[21] Michael D. Davis, *Black American Women in Olympic Track and Field,* (North Carolina: Mcfarland and Company Inc. Publishers, 1992; Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 138; Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Women's Sport,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 313.
[22] Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, 112-113.

growing demand for competitions led the Amateur Athletic Union (the governing body of track and field in the U.S. until 1979) to sponsor, albeit grudgingly, championship meets for women starting in 1924. Both Pickett, from Chicago, and Stokes, from Boston, benefitted from this expansion of organizational support and were introduced to track and field, like many working class women in the North, on northern playgrounds and through city track clubs. [23]

Despite the growth and widespread popularity of women's track and field, the reputation of the sport as thoroughly masculine persisted. Though controversy surrounded all women's sport in this period, the association of track and field with the working classes, as well as the sport's emphasis on power, speed, and elemental, or animalistic movements meant that it was particularly susceptible to charges of "mannishness." Press coverage of women's competitions tended to be thoroughly critical, if not openly misogynistic, and charged female track and field athletes with violating the standards of feminine respectability. Medical professionals added to this negative view, warning that women who competed in track and field ran the risk of damaging their reproductive organs. This general moral panic had the effect of driving many White women out of the sport and by the 1940s track and field in the United States was dominated by Black women.

The legacies of Black women's violent exclusion from the category of "respectable womanhood," and their attendant challenges to this category and its standards of behavior informed African American communities' attitudes toward sport in this period. As the notable theorist of Black feminist thought, Patricia Hill Collins, has pointed out, the positionality of Black women in the United States has historically allowed them to recognize the socially constructed nature of the category "woman" as well as the oppressiveness of the standards which

[23] Ibid, 119.

sustain it.[24] The conceptions of womanhood that Black women constructed in this context did not necessarily preclude vigorous physical activity or participation in competitive sport. Indeed, many Black women disregarded critiques of track and field as too masculine and, often with the support and encouragement of their communities, embraced the sport and excelled, with a significant number garnering international recognition. [25]

Historically Black Colleges and Universities played a central role in fostering the tradition of Black women's national and international success in track and field.[26] Beginning in the early twentieth century, Black physical educators had taken a different stance from their White counterparts when it came to young women's participation in sport. Rather than focusing on individual health and feminine respectability, as White physical educators tended to do, Black physical educators more often stressed community well being and encouraged women's participation in competitive athletics.[27] Tuskegee Institute in particular took an active role in promoting women's intercollegiate sport. By 1929 "the school [had] added women's events to its Tuskegee Relays, the first major track meet sponsored by a black college, and soon thereafter began extending athletic scholarships to promising high school girls."[28]

The "Tigerettes" of Tuskegee Institute dominated the track and field scene throughout the 1940s, consistently recognized as the best women's program in the United States. Their team featured, most notably, high jumper Alice Coachman who became the first woman of African descent to win an Olympic medal at the 1948 London Games. By 1956, however, the Tigerettes had been eclipsed by the "Tigerbelles" of Tennessee State University (TSU).[29]

---

[24] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
[25] Cahn, *Coming on Strong* chapter 3 and 5.
[26] Lansbury, *A Spectacular Leap,* 9.
[27] Cahn, *Coming on Strong,* 69.
[28] Ibid, 118.
[29] Lansbury, *A Spectacular Leap,* 116.

The Tigerbelles were coached by Ed Temple who used his position at TSU to expand opportunities for Black southern women to participate in track and field. Over the course of his 44 year career at TSU, Temple coached over 40 athletes who qualified for the Olympic Games and under his guidance the Tigerbelles collectively brought home 23 Olympic medals. This remarkable success was the product of both Temple's brilliance and vision as a coach as well as his athletes' commitment to team building.[30]

During the school year Temple traveled around the South, attending high school basketball games and track meets in search of talented young women who he thought might benefit from an athletic outlet during the summer. The high schoolers that Temple identified as budding athletes were invited to join the Tigerbelles for their summer track and field camp which took place annually at TSU. The camp provided young women with the opportunity to learn from, and be supported by, more experienced college-aged women and it was also a way for current Tigerbelles to recruit new teammates. The relationships that different generations of Tigerbelles built with each other were central to the program's legacy. Older team members passed down both knowledge and pride to younger athletes and tried to instill a sense of collective responsibility and accomplishment across different generations of the team. According to Temple, "the older Tigerbelles never let the younger ones forget that [they had] an obligation to uphold the Tigerbelle reputation."[31]

By 1968, the Tigerbelles were well-established as one of the best women's track and field programs in the world, having dominated the sport for at least a decade.[32] In the world of track and field, the team was famous. "[A]nyone who followed [the sport] knew they were the best

[30] "Remembering Ed Temple" Tennessee State University website, https://www.americanquarterly.org/submit/guidelines.html.
[31] Ed Temple, B'Lou Carter, *Only the Pure in Heart Survive,* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 52.
[32] In 1968 the Tigerbelles claimed six American records and between 1958 and 1968 members of the team had set 9 world records and won 12 Olympic medals: Ed Temple, B'Lou Carter, *Only the Pure in Heart Survive,* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 181-185.

team in the country… They were all black… and they were proud of their reputation...When they stepped onto the track, most other athletes just stared. Some whispered, 'It's the Tigerbelles. The Tigerbelles are here.'"[33] Wyomia Tyus was one of five Tigerbelles to have qualified for the 1968 Games, and on the start line of the 100m final, she embodied the pride, power, and joy of this long tradition of Black women's athletic excellence.

In video recordings of the event, Tyus appears to do a relaxed cha-cha with her hips as she swings her arms and snaps her fingers, laughing a little to herself. An easygoing grin animates her face, and she exudes cool confidence. Tyus retains this self-assured, almost amused, demeanor even as the race begins. She looks powerful but relaxed and her face shows no sign of strain as she runs. In just 11 seconds--world record time--Tyus crosses the finish line in first place, becoming the first person in history to win consecutive Olympic gold medals in the 100 meter dash. As the runners pass the finish line and slow to a walk, Tyus and her teammates--Barabara Ferrell and Margaret Bailes--can be seen grasping each other's hands as they catch their breath.[34]

Looking back on the race, Tyus remembered feeling sure that she was going to win: "there was no way anyone could say to me that I was not going to win that 100 meters. I just felt so confident--in me. I wasn't saying it out loud to anyone else--except maybe through the dance." Tyus explains that she had been dancing the "Tighten Up" which was "kind of like a herky jerky thing" that "was very popular at the time because of the Archie Bell & the Drells song" which was a hit in 1968.[35] According to Tyus, the dance had been part response to the

[33] Madeline Manning Jackson, Jerry B. Jenkins, *Running for Jesus,* (Waco, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1977), 49, 62.
[34]"Some Pre-Race Funk, The Trick for an Olympic Double" *YouTube* video, 9:29. February 16, 2017 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn3hMAvOYfQ; George Strickler, "Oerter Wins 4th Discus Title in Row: Regains Olympic Record; Two World Marks Broken Miss Tyus Takes 100 Meters in 11 Seconds" *Chicago Tribune,* October 16, 1968; "Oerter, Miss Tyus Retain Crowns" *The Washington Post,* October 16, 1968.
[35] Tyus and Terzakis, *Tigerbelle*, 162

joyful crowd, part strategy for keeping loose and relaxed, and part expression of pride and self-confidence:

> There were people from Jamaica in the stands right near the starting line playing bongo drums and that made me feel like dancing...For me it wasn't that much of a stretch. They were playing music, and people were dancing in the stands, and when you're standing in front of the blocks, that's always kind of a dance anyway, all the shaking and wiggling you do, trying to stay loose...it was mostly a comfort thing, for me, to let people know: *Hey--this is me. Get in line because I'm feeling fine.*[36]

During the race, Tyus wore black shorts instead of the ones issued by the U.S. Olympic Committee. And later, after the USA women's 4x100m relay team won gold, Tyus told the press that their victory was dedicated to Smith's and Carlos' protest. These were her ways of expressing support for the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR), and of staking out her opposition to her own treatment as a Black woman in the United States as well as her support for human rights globally.[37] But when taken as a whole, Tyus' performance illuminates a side of sport that an exclusive focus on the OPHR–and on the acts of protest which it inspired–effectively obscures. Her dance on the start line, the way she smiles when she crosses the finish line, and the embrace she shares with her teammates after the race, complicates the iconic podium protest image by communicating fun, satisfaction, and camaraderie. Taken together with her cool, her funkiness, her grace, and her power, Tyus' performance highlights the full range of potential joys that sport makes possible.[38]

---

[36] Tyus and Terzakis, *Tigerbelle,* 161-162.
[37] Tyus and Terzakis, *Tigerbelle,* 173; "U.S. Women Dedicate Victory to Smith, Carlos" *The New York Times,* October 21, 1968.
[38] Audre Lorde's concept of the "erotic as power" is particularly useful in thinking through the significance of the joy Tyus exemplifies here. For Lorde, the erotic encompasses the knowledge of one's personal "capacity for joy" as well as "the sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual." It is "an assertion of the lifeforce of women." Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic" in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 53-55.

To recognize and embrace the joys of sport--to take pleasure in dancing, sprinting, embracing teammates, and in bearing witness to such sensuality--does not preclude attention to its problematic aspects. Indeed, Tyus both symbolically and verbally protested the complicity of the sports establishment in human rights violations even as she visibly enjoyed herself on the track.[39] Tyus' enjoyment does not work to deny or downplay the persistence of oppression within and beyond the world of sport. Instead, her joyful movements work together with her more explicit protests, marking a refusal of racist and patriarchal power over her own body. The visceral pleasure that is communicated through Tyus' performance, and her stated sense of self-actualization–"I felt the way you feel when everything falls into place, and your life is where you want it to be"--reveal sport's potential to serve as an emancipatory, life-affirming space.[40] The social and political significance of *this* aspect of sport--its joys and pleasures--was almost totally obscured by the male activists in the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

2. "[I]t was a party. We just really enjoyed ourselves—had a lot of fun. And I think the people in the stadium enjoyed watching us enjoy ourselves:"[41]

In *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*--a manifesto-like text that provides an account of the Olympic Project for Human Rights' organizing in the lead up to the 1968 Olympics--Harry Edwards suggests that Black athletes who found pleasure in the world of sport were merely exhibiting false consciousness. In a passage which belittled Black men for their continued participation in sport even when they did not make it to the professional ranks, Edwards seems to dismiss the potential that anyone could actually have a genuine love for their sport. He suggests

[39] "U.S. Women Dedicate Victory to Smith, Carlos" *The New York Times,* October 21, 1968.
[40] Tyus and Terzakis, *Tigerbelle*, 169.
[41] Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

instead that their continued play can only be understood as an "attempt to cling to the one commodity that they have been able to peddle, however cheaply--their athletic abilities." He goes on to describe these athletes, who participate "in hunch games and city-league games" and "when they are invited...return to the old college campus to play against the new recruits and relive some of the old excitement," as "pathetic, brooding, black figures."[42]

Of course, Edwards' text offers a powerful and important critique of twentieth century sport that remains relevant today. *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* scrupulously details the persistence of racism within the sphere of sport and rejects the idea that the upward mobility of a few elite Black athletes can be taken as evidence of an equal playing field. However, Edwards' and the OPHR's failure to understand sport more broadly, as contested cultural terrain in which political struggle could be "center[ed] on identity, dignity and fun" ultimately limited the potential of their activism.[43] This denial, or rejection, of pleasure and fun can be seen in the image of the Smith-Carlos podium protest as the men stand somber, rigid, and silent, but it is belied by other images that were produced at the 1968 Games–including other images of Smith and Carlos themselves–and undermined by the memories of other Olympians who competed in Mexico City.

To 15 year old Esther Stroy, who qualified for the U.S. Olympic team in the 400 meter dash, the Mexico City Games were an immensely pleasurable and meaningful experience. Stroy was described by the press as the "littlest Olympian of them all…105 pounds and five feet four inches dedicated to speed afoot" who's running talent had been discovered "on a public playground" in Washington D.C. only a few years prior to these Olympics. Her teammates called her "jitty bitty" because she was "just all over the place." Though the athletes on the American

[42] Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete,* 50th Anniversary ed. (Urbana, Chicago, Springfeild: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 25.
[43] Kelley, *Race Rebels,* 3.

team were told that Mexico City was unsafe and that they ought to stay close to the Olympic Village, Stroy laughingly remembered that she "didn't pay any attention [and] went off away anyway." Not only did she leave the Village to explore Mexico City–meeting Mexican students and visiting an amusement park with a newfound friend from Jamaica–she attended "every sport there was to go to" and "went to everybody's eating facility": "I made friends with the Japanese, I made friends with the Germans, I made friends with the West Indies… and they invited me to come eat with them and I went and ate!"[44]

Stroy failed to make the final in her event after pulling her hamstring in the semifinal; however, her memory of the Games is untarnished by this disappointment. Reflecting on her experience, Stroy claimed that "the most memorable part [of competing at the Games] was all of the athletes that [she] met and the friendships that [she] obtained." Commenting on the life-long nature of these friendships Stroy described how her life had been enriched by the opportunity to travel outside the United States and meet people from around the world: "still talking with those athletes…and still seeing them today is very, very awesome for me."[45]

For Stroy, a young African American woman from "Northeast D.C.," having fun in the face of the reactionary elements of sport worked as a strategy of resistance. Describing the mandatory "femininity testing" that all female athletes had to undergo for the first time at the 1968 Games, Stroy remembered that her and her teammates got through it by "making fun": "we were stripped naked and we were put through all kinds of stuff, so we just had fun with it…we were posing and just making fun. Wyomia Tyus and all of us were just laughing… just to get

[44] Shirley Povich, "This Morning…" *The Washington Post.* October 14, 1968; Esther Stroy, interview by Desiree Hargus, December 27, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[45] Shirley Povich, "Miss Stroy Hurts Leg, Runs Fifth: Pulled Hamstring Cropped up Tuesday." *The Washington Post.* October 15, 1968; Esther Stroy, interview by Desiree Hargus, December 27, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

through it."[46] One of Stroy's American teammates, Jarvis Scott, shared similar memories about the testing that women were forced to undergo. Scott–who came from the Watts neighborhood in South Central Los Angeles and competed alongside Stroy in the 400m dash, ultimately finishing 5th in the event–laughed when asked about her experience with the sex testing: "it was kinda funny for us but we did it… we joked about it. It was funny but not funny."[47] By prioritizing their own enjoyment, and through laughter and "making fun," these women negotiated the sexism they faced at the Games, and refused to internalize it.

Having fun with other athletes also had the power to subvert the politics of nationalism at the Games. According to Stroy, "politics wasn't a factor" for the athletes. Though government officials from the United States and the Soviet Union saw sport as another generative site of ideological contest in the Cold War, Stroy says that many American athletes were actually "in awe" of the Soviet athletes and made friends with them. Stroy's teammates Francie Kracker and Barbara Friedrich elaborated on this assessment saying that American athletes felt "very envious" of their Soviet counterparts because while the American track athletes (and American women in particular) were "on their own" financially, the Soviets "were supported by the state, so [it was] hard to beat that!" Friedrich went on to describe the social activities that the American and Soviet athletes engaged in together outside of competition: "we play[ed] ping pong, it broke the ice a little bit...we sat around, we listened to music, we were dancing in the Olympic

[46] The international Olympic Comittee had been doing sex testing since the 1920s when women were first permitted at the Olympics; however, while the anatomical examinations that Stroy describes did happen at track meets leading up to the 1968 Games, at these Olympics anatomical tests were swapped for chromosomal testing. It's possible Stroy's memory about being "stripped naked" was from another event prior to the 1968 Games. See Lyndsay Pieper, *Sex Testing: Gender Policing in Women's Sport,* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016); Esther Stroy, interview by Desiree Hargus, December 27, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

[47] Jarvis Scott, interview by Joey Beauchamp, October 14, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

Village... taking a swim in the pool...we did mingle, so politics did not occur at the Olympic village when it came to those areas."[48]

The potential for international sport to be a space of intimate friendship and community across political or national boundaries as well as across divisions of identity, is corroborated by Jarvis Scott. Themes of friendship and family crop up repeatedly in Scott's reminiscences about the 1968 Olympics. Indeed, Scott insisted that the category "athlete" had the power to transcend the divisions that existed within the U.S. Olympic team.

Despite the politically charged atmosphere of 1968, Scott claimed that becoming teammates on the U.S. Olympic team worked to soften, if not dissolve, the boundaries of race and gender that might otherwise have kept people from forming friendships. Scott insisted that "once you became a USA team member there wasn't no color...you were teammates...both men and women… we were a family." She explains that it was the familial ties which developed among athletes that "made the Olympics so important." Scott's teammate, Martha Rae Watson–a long jumper and sprinter from Long Beach, California–echoed this idea. She said that there was never any real animosity between competitors from different nations and, in fact, athletes looked forward to seeing each other at competitions. Like Scott, Watson felt that international sport lent itself to the development of strong kinship ties, and that "any Olympian [became] a family member of [hers]." These sentiments were manifested by Scott when she decided to give up her

[48] Esther Stroy, interview by Desiree Hargus, December 27, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Francie Kracker (Goodridge), interview by Steve Lebruta, February 26, 2013, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Barbara Friedrich, interview by Desiree Hargus, May 23, 2014, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

own spot in the Olympic 800 meter race in order to give Francie Kraker–a White woman from Ann Arbor, Michigan–a chance to experience the Games.[49]

Scott had qualified for the 1968 Olympics in two events, both the 400 meters and 800 meters, while Kracker, who only competed in the 800 meters had finished fourth at the U.S. Olympic trials, just barely missing out on qualifying for the Games. Scott remembers having respect and sympathy for Kracker because they "had been competing with each other for so long." Though it was a difficult decision for Scott to make, she eventually decided that giving Kraker the opportunity to experience the Olympics was more important than whatever she might gain personally by competing in two events. According to Scott, her decision prompted hate mail from some African Americans who resented her for giving up her spot to a White woman. With exasperation Scott insisted that these people didn't understand the kind of "contract" that existed between athletes:

> It didn't matter what race [Kracker] was, it was the idea that she had been competing for so long. And of course you know I could beat her, that wasn't the point! The point *was* she had an opportunity to *compete*. That'll be a memory that she'll have for the rest of her life. She had an opportunity to be out there with the rest of us.[50]

The sense of fellowship expressed by Scott extended to athletes from outside the United States as well. She explained that the only barrier to interacting with athletes from other countries was language, but that this was easily overcome. "The international language is being friendly, smiling, you know, patting each other on the back…thumbs up…changing uniforms...[going to] dances." Scott's teammate, Madeline Manning, who won gold in the Women's 800m in Mexico City (also becoming the first Black woman to compete in the event,

[49] Ibid; Martha Rae Watson, interview by Brennan Berg, October 19, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[50] Ibid.

and the first American woman to win it) emphasized this point, remembering that "athletes loved to try to communicate with each other as best they could, with smiles and hugs and handshakes and trades of Olympic pins and other souvenirs."[51] Though neither Manning or Scott went as far as Stroy or Friedrich in suggesting that politics did not exist among athletes, they believed that even in the midst of ongoing political divisions "a lot of happiness and excitement and friendship was built because of the Olympic Games."[52]

Describing the spirit of camaraderie that pervaded the closing ceremonies in particular, Manning said, "you'd be hand in hand sometimes or on somebody's shoulders or on somebody's back… they'd be from a whole other country and you don't even know who they are." According to Manning, this sort of merging was one of the most poignant aspects of the Games: "that one unique unity [and] fellowship of athletes…swarming the stadium and having a party, that was phenomenal."[53] Manning and other athletes were clear that this feeling of "fellowship" was not imposed from the top down by the governing bodies of sport, but developed among athletes themselves, and often in ways that challenged the rules and agendas imposed by Olympic and national team officials.[54]

For Francie Kracker, the contested nature of the Games, the fact that "the Olympic movement can't be controlled" by national leaders or sport administrators, was precisely what made them so significant. To Kracker, the Olympic movement was inherently at odds with itself.

---

[51] A New York Times article picked up on the pin and souvenir trading that Olympic athletes engaged in, noting that along with practicing, worrying, and resting, athletes at Games "incessantly…swap Olympic pins:" Steve Cady "Olympic 'Medals' on Trading Block" *New York Times,* October 11, 1968.
[52] Madeline Manning Jackson, Jerry B. Jenkins, *Running for Jesus,* (Waco, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1977), 49, 62. Esther Stroy, interview by Desiree Hargus, December 27, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Jarvis Scott, interview by Joey Beauchamp, October 14, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[53] Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[54] For instance, one Chicago Defender article detailed the efforts of Olympic officials to prevent athletes from drinking and having sex while at the Games: "No Cheating, Fellas," *Chicago Defender,* October 2, 1968.

The nationalism, patriarchy, and racism of the governing bodies of sport were consistently undermined by the athletes themselves, who formed unlikely friendships and solidarities at the Games.[55] The relationships created by athletes, and their efforts to find ways of relating across differences, undermined the efforts of nation-states which sought, in this period, to use sport as a site of ideological and political competition within a larger theater of interstate and neo-imperial rivalry.

The act of both doing and watching sports was central to the subversive culture created by athletes at the 1968 Games. Moments of exhilaration and camaraderie experienced by athletes in competition and the feeling of having individuality dissolve into the collectivity of a crowd made the Games genuinely meaningful and even life-altering for many participants and spectators.

In video footage of the final for the Men's 200m dash in Mexico City, Tommie Smith makes visible the intense pleasure that sport makes possible as he crosses the finish line first, in world record time. The film shows Smith pulling up even with the leader of the race as the runners barrel into the final fifty meters of the track. For a brief moment the men appear to be locked in step with each other, leading the rest of the field. In the next breath, Smith pulls aways, his long, smooth stride making his acceleration appear to be effortless. Embodying grace and power, Smith increases the distance between himself and his competitors and, aware of the decisive gap he's created, he uses the final steps of the race to toss his hands into the air in triumph. In this split second, pure euphoria radiates from Smith's body. As the sprinter realizes he has laid claim to an Olympic victory, the determination and focus on his face give way to a wide smile and he glides across the finish line with his eyes shut and his face tilted toward the

[55] Francie Kracker (Goodridge), interview by Steve Lebruta, February 26, 2013, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

sky, clenched fists raised above his head. His joy is almost tangible and his body communicates the simple thrill of a foot race and the deep satisfaction of a life goal attained.[56]

In a second clip of video footage from the Games, John Carlos is captured enjoying himself in the stands of the Olympic Stadium with a group of other athletes. The scene is chaotic as athletes in team uniforms from Jamaica, the Bahamas, the United States, as well as others in plain clothes, stand and sit jumbled together, dancing, clapping, shouting, and laughing. Some men play bongos and maracas, spurring on the energy with their music and laughter. The party-spirit seems to be infectious, and everyone pictured appears to be beaming.[57]

Moments like these are central to sport's appeal for both athletes and fans. In a book-length reflection on the pleasures of sports spectatorship, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht describes watching athletics as an aesthetic experience and as "a fascination in the true sense of the word--a phenomenon that manages to paralyze the eyes, something that endlessly attracts, without implying any explanation for its attraction." Gumbrecht describes the "phenomenology of... crowds at athletic events" suggesting that "what many players and fans enjoy about cheering is a state of mind that absorbs and transforms individuality into communion."[58] This interpretation accords with the memories of athletes who participated in the 1968 Olympics, many of whom described having the privilege of watching other athletes compete and experiencing the crowd in the Olympic Stadium as among the most incredible and meaningful aspects of their Olympic experience.[59]

---

[56] Muchmore, Jim. "Tommie Smith - Men's 200m (WR) - 1968 Olympics." *YouTube* video, 0:58. August 28, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cI8KVFHkCzU.
[57] "Full Olympic Film--Mexico City 1968 Olympics." *YouTube* video, 1:26:08. July 18, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVsQYRZgb10.
[58] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In Praise of Athletic Beauty,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), 16, 215.
[59] 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

Esther Stroy, who went to "every sport there was to go to" expressed this sense of fascination and communion when describing the thrill of watching her teammates compete. In particular, she said that watching Bob Beamon's world record shattering long jump was "truly amazing." The way Stroy remembered it, Beamon "hit the board and he went up in the air and then he put his legs out, and everybody thought he was gonna go down, and then he didn't and he stretched out further and [the crowd] took this deep breath in and then he finally came down, it was awesome… everybody just stood up." Beamon himself appeared to be completely overwhelmed by his achievement. Video footage captured the instant when he realized how far he had jumped. Beamon seems to shake his head in ecstatic disbelief before tossing his head back and throwing his arms in the air as he runs toward a teammate. The men crash into each other, bouncing and spinning around in a celebratory embrace before Beamon sinks to the ground, covering his face with his hands, apparently unable to stand. Reflecting on his jump, Jarvis Scott put it bluntly: "it was something to be amazed at."[60]

Many athletes found it difficult to put into words the strong feelings that being at the Olympic Games produced. Doris Heritage Brown, who competed in the 800 meters at the 1968 Games, said that conveying what was meaningful about her experience was hard because there were "so many excellent things going on." Brown believed that "being around so many people of excellence…help[ed] you to grow into somebody you weren't before."[61] Similarly, Brown's

[60] Beamon claimed to have had a "cataplectic seizure"--temporary loss of control over his muscles–brought on by the sheer emotional energy of the moment. Esther Stroy, interview by Desiree Hargus, December 27, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Bob Bagchi, "50 stunning Olympic moments No2: Bob Beamon's great leap forward," *The Guardian,* Nov. 23, 2011; "Bob Beamon's World Record Long Jump - 1968 Olympics" *YouTube* video, 2:33. January 21, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEt_Xgg8dzc; Jarvis Scott, interview by Joey Beauchamp, October 14, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

[61] Doris Heritage Brown, interview by Brennan Berg, April 19, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

teammate and fellow 800 meter runner, Madeline Manning, described hearing the roar of the crowd at the Opening Ceremonies as being a life altering, almost spiritual experience:

> It was just an awesome, awesome experience… we were coming closer and closer to the mouth of the stadium and as we did we could hear...the drums playing and the loud camaraderie of the whole stadium... and you stepped into the open port hole, onto the track…your back just straightens up and your palms get sweaty…I don't care how tough you think you are, that is a melting moment, it is a very humbling moment and it is one that enriches your life in a way that nothing else can.[62]

The power of sport to imbue life with meaning, or to enrich it, as Manning says, was part of what made athletes so unwilling to consider the OPHR's proposed boycott of the Games. By simply denying the powerful pleasures of sport, Edwards and the OPHR failed to offer an alternative to the present situation. They failed to consider how the problems of sport might be eliminated even while its pleasures were preserved. According to Wyomia Tyus, "in '68 the question that needed to be asked--and it needed to be answered by as many people as possible--was this: 'Do you think people really want to give up all the time they've worked? *Why* would they do that? What would inspire them to do that?' There had to be a good reason. They would have to see a future, one they could fight for."[63]

The pleasure communicated through these "other" images of the 1968 Olympics complicates the iconic podium protest by hinting at what it leaves out and makes silent. The OPHR effectively instrumentalized the celebrity of prominent male athletes in order to use the realm of sport as a platform on which to powerfully denounce the racist structures and practices of the United States and the international athletic establishment. However, the limited vision of the organization--including, among other things, its failure to take the pleasures of sport as

[62] Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[63] Tyus and Terzakis, *Tigerbelle*, 182.

seriously as the problems--meant that it ultimately foreclosed an opportunity to use sport as a springboard for broader, more inclusive, and more liberatory politics.

3. "At that time I did not realize I was an athlete. I just loved to play:" [64]

In 1968, female athletes were uniquely positioned to recognize and access the joys and pleasures of sport. Their place on the margins of institutionalized sport--though a direct product of sexism that came with its own set of constraints--provided them with a relatively autonomous social space with some room to determine the culture in which they trained and competed. Women's exclusion from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the dearth of professional sports open to women, and especially Black women, meant that they participated at a distance from the hegemonic discourses and exploitative practices that were routine in men's college and professional sport and that Black men in particular were subject to. This distance allowed women to see both the potentially oppressive and exploitative elements of sport, while also experiencing first hand the power of physical culture to open up the potentialities of life. Sport presented the possibility of fun and fulfillment, as well as the opportunity for women to expand and explore their bodily capacities, to challenge themselves, and to experience the thrill of competition.[65]

Indeed, reflecting on their early years in sport, many of the women who competed at the 1968 Games related experiences that were overwhelmingly positive. For working class women in particular, sports teams and clubs offered inexpensive leisure activities, the possibility of establishing meaningful relationships with other athletes and coaches, as well as the opportunity

[64]Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[65] I'm drawing here on Stuart Hall's interpretation of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony: Hall, *Cultural Studies 1983,* 170; 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

to travel and potentially even go to college. Further, sporting spaces in general offered some room for transgressing the norms of femininity, even if only temporarily. Qualifying for the Olympic Games was quite obviously not the experience of every woman who participated in sport in this period. However, many of the women who did qualify understood their individual achievement to be a product of collective effort, and representing their communities at the Games was often their primary concern. Additionally, these women believed that their presence in this historically exclusive space would ultimately help expand access to the sphere of sport to other women. They saw themselves as "pioneering," "opening doors," and creating opportunities for future generations of female athletes to experience the life-enhancing pleasures of sport.[66]

As a young girl growing up in the 1950s, "down in the projects of Cleveland, Ohio," Madeline Manning could think of nothing more fun than "playing bullrush and jumping over fences." Her mother's disapproval of her "tomboy" behavior did little to curb her enthusiasm for physical activity and competition. Summers were spent chasing her brother, Robert, around the neighborhood and winning impromptu foot races against other girls. After discovering that no girl in the neighborhood could beat her, Manning was "anxious to compete against…and beat the boys."[67]

During the school year, in a gym class game of "bullrush," she got her chance. The aim of this game was to run from one end of the gym to the other without being tackled by a person in the middle. If you were tackled you joined the middle until there was only one person left running. Manning was determined to be the "king" of this game and eventually she managed to

[66] Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; arvis Scott, interview by Joey Beauchamp, October 14, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Richard Pringle, Robert E. Rinehart, and Jayne Caudwell, *Sport and the Social Significance of Pleasure,* (London: Routledge, 2015), 1-2.
[67] Madeline Manning Jackson and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Running for Jesus,* (Waco, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1977), chapter 3.

be the last kid standing. She needed to make it across the gym one last time without being tackled in order to be crowned king. Manning remembers leaning into the pressure and intensity of this moment. She describes rocking back and forth, preparing to run through the crowd of other kids and formulating a strategy. She "took a deep breath, rocked back, and took off…[she] dodged some of the boys and drove towards the smallest tackler...shoved him back ...pivoted and raced toward the sideline, arms and legs flailing." Her run was successful and she reports having felt immense pride as she walked around school for the next week, knowing she was "king of the bullrush."[68]

In recounting this memory of middle school play, Manning communicates the same thrill and passion that is evoked when she talks about her experiences competing as a world class track athlete. On the start line of international races she would "[throw her] head back and let [her] arms dangle free. On tiptoes [she] shook [her] whole body loose." As the race got underway she would feel "exhilaration, adrenaline shooting through [her]" and then the "sweet freedom of movement" as she found her rhythm. The high that Manning felt from running as hard and as fast as she could on the track at times mimicked the thrilling sensation of childhood play. In fact, Manning points to her middle school "bullrush" win as being her "first 'athletic' victory."[69]

From an early age, Manning enjoyed testing her limits and proving people who doubted her abilities wrong. Another of Manning's childhood memories involves being taunted by white boys in her neighborhood who would shout racial epithets at her, telling her she couldn't outrun them. She would eventually get so mad that she would "light out after them, crying and shouting." Manning relished her ability to prove these boys wrong by being able to catch them *and* beat them up. Interestingly, Wyomia Tyus, who eventually became Manning's teammate at

[68] Ibid.
[69] Manning, *Running for Jesus,* 48-57.

Tennessee State and on the 1968 Olympic team, shared similar childhood memories of beating up white boys who called her names. Though it only happened one or two times, Tyus remembers that "it was amazing" to take them down. [70]

Starting in childhood, physical culture functioned as a site of positive self-definition for Manning in which she could cultivate confidence and pride, and reject the racist and sexist ideas she encountered in and beyond her community.[71] Importantly, it was also a site of intense fun. Manning "loved to run and jump and play" and longed for more opportunities to compete.[72]

In fifth grade, Manning was introduced to more formal athletic competition when a new track and field program was started at her school. She demonstrated an all-round athleticism, excelling in both the jumping and sprinting events, but it wasn't until high school that Manning's talent would really be developed. In the fall of 1963, as a "tall, awkward, and shy" tenth grader at John Hay High School, Manning was "discovered" in gym class during what was widely known as the Kennedy physical fitness tests.[73] To Manning, this test was an "opportunity" and, with the permission of her likely bemused gym teacher, she took it over and over again. Eventually her teacher, Miss Marilyn White, stopped her and recommended she get involved in some type of sport. Her school offered girls' basketball, volleyball, and track, so Manning took up all three.[74]

Along with working as a high school gym teacher, Miss White served as a manager of the Cleveland Department of Recreation track team and she informed the team's head coach, Alex Ferenczy, of Manning's budding talent. Ferenczy invited Manning to join the city team where

---

[70] Tyus, *Tigerbelle*, 37.
[71] Ibid; Patricia Hill Collins, "The Power of Self Definition," in *Black Feminist Thought,* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
[72] Manning, *Running for Jesus,* 33.
[73] These national physical fitness tests were initially developed through the President's Council on Youth Fitness under Eisenhower in 1956 as anxiety over Americans physical unfitness rose during WWII, but were popularized by Kennedy in the early 1960s.
[74] Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Manning, *Running for Jesus,* chapter three and four.

she would get the chance to train in an interracial group of elite female athletes, including two Black women who had competed in the 1964 Olympics (high jumper Eleanor Montgomery and sprinter Vivian Brown). With her new training partners and with the patient and caring guidance of Ferenczy–described by Manning as an important father figure who played a major role throughout her entire athletic career–she excelled. By 1965, while still in high school, Manning was competing for the United States at the international level: "I went over to Russia, Poland, and West Germany. For the first time in my life, ever out of Cleveland… So that's kind of how everything got started for me, from being a little girl in the inner city."[75]

Manning went on to become a three time Olympian (1968, 1972, 1976). At the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City she won a gold medal in the 800 meters, becoming the first American woman in history to do so and setting a world record along the way. Manning's achievement was extraordinary and her life story is remarkable; however, her path into high level sport is actually fairly representative of many Black women's entrances into athletics in this period.[76] Having siblings or neighborhood kids to play with, mandatory physical education in public schools as well as school sports teams for girls, and access to free public recreation spaces and athletic clubs all helped foster young working class women's athletic abilities.

Like Madeline Manning's experience in Cleveland, Mamie Rallins, who grew up "in the projects on the South Side of Chicago," was introduced to track and field by a gym teacher who encouraged her to join the city club. Rallins, who had become a self-described "gym rat" after her mother died when she was 13, welcomed the opportunity to get involved with other athletically inclined women.[77] The club, which was called the Chicago Comets when Rallins

[75] Manning, *Running for Jesus,* chapter four; Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[76] Cahn, *Coming on Strong,* chapter 3 and 5.
[77] Mamie Rallins, interview by Desiree Hargus, July 20, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

joined, had a long tradition of offering both Black and White working class women a chance to get involved in organized sport.

The Chicago Comets had roots in Chicago's Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) which was founded by Bishop Bernard Sheil in 1930. The organization was open to "boys and girls of all races and religions" and strove to uphold Sheil's belief that all children had "an inalienable right to play." The CYO organized a basketball season for girls starting in 1931 and offered a city track and field team starting in 1948. By the 1950s, girls track and field was the most successful sport in the organization. Under the guidance of Joseph Robichaux–who was hired by Sheil in 1945 to serve as the liaison between the African American community and the CYO, and who became known as the South Side "commissioner" of youth athletics–the women's track and field program garnered national attention, both for their athletic success and for being an interracial team. By the time Mamie Rallins joined in 1956, the team was one of the best in the nation and boasted two Olympians, Mabel Landry and Barabara Jones, who competed at the 1952 Games in Helsinki.[78]

Along with being heavily involved with CYO athletics, Robichaux was a prominent businessman and "a loyalist black elite in Richard J. Daley's machine."[79] Combining his involvement in sport, business, and politics, he managed to secure sponsorship for the women's track team from the Mayor Daley Youth Foundation (which was otherwise an organization that only supported men's sport). The funding covered the cost of traveling the country for competitions and the team adopted the name of its sponsor.[80]

---

[78] Timothy B. Neary, *Crossing Parish Boundaries: Race, Sports, and Catholic Youth in Chicago, 1914-1954,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), chapter four.
[79] Neary, *Crossing Parish Boundaries*, 130.
[80] Mamie Rallins, interview by Desiree Hargus, July 20, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Louise Meade Tricard, *American Women's Track and Field, 1895-1980*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 1996), 529.

When Rallins started out in the program she trained and competed in the sprints and long jump. She wanted to be a hurdler, but Robichaux told her she was too short. Rallins was only 4”11 until age 19 when she received a physical through the women’s track team. The doctors informed her and her coaches that her “body was starving to death.” Because there had not been much for her to eat at home since her mother died, Rallins started going to Robichaux’s house each night after practice in order to have a meal. This helped, and between age 19 and 21 Rallins grew to 5”6 and was able to take up hurdling. In 1968, at the age of 27, she made her first Olympic team (she qualified again in 1972). Rallins spent 15 years training and competing with the Mayor Daley Youth Foundation, leaving at age 30 after Robichaux died of cancer in 1971.[81]

Reflecting on her career, Rallins noted that she “developed slowly and became outstanding.”[82] Undoubtedly, Rallins’ determination and persistence were in large part responsible for her incredible development. But it’s also clear that her story can’t be completely reduced to one of individual triumph. The ethos that informed the CYO women’s track team (later called the Chicago Comets and finally the Mayor Daley Youth Foundation) made stories like Rallins’ possible. As a coach, Robichaux’s concern for the women on his team extended beyond their athletic careers. His attitude toward sport, which reflected the founding ideals of the CYO, prioritized community and long term individual development above short term, individual, athletic success. The institutional space provided by the city track team gave young women like Rallins a chance to enjoy physical activity without financial barriers, to “develop slowly,” and to participate regardless of whether or not they became “outstanding.” Rallins, like many other

[81] Ibid.
[82] Mamie Rallins, interview by Desiree Hargus, July 20, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

women in this period, benefitted from a culture that valued sport for its own sake and viewed participation as primarily a route to a richer life.

Jarvis Scott, who was on the 1968 Olympic team with both Rallins and Manning, had a similar experience of sport being a positive, life-affirming activity. Growing up in "an athletic family," in the "Jordan Downs projects" of LA meant that Scott always had lots of other kids to play and "create games" with. Participating in sports with her siblings and neighborhood kids "became a habit," a way for them to keep their "minds occupied and keep active" when there was nothing else to do. Scott had no contact with organized sport until high school when the head coach of the LA Mercurettes track club, Fred Jones, came through her neighborhood looking for kids who were interested in participating in track and field. Organized sport became a site of possibility and opportunity for Scott, and a potential source of excitement beyond childhood. She joined the track club and became increasingly involved in the sport: "it gave me an identity, a dream, something to grow up to… and eventually that's exactly what happened, I got involved through the club… and it created a path."[83]

The path that track and field offered for Scott, Rallins, Manning, and many other young Black women in this period was the product of the publicly funded infrastructure and organizational support that had been built around women's track and field in the United States starting in the 1920s.[84] Though it is undeniable that these women were extraordinarily hard working and talented, their individual successes only became possible when they were given the space and support they needed to excel. In this respect they were the beneficiaries of publicly funded parks, tracks, and training groups, access to which had been fought for by adults in their

[83] Jarvis Scott, interview by Joey Beauchamp, October 14, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[84] Louise Meade Tricard, *American Women's Track and Field, 1895-1980*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 1996), chapters 5 and 6; Cahn, *Coming on Strong,* chapter 3.

communities. Caring and supportive family and community members, physical education teachers, and coaches all nurtured the talent of these young women and helped to make sure they had access to the positive, even life-transforming, power of sport. Speaking of her journey to winning consecutive Olympic gold medals in the 100 meter dash, Wyomia Tyus emphasized this collective spirit, explaining that her individual achievement was made possible through a transgenerational, community-wide effort.

4. "I stand on so many shoulders:"[85]

Wyomia Tyus spent her childhood running through the fields and exploring the woods that surrounded her family's dairy farm. Tyus' parents were tenant farmers and the land they lived on technically belonged to a White landowner who lived on the hill above their house. But to Tyus and her brothers, the land "was just open space," a place for them to play, feel free, and "*be* children." According to Tyus, the farm, located in Griffin, Georgia, felt like "a kind of safe haven," somewhat sheltered from the overtly hostile racism faced by Black people who lived in town. Tyus credits her parents with creating the sense of security that she and her siblings grew up with, and credits her father in particular with "exposing [them] to the feeling of being free." On weekends he would take the kids on long walks through the woods surrounding their house. He would teach them some practical things about nature, but the main idea that was communicated to Tyus on these walks was that "this is how life is supposed to be–beautiful, calm, and serene."[86]

In 1959, the year Tyus turned 14, this sense of peace was shattered. Her family's home was lost in a fire and they were forced to move to town. Shortly after this devastating event, her

[85] Wyomia Tyus et al., "Interview with Wyomia Tyus, September 26, 2019," *UGA Special Collections Libraries Oral Histories*.
[86] Wyomia Tyus and Elizabeth Terzakis, *Tigerbelle: The Wyomia Tyus Story,* (Brooklyn: Akashic Books, 2018), 25, 28, 35.

father passed away. For Tyus, the heartbreak was debilitating. The way she remembers it, she "became a real recluse," hardly able to speak for about a decade. At this point in her life, participating in sports became a way to cope with her grief, and eventually a way to heal. In order to avoid spending time at home where the absence of her father was most intense, Tyus took up both sports that were offered to young women at most Black high schools in this period– basketball and track and field.[87]

The years Tyus had spent playing sports with her brothers on the farm had developed her athleticism and, although she wasn't very invested in performance, she quickly started to be recognized for her talent. In 1961, she was approached by Ed Temple and invited to join the Tigerbelles for their annual summer training camp in Nashville. Getting out of Griffin for the summer was enticing to Tyus, but her mother didn't have enough money to pay for her train fare. Tyus' high school coach and gym teacher, Mrs. Kimbrough, recognized the significance of the opportunity that Temple was offering and began fundraising. In the end, enough money was raised to pay for Tyus' train ticket and for a little spending money while she was away. According to Tyus, this generosity was consistent with the general attitude of the adults in her community who wanted her generation to have every chance to succeed.[88]

The summer of training with the Tigerbelles was hard work, unlike any athletic challenge Tyus had ever experienced. At first she wanted to go home, but with encouragement and advice from the older women she was training with, things started to click. After that summer, Tyus returned to Georgia with a sense of purpose. She had begun to recognize her own potential in track and field and meeting the women on the Tigerbelles team had been inspiring: "It was just so eye opening [to] meet these young women who were doing a whole lot of things, not just

[87] Tyus, *Tigerbelle*, 48-49; Cahn, *Coming on Strong,* 121.
[88] Wyomia Tyus et al., "Interview with Wyomia Tyus, September 26, 2019," *UGA Special Collections Libraries Oral Histories*.

running track…they had been overseas...You get a book education but then you travel all over the world and that's a different kind of education." Both types of education appealed to Tyus and she was thrilled when, in 1963, she earned a work-aid scholarship to join the Tigerbelles at TSU.[89]

For many working class Black women athletes who came of age in the 50s and 60s, earning a work-aid scholarship to TSU was their only chance at higher education. This was certainly the case for Tyus, who pointed out that without the scholarship "[she] was never gonna go to college." Similarly, Madeline Manning, who went to TSU in 1966, said "there was no way that [she] would be able to go to college unless [she] was scholar-shipped' cause [her family] just did not have any money." Speaking to the life-altering nature of these scholarships, Tyus said that Temple "saw possibilities for women *way* before Title IX":

> He had the ability and fortitude to say to the girls 'you could be more than just a track star. This could propel you into your future. Track opened the doors for you but education will keep them open.' He gave us a dream–something to look forward to. Most of us were coming from poor families, big families…Girls wanted to get out of that and make a better life for themselves and their parents wanted the same. Mr. Temple gave them that opportunity.[90]

Ed Temple was known as a strict coach with rules for the women on his team that extended to their lives off the track. The team had a curfew, a dress code, and, according to Tyus, they "definitely had to get good grades–that was number one." Of course, they also had to continue to do well on the track, but this meant something different for everyone according to their ability and every woman on the team got the same treatment no matter how athletically talented they were. The rule was that "you didn't have to be a superstar, but you had to contribute

[89] Wyomia Tyus et al., "Interview with Wyomia Tyus, September 26, 2019," *UGA Special Collections Libraries Oral Histories*; Tyus, *Tigerbelle,* chapters 2 and 3.
[90] Tyus, *Tigerbelle,* 85; Wyomia Tyus et al., "Interview with Wyomia Tyus, September 26, 2019," *UGA Special Collections Libraries Oral Histories;* Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

something positive to the team at all times." This could mean anything from being a good leader, to helping younger Tigerbelles adjust to college life, or becoming involved in another extracurricular activity such as student government.[91]

Though the women on the team at times bristled at these rules (and sometimes worked around or flat out ignored them) it was clear to many of them that Temple meant well. This was his way of showing that he cared about their whole lives, not just what happened in their athletic careers. Tyus remembers being aggravated by Temple's rules, but she said that they also made her appreciate him: "it seemed like he was thinking about *me* and not just about how I could run."[92] This was Temple's intention. He saw what happened to many Black male athletes who competed in the NCAA and he resented it. From his perspective these young men were exploited for their athleticism for four years until they couldn't be "used" anymore, and because most coaches didn't care about how they were doing in school, many of them left without a degree. Temple refused to let this be the case for the women he coached at TSU. His athletes knew that, as a Tigerbelle, academics came first.[93]

It was not just getting a diploma that made being a Tigerbelle meaningful. The experience of being surrounded by other Black women, making lifelong friends, and working together to make eachother better was invaluable. Martha Rae Watson, a long jumper from Long Beach, California who qualified for every Olympics between 1964 and 1976 and was on the Tigerbelles team with Tyus and Manning, appreciated that there were "no racial problems" at TSU. She said this was a "very good experience… because it showed [her] what it felt like not to have things

[91] Tyus, *Tigerbelle,* 84; Temple, *Only the Pure in Heart Survive,* 166-174.
[92] Tyus, *Tigerbelle,* 55, 87, 91.
[93] Wyomia Tyus et al., "Interview with Wyomia Tyus, September 26, 2019," *UGA Special Collections Libraries Oral Histories*; Tyus, *Tigerbelle,* chapter 3; Mamie Rallins, interview by Desiree Hargus, July 20, 2012, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports; Martha Rae Watson, interview by Brennan Berg, October 19, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

holding you back that were not in your control." According to Watson, as a Black woman at TSU, unlike elsewhere in the United States, "you had choices."[94]

For Tyus, the environment at TSU helped her to start moving past some of her grief. It was "through the running and being around other women...who'd had things happen to them and… [had] moved on" that she began to feel it was possible for her to come to terms with her father's death. Edith McGuire, who was two years ahead of Tyus at TSU and won an Olympic gold medal in the 200 meter dash at the 1964 Games, was particularly important to Tyus. The two developed a "a special bond" from the moment they met. Both women were from Georgia, both had lost their fathers at an early age, and as young women both became world-class sprinters and trained together as Tigerbelles and Olympians. Their "tried-and-true friendship" was never complicated by the fact that they competed in the same events because, explained Tyus, for Tigerbelles "competition and camaraderie were intertwined."[95]

Madeline Manning believed that this spirit of competitive camaraderie was what made the Tigerbelles such an impressive team. She remembered that when she got to TSU there were about eight women on the team who were "scholarshipped:"

> [A] few of us were Olympians…and the other girls were all national champions… it's like you're training with the world's best every day… We were a very close knit team but when it came to us competing, you can imagine national champions competing against each other in practice. It did nothing but make us better.[96]

Tyus agreed that it was knowing how to work hard as a team that made the Tigerbelles successful. This collectivity was key not only to the athletic success of the women who made up the team, but also to their positive experiences of sport. Tyus believed that one of the most

---

[94] Martha Rae Watson, interview by Brennan Berg, October 19, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.
[95]Wyomia Tyus et al., "Interview with Wyomia Tyus, September 26, 2019," *UGA Special Collections Libraries Oral Histories*; Tyus, *Tigerbelle,* 81-86, 230-233.
[96] Madeline Manning Mimms, interview by Brennan Berg, April 4, 2011, 1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

important things about being a Tigerbelle was the "attitude of mutual support" that the women cultivated: "young as we were, we were all very conscious of the need to take care of each other." It was this culture of caring and commitment to group success which ultimately made being a Tigerbelle so special.[97]

Conclusion:

The realm of physical culture that working class women in this period had access to–organized in public recreation programs and clubs, and in underfunded collegiate programs such as the Tigerbelles–contrasted sharply with the culture of many men's professional and collegiate sports teams. Indeed, the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) started as a group of Black male athletes determined to expose and change the racist and exploitative conditions which defined these American systems of sport. In *The Revolt of the Black Athlete,* Harry Edwards traces the history of integration in the NCAA noting that "the emergence of racially mixed athletic teams [meant that] black athletes found themselves in refreshingly new but sometimes brutally dehumanizing educational and athletic environments." Edwards goes on to explain how Black men in the NCAA were treated more like the property of athletic departments than they were like students, and says that after four years of exploitation and no academic support, many of these men failed to graduate. Accordingly, the early phase of the male-centered "black athletic revolt" took place on predominantly white college campuses.[98]

In a 5 part series titled "The Black Athlete--A Shameful Story" that appeared in the July 1968 issues of *Sports Illustrated*, columnist Jack Olsen explored the experiences of Black male athletes from the college ranks to the world of professional sport. Olsen documented racism throughout the entire American sporting landscape. The series argued convincingly that while

[97] Tyus, *Tigerbelle,* 230-235.
[98] Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete,* 15-25.

Black male athletes had gained some new opportunities to compete in formerly white spaces, they faced persistent racism and exploitation within these spaces.[99]

The series did not mention a single Black female athlete (in fact, the publication virtually ignored Black female athletes for the first 30 years of its existence).[100] Likewise, the OPHR did not include or consult Black female athletes in their organizing and activism. These omissions meant that the positive experiences of many Black women who competed outside of the NCAA and on the margins of male dominated sporting institutions were not considered. Thus, an already existing alternative to the exploitative culture these men were fighting against was overlooked. According to Wyomia Tyus, this was one reason why many Black women athletes didn't feel the OPHR represented them.

Tyus said it was undeniable that Black women athletes, like their male counterparts, were "let down" by rampant racism and sexism in the United States. However, she felt that this was largely inconsequential to her experience in sport, "because [she] had enough love and support from [her] family, Mr. Temple, and the Tigerbelles."[101] In this way, participating outside the world of for-profit sport meant that for many women, elite sport was experienced as a site of long-term fun and fulfillment– a way to stay in touch with the joys of physical activity, and even as an extension of the excitement and thrill of childhood play. While Black men in the OPHR were demanding full inclusion and equality within a historically white, male, and profit-driven system, Black women were practicing sport at a remove from the demands of profit and the logic of individualism.

---

[99] Jack Olsen, "The Black Athlete--A Shameful Story," *Sports Illustrated*, July 1, 1968, https://vault.si.com/vault/1968/07/01/43084#&gid=ci0258c07be00026ef&pid=43084---005---image.

[100] Between September 2, 1957 when tennis star Althea Gibson was featured on the cover of the magazine and November 20, 1985, when basketball player Cheryl Miller was featured, not a single African-American woman appeared on the cover of the magazine. This is despite 144 covers featuring white women, 394 featuring black men, and 66 featuring track and field, a sport that Black women dominated having won 28 Olympic medals over this time period

[101] Tyus, *Tigerbelle*, 156.

Centering the experiences of Black women athletes in 1968 suggests that it was the structure of men's sport itself that created the exploitative and dehumanizing conditions that Black men in the OPHR were protesting. Further, centering Black women allows alternative modes of resistance to come into view. Women in this period, and Black women in particular, recognized the persistence of racism and sexism within the world of sport; however, rather than only using sport as a platform on which to denounce these problems, they used it as a site of liberatory praxis; a place in which to imagine and act out alternative ways of being in the world and of relating to each other and themselves.

In our own historical moment, this use of sport is particularly pertinent. In the wake of the "2020" Tokyo Olympics (which took place in empty stadiums, in an official state of emergency), and as the physically and mentally abusive conditions that pervade men's, women's, and even children's sport in the United States today are increasingly exposed, it is clear that the need to rethink the role that sport plays in our society is long overdue.[102] Recognizing the potential pleasures of sport–which were highlighted in images and memories of women who competed at the 1968 Olympics, right before American women were incorporated into the "male model" of sport with Title IX in 1972–might serve as a useful starting place for imagining a future in which sport functions solely as a practice of freedom.

[102] While there have been a seemingly endless stream of recent articles detailing abusive conditions in American sport, the story of the abuse suffered by teenage track phenom Mary Cain is particularly illuminating: Lindsay Crouse, "I Was the Fastest Girl in America, Until I Joined Nike," *New York Times,* November 7, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/07/opinion/nike-running-mary-cain.html.

Sources

Primary Sources

1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports.

"Bob Beamon's World Record Long Jump - 1968 Olympics" *YouTube* video, 2:33. January 21, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEt_Xgg8dzc;

Edwards, Harry. *The Revolt of the Black Athlete,* 50th Anniversary ed. Urbana, Chicago, Springfeild: University of Illinois Press, 2018.

"Full Olympic Film--Mexico City 1968 Olympics." *YouTube* video, 1:26:08. July 18, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVsQYRZgb10.

International Olympic Committee. "Factsheet: Women in the Olympic Movement," PDF file, July 23, 2021. https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Olympic-Movement/Factsheets/Women-in-the-Olympic-Movement.pdf.

Manning, Madeline Jackson and Jerry B. Jenkins. *Running for Jesus.* Waco, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1977.

Muchmore, Jim. "Tommie Smith - Men's 200m (WR) - 1968 Olympics." *YouTube* video, 0:58. August 28, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cI8KVFHkCzU;

Olsen, Jack "The Black Athlete--A Shameful Story," *Sports Illustrated*, July 1, 1968, https://vault.si.com/vault/1968/07/01/43084#&gid=ci0258c07be00026ef&pid=43084---005---image.

ProQuest Historical Newspapers

Shatner Method. "Black Power Salute Rocks 1968 Olympics - ABC News - October 17, 1968." *YouTube* video, 3:30. November 13, 2018 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZttN9hPvx4

"Some Pre-Race Funk, The Trick for an Olympic Double" *YouTube* video, 9:29. February 16, 2017 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn3hMAvOYfQ;

Sports Illustrated Vault, https://vault.si.com/vault/archives.

Team USA, "Freedom for Gold - Gold Medal Moments: Tommie Smith." *YouTube* video, 2:50. July 30, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kvn6txTn1Tg&list=RDfEg3uNqsTYQ&index=15

Temple, Ed and B'Lou Carter. *Only the Pure in Heart Survive.* Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980.

Tyus, Wyomia and Elizabeth Terzakis. *Tigerbelle: The Wyomia Tyus Story.* Brooklyn: Akashic Books, 2018.

Tyus, Wyomia, et al., "Interview with Wyomia Tyus, September 26, 2019," *UGA Special Collections Libraries Oral Histories*.

Secondary Sources

Arial, Cat M. *Passing the Baton: Black Women Track Stars and American Identity*. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2020.

Cahn, Susan K. *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Women's Sport.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Carlos, John and Dave Zirin. *The John Carlos Story*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought.* New York: Routledge, 2000.

Crouse, Lyndsay. "I Was the Fastest Girl in America, Until I Joined Nike." *New York Times,* November 7, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/07/opinion/nike-running-mary-cain.html.

Davis, Michael D. *Black American Women in Olympic Track and Field.* North Carolina: Mcfarland and Company Inc. Publishers, 1992.

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *In Praise of Athletic Beauty.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Hall, Stuart. *Cultural Studies 1983 A Theoretical History.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.

Hartmann, Douglas. *Race Culture and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and their Aftermath.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Henderson, Simon. *Sidelined: How American Sports Challenged the Black Freedom Struggle.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013.

Kelley, Robin D.G. *Race Rebels: Culture Politics and the Black Working Class.* New York: The Free Press, 1994.

Lansbury, Jennifer H. *A Spectacular Leap: Black Women Athletes in 20th Century America.* Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2014.

Lorde, Audre. "Uses of the Erotic" in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches.* Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007.

Neary, Timothy B. *Crossing Parish Boundaries: Race, Sports, and Catholic Youth in Chicago, 1914-1954.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Pieper, Lyndsay. *Sex Testing: Gender Policing in Women's Sport.* Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016.

"Remembering Ed Temple" Tennessee State University website, https://www.americanquarterly.org/submit/guidelines.html.

Rinehart, Robert E. and Jayne Caudwell, *Sport and the Social Significance of Pleasure.* London: Routledge, 2015.

Tricard, Louise Meade. *American Women's Track and Field, 1895-1980*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 1996.

Wiggins, David K. *Glory Bound*: *Black Athletes in White America.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997.