

A Mile In My Shoes

By: Nick Mystrom

Night and Day

Some people were appalled at Fisher DeBerry's comments last month. I was appalled that he had to apologize.

DeBerry, the head coach of the Air Force football team, said "It's very obvious to me the other day that the other team had a lot more Afro-American players than we did, and they ran a lot faster than we did. It just seems to be that way, that Afro-American kids can run very, very well"

On first glance, the use of the term 'Afro-American' is noticeable only because it is an improper (and arcane) attempt to say 'African-American'. Other than that, I have no problem with anything he said, nor should anyone. He didn't say anyone is smarter or dumber than anyone else, nor that anyone is richer or poorer than anyone else—he only said that, in his experience, he has found that black athletes are faster than white athletes. Well, I have found that to be true in my experience, as well. That is not, of course, to say that there are not fast white guys and slow black guys. Conduct a scientific study if you want. I don't choose to. I choose to simply look at the last thirty world champions in the 100 meters, the racial makeup of the speed positions in the NFL in the last twenty years, and the racial makeup of major college basketball and the NBA.

Anyone who has ever been involved in speed-oriented sports must agree with his statement, they may not say it to the press, but they must agree with it. I have played football and basketball my whole life and, no matter what any politically correct announcer tells me, there is a difference when it comes to black and white athletes. I've heard all the theories ranging from higher thigh muscles to fast twitch fibers to socio-economic conditions. The fact of the matter is that I have no idea why black athletes are different than white athletes, I just know that they *are* different—and, in most cases, superior.

I realize that any mention of race in the context of sports is a political hot button. Some of that is probably due to the idiotic comments of Jimmy the Greek (theorizing that black athletes are superior due to breeding during slavery) and Al Campanis (saying that blacks lacked the mental abilities necessary to be a big league manager). I say: don't let the asinine comments of two bigots preclude us from discussing what amounts to a huge pink elephant dancing on the 50 yard line of Mile High Stadium.

Fisher DeBerry may have apologized, but he only said what he, and every other coach in America, knows to be a self-evident truth. I never saw a study showing that Pizza tastes better than brussel sprouts, or that Donald Trump has bad hair, or that people from Maine are generally more polite than people from Philly or that OJ lied in court, but I know these things to be true. They are self-evident truths, we shouldn't have to apologize for them.