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S&S SPORTS BUSINESS JOURNAL

JULY 15-21, 2019
VOL. 14 ISSUE 14 • \$7.95



CHANGING THE CULTURE

Insiders and experts describe how teams, leagues and organizations can adopt a more inclusive mindset in front offices and in their communities. PAGE 21

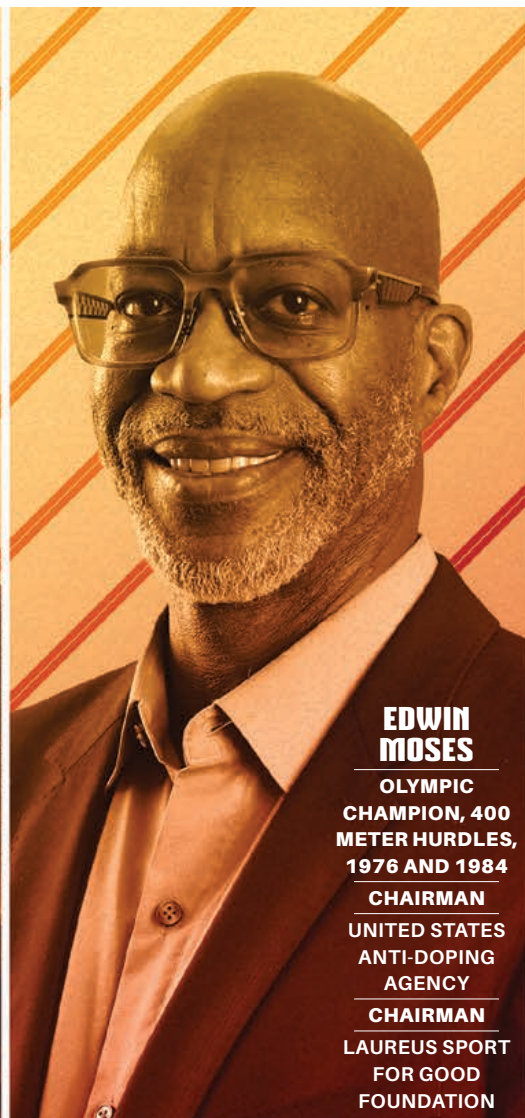
Nzinga Shaw, Edwin Moses,
David Wall Rice and Adrian Williams

IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

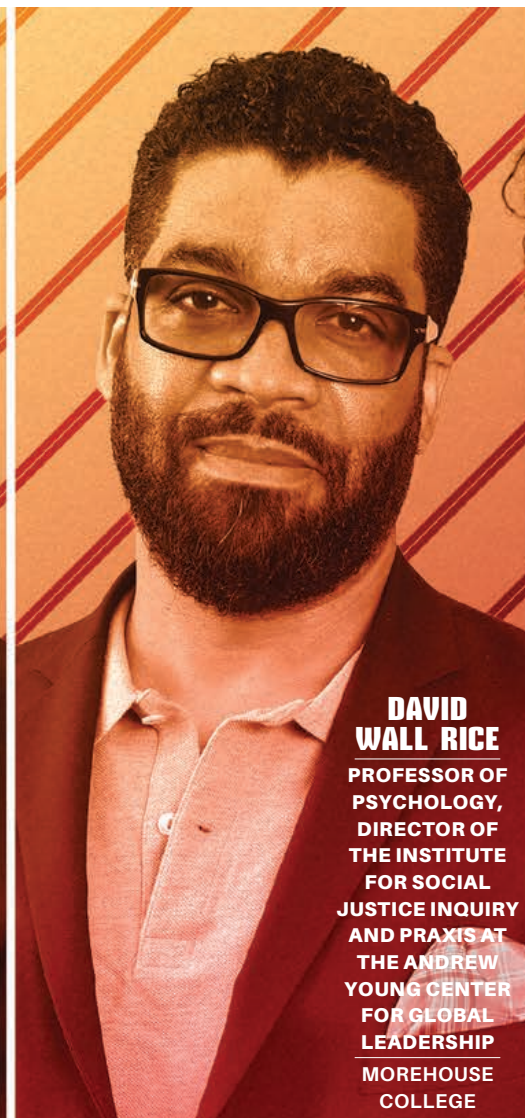
The Courage to Change



ADRIAN WILLIAMS
SENIOR
DIRECTOR OF
DIVERSITY
AND
COMMUNITY
MARKETING
ATLANTA BRAVES



EDWIN MOSES
OLYMPIC
CHAMPION, 400
METER HURDLES,
1976 AND 1984
CHAIRMAN
UNITED STATES
ANTI-DOPING
AGENCY
CHAIRMAN
LAUREUS SPORT
FOR GOOD
FOUNDATION



DAVID WALL RICE
PROFESSOR OF
PSYCHOLOGY,
DIRECTOR OF
THE INSTITUTE
FOR SOCIAL
JUSTICE INQUIRY
AND PRAXIS AT
THE ANDREW
YOUNG CENTER
FOR GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP
MOREHOUSE
COLLEGE



NZINGA SHAW
CHIEF
DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION
OFFICER
ATLANTA HAWKS
AND STATE
FARM ARENA

THE SPORTS INDUSTRY'S willingness to adopt a mindset of inclusion and diversity of thought was top of mind last month when Sports Business Journal invited thought leaders in diversity and inclusion to participate in a roundtable discussion at the offices of the Atlanta Business Chronicle. The four individuals brought different insights based on their personal and professional experiences — the Atlanta Hawks' **Nzinga Shaw** and the Atlanta Braves' **Adrian Williams** each from inside professional teams; **Edwin Moses** as an Olympic champion in the 1970s and '80s and now as a leader in domestic and international organizations around sport; and **David Wall Rice** as a researcher and psychology professor at Morehouse College.

The conversation, led by SBJ's Abe Madkour and Betty Gomes, covered inclusive leadership, building a diverse hiring pipeline and buy-in from senior leadership to attract and retain a diverse workforce and fan base. The discussion was edited for clarity and brevity.

Visit sportsbusinessjournal.com all this week to see video excerpts of the discussion.

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IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

PROGRESS ON DIVERSITY IN SPORTS BUSINESS

We've talked a lot about the efforts of the sports business and the sports industry to become more diverse, specifically in the executive ranks. In 2019, where are we?

► **NZINGA SHAW:** The sports industry has come a long way in the past several years as it relates to having people of color, women, LGBTQ in positions of power. What I will say is that because there are an influx of diversity and inclusion officers in sports [and] entertainment, I think that they have had a concerted effort and have been very intentional about identifying talent on the outside, looking in new and unexpected places for people to add value in the senior ranks. And so we are starting to see an influx of these type of individuals within sports organizations. I don't think that we would get an A if we're grading this in terms of our ability to really penetrate the industry the way that we should. But I certainly think that we are far ahead of where we have been in the past several years.

► **ADRIAN WILLIAMS:** I would echo that. And in Major League Baseball, I think it's a really interesting space right now. They've created a diversity council where the team presidents and owners are actually coming together and having conversations around diversity and inclusion, which also includes the ideas on how are you getting more diverse senior leaders into baseball, and what does that mean from a business perspective, as well as thinking about diversity on the field. ... I also think it's really interesting that the city of Atlanta is really taking the lead as it relates to senior leaders and diversity. I know you were one of the first [speaking to Shaw], if not the first in the NBA, and I'm one of the first in MLB.

► **DAVID WALL RICE:** I'm a little bit of a fish out of water here because I'm a researcher, psychology professor and a fan, right? So I'm somebody who's on the outside. So I certainly do think, though, that what's been said resonates. It seems like we're far ahead of where we were, if I look at and take the temperature about five years ago or so. The thing that I would say is that it becomes important for us to continue to push. I think diversity doesn't just look diverse, it becomes important to have diverse voices and diverse perspectives. A lot of times what can happen is, because you have this person who is from this population, or from this group, the thinking is that, "OK, well, here we go. We're diverse as default."

Being that sport is such a juggernaut in terms of being able to present as influential and as a demarcator of where popular culture is, I look forward to more progress and push.

► **EDWIN MOSES:** My perspective is very different. Because when I was competing many, many years ago, you could barely find a sports journalist at a football game, black sports journalist. Football, basketball, there were very few, just a handful nationally. And my sport was international, so I saw a lot more diversity internationally because you have people from all over the world. But there certainly has been a change. The U.S. Olympic Committee was a very non-diverse organization when I competed, but it's changed a lot and they're taking a lot of different steps. But I'm very happy to see people that look like me, people of color in all segments of sports in the United States. And because you have people like Nzinga who is in a position to recruit more people, discuss what's needed with the upper management and draw people in, it's very, very good.

Where are the pain points? Where do they remain, where you still find a little bit of resistance in this process?

► **MOSES:** I was at a conference during the Super Bowl, the GladiatHers conference. And they were talking about diversity. And it was mostly women. And I stood up and made a comment that, one of the problems that I've seen and that I know exists, is that there's a lot of ... situations where there are simply white men who are waiting to roll uphill in certain situations that have been around. [They] have the tenure, and [are] just waiting for the position versus [organizations] going out and finding diversity.



NZINGA SHAW said there is an opportunity at the senior level of sports operations for greater diversity.

"When you are in a sports organization which is primarily run by men, and you happen to be one of the only women in the room, you've got to be an A-type personality if your voice is going to be heard."

Just a couple of days ago, I had a conversation with a gentleman here in town who is in real estate. And he said he was looking for black executives in real estate [for] a real estate investment company that he owned. And he said he couldn't find any. ... And I told him, "If you can't find it here in Atlanta, frankly you're not looking. Because you're in a place where perhaps you have more people like that in diverse businesses, CFOs, college presidents here in Atlanta than almost anywhere in the country, people of color." And I told him, "You're not looking hard enough, because it's right underneath your nose." So that is a problem.

SHAW: If we look collectively at the leagues and the teams, another area for improvement would be at the very, very senior levels of the operation side. There are obviously great stories like Masai Ujiri and Lloyd Pierce, and coaches and GMs that are starting to break into the sports industry at the highest levels. But there is a vast majority of these positions being held by white men. I mean, I look at my league at the NBA, and looking at all of the team presidents and CEOs, we have one woman who is in charge of an organization, Cynthia [Marshall] who runs the Dallas Mavericks. Other than that, they're all white men. And so I think there's an opportunity for us to really think at the most senior levels of the organization that run strategy, that really think about how the organization is making money and impacting the bottom line.

Someone told me recently they thought women feel less welcome in a sports business organization than potentially people of color. Do you sense that at all? Are we seeing more progress in either gender or ethnic hiring?

► **SHAW:** I'm in an interesting position because I happen to be a woman and I'm a person of color. I will say that I do not feel that my gender has been a hindrance or has made me feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. What I will say is that, when you are in a sports organization which is primarily run by men, and you happen to be one of the only women in the room, you've got to be an A-type personality if your voice is going to be heard. And so that is some of the pushback and the challenge that I have felt. Although I do consider myself to be an A-type individual, I will say that I've had to exercise my voice a lot louder, or perhaps interject before someone finishes their statement, to be heard.

► **WILLIAMS:** What we try to do, at least at the Braves, is help educate our senior leaders and provide them opportunities for understanding and learning, which helps us push forward as we think about diversity, both in the workforce, on the field, and then as we think about our business as well. And we've seen that over the last two to three years there's been a shift in the mindset, and a lot of that's just because we've had other diverse thinkers in the room. That has allowed us to grow our fan base, that's allowed us to really diversify our workforce. And you see that change in our business, but also in our front office.

► **RICE:** One of the pain points, to use your language, is this idea of perspective. And I think it oftentimes comes from the whiteness that is in the room at the upper level. So there are

tremendous narratives and stories of progress. But a lot of times those narratives and stories are thought of as kind of secondary. Who people are, and their diversity that they occupy, oftentimes is not considered as central. It's secondary to, "OK, well let's get the job done," in terms of the sport, or in terms of making money, in terms of the commerce and things like that. And I think that the more that we put as center who individuals are allows not only for the sport to grow and for the impact, but also for there to be a greater degree of performance from the player.

It's very important for us to look at how it is that we continue to agitate and to push mindset and this idea of what does it mean to be diverse. And I think that meaning, especially within the culture, the zeitgeist that we're in now, takes on a particular type of resonance because of the sociocultural political space that we're occupying.

As soon as we see the next owner of one of these teams, be it LeBron James or any other African American ... that could be a game changer in terms of diversity. Do you agree with that in terms of, people of color or women, owning professional sports organizations being a relative point?

► **RICE:** Absolutely. I mean, it's a step, right? And so we understand that that doesn't mean we've won. It's kind of like looking at, "OK, well we've had a black president of the United States, so here it is, we've arrived at the promised land." That becomes a step forward in progress, a significant one that we can kind of substantively build on.

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OUR DIFFERENCES MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

THE MIAMI HEAT AND AMERICAN AIRLINES ARENA ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT THEIR PLAYERS
AND FANS WITH A TEAM AS DIVERSE AS THEY ARE.



IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

Are we still at that point where people aren't looking hard enough or in the right places for diverse talent? And what do we tell recruiters who are getting a much more powerful role in the sports business to find that talent?

SHAW: You have to have recruiters that look like the demographics that they're trying to touch, because I think when you're trying to attract talent to an industry that they might not be familiar with, there's a lot of uncertainty. And so when you're in an uncertain situation, you find familiarity to find some level of comfort. And so if we only have people from the majority recruiting these positions, there's already a disconnect, right? And then I also think that we have to go to new and unexpected places. If we know that the sports industry is challenged, if we know that the majority of people that work in professional sports are men and the majority of them are white, and we only poach from sports organizations, well then we're never going to find diverse talent.

So we've got to start looking outside of our industry, and start looking for core competencies that would make a person successful in a role. ... We should say, "We're looking for people that have the ability to be analytic. People that have the ability to do research. People that have demonstrated innovation," and whatever competencies we're looking for. And then go to different industries to find those people. So, it's OK to take somebody out of consulting. Or it's OK to take someone out of the advertising industry and bring them into sports. Because now we're going to introduce our industry to some innovative ways of working.

MOSES: There's a phenomena that I'm sure we're all familiar with, the meeting before the meeting at board meetings, and these owners meetings, or whatever it may be. There's generally a meeting of people who are heavyweight decision-makers. And many times people of color are not invited to those meetings, the dinner the night before the actual board meeting starts in the morning, where real decisions are made. Or the agenda is generally set or agreed to move in a certain direction. And many times people of color are not invited to those meetings. I found out about this while I was an Athletes' Commission member ... at the U.S. Olympic Committee, that there was always an agenda that had started a few days before or the night before, and we were not invited.



EDWIN MOSES said he learned early on how a board's real decisions were often made.

So, having learned that, then as athletes we started conducting our own meetings, and asking questions and finding out exactly what the agenda was planned on being, and how we were going to intervene. And that's pretty much how I learned how to do business and work in a board environment by figuring these things out. ... I didn't have any mentors or anyone to explain this to me. I basically just had to learn by seeing, and learn by reacting. But that phenomena is very, very powerful. And when you talk about the owners of the teams and the leagues, and decisions about who's going to be even able to buy a club, there are decisions at that level that will preclude a black billionaire from buying a club, and it's happened before. So those are the kinds of systemic problems that exist and are very, very difficult to overcome.

"When you talk about the owners of the teams and the leagues, and decisions about who's going to be even able to buy a club, there are decisions at that level that will preclude a black billionaire from buying a club, and it's happened before. So those are the kinds of systemic problems that exist and are very, very difficult to overcome."

THE ROONEY RULE AND BUILDING A DIVERSE HIRING PIPELINE

Does something like a Rooney Rule work? Would it work on the business side?

SHAW: I don't like the Rooney Rule, I'm going to be honest with you. I think that the intention behind it was very good. And the NFL at the time, when they implemented the

Rooney Rule, was really trying to make a very big statement about including people of color in the recruitment process for head coaching jobs. But

when you really think about the framework for the Rooney Rule, it can create a lot of bad feelings, and a lot of bad sentiment surrounding the actual candidates that are put forward. Because you don't want anyone to feel like they were just meeting a quota, or just there to check a box as a means of an exercise, versus as really trying to determine if this person could fulfill the position in a meaningful way.

And then, if they actually do in fact get hired and get the job, there might be some bad feelings on the other side from folks within the organization that, "This is not the person that I wanted to hire, but it almost feels like affirmative action and I was forced to do so." I understand what the NFL was trying to do, but I think in execution and in theory, it's not the best way to include women, people of color, or anybody with a difference into the hiring process.

WILLIAMS: The idea of being intentional about your recruitment is really important. It's not about making a mandate, to Nzinga's point, that can create animosity within an organization. But if you're intentional about your recruitment and ensuring that your candidate pool is diverse ... looking for the best people, and that person interviews and goes through the same process, that allows everybody to have really a good feeling in regards to a person of color or diversity coming into the role. Because I think everybody within an organization starts to feel like this person is capable, qualified and won the job.

RICE: The hope is that you put a Rooney Rule in there so that the culture changes. It's kind of like making a drop and hopefully the ripple is, "Oh, we got to get better than this. We don't need a rule to tell us that we need to diversify in the ways that we should already be doing." So is the spirit still there for the ... I mean, does the spirit of the Rooney Rule work?

► **MOSES:** I think in terms of leadership style. ... My leadership style is that I like working with people who are smarter than me. ... I'm not intimidated by whether it's a woman, someone gay, person of color, whoever it is. If they can do the job and they're smarter than me, I want them on my team. There's in some cases an aversion to having someone on your team that you may perceive is smarter than you, or more sophisticated, or knows more about strategy, or has better communication skills, or leadership skills. I think that that feeling is out there, and it's under the radar. But that's something that people of color have to deal with all the time. You can be too smart, too good to work yourself into an organization, and be someone who will have a long lifespan in an organization or setting.

► **WILLIAMS:** If you were to look at the landscape of the professional teams here in the city, you've got three team presidents that I look at and say are progressive in their thinking. ... Those leaders were very comfortable and intentional in saying, "We need to diversify." And so when they started looking at people, they wanted to have a candidate pool that was very, very diverse, and then they made a concerted effort to put women or people of color in leadership positions. But that really starts from the mindset of the leader, to say, "Hey, I am interested and I know that my organization is going to be better if I have diversity of thought at the senior levels." And I think that this market, and our teams, are a prime example of that.

► **SHAW:** You really have to engage talent in a way that is a long relationship, not just recruit a person and fill a position quickly. But sometimes you really have to get to know candidates over the course of a year to understand where they can fit in properly, how they can add value. And a lot of it is not based on what the eye can see.

Do you think the pipeline is getting better? When you're seeing young people come into an organization or apply, is it more diverse?

► **WILLIAMS:** The leagues are doing a good job of starting to create pipelines. ... There is a specific desire from the league, and programs in place for education. So whether that's understanding analytics, understanding various parts of the business, looking at ways at which the education starts. And then from there, a direct pipeline into organizations. So, there are diverse candidates that are coming in from the MLB diversity pipeline that go into the clubs, and at anywhere from entry level to middle management.

There is definitely an effort in regards to both recruitment and building a pipeline. And MLB is pretty deliberate. They are going out, and they are going to various schools, recruiting, diverse candidates, both women, males, on the field, off the field.

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RECENT DIVERSE HIRES ACROSS SPORTS

NBA

SUMMER 2018

► **Natalie Nakase**, player development coach, Los Angeles Clippers. Started as an intern with the Clippers' video department in 2012.

► **Jenny Boucek**, assistant coach, Dallas Mavericks. Team's first female coach. Served as an assistant coach or head coach for almost two decades in the WNBA.

► **Kristi Toliver**, assistant coach, Washington Wizards. Hired as assistant coach during Summer League and was a full-time assistant during 2018-19 season. Currently playing in her 11th WNBA season and her third with the Washington Mystics.

OCTOBER 2018

► **Chasity Melvin**, assistant coach, Charlotte Hornets' G League team, the Greensboro Swarm. Played 12 seasons in the WNBA.

NOVEMBER 2018

► **Sue Bird**, basketball operations associate, Denver Nuggets. Has played 16 seasons with the Seattle Storm (out for current season with knee injury).

DECEMBER 2018

► **Kelly Krauskopf**, assistant general manager (first woman in such a role in the NBA), Indiana Pacers. Was president and GM of the WNBA's Indiana Fever for 17 years.

JUNE 2019

► **Lindsay Gottlieb**, assistant coach, Cleveland Cavaliers. Previously served as the women's basketball coach at the University of California-Berkeley. First women's collegiate head coach to be recruited by the NBA, and only the eighth woman to have an assistant coach or player development role in the NBA.

► **Swin Cash**, vice president of basketball operations and team development, New Orleans Pelicans. Played 15 years in the WNBA.

NHL

AUGUST 2018

► **Hayley Wickenheiser**, assistant director of player development, Toronto Maple Leafs. She is a four-time Olympic gold medalist with the Canadian women's national team.

NFL

2018

► **Phoebe Schecter** worked with the Buffalo Bills' tight ends and assisted the offensive, defensive and special teams quality control coaches as a seasonlong internship.

SPRING 2019

► **Maral Javadifar**, assistant strength and conditioning coach, and **Lori Locust**, assistant defensive line coach, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the first team to have two women assistant coaches. Locust attended Temple University and played four years of women's semi-professional football. Javadifar played basketball at Pace University.

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

SPRING 2019

► **Kevin Warren**, selected as commissioner of the Big Ten Conference. First black commissioner to lead a power five conference. He is currently chief operating officer for the Minnesota Vikings.

PGA TOUR

JANUARY 2019

► **Alex Baldwin**, president, Web.com Tour (now Korn Ferry Tour). First female president at the PGA Tour and was previously vice president of marketing partnerships at the tour.



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INCLUSION IS
ESSENTIAL**

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IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

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► **MOSES:** I attended the FLAME [Finding Leaders Among Minorities Everywhere] program that the United States Olympic Committee puts on, which is a very good program. I was there, John Carlos was there, quite a few executives, a very diverse crowd. They must have had about 50 young people from around the country — law students, sports business, kinesiology, HBCU kids — it was very, very diverse. And just to talk to them about our experiences, and also the expectations of working in the Olympic sports side. But I was really glad to be there. I've been asked to come before, but this was the first year that I made it, and I'm very pleased to see that the thought has been taken, and the program is working very, very well. It's very, very good.

► **SHAW:** Absolutely, we're thinking about pipeline. I'm even thinking about emerging demographics that we're trying to really build relationships with. For instance, the Hispanic community here in Atlanta. Atlanta has a population of 6 million people, 1.3 million are Hispanic. And right now we don't have a large number of Hispanic fans for the Atlanta Hawks, and for the NBA in general. And so, when we think about talent, we're thinking about, well, do we have bilingual people in our organization that are able to help us understand and translate marketing messages, or even navigate the building when you come in. ... I'm seeing totally different candidates than I was five years ago. Because it's translating to fan experience, it's translating to our marketing efforts, and really how we build our business.

Having those positions of ownership, when that is your responsibility, your purview, that can allow an organization to be strategic, correct?

► **SHAW:** 100%. I mean, you have to have a chief diversity and inclusion officer. Because someone has to have thought leadership and expertise, and be able to really engage across the organization. So not being housed out of human resources, but really have deep reach into all facets of the organization in order to get this stuff right. I mean, you wouldn't have a marketing campaign without a chief marketing officer, right?

But most of the time it was out of HR.

► **SHAW:** It was out of HR, and I think that was the wrong model. Because this is not only a human capital issue. I worked with my sponsorship team. When we were doing the naming-rights deal for State Farm Arena, when we changed from Philips Arena to State Farm Arena, I went on the pitch with the team. I wasn't sitting there, I was actually engaged in the pitch, and talking about all of the community activities that we do and how we can collaborate effectively with State Farm as a partner. It was a major part of winning the business. I collaborate with marketing oftentimes. I collaborate with our foundation. Diversity officers really, really need to be empowered to work across the business. It's not an HR function.

► **WILLIAMS:** When I got hired, my role was diversity and inclusion. But again, when you think about leadership, our leadership was like, "But you're going to be housed in marketing. And although you will impact the workforce, and supplier and the team, we also want you to impact our fans as well." So, being housed intentionally into marketing meant that I was able to work with our marketing department, our sponsorship team, our media team. And through that, working with our naming-rights partner SunTrust on how are they activating their sponsorship. As they're spending \$25 [million] to \$30 million, what are the various touchpoints? And we are leading them in regards to how they reach out to the Hispanic and African American communities.

"Diversity and inclusion is about community. It's about how it is that you value the place in which you live and work. And how important is that to you? It should be the cornerstone. And if it's not, then you're doing something wrong."

LEADERSHIP'S ROLE IN D&I

How vital is it for ownership to be on board with diversity and inclusion?

► **SHAW:** They can't be on board with it, they have to drive it. I mean, we're all on board. The people that work in sports organizations, we get why it's important because we're on the front lines. But if the owners are not driving it, then it becomes stale, stagnant, and then we will not make any progress. And so, I think it takes a level of braveness. Even when I think about my organization and me becoming the first chief diversity and inclusion officer; my CEO [Steve Koonin] had to make the decision of whether or not he was going to push and fight for that position to be implemented.

And so I challenged him. I said, "I think you should implement the role. You're the CEO. I mean, who's going to stop you?" And then he came back a couple of days later and said, "You know, I discussed this notion that you put up with my wife. And she makes all the decisions in our house. So she decided that we're going to hire a chief diversity officer." And that's literally how the job came about. And so I ended up applying and becoming the first. But you know, it takes a level of courage from the white men at the top who are in charge, whether owners, or CEOs, or GMs. They've got to take a chance not only on CDIOs, but on people that are different in leadership roles.



DAVID WALL RICE said a sports organization is a mirror to the community it serves.

► **WILLIAMS:** My job's the only one that exists in Major League Baseball. So, a little bit different story, but Derek [Schiller, Braves president of business] came to me and said, "Are you willing to be a change agent within our organization? Because our business is changing, we're changing location, and so we need to think about our business differently. And in order for this job to work, you have to be willing to fight some battles. You have to be willing to be that change." And so I think, having us together, that's important. And I go back to this city, this city really driving diversity across sport.

► **RICE:** I'm curious about how that becomes important, being that this is the cradle of the civil rights movement, looking at social justice and social impact. Being able to have folks who are in this space, who perhaps are more comfortable. I'm hesitant to say take a chance — I understand what's meant there — but who are comfortable being a part of the community in that very intentional way. Not only having people around who are able to be sounding boards, but folks who are able to give direction and speak truth to power. That becomes so very important, and perhaps something that's unique here to where we can be leaders within the sport industry and business.

INCLUSION IN THE EQUATION

The second half of that diversity and inclusion discussion — the inclusion part — seems like a lot of times that gets either lost or isn't executed as well as getting people in the door. Once they're in the door, how do you get their voices heard?

► **SHAW:** You have to impact your corporate culture, and how you receive different types of people. That's what inclusion is about. It's really about how are they received and how are they able to show up as their authentic selves without fear of retaliation, or fear that they are going to be mistreated if they reveal the parts of themselves that are different from the main culture? And something that we've been doing at the Hawks, which has been wildly successful in my opinion, is curating a series called Courageous Conversations that happens monthly. And we bring thought leaders from outside of our industry in to tackle tough topics. Like race, privilege, sexual violence — goodness, we've had everything from physical disability, the list goes on.

Two years after starting Courageous Conversations, I've seen the culture shift. And that's inclusion, that's what it looks like. It's not a formula. Diversity to me is a formula. Diversity means difference, it means tangible things that we can see that are unique. And so I can check boxes and count numbers and say, "I've got my metrics all together." And that's 30% of the D&I equation. But 70% is, are these people going to stick around? Do they feel good in here? Are they reaching their maximum potential? Are they being allowed to add value in a way that is tangible to the business? That's the inclusion part that we've got to get right.

► **RICE:** You're a mirror, in many respects, to the community that you're servicing and/or that you're working with. So the idea is, and I love, you know, how is it that people can show up and be their authentic selves? Because the thing that I'm very much interested in is, where is their authentic engage-

ment? ... How is it that you can be an authentic contributor to the community? And what we're talking about in terms of levels here, I know that there's a bottom line. You know, we're talking about business. How is it that we're going to get a stronger yield in terms of what it is that we're putting out there as a product?

You're going to get a stronger yield in my estimation, if you're really connected to the communities that you say that you're attached to. So, the more voices that you have from said communities, the more diverse it is, the more that you're able to be inclusive and really again, represent that mirror that you say that you are representing.

► **WILLIAMS:** You know it's interesting, because one of the things that we've tried to do at the Braves is, we start talking about our Hispanic outreach. One of the reasons why we are really intentional to Hispanic outreach is 30% of our players on the field are Latino. ... We've got to build connection to our key players, but also too, as we think about how we're building new fans, we are thinking about how are we truly authentic? And that is the key for us in everything that we do on the Los Bravos platform, is really ensuring that we: A) are mirroring what our community looks like; and B) the voice that we're using connects to our community.

Our fan base, whether it's international or domestic, like, "I now have a place to come. When I come to SunTrust Park, I feel like I am welcomed here." And as we have not only our Spanish interpreter, but a full Hispanic content team on social and digital, we are now able to capture all of those experiences. So when somebody walks in, you have somebody from guest services that's able to speak to you in your language if you need to, you have somebody on the field. And then in the social and digital space, we also are connecting with you, and we're going to show you and highlight you at the stadium. All because we want you to feel like you're welcome when you come into our ballpark.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



Photo Credit: Paul Williams III

IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



ADRIAN WILLIAMS said his role reaches across recruiting, marketing, sponsorship and media.

“If you’re intentional about your recruitment and ensuring that your candidate pool is diverse ... looking for the best people and that person interviews and goes through the same process, that allows everyone to have a really good feeling in regards to having a person of color or diversity coming into the role.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

And that’s the same for LGBTQ, African American, women, that’s what we’re trying to do to make sure, authentically, we are connecting with them so that they feel like they are part of our organization and our fan base.

A few years ago sports wasn’t seen as the most welcoming environment. Do you agree?

► **SHAW:** I see two instances, at least at the Atlanta Hawks organization, where fans did not feel welcome when I first got here, and [it’s] starting to shift. The first instance is with the LGBTQ community, and the second instance is with the community that has sensory needs, like autism and PTSD. You know, when I started my job, there were no professional sports teams in Atlanta marching in Pride. The Pride parade has been going on for 47 years now. And it was just mind-boggling, because there are so many different sports properties in the Atlanta market. ... And so, for the sports community to not engage or at least show allyship, seemed very strange to me. And especially because Atlanta has the third largest population of out people second to New York and San Francisco. And so, I will say that we began to become very intentional about that community.

The sensory population, that’s another diverse community. There are about 20% of families, at least in the Atlanta market, that have some type of sensory need, whether it’s a child with autism, or a family member who served in the war who now has PTSD. And these are certainly challenges. Because a sports environment is very loud, it’s very sensory overload. I mean, even for a person that doesn’t have those experiences, it can be a lot. And so, a lot of the feedback that we’ve received is, it’s hard to bring our entire family to a game because there’s not

a room that can accommodate these needs. And so we just partnered with an organization, Culture City, about a year and a half ago. We’re the second NBA team to build a sensory inclusion room within our arena which allows families to say, “The kids don’t have to be separated,” or, “Johnny and Billy don’t have to stay at home because Susie has this need. Everybody’s coming. We’re all going to sit in this room that can accommodate us. We can watch the game and still have a good night out.”

So we have to think about inclusion beyond, again, those visual things, like the race, and the gender, and we have to start thinking a lot deeper about what does inclusion mean. And are we drawing people into our industry in a way where they feel like it’s authentic?

What’s the message that you would like to leave in terms of inclusive leadership and building a diverse environment?

► **RICE:** I would go back to the beginning and say it’s about community. Diversity and inclusion is about community. It’s about how it is that you value the place in which you live and work. And how important is that to you? It should be the cornerstone. And if it’s not, then you’re doing something wrong.

► **SHAW:** Diversity and inclusion is about courage and empathy. You have to be courageous enough to have conversations that help bring a level of understanding that you may not have started with. And you have to be empathetic and understand that people are struggling, people are going through situations in their everyday lives, and are hurting. And so we have to figure out how to help people be happy. Sports brings people together. It’s the one industry that can galvanize a crowd and unify people across disciplines, across demographics. Let’s use that same energy within our organizations to make our industry better.

► **MOSES:** I work for an organization, and our mantra is sports has a power to change the world. And when I was at Pepperdine getting my MBA, if I look back now, many, many years later, there were two academic choices that I made in my curriculum that really have paid off. No. 1 would be psychology of organizations, how power is structured, power, discipline, all the elements, and the psychology of how people work. And the second one that was important to me is the theory of organization, organizational development. How organizations work, how they’re put together, how these systems work together.

Those two have been two of the most important academic lessons that I’ve learned. You can learn finance, you can learn statistics, you can learn accounting, things like that. But in an organization, in terms of being in a diverse organization, it’s going to be about people. How people think, making people feel comfortable and treating people fairly.

► **WILLIAMS:** Being open-minded and having a willingness to make change. But also, as you have that willingness to make change, that might disrupt your base, it might disrupt your organization. But know that that change, and being inclusive, can make your organization better. ✕

IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



USTA CRO **Lew Sherr** reviews U.S. Open ticketing strategy with LEAD apprentice **Samantha Timmons** (center) and **Kirsten Corio**, USTA managing director.

USTA's Sherr takes LEAD on diversity

THE HEAD of the U.S. Tennis Association's moneymaking division describes attracting diverse employees as a "business challenge."

As the U.S. changes demographically, professional tennis' workforce must look like its fan base, USTA Chief Revenue Officer Lew Sherr said. "Our mission is to grow the game and to make sure that the game looks like America from a demographic standpoint," he said.

BY KARN
DHINGRA

That's why four years ago, Sherr, who oversees the commercial and business development activities for the U.S. Open's broadcast, sponsorship, ticketing and hospitality businesses that generated nearly \$350 million in 2018, started the Leadership, Empowerment & Accelerated Development associate program.

Through an extensive interviewing process that involves prior program participants and executives, the USTA identifies high-potential women and minority candidates with limited sports business experience and pairs them to work alongside senior managers, including Sherr, for two years.

The USTA looks to select LEAD participants who are proactive and invested in their professional development, Sherr added.

Program participants shadow Sherr and senior management and are exposed to all facets of the USTA's business operations, including ticketing, corporate sponsorships and broadcast and digital operations. At the end of two years, it's expected that participants will transition into a position within one of the USTA's business lines, Sherr said.

BUY-IN IS CRITICAL

SPORTS-ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONS or businesses that are developing a program to promote diverse women candidates through their ranks should have a component that gives the candidates the opportunity to see how business deals get done, Sherr said.

The success of the program can be attributed to

being created out of a business need to attract, develop and retain talent, rather than being imposed by the USTA's human resources program, he added.

"The program sounded great in theory but my big fear was that either I wouldn't be able to give them enough access, or enough opportunity," Sherr said. "Or that my colleagues, our business partners, our clients might push back on having somebody else be a part of all of those interactions. Thankfully the opposite has been true."

Renée Tirado, who is the chief diversity and inclusion officer for Major League Baseball and previously held a similar role at the USTA, said LEAD is not a run-of-the-mill corporate social responsibility program the association put in place to check off an administrative box.

The USTA looks at diversity and inclusion as a leadership competency and believes that in order for its executives to be effective and high performing, they need to have the tools to navigate a diverse workforce and workplace to get the best out of their talent, Tirado said.

"The uniqueness of this particular program is you have high-level executive buy-in, and not only buy-in, they're actually leading it themselves," Tirado said. "The opportunity to work with senior executives at that level, every day, day in, day out, and being exposed to the entire inner workings of those business lines is rare."

But most importantly, Sherr is committed to offering young minority women meaningful opportunities in professional sports, Tirado said.

"Lew's got skin in the game, he's actually the one saying, 'I'm taking this person under my wing,'" she added. "I think his approach is the model, quite frankly, for other leaders in sports to look to when you talk about being able to hit your bottom line and doing it in a way that develops the next generation of leaders."

ALWAYS EVOLVING

THE LEAD program has evolved during the four years of its existence.

Initially, the program began informally. With the second iteration of the program, USTA introduced formal mentoring programs and included the program participant in all of the association's learning and management training programs.

The program added an external mentor program to help with industry networking and offer different points of view from other sports, and the USTA has given participants more project work with different lines of the association's business, Sherr said.

As the U.S. continues to evolve demographically, other professional sports leagues have noticed the initiatives that the USTA and NBA have undertaken to make their executive ranks more reflective of the country's racial and gender makeup, said Tony Ponturo, a New York University sports management lecturer and executive vice president for strategy and consulting at Turnkey Intelligence, a sports market research firm.

Ciera Rojas, who was referred to Sherr by Ponturo, said her participation in LEAD was a challenging experience that gave her a chance to help manage USTA's partnership with Rolex.

"If it wasn't for LEAD, I wouldn't have learned how to sell and operate in that kind of high-level environment," Rojas said.

Professional sports leagues will have to hire more diverse employees who will be able to sell their respective game to the country's growing minority populations, added Ponturo, who was a longtime sports marketing chief for Anheuser-Busch.

"You really want to be smart and make sure you're talking to your full base of consumers," Ponturo said. "One way to understand the consumer is also to do the right thing and have people in your organization that represent those consumers' faces."

FEMALE EXECUTIVES IN USTA SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Andrea Hirsch
CAO

Stacey Allaster
CEO, professional tennis

Amy Choyné
CMO

Kirsten Corio
managing director,
ticket sales and
digital strategy

Deanne Pownall
managing director,
corporate
partnerships

Patti Fallick
managing director,
broadcast

Nicole Kankam
managing director,
pro tennis
marketing

Ginny Levine
managing director,
community tennis
marketing

Sloane Kelley
managing director,
digital content

LEAD PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Jasmine Polite
FIRST PARTICIPANT
manager, U.S. Open
corporate
hospitality and
premium services

Ciera Rojas
REFERRED BY
TONY PONTURO
USTA senior
account executive,
partnership
marketing

Samantha Timmons
REFERRED BY
RENÉE TIRADO
USTA business
operations
associate

IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Same goal, different paths

Leagues employ varying strategies to achieve inclusive environment

ALL OF the major sports leagues in North America are focused on changing their workforce and leadership teams to be more diverse in terms of women and people of color, but the paths and where they are in their journey are different.

While the NBA and MLB have high-level chief diversity officers who have been on the job and implementing plans of action for a few years now, other leagues are considering hiring someone to fill that position or are in the process of doing so.

BY LIZ MULLEN

The NHL is in the final stages of interviewing candidates to serve a head of diversity hiring, said Kim Davis, executive vice president of social impact, growth and legislative affairs.

“We expect to have that hire in place by the beginning of the season, which will be no later than the end of September,” Davis said. “We are down to our final three candidates.”

Davis was hired to a newly created position — which was designed in part to help the NHL diversify its audience and fan base — in December 2017. The title for the new hire will be senior director of inclusion and leadership and will report to Davis and to human resources, she said.

“That person is going to help us with many aspects of diversity and inclusion, one of which is how do we continue to identify top talent that is diverse,” Davis said. “So that person will work with our HR department to help with those efforts so we continue to grow our own internal talent-based ability to reach diverse audiences.”

The NFL, meanwhile, had been looking to hire a chief diversity officer, as SBJ reported last year. But Robert Gulliver, who had been the league’s chief human resources officer, left the league to take the chief HR job at The Hain Celestial Group early this year.

People are being interviewed now to replace Gulliver, said Troy Vincent, NFL executive vice president of football operations. He indicated that a chief diversity officer could be next.

“I would believe the head of HR would be part of that decision-making on whether he or she believes that chief diversity officer may be his or her possibly next hire,” Vincent said.

As of now, the NFL is focused on a three-pronged approach to making its workforce and leadership more diverse, including a diversity pipeline, a program to develop diverse employees and a strategy to keep these employees through mentorship.

“We understand the value of having mentors to assist and navigate in advance of diverse candidates,” Vincent said. “People in the industry hire people who they are familiar with.”

He said this three-part plan was discussed at the league meetings this year by the NFL’s Workplace Diversity Committee, chaired by Cincinnati Bengals Executive Vice President Katie Blackburn and of which Vincent is a member.

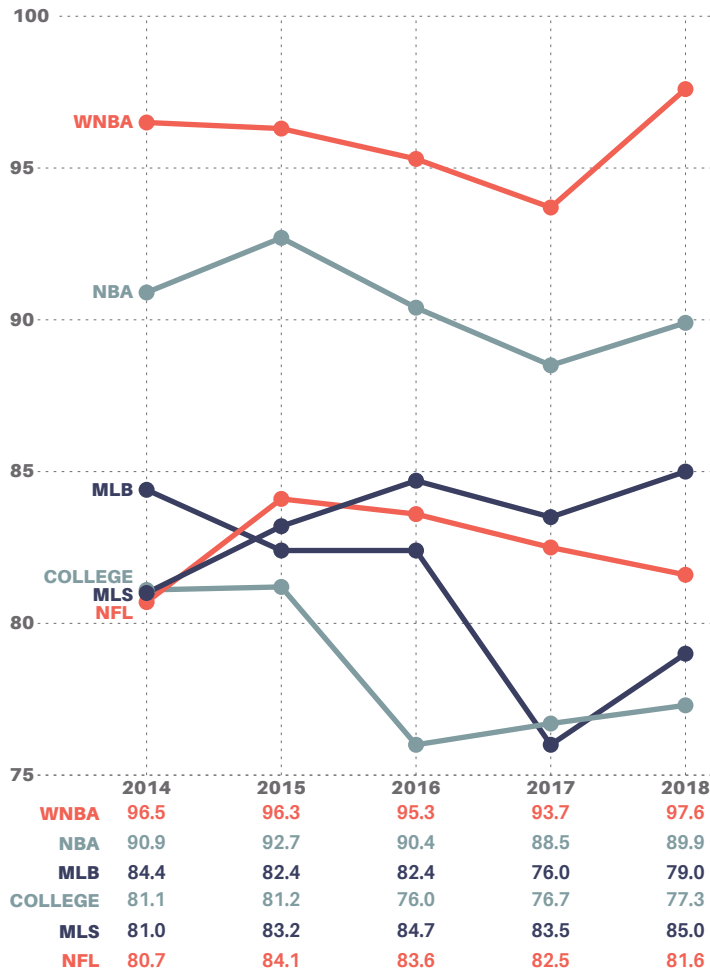
At NASCAR, the organization does not have a chief diversity officer, but has long had a multicultural department that works on diversity initiatives, including the NASCAR Diversity Internship Program, which has had 400 student interns since its inception in 2000. Of those, 24 former NDIP interns now work full time in the NASCAR industry.

Dawn Harris heads up that department, which looks after other diversity and inclusion initiatives, including alliances



FIVE-YEAR REPORT CARD ROUNDUP

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport publishes the Racial and Gender Report Card for college and professional sports. Below is a sampling of combined racial and gender scores for five leagues and college sports from 2014 through 2018.



Source: TIDES

The 2019 class of the NASCAR Diversity Internship Program joins All-Star Race winner Kyle Larson, a graduate of the NASCAR Drive for Diversity program, in Victory Lane at Charlotte Motor Speedway in May.

with partners such as the Professional Diversity Network and the Sports Diversity & Inclusion Symposium, which NASCAR will be hosting this October in Daytona Beach, Fla.

NASCAR could have a chief diversity officer in the future, said Paula Miller, NASCAR senior vice president and chief human resources officer. Miller said it is something NASCAR executives have discussed and that it could be an internal or external hire. Steve Phelps was named NASCAR president last fall and he is not finished assembling his top management team, Miller said.

But Miller also noted that the multicultural department is already fulfilling that role without that title. “We have a four-person team and that is all they do. If we had a chief diversity officer by title, they would assemble a team inside of corporate. They would drive strategy, they would do everything that we do with the team we have today,” she said.

A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE

ASHER SIMONS, co-head of CAA Search, works for a variety of sports businesses in finding executives and has helped organizations hire a chief diversity officer. It’s important that any business hiring such a person give them the latitude to “make real change,” Simons said.

In some cases, the chief diversity officer can be a designated position, and in others diversity and inclusion can be a function of human resources. “It really depends on the organization,” Simons said. “There are some organizations that have the size and scale that really requires someone purely dedicated to it.”

Richard Lapchick, director of The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida who has been following diversity hiring trends for more than 30 years, said every major sport now has a head of diversity.

“I don’t think there is a major professional sport that doesn’t have it,” Lapchick said. “I think a lot of individual teams have chief diversity officers now. And we are going to see eventually — I predict that — all teams will have a chief diversity officer.”

The reason, he said, is the bottom line. As the population of North America gets more diverse and U.S. sports try to grow globally, they want their workforce and leadership to reflect their fan base.

“I am convinced that the current commissioners in all the major sports now understand that diversity is a business imperative and that they are committed to changing things,” Lapchick said. “And they continue to create more opportunities — particularly for people of color.”

But, Lapchick added, “I think we are lagging in the gender issue.” TIDES releases an annual report card on gender and racial hiring at most of the major leagues — the NHL and NASCAR have chosen not to participate. Racial hiring is improving overall, but the gender grades have been going down (see chart, opposite page).

“It’s been increasingly going down for the past five years,” Lapchick said. The only league that gets an A+ on gender hiring is the WNBA.

Oris Stuart has been chief diversity and inclusion officer of the NBA since June 2015, after serving as CEO of Global Novations, a consulting firm specializing in diversity and inclusion that was sold to Korn Ferry.

When he joined the NBA, the league already had a reputation for being progressive and inclusive in sports under the longtime leadership of former Commissioner David Stern and the new leadership of Commissioner Adam Silver. Although the league had a good reputation of racial and gender hiring, it did not have a formalized strategic plan.

“We concluded that it didn’t make sense for us to only be compared to the other sports leagues. We wanted to compare ourselves to the world’s best-run organizations,” Stuart said.

Like his counterparts at other leagues, Stuart is not just focused on hiring women and people of color, but also LGBTQ and disabled people. Once they are hired, the league must ensure they feel included and have the best tools and support to thrive, he said.

“Women are an opportunity,” Stuart said. “You have to not only do everything you can to attract

women, but then you’ve got to be able to retain them and sustain momentum.”

The NBA has rolled out a new training program aimed at this, called inclusive retention and development, Stuart said. “What it reflects is the fact is we are not satisfied just to get more women into positions but we need our leaders to know there is a responsibility that they have to understand when there may be different needs or different headwinds of challenges that women are facing and they need to understand those and to be prepared to interrupt those issues and mitigate those issues,” Stuart said.

The program is not just aimed at women, but anyone who is a minority in an organization structure based on who they are or what they look like.

“There are lots of headwinds, right?” Stuart said. “One of them, if you are a woman and you end up being the only one, which is something that happens quite often in lots of organizational settings, that is not sustainable. You look around and you don’t see anyone who looks like you or you don’t feel there is a long-term opportunity. That’s hard to sustain.”

At MLB, meanwhile, Renée Tirado has been baseball’s chief diversity and inclusion officer since February 2016. Since then, she has worked on initiatives to improve the hiring of and working conditions for women, people of color, LGBTQ people and disabled people, including creating a pipeline of diverse job candidates, among other things.

Last year, Tirado told SBJ that her office had placed 80 diverse candidates in jobs in MLB and its clubs. This year, that number has grown to 140. She is working with the staffs of all 30 clubs and she said the teams have fully bought in to the diversity hiring program.

“They bought in because there is talent out there,” Tirado said. “These are not just people they hired because they are brown or they have estrogen. ... I know they are being hired because they are talented, because we have about a 69 percent retention rate — so 69 percent of the candidates we placed are still in baseball.”

Diversity programs take a while to gain traction. Tirado said it took time to get to know the different clubs and the different needs each had. Sports is a relationship business and relationships take time to build.

“We are going in the right direction,” she said. “We provided an infrastructure in place to make sure these candidates are successful. ... But at the end of the day they have to do the work themselves.”

Tirado has the numbers to back up her assessment of how MLB is becoming a more diverse workforce:

- 93% — percentage increase in the number of women hired at MLB in the past year.
- 28% — percentage of people Tirado’s office placed into internships since 2016 who have been converted to full-time hires.
- 54% — percentage of the people hired in that first year who have been promoted.

“I don’t think it will be that exciting or out of the norm in a couple of years when you see that diversity reflected more in more high-optic roles,” Tirado said. “I think it will become our new normal and that is always the goal.” ✕

TEAM DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OFFICERS/ OTHER POSITIONS

NBA

Nzinga Shaw

chief diversity and inclusion officer
ATLANTA HAWKS AND STATE FARM
ARENA

Maurice Stinnett

VP, diversity and inclusion
BROOKLYN NETS

Kevin Clayton

VP, diversity and inclusion
CLEVELAND CAVALIERS

Gail O’Bannon

VP, diversity and inclusion
DALLAS MAVERICKS

Kyle Ellington

director of diversity and inclusion
SACRAMENTO KINGS

MLB

Adrian Williams

senior director, diversity and community marketing
ATLANTA BRAVES

Sara Lehrke

VP, human resources/chief diversity officer
CLEVELAND INDIANS

Miguel Ramos

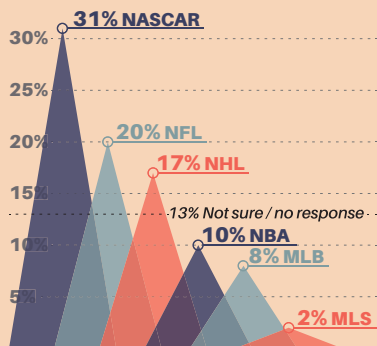
director of diversity marketing
MINNESOTA TWINS

IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

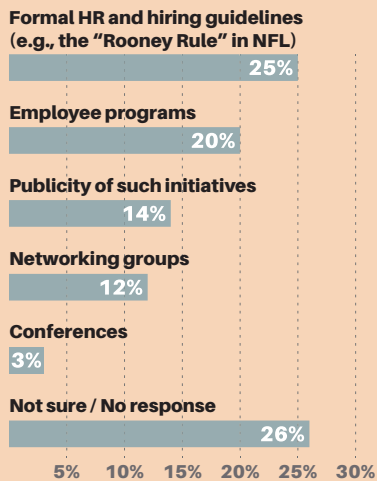
TURNKEY SPORTS POLL

The following are results of the Turnkey Sports Poll taken in June. The survey covered more than 2,000 senior-level sports industry executives spanning professional and college sports.

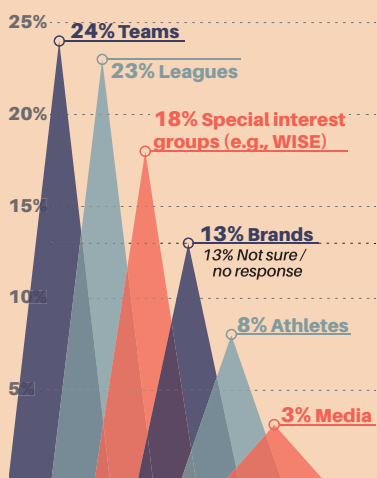
WHICH LEAGUE AND ITS TEAMS HAVE THE MOST WORK TO DO TO PROMOTE A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN AND MINORITIES?



IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES IN THE SPORTS INDUSTRY HAVE BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE?



WHO IS BEST AT PUTTING INTO EFFECT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES IN SPORTS?



Source: Turnkey Intelligence in conjunction with Sports Business Journal. Turnkey Intelligence specializes in research, measurement and lead generation for brands and properties. Visit www.turnkeyintel.com.



Antron Brown, a three-time Top Fuel champion, is a driver for Don Schumacher Racing. He attributes the diversity among NHRA drivers in part to the location of drag strips in urban centers.

NHRA says diverse driver group reflects fan base

THE NATIONAL HOT ROD ASSOCIATION has long been the most diverse racing series in the U.S., positioning itself well in a country that is rapidly changing along demographic lines.

At a time when other motorsports properties in the U.S. are trying to add more women or people of color to their driver ranks, the NHRA premier Mello Yello Series has a long history of women, African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities competing and winning. While NASCAR and IndyCar have more overall mainstream buzz, the drag racing series' diversity is an important calling card as it positions itself for growth.

"It's a sense of inclusivity that goes way back many years," said Glen Cromwell, president of the NHRA since late 2017. "[Former driver] Shirley Muldowney broke that barrier for us like Billie Jean King did with tennis, and it really goes with the openness of the NHRA. Our marketing campaign, Speed For All, speaks volumes of the inclusivity of how we think as a sports property."

In the 1970s, Muldowney became a well-known name as the first woman to be licensed to drive professionally in the Top Fuel dragster division by the NHRA. She became the first woman champion in 1977, and repeated as champion in 1980 and 1982.

Well-known female drivers in the Mello Yello Series today include Brittany and Courtney Force (though the latter stepped away from racing this past offseason), Leah Pritchett and Erica Enders-Stevens. Antron Brown, who is African American, is a three-time champion of the series' Top Fuel division. In terms of Hispanic drivers, two-time Funny Car champion Tony Pedregon is now the NHRA booth analyst for Fox Sports, while his brother Cruz, also a two-time Funny Car champ, still competes in the series.

Brown, who drives for Don Schumacher Racing, told Sports Business Journal that the motorsports league's diverse roots come from the fact that drag strips across the country are often in urban locations. The NHRA says it has 120 member tracks and more than 65,000 members. Brown grew up in New Jersey,

where three drag strips were less than an hour away from his home.

Moreover, Brown noted that drag racing is the form of motorsports that is most relatable to everyday Americans who feel the need for speed in their road car.

Backing up its claim as the most diverse series, the NHRA said that heading into this season, women had recorded 117 wins in its history, the most of any global racing property. It is also the only U.S.-based motorsports league with both African American and Hispanic season champions.

The series did not provide fan demographics, but Cromwell said the NHRA has a fan base that reflects the diversity on the track.

"Like any sport, your fans are coming there to cheer on their favorite drag racers or basketball players — and because of the diversity, I think our fan base resembles our driver base," Cromwell said.

The series still has more work to do, including replacing the marketing star power of Courtney Force, daughter of drag racing star John Force, who left the sport to spend more time with family. She appeared in ESPN The Magazine's Body issue, for example.

Still, the series' head start in the diversity department has Brown feeling confident it can continue to grow and thrive.

"It's the accessibility — there's drag racing tracks all over the place, and the NHRA has been great with it in that you can race anything and everything; you don't have to spend a lot of money to go drag racing," Brown said. "It doesn't make a difference who you are or where you came from; if you can drag race, that's all it depends on."

IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Wambach uses experience to help women ‘speak up for more’

The last time the U.S. women’s national team was competing in the World Cup, Abby Wambach was helping lead them to their third championship. Four years later, the former star forward is retired, but she went to France to watch her friends successfully defend their title. While there she took some time to answer a few questions about her experience stepping away from the sport in 2015 and her efforts to empower women by using an athlete’s point of view to help develop their leadership skills. — Liz Mullen

How have you handled the transition away from the game?

The transition from playing soccer has not been that difficult, since I was ready to leave the game. That said, watching and pulling for the team during this World Cup has been so difficult since I am powerless to do anything to help them win. I am so proud of the legacy we left behind and the fact that the future of the team and program are in such good hands.

In your book, “Wolfpack,” you describe being on stage at the ESPYs in 2016 with Peyton Manning and Kobe Bryant, where you each were given the Icon Award, and how their futures as retired athletes looked vastly different from yours. Do you think that’s an issue women across all sectors face? How can that be changed?

Women need to be willing and excited to speak up for more — they cannot settle for just being grateful. I was stuck in a place where I was simply grateful for what we had instead of doing everything in my power to push for more. This current U.S. national team is a perfect example of how a group of women are willing to address inequities while playing in the most important event of their careers.

You’ve written a book about leadership and founded a leadership company, Wolfpack Endeavor. How would you rate leadership in sports business on diversity and inclusion?

Leadership roles for women in sports business are scarce, but I feel like things are moving in a better direction. Interestingly enough, women who played sports through high school and/or college have a disproportionate number of leadership roles throughout other industries. The sports business, of all places, should be leading the way.



ABOVE: Wambach presented Megan Rapinoe with her Visa Player of Match award after the team’s win over Spain on June 24 in Reims, France.

BELOW: Following her retirement, Wambach joined Peyton Manning and Kobe Bryant on stage at the 2016 ESPYs to receive an Icon Award.



What would inclusive leadership in sports look like? What kinds of hiring practices can leagues, teams or other sport entities put in place to increase diversity?

Leadership in sports should ideally reflect diversity of the organization or company’s employees, team and their consumers. Women and other underrepresented segments of our society provide important perspectives and creativity that will only help sports organizations grow and evolve, leading to more success.

Do you think the gender pay gap is any smaller now than five, 10 or 20 years ago? How has it changed?

The pay gap is narrowing a bit and the awareness of the issues is growing, but we are nowhere near where we need to be as a society. Secret’s powerful “I’d Rather Get Paid” campaign and other brands’ support of the women’s national soccer team during the World Cup is a high-profile example of how companies can set a great example of investing in women’s sports and events. The pay gap is an important issue, but do not forget about overall investment in women as well.

Are you going to continue to fight for equality and inclusion and if so, how? What are your goals?

My focus is to help train women to be better leaders by embracing an athletic mindset. Working on their personal growth as well as developing techniques to be better teammates will lead to stronger leadership skills and will provide more value for their companies.

“Women need to be willing and excited to speak up for more — they cannot settle for just being grateful.”

IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



Panelist
JAMIL NORTHCUTT
VICE PRESIDENT,
PLAYER ENGAGEMENT
MLS

Panelist
KATHY BEHRENS
PRESIDENT,
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
AND PLAYER PROGRAMS
NBA

Moderator
BRANDON GAYLE
DIRECTOR, GLOBAL SPORTS
PARTNERSHIPS AND
SOLUTIONS
FACEBOOK

Panelist
KEVIN WARREN
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
MINNESOTA VIKINGS
*takes over as Big Ten Conference
commissioner in September*

Panelist
INGA STENTA
SENIOR DIRECTOR,
GLOBAL BRAND MARKETING
REEBOK

Execs advocate making hiring pipeline ‘bigger and broader’

A panel of sports business executives addressed issues around diversity and inclusion — from recruiting to employee training to community outreach — at the CAA World Congress of Sports in April. Excerpts from their discussion have been edited for brevity and clarity.

► **BRANDON GAYLE:** There was an article recently in the Wall Street Journal about Goldman Sachs actually implementing the Rooney Rule. At Facebook, we have something called the Diverse Slate approach, so basically no recruiter or hiring manager can actually go through their process without seeing a diverse slate of folks before we make an offer. ... Does the Rooney Rule work? Is it doing what it's intended to do and is it right for other industries to be looking for this as the model right now?

► **KEVIN WARREN:** Personally, I look forward to the day when we don't have to have the Rooney Rule any more. We need to create an environment that regardless of who you are or what you stand for that you feel comfortable. So we hosted the first LG-BTQ Symposium in the NFL at our facility. I don't want people to feel like they've gotta be in the closet. We need to be intentional, but we also need to be aware. Our VP of finance ... has a young child. One of the things that I noticed in her office, she has pictures of her son. ... That says a lot because some companies you go into, women who have kids don't even put the pictures up because they don't want to be perceived as someone who may not be able to work in the workforce.

► **GAYLE:** What advice does the panel have for how to improve recruiting?

► **JAMIL NORTHCUTT:** The University of Texas has an African American Male Research Initiative. That group of individuals is coming to our Major League Soccer office. ... We're going to put on a program for them to talk about getting their foot in the door. But more importantly, it's a relationship type of thing. I know we have these different hiring practices. That's why we have the Rooney Rules and certain things in place, but we all know this business is like the mafia. When you start looking at statistics, 85% of jobs are already filled before they're ever even posted. We have to be mindful about that. For others that are looking to get into the industries that are minorities, again, how you create and develop relationships is huge. Any employability studies, they show you about social capital and how important you have to be in these social circles to be considered for these opportunities.

► **KATHY BEHRENS:** You just have to break down that tradition of, "It's who you know." If it's a relationship business, every department, every sort of traditional function, whether it's on the business side or the sports side, for our case, basketball operations, there have

to be nontraditional pushes to make the pipeline bigger and broader and you have to do more to help prepare people for what the next opportunity is going to be so that people don't feel stymied in the role that they are in. That's something that we're very focused on as well in creating opportunities for former players, whether WNBA players or NBA players, not just in the basketball space, but on the business side as well. You just have to be very intentional. There are lots of different strategies to employ. It has to be done with a sense of purpose.

► **GAYLE:** Another big piece of culture and climate is unconscious bias. There's a lot of research around what we bring to work that's sort of packed into our subconscious and how that affects our interactions with folks. ... How do you guys think about programs around tackling that issue and training, specifically?

► **NORTHCUTT:** The training piece is critical. We have compliance trainings centered around that, and that's something that every employee has to go through. ... We just added a new talent development person. There are succession plans that are put in place to help people grow and develop within the structure of

our office, but those trainings are really a good way for us to tackle that particular issue.

Then also there are some things that we do that are just sort of basic humanistic things that we need to do. The lunches that we have around our office, the fellowship that we create. These are the things that break down barriers. We can do all the programs and trainings all we want to, but when we spend time with one another, when we relate to each other, we have conversations, we learn about people's families, where they come from, what sports teams they like.

► **INGA STENTA:** Likewise, we have the unconscious bias training. Those conversations can get really uncomfortable, but having a space that allows for that and provides that feeling of safety and community makes having those conversations that much easier to have.

► **GAYLE:** How does this extend to the community?

► **STENTA:** We have to be a reflection of our consumer as a brand, but then within our own offices, we are doing the same things. We're trying to create more of these employee resources groups. We've just rolled out five more. I've talked about the working parents one. We've got LG-BTQ. We've had a women's one going for a few years. A passport one, I think it's called, because we have a lot of folks within our organization from all around the world. Those have been a huge asset for us and certainly gives the employees a place to connect, a place to find others like them, and also just bring that diversity of thought that is so integral to us being a strong brand.

► **BEHRENS:** The reason why diversity and inclusion is so important, I think for our industry, is because all of our sports reflect the best of that diversity. When you look at the com-

position of the best teams, on the court or on the field, they are diverse and they know how to work together in order to be successful. Everything that we do, in terms of our community work, is the opportunity that sports has to bring people together and to bring communities together, to bring different cultures together. The global nature of the game of basketball, I think, gives us a sort of special imperative to be right in this space, to be active and engaged in it. It's also ongoing. There is no destination here. It's a real journey.

Diversity is not just gender and color. ... What are we doing on the LGBTQ side? What are we doing for those with mental disabilities? Are we creating opportunities for people who are marginalized? It is a much bigger picture. The community work is important. The business focus is important. The employment focus is important. It all has to wrap together.

► **GAYLE:** [Shifting] to retention as a third pillar of this work. Kevin, talk about reformatting, reorganizing the way the Vikings look to build a diverse pool of talent to build a bench for succession planning and getting the next leaders ready to take those roles.

► **WARREN:** We have to really focus on getting young people in our organization, young people in the pipeline. ... We need to do different things at an ownership level. I have two young, African American men in college who I pretty much have said, "Your summer internship is just to shadow me. Just to be in there. Your work is basically to sit in meetings and to learn." People that look like us have not had that opportunity. Women have not had that opportunity in the past. I want people to know. We're not saying to take jobs away from white males or white females.

We're saying, "let's come together and be better." Statistics show companies that are diverse are better run and more profitable, which would create more opportunities.

► **BEHRENS:** We think about mentorship a lot, but it's really sponsorship that I think has really got to drive the next round of change. ... How do you identify people and how do you make sure that the senior people are sponsoring that next generation so the retention happens, but also so that the opportunity happens because this can't work in silos. You have to have the pipeline. You have to have the development. Then you have to make sure there's opportunity. Otherwise, people are going to get stuck and unhappy and that's terrible for your culture as well.

► **NORTHCUTT:** You have to layer it as well. You can't just think the pipeline is at the bottom and they have to kind of work their way up, which is fine. But there are people who are ready to step into executive-type roles, they just need the opportunity, making sure that you're placing individuals in those opportunities to succeed.

► **WARREN:** I've had a 29-year career, and I've never replaced someone in a job. Every job I've ever had has been created. Why is that important? That means it has been relationships. The majority of these jobs that happen in the sports business ... typically, it's someone who knows someone who knows you that you've spent time with, and that's really important. Just look around this room. This is great, but look at the lack of people of color in this room. People are going to come away from this week with jobs they didn't have, maybe didn't even know about. We need to make sure that we put people in these positions because it will make the world a better place and a better place to work, which is really important. ✕

The Vikings' Kevin Warren, Reebok's Inga Stenta, MLS's Jamil Northcutt, the NBA's Kathy Behrens and moderator Brandon Gayle of Facebook on stage at the CAA World Congress of Sports.



Highlights of McKinsey's diversity report

IN 2015, consulting firm McKinsey & Co.'s "Why Diversity Matters" report revealed a positive, statistically significant correlation between executive team diversity and financial performance. The company last year conducted an extensive re-fielding of that study, which included a deep dive into the personnel makeup of 1,007 companies across 12 countries. Select U.S. data from that "Delivering through Diversity" report is presented here.

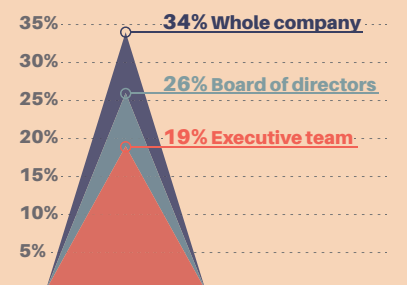
► Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams were 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. Similarly, the top one-quarter of the companies that were more ethnically/culturally diverse were 33% more profitable than the least diverse companies.

► Sodexo and its Centerplate division operate food and beverage at nine major league sports venues in the U.S. and are the dominant third-party concessionaire on college campuses. The company's internal research, according to McKinsey, "revealed that greater representation of women in management positions — between 40% and 60% women — correlated with superior performance on measures such as customer satisfaction and employee engagement."

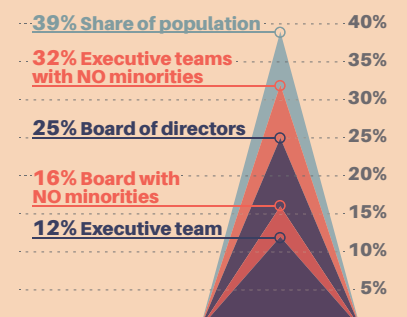
► Seven women are on the company's BOD, according to its most recent shareholder meeting, as are 37% of its executive committee and nearly half of its 460,000 employees worldwide.

Among the 334 U.S. companies analyzed in the study, women made up less than one-fifth of all executive-level positions.

AVERAGE % WOMEN REPRESENTATION BY COMPANY LEVEL



AVERAGE % ETHNIC/CULTURAL MINORITY REPRESENTATION BY COMPANY LEVEL



Source: McKinsey "Delivering through Diversity"

FinALLY: Moving from advocate to ally



BY NZINGA SHAW

WHEN I entered the workforce fresh out of undergrad, my father gave me some advice: “Don’t talk about politics or religion at work!”

This adage is one that we have mostly adhered to for decades. I would also add race, sexual orientation, harassment, and disabilities to the list of topics that we don’t easily talk about in the workplace. We’ve been socialized to believe that it is best not to talk about these topics, for we know there are vastly different worldviews.

My father’s instructions suggested that I should not bring my whole self to work because there was a strong potential for my employer to treat me unfairly due to my unique attributes. He believed that the best course of action to ensure my future professional success was to blend in. However, I would contend that our current sociopolitical climate, coupled with our immediate access and consumption of news via social media, has made this widely held principle null and void. The polarization is so deep that it is almost impossible not to talk about politics, which also means we are talking about race, ethnicity, religion, class and gender because they are all so intertwined and intersectional.

Employees are bringing fears to work. Children are bringing these fears to school. As leaders in sports, we need to not only talk about these issues, but we also need the requisite skills to do so effectively. We must recognize that there are a different set of skills needed to have bold, inclusive conversations across difference, and then find ways to curate meaningful dialogue internally and in our communities.

Dec. 8, 2014, was my first day of work at the Atlanta Hawks organization, one that I will never forget. Our head of PR

set up a series of media interviews for me to speak to disenfranchised fans and partners who demanded that I publicly address our shortcomings — including how we failed to operate well internally and externally, with race relations as a core issue. Our shortcomings were beyond a single email, a single person or a single event. At that moment, I knew that I could not do this work alone. I needed advocates and WE needed allies. The Atlanta Hawks’ leadership decided to take a hard look at ourselves and committed to build bridges to the community through basketball.

The most important lesson during this tumultuous time was that allyship is synonymous with action. It’s not enough to press the “like” or “sad” button, but allyship is about using our personal and professional platforms to enhance the lives of others.

The first step of becoming an ally is to know yourself and to recognize the unmerited privileges that you enjoy in society. The next steps are to educate yourself on the issues facing the group(s) of focus and to build relationships with people who identify themselves as part of the group(s). Finally, you should develop a personal definition of allyship and seek out the actions you can take to champion the lives of others. As this is not a static process and will require frequent evaluation, it is important to keep a few things in mind:

1. Accept the fact that you will make mistakes and learn from them by asking questions.
2. Embrace discomfort.
3. Remain astutely aware of your own privilege and find ways to mitigate its unjust impact on others.

At the Atlanta Hawks, we are doing all we can to make the transition from advocates to allies. In 2016, we hosted the inaugural MOSAIC symposium (Model of Shaping Atlanta through Inclusive Conversations) at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights and focused the conversation on race and gender in sports. We put our learnings from this symposium into action and became the first professional sports team in Atlanta to march in the Pride parade in its 45-year history, proudly proclaiming our allyship of the LGBTQ community. We also formed a partnership with the 100 Black Men of Atlanta organization and hosted over 100 at-risk teens in our arena for mentoring, an oratorical contest, scholarship gifting and the culminating NBA basketball game experi-

ence, a first for many of these youth.

The third MOSAIC focused on disruption, the idea of unexpected, unsettling and often uncomfortable innovation. The Hawks’ action item was the implementation of an internal, monthly speaker series for employees in which we host thought leaders to educate our staff on the nuances of tough topics. We call this forum called Courageous Conversations and have openly discussed sexual violence, privilege, race relations, immigration and how to live your life exponentially. Courageous Conversations is our organization’s way of demonstrating our allyship of the many employees that we serve so that they can bring their full selves to work in a fear-free environment that cultivates growth and learning.

My initial experiences when I took on the role as chief diversity and inclusion officer were rife with uncertainty, nuance and complexity. Though many of these challenges persist today, we have made great strides and will continue to grow our commitment to allyship in the world of sports.

If my dad were still alive today, he would be proud to see that I am helping to shape a world very different from the realities he faced and what he believed to be possible: A world in which employees sharing differing perspectives are embraced and not shamed. Advocacy is defined as demonstrating support, but allyship takes us a step further by offering an opportunity for people of privilege to use their platform(s) to provide experiences for others who would not have been exposed to those opportunities otherwise.

Nzinga Shaw is chief diversity and inclusion officer for the Atlanta Hawks and State Farm Arena.

“Allyship is synonymous with action. Allyship is about using our personal and professional platforms to enhance the lives of others.”

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IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Where is the industry now?

We asked executives across sports to rate the industry on diversity and inclusion, to discuss ways to improve and to identify examples of inclusive leadership. Responses are edited for clarity and brevity.



TINA DAVIS

**MANAGING DIRECTOR, GLOBAL HEAD OF SPONSORSHIP
CITI**

On a scale of 1 to 10, where does the sports industry rank on diversity and inclusion?

3, and maybe that's being generous. There has been change over the last few years, but the change feels superficial. There have been improvements in gender representation, but very little movement to include people of color in the field. When I see people of color in leadership roles, while delighted, I am still surprised — which is disheartening. The leadership of our industry does not reflect the audiences we serve.

Which workforce segment feels the most unwelcome in the sports business environment?

I don't think any segment is necessarily unwelcoming. I don't feel unwelcome. But I look around the room and I see the same people, from the same networks, bringing the same people along with them. This industry will be well served if our leaders think about this dynamic each time they hire.

What program or initiative has moved the industry forward?

I think it's telling that nothing comes immediately to mind. I will take this good question, and my inability to put forward a great answer, as a challenge to be more the change that I think the industry needs. Ask me again next year.

MAURICE STINNETT

**VICE PRESIDENT, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND CULTURE
BSE GLOBAL**

On a scale of 1 to 10, where does the sports industry rank on diversity and inclusion?

When it comes to executive leadership and governorship, I would rank the sports industry about a 3. Although progress continues to be made, I'd love to see the industry grow to include a wider range of leaders who are diverse in a multitude of ways.

What program or initiative has moved the industry forward?

There are a growing number of or-

ganizations creating executive roles that are focused on building a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace. These leaders are responsible for developing and implementing strategy that fosters a welcoming corporate culture, provides opportunities for advancement and ensures a level playing field for all employees.

The NBA is specifically an innovator in this area, hiring its first-ever diversity chief in 2014. BSE Global followed a similar suit and recognized the importance of building a culture of inclusion, which led to my being hired as vice president of diversity and inclusion — the first black man to serve in such a role at an NBA team.



VALERIE CAMILLO

**PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS
PHILADELPHIA FLYERS AND WELLS FARGO ARENA**

How has the dialogue around diversity and inclusion changed and where does it need to go?

Five years ago, I don't remember much talk about "inclusion." The focus was almost exclusively on representation. Now, there is much greater emphasis on being authentic at work rather than trying to conform to a perceived standard. I think this is personally gratifying for employees and results in the sharing of creative perspectives that unlock differentiated value.

What does inclusive leadership look like in sports business?

When a junior employee of any race, gender or experience can see someone like them succeeding at the highest levels. And, in that leader, they see someone living their authentic life ... not trying to play a role or be someone they are not.

KEVIN CLAYTON

**VICE PRESIDENT OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT
CLEVELAND CAVALIERS**

On a scale of 1 to 10, where does the sports industry rank on diversity and inclusion?

Strides have been made more so with the industry's athletes than executives — so a 5 or 6 now. The NBA has been a leader, but we need sustained diligence to progress across the industry. Only four U.S. pro teams — out of 149 — have a dedicated VP-level [diversity and inclusion] role. That must improve.

How does more pressure need be

put on the industry to improve?

The pressure can only come from within. External pressure will create a lot of buzz and activity, but only marginally move the needle. The sports industry needs to move closer to leveraging D&I as an all-encompassing business strategy that can help increase participation and additional revenue opportunities.

What does inclusive leadership look like in sport business?

Inclusive leadership is more about culture and behavior. Leaders must create environments where all members of the "team" have an opportunity to participate on and off the field or court. Diversity does not guarantee inclusion.





HANNAH GORDON

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
AND GENERAL COUNSEL
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS**

How has the dialogue around diversity and inclusion changed and where does it need to go?

Five years ago we were talking more about diversity (having different people in the room) and now we are talk-

ing more about inclusion (feeling like you belong in the room). We need to continue to understand that the feeling of belonging is not only a moral imperative but also a business imperative. ... We are going to lose top talent if we don't focus on their experiences in our work environments.

How does more pressure need be put on the industry to improve?

We don't need pressure to improve: We are going to improve or we are going to shrink.

Describe an inclusive leadership success story in sports business.

Three years after the 49ers became the first NFL team to adopt a diverse slate interviewing policy, our vice president of human resources, Harpreet Basran, suggested that we require a diverse slate of interviewers as well. Our executive team embraced the idea because President Al Guido has made clear that culture is the responsibility of the executive team and diversity and inclusion, or lack thereof, is part of any organizational culture.

SCOTT PIOLI

FORMER NFL TEAM EXECUTIVE INCLUDING WITH THE ATLANTA FALCONS, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS AND NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS, AND FORMER NFL ANALYST ON NBC'S "FOOTBALL NIGHT IN AMERICA"

On a scale of 1 to 10, where does the sports industry rank on diversity and inclusion?

Based on my exposure beyond football, the sports industry is inconsistent. Overall, I think it's a 5. I have spent time in and around other sectors to see some sports are better than others.

What program or initiative has moved the industry forward?

I think the original concept and implementation of the NFL's Bill Walsh coaching fellowship program was terrific. ... The program was a recommended "best practice" for NFL teams to create opportunities by bringing in college coaches as interns with NFL teams during training camp. It was put in place when NFL training camps started much earlier than they do now



and college camps started later. However, there was domino effect created by NFL and collegiate football calendar changes that significantly reduced the availability of a lot of very talented and upcoming coaches. It's important to note, this answer is not just about the NFL. ... Policies and programs need to be continuously scrutinized and revised. Circumstances change and programs need to be innovative and constantly evolving.

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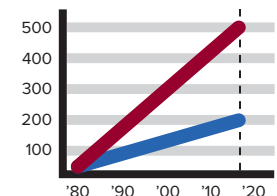
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IN-DEPTH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

CHARECE WILLIAMS

**SENIOR SPORTS MARKETING
MANAGER/HEAD OF NBA & HOOPS
PEPSICO**

On a scale of 1 to 10, where does the sports industry rank on diversity and inclusion?

I'd give the sports industry a 4. It's clear that intentional actions have been made to diversify the workforce. However, there's still an opportunity to reinforce inclusion and embrace the differences that diverse backgrounds can bring.

What roles in sports organizations are seeing the most progress and which are behind?

I see some growth in community relations and other nonrevenue-driving roles. There's a big opportunity to diversify areas such as marketing, sales and marketing partnerships. PepsiCo, for example, has diversity goals — one of them being to increase gender parity in management. Currently, 40% of all managers globally are women, and we're striving to reach 50% by 2025.



Describe an inclusive leadership success story in sports business.

I'd say Adam Silver is a great example of a strong leader who creates an inclusive workforce for his employees and his players. His appointment of Amy Brooks to chief innovation officer, a rare and first-of-its-kind role in professional sports, also shows his commitment to innovation and to promoting women to new heights.



ALEX BALDWIN

**PRESIDENT, KORN FERRY TOUR
PGA TOUR**

On a scale of 1 to 10, where does the sports industry rank on diversity and inclusion?

My answer may have looked different 10 years ago, but today, there is measurable progress as well as a desire and concerted effort to be more inclu-

sive in sports. That said, we have to be honest with where we are. In my mind, there is still plenty of work to do, which is why I will say "5."

Which workforce segment feels the most unwelcome in the sports business environment?

There is a preconceived notion that you must be a former athlete or have extensive sports knowledge to work in the industry. The truth is, there are roles available with a variety of disciplines. Interviewing without unconscious bias and with the objective to hire the best available talent regardless of age, race or gender will yield a more diverse slate of employees.

What program or initiative has moved the industry forward?

Two years ago, "Advancing Women in Leadership," one of the tour's Employee Resource Groups, launched the inaugural Women in Business Forum at The Players Championship. This event continues to provide a much-needed platform for our female employees to network with key tour partners and learn from industry trailblazers.



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DAHANN BILLINGS-BURFORD

CEO
RISE (ROSS INITIATIVE IN SPORTS FOR EQUALITY)

How has the dialogue around diversity and inclusion changed and where does it need to go?

There's more diversity, but not enough inclusion. Inclusion affords diverse opinions and perspectives not just a seat, but equal power at the table. We've been encouraged that teams, leagues and universities are more willing to engage us at RISE to have these difficult conversations around both topics. More diversity and inclusion in sports media would also help advance this dialogue.

What does inclusive leadership look like in sports business?

Inclusive leadership requires diversity in power and influence, and decision-makers actively engaged in perspective taking. It means that an organization's employees and leadership reflects its employee base and clientele. An inclusive leader advances appropriate values within and outside of its walls.

Describe an inclusive leadership success story.

The NHL's Kim Davis has successfully advocated the importance of inclusion as a business imperative with an emphasis on engaging a more diverse fan base. Gary Bettman exhibited true inclusive leadership by hiring her [in an executive vice president role]. Troy Vincent's senior position [as executive VP of football operations] affords him influence over the NFL's on-field product, business operations and community engagement.

GILLIAN ZUCKER

PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS
L.A. CLIPPERS

Which workforce segment feels the most unwelcome in the sports business environment?

Sports has always been a tough business in which achieving success requires employees to give more intensity and commitment than the people standing beside them. Add to that the scarcity of jobs and the enormous demand for those eager to fill them, and the result is an ultra-competitive environment for the sports workforce not unlike that on the courts, fields and other facilities we promote. That can feel unwelcoming to many.

I'm encouraged, as the sports landscape continues to evolve and expand with the addition of new sports and leagues, that the number of positions and experienced candidates will expand as well. Sports experience on the business side is highly transferable between leagues and teams. As we see more and more people make successful transitions, opportunities should begin to feel more accessible and welcoming.



What program or initiative has moved the industry forward?

The Clippers are proud to partner with Bumble to display the Empowerment Badge on our uniforms. On the Bumble platforms, women make the first move, and the Empowerment Badge serves to remind our fans, players, coaches and employees — as well as the rest of the world — that strong women have impacted their lives every step of the way.

JAMIL NORTHCUTT

VICE PRESIDENT, PLAYER ENGAGEMENT
MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER



How has the dialogue around diversity and inclusion changed and where does it need to go?

The use of the words diversity and inclusion is idealistic. It is the right idea. However, the words warrant more intrinsic discussion. What are we referencing and why? As with goal setting, we need to be very specific about what we need to address to achieve the desired results and outcomes.

How does more pressure need be put on the industry to improve?

Pressure is applied when there is accountability. How are we holding our industry accountable? We need to develop standards of compliance, enforcement and reinforcement. A study (Quillian, Pager, Hexel, & Midtøen, 2017), which was a meta-analysis from Northwestern, found no changes in hiring practices regarding racial discrimination in 25 years in U.S. labor markets.

Describe an inclusive leadership success story.

The Kyle Korver essay, "Privileged," in The Players' Tribune. Mr. Korver displayed humility in recognizing his own biases through self-awareness and was bold enough to discuss it openly and constructively. This took a great deal of courage and helped to advance humanity.



PAUL RICHARDSON

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES
ESPN

How has the dialogue around diversity and inclusion changed and where does it need to go?

On and off the field, sports reflect the changing world. As fans continue to diversify, more sports organizations are hiring dedicated D&I leaders to advance conversations. I expect more candor along with tangible action plans will elevate D&I as drivers of

innovation, team performance and fan engagement.

How does more pressure need be put on the industry to improve?

A multi-prong approach appears to work best. Regulations and policies have their place, and things like Title IX and practices such as the NFL's Rooney Rule were major steps forward. ... However, I'm persuaded that the "pressure" that speaks the loudest comes from our consumers. Losing audience equates to revenue and long-term viability risks. Educating fans about our progress or lack thereof is

the added pressure needed to see long-term and sustainable improvement.

Describe an inclusive leadership success story.

It is encouraging to see how inclusive leaders in sports have dealt with the issue of athletes' mental health. Kevin Love has been a recent and vocal athlete and we see others now speaking to their battles with depression, anxiety and addiction. ... In most cases, athletes are supported to get the care they need, even taking time away from the sport, and generally welcomed back without repercussions.