

Sports

Williams' story another example of oppression



Photo by Steven Beekmann

Heave ho!

Michael Brown, a senior chemical engineering major and A&M Y.O.U. weightlifting coach, encourages Freddie Martinez, an A&M Y.O.U. student, in the weightlifting event at the Y.O.U. Olympics at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos Saturday. Martinez won the competition by lifting more than 300 lbs. Y.O.U. students also competed in basketball, track and field, softball, volleyball, and a spelling bee and trivia contest.

In Sunday's edition of the *Bryan-College Station Eagle*, a story appeared in the sports section which wondered aloud why Super Bowl

XXII's Most Valuable Player, Washington Redskins quarterback Doug Williams, wasn't receiving more advertising endorsements.

After all, Williams did have the greatest passing performance a Super Bowl has ever seen, overshadowing golden boy John Elway. And he did have to overcome a tremendous amount of adversity, such as injury, four team changes and the death of his first wife, to get to where he did.

He seemed to be the epitome of the American dream. Hot dogs, Mom, apple pie and Doug Williams — a veritable Horatio Alger in shoulder pads.

Could it be, the story said, that advertisers aren't beating a path to Williams' Zachary, La. door because he's **BLACK?**

Is it just me or is this a bad case of déjà vu?

We heard all this fuss back in January when Williams became the first black quarterback to lead his team to football's greatest showcase.

Personally, I got so sick of every Williams story taking the race angle

that I stopped reading the sports section and even actually resorted to reading a Mark Nair column. (Yes sportsfans, it was a low point in my life too.)

The media got so carried away that one reporter asked, "Doug, you've always been a black quarterback haven't you?"

Much to his credit, Williams handled the ordeal like the true gentleman he is, but enough is enough.

The argument that Williams isn't spending his time peddling Puddin' Pops or Adidas hightops cause he's black is ludicrous.

Has whoever wrote that article ever heard of Michael Jordan, William Perry, or Akeem Olajuwon — all black athletes who earn as much each year in endorsements as for winning games?

Perhaps Williams' low-profile attitude and unflashy playing style are just not appealing to advertisers. Sports fans like to identify with outrageous characters a la Jim McMahon, the Boz, Charles Barkley, or Mike Tyson. Hence they are the ones who get the Taco Bell, Right Guard, Nike and Pepsi commercials.

It's shocking to me that the media concentrates so much on race in a business in which the only measuring stick should be talent. In many cases, the media has even helped perpetuate stereotypes.

Doug Williams' story is a perfect example of that. With every story focusing on the color of Williams' skin, the media gave credence to those idiots who believe that a black man does not have the mental or psychological facilities to win the big one.

Of course anyone who's been an

A&M football fan since 1984 can dispel that stupid rumor.

Kevin Murray may have been cocky, but he was a talented quarterback and a winner at crunch time. Whenever the Aggies were down by a touchdown with the clock winding down, A&M fans always had a feeling that Murray would find a way to win.

And he usually did because he was a mentally tough individual.

Another rumor concerning black athletes that the media has yet to squelch is that blacks are naturally better athletes than whites.

For example, how many times have you seen an article exclaim how peculiar it is that Larry Bird, a white man, is considered the best all-around player in the National Basketball Association?

And although it's true that the NBA is approximately three-fourths black, many of the leagues best players are white. No coach would turn down the opportunity to have Bird, Tom Chambers, John Stockton, Detlef Schrempf, Mark Eaton or Jim Petersen — each a caucasian — on his team.

Sports is an enjoyable area of many people's lives because it gives a chance for a group of people to unify and work for one common goal. Athletes sweat together, hurt together, win and lose together.

And seldom does the issue of skin color affect how teammates feel about one another because something stronger and more important than that bonds them together.

And that's the way it should be. Now if only the media can catch on.



Anthony Wilson

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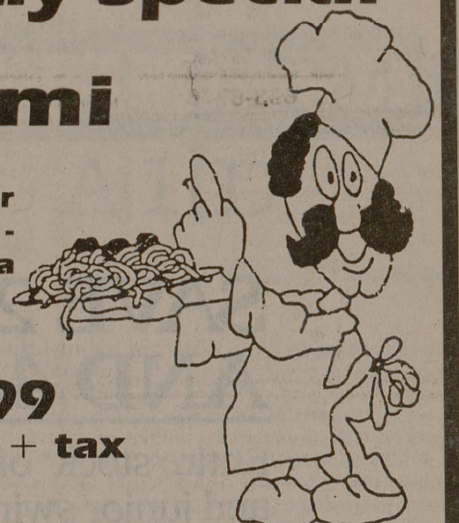
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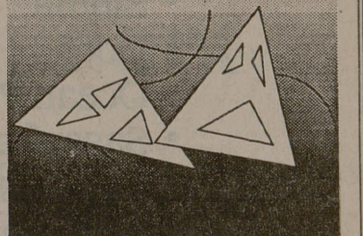


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