

RACISM AT WORK

The Danger of Indifference



Black Coaches in British Football

The Parliamentary Commission for the development of Culture, Media and Sport carried out a review into racism in football in 2012. During the hearing, it was reported that 20% of the Professional Footballers' Association members wanted to stay in the game after they had stopped playing. Of the 3,000 players active at the time, 25% were black and there were 50,000 former players. However, the proportion of black coaches did not reflect the numbers playing the game. The Football Association revealed that the number of BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) people who had attained its Football Coaching Qualifications were:

- FA Football Coaching Qualification Level 1 - 8.5% of 27,380 coaches were BAME
- FA Football Coaching Qualification Level 2 - 9.2% of 6773 coaches were BAME
- FA Football Coaching Qualification Level 3 - 4.2% of 1399 coaches were BAME

They also revealed that out of 552 senior coaching positions in England's 92 professional clubs, only 19 were held by BAME individuals. Typically, a professional club will have six senior coaching staff:

- 1st Team Manager
- 1st Team Assistant Manager
- 1st Team Head Coach
- Development Squad (18 – 21 years of age) Head Coach
- Youth Development Head Coach
- Youth Academy Director (15 -16)

These senior coaches are coached by a range of other coaches who will be a mix of full-time, part-time and sessional staff. For each category of staff the proportion of BAME coaches can be seen below:

	BAME + No.	% BAME
1 st Team Managers	2 / 92	2.2
1 st Team Assistant Managers	3 / 92	3.3
1 st Team Coach	4 / 92	4.3
Development Squad	5 / 92	5.4
Youth Squad	2 / 92	2.2
Academy Director	3 / 92	3.3
OVERALL	19 / 552	3.4



RACISM AT WORK

The Danger of Indifference



It is clear to see that behind the scenes, minorities are woefully under-represented. In addition, only three clubs, at the time, had more than one BAME coach. The isolation that the pioneering black footballers experienced in the past is now replicated in the preferential coaching schemes.

Some of the reasons identified by research behind these disparities were:

1. Limited access to high level coach education courses. The cost of the course and lack of mentoring opportunities contributed to reducing access, particularly if the BAME individual was not already employed by a club in some other capacity.
2. When BAME individuals were employed by clubs, they would be more likely to be overlooked for the more prestigious, high level coach education courses. The people chosen for these courses would be the “preferential choices” of the white coaches and other white staff.
3. Favouritism shown by high profile ex-players.
4. Subtle forms of racism within the high level coaching environments. It included “banter” but also the lack of willingness to address issues such as racism on the courses. In truth, this led some coaches to feel isolated, which had an impact on their motivation and aspiration.
5. Over-reliance on the “old boys’ network”. The networks reduced BAME coaches’ chances of obtaining coaching roles. Even when BAME individuals had the qualifications, other individuals with lesser qualifications would be selected instead.
6. Lack of sponsorship or patronage by key power brokers. Non-inclusion in the more dominant networks meant that BAME players and coaches would not receive the sponsorship and support of influential people within the sport.

Whilst professional footballers could be seen as different from other employment seekers, the obstacle that BAME coaches face are remarkably similar to those found in other areas.

