

Black Lives Matter and English soccer: thinking, acting and resisting across space and time
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The involvement and leadership of black professional soccer players (together with support from a number of white allies) has been one of the most notable features of the Black Lives Matter protests of summer 2020 in the UK. However, largely absent from analyses of this development are considerations of the *transnational* and *transhistorical* orientations and perspectives underpinning the players' activism. In focusing on current events, scholarly and journalistic commentaries tend to place key individuals and their actions in geographically-bounded, time-contained and essentially disconnected silos. This approach deters any consideration of how the positionality, purpose and power of black sports activism are informed and nourished by transnational networks and interactions; and it inhibits recognition of how they often draw on occurrences from the (sometimes distant) past as well as the present. Drawing on recent articulations and actions from elite, male and female black soccer players in England, this paper illustrates how manifestations of anti-blackness and white supremacy – and the techniques and tactics for resisting them – are taken by black players as reference points from other cultural spaces and varied points in history, and inserted into the particular milieu and power dynamics of modern English soccer and British society. This allows these athletes to contextualise and comprehend their experiences, and to align in cross-cultural solidarities against racism and other social injustices on both local and worldwide scales. This is an approach, this paper concludes, that those with the power, capacity and responsibility to instigate structural change in sport would do well to follow.