



Title:

"Competitive Markets Eliminate Discrimination: the Example of Professional Sports"

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Two previous Commentary articles have focused on dispelling the myth that the current wage gaps that we see between white males and females or minorities in competitive markets are due to discrimination rather than differences in productivity or labor market preferences.¹ In the present article the voluntary integration of the three major U.S. professional sports of baseball, football, and basketball will be used as historically based examples of the power of competition in the marketplace to reduce discriminatory employment practices. What makes these professional sports (all capitalistic business enterprises) such a compelling example is that the integration of African-Americans into the “game” took place on a completely voluntary basis before the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, when it was perfectly legal to discriminate in employment at will.

Jackie Robinson became

improved 5-7-2 record. After this there was no looking back, and every NFL team had by now voluntarily integrated.³ Again, the process was painful and not very pretty, with several teams