

SPORTS

The Kentucky Derby and Breonna Taylor

BY ISABELLA D'BURKE

WITH ALL OF THE Covid cancellations, there are few sports that are allowed to progress this year, and many fans aren't sure what sports to watch. Luckily, there was still the \$3 million Kentucky Derby, presented by Woodford Reserve. While the event itself was a short, 2-3 minute view, it's unpredicted end still provided for a fun race.

The New York Times reported on the race by stating that the predicted winner, Tiz the Law, but he ended up losing to the now champion, Authentic. Tiz the Law had become a symbol for "everyday folks" (New York Times), as his hard work ethic won him 6 out of the 7 races prior to the final race. Unfortunately for rider Manny Franco, his strategy of settling in fourth place and fighting on the home stretch didn't earn him the win. Authentic's first place win gave his rider, John Velaquez, his third Kentucky Derby win and his 200th Grade 1 victory. Velaquez is the third rider in history to hit the 200 victory milestone. Authentic's 2020 victory was worth \$1,860,000 making Authentic now worth \$2,871,200.

The Kentucky Derby was different this year despite the seemingly normal race. Due to the pandemic, there were no spectators allowed. This created a different environment for the racers. Even though the lack of fans portrayed a quiet arena, protestors chanted outside of the arena. They were requesting for the derby to be canceled and for justice to be brought for Breonna Taylor, a woman killed in her home by Louisville police.

While many activists were calling for the derby to be cancelled, Attorney General Daniel Cameron tweeted, "Today, while we honor a KY tradition with the running of the Derby, we remain cognizant of the community's desire for answers in the investigation into the death of Ms. Breonna Taylor. We continue to move forward with our investigation, reviewing each fact to reach the truth." Amid the sounds of protestors, police, and an ever-present global pandemic, The Kentucky Derby commenced.

This race will always be remembered, not only for its exciting finish, but for the social change surrounding it. The Kentucky Derby paints an image of people in big hats and bright colors. This year, the Kentucky Derby will be known for the people wearing black clothes outside of the arena. This new image represents the change that is happening all around the United States. While the derby itself may not be interesting to many, everyone can look at it and take a page out of this book.

The Kentucky Derby is an example of America's obligation to reevaluate its priorities. Americans are knocking on the doors of social injustice. While people are sitting in the stands, eager for their taste of the "Old South," there are others stuck outside, living in a world of systematic racism. Now, the stands are empty. The question is: what are we going to do about it?

Mental Health Decline Amongst Collegiate Athletes

BY MIA CAHALAN

WITH SPRING SPORTS SEASONS being canceled across the country amongst high school and collegiate divisions, the cancellation of fall sports was no surprise. Even though some high schools are allowing for fall sports seasons, collegiate athletes were unfortunately not given the same opportunity. Over the summer, one by one, different divisions of the NCAA announced the postponement and later on cancellation in some cases of sports seasons. This caused an instant reaction from athletes and spectators.

For many athletes, sports are more than what they seem. It gives student-athletes something to work for and stay motivated through the struggles of everything changing in the times we are in.

Many student athletes already struggle with the balance between school and their sport. At times, both can be physically and emotionally draining. This alone puts collegiate athletes at a higher risk of having a decline in their mental health as opposed to their fellow peers. Bob Gallaher writes in an article, "Mental Health Impact on Student Athletes," which focuses on mental health on the University of Eau Claire campus. He states that with the sports season postponement and cancellations, many students have reported feeling an even greater decline in their mental health. This feeling of decline is occurring amongst all three divisions in the NCAA. The most common frustration and disappointment that the students expressed was the feeling of having something you work so hard for being taken away.

Beyond the disappointment of their hard work and not being able to be recognized, the students at UWEC and around the nation voiced other aspects that they will be missing during their seasons. Another common point that was made by the athletes was that they will greatly miss the time they spend with their teammates at practice each day. This is an important interaction that athletes are able to have with their teammates throughout the day. Athletes form bonds with teammates that are irreplaceable. All opinions aside, the well-being of the athletes is the main priority, whether there is a competing season or not.

As time progresses the well-being of students in this time has dwindled. For many athletes, sports are more than what they seem. It gives student-athletes something to work for and stay motivated through the struggles of everything changing in the times we are in. The struggles don't end there – many student athletes throughout different regions are reporting feeling a void within their lives and utterly depressed.

Due to the ramifications of the cancellation of sports across the board, recent voting has finalized the continuation of sport practices but with precautions in order to do so. The reasoning behind moving forward is due to the fact that coaches, players, and spectators are not willing to give up on what they love. Because of this, it forced members of the board to uphold their end, and pass the vote once and for all. On the upnote, this new decision can positively affect athletes' mental health. It is on the upswing from here for the athletes.