

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

College Basketball Coaches Call for End to ACT, SAT Requirement

Leaders say the tests hurt poor and minority students, ask NCAA to make 'immediate decision'



Harvard coach Tommy Amaker co-chairs the Committee on Racial Reconciliation formed by the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

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By [Rachel Bachman](#)

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The nation's leading men's college basketball coaches' association has called the SAT and ACT "longstanding forces of institutional racism" and wants them eliminated from use in determining athletes' eligibility.

The National Association of Basketball Coaches made the move three days after naming its first-ever Black executive director, the former Division I coach Craig Robinson. It also came the month after the organization formed a Committee on Racial Reconciliation, co-chaired by Harvard coach Tommy Amaker and South Carolina coach Frank Martin.

The committee believes the two standardized tests "no longer have a place in intercollegiate athletics or higher education at large," Amaker and Martin said in a joint

statement Thursday. “This is an important step toward combating educational inequality in our country.”

The NCAA didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

A spokesman for the College Board, which oversees the SAT, denied that the test is discriminatory and said that any objective measure of student achievement would shine a light on inequalities in the education system. He added that the College Board has asked colleges to equally consider students for admission who are unable to take the test due to Covid-19, and supports the NCAA reexamining its eligibility requirements.

A spokesperson for the ACT didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

The NCAA requires incoming athletes in Division I or II sports to complete a series of requirements to be deemed academically eligible, including earning a qualifying score on either the ACT or SAT.

A proposal that accompanied the NABC news release Thursday noted the wider trend already under way to move away from the tests. Many four-year colleges and universities, including those in the Ivy League and Duke and Stanford, won’t require the tests for admissions in 2021. The schools cited challenges students might have in taking the tests during the coronavirus pandemic.



South Carolina coach Frank Martin co-chairs the Committee on Racial Reconciliation.

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The burden of finding a safe and accessible testing location was especially onerous for low-income and minority students, the NABC proposal said, but it advocated for a

permanent elimination of the tests.

In May, the University of California board of regents voted to stop using the SAT and ACT in admissions. One regent called the tests “a proxy for privilege,” echoing concerns that they penalize students who can’t afford to pay for pricey test-prep courses. Before the UC system’s move, more than 1,000 colleges and universities had made one or both of the tests optional.

The NABC proposal highlighted the original SAT’s invention by former Princeton professor Carl Brigham, who was part of the eugenics movement of the late 19th and early 20th Century.

Black, Latino and Native American students have much lower SAT or ACT scores, on average, than Asian and white students, but test scores correlate highly with family income and parental education, the proposal said.

About 56% of male Division-I basketball players are Black, 23% are white and 21% are some other race, according to NCAA data.

“We feel it is prudent for college athletics to address a standardized test structure that has long had disproportionately-negative impacts on low-income and minority students,” said Robinson, the NABC executive director, a former player at Princeton and former coach at Brown and Oregon State. Robinson also is the brother of Michelle Obama.

The NABC says it has about 5,000 members at the NCAA to high school level.

Division-I male basketball player graduation success rates have trended up overall recently. Black male Division-I basketball players have posted rates between 76% and 82% in recent years, according to NCAA data, compared with the low 90s for white male players.

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