

## Why do you think there is a dearth of diversity in so many Olympic sports?

Written by Eryn Roberts

Wednesday, 08 August 2012 00:00

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**Issue:** Gabby Douglas now has an individual all-around gold medal in women's Olympic gymnastics to go with the team gold she won with her U.S. teammates. The 16-year-old Douglas becomes the 4th American gymnast and first African-American gymnast to win the Olympic all-around competition, but she also stands out because of her race.

The only black gymnast on this year's U.S. women's team, she is one of only a few black gymnasts to ever represent the U.S. in Olympics competition. According to Professor Rob Ruck, a sports historian at the University of Pittsburgh who has written extensively about why certain sports flourish in certain communities and not others, there are three factors that dictate which "sport takes on significance within a community of people." First, "A set of environmental and class, or socioeconomic factors. Second, when the sport provides certain tangible and material rewards, benefits and opportunities. The third is when a particular sport has acquired a deeply rooted historic meaning to people." When asked to identify the single greatest obstacle to greater racial diversity in the sport of gymnastics, Wendy Hilliard, the first African-American on the U.S. Rhythmic Gymnastics National Team, said one word: "cost." The other great obstacle to increasing diversity in sports in which minorities are traditionally underrepresented: "exposure."

**Question: Why do you think there is a dearth of diversity in so many Olympic sports?**

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**Somme Webber**

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I think the biggest issue is money. It takes not only talent, but a whole lot of time, money and support to



**Morgan Hill**

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Black children living in difficult circumstances, which unfortunately is far more likely than children of other

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**Jalyn Gray**

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I would like to think we are sending our best to the Olympics, but the sad truth is many people never hav



**Britney Haynes**

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I love many aspects of the Olympics, but one of the most exciting parts is to see people like me. I love s

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□ **{jcomments on}**