

The Olympics: A Time Where Race Doesn't Matter...Or Does it?

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor
Wednesday, 08 August 2012 13:30



“O, say can you see.....”

These are the words that mark the beginning of the national anthem of the United States of America and the official tune that is played at the raising of the U.S. flag: “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

All one has to do is go back down memory lane to remember the rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” performed by Whitney Houston 10 days into the Persian Gulf War, at the beginning of the Super Bowl in 1991.

There was such a strong sense of pride as Houston sung. Throughout the performance, you see people of all races in the audience waving American flags. As Houston brought her rendition to a close, four F-16 fighter jets flew over the stadium and everyone cheered enthusiastically.

At that moment, it didn't matter what race we were, we were all proud Americans. We were Americans who realized that we were living in the greatest country in the world. We were Americans who took comfort in knowing our brave men and women of the military were overseas representing their country and keeping us safe from enemies, foreign and domestic.

We were Americans!

Fast forward to August 2012 and we see that the same thing rings true.

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Right now, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is being sung by many Olympic athletes from the United States, who have achieved the honor of winning a Gold medal. These Olympic athletes earned the right to represent the U.S. and have displayed excellence on the grandest stage of their respective sport.

These Olympians have beaten the best of the best from countries all over the world and now they get to stand at the top of the podium and see their flag raised, all the while singing along to the tune of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

At that moment, the gold medal is placed around their neck and "The Star-Spangled Banner" begins to play. A sense of pride comes over us here in America, knowing that someone from the U.S.A. represented us well and was victorious in the process.

Personally, I get the same sense of pride when every Olympic athlete from the U.S. competes in every Olympic sport. It doesn't matter if the Olympian is Black or White, Asian or Hispanic, Male or Female. To me, they are all Americans.

As I see some of the media scrutiny and social media attacks, surrounding Black Olympians like Gabby Douglas and Serena Williams, I am cognizant of the true racial climate here in the United States. There are non-Blacks who temporarily applaud us for our achievements, successes, bravery and valor, but most of it is short-lived praise.

They say and think things like.....

So what you were a Gold medalist.....you're still Black!

So what you were wounded in combat.....you're still Black!

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So what you put your life on the line and gave it your all.....you're still Black!

Just look at how intelligent, qualified and accomplished Black men like President Barack Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder have been denigrated, disrespected and have had their patriotism called into question. Now, Fox News had people on their network saying that Olympic Gold medalist Gabby Douglas' outfit didn't appear to be patriotic enough.

Enough is enough!

It is a shame that Black people can go to war and die for this country, as well as go to the Olympics to compete for this country, and then get treated as if what they have done and accomplished doesn't matter or is less than because they are Black. Black people still get treated like second-class citizens in the confines of the country they represent and this must stop.

I get so happy when the Olympics roll around every 4 years and I get to cheer for American athletes, win or lose. I can only hope that the same enthusiasm that people have when they turn a blind eye to root for America in the Olympic Games, carries over to rooting for America after the games are over.

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