



Take on the South is a series of eight, one-hour, live-to-tape debates produced by ETV for the University of South Carolina's Institute for Southern Studies (ISS) under a grant provided by Watson-Brown Foundation, Inc. The Foundation's mission is, "to improve education in the American South by funding its schools and students, preserving its history, encouraging responsible scholarship, and promoting the memory and values of our spiritual founders."

"What Is the Most Important Southern Sport, NASCAR or Football?"

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Take on the South

“What Is the Most Important Southern Sport, NASCAR or Football?”

Description of Program

Under a grant provided by the Watson-Brown Foundation, Inc., the fifth program in the series of eight, one-hour, live to tape debates produced by ETV for the University of South Carolina’s Institute for Southern Studies (ISS) is “What Is the Most Important Southern Sport, NASCAR or Football?” Dr. Walter Edgar, Director of the Institute for Southern Studies at the University of South Carolina, is the moderator for the debate. The program will provide thought provoking positions to encourage inquiry and truth as it restores the time-honored tradition of debating. Two distinguished scholars will present somewhat different positions on the culture surrounding Southern sports. The topic of the debate is which is more important, NASCAR or football in the South.

Dr. Harvey (Hardy) Jackson is the first colleague to present his position. Dr. Jackson grew up in the football capital of the South, Alabama, attending public school and graduating from Birmingham Southern College. He earned his Masters degree from the University of Alabama and his Ph.D. in 1973 from the University of Georgia, both Southeastern Conference schools. He is currently a Professor and Eminent Scholar in History at Jacksonville State University. Dr. Jackson is the author, co-author, or co-editor of eleven books on a variety of aspects of Southern History, including *Rivers of History; Life on the Coosa, Tallapoosa, Cahaba and Alabama* which was published in 1995, more recently *Inside Alabama: A Personal History of My State*, which won the Alabama Historical Association C.J. Coley award. Jackson is editor of *Recreation, the 17th Volume of the New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and is working on the history of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico titled, *The Rise and Decline of the “Redneck Riviera”*. Dr. Jackson’s position, as one can conjecture, is that football is “hands down” the most important Southern sport.

Dr. Jackson began the debate by asking for a show of hands from the audience of who had attended a NASCAR or stock car race. A few hands were raised in answer to his question. Next, he asked the audience to indicate how many had attended a football game; it appeared that all hands were raised. He felt his case had been won since football clearly was more popular with the audience. Giving a brief history of the first recorded Southern football game in 1877 between Washington and Lee vs. Virginia Military Institute, Dr. Jackson noted that football preceded auto racing because no cars had been built at that time. Football became the glue binding many communities together with a ritual that cut across regional, class, and cultural line. The South was changed when the University of Southern California beat Alabama 42-21, with Sam “Bam” Cunningham, their African American star player. Winning was more important than segregation as the game of football began the process of Southern integration. Dr. Jackson concluded that football had improved the south and therefore is the “most important Southern sport”.

The second to present his argument in the debate was Dr. Daniel Pierce, author of the first comprehensive history of early NASCAR, *Real NASCAR: White Lightning, Red Clay, and Big Bill France* published in 2010 by UNC Press. Dr. Pierce is Professor of History and Chair of the department at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee where he authored *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* (UT Press, 2000). His work has

been published in *The New York Times*, *Southern Cultures*, *Smokies Life* magazine as well as *NASCAR Illustrated*. Having become a fan of NASCAR while in Tennessee, Dr. Pierce supports the view that NASCAR is the most important Southern sport.

Dr. Pierce ceded to Dr. Jackson that indeed football was the most popular Southern sport; however, NASCAR is the most important Southern cultural gift to the world. After attending his first stock car race in 1994 at the Bristol Motor Speedway, Dr. Pierce became fascinated with the sport calling it the “genius of the Southern working class”. Football was brought to the South by the schools of the Ivy League; whereas, stock car racing was born on the beach of Daytona in 1936. Racing enthusiasts came from the working class of the piedmont areas of the South bound by tradition, family, conservative values, and patriotism. Although football is arguably the most popular sport, NASCAR is the major cultural contribution from the South making it the “Most Important Southern Sport”.

The entire focus of *Take on the South* is to provoke thought and discussion. The debate on the topic of “the most important Southern sport” succeeded in providing an interesting perspective of culture in the South.

Guide Components:

- **Description of Program**
- **Vocabulary**
- **Classroom Activities**
- **Discussion Topics**
- **National Social Studies Standards**
- **Selected Internet Resources**
- **Selected Literature**

Grade Level:

The program is recommended to support the National Social Studies Standards for High School. The program is also suitable for viewing in middle grades.

Vocabulary:

Encarta Dictionary

Fan – enthusiastic admirer of a celebrity or public performer

Gridiron – football field

Interloper – intruder; interferer

Pantheon - temple

Ritual – an established and prescribed pattern of observance; following a pattern

Ritualized – make something a ritual; promote rituals

Speculate – consider possibilities

Speedway – racetrack for motor vehicles; fast road

Virtuoso – exceptional performer; talented person

Virtuosity – outstanding skill; great skill or technique shown by somebody who excels at doing something; interest in, or knowledge and appreciation of

Classroom Activities: Activities should be simplified or enriched based on the level of the student.

1. **Class Poll**
Poll all students on the topic of the *Take on the South* program, “What Is the Most Important Southern Sport – NASCAR or Football?” Students may participate in ETV’s online poll at the following address: SCETV *Take on the South Series* Sports Poll
http://www.scetv.org/index.php/take_on_the_south/show/what_is_the_most_important_southern_sport_nascar_or_football/ Students may also comment on the SCETV polling site.
Compile classroom results and compare to SCETV poll numbers or school numbers.
2. **Family/Friends Poll**
Invite family and friends to participate in the poll topic of the most important Southern sport. Document the data and reasons for the choice. Compare information with other students and compile information. Did the data duplicate the poll of the class? What were the variables?
3. **Current Events: Individual, Small Group or Class**
Using current newspapers, magazines and Web sites, follow your favorite football team or NASCAR driver. What are the statistics of the team/driver? What impact did the individual or team have on the sport? Although this activity may be seasonal, students can use the most recent information obtained.
4. **Historical Research: Individual, Small Group or Class**
Biography: Select a famous race car driver or football player to research biographically. Include contributions and impact of the individual on the sport. Students list awards and accomplishments of these individuals.
5. **Research: Individual or Small Group**
Using Web sites, resource materials and personal interviews, research the history of your favorite speedway or football stadium. What impact have these structures had on the community? When constructed, what was the funding source to build the stadium or track? How are these structures maintained financially? Students report findings to the class.
6. **Culture of the Community: Individuals and Class**
Students interview school or community members to discuss the important cultural aspects of the most popular sport in the area. What positive elements has the sport brought to the school and community? How has the sport improved the school and community?
7. **Economics: Individuals, Small Group or Class**
By visiting local business and community leaders, students research the economic impact of a local sport. Compare and compile class findings. What types of community improvements have been made because of a particular sport?
8. **Resource Speaker: Class**
Invite a local sports “star/celebrity” to the class to share how that particular sport impacted his/her life. Topics: How did the individual become involved in the sport? What did it take to become successful at the sport? How much time and effort did the individual put into the sport? What opportunities did the sport bring to the individual?
9. **Field Trip: Class**
Encourage students to visit the local museum as a class or individually to research sports’ artifacts. What sports have dominated the local community? What role did sports play in the history of the community? Research the community sports legends.
10. **Class or Family Field Trip**
Attend a local football game or race event. Students interview some of the fans to get an understanding of the social and emotional importance of the event. What are some of the similar qualities fans express concerning the importance of the sporting event?

Discussion Topics:

- What are the students' favorite NASCAR drivers? Why?
- Who do students view as the "best" football team? Why?
- What characteristics or qualities do skilled drivers and football players have in common?
- How do sports of any type bind a community together?
- How is your community impacted economically by sports?

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies **Copyright 2010 National Council for the Social Studies** **High School**

1. **CULTURE:** Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

Knowledge: Learners will understand:

- "Culture" refers to the socially transmitted behaviors, beliefs, values, traditions, institutions, and ways of living together of a group of people;
- Concepts such as: beliefs, values, mores, institutions, cohesion, diversity, accommodation, adaptation, assimilation, and dissonance;
- That culture is an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behavior patterns;
- How culture develops and changes in ways that allow human societies to address their needs and concerns;
- That individuals learn the elements of their culture through interpersonal and collective experience;
- How people from different cultures develop diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- That behaviors values, and beliefs of different cultures can lead to cooperative or pose barriers to cross-cultural understanding;
- That awareness and knowledge of other cultures is important in a connected society and an interdependent world;
- That the cultural values and beliefs of societies influence their analysis of challenges, and their responses to these challenges.

Process: Learners will be able to:

- Give examples of the value of cultural unity and cultural diversity, within and across groups;
- Compare and analyze behaviors for preserving and transmitting culture even while adapting to environmental or social change;
- Evaluate how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;

- Analyze data from various cultural perspectives and evaluate the consequences of interpretations associated with the world views of different cultures;
- Interpret patterns of behavior reflecting values and attitudes that contribute or pose obstacles to cross-cultural understanding;
- Construct reasoned judgments about specific cultural responses to persistent human issues;
- Analyze historic and current issues to determine the role that culture has played.
- Explain and apply ideas, theories, and modes of inquiry from anthropology, sociology, history, geography, and economics in the examination of persistent issues and social problems.

5. INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS: Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Knowledge: Learners will understand:

- Concepts such as: mores, norms, ritual, status, role, socialization, ethnocentrism, cultural diffusion, competition, cooperation, conflict, assimilation, race, ethnicity, and gender;
- The influence of individuals, groups, and institutions on people and events in historical and contemporary settings;
- How the various forms of groups and institutions change over time;
- The impact of tensions and examples of cooperation between individuals, groups, and institutions, with their different belief systems;
- How the beliefs of dominant groups tend to become norms in a society;
- How groups and institutions work to meet individual needs, and can promote the common good and address persistent social issues.

Processes: Learners will be able to:

- Ask and find answers to questions about the various forms that institutions take, their impact, the role of individuals within them, and how they change over time;
- Evaluate different interpretations of the influence of groups and institutions on people and events in historical and contemporary settings;
- Analyze instances of tensions between individual expression and group conformity;
- Examine the belief systems of specific contemporary and historical movements that have caused them to advocate public policies;
- Understand the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change;
- Investigate how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs, promote or fail to promote the common good, and address persistent social issues;
- Gather information about groups and institutions using such tools as observations, surveys, and interviews.

Selected Internet Resources:

Supervision of student use of Web sites is recommended. Other site resources are available. The sites were active at the time of publication.

- The Atlanta Coast Conference Official Site
<http://www.theacc.com/>
- Auburn University Athletic Site
<http://www.auburntigers.com/index-main.html>
- Bristol Motor Speedway
<http://www.bristolmotorspeedway.com/>
- Clemson University Athletics Site
<http://www.clemson.edu/olympics/>
- Darlington Raceway
<http://www.darlingtonraceway.com/?homepage=true>
- ESPN College Football
<http://espn.go.com/college-football/>
- ESPN NASCAR News
<http://espn.go.com/racing/nascar/>
- Fox Sports NCAA College Football
<http://msn.foxsports.com/collegefootball/>
- Fox Sports NASCAR
<http://msn.foxsports.com/nascar/>
- NCAA Football
<http://www.ncaafootball.com/>
- The Official NASCAR Site
<http://www.nascar.com/>
- SCETV *Take on the South Series* Sports Poll
http://www.scetv.org/index.php/take_on_the_south/show/what_is_the_most_important_south_sport_nascar_or_football/
- The Southeastern Conference Official Site
<http://www.secdigitalnetwork.com/>
- Sporting News College Football
<http://aol.sportingnews.com/ncaa-football>

- Sporting News NASCAR
<http://aol.sportingnews.com/nascar?flv=1>
- Sports Illustrated: College Football
<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/football/ncaa/>
- Sports Illustrated: NASCAR
<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/racing/>
- University of Alabama Athletic Site
<http://www.ua.edu/athletics.html>
- University of South Carolina Gamecock Athletic Site
<http://www.gamecocksonline.com/index-main.html>
- Wikipedia College Football
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/College_football
- Wikipedia NASCAR Information
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASCAR>

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About South Carolina ETV

South Carolina ETV is the state's public educational broadcasting network with 11 television and eight radio transmitters, and a multi-media educational system in more than 2,500 schools, colleges, businesses and government agencies. Using television, radio and the web, SCETV's mission is to enrich lives by educating children, informing and connecting citizens, celebrating our culture and environment and instilling the joy of learning.

Additional programming available through South Carolina Educational Television:

www.scetv.org Descriptions and information found on the SCETV website.

Carolina Stories weekly series highlights the rich cultural and historical landscape that is South Carolina. From the Upstate to the Lowcountry, the stories are as geographically diverse as their subject matter and they are all produced by ETV's production teams.

Connections is SCETV's weekly public affairs program and online discussion about issues that affect the South Carolina minority population. The host is P. A. Bennett.

ETV Shorts is a weekly web series of stories gathered from around the state. From the mountains to the sea, South Carolina has so much to offer residents and visitors alike. **ETV Shorts** will spotlight our beautiful state and highlight our amazing people!

NatureNotes Webisodes – Naturalist Rudy Mancke shares his knowledge, as well as his fascination, with the amazing variety of plants and animals found all around us on NatureNotes.

Riverbanks Roundup – ITV is working with the outstanding Riverbanks Zoo and Garden to feature educational aspects of the many zoo animals and their habitats. Each themed-program, which is designed to support elementary science standards, is produced on site at Riverbanks, allowing viewers to go behind-the-scenes with host Katie Mixon to meet the amazing animals and the zoo experts who take care of them.

The ***SC Hall of Fame*** was founded in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in 1973 to recognize and honor contemporary and past citizens who have made outstanding contributions to South Carolina's heritage, history and progress.

Southern Lens is a showcase for independent film from and about the South, culled from film festivals and presented by South Carolina ETV. By turns warm, humorous, compelling, and heart-breaking, each film presents a place and time in Southern culture as seen through the eyes of one filmmaker. Watch films on **Thursdays at 9:00 pm**. Southern Lens follows ETV's **Carolina Stories** series.

The Big Picture is a weekly program designed to inform, entertain and enlighten viewers by providing an in-depth look at the issues and topics of interest to South Carolinians.