

## Racism in the NFL: Retired Black players denied compensation from concussion injuries after ‘race norming’ their cognitive abilities

The NFL has been testing players to determine cognitive decline caused by time in the NFL. If players exhibit enough deviation from the test’s assumed baseline, the player is eligible for the settlement.

“Race-norming” is used to set a baseline lower for Black players based on racist assumptions on average Black intelligence, [as the suit filed by \[former Steelers Najeh Davenport and Kevin Henry\] states](#). Though the line is set lower, Black players must exhibit the same sized drop-off in neurocognitive function. Meaning, Black athletes, in a vacuum, have to be substantially more mentally injured than their white counterparts to collect a payout.

Najeh Davenport suffered [ten concussions](#) in the NFL. When he joined the lawsuit against the NFL, he initially won his claim. Then the NFL appealed the ruling and had Davenport’s test recalibrated or “race-normed.” With the test results curved, Davenport lost out on the settlement.

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The baseline “lower intelligence” levels... are not ontological to race and are almost definitely linked to the mental health impact of [poverty](#).

The NFL is not only asserting that there are natural differences between Black and white players, or the baseless assumption white players have typically superior intelligence. They are weaponizing it further to screw thousands of players out of well-deserved payment for the damage they incurred in the NFL.

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