

Rodney Hinds on Elevating Voices in Sports Journalism

Can you imagine a renowned sports journalist like Rodney Hinds once considering a career as a bus driver? Sure, it may be hard to believe. But even someone with impressive credentials like Rodney faced uncertainty early on in his life. Today, he's known for his keen insights and impressive career in the media, but like many of us, he faced moments of doubt about his future.

“I dabbled with being a teacher. I dabbled with being a doctor. I dabbled with bus driving,” Hinds recalled with a chuckle. But the heart of his work and aspirations — no matter the role — has always been about connecting with people.

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Now, after more than two decades at *The Voice*, a British newspaper focused on Black news, culture and sports, Rodney Hinds has not only become the Sports Editor but also emerged as a passionate advocate for representation and diversity in sports media. His journey — from contemplating different career paths to finding his true niche in journalism — reflects a deep commitment to connecting with and helping others.

In addition to his role as Sports Editor, Rodney is an accomplished author, broadcaster, mentor and lecturer. His contributions to the field have earned him prestigious recognitions, including the National Diversity Awards Lifetime Achievement in 2019 and the Best of Africa Award in 2022. Named on the Diversity Powerlist 2022/23, Rodney is also the co-founder of FBL (Football Black List), continuing to make a lasting impact on sports media.

The moment Hinds walked into the room, there was an unmistakable warmth and energy that seemed to fill the space. It wasn't just his presence but the way he effortlessly connected with those around him. His approachable demeanor made it clear that he's the epitome of a people person, someone who thrives on meaningful interactions. His passion, authenticity and openness

made it evident that he's more than a media figure — he's a source of motivation for anyone seeking to push boundaries and make a difference in their field.

But the seasoned journalist's journey in sports media is about more than just *his* personal success — it's about resilience, mentorship and a commitment to true diversity, paving the way for *others* to achieve their goals.

He has a refreshingly honest view on inclusion: "I don't believe that diversity should just be based on 'you're black so you should be given a positive opening'...provide me with the same opportunities as everybody else. That's what true diversity means for me, because we're all waiting for opportunity." This belief in fairness of opportunity has guided his career path, working hard to advocate for equality in an industry that hasn't always been welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds.

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Rodney's father, a devoted boxing fan, would become animated watching Muhammad Ali fight, his excitement igniting Rodney's own. This influenced his interest in pursuing a career within the sports journalism industry. "I could see in my father's behavior that what he was watching was magical. It was doing something for him," he reflected. His father's enthusiasm was inspiring. Sports are not just about competition and who wins or loses — they embody an emotional connection to family.

At the start of his career in journalism, Rodney faced some challenges and prejudice. "As a black journalist, I haven't always been accepted by certain sports authorities," he said honestly. However, this struggle wasn't just personal; it involved an entire unjust system that often overlooked Black perspectives.

Rather than being discouraged, the determined activist channeled this adversity into motivation, becoming even more committed to breaking down barriers and making space for people like him in journalism. His resilience in the face of these challenges not only strengthened his career but also opened doors for others to follow.

“But as I said, my personality means that I would go. Go over things, under them, around them, to get things done,” he explained, reflecting that it was the resilience that has shaped his journey in the face of hardship. This experience serves as a reminder of the need for change in a field that still has a long way to go in embracing diverse voices.

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The story Rodney shares goes beyond his own achievements; it’s about creating opportunities for others. As a mentor, he passionately advocates for young Black journalists, consistently pushing for greater representation in sports media.

“My identity has played a big role in my career,” he said, recognizing that the success of Black athletes has given him confidence and a roadmap for his own journey. “I’m not here today because I’m some sort of superstar. I’m here today because I’m trying to help other journalists, potential journalists, get into the industry,” he emphasized, highlighting his strong commitment to supporting those who share similar backgrounds.

In an unjust world where marginalized communities unfortunately face significant challenges, Hinds emphasizes the importance of resilience, hard work and supporting others along the way. He not only navigated the obstacles in his own career, but also recognized the value of lifting up those who follow in his footsteps.

But Rodney’s efforts are not limited to the realm of sports — his vision reflects a broader commitment to making real, permanent changes in the industry. By creating opportunities and

advocating for representation, he is working to reshape the landscape for future journalists, one step at a time.

After spending 24 years at *The Voice*, you can feel the sport media veteran's passion for his work. "If I could marry *The Voice*, I would; it's that kind of relationship," he joked, showing just how much he cares about what he does. "It's just always been very exciting...I love talking to people. I love having conversations. I love learning." From covering Olympic Games to chatting with inspiring figures in sports, Rodney's journey has been nothing short of a dream come true. He truly values the connections he's made along the way and appreciates the diverse backgrounds of the people he meets.

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Hinds also highlighted how crucial his role is in the media, especially regarding how Black athletes have helped raise the profiles of Black sports journalists. "Their success is my success," he pointed out, noting how their achievements drive him to tell stories that resonate with people.

In sports journalism, the conversation around true diversity is crucial. Rodney highlights that "the way it should be true, diversity is about providing everybody with the same opportunity." This perspective shifts the focus toward inclusivity, emphasizing that everyone should have a fair shot in a system that values talent and hard work, regardless of one's background.

During our discussion, Rodney's determination stood out. He spoke passionately about perseverance, especially when faced with challenges. "You're not going to win every day, but you're not going to lose every day. So I've tried to take on some sporting principles, but use them in my own life."

His advice to aspiring journalists is clear: stand out and push through the tough times. If it matters to you, keep pushing until you reach your goals. This sentiment underscores how vital tenacity is in achieving one's dreams. The path wasn't easy. It required hard work, resilience and a strong belief in himself. But it is evident that it has been worthwhile.

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While the distinguished journalist may have set aside his childhood dream of becoming a bus driver, sports journalism fulfills his passion for connecting with others, as well as embodies resilience and community. His journey emphasizes the notion that the field of journalism becomes stronger when we share our stories and learn from one another.

By promoting diverse voices at *The Voice*, Hinds is actively shaping a more inclusive future in sports media. His determination reminds us that, although the journey can be quite challenging, those who are tenacious and truly love their craft can achieve whatever they set their mind to.