

and incomplete interpretation. Political (Congressmen cutting deals with professional leagues) and social factors (desire for a city to be labeled “big-league”) have also been reasons for expansion and relocation. Other factors, such as the financial package a competing city or region puts together which convinces the majority of owners they will generate more profits in a relocated area, an area’s potential to generate television revenue, tax advantages, and revenue from new stadiums which are now intricately mixed with inner city redevelopment projects, are omitted in this book as reasons for expansion and relocation.

The manuscript’s notes are thorough, and its selected bibliography is equally comprehensive. Outside of these areas, scholars examining the economics of franchise relocation and expansion, and other interested readers will be unlikely to find this book enlightening.

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Fizel, John, Elizabeth Gustafson, and Lawrence Hadley (eds.). *Sports Economics: Current Research*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999. Pp. 246. Illustrated. Notes, bibliography, tables, index. \$59.95 cb.

Sports Economics: Current Research is a compilation of research presentations presented at the Western Economic Association’s annual convention from 1996 to 1998. The best presentations were reviewed by professional colleagues, revised by the authors, and edited for this volume. The book’s fundamental underpinning is that the industry provides unusual opportunities to conduct both theoretical and empirical research.

From the outset, the editors point out that this is a book written by economists for economists. The authors address critical economic issues impacting the contemporary sports industry: the location of teams and their influence on local economies, the relationship between team ownership of sports arena/stadium and the likelihood of franchise relocation, and the impact of free agency and a team salary cap. Thus, these economists attempt to highlight the duality of market cooperation and market competition that is unique to the sports industry. However, the examination is strictly from a theoretical and empirical perspective.

The book is organized into four broad categories: sports leagues and markets, the location of teams and stadiums, managerial decisions, and labor market issues in team sports. As the authors mathematically construct their answers, they cover many factors, such as utilizing a market viability model to identify the emerging markets most deserving of inclusion in the next round of major league baseball (MLB) expansion. The authors identify Salt Lake City, Utah; Washington, DC; and Charlotte, North Carolina, as the leading candidates for baseball expansion.

The main problem with this book is that economic analysis alone cannot reach the authors’ objective—the creation of a theoretical model “with policy prescription for achieving balance with neither monopoly nor monopsony exploitation” (3). These economists argue that the sports industry is unique because the team owners’ monopoly goals must be balanced against their illegitimate monopoly objectives. Preserving competitive balance on the playing field is the team owners’ legitimate goal. Losing this balance could result in

fans losing interest and the league becoming an economic failure. Exploiting the fans and players serve as the illegitimate monopoly objectives. Moreover, according to the authors, owners appear to use their monopoly power to restrict outputs by limiting the number of teams. Such an argument marginalizes important forces that dramatically altered a sports league's economic market, particularly baseball, since the end of World War II.

From the beginning, MLB was plagued by unbalanced consumer markets, leading to the creation of territorial rights. This market monopoly was instituted on the supposition that consumer demand for professional baseball was limited, and thus a single club would have a better chance of prospering than several clubs competing for the same market. But territorial rights did not solve this market imbalance, resulting in the owners attempting to compensate for this inequity by sharing gate receipts. As an incentive to improve the stands and add more box and reserve seats, the owners retained the additional revenue from gate receipts. But as additional higher-priced seats were made available, the percentage of total gate receipts was reduced for the visiting team. By 1950, the visiting team received only 14 percent of the total gate receipts.

Demographic and economic changes further complicated major league baseball's consumer market at the end of World War II. The rise of sprawling metropolises in the West and Southwest encouraged established teams to relocate, leagues to expand, and new ones to organize. Local boosters offered lavish incentives, like building stadiums at taxpayer expense, to lure a professional franchise to their growing city. Professional sports served to cast the national spotlight upon these growing metropolises, promoting a city's image as "big league." When MLB owners responded slowly to expanding their market monopoly, these same local leaders turned to Congress to exert political pressure by threatening to lift the sport's antitrust exemption. Clearly these owners did not want to take on additional partners when their attendance reached 20 million in 1949. But when attendance began to decline in the 1950s the owners recognized the need to consider expanding their market monopoly; their response was often irrational. This complex interplay that emerged between MLB and the postwar urban city was one of several forces that dramatically altered baseball's consumer market.

Other problems lessen the value of this work. Individuals unfamiliar with economic theory and its modulations will have difficulty staying with the complex formulas that abound throughout the text. In fact, these economists devote entire pages to formulas and how they were derived, with little explanation of their importance (31–34, 97–100). Thus theory and math overpower the main argument.

While this work may be a fine statistical analysis, it is difficult to recommend it for anyone attempting to understand what the economics of professional sports means for American sport or culture.

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