

STAUDOHAR, PAUL D. ED. *Diamond Mines: Baseball & Labor*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000. Pp 224. Notes, bibliographical references, index, figures, tables. \$39.95 cb., \$19.95 pb.

*Diamond Mines: Baseball & Labor* is a compilation of original essays from the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, which celebrated its twelfth anniversary in June of 2000. The essays on baseball and labor are drawn from a variety of academic disciplines that includes history, economics, business, law, and the humanities. The book's fundamental underpinning is that with work stoppages occurring in the last eight negotiations between the players and owners, labor issues have come to the forefront. While labor issues are also paramount in other sports—like football, basketball, and hockey—baseball has assumed the leadership role by establishing models followed by the other sports, for better or worse. Baseball was the first professional team sport to be unionized, to have a collective bargaining agreement, and to have a work stoppage. Moreover, the sport also made major breakthroughs in key areas like grievances, salary arbitration, and free agency.

The book begins with an historical summation of baseball's labor relations from the late nineteenth century to the present. Throughout this summary, Staudohar makes one critical assessment regarding the collective bargaining process between players and owners. There has been a lack of trust, respect, and cooperation among the negotiators. Former Major League Players Association (MLPA) Executive Director Marvin Miller "incurred the owners' wrath" with his confrontational style of negotiations, instead of the "low-key paternalistic dealings" the magnates were accustomed to in the past (p. xxii). Collective bargaining is further exacerbated by the print and broadcast media, who want to know the negotiator's every thought and act, so they can report to the fans information regarding the progress of negotiations. Unlike other industries, negotiators cannot seclude themselves into a tranquil isolated setting to quietly work out their differences.

Ten essays constitute the book's organization. Charles Korr examines the way the MLBPA functioned prior to Marvin Miller's hiring and illustrates how the owners contributed to the association becoming more aggressive, primarily over the concern of the pension fund and the players taking a proactive role in decisions about the fund. Karen Koziara highlights the lessons learned from baseball's labor relations and discusses the impact of several dimensions of the external environment on collective bargaining. Essentially, the external domain is divided into three domains: the economic context, the political and social context, and the technological context. Koziara points out that environment changes (e.g., economic disparities and league expansion) that have a positive impact on one side's bargaining power adversely affect the other side's power. A primary determinant of bargaining power is whether workers can effectively withhold their services and affect employer production. Rodney Ford provides a rationale for government action and inaction regarding antitrust law. He argues that good things would occur if the conferences in professional leagues were divided into two separate leagues. These "new leagues" would retain their "major league" status, ticket and broadcast rights would decline, and "output

would expand in the form of more teams and possibly more games" (p. 109). Moreover, because monopoly profits would disappear, there would be little for unions and leagues to fight over from an economic standpoint.

This interdisciplinary approach to major league baseball's labor relations is an innovative one. This collection of essays would have been stronger if there were an acknowledgment of the impact of the transformation of America's political, economic, and social landscape in the post-World War II era. The changes in organized baseball's postwar labor relations occurred at a time when America was a better-educated and more urbanized society. Ballplayers of this era were influenced significantly by the changes in demography, technology, the political economy, and American racial attitudes. They expected to grow up in a different America, in a different sports world. They got this novel idea in their heads that the basic rights guaranteed under the Constitution applied to them as ballplayers also. It was no coincidence that several challenges to baseball's reserve clause, culminating with the Flood decision in 1972, occurred in the postwar era. By the 1970s, a generation of players emerged who were willing to challenge the status quo. It should be noted that prior to the Messersmith-McNally arbitration cases, seventeen major league players threatened to play out their options, each beginning the new season unsigned.

Finally, I am still confused why scholars buy into this large market/small market scenario, constantly bantered about in the popular media, when they access organized baseball's labor relations. The fundamental problem is that their definition of what constitutes a large or small market is unclear. Are they referring to a city's population, or does a large market represent a major media market, like New York, Los Angeles, or Atlanta? To be sure, owners in larger cities have a significant advantage over magnates in smaller ones. A poorly run organization in New York would have a better chance of surviving than a poor one in Tampa Bay. However, this approach marginalizes key factors that affect not only labor relations but also major league baseball in general—the motives of owners, talent acquisition, marketing, human resource management, profit maximization, and responding to market forces. Moreover, a pivotal factor to assess in addressing both the business of baseball and labor relations is how the owners negotiate this dichotomous relationship of being competitors and partners. Undoubtedly, wrestling with this latter issue has dramatically impacted upon organized baseball's post-World War II labor relations.

Despite these drawbacks, *Diamond Mines* makes a significant contribution to the evolution of organized baseball's labor relations. It is a stimulating, informative, and most interesting book to read. I am certain the ideas in this work will stimulate further research and analysis into the late twentieth-century development of organized baseball's labor relations.

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