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The ILR Cornell Sports Business Society


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## Sports, Inc. Volume 2, Issue 1

ILR Cornell Sports Business Society

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## Sports, Inc. Volume 2, Issue 1

### Description

The ILR Cornell Sports Business Society magazine is a semester publication titled *Sports, Inc.* This publication serves as a space for our membership to publish and feature in-depth research and well-thought out ideas to advance the world of sport. The magazine can be found in the Office of Student Services and is distributed to alumni who come visit us on campus. Issues are reproduced here with permission of the ILR Cornell Sports Business Society.

### Keywords

sports, sports business, sports management, collective bargaining, negotiation

### Disciplines

Benefits and Compensation | Civil Rights and Discrimination | Collective Bargaining | Dispute Resolution and Arbitration | Entertainment, Arts, and Sports Law | Labor and Employment Law | Labor Economics | Unions

### Publisher

ILR Cornell Sports Business Society

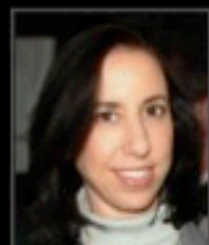
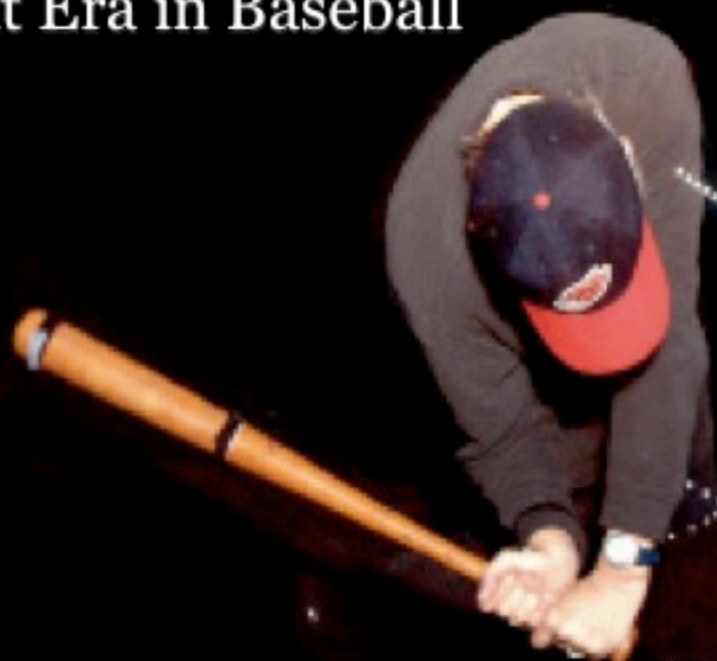
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# SPORTS, INC.

Advancing the World of Sports

## SPORTVISION: The Next Era in Baseball



**Exclusive Interview:**  
MetLife's Chief Marketing  
Officer, Beth Hirschhorn '88

**PLUS**



Baseball's Golden Age



Stathead: Evaluating Pass Protection

Meetings – Tuesdays, 4:30 – Ives 105  
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# The INC's INK

Volume II, Issue 1: October 2009

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# The League or the Law?

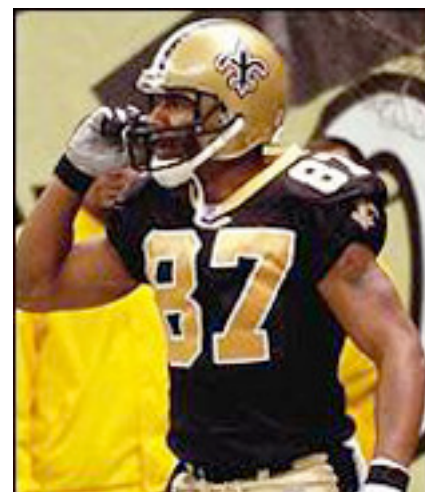
**Joshua Erenstein**

Chad Johnson (I refuse to call him Ochocinco) once labeled the NFL as a different kind of NFL. To be more explicit, #85 has referred to the National Football League as the “No Fun League.” This legendary statement was expressed by the talkative Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver after repeated fines and reprimands were leveled against him as a result of his touchdown dances. These were tagged as pre-ordained and excessive by ex-NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue, current commissioner Roger Goodell, NFL V.P. of communications Greg Aiello, and Co. With the mass media outreach of pro sports today and the skyrocketing exposure given to star athletes, one can appreciate the NFL’s dedication to protecting its image. One can compare the public’s perception of the NFL with that of the other major American sports leagues. The NBA, for example, has a severe image problem; most educated sports fans in this country think of most NBA players as lawless thugs and glitzy outlaws. MLB players are generally seen as soft and boring in the public eye. The NHL, which has done a tremendous job coming back strong from the 2004-2005 lockout, may have the classiest athletes, but does not receive enough exposure to compete with baseball, basketball, and football. That leaves the NFL as the lone sports system that can best promote its players. Thanks to the tradition, class, and publicity of the NFL, the players are followed twenty-four hours a day, seven



days a week, and fifty-two weeks a year. Whether it be on Twitter, on NFL Network’s “Team CAM,” or on ESPN’s “NFL Live,” the players are always under the spotlight. Local sports radio stations have always provided football talk, but with the advent of satellite radio, 24-hour football radio stations are now easily accessible to even the most fair-weather of fans.

The depth of the general fan’s knowledge and passion for the NFL is increasing at an exponential rate. A decade and a half ago, highlights were all that most fans craved. Following the creation of fantasy sports, a national craze for sports statistics was berthed. As baseball is considered more of a “numbers game” than football, fantasy baseball took the United States by storm. In its search of the importance of numbers involved in the new national pastime (football), the American public began to adore individuals across the league more so than the teams. This stipulation excludes one’s favorite team; most fans care about “their” team the most, but after that team, do fans care more about other teams or other players in the league? The



answer is the players. Even the most passive fans are now starting to realize that NFL games are likelier to be won and lost in the trenches as opposed to an eight catch, 117 yard, two touchdown receiving performance from a team’s top wide-out. Fans still love to follow the performance and off-field lives of the revered and well-marketed skill position players. Just take a look at the millions of followers of NFL players’ Twitter pages, including the 185,000+ that exclusively follow Chad Johnson’s Tweets and the 788,000+ that have looked up one video featuring a small collection of his highlights on YouTube. Therefore, I think that as these individual athletes are becoming increasingly popular, it hurts the NFL to de-emphasize these individuals. The NFL should let the coaches worry about keeping their respective teams cohesive; the League should let the players market themselves individually via appropriate antics for the fans’ sake and for the monetary benefit of the NFL.

Many gaps and bridges that I have left out need to be explored in order to fully comprehend the growth of the NFL in the public

realm, but one can generally understand the NFL's progression in the eyes of America's bourgeois. Even though new areas of the sport are being examined thanks to the creation of the NFL Network and ESPN's new push to dive deeper into the world of football, American sports fans still love numbers. We are all about the digits (including *Ocho* and *cinco*). So, even though American sports fans are loving the new in-depth analysis of the footwork of a left tackle, the body control of a wide receiver, and the hand and shoulder placement of a blitz-denying running back, most of us follow the NFL for the numbers and the entertainment. The bigger the numbers get, the more we are entertained. We pay money to see Chad Johnson do the Riverdance, watch Terrell Owens (T.O.) eat popcorn, listen to Joe Horn's imaginary phone conversation with his mom on the field, and witness Shawne Merriman's "lights-out" sack dance. That's just the way it is.

Fans want to be entertained. Most fans find Chad Johnson funny and very enjoyable to watch. He also produces on the field, so he is a rare complete package in the NFL. If his touchdown dances excite the fans, pump up his teammates, anger his opponents, create fodder for the broadcasters, and provide motivation for him to get in the endzone, that seems to be a win-win-win-win-win situation. Therefore, is it right, fair, or more crucially to the League, a good business decision, for Goodell to fine and suspend players for their antics? The NFL makes the bulk of its money via television contracts and advertisements. I certainly believe that TV ratings would

increase and the list of potential advertisers would lengthen if a player such as Johnson guaranteed a special celebration if he scored in an upcoming game, like he did in earlier seasons of his career. If the NFL allowed this, then the ears of advertisers and networks would perk up even more. The main demographic being sought out by the NFL is the 18-34 year-old male sector; I strongly doubt that seeing a player and his teammates execute a comedic skit following a score would bother more members of this group than it would entertain them.

I certainly think Goodell has the right to suspend a player such as Pacman Jones, who seems to gobble up fines, reprimands, and police investigations faster than the real Pacman eats those little dots. It is important for the NFL to emit a positive image, because the NBA has clearly proven that if a league allows its players to run wild, the fans will be more likely to stay away from the games. The Oakland/Los Angeles Raiders of earlier decades were viewed as mean, dangerous, and in possession of a swagger that other teams could only dream of. This attracted many fans to the team, and is a main explanation for the team's impressive national fan base. This aura that the Raiders possessed was largely based on their on-field menacing tactics and the way they strutted into the stadium on game days. Unlike the "coolness" of these "bad-ass" Raiders, the brutality displayed by Ron Artest, Ben Wallace, Stephen Jackson and others, although provoked by spectators, sends fans towards the exits, rather than the entrances. The NFL only has eight scheduled home games for each of its teams every year. The fans are going to

fill the stadiums to near-capacity every game. However, if the fans knew Johnson had an antic up his sleeve, T.O. was going to shake pom poms, or the Lions rookie running back Aaron Brown was going to do backflips (as he did against Atlanta in the preseason and was penalized for), I think the stadiums would not just be sold out on paper, but actually filled to capacity every Sunday.

On-field celebrations and acts should be deemed acceptable or unacceptable by referees on a case-by-case basis. Following a loose set of guidelines, they should largely use their own discretion. Group celebrations are currently banned. If a celebration is orchestrated by a group of players beforehand or a planned routine is executed by a single player, but only takes eight seconds and is not offensive to anyone, then it should be permitted. If a player decides to put on a twenty-second gymnastics display, then a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty should be assessed. If and only if a player commits an offensive act in his celebration, such as Randy Moss pretending to moon Packers fans, should a player be fined. Minor, inoffensive celebrations should be allowed.

What about the NBA dress code? Would fans rather see Chris Paul step out of a decked-out Maybach in front of New Orleans Arena in a suit or in a designer t-shirt and jeans? I think a fan poll would be split down the middle. Some fans might be turned off by baggy jeans and wearing sunglasses indoors, but the same number of fans likely thinks these "swagger" accessories add to the player's aura. The bottom line is that the NBA has bigger fish to fry

in fixing its image than the mere institution of a dress code. There are more important areas of image control for the Association to worry about. The NFL, though, is unique in that its image is viewed as squeaky clean; as a result, topics that are hot in other sports such as dress codes and steroids are overlooked in the NFL. Therefore, the League has time to focus on determining the proper way to address endzone celebration.

In terms of off-the field activities, why should Goodell get to decide the lifestyles of the players? Excluding performance enhancing materials, is it fair for Goodell to dictate how the players should live their private lives? If a player wants to get drunk five nights a week, gets photographed with good-looking girls, takes a cab home, and never breaks any laws, should he be reprimanded? Even if a player does break the law, should that be a factor in whether or not he is allowed to play in a game, which happens to be his only job and source of income? I don't think there is a fixed answer to this. I think a case-by-case approach must be applied here.

Shouldn't players and coaches be allowed to fulfill their rights as Americans and express their feelings on the officiating with absolute freedom? I understand that if there were no fines in place to guard against referee bashing, then it would be open season on the officials and the spectators could revolt against the league citing the players' siding with them. However, saying "I didn't agree with the last call" and getting fined for that statement is excessive. The NFL has been better in recent years with admitting mistakes following games and allowing the coaches to



somewhat express their feelings. They need to keep moving in that direction.

The question remains: is the NFL decreasing their profits with their strict policies? Did Michael Vick deserve to be suspended two extra games after serving two years in jail for dog fighting charges? Donte' Stallworth seems genuinely ashamed and remorseful for accidentally killing a pedestrian while driving drunk. Who is to say that his jail sentence was not enough? The thirty days he spent in jail does not seem like a long time, but the eight years of probation, two years of house arrest, 1,000 hours of community service, and what is assumed to be a multi-million dollar settlement with the victim's family seems as appropriate as possible. A human life cannot be replaced, but the grief he is now forced to live with for eternity will likely cause him much pain and anguish that could only be released in his life via football, the game he loves. I am not saying that I would not have suspended Stallworth for the year, but is his year-long suspension the best option for him, the League, and the fans? I doubt the family of the man he killed cares if the fans miss Stallworth's appearance on the field, but "live and let live" could be applied in this situation.

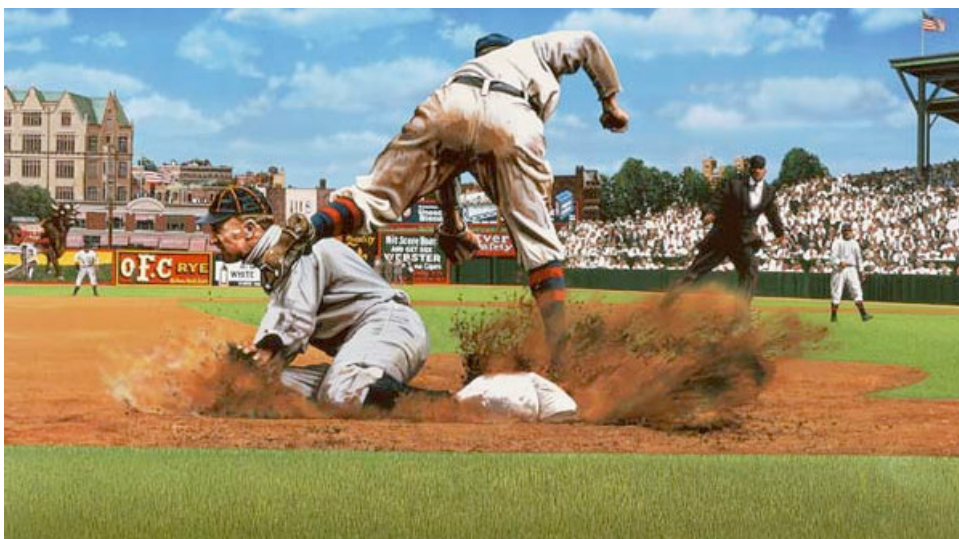
The League's perceived authority recently took a hit when

the State of Minnesota ruled in favor of Pat and Kevin Williams in a court case involving the two Vikings defensive tackles and the NFL. The two Pro-Bowlers tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs and were subsequently suspended by the NFL for four games, but the uniqueness of their case led the State of Minnesota to overrule the NFL and allow the linemen to sue the NFL. This, in turn, allows them to play every game this season. As previously stated, the fans tend to overlook this sort of press when it concerns their beloved NFL. In terms of the upcoming 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiations, however, this case is a significant detriment to the League. NFL officials admitted so by issuing a rebuttal to the government ruling in the form of a fiery statement. By losing a major stage in this well-publicized battle, the NFL will likely have to relinquish an extra hand's length of rope in their tug of war with the Players' Association.

Overall, I am glad that Goodell has started to look at off-field disciplinary issues on a case-by-case basis. I think the referees need similar authority on the field. However, Goodell's fist could be labeled as iron and his policies can be tagged as unfair. It is nearly impossible to assess the actual monetary value lost in limiting touchdown dances, preventing the press conference rants of coaches, and forbidding the participation of troubled players. If Roger Goodell wants the NFL moniker to continue representing the National Football League rather than the "No Fun League" in years to come, then some of the pleasures of game day need to be given back to the fans.

# Baseball's Golden Age

Gabriel Gershenfeld



“What was the purest baseball era, from a statistical perspective?” asks sports columnist Bill Simmons in the June 29 issue of *ESPN The Magazine*. His assumptions about interpreting baseball’s “purest” era are in many ways more revealing than his conclusions. Simmons says eras where factors such as discrimination, competitive balance, drugs, or any factors that made the sport “impure, antiquated, or uniquely ludicrous” can be excluded. Moreover, he titles his article “The Wonder Years: The Golden Age of Baseball.” “Golden Age” is a term to describe an ideal state in culture and society; are the connotations of “purest era” and “wonder years” the same? How subjective can any evaluations be? Neil Leifer’s *Ballet in the Dirt: The Golden Age of Baseball* combines Leifer’s iconic ‘60’s and ‘70’s baseball photography with captions and essays extolling the virtue of these years. This glossy 12.5” by 10.5” Five pound coffee-table book is as beautiful a place as any to start examining what and when was

baseball’s “Golden Age.”

A quote prominently featured on the back cover of *Ballet* from Terry McDonnell, the editor of the Sports Illustrated Group, succinctly describes the book’s target audience: “*Ballet in the Dirt* is baseball as good as it gets, or maybe ever was. Neil Leifer pulled the heart of the game into his images at a time when baseball was in the same sentence as apple pie.” *Ballet* is for baby boomers looking to relive the sport they first became fans of. We see Willie Mays making a basket catch; Maris, Mantle, and Boyer giving a “number 1” after their 1960 World Series win; and a youthful Pete Rose scouting the opposition—these are the images that defined baseball for a previous generation. The front cover shows Jim Gilliam, Don Drysdale, and John Roseboro in the 1963 World Series exuding a simple joy for the game in front of a Dodger blue sky.

The photo captions tell as much of a story about that time period as the photos themselves. They range from the matter-of-fact:

“Note that nearly every man in the crowd is wearing a white shirt and a tie, a long-standing tradition that disappeared when World Series games began being played at night in the 1970s”

To the nostalgic:

“Interviews today are usually brief, tape-recorded adversarial encounters in the locker room. Gone are the days when a superstar like Stan Musial... would park himself on the top step of the dugout before a game and shoot the breeze with his buddies in the press”

To the critical:

“Conditioning emphasized stretching and flexibility, unlike today’s obsession with pure size and strength.”

Editor Eric Kroll and writers Ron Shelton (former player) and Gabriel Schechter (research associate at the Baseball Hall of Fame) portray the “Golden Age” as the ‘60s and ‘70s, is an indirect opinion about the present. In his introduction, “It was Golden: Baseball in the ‘60s and 70s,” Ron Shelton says that those decades “were the pre-Moneyball era, when the important opinions came from managers, not computers.” Although Orioles manager Earl Weaver was actually one of the first managers to analyze detailed player



splits and value OBP at the top of the lineup, *Ballet* says he is simply a manager who was involved in “10,000 games in a lifetime, give or take, out of which came a headstrong point of view.” Thus, *Ballet* does not consider Weaver a major catalyst for the statistical revolution. Regarding player salary, Shelton says “it all changed in ’69 when Curt Flood refused to be traded...,” yet the next paragraph opens with “throughout the ‘70s the game stayed pure....” Shelton says drugs didn’t start to creep in until the end of the “Golden Age,” but he doesn’t count greenies (aka amphetamines). Jim Bouton’s 1969 expose of major league life, *Ball Four*, left little doubt that greenies were widespread and performance enhancing. *Ball Four* itself may have signaled the end of a journalistic “Golden Age” of baseball. *New York Times* sportswriter Leonard Schecter collaborated with Bouton to write the infamous book, and soon other sportswriters followed Schecter’s lead by reporting players’ off-the-field transgressions that had traditionally been taboo for decades. Many players lost their trust in many writers, and the media never had quite the same level of access they once had as a result of their obsequious attitudes.

Further investigation shows that assigning particular years to a “Golden Age” can be tricky. *Ballet* declaratively states that the Golden Age of baseball is the ‘60’s and 70’s. Yet an Amazon.com search for “baseball’s golden age” reveals a discrepancy of interpretations: “Baseball’s Golden Age: The Photographs of Charles M. Conlon” covers 1904 to 1942; Gene Fehler’s “More Tales from Baseball’s Golden

Age” reminisces about the ‘40s and ‘50s; Fox Sports’ “Baseball’s Golden Age” TV series spans the ‘30s through the ‘60s; Warren Goldfein’s “Diamond Gems In Autumn: 50 Memorable Classics From Baseball’s Golden Age” describes the time period from Enos Slaughter’s 1946 home run through Joe Carter’s in 1993. Why the difference in opinions? More often than not, the time period described is the era in which the photographer, author, producer, or editor grew up in—their childhood, their college time, or their first formative professional years. The “Golden Age” will always be the time when we first fell in love with a sport; it ends when we grow up.

Shelton admits that the “Golden Age” he remembers was not perfect:

“...The photographs in this book take us back to when baseball was, if not pure, certainly innocent. We forgave their drinking. We loved their brawling. We pretended we didn’t know about their womanizing. They wore the name of our city on their chests and so we believed they cared about us and if that was an illusion, then give us our illusions.”

He is speaking to his own generation. It’s not *his* opinion or *his* outlook; it’s *our* city and *our* illusions. Baseball is a personal memory, and to Ron Shelton, Leifer’s images evoke his own childhood memories, his first game of catch with his dad, his

first little league hit, and then “years later you are older and you realize your gods are human, and there is mortality... but not in baseball.”<sup>1</sup> Yet Shelton’s experience is universal for practically any baseball fan. Leifer captures a simple reality, but to some audiences this, or any other “Golden Age,” is all that is needed to evoke fiction. The past is too often what we want it to be.

*Sports Illustrated* and *Kansas City Star* columnist Joe Posnanski writes in his blog about favorably remembering the era he grew up in. He is “oddly happy” that Jim Rice made the Hall of Fame, even though he did not vote for him. As an Indians fan growing up, watching, rooting against, and fearing Rice was part of Posnanski’s childhood:

“When Jim Rice was inducted into the Hall of Fame this weekend — I did feel a little emotion. No, he wasn’t a complete player. Yes, Fenway Park probably inflated his numbers. Sure, I think that numerous other players just from around his time — Fred Lynn, Dale Murphy, Dwight Evans, Dave Parker — were at least his equal.

But you know what? I grew up watching Jim Rice play baseball. I remember cringing when he came to the plate against my Cleveland Indians. I recall the feeling of joy I would get when a Jim Rice baseball card appeared in my wax pack — hey, Jim Rice, he’s a SUPERSTAR. The Hall of Fame is there to honor players,

of course, but in a way it's also there to honor our childhoods, to stamp our memories, to tell us that yes, we were lucky enough to watch this player, this Hall of Famer, this baseball icon."

Seeing Rice enter the Hall of Fame is an affirmation of the legitimacy of the era Posnanski grew up with. His analysis is objective—he previously compared the OPS leaders of four different 5-year time periods and their Hall of Fame standing to judge those periods importance—but his outlook remains emotional.

Fittingly, the last photograph in *Ballet* represents the end of an era for Kroll, Shelton, and Schecter. Before his untimely death in 1972, Roberto Clemente was known for his gold-glove defense, spirited charity work, and as the first Latino to win an MVP. The caption of Clemente walking out of the clubhouse ends the book with an ominous, martyr-like tone: "Roberto Clemente makes a lonely march from the clubhouse to the light of the field and another chance to shine."<sup>2</sup> Clemente's end not only represents the sad end of the book, but of an era for those who grew up with his career.

Any definition of a "Golden Age" fundamentally depends on the person defining it. "Doesn't everyone believe that the time they grew up with baseball is special?" Posnanski asks. From his experience, those who grew up with Willie, Mickey and the Duke center in the 1950s tend to think of that time as the best, those who grew up with Koufax, Gibson, and Marichal on the mound in the 1960s tend to think of that time as

the best, "and I suspect those who grew up in the 1990s will someday romanticize the Selig Era."

What does Simmons call Baseball's "Golden Age?" After accounting for equipment, discrimination, competitive balance, managerial tactics, ballparks, and drugs, in a thorough manner, Simmons concludes that

baseball's "Golden Age" is a five-year period from 1988-1992. This period had many memorable postseason events, but is also noteworthy for another influential reason he neglects to mention. Simmons' own formative years were during that time: he attended the College of Holy Cross from 1988-1992.

# Stat Head

## Jeff's Methods of Evaluating Pass Rushing and Pass Protection

Jeffrey Lebow

It is difficult to measure the pass protection capabilities of a given offensive lineman in the NFL. K.C. Joyner poorly attempts to explore this question in his book, "Blindsided: Why the Left Tackle is Overrated and Other Contrarian Football Thoughts." However, his heavily flawed exploration triggered activity in the geeky sports numbers department of my brain. Joyner mentions that in 2005, Orlando Pace and L.J. Shelton, two left tackles in the NFL, each allowed 5.5 sacks in sixteen games. Orlando Pace made the Pro Bowl while L.J. Shelton was cut quickly after the season ended. I have a hunch that Shelton's teammates often had to double team Shelton's man while Pace rarely, if ever, needed a help blocker. Perhaps, Pace was not as responsible for the sacks he "allowed" as Shelton was. Maybe Shelton allowed the sacks to happen more quickly than Pace. But is the common NFL fan

aware of what differentiates the value of Shelton to that of Pace? Joyner pathetically implies that the difference between the players' performances was insignificant. His foolishness activated the aforementioned part of my brain, which led me to develop three new statistics that analyze both pass rushers and pass protectors.

### Types of Sacks and Their Importance

All sacks are not created equal. That is the theme for the first two statistical breakdowns. There are many types of sacks which the "Scientific Football" publication series has either covered or created. Here is the list:

**Coverage sack:** A sack that occurs in the pocket more than three seconds after the snap.

**Garbage sack:** When one defensive player gets a sack due to the pass-rushing efforts of another

defender. One typical example of this is when a defensive end crashes the pocket from the outside and forces the quarterback to step up into a well-blocked defensive tackle. The tackle was only able to get the sack because of the defensive end's pass rush, so he is credited with a garbage sack.

#### **Good recognition sack:**

This type of sack is given when a defensive player makes a sack because he didn't bite on a fake by the offense that was supposed to take him out of position. A good example of this is when a defensive end reads a bootleg pass correctly.

#### **Individual effort sack**

**(one-on-one):** A sack where a defensive player beats an offensive player one-on-one for a sack.

**"Other" sacks:** The type of sack that is credited when a sack doesn't fit into any of the other categories. The most common "other" sack is the gimme sack.

Gimme sacks most often occur when a quarterback trips over a lineman's foot on his drop and is downed by a defensive player.

**Pursuit sack:** A type of sack that occurs when the quarterback is scrambling out of the pocket but is still looking to throw the ball downfield when he is sacked. Compare to run sack.

**Run sack:** This type of sack is credited when a quarterback starts to run after dropping back to pass the ball. The quarterback must be out of the pocket and pull the ball down, tuck it away, and be running toward the line of scrimmage for a play to be noted as a run sack.

**Scheme sack:** A sack where a defensive player gets it due to running a stunt or a blitz.

When I read this list, there was one sack that stood out as the most impressive: an individual effort

sack. Based on the aforementioned definitions, with the exception of a scheme sack, all of these sacks can be considered individual effort sacks. I want to redefine an individual effort sack as a sack that not only includes the defender beating the offensive player one on one, but is specifically NOT a coverage, garbage, "other," pursuit, or run sack. Some good recognition sacks can fall into the individual effort category so those have to be judgment calls. My definition of an individual effort sack also includes beating multiple defenders for a sack. Now that I got that out of the way, here is my first statistic: Individual Effort Sack Percentage.

#### **Determining the Chances of Surrendering and Achieving Individual Effort Sacks**

IES % is calculated by "Individual Effort Sacks" divided by "Individual Effort Sack Opportunities." An Individual Effort Sack Opportunity consists



of any play in which an Individual Effort Sack could occur. An opportunity can not occur on a running play, a screen pass, or a botched snap in which the quarterback does not receive the ball. If an offensive lineman *uses* help on a given play, it doesn't count as an individual effort sack opportunity. However, if a defensive player beats both the lineman and his help, it does count as an IES and an IES opportunity. This is similar to a scenario in basketball when a player is fouled in the act of shooting. The shot only counts toward his Field Goal Percentage if the player makes his shot. IES% can be measured for both offensive and defensive linemen. A defensive lineman wants his IES% to be high while an offensive lineman wants his IES% to be low. This stat measures the chances of an offensive lineman getting beat one on one and surrendering a sack and it measures the chances of a defensive lineman

beating a player one on one for a sack on a given play.

### Help Wanted: Which Offensive Linemen Need Help? Which Defensive Linemen Demand Help?

The statistic I created to determine how often a player uses help or gets double teamed is called Help Blockers Per Play (HBPP). It is calculated by the "number of plays a lineman uses a help blocker (offense)" or the "number of plays a lineman gets double-teamed (defense)" divided by the "number of IES opportunities." For instance, if on every five IES opportunities a left tackle has a teammate chip block for him, the lineman will have .2 HBPP. A defensive lineman who is double- teamed once every ten plays will have an HBPP of .1. An offensive lineman wants a low HBPP while a defensive lineman wants a high HBPP. Therefore, an offensive lineman with an IES%

of nine but with an HBPP of .05 will be more impressive than the lineman with an IES% of 9 and an HBPP of .2. Conversely, the defensive lineman with an IES% of .06 but with an HBPP of .03 is less impressive than the lineman with an IES% of .06 and an HBPP of .15.

### Crunch Time: How Quickly Does it Take For Given Linemen to Surrender or Achieve Sacks?

A left tackle who on average gets beat one on one after five seconds is far better than a left tackle who on average gets beat one on one after two seconds. Therefore, another measurement used should be average time of individual effort sack (IES AVG TIME) which would simply be computed by (sum of seconds of

*Continues on Page 19*

## Sportvision

### The Next Era In Baseball

Mathew Sevin

Currently, baseball has rediscovered its retro roots. As the steroid era hesitantly departs like an eleven year old asked to leave a classroom (I guess its disciplinarian is Senator Mitchell) the game will expose dynamic players, those who can do more than just hit homeruns. But as teams rekindle their love for balanced baseball, similar to the days when Joe Dimaggio reigned supreme, advanced technology will give a sharp perspective on how to recommence being classic. I mention Joe Dimaggio because he was the mark of pure baseball;



he utilized the game's five tools of fielding, running, throwing and hitting for both average and power. The game, especially from 1995 to 2005, became distorted as steroids led players to rely on power more so than the other four tools. Now, with the power fading, the game

must diversify and search for those who are multifaceted. Fortunately, with a new tool developed by *Sportvision*, the game may be able to find its best players in a revolutionary, systematic, and scientific way.

A digital algorithm system

called *Baseball f/x* developed by *Sportvision* will bring unprecedented information to the game of baseball. In my opinion, this tool might be the greatest thing to happen to baseball since stirrups. In its simplest form, the camera and software system will be able to track the speed and location of the players and the baseball at all times on the field. The data will reveal a plethora of latent in-game details such as the speed of an outfielder's throw, the speed of a base runner from one base to another, and how far an outfielder ran to make a catch. For the first time these aspects of the game will be recorded on a consistent, reliable basis not dependent on human judgment. Ok, great. But why do we need this information anyway?

Critics of baseball's attempt to analyze its game scientifically claim baseball has overextended itself. One could argue that if politics became as closely analyzed as baseball, we would know Barack Obama's most commonly used vowel in the first word of his second sentence of speeches he gives on religious holidays. Yet, this software system trumps the trivial, countless analytical baseball hours spent in the past decade as it focuses on an undervalued, undeveloped analytical point of view. In a unique and quantifiable fashion it will educate general managers and (hopefully, in the near future) fans on the second and third most important parts of the game: defense and base running. Never before have teams had access to digitally logged information on the route their outfielders take to balls, how quickly they execute routes, and how long it takes them to get the ball from the outfield grass to the

infielder's mitt, regardless of the speed of their throws. Now imagine Derek Jeter running from second to third and having a computer system draw his running path. What if instead of seeing a straight line, you see a squiggly one that marks geometric inefficiency? You have just discovered a bad base runner, even if he is running faster than anyone else on the team. Of course, I am using Derek Jeter as an example; there is no evidence that he is a bad base runner. (Expect my book *Derek Jeter: Weaknesses Exposed and Why He should not be in the Hall of Fame* to be published once this software system is made public).

The implications this software has for baseball are astronomical, as analysis on defense and base running will become more scientific. Last year, Jeff Lebow, President of the ILR Sports Management Club, explored the importance of defense for the Tampa Bay Rays. His research showed that the team surrendered 273 fewer runs in 2008 than in 2007, of which 87% could be attributed to an improved defensive efficiency rating. Now what if every team is able to analyze their defense so that they can make a similar impact on their own club? As winning the game of baseball is dependent upon scoring runs while limiting the opponent's runs scored, the ability for a team to play good defense is obviously an integral part of the game. This system, if the information is managed correctly, can inform general managers about who plays good defense and who doesn't.

With great software comes great responsibility, and as important as this system is, maybe how *Baseball f/x* will be used will

be more interesting. Currently, it has been implemented in San Francisco, but the team has yet to gain access to the information. It will be interesting to see if the software becomes available to all MLB teams or whether it will be accessible to the public. It seems logical that every team would have it installed in their stadium by the end of the 2010 season, but for what price? In a hypothetical situation where *Baseball f/x* is undervalued and underused, half of the teams choose to pay for the software while the other teams, who believe it is a gratuitous cost, do not invest in it. However, this scenario seems unlikely, as even the most antiquated general manager might see its utility. In a situation logical for teams and favorable to fans, every ballpark implements *Baseball f/x*, while *Sportvision* disseminates the product at no charge to the public, so that academics can study the game, and media can present it with even more knowledge. However, according to the New York Times article, "Digital Eyes Will Chart Baseball's Unseen Skills," "the data could be made available to the public on a subscription basis", Bowman said, "although what data is released and in what form could be affected by clubs' competitive concerns."<sup>1</sup> The competitive concerns that Bowman, Major League Baseball Advanced Media's Chief Executive, articulates includes a team's interest to privatize this information. Teams can gain a competitive advantage over other teams if they interpret the data in a significant way, but releasing this product to the public may negate that opportunity.

Irrespective of the outcome,

# Consumer Discrimination In Baseball

Ryan Morfopoulos

Willie Mays and Mickey Mantle both have a career OPS of close to .950. But Mantle's baseball card is worth five times as much as Mays'. Can race explain this price difference? Is race a factor in today's baseball card prices?

The sports industry provides an array of data that can be used to draw comparisons between players of different races with similar abilities. Paul E. Gabriel and Curtis Johnson's 1995 article "An Examination of Customer Racial Discrimination in the Market for Baseball Memorabilia" in the *Journal of Business* examines rookie cards from 1984 to 1990 to determine if race affects card prices, adjusting for past performance. This article will replicate their methodology and use empirical analysis to investigate consumer racial discriminatory behavior in 1960 and 2008, and if those preferences have changed.

## Economic Theory

Customer discrimination theory studies any discretionary preferences that consumers use when deciding which products to purchase. If the customer avoids purchasing an item because it does not fall within his set of preferences, the seller loses earnings that it could otherwise have gained by selling more items that customers are likely to buy.

In contrast to other markets,



in the sports market it is possible to measure the extent to which consumers discriminate against players of different races with similar skills. In Major League Baseball, in particular, there are statistics to quantify player skill and production.

Player statistics are one of four main factors that contribute to the value assigned to each baseball card. As Beckett states, "A player's performance on the field directly affects the value of his cards."<sup>1</sup> It therefore follows that a player with better statistics should have a higher card value because consumers should be willing to pay

more for the card of a player who they perceive to be more skilled than other players.

The second factor affecting a card's value is scarcity, since a fixed number of each card is printed. The player cards that have the highest price in the market are the scarcest relative to the demand for them, and, conversely, the higher the supply of a particular card relative to its demand, the lower the demand for the card will be. Thus, older cards are scarcer and tend to be worth more than newer cards.

Third, a card's value is affected by the exposure that the

player gets. One way to evaluate a player's exposure is to take note of the market that he played or plays in. If a player plays for a major-market team and performs well, he should be expected to have a stronger national fan base than a player who performs equally as well, but in a smaller market.

This paper hypothesizes that race is a fourth factor that determines a card's value, and this factor has diminished over time. Race can play a role in consumer preferences, as consumers may discriminate against a certain race in their buying habits. Since the prices of baseball cards are catered to the preferences of consumers, if a consumer is more likely to purchase the card of a white player who has similar statistics, popularity, and ability to a black or Hispanic player, it follows the theory that prices for white player cards should be higher. Via the analysis explored in this article, it will become apparent that race has a greater effect on the value given to a 1960 player card than it will on the value given to a modern-day player's card.

### Data Analysis

A number of parameters were set in collecting the data set to test the aforementioned hypothesis:

All of the players selected were members of at least one all-star team. This was important because it shows that each player received national exposure, therefore ensuring that each player had, at one point or another, been exposed to the national spotlight.

The players selected all played at power-hitting positions on the field. Traditionally, players who play at first base, third base,

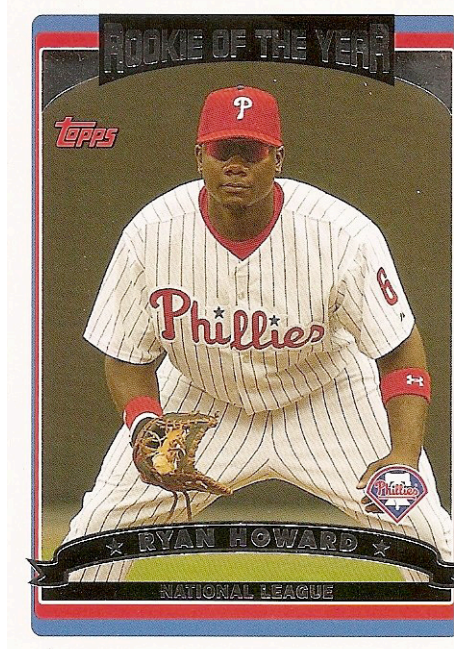
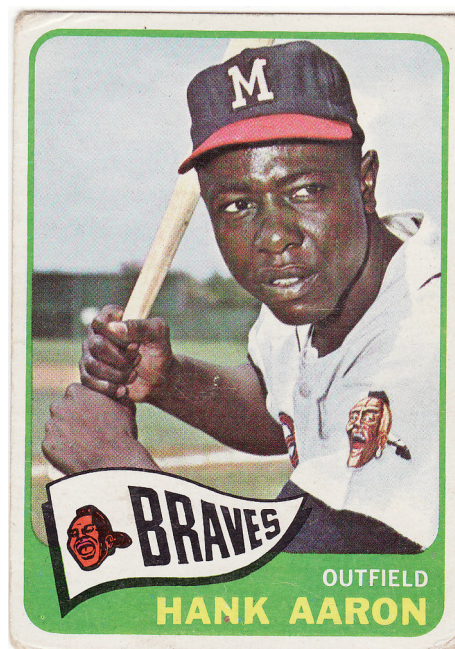
or the outfield have been known to post higher power numbers than players at other positions on the field.

All players selected had a minimum career on-base plus slugging percentage (OPS) of .725 in order to ensure that all players in the data set had minimum power numbers. Combined with the position parameter, this means that the players compared had relatively similar strengths on the field. OPS is one of the most useful indicators of a player's performance on the field, since it combines two very important statistical categories: on-base percentage (a measure of the percentage of at-bats that a player reaches base through a walk, hit-by-pitch, or hit) is added to slugging percentage (a player's total number of bases reached on hits divided by official times at bat). It is useful in comparing players of different eras since these statistics were equally significant in each respective era.

The samples were drawn from two different dates: modern-day (2008) and 1960. The modern-day players have not yet retired.

The 1960 players played from 1955-1965 and retired prior to 1977. The period of 1955-1965 was chosen because, in years prior to 1955, it was difficult to find a sufficient number of black and Hispanic players who were all-stars at 1B, 3B, or the OF. 1955-1965 provided the most data on black and Hispanic all-stars at these positions and allowed for the largest time gap to be maintained between these players and the modern-day players.

To control for variation, random (within the aforementioned parameters) samples of 30 players (15 black/Hispanic players and 15 white players) were drawn for each respective era. The following tables I and II show these players with their career OPS and today's average card price of each 1960 and 2008 Black/Hispanic and white player card:



**Table I.** Today's average 1960 Topps baseball card prices of all-star 1B, 3B, and OFers who played between 1955 and 1965 and retired prior to 1977 and who had a career OPS of 0.725+

Black/Hispanic Player	Career OPS	Avg. Card Price	White Player	Career OPS	Avg. Card Price
Roberto Clemente	0.834	\$150	Mickey Mantle	0.977	\$450
Willie Mays	0.941	\$90	Stan Musial	0.976	\$75
Hank Aaron	0.928	\$90	Roger Maris	0.822	\$75
Frank Robinson	0.926	\$35	Duke Snyder	0.919	\$35
Eddie Matthews	0.885	\$27.50	Al Kaline	0.855	\$35
Orlando Cepeda	0.849	\$16	Jackie Jensen	0.829	\$32
Bill White	0.806	\$6	Harmon Killebrew	0.884	\$27.50
Elston Howard	0.749	\$5.50	Ted Kluszewski	0.85	\$17.50
Vic Power	0.725	\$5	Gil Hodges	0.846	\$17.50
Minnie Minoso	0.848	\$4.25	Richie Ashburn	0.778	\$14
George Crowe	0.799	\$4.13	Ken Boyer	0.81	\$10.50
Vada Pinson	0.769	\$4	Joe Adcock	0.822	\$8
George Altman	0.761	\$3	Gus Bell	0.775	\$6
Al Smith	0.787	\$2.50	Carl Furillo	0.813	\$4.50
Leon Wagner	0.795	\$2	Hank Bauer	0.785	\$3.50

**Table II.** Today's average 2008 Topps Silk Collection baseball card prices of non-retired all-star 1B, 3B, and OF who have a career OPS of .725

White Player	Career OPS	Avg. Card Price	Black/Hispanic Player	Career OPS	Avg. Card Price
Jason Bay	0.891	\$60	Albert Pujols	1.049	\$90.00
Nate McLouth	0.798	\$45	Alex Rodriguez	0.967	\$45.00
Kevin Youkilis	0.857	\$35	Ken Griffey, Jr.	0.919	\$35
David Wright	0.921	\$35	Ryan Howard	0.97	\$28
Chipper Jones	0.955	\$35	Derrek Lee	0.864	\$28
Ryan Braun	0.937	\$35	Justin Upton	0.769	\$27.50
Josh Hamilton	0.908	\$35	Alex Rios	0.793	\$27.50
Lance Berkman	0.973	\$17.50	Manny Ramirez	1.004	\$27.50
Justin Morneau	0.846	\$17.50	Alfonso Soriano	0.847	\$27.50
Mark Teixeira	0.919	\$17.50	David Ortiz	0.937	\$27.50
Adam Dunn	0.9	\$17.50	Vladimir Guerrero	0.963	\$27.50
Jim Edmonds	0.905	\$14	Prince Fielder	0.920	\$27.50
Todd Helton	1.002	\$14	Carlos Beltran	0.853	\$17.50
Troy Glaus	0.858	\$14	Barry Bonds	1.051	\$17.50
Johnny Damon	0.789	\$14	Carl Crawford	0.764	\$17.50

Two regressions were run to analyze the previously mention hypothesis. Career OPS, race, and national exposure were the independent variable used. I was not able to find reliable data on card scarcity. The average price of all cards in the data set was the dependent variable used. Using the data from the tables above, the following equations were estimated:

$$(1) P_{1955-1965} = A_0 + A_1 OPS + A_2 EXP + A_3 RACE$$

$$(2) P_{1998-2008} = B_0 + B_1 OPS + B_2 EXP + B_3 RACE$$

In the two estimated equations, "P" indicates the price of all cards in the data set in the given time frame (1955-1965 or 1998-2008). The *Beckett Official Price Guide for Baseball Cards*, which sets the standard for pricing baseball cards, was used to find the average price for the baseball cards. The average price for each





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**Brunch on Sat & Sun starting at 10am**



card was found by taking the average of the high and low values that the *Beckett Price Guide* provided for each card. OPS stands for the career on-base plus slugging percentage of all players in the data set for the given era. EXP represents the national exposure of the players. Players who played in New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, or Atlanta for the majority of their careers were assigned the “dummy variable” of 1 and players who did not play in these cities were assigned a 0. Those cities are considered to be big-market cities because players from these markets receive more national exposure than do players who play in smaller markets that reach a more local fan base. The RACE variable indicates whether the player was white or black/Hispanic. Players who were black or Hispanic were assigned the “dummy variable” of 1 and white players were assigned a 0.

Tables III and IV below show the significant variables in from the regression:

**Table III.** Estimations of Price Discrimination for 1960 Baseball Players. N=30

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Ratio	P-Value
Intercept	-572.27	170.4044	-3.35834	0.0784
OPS	717.45	199.394	3.59820	0.0693
EXP	43.329	28.59086	1.48054	0.2769
RACE	0.2722	26.55351	0.99189	0.4258

**Table IV.** Estimations of Price Discrimination for 2008 Baseball Players. N=30

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Ratio	P-Value
Intercept	-18.4421	34.8552	-0.52911	0.6496
OPS	51.18809	38.44762	1.331372	0.3145
EXP	-2.10309	6.459523	-0.32558	0.7756
RACE	4.093796	6.112429	0.669749	0.5720

The first column of Tables III and IV shows the variable that the data in the tables corresponds to (Intercept, OPS, EXP, or RACE). Column II shows the coefficient for each variable. As evidenced by the high coefficients for OPS in Tables III and IV, there was a strong correlation between OPS and the price given to a player’s card in each era. The coefficient for EXP in 1960 was also relatively high, showing that national exposure affected the price of cards in that era. The coefficient for EXP in 2008, however, was negative, which suggests that the market that players play in today does not have an effect on card price, possibly due to the fact that networks like ESPN and FOX broadcast games to the nation so that every team receives national exposure. The coefficient for RACE was hypothesized to be negative but, due to possible variation in the sample, it was not. Comparing the race coefficients across the two eras, the regressions indicate that consumers today discriminate more strongly against black/Hispanic player cards of present-day players than they do against black/Hispanic player cards of past players, a result which is contrary to the hypothesis of this study. The third column gives the

Standard Error for each variable. Column IV shows the t-ratio for each variable. OPS in 1960 was found to be statistically significant ( $t \geq 1.96$ ). OPS in 2008 also had a relatively strong effect on card price, as did national exposure in 1960. The fifth column displays the p-values for each corresponding variable, further clarifying the statistical significance of each variable.

### Conclusion

The results indicate that the hypothesis that consumers today discriminate more actively against 1960 black and Hispanic players than they do against modern-day black and Hispanic players did not hold true. Race, in fact, was not a statistically significant factor in card prices for either time period.

One factor that may have affected the data is the considerable variation in the price given to cards. A player like Mickey Mantle, for example, had an average card price of \$450 in 1960. Factors such as Mantle’s exposure to a large market may have contributed to this outlier. A larger sample size would lead to more confidence in analyzing card prices.

The sports market provides a desirable mechanism by which consumer discrimination can be measured. Despite the strong inclination to believe that consumers today would discriminate more strongly against black and Hispanic players of the past rather than the present, the baseball card purchasing preferences and behaviors in this study indicate that race has no significant effect on card price, and consumers may actually discriminate more against present-day players.

# How Should We Value Baseball Players?

Daniel Novick

How much is your favorite player worth? A fan might determine a player's value simply by comparison. For example, if C.C. Sabathia is equal to Johan Santana, and Johan signed a contract for \$23 million per year, then that's approximately what Sabathia should be worth. However, how do we know if the second player is fairly paid? What statistics should be used to compare players? Economists and analysts have formulated two different, scientifically driven theories: marginal revenue product (MRP) and wins above replacement (WAR). MRP implies that a player is worth the marginal revenue that he adds to his team. This is tricky to determine, because figuring out how much revenue a player adds to his team is complicated, and players can be worth different amounts to different teams. WAR attempts to find out how many more wins a player would add than a replacement (minor league) player would add given the same opportunities. This article will further explain the theories behind MRP and WAR as well as the practical strengths and limitations of each.

The first step towards measuring value is to quantify production at the plate and in the field. For the sake of simplicity, this article will only focus on offense. There are several different measures that vary in complexity and accuracy, from OPS (on-base percentage plus slugging

percentage) to custom linear weights<sup>1</sup>, which assign a run value to each offensive event and is adjusted depending on the run scoring environment (a run is more valuable at PETCO Park than at Coors Field because the ballpark is more pitcher friendly). Whatever statistic you choose, the next step is to translate the player's value into a practical measurement of his worth to his team.

The foundation of MRP should be familiar to students who have taken introductory microeconomics. MRP equals marginal product multiplied by

marginal revenue. The statistics mentioned in the previous paragraph are used to find marginal product. Determining marginal revenue is a little more complicated—how much is each individual home run, run, or win worth to his team? A full second article is necessary to fully explain this process, but it takes into account all teams' revenue streams (ticket sales, merchandise, TV contracts, etc.). MRP seems like a reasonable way to evaluate contracts, since according to economic theory, players will be paid according to the revenue they



contribute to the organization.

While the MRP method may work in almost every business, it fails to work in the business of baseball because its players are improperly valued. Let's say that Wal-Mart is evaluating their need for cashiers, all of whom are paid \$10 per hour. The first cashier is extremely valuable, since the store needs at least one person working the register or the store cannot function. The second cashier is also valuable, though not as much as the first cashier, since the store can still function with just one cashier. Wal-Mart keeps going through this process of hiring additional cashiers and wants to continue adding cashiers to their store until marginal revenue equals marginal cost. There is no limit to the amount of cashiers that Wal-Mart can employ. If Wal-Mart wants to hire 40 cashiers because they still feel the 40<sup>th</sup> cashier will provide value to the store (by making lines move more quickly), then they have every right to do so. Baseball, however, has a 25-man active roster. Wal-Mart can add more employees and hours, but baseball teams are limited to only 25 players. While that additional 26<sup>th</sup> player on the team would probably make a positive contribution by giving some players more rest, teams are not permitted to carry a 26<sup>th</sup> man. If one additional player above 25 will bring in \$1,000,000 while only being paid \$400,000 (the minimum salary), a general manager still couldn't sign him. If the 25<sup>th</sup> man on the bench never plays, and therefore contributes nothing to the team, you still have to pay him that \$400,000 because MLB requires all teams to have

25 men on the roster. No matter how worthless the 25<sup>th</sup> man is, he will be paid the \$400,000, and no matter how valuable the 26<sup>th</sup> man *would be*, teams must keep him in the minor leagues. Therefore, because of MLB's roster size and collectively bargained minimum salary, fringe players aren't always paid according to their MRP.



WAR does a better job of evaluating a fringe player than MRP does, as that 26<sup>th</sup> player mentioned in the previous paragraph (who cannot join the team) is the foundation for determining wins above replacement. The 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup> players, placed on a team's minor league roster, are what every member of the team should be compared to. If a player is better than the 25<sup>th</sup> man, then he should be on the team; if he's not, then he should be in the minor leagues. The player who hangs in the balance, and walks the cord between being better and worse than the 25<sup>th</sup> man, is the baseline. He is projected to contribute zero runs to an offense above what a freely available minor league player will contribute. The 25<sup>th</sup>

player on the team who is equal to a player in the minors virtually contributes zero runs because minor leaguers are accessible to a major league team at any time, and can be added to the roster. Players are valued based on their comparisons to the expected contribution of this "26<sup>th</sup> man." An individual player playing at this "26<sup>th</sup> man" level, despite being able to hit some homeruns and field some ground balls, has a value of zero because he doesn't contribute anything above what someone who would take his job would contribute. In measuring a player's value, the question is: How many additional runs will we create with this player, as opposed to with the person that can replace him?

MRP and WAR evaluation theories are both logical: it makes sense that a player should be paid according to the revenue he brings in as well as how difficult it would be to replace him. However, the basis of WAR exposes the weakness of MRP—in the context of league requirements, a fringe player is only worth whatever he contributes above and beyond the guy in his rear view mirror, waiting to take his spot.

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1 [http://www.tangotiger.net/wiki/index.php?title=Linear\\_Weights](http://www.tangotiger.net/wiki/index.php?title=Linear_Weights)

## 26<sup>th</sup> Man

## Sevin: The Next Era in Baseball

the analytics of baseball takes a giant leap forward. *Baseball f/x* will have user-friendly graphics similar to that of MLB.com's Gameday (which provides an enhanced viewing platform for the Internet user) in a display that will be clear and easy to read. (In the graphic on Page 25, Miguel Cairo's basepath is clearly identified, while the other details of the game previously discussed are displayed on the right.)

On the offensive side of the game, after years of detailing progressive offensive statistics, teams and fans have become accustomed to describing a player through his on-base percentage and slugging percentage, rather than through his batting average and runs batted in. Potentially, *Sportvision* has created a format that could lead to similar novel defensive and base running statistics and acronyms that describe a player quickly and accurately. The game could shift to a balance of fielding, hitting, and running, as recently, teams have crippled themselves in a reliance on offense. This software could cause each facet of the game to be more equally valued as teams gain access to this reliable, significant data.

While *Baseball f/x* may educate baseball experts on which players to value, it also may teach them the most efficient way to play the game. *Sportvision* tracks the distance a fielder stands from home plate before the play starts. It may turn out that a third baseman should play either closer or farther to the plate before the ball is hit.

## Lebow's Methods of Pass Rushing and Pass Protection

IES / # of IES allowed). Although this statistic is largely related to how difficult a quarterback is to sack, it still is important to note (especially over the course of one's career).

### Problems With my Statistics

An individual's statistics in football tend to be far more dependent on the situation and the performances of the other 21 players on the field. For instance, some linemen give up more sacks than they should because their quarterbacks are easier to sack than others. Kurt Warner was sacked 12.3 percent of the times he dropped back to pass for the Giants in 2004. Eli Manning was sacked only 6.2 percent of the times he dropped back to pass for the Giants in the same season despite facing a much tougher schedule with an offensive line which was more injured when he took over. There are a variety of reasons why this may be the case. How elusive is the quarterback?

How strong is he (does he go down easily)? How quickly does he get rid of the ball? This could relate to his throwing motion, whether he is more talented at throwing deep passes or short passes, or his willingness to take a hit. Also, a sack is more likely to occur on certain downs and distances. Sacks are most frequent on third and long. The defensive linemen know that the probability of a pass play being called is high, so they are focused on sacking the quarterback as opposed to containing the run. Therefore, teams that get into more of these situations are more likely to get sacked. Certain players face better pass rushers on a given team. These are all factors that mitigate the importance of the statistics I created. Lastly, determining an individual effort sack opportunity and a player who was double teamed can be subjective. It requires looking at game tape to determine the exactness of these statistics. Nevertheless, these methods are better than the existing ones available to the average fan.



# The INC.'s Interview



Beth Hirschhorn  
MetLife's Chief Marketing Officer  
Graduate of Cornell: College of Human Ecology  
Class of 1988



Joshua Erenstein: What are your fondest memories of Cornell?

Beth Hirschhorn: When I think about Cornell, I think about walking through campus. That's the memory that's the strongest. It's not just the sights, but the sights, the sounds, the smell, and the whole sensory experience. I was a regular at CTB; that was two meals a day for me most weeks. The Hot Truck on West Campus for a PMP (poor man's pizza) was a very regular experience. I lived in U-Hall 3. Johnny's Big Red [bar and grill that has been closed for years and patron of the famous JOHNNY's sign that was removed last year from Dryden Ave due to erosion of sign] was my favorite bar. I also lived over Johnny's my junior year, making leisure time a little too convenient.

JE: What is your opinion on the state of Cornell, Ivy League, and general college sports?

BH: I'm very pleased with the way lacrosse and hockey are doing. I think the state of college sports is on the upswing because of all new media and proliferation of cable channels. I think that's been a real benefit for college sports because alumni can watch these games even when they're not broadcasted on major networks. The media environment is really a boon to college sports; the internet is as well. I couldn't find a game when I graduated from college. At best, the final playoffs for each sport were the only thing on TV. For sports marketing, the sheer amount of coverage out there is a real change. It also splits up the audience; I'd rather have access to all these different teams than not. I think it also creates a different and better opportunity for the leaders of the universities to maintain a more active alumni base and that's who they count on; if you can keep your alumni engaged in your school, you're going to be in better shape. I think the priorities should be the quality of education and the people they bring into the institution. To the extent they might be diluted through scholarships, then that might be factual. The colleges and every league are investing more in sports to maintain the spotlight on the school. I don't know where the compromise is. [In terms of Cornell sports,] there are plenty of other sports besides football. I would like to see [Cornell men's] basketball get beyond that first bracket though, but it's not a huge priority for me.

JE: What annual event other than the Super Bowl offers the most significant advertising opportunity?

BH: In terms of a significant advertising opportunity, I don't think the Super Bowl is worth the premium. I think it's more of a showcase to promote new work than having viewers act on those commercials. Unless there's a strong call to action that people will take during the game, it's not necessarily a good value for the investment. The presidential debates had a huge number of viewers. Volume isn't really important for certain products. Volume alone for target audiences and precision is often more important. There's some programming that's more obscure but still reaches plenty of people. If you have enough of those programs, you don't have to buy "American Idol" every week, which is sort of the gold standard after the Super Bowl. We participate in events where the people will be who need to receive our message. A lot of kids are watching American idol, yet kids don't buy life insurance.

JE: Could you describe the full range of MetLife's sports promotion activities?

BH: Companies have a media plan that's a mix of different types of media: online, television, print, and promotional opportunities. Within each of those forms, it all has to hang together; different pieces have to play different roles in the media mix. We have the MetLife blimp program, which provides aerial coverage for PGA Tour events, the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness, among other events; some college sports, and the recent Yankees-Mets "Subway Series" finale, which was very well watched. Sports play a great role in MetLife's media mix; sports gives you reach very efficiently. Regarding the NFL, we like the NFL – not every game that's on TV – but we like to get a dose of NFL and a good and consistent dose of golf. We want to reach a lot of people very efficiently; other parts of our programming may be more targeted to cover enough people in the country and at the same time have a nice balance of reach with frequency. For people that already do business with MetLife, we reach them because we want to attract more people like them. Our overarching campaign is to introduce new people to the brand. In 2008-2009, we've changed that strategy slightly because we felt that in the midst of this financial crisis, it was hugely important for our own customers to hear from us at a time when we are heads and shoulders ahead of our competition in terms of our reputation, future, and being financially as strong as ever. It's critical to reinforce these messages with our own customers.

JE: How does MetLife determine which events to support?

BH: There are two quick filters: First, does the event, program and/or opportunity provide a good match for the target audience we're trying to reach? Next, is it a good fit with the brand and the message you're trying to convey? It's easier to filter out groups and programs that don't match our high brand of ethics and trust.

JE: How does MetLife determine the return on investment for its sports-related promotional activities?

BH: It's not that easy. Determining the ROI can be challenging. There are a few different components. It is simple to understand who you planned on reaching and who you ended up reaching; the media buying company can work with networks and/or promoters to get the actual data on how many of those people you reached. The hospitality/customer entertainment aspect helps us develop and deepen relationships with customers. Media and entertainment components are relatively simple to measure; a newer way we're measuring things is "are we able to engage the public in a meaningful way and did we use the property to engage our target audience?" For the "Yankees Player of the Month" and the metlife.com billboard in Yankee Stadium, we get tickets to games. We went beyond the more common and superficial promotional approach by creating the "Player of the Month" sweepstakes to leverage some of the brand equity of the Yankees. They were willing to help us and offer any person a good chance to win the sweepstakes. We also engage people using our presence on the Yankees and MLB websites as well as our own. 50,000 people have signed up and that number keeps growing, which is good for a local promotion within a few weeks; TV and radio announcers announced it too. This deepens the relationship with the sports marketing partner and more meaningfully touches people in a deeper way than just TV commercials.

JE: What is the most intriguing experience you have had in a marketing negotiation involving sports in some fashion?

BH: In any good negotiation, there are two things I start with: I establish with my would-be partner what my goals are and where we have commonality with them – i.e. where they are aligned. We always revisit that, especially if a conflict arises. We remind ourselves what the original goals were. We want to produce a deal that gets everything further along, with both parties bringing something to the table. What assets does each of you bring to the table? We bring a brand that can't be beat: a global insurance company with a history and heritage that most companies don't even come close to. 70 million customers can be exposed to the deal if we decide it's appropriate. We have customers, a reputation, and exposure through an award-winning ad campaign. We don't show what we think their assets are worth to us until we're much further along in the negotiation.

JE: Do you use sports (such as golf or tennis) as a key to building relationships and conducting business with organizations that you sponsor?

BH: Yes, we always work activities and hospitality into sponsorship deals. Playing the sports and going to interesting events is another thing; there are value ads that you ask for when meeting with a potential partner such as the new Meadowlands stadium. We are not only given some tickets to entertain clients, but we are also able to invite clients to a golf tournament, for example. MetLife is a sponsor of the LPGA Golf Clinics for Women, [which consists of] 15 clinics across the country. Each year we get a certain number of slots; partners or customers get lessons from LPGA pros. This is relationship building over a whole day. Sports play a role in relationship building. It's not our primary goal of the sponsorship, which is to get mass media exposure, but client relationship building opportunities are key.

JE: With whom does MetLife have the longest standing relationship with and how did it come about?

BH: Our relationship with the Peanuts characters has existed for 30 years. The characters are licensed to the Schulz family and United Media is the company that licenses the property to us.

JE: When people think of fast food, they think of McDonald's. When people think of jeans, they think of Levi's. When people think of blimps, they think of MetLife. How did the blimp program get started and why has it been so successful?

BH: MetLife's blimp program is another piece of the marketing mix. Our blimps provide a lot of consistent visibility. We provide the blimps to the NFL, golf, baseball, and the Kentucky Derby, among others.. There is a good chance of your seeing the MetLife blimp at one of these events. The views are regular and consistent. It's billboard power doesn't provide depth of message, so it requires more traditional marketing compliments. It's unique – not every company has a blimp, let alone two or three, nor have many companies had a blimp program for 20 years. The MetLife blimp provides great brand exposure without interfering with the fans' experience. It contributes to the experience with the aerial coverage rather than, say, interrupting it with commercials. We're covering shots that can't be seen in any other way. You can't see a full golf drive from a camera on the ground; the only way to get the whole feel of the shot is from the blimp. It's great to have your brand be part of the experience of a television special without having to invest too much.

### *Examples of MetLife's Sports Promotion Activities / High Profile Sponsorships*



#### New Meadowlands Cornerstone Partner

- MetLife is the Official Insurance Company of the New York Jets, New York Giants, and their shared stadium
- Cornerstone Partnership is a first of its kind marketing opportunity that delivers unprecedented exposure, activation and integration at the new home of the Jets, Giants and other high profile events (college football, concerts, soccer) with approximately 35,000 square feet of completely customized public and private space spanning three levels of the stadium.



- Sponsorship includes media components, use of team marks, as well as access and assets that MetLife plans to leverage for consumer promotions to enhance the fan experience at the new stadium



(New Meadowlands)



2009 New York Yankees Sponsorship

- Secured outfield signage and rights to the Yankees Player of the Month Award



**Mark Teixeira  
with contest  
winner.**



LPGA Golf Clinics for Women from MetLife

- Allows MetLife to place its message in front of a female audience while providing women customers, brokers and producers the opportunity to enhance business relationships



**LPGA GOLF CLINICS** for women  
from **MetLife**

- National presence in 15 markets supported by print and on-line advertising with on-line & on-site branding

*Hospitality/Event Presence at:*

U.S. Open Golf Tournament– USGA



PGA Championship – PGA of America



PGA Tour Events



MGA (Metropolitan Golf Association)



MetLife Cycling Team



U.S. Open Tennis Tournament

*MetLife Blimp Program*

- The MetLife blimps have provided ground breaking aerial coverage for an array of special events for over 20 years. The blimps cover approximately 70 events a year including:



All PGA Tour events airing on CBS and NBC



U.S. Open Golf Tournament



PGA Championship



NFL



College Football Coverage



Kentucky Derby &amp; Preakness Stakes



USTA



NBA



MLB

- The “Best Shot in Golf” presented by MetLife premiered on CBS on May 3, 2008
- Building on the MetLife blimps’ status in the golf world, over the past year we partnered with CBS and the PGA to create a 60 minute Blimp documentary. The documentary takes golf viewers behind the scenes to see how the blimp created a whole new perspective for golf coverage. The MetLife blimp and crew are featured throughout the film and effectively translate the program into one hour of MetLife branded content.



## Sevin: The Next Era in Baseball

In general, a third baseman plays farther back when the fourth hitter is up while he plays closer when the leadoff hitter is up. But what if instead of playing 100 feet away from home with power hitters batting, and 90 feet from home with speedsters at the plate, it turns out that the smartest defensive positioning is 95 feet from home regardless of who hits? This information could therefore be valuable in letting us know how to maximize defensive efficiency in terms of personnel as well as in the proper positioning of the players.

What we learn from *Baseball f/x* may also be applied in the classroom; the system may actually be effective in teaching physics. Because *Baseball f/x* is grounded on the science of physics, imagine teaching the science's core concepts using sports related instances. In a *Wall Street Journal* article entitled "Baseball Veers into Left Field" a medical director explains that he uses baseball examples to explain his theory on the "circadian advantage" because, "Baseball is a great way to raise awareness. It's a sexy topic and it gets a lot of attention."<sup>2</sup> Teachers can enliven their classroom using empirical physics data from the *Sportvision* software. Imagine showing a class a video of Barry Bonds hitting a homerun in a game, followed by these problems.

Problem 1: Find the initial speed of the ball.

Problem 2: Find the components of the final velocity of the pitch when it reaches home plate.

While I am not claiming that everyone in the classroom will be



a baseball fan, it will sure beat the 1980's cartoons that my teacher used to question my class on.

On the other hand, maybe this software reassures and propels a perverted, infantile American obsession with analyzing sport. Because, "as any numbers geek knows, baseball has always been the wonkiest of sports, rife with statistics and theories."<sup>2</sup> In response to this analytical overload claim, I propose two counter arguments. First, fans spend a lot of money in love of their national pastime, so shouldn't they feel assured they are watching the purest form of the game? Second, this system may be adaptable in other sports, and possibly in other industries more directly beneficial to mankind. There is, however, an undeniable craze and fantasy that fans associate with manipulating, understanding and predicting sport itself.

*Sportvision* is bringing a great product to America's pastime. Super-athletes, like Minnesota Twins catcher Joe Mauer, will remain the game's top performers, and this system will only serve to filter those who are. After all, this

software is an honest approach to analyzing a game that somehow avoided a fate similar to that of the late King of Pop while facing its own drug problem. Now that's morally uplifting.

1 Schwarz, Alan. "Digital Eyes Will Chart Baseball's Unseen Eyes." Sports 9 July, 2009 *New York Times*

2 Kelley, Austin. "Baseball Veers Into Left Field." Sports 17 July, 2009 *Wall Street Journal*



Make sure to tune in on Wednesdays from 5 to 6 P.M. on sloperadio.com as the ILR Sports Management Club hosts "Sports, Inc." If you miss the live broadcast, you can listen to the show as well as previous episodes any time online.



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Everyday: 4:00 PM - 2:30 AM