

BOOK REVIEWS

Beyond the Box Score: An Insider's Guide to the \$750 Billion Business of Sports

Rick Horrow & Karla Swatek

[Garden City, NY: Morgan James Publishing 2010]

xi + 210 pages [\$16.95 U.S. (soft cover)]

ISBN: 978-1-60037-643-6

The goal of *Beyond the Box Score: An Insider's Guide to the \$750 Billion Business of Sports* is abundantly clear from the outset. Both the back cover and the book's introduction talk about it being "a comprehensive look at how the ever-growing professional sports industry really works" (p. ix). This is clearly an ambitious goal that is virtually impossible to accomplish in a 210-page book, but the authors make a solid attempt to achieve this noteworthy goal through a series of broad-ranging discussions on a variety of sports law and business-related issues.

At least one of the book's co-authors should be very well-known to most *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sports* readers. Attorney Rick Horrow is well-known in the sports industry for his work on a variety of stadium and arena development projects. In addition to his high-profile client work, Horrow has been featured on a variety of media outlets commenting on sports law and business-related issues. *Beyond the Box Score* is Horrow's second book. His first, *When the Game is on the Line*, which discussed many of his experiences in sports facility development, was released in 2006. Horrow's co-author, Karla Swatek is a vice-president at Horrow Sports Ventures.

Beyond the Box Score is comprised of eight numbered chapters that address a diverse set of subjects facing today's sports industry, such as, facility development, media rights, team ownership and player representation. Case studies about two recent sports facility projects and interviews with the commissioners of four major league sports, are added to several of the chapters and provide valuable additional perspective.

The book starts with former NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue writing a foreword and the authors writing an introduction entitled "Looking at the World Through Rose Bowl-Colored Glasses." These perspectives discuss why they believe the *Beyond the Box Score* is a necessary read in today's society.

As noted earlier, the main body of the book features chapters that address a variety of topics in the professional sports industry. The first chapter entitled "The Mega Master Super Series XLXL" utilizes the National Football League and the Super Bowl as a means of introducing the reader to a variety of event management related issues. As readers of *JLAS* might suspect, this leads into sub-discussions of related topics such as the economic impact of sports events and corporate hospitality. The chapter concludes with a five-page interview with NFL commissioner Roger Goodell covering a variety of sports business topics.

The authors shift the editorial focus of the next two chapters to media-related topics. The second chapter entitled "Remote-Controlling What You See on Sports TV" is a 12-page discussion covering the development of televised professional sports from its inception in 1939 through 3-D television. Chapter three entitled "Not Far From the Madden-ing Crowd" covers a wide variety of topics including social networking, gaming, fantasy sports, sports gambling and trading cards. The chapter concludes with a brief, interesting interview with NBA commissioner David Stern.

Chapters four and five form an unofficial 49-page unit that shifts the editorial focus to the issue of sports facility development. Chapter four focuses on the evolution of sports facility design and provides an interesting historical look at the architects and firms who are behind many of today's sports palaces. As one might suspect, a discussion of economics and how they drive sports facility design is woven throughout this text. A case study on the new NFL's Dallas Cowboys' facility is included in this discussion and does a nice job of tying many of the key elements with respect to issues involving sports facilities together. Chapter five entitled "The Government Gets Into-and Out of- the Game" looks at how these facilities are paid for including topics such as, governmental financing methods, tax increment financing, and economic impact arguments. A case study of the Oklahoma City arena project that Horrow worked on is included within the chapter.

Consistent with the overall format of the book, the last three chapters cover a wide variety of topics. As the title implies, the sixth chapter, called "So You Want to Own a Sports Team?," addresses a variety of topics related to team ownership including, price, league governance, and corporate ownership. Charts and other sidebars detailing key information regarding current professional team ownership are included and prove beneficial for the reader. An interview with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and some of the issues facing his league add more context for on the topic the reader. Chapter seven entitled "One Union Under Center: Athletes, Agents, and Their Deals" covers player representation issues. While addressing the standard agent-

related issues, such as agent regulation, player branding and shoe contracts, the chapter also discusses a variety of collective bargaining topics that even the novice reader will likely find easy to understand and very informative. This chapter concludes with an interview with NASCAR CEO Brian France. Finally, chapter eight "Ticket to the Future" covers ticketing with pricing strategies and the future of ticketing being the main topics of discussion.

Beyond the Box Score has many positive elements and will be a solid overall read for most readers. The book is a quick read that addresses many of the most important issues in today's professional sports industry in an easy to read format. The case studies and commissioner interviews provide additional solid context that novice readers should be able to understand while still providing useful information for more experienced readers.

The book's numerous positives are somewhat offset by two overarching negative issues. The first is the presence of a substantial number of typos or factual errors that will likely be distracting to some knowledgeable readers. Ironically, this issue starts to manifest itself on the back cover of the book as co-author Karla Swatek's name is misspelled as Swateck. In terms of the actual content, page 205 is emblematic of this issue as the home of Major League Baseball's Philadelphia Phillies is erroneously referred to as "Business Bank Ballpark" instead of the correct Citizens Bank Park. This error comes a mere three lines after the name of Comcast-Spectacor executive Peter Luukko was misspelled as Lukko. Similar errors are present throughout the text. While none of these errors are a major issue, they do detract from the overall quality of the book.

The other negative issue is that the book already has a dated feel to it, ironically because of the timeliness of the content and commentary. For example, chapter seven contains a discussion on how the U.S. Supreme Court might rule on the *American Needle v. NFL* case and the potential effects of such a ruling. While *American Needle* was obviously an open issue when the book was written, many readers will know how the case was eventually decided a few months later making this section feel superfluous. This issue is clearly not the fault of the authors as all works of this type will face similar challenges. But, readers of *JLAS* should be aware of the fact that the book is more of a snapshot of the sports industry as it stands today and might have limited use as a textbook or supplemental course reading in three or four years because of this issue.

In conclusion, *Beyond the Box Score: An Insider's Guide to the \$750 Billion Business of Sports* will be a solid, affordable addition to the bookshelf of most *JLAS* readers. For people with extensive industry knowledge, the book's main benefit will be as a useful reference tool in future years showing

where the professional sports industry stood as the 2010s opened. But, even the most seasoned reader will likely find many nuggets of new, useful information throughout the book and the perspectives from the commissioners should be beneficial for large portions of this audience as well.

The audiences most likely to benefit from reading *Beyond the Box Score* are new undergraduate sports management students, high school students, or others with a developing interest in the professional sports industry. The authors do a nice job of making the text very accessible to these readers and provide good perspective for them as they attempt to learn more about the industry.

Beyond the Box Score could function well as supplemental reading for introductory undergraduate sports management courses. It could also work well in some sports law or sports business classes taught in seminar or workshop-style formats.

W.S. Miller
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
Kenosha, WI