

# Preface

As economics professors we often tell our students that if there is an unmet want with the potential to generate economic profits, someone will attempt to fulfill that want. That is what we are attempting to do with this book, though not so much for the economic profits, but to satisfy our own desire for a textbook covering the economics of intercollegiate sports. Existing textbooks emphasize the economics of professional sports, and do well at that task, but the economic structure of college sports is uniquely different and deserving of a separate, detailed treatment. Whether you are reading this book as a professor preparing a class in sports economics, a student taking a course in the economics of sports, or someone just seeking to learn more about the economics of intercollegiate sports, we hope that this book will provide you with new information and insights.

## **Intended Audience**

When we first started writing this book, we were looking to augment our own sports economics classes with detailed coverage of intercollegiate sports. In keeping with our usual audience, we have aimed the book primarily at undergraduates who have completed economics at least through the introductory level. We see this work being suitable for a stand-alone course in the economics of intercollegiate sports, or as a text representing the collegiate portion of a broader sports economics class. As with many applied textbooks, however, this work may prove useful to other areas and levels of study. Programs in sports management or sports marketing, at the graduate or undergraduate level, may also find this text useful.

## Features

This book has a number of features designed to facilitate the study of college sports economics.

1. *The first of its kind?* While there are many great books on the economics of intercollegiate sports, this text is constructed specifically with the classroom in mind. Combining central ideas of the discipline with numerous real world examples, this text covers the major economic issues in college sports, balancing theoretical economics with practical application.
2. *Casual, yet straightforward.* While we take the subject matter seriously, we try not to take ourselves too seriously. We have attempted to write a book that not only conveys important information in an easily understood manner, but that is also as much fun to read as it was for us to write.
3. *Boxes and Fast facts.* These sections provide specific illustrations of the general concepts, sometimes affirming the conventional wisdom, occasionally providing a unique counter-example.
4. *Review, Discussion, and Internet Questions.* These questions help reinforce the main ideas of each chapter. Review questions assess the ability to recall and explain key information. Discussion questions focus more on application and extension — putting pieces together. Internet questions require trips to websites to gather data to test (informally) hypotheses presented in the text, or to update cases that may have changed since the book went to press.
5. *Selected Bibliography and Internet Sites.* In the process of writing this book, we have studied extensively the works of others and compiled lists of valuable readings and websites we have encountered. These are not exhaustive lists, but rather a good place to start for those interested in learning more about the economics of intercollegiate sports. We note, however, that website links do change, but all listed were accurate when the book went to press.
6. *Chapter Appendices.* Chapters 3 and 8 contain appendices that add a layer of complexity to the discussion for those who want it.

These generally involve a more rigorous theoretical presentation, and can be easily skipped without losing the main ideas.

## **A Disclaimer**

Reflecting the accumulated evidence and existing literature on the subject, this text does not always put higher education, particularly at Division I institutions, in the most flattering light. While we stand by our analysis and conclusions, we recognize that there are exceptions to these generalizations. We applaud our colleagues at DI institutions who provide quality undergraduate teaching, often in the face of pressure to focus instead on research or graduate teaching. We also recognize that there are some quality teaching assistants out there who are well on their way to distinguished undergraduate teaching careers. Finally, we acknowledge that while the discussion focuses on problems at DI schools, Division II and III colleges and universities are not immune from these issues. They just tend to see less of them, mainly because the stakes are smaller.

## **Acknowledgments**

Like head coaches and quarterbacks, we authors get more credit than we deserve for the success of the book. On a project like this, there are many people behind the scenes who deserve thanks for helping our labors come to fruition. Among them are Linfield College students, past and present, including Ben Pappas, Mark Kessler, Heather Correia, Casey Stepan, and the many in Randy's January 2007 "Economics of College Sports" class who provided invaluable insights into what parts of the nearly completed manuscript worked and which did not. There are many to thank at Western Oregon University as well, including Hamid Bahari-Kashani, Dianna Hewett, and David Ashby, all from the Division of Business and Economics; the staff of Hamersly Library; and Zenon's Spring 2005 "Economics of Intercollegiate Sports" class. Outside of our own institutions, we would like to thank

Daniel Rascher, Professor of Sports Management at the University of San Francisco; Stephen Shmanske, author of *Golfonomics* and Professor of Economics at Cal State East Bay; and Chuck McAllister, who spent many hours proofreading the text, finding everything from the smallest typos to the most egregious errors in fact or analysis. Finally, we would like to thank Juliet Lee Ley Chin, Sandhya Venkatesh, and the rest of the staff at World Scientific that helped bring this book to press. Coaches and quarterbacks generally receive too much blame if things go wrong, but we will not. Any errors, be they of omission or commission, are our own.