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BOOK REVIEW

YOU CAN'T PLAY THE GAME IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE RULES: Career Opportunities in Sports Management

David M. Carter

[Manassas Park, VA: IMPACT PUBLICATIONS 1994]

xvii + 247 pgs.

ISBN 1 57023 005 6 : \$ 14.95

YOU CAN'T PLAY THE GAME IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE RULES by David M. Carter is a welcome resource for those interested in a career in sports management. This book provides a look at the many career opportunities in this field from the perspective of those who have struggled to make sports management their career.

Many students, lawyers, and agents may not see the field of sports management as an area for growth or career possibilities. Yet Mr. Carter's thorough analysis shows the almost endless opportunities that exist in the area of sports management. By focusing on five main parts, this book provides an in-depth look at every facet of sports management. Each part contains an accompanying piece authored by a professional in the area discussed. These contributions give close up looks at the day-to-day operations in each area. Each chapter also includes various "Cause and Effect" and "Overtime" sections which provide Carter's comments and analysis in an attempt to integrate the specific perspective of the professional contributor, and the different areas of employment, into what he has already described within the chapter.

The book begins with a foreword by a sports agent providing an overview of the book and of the sports management field itself. This foreword candidly admits the difficulty that anyone will face in attempting to gain employment in this field, yet this does not cause the book to begin in a negative tone. Instead, by making it clear that one must become well versed in every bit of information that can be found which relates to this area of employment (i.e. newspapers, television, magazines, books and any other items that could provide information in the sports field), this contributor shows that this information will prove valuable and necessary for anyone seeking employment in sports management. Though such careers may not be easy to find, a person who works and studies hard will be rewarded. This section leaves readers feeling that they owe it to themselves to read on.

Part I of the book begins with Chapter 1 which provides an in-depth look into the industry and its players. This chapter provides an introductory description of the five main areas of career opportunities in sports management. These five areas include: athletic departments; athletic representation firms; franchises, unions and leagues; the media; and sports management companies. Carter also describes his experiences which led up to his decision to write *YOU CAN'T PLAY THE GAME IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE RULES*. With this initial chapter, Carter provides a glimpse into the many career opportunities in this field.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Skills For Success that the author feels an individual must master to become such a success in sports management. The first skills are personal skills, such as the ability to interact professionally and personally with others, salesmanship, absolute honesty and integrity, discipline, persistence, and patience. As the author says, "while you are learning the business you will likely be in a position to make a noteworthy contribution, only to learn that no one wants to hear it." Throughout this process, you must "[r]emain confident, maintain a positive attitude, and disregard the nay-sayers. After all, you'll have the last laugh." The next skill is that of self-realization, which includes the ability to recognize ones strengths and weaknesses in order to focus on strengths and work on weaknesses. The author also recognizes that as the world of sports becomes more developed, complex, and international, higher and higher levels of education will be necessary to keep up. The next skills come under the title "Vision and Planning," which recognizes that to become a success in sports management, one must set achievable short term goals which will help build toward the realization of the long term goals one wishes to achieve. Another very important skill is the ability to build relationships in the area that an individual is interested in within sports management. This may entail mere information oriented interviews with individuals in the field, volunteer or academic experience, and the establishment of quality, personal relationships within the industry. The final skill for success is to add value to the industry. As the author describes, the field is managed by those few who have found valued ideas or services. This addition can take place in two ways: (1) by creating a job or performing a function that increases revenue while minimizing the burden on an employer; or (2) by developing and/or implementing a plan which will help a business reduce expenses. With these skills the author feels that an individual will be attractive for employment in the field of sports management.

Part II, describes the athletic department. This part begins with Chapter 3, which provides an overview of the structure of the athletic

department, how student-athletes fit into this department, how the department monitors and regulates those athletes, how the department is integrated into the university as a whole, and how the department is then regulated and works with the NCAA. Throughout these descriptions Carter provides a picture of the role fulfilled by individuals employed within an athletic department. This chapter also begins the "Cause and Effect" sections of the book, which show how each section is actually interrelated with all the other sections. For instance, athletic departments on the college level act as minor league training systems for professional franchises in football and basketball.

Chapter 4 begins with a contribution by an acting director of an athletic department, showing how this individual went from athlete, to professional, to coach, and then administrator within the athletic department. Carter then provides an initial "Overtime" section, which picks up from the contribution and tries to alert those interested in working for athletic departments to the problems faced by student-athletes. As Carter explains, individuals in this field should focus on trying to "put the student back in student-athlete."

Part III focuses on athletic representation firms, specifically agents. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the agent's role, work, compensation, representation of athletes, and selection of athletes. Carter is also aware of the lack of agent regulation which has proven very problematic in many universities and states lately. Chapter 6 then provides another outside contribution to the book, this time by a CEO of a personal representation firm for professional baseball and hockey players. This contribution explains how this individual first became involved in the area of athletic representation and how he has progressed to his position today. The author again answers this contribution in an "Overtime" section as he professes his very positive and somewhat unique belief that the area of personal athletic representation is an area of virtually unlimited opportunities.

Part IV provides a detailed analysis and overview of the area of franchise management. Chapter 7 describes the different facets of this area including revenues, expenses, management opportunities, salaries, race relations, etc. Chapter 8 is another contributory piece by a professional in the field who describes his experiences in franchise management.

After this contribution, readers become more savvy to the importance and use of these contributions for the author and the reader. They provide readers with real experiences of those who are actually in the particular fields. And they provide the author with a validation of sorts

for what he has provided in his descriptions of each individual field. And then after achieving this validation, Carter provides his "Overtime" commentary on the contributors personal account. As the author makes clear, there are sacrifices and hard work one must undertake to become employed in the area of sports management.

Part V is an analysis of the media, an area that many would not always associate with the field of sports management. Yet, in chapter 9 Carter makes it clear that, with the impact of huge rights fees, the influx of cable and pay television, and professional sports reliance on the revenue generated through television and other media, this area is one that is open to those interested in sports management. Chapter 10 then provides another contributory piece, this time by a newspaper writer, to give the reader the personal experiences of one actually involved in this area. And in the "Overtime" section Mr. Carter poignantly reminds the reader of how the media really is interrelated with the other areas of sports management, and how the media's role and power will only increase in the future. In fact, it will most likely become necessary for the other areas to form lasting personal and working relationships with those in the media to attain any level of success.

Part VI describes the fifth area of career opportunities, the sports management company. Chapter 11 describes the many different types of firms within this area such as: sports marketing/public relations firms, venue management firms, and special event marketing and management groups. This initial chapter makes the reader more aware of the myriad possibilities in this area. Chapter 12 then begins with a contributory piece by an individual who began as a minor league baseball player before building a successful financial planning firm for athletes. And in the "Overtime" section Carter shows how many of the positions described in the sports management area are similar to traditional business positions in traditional companies. Therefore, this area may require the most formal academic requirements and may most closely resemble the traditional business world.

Part VII begins in Chapter 13 with a final contributory piece by another individual in the sports industry. This piece is more thorough than the other contributions throughout the book, as it shows the many detours one will face and the tough climb it will take for those seeking career opportunities in the sports management field.

In the final chapter, Chapter 14, Carter takes the opportunity to stress some points that he feels are of utmost importance for anyone seeking a career in this field. Carter stresses the importance of persistence, adding value, becoming and staying informed and up-to-date, and

staying academically and personally educated in the sports field. Carter ends with an acknowledgement of the struggle that is involved, but also a realization that this struggle will be worth it.

YOU CAN'T PLAY THE GAME IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE RULES is a welcome addition to the sports literature. It is well-written and informative. While it is open to the realities and struggles involved in attaining a career in sports management, it also provides the reader with hope for the future. Anyone reading this book cannot help but be impressed with the honest depiction of the area of sports management through Carter's analysis and the varied descriptions from individuals actually employed in each field. This book will prove to be a necessary addition for anyone attempting to become employed in any of the five areas described.

PAUL M. ANDERSON

