

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

FS17
Winter 2015

Fred Claire
fclaire@caltech.edu
fclaire@sbcglobal.net
818 517-4847

Rod Kiewiet
drk@caltech.edu, X4032

The Business Side of Sports

Major League Baseball, as well as other professional sports, is a particularly interesting subject of analysis because it is simultaneously a game and a business—those involved strive to win games and championships, but they are also in it to make money. It is also useful to study professional sports because of the mix of quantitative and qualitative information and considerations that inform strategy and decision making.

This class is co-taught by Professor Rod Kiewiet and by Fred Claire. Mr. Claire has been involved in Major League Baseball since the mid-1960's, and worked in the front office of the Los Angeles Dodgers for 30 years. He served as General Manager of the Dodgers from 1987 to 1998. The teams he assembled were perennial pennant contenders, and won the World Series in 1988. Since leaving the Dodgers he has been a partner in AriBall, a sports analytics company he founded with noted baseball statistician (and Caltech alumnus) Ari Kaplan. Mr. Claire has lined up several high-profile guest speakers to address major issues in the business side of sports. Such issues include the politics and economics involved in building and managing stadiums, the relationship between owners and management, the factors that affect player salaries, and the globalization of professional sports. One of the goals of the class is to introduce students to potential career opportunities in the business world of sports.

This is a freshman seminar, and so is offered on a pass-fail basis only. To obtain a passing grade you need to attend class regularly, ask questions and participate in discussion, and write a paper, approximately 10 pages in length, that is on a topic of your choosing but based upon the material covered in class. Readings for each week are posted on the Moodle site. To be ready for class and to get the most out of this course you should do as much of the reading for each week as you can before class.

The class was first offered in January of 2014 and guests included Mr. Kaplan; Caltech alumnus Dean Oliver, formerly of ESPN and now with the Sacramento Kings; MLB executives Lou Melendez, Wayne Krivsky and Logan White; former MLB pitcher Tommy John; former Dodger great Maury Wills; Darryl Dunn, general manager of the Rose Bowl; Bill Shumard, president of the Special Olympics of Southern California; and Jeff Fellenzer, a professor at USC who with Mr. Claire started a class at the Annenberg School 15 years ago titled "Sports, Business and the Media."

