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Stumbling on Wins, Exposing the Pitfalls on the Road to Victory in Professional Sports

New Book from FT Press, authored by economists David J. Berri and Martin B. Schmidt explores why sports teams continue to make the same mistakes, over and over again

New York, NY (March 31, 2010) – Sports teams have an immense amount of detailed, quantifiable information to draw upon, more than in virtually any other industry. They have powerful incentives for making good decisions. Everyone sees the results of their choices, and the consequences for failure are severe. And yet coaches and managers are making the same mistakes over and over again... systematic mistakes you'd think they'd learn how to avoid by now. Why does this continue to happen? Don't they *want* to win, ask fans?

These questions are addressed and answered in the new book ***Stumbling on Wins, Two Economists Expose the Pitfalls On The Road To Victory In Professional Sports*** (FT Press, ISBN-13: 9780132357784, \$24.99, hardcover 256pps, April 2010) by David J. Berri, associate professor of economics at Southern Utah University, and Martin B. Schmidt, professor of economics at the College of William and Mary. They draw upon the latest advances in behavioral economics to reveal the biggest mistakes decision-makers make in four sports: basketball, baseball, football, and hockey.

In ***Stumbling on Wins***, Berri and Schmidt reveal which statistics are connected to wins, and which aren't, why a quarterback's place in the draft tells you nothing about how he'll perform in the NFL, why basketball decision-makers don't focus on the factors that really correlate with NBA success, why famous coaches don't deliver better results, and how these insights more often than not relate to the decisions we make in our own lives.

“We present a number of stories in our new book to help demonstrate how and why famous sports minds make incorrect decisions, even with an abundance of data at their fingertips,” say Berri and Schmidt. “We believe these stories should not only change the way sports fans perceive the choices made by their favorite teams, but also impact the way economists and other social scientists think about human decision making.”

In *Stumbling on Wins*, readers discover:

- Can a college player become a big winner by just appearing in the NCAA Final Four? – The problems with making selections in the NBA draft
- Are black quarterbacks really underpaid? – The curious cases of –Donovan McNabb and Brett Favre
- How much should a team pay an NHL goalie? – Martin Brodeur and the average goalie
- Do better coaches really win more? – Phil Jackson versus everyone else
- The “hot hand” and other figments of the imagination– Enduring myths of on-court and on-field performance
- How old is too old? –Are teams playing too many athletes who are past their prime?

Stumbling on Wins is about more than hard facts and numbers when it comes to decision making and winning in sports, the authors also link sports stories to the broader economy and to even broader theories of social and political science

To learn more about the fascinating insights in *Stumbling on Wins*, go to the FT Press Web site and review an excerpt. <http://www.ftpress.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=013235778X>

Please contact Laura Czaja, PR Manager at FT Press for a copy of *Stumbling on Wins*, an excerpt or author interview at laura.czaja@pearson.com or at 212-641-6627.

About the Authors

David J. Berri is associate professor of economics at Southern Utah University. He is currently president-elect of the North American Association of Sports Economists. He has written extensively on sports economics for academic journals, newspapers, and magazines, including *The New York Times*.

Martin B. Schmidt is professor of economics at the College of William and Mary, specializes in sports economics and macroeconomics. His writing has appeared in the field's leading academic and general interest journals, as well as newspapers, and magazines, including *The New York Times*.

Berri and Schmidt co-authored *The Wages of Wins*, and maintain a popular blog that discusses the economics of sports decision-making (www.dberri.wordpress.com).

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