Book Review
"Money Games: Profiting from the Convergence of Sports and Entertainment"
By David M. Carter
Review by Kurt W Rotthoff, Seton Hall University

As the title suggests, *Money Games: Profiting from the Convergence of Sports and Entertainment*, the stated focus of this book is the convergence between sports and entertainment. In my opinion, I find this to be misleading. I have always viewed sports and entertainment as one and the author hints that he shares this opinion during the introduction, when he describes that the two have been converged since the beginning of sports. This is further substantiated by David Hill from Fox Sports who the author interviewed for the book. Hill says, "For me, convergence has always existed." While the idea of convergence comes up throughout the book, the focus would more accurately be described as: technological innovation in sports and how to profit from that innovation. Although the book is written well, it is written from a journalistic perspective, the lack of academic studies is clear throughout.

Looking beyond convergence, this book utilizes case studies to start each chapter followed by an interview with an industry insider. This structure is pleasant and relevant. Part 1 of the book focuses on the home: Television, Video Gaming, and Athlete Branding. The next section covers the traveling fan (part 2): The Internet, Mobile Technology, and Gambling. And finally Part 3 looks at the athletic venue: Sports-Anchored Development, Venue Technology, and Corporate Marketing.

The increase of technology in television and video gaming is the focus of the first two stories. The first account peaked my interest because it uses a great example of how Olympic swimming, a relatively overlooked sport, was watched on TV by 70 million people as Michael Phelps competed for his 8th gold medal in 2008. The ability for more information to be disseminated through increased television coverage and increased channels dedicated to sports, has improved the ability of fans to watch alternative sports. In the next chapter, on video gaming, the author clearly discusses how companies that are nimble become successful. For example,

Nintendo was competing with companies like Sony and Microsoft to develop more sophisticated games with better graphics. Instead they came out with the Wii, a gaming system that had less sophisticated games and graphics but added an element that other companies were missing – human action. This turned out to be a huge success that is being replicated by the other companies.

The last chapter in the first section discusses athlete branding. These studies look at examples of athletes who have done a great job making their name their brand: David Beckham, Tony Hawk, and Yao Ming. There is no clear evidence as to why these athletes were chosen. Beckham has built a personal image, but what he sponsors is less known by the casual fan. Yao Ming is hugely successful in China, but again it's hard to tell what his image is built on in other countries. The discussion is focused on how each athlete got to where they are and more importantly how they have monetized their success. Although the book does not take it this far, investigating how social media outlets change the way athletes brand themselves will yield interesting future research. Using the social media outlets increases the potential to develop an athlete's branding, but it also entails risks (social media is also discussed in the next section).

The second section of the book focuses on increased technologies that have helped fans stay connected when they are away from home. The first two chapters in this section deal with the internet and mobile media outlets. Major League Baseball's website is the focus of the case study on how to use the internet to efficiently release information about players, teams, and the league on the whole. The discussion covering how Rivals.com and others use subscription models to profit off of providing this information is useful. The interview at the end of this section, with George Bodenheimer from ESPN, is my favorite interview in the book. Bodenheimer discusses how ESPN has been utilizing new technologies such as ESPN 3D and using sponsors for College Game Day. The interview leads into the mobile technologies chapter well, where the focus is how mobile media changes the way consumers get information. Customers no longer want to wait until SportsCenter or the news, they want instant access to their teams and fantasy leagues at all times. The chapter

also discusses technologies that are being developed. For example, SlingBox allows a user to watch their home TV channels, and thus home team sports teams, on their computer from anywhere with an internet connection and Nike+ allows for virtual running races. The interview in this chapter, with Larry Witherspoon from Tickets.com, discusses the convergence of technology and sports. As stated earlier, this is, I believe, the primary contribution of this book.

The last chapter of the second section covers gambling. While initially this seems to be oddly placed, the chapter actually includes a useful in-depth discussion of World Series of Poker, and all the legal issues online gambling has faced in the U.S. Sports betting is a big industry and this chapter discusses how internet options, such as Betfair.com, allow for more efficient access to gambling. Information gathered from online gambling websites examine how fans utilize the site and this information can be used by the leagues to confirm the integrity of the game.

The last section of the book deals with case studies about venues and how they have adapted to changes in technology over time. This section highlights the journalistic perspective, showing that no academic studies were taken into account The first section deals with Sports-Anchored Development (SAD).The author describes the economic impact of SAD is "Huge",claiming that "…from 2002 to 2009 PETCO Park and ancillary development created 19,200 jobs, while generating $5.25 in private investment for every $1 in public funding." (cited from the *San Diego Union Tribune* editorial, "The Petco Boom," July 15, 2010) While there are many different academic resources for information on the economic impact of stadiums and development (see Coates and Humphreys 2003 and Johnson, Groothuis, and Whitehead 2001), this book does not utilize these resources. However, the author does a good job establishing what the focal point of selling a venue is: "I think people will start to live the events instead of just showing up for them. The new experience will be a total immersion into a densely packed environment of living, shopping, working, and dining, intermingled with the play aspects of sports and entertainment." This is surely how the author plans to monetize this information.

Venue technology is well placed after the discussion on the use of venues on the whole. The amount of technology going into a modern stadium is amazing. Some examples stated are the retractable grass field at the University of Phoenix stadium, building venues that allow for multiple uses from one venue (both University of Phoenix and Dallas Cowboy's stadium are discussed), and having small cameras that allow the fans to see multiple aspects of the game, or race, have increased both the use of technology and the usefulness of this technology. Technology can even improve seemingly simple jobs like taking tickets. For example, Radio-frequency identification tags (RFID tags) store data on a small chip that can be scanned, from a central location at a distance, at the gate of a stadium to determine if the ticketholder has a valid ticket. This technology is used by Manchester City Football Club and has allowed for easier and faster fan access along with increased security on where and when people enter the stadium. The interview with the Dallas Cowboys' Jack Hill does a great job of discussing how the new Cowboy's Stadium uses technology not only for fan interest during the games, but also to allow the stadium to be versatile in maximizing its ability to hold other events as well. Again in this chapter, the author claims these "...flexible venues are able to make strong arguments for (additional) public sector investment" and that "...improved technology could result in fewer seasonal jobs for local workers and, over time, influence a city's interest in allocating public dollars to the pursuit of new or renovated venues", which contradicts the evidence from the current economic research.

One of the primary uses of this book is in a Sports Marketing class. The last chapter sums this up by analyzing corporate sponsorship and reviewing the use of technology to increase the value of a brand. The main focus is on the building of the Wide World of Sports at Disney and their merger with ESPN to make it an overall sports experience. This success again supports the idea that nimble companies, which have the ability to adapt to and use technology, will continue to succeed.

On the whole this book has a great structure: case studies followed by an interview of an industry insider. The use of technology in sports is growing and these case studies are interesting

for the serious fan or a course in Sports Marketing. If you are going to use this book in your class, or

read it on your own, I recommend you do it soon. Most of the cases are very relevant today, but will

age quickly.

Coates, D. and Humphreys, B. R. (2003). The effect of professional sports on earnings and
        employment in the services and retail sectors in US cities. *Regional Science and Urban
        Economics*. 33, p. 175-198.

Johnson, Bruce K., Peter A. Groothuis and John C. Whitehead. (2001). The Value of Public Goods
        Generated by a Major League Sports Team: The CVM Approach. *Journal of Sports Economics*
        2:1 p. 6-21.