

## From the Ballfield to the Boardroom: Management Lessons from Sports

By Brian Goff

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**From the Ballfield to the Boardroom: Management Lessons from Sports** By Brian Goff

No one can deny that sports and business are two of the most potent forces in our culture today. Sport, play, and the terms and phrases that define them, are engrained in our collective psyche, influencing the ways in which we conduct business-as a game, with rules of engagement, tournaments of competition, the shame that accompanies defeat, and the bragging rights that accrue to the victor. The parallels are ubiquitous; as the NFL's Bill Parcells stated in a *Harvard Business Review* article, my guess is that the challenges I've faced are not all that different from the ones that executives deal with every day. People are people, and the keys to motivating them and getting them to perform to their full potential are pretty much the same whether they're playing on a football field or working in an office.

*From the Ballfield to the Boardroom* draws from Brian Goff's expertise as a managerial economist to shed new light on the sports-business connection. Using dozens of examples from across the spectrum of professional and college sports, he analyzes the ways in which key decisions are made on the playing fields and locker rooms and applies these lessons to the corporate context. From the distinctive leadership styles of legendary coaches Tom Landry, Vince Lombardi, John Wooden, and Bobby Knight, among others, to such culturally significant developments as the racial integration of Major League Baseball and the meteoric rise of NASCAR, Goff draws from the world of sports to provide a solid foundation in the managerial arts, including: assessing risk and uncertainty, conducting market and competitive analysis, wooing customers, fostering an innovative culture, managing information and communication flows, and resolving labor disputes. The result is an incisive look at the sport of business, with practical insights for successful management at all levels of your organization.

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#### Review

"Using examples from across the spectrum of professional and college sports, Goff (economics, Western Kentucky University) analyzes the ways in which key decisions are made in sports and applies these lessons to the corporate context." - **Reference & Research Book News**

#### Review

"This book shows in an interesting and readable way how the world of sports holds important lessons for the world of business. Dr. Goff is a pioneer in the application of economic methods to study sports and sports institutions, and here he details how this approach can yield important insights of practical value for business leaders. This is a must read for economists and students of sports, for MBA and management students, and for business executives at all levels." (Robert D. Tollison, Professor of Economics and BB&T Senior Fellow, Clemson University)

"[A]ccessible to students of managerial economics and business professionals alike, Brian Goff's book supplies more insights into sound decision-making practices than can be found in the collected works of an army of management gurus. You don't need to be a sports fan to enjoy *From the Ballfield to the Boardroom*. Anyone interested in how managers can thrive in a high-profile business where nearly every move they make is the stuff of headlines will profit from reading it." (William F. Shugart II, F.A.P. Barnard Distinguished Professor of Economics and holder of the Robert M. Hearin Chair at The University of Mississippi)

#### About the Author

**Brian Goff** is Distinguished University Professor, Department of Economics, Ford College of Business, Western Kentucky University, where he has served on the faculty since 1986 and teaches undergraduate, masters, and MBA courses. He is the coauthor of several books, including *Spoiled Rotten* and *The National Collegiate Athletic Association*, and dozens of articles on economic and public policy in such publications as *American Economic Review*, *Economic Inquiry*, *Public Choice*, and *Social Science Quarterly*.

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