

Berri, David J. Stumbling on wins: two economists expose the pitfalls on the road to victory in professional sports, by David J. Berri and Martin B. Schmidt. FT Press, 2010. 237p bibl index afp ISBN 9780132357784, \$24.99

In *Stumbling on Wins*, sports economists Berri (Southern Utah Univ.) and Schmidt (College of William and Mary) follow up their *The Wages of Wins* (with Stacey Brook, CH, Jan'07, 44-2764) with more modeling and number-crunching applications. The holy grail remains the same: understanding and improving decision making on the court, field, and ice and in the front offices of North American professional team sports. Shorter both in length (about 170 pages of actual text and tables plus 60 more allocated to notes, references, and an index) and coverage per topic than *Wages*, this volume is more disjointed and dependent on isolated instances and stories. The theme is that the alleged experts employed to coach, draft players, and devise strategies continue to make systematic mistakes, can be irrational, and do not learn from experience or available evidence. An important research frontier is the intersection of economics and psychology, which morphs into what is termed "behavioral economics." Berri and Schmidt are taking a page from that general playbook and applying these approaches to the world of sport. However, the jury is still out as to whether their examples are substantive or simply intriguing anomalies that make for arguments on sports-talk radio shows. Summing Up: Recommended. Sports and sports economics collections at all levels. -- A. R. Sanderson, University of Chicago