

Bradbury, J.C. The baseball economist: the real game exposed. Dutton, 2007. 336p bibl index This book has attracted attention in the popular press, and one can see why: every year, the market serves up new volumes for fans on players, teams, history, lore, and even statistics and decision making. Furthermore, the book promises to treat subjects that whet fans' appetites: the paucity of left-handed catchers; the relationship between hit batsmen and the designated-hitter rule; the relative prospects of big-market and small-market franchises; players' economic value; steroids. Unfortunately, economist Bradbury knocks few balls out of the park. The book suffers from mediocre writing and uneven chapters (in terms of both topic and analysis); the author's claim to fame--"sabernomics," i.e., mixing baseball data and economic principles--is a hit-or-miss proposition; and a 70-page appendix listing player values for every MLB position player is overkill. Furthermore, Bradbury too often fails to support personal opinion and speculations with evidence. And in the last 3 chapters (of 16) he commits several errors and stumbles badly. This said, many of the book's stand-alone chapters will interest the intelligent fan, and the book may stimulate scholars who labor in these and complementary fields. Summing Up: Recommended. With reservations. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers. -- A. R. Sanderson, University of Chicago