

Szymanski, Stefan. Playbooks and checkbooks: an introduction to the economics of modern sports. Princeton, 2009. 225p index afp ISBN 9780691127507, \$29.95

Well-known British economist Szymanski (Cass Business School, City University London) gives readers an n-dimensional "tweener." That is, the book is not a popular volume that titillates intelligent lay readers and statisticians with the latest metrics; it does not have enough heft to serve as a full-blown scholarly resource; it is not simply a good sports read. The subtitle reveals the book's true nature because it really is "an introduction to the economics of modern sports"--an appetizer, not a full meal. But an appetizer from Szymanski can be as filling as someone else's five-course dinner. In the first two chapters the author outlines the evolution and organization of professional team-sport leagues. The next four chapters focus on economic threads from the perspectives of government officials and agencies, players and owners, and broadcasters. That, in a nutshell--or 180 pages--is it. The volume concludes with a "beginner's guide" to the relevant sports economics literature, tied back to the individual chapters; this section will be valuable to anyone wanting to know more, and it compensates in part for the complete lack of footnotes/endnotes. Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals; general readers. -- A. R. Sanderson, University of Chicago