

# Activities and Discussion Questions



## Inning 1

### Warm-Up Activity/Pre-Game Interview

Let's start with a few warm-up questions:

- What do you think about the salaries professional athletes earn, and why do you think professional athletes make as much money as they do?
- What do you think about the price of tickets to professional sporting events?
- How has "big money" affected professional sports?
- What is the most serious economic issue facing pro sports?

Explain your answers. A simple "yes" or "no" won't do.

Write down your responses or record them on audiotape. And be sure to save them so you can revisit them later.





### 1.1 Beauty Is in the Eye of the Beholder

Utility is a fairly simple economic concept: We choose to spend our money on a product or service because we get a certain amount of use, pleasure, or satisfaction from consuming it.

Describe the utility we derive from each of the following:

- a snow shovel
- a mousetrap
- your favorite song
- an official jersey from your favorite team
- the autograph of your favorite player
- a Sunday afternoon watching NFL football
- a baseball glove that you have owned for at least five seasons

#### Try This Exercise:

On the next page is an old ad for D & M baseball gloves, which used to be made in New Hampshire. Does the ad talk only about the function of the glove? What approach is the company using to sell its product?



Soldiers call them the  
**“Lucky Dog”**  
 Sport Goods

One secret of better base-  
 ball is in using better base-  
 ball goods—here they are.

**D & M**

DO you know why the American boys turned the tide that won the war? It was not that they were trained soldiers—for they were not—but they were trained in alertness, in team work and quickness of judgment; in accuracy of aim and in that sense—whatever you call it—that anticipates what the other fellow is going to do and does it first. They had all kinds of courage. They know no fear, and they *wouldn't be beaten*. It was the old baseball spirit adapted to a new use. The preparation for this war had been going on for years on every “diamond,” “gridiron,” school ground, and in vacant lots and back yards all over America.

All of these qualities that helped to win the war will help anyone to win in peaceful pursuits. With the world's new appreciation of sports, D & M Sport Goods should be of greater service than ever. The goods shown here are just a few of the good things in the new D & M line.

We furnish everything for sports and the quality always exceeds the price. If you would do better business, sell more goods, accomplish more work, excel in your profession or lead your class in school, take some time for sports. And if you would like to play better baseball you should have our new edition of

***Official Rules for Baseball and Tennis***

There's a copy of these Rules and a new Catalogue Free for every man, boy or girl who will send for them. This Catalogue is of exceeding interest—one of the best we ever published. Find the article you want and if your dealer hasn't it send to us—but ask him first.

**THE DRAPER-MAYNARD COMPANY**  
 Dept. C, PLYMOUTH, N. H.

Courtesy of New Hampshire Historical Society

Baseball glove ad from the Draper-Maynard Company, circa 1920s, when the equipment for America's national pastime was still made in the USA.



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### 1.2 A “Typical” Fan? / A Willing Sap?

#### Part A

**Question:**

What is a sports fan, and is there any such thing as a “typical” fan?

**Try This Exercise:**

Describe some of the behaviors and characteristics of a “typical” fan, **OR**

Draw a picture of a “typical” fan, **OR**

Take a photo of a “typical” fan.

Then get together with everyone in your class and compare your descriptions/images.

#### Part B

**Question:**

Somebody once said: “A sports fan is a willing sap.” What do you think that means, and how does it relate to the concept of utility?





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### 1.3 What Are They Selling?

What are professional sports leagues actually selling?

- a) a sports experience for hard core fans
- b) an entertainment experience for casual fans who just want a fun “night out”
- c) a combination of the two
- d) a diversion that will hold fans’ attention long enough for advertisers to bombard them with commercial messages
- e) whatever it takes to make money

Get together with the people in your class and try to come up with an answer. Be sure to explain your reasoning.



*Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress*

Dancing girls and ballplayers entertaining the fans, Washington, 1924.





### 1.4 Gauging the Market

Sports teams compete against one another on the field or on the court or on the ice. But when it comes to business, their true competitors are movies, concerts, live theater, restaurants, outdoor recreation, and all the other leisure options available to fans. For better or worse, pro sports are part of the entertainment industry. They have to compete for entertainment dollars and a piece of their fans' limited leisure time.

To get an idea of how much competition there is for entertainment dollars and leisure time . . .

#### **Try This Exercise:**

1. Get together with the people in your class and make a list that includes pro team sports and five other entertainment/leisure activities. Choose whatever you like but try for a good distribution.
2. Survey 50-100 people (divide the work so that no one gets stuck with too many surveys). Ask the following questions:
  - "If you have an entire Saturday or Sunday and \$200 to spend on entertainment/leisure, which of the activities on this list would you choose as your top two?"
  - "What had more of an impact on your choice: time or cost?"
3. After you finish the survey, look at the results and try to determine what they tell you about the economic future of professional team sports.





### 1.5 Bill Veeck's 12 Commandments

Bill Veeck tried to live by a set of 12 commandments. He recommended them to anyone who worked in baseball, but with a little modification they speak to people in just about any line of work.

The commandments originally appeared in a *Boston Globe* article by columnist Larry Whiteside.

1. Take your work very seriously. Go for broke and give it your all.
2. Never ever take yourself seriously.
3. Find yourself an alter ego and bond with him for the rest of your professional life.
4. Surround yourself with similarly dedicated soulmates, free spirits of whom you can ask why and why not. And who can ask the same thing of you.
5. In your hiring, be color-blind, gender-blind, age- and experience-blind. You never work for Bill Veeck. You work with him.
6. If you're a president, owner, or operator, attend every home game and never leave until the last out.
7. Answer all your mail; you might learn something.
8. Listen and be available to your fans.
9. Enjoy and respect the members of the media, the stimulation and the challenge. The "them against us" mentality should exist only between the two teams on the field.
10. Create an aura in your city. Make people understand that unless they come to the ballpark, they will miss something.
11. If you don't think a promotion is fun, don't do it. Never insult your fans.
12. Don't miss the essence of what is happening at the moment. Let it happen. Cherish the moment and commit it to your memory.

#### Try This Exercise:

Choose a non-sports business or occupation and apply Bill Veeck's 12 commandments to it. Explain your reasoning.





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*Courtesy of National Baseball Hall of Fame Library*

Bill Veeck





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### 1.6 All Net

Each of the “Big Four” – MLB, the NBA, the NFL, and the NHL – quickly grasped the marketing potential of the Internet. Each league has a web site, and so does almost every team.

The league web sites are:

www.mlb.com  
www.nba.com  
www.nfl.com  
www.nhl.com

#### **Your Assignment:**

Visit each league’s web site and answer the following questions:

- What do the sites tell you about the sports/business/entertainment connection?
- What strengths is each sport trying to market?
- Which web site is the most effective? Why?

