

Activities and Discussion Questions



Inning 3

3.1 Inputs

Economists sometimes talk about factors of production or inputs – labor, materials (land, natural resources, or raw materials), and capital. In the case of a sports franchise, labor includes players, coaches, trainers, groundskeepers, and umpires or referees – all the people who make the games happen on the field. Materials include the plot of land where the ballpark sits or the water and fertilizer that help to keep the grass looking good. Capital is the actual ballpark structure, the arena building, training equipment, a Zamboni – something as simple as a ball or as complex as an exploding scoreboard – all the implements, tools, and structures required to produce the sports product.

Try This Exercise:

List the inputs needed to produce a baseball season or a football season. Then list the inputs needed to produce a heavyweight boxing title fight or a professional tennis match. Compare the lists when you finish.

Question:

How do the inputs needed to produce a team sport (baseball or football) differ from the inputs needed to produce an individual sport (boxing or tennis)?





Inning 3

Try This Exercise:

Below is a publicity shot of Babe Ruth stitching a baseball at the old Draper-Maynard Sporting Goods factory in Plymouth, New Hampshire. Take another look at the photo and try to identify:

- a) a labor input
- b) a materials input
- c) a capital input



Courtesy of New Hampshire Historical Society



Inning 3

3.2 What's in a Name?

First there was the National Association of Base Ball Players(1857), then the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players (1871), and finally the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs (1876).

Questions:

- What do the different names say about the changes in organizing labor, materials, and capital?
- Why might a league run by players have a tougher time succeeding than a league run by investors?
- Who should have greater control over the sports product – the people who own and organize the teams or the people who play the game and attract the fans? Explain your reasoning.

