

THEY SHOOT...THEY SCORE!!!

**LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION AND STRATEGY
FROM THE BUSINESS OF SPORTS**

August 2018

[DR. PATRICK RISHE](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[Dr. Patrick Rishe](#) is the Founding Director of the [Sports Business Program](#) at Washington University in St. Louis, as well as a Professor of Practice in Sports Business within WashU's Olin Business School. He is also the Founder and CEO of the sports consulting firm Sportsimpacts, as well as a contributing Sports Business writer for [Forbes.com](#). Regarding professional highlights from 2018 alone, Dr. Rishe received the annual Reid Teaching Award from the Olin Business School, served as the NCAA's expert witness in their favorable outcome in the [Todd McNair lawsuit](#), and conducted an Economic Impact Study for the 2018 SEC Men's Basketball Championships.

As the Founding Director of the WashU sports business program which began in 2015, Dr. Rishe has produced (1) an annual Fall Sports Business Summit which has attracted over 75 sports industry speakers in its first 3 years, (2) experiential projects with organizations such as Populous, the St. Louis Cardinals, the Carolina Hurricanes, and the Vegas Golden Knights, and (3) sports immersion trips where dozens of WashU students have traveled to New York City and Los Angeles to network with numerous sports organizations. Dr. Rishe teaches classes in Sports Analytics, Sport Marketing, and the Business of Sports. Prior to WashU, Dr. Rishe spent 16 years at Webster University as an Economics professor.

As the Founder and CEO of Sportsimpacts (started in 2000), Dr. Rishe's firm has conducted over 85 Economic Impact Studies including 3 Super Bowls (2016, 2011, 2006), 3 Final Fours, and a Ryder Cup. He has also done impact studies for entire college athletic programs (Ohio State, Texas, New Mexico), and has conducted market research at over 20 NCAA Championship events.

Academically, Dr. Rishe has published numerous academic papers in peer-reviewed journals, including *Sport Marketing Quarterly* and the *International Journal of Sport Finance*. In the classroom, he has taught Sports Business courses at UCLA, Saint Louis University, and Pepperdine University, has been a guest speaker at Harvard's Sports Law Symposium and NYU's Tisch Graduate School of Sport Management, and has previously (2015-2017) moderated panel discussions at both the MIT Sports Analytics Conference and Stanford University's Sports Innovation Conference (2015, 2018).

In media works, Dr. Rishe has been a contributing OpEd columnist for FORBES.com since 2010, where he has published over 800 pieces which have garnered over 4 million readers. His insights on topical sports business issues have appeared on various national media outlets such as NBC Nightly News, CBS News, CNBC, Bloomberg TV, CNN, Fox Business, New York Times, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, L.A. Times, ESPN Radio, Fox Sports Radio, Marketplace Radio, and NPR.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thank you to all the contributors herein. Whatever growth I've experienced as a sports business educator and analyst in recent years is largely a function of (1) conversations we've had directly, (2) reviewing presentations or interviews you have delivered, or (3) visiting your place of business for first-hand exposure to your work and culture.

Second, thank you to the Lacob family. While some of the contributors herein were part of my professional network prior to 2015, many were met through networks formed since I became the Director of [the Sports Business Program at Washington University in St. Louis](#) in June 2015. But the only reason we have a program is because of the Lacob's generosity. To that end, I thank Joe Lacob, owner and CEO of the [Golden State Warriors](#), and his sons Kirk and Kent (a 2015 WashU alum) for their time, resources, and guidance. For these things, I'm forever indebted.

Third, thank you to the executives at the Olin Business School (most notably, Todd Milbourn, Steve Malter, and Mahendra Gupta) for their faith in me to provide direction and guidance during the program's infancy. Also, a thanks to the students (Andrew Pek, Ryan Vargas, Rohan Gupta, Katie Sissler) who provided editorial assistance in the months before the book's release, and 2 Olin colleagues (John Horn and Mark Soczek) for making editorial suggestions.

Lastly, thank you to my family for instilling within me a passion for sports which still burns to this day. This includes:

- My father, Jim...a long-time high school athletics director, coach, and referee, who in March 2018 was inducted into the [2018 Hall of Fame class of New York State's Athletic Administrators Association](#).
- My older brothers, Mike and Dave...who not only were excellent athletes once upon a time and spent considerable time allowing their younger brother to tag along for touch football or 2-on-2 basketball games, but who continue to be cherished lifetime friends and role models for their families, colleagues, and students.
- My dearly departed mother and sister, Marilyn and Beth Ann...who were both sports enthusiasts, always supportive, and tough-as-nails against the longest of life's odds. How they confronted and endured in the face of insurmountable circumstances left an indelible imprint upon anyone whose lives they touched. Their spirit and light shines on.

PREFACE

I've been fortunate enough to build a highly developed network of contacts within the sports industry, borne from (1) attending numerous professional conferences, (2) roughly 20 years working with clients through my sports consulting practice, and (3) leveraging my media access. Not only have these factors created positive networking externalities for my students and university - gaining access to team, league, and company employees - but it has helped broaden my own knowledge about the sports industry, keeping me sharp on the latest trends.

Furthermore, since joining Washington University in St. Louis in 2015, that professional network has exponentially increased...with new industry ties seemingly forming weekly across all aspects of the industry. I haven't tapped into the Alaskan Iditarod, Jamaican bobsled, or New Zealand rugby networks just yet, but give it time.

Reflecting upon this network, I began to appreciate the value, breadth, and scope of their far-reaching insights on current and future trends within the sports industry. Their collective experience empowers them to opine upon broader perspectives regarding leadership, innovation, and strategy, which have driven them to personal and corporate success. In short, I realized what a wonderful opportunity this network presented for compiling their expertise into one project. One place. One book.

Subsequently, this book shares insights from 50 professionals who collectively possess over 700 years of sports industry experience!!! They span every major sports league in North America, as well as major collegiate athletics, consulting firms, apparel companies, facility architects, esports, and local/regional sports commissions. They also span the organizational ladder, from team owners to team/company executives. From business strategists to analytics gurus to entrepreneurs...we cover it all. Well, almost all. We don't cover motor sports, but [judging from the ratings these days](#), no one else is either...so we're good.

As a long-time business educator, I'm particularly excited because this book offers a comprehensive look at various facets of managerial decision-making and business operations across all levels of sport. The subject areas typically covered in business schools - marketing, management, sales, finance, communications, analytics, entrepreneurship, leadership - are all

addressed in one way or another herein through a series of real-world examples shared by the contributors. Examples include:

- **MANAGEMENT**...The thought process executives undertake when making difficult roster or coaching changes (*Golden State Warriors*);
- **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**...Creating / operating a sports startup from scratch (*Vegas Golden Knights, LAFC, Halo Neuroscience, STRIVR, asensei*);
- **FACILITY LOGISTICS**...Understanding the various logistical considerations a sports architect must weigh when designing a new sports facility (*Populous*);
- **SALES/MARKETING/MANAGEMENT**...Adding new physical features and new pricing options at your venue to either (1) cater to millennials or younger, or (2) cater to event rights holders to attract future events to your building (*St. Louis Cardinals, St. Louis Blues*);
- **ANALYTICS/ENTREPRENEURSHIP**...Technological advancements which allow for (1) More accurately assessing sponsorship ROI (*Wasserman, GumGum, Block Six Analytics*), (2) More efficiently training athletes (*STRIVR, Halo Neuroscience, asensei*), and (3) More successfully identifying new customers and retaining existing customers (*KORE, numerous pro sports teams*);
- **MARKETING**...The importance of research when implementing experiential marketing to better understand the emotional factors which drive sports attendance and viewership (*GMR Marketing*);
- **FINANCE**...How valuations of European soccer clubs are complicated by relegation and promotion (*Inner Circle Sports*).

It's comprehensive, and it's interactive! Throughout the book, I've linked to a variety of related stories or videos to give interested readers the ability to dive deeper as they desire.

So, in the immortal words of Terrell Owens, [get your popcorn ready](#) (or perhaps a latte from Starbucks is more apt for the target group reading this book), and enjoy! ¹

¹ 36 of the 50 interviews conducted were comprised of contributors emailing their written responses to the questions I sent them. The other 14 interviews were either conducted by phone

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

COMPANIES	TEAMS
AEG	<i>NBA / G-League</i>
Anheuser Busch InBev	Dallas Mavericks
Ascendent Sports Group	Golden State Warriors
asensei	Phoenix Suns
Block Six Analytics	Santa Cruz Warriors
Elizabethtown Tourism and Convention Bureau	<i>NHL</i>
Genius Sports	Carolina Hurricanes
GMR Marketing	Los Angeles Kings
GumGum Sports	St. Louis Blues
Halo Neuroscience	Vegas Golden Knights
Immortals	<i>MLB</i>
Inner Circle Sports	Houston Astros
Jordan Brand (Nike)	Milwaukee Brewers
KORE	St. Louis Cardinals
Kansas City Sports Commission	<i>NFL</i>
Laundry Service	New England Patriots
Madison Square Garden Company	San Francisco 49ers
Populous	<i>MLS / USL</i>
QuintEvents International	Los Angeles Football Club
Rapsodo	Sacramento Republic
SME Inc	
St. Louis Sports Commission	COLLEGIATE
Stadia Ventures	America East Conference
STRIVR	Missouri Valley Conference
The Kraft Group	NCAA
U.S. Soccer Federation	University of Oklahoma
W Partners	
Wasserman	

(Bubolz, Clark, Farrell, Glaser, Gumpert, Nelson, Penn) or in person (Abbamondi, Mehrotra, Schreiber, Segal, and all 3 members of the Lacob family).

BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT CONTENT AREAS COVERED

In an effort to organize key insights by topical business/management subjects (e.g. leadership, innovation, strategic marketing, etc...), Appendix A provides a summary of insights which are organized by these various topical areas. So, after reading the introductory chapter, please jump to Appendix A if this is your preferred method of consuming the content. Thereafter, if you seek greater context, you can seamlessly transition back to the full interview of the person of interest within the body of the book.

I organized the business/management content areas as follows:

- The 4 largest themes covered throughout the book are:
 - o Leadership
 - o Innovation
 - o Strategic Marketing / Brand Development
 - o Strategic Business Planning

- 10 additional complementary themes covered throughout the book (in alphabetical order):
 - o Analytics and Sport Science
 - o Business Operations and Finance
 - o Communications (Corporate, Sports Media, Social Media)
 - o Community Relations
 - o Corporate Culture
 - o Corporate Partnerships
 - o Entrepreneurship
 - o Event / Project Operations
 - o Facility Construction / Renovation Logistics
 - o Sales.

So if you wish to consume the content herein by subject or content area, jump to Appendix A. Otherwise, let's move to the next page, where I introduce the book, and discuss how my life has been intertwined with the sports industry in some way, shape, or form over the last 40 years.