Moneyball:
Analytical Sports Management
May 6-10, 2019

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Aims and Objectives
This course explores the background and use of evidence-based management in sports with a focus on (association) football. We will study what analytics is and isn’t, how it has been used in the major professional sports, and how it can be used to value and trade players, manage the player talent cycle, manage football clubs, and assess the quality of club and team management.

Course Structure
The course is divided into ten sessions of ninety minutes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. For each session a core reading is required. There will be a brief introduction of the major issues covered in each session, followed by a discussion of issues arising from the readings.

Course Requirements
In preparation of the course:
- Carefully work through the required readings.
- Prepare a one-page summary (single-spaced) of a required paper to be distributed before class.

During the course:
- Lead the class discussion of the assigned paper.
- Contribute to class discussions when you are not the leader.

After the end of the course:
- Write a short report (2,000-3,000 words, 12pt font, excluding references) analyzing a specific transfer, league, squad, or club of your choice. As far as possible, you should use data to support the analysis.
  The essay is due June 21, 2019.

A note about readings and other materials
The field of sports analytics is young, with many discoveries happening in real time. This is especially true in football, the main focus of our seminar. As a result, there is a shortage of high-quality academic work in this area; it also means that much of the cutting-edge analytical work appears online (blogs, social media, etc.) and is not peer-reviewed. Our discussions are intended to make you knowledgeable consumers of research undertaken by industry; I will also provide information about some of the more prominent platforms and sources during the seminar.

I recommend that students read Moneyball by Michael Lewis and watch the movie based on the book prior to the seminar.

May 6: Analytics And Management In Professional Sports

Session 1: Analytics and Management

Required Readings


OR


Session 2: Analytics in Professional Sports (and Football)

Required Readings

- http://analytics-magazine.org/sports-analytics-part-2/

OR

May 7: Players As Assets

Session 3: Analyzing and Managing the Market For Players

Required Readings


- “Competitive Balance: A Spatio-Temporal Comparison”
- “Ten Years Of Demographic Analysis of the Football Players’ Labour Market in Europe”
- “World Football Expatriates: Global Study 2018”
- “Player Turnover Strategies in The Five Major European Leagues”
- “Is There An Optimum Squad Age To Win in Football?”
- “The Transfer of Footballers: A Network Analysis”
- “Transfer Market Analysis: Tracking the Money (2010-2017)”


Optional Readings


Session 4: Understanding Player (and Team) Quality

Required Readings


OR

Optional Readings


May 8: Analytics and Players As Employees

Session 5: Signing and Exiting A Player

Required Readings

https://danielgeey.com/the-transfer-window-what-you-need-to-know/

“How a transfer really works - agents, tapping up, WhatsApp and why clubs can't recoup fees with shirt sales”
https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/transfers/transfer-window-premier-league-revealed-how-a-transfer-deal-really-works-a7837031.html

Optional Readings


Geey, Daniel. “The One Stop Shop To Understanding the Transfer Window.”
https://danielgeey.com/the-one-stop-shop-to-understand-the-transfer-window/


Session 6: Managing Players As Employees

Required Readings


AND


OR

May 9: Football Analytics and Organization

Session 7: Evidence-Based Management

Required Readings


Optional Readings


Session 8: Decision Quality – Hiring Managers and Players

Required Readings


“The dynamics of Swansea City's transfer team: The key roles of the main players explained - and who has the final say on signings”
https://www.walesonline.co.uk/sport/football/dynamics-swansea-citys-transfer-team-13216285

“Michael Edwards and how Liverpool's sporting director became the man behind big name transfers”
https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/sport/football/transfer-news/michael-edwards-liverpool-fsg-klopp-12124673

Optional Readings


May 10: Designing An Analytical Football Club

Session 9: Diagnosing Alignment

Required Readings


Optional Readings


Session 10: Building Competitive Analytical Advantage

Required Readings


OR


OR

Online Football Analytics Sources

Blogs

- Keith Lyon’s sports analytics links: https://www.scoop.it/t/liasing
- StatsBomb: https://statsbomb.com
- OptaPro: https://www.optasportspro.com/about/optaproblogin
- Martin Eastwood: http://www.pena.lt/y/blog.html
- American Soccer Analysis: https://www.americansocceranalysis.com
- FiveThirtyEight (Sports): https://fivethirtyeight.com/sports/
- Mark Taylor: http://thepowerofgoals.blogspot.com
- Laurie Shaw: http://eightyfivepoints.blogspot.com
- Goal Impact: http://www.goalimpact.com/blog/
- Daniel Altman: http://www.northyardanalytics.com/blog/
- Sander Ijtsma: http://11tegen11.net