



Fans of the World, Unite!: A (Capitalist) Manifesto for Sports Consumers

Stephen Ross, Stefan Szymanski

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Fans of baseball, football, basketball, and hockey have long been exploited and oppressed by the monopolistic practices of team owners. The time has come for a revolution in the organization of major U.S. sports!

Fans of the World, Unite! is a clarion call to sports fans. Appealing to anyone who is in despair due to the greed and incompetence of team owners, this book proposes a significant restructuring of sports leagues. It sets out a rational program for a revolution that will serve the best interests of the fans and of the sport itself. But Stephen F. Ross and Stefan Szymanski are no Marxists: they show how a revolution in the organization of sports might even benefit the owners. By harnessing the power of markets, sports leagues can be made both more responsive to the needs of the fans, and more efficient.

Ross and Szymanski have spent many years evaluating the ways in which leagues work across the globe. Drawing on their extensive study of leagues, the authors boil down their plan to two major reforms. Borrowing from NASCAR, they propose that team owners should not own sports leagues as well. Rather, league ownership should be separate. Their second proposal is drawn from soccer: introduce competition through a promotion and relegation system. In this type of system, the worst teams in the league are kicked out at the end of the season and replaced by the best performing teams in the next division down. This gives poor performing teams incentive to step up their game, and allows fresh blood to enter the leagues if the poor performers fail to do so.

The main goal of these reforms is to align the financial interest of those who own the league with the best interests of the fans and the sport. Having laid out the problem and the solution, the authors skillfully address practical implications of introducing their scheme, suggesting how leagues might at least make some changes, if not all of those suggested.

The time for change has come! Armed with this book, and with fairness on their side, fans can set forth to begin a revolution.

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