The structure and management of the three major professional sports provide analogies that can serve as guides for managers in analyzing their organizations and determining their best game plans.

Baseball, Football, and Basketball: Models for Business

Robert W. Keidel

Teamwork and hustle . . . game plans and goal line stands . . . playing hardball in the big leagues. Not only is professional sports a business; it is an exemplar for business. Indeed, if it can be said that nature follows art, then surely business must follow sports. How many executives, for instance, strive for the historical precision of the Dallas Cowboys or the cohesiveness of the Boston Celtics? How many deep down see themselves as corporate Billy Cunninghams, George Allens, or Whitey Herzogs? Probably quite a few.

Business's identification with sports, sports teams, and sports personalities is pervasive. None of this is lost on periodicals like *Sports Illustrated*, which touts its "speakers bureau" of 2,000 sports stars "ready to sparkle at sales meetings, award dinners, conventions, store openings, or wherever else the color and excitement of sports can help you shine."

For most managers, sports' relevance to running a business consists of global concepts like "team spirit," "competitiveness," and "winning." Something more, however, is suggested by the use of sport-specific metaphors like "home run hitter," "quarterback," or

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