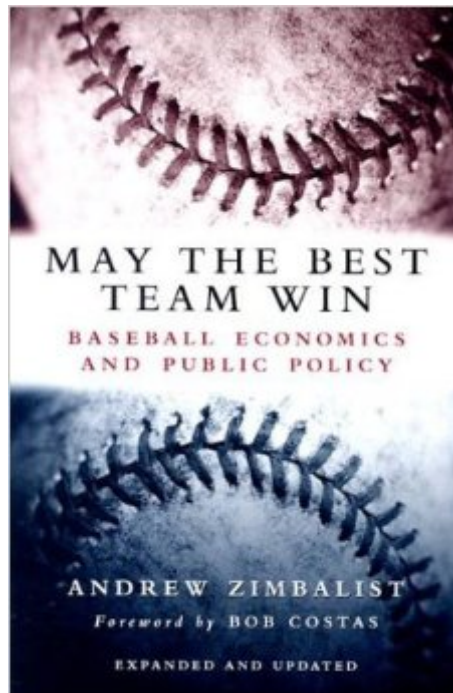


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# May The Best Team Win: Baseball Economics And Public Policy



## Synopsis

The business of baseball stands in sharp contrast to the game's wholesome image as America's favorite pastime. Major league baseball is a deeply troubled industry, facing chronic problems that threaten its future: persistent labor tensions, competitive dominance by high-revenue teams, migration of game telecasts to cable, and escalating ticket prices. Amid the threat of contraction, existing franchises are demanding public subsidies for new stadiums, while viable host cities are begging for teams. The game's core base of fans is aging, and MLB is doing precious little to attract a younger audience. According to Andrew Zimbalist, these problems have a common cause: monopoly. Since 1922 MLB has benefited from a presumed exemption from the nation's antitrust laws. It is the only top-level professional baseball league in the country, and each of its teams is assigned an exclusive territory. Monopolies have market power, which they use to derive higher returns, misallocate resources, and take advantage of consumers. Major league baseball is no exception. In *May the Best Team Win*, Zimbalist provides a critical analysis of the baseball industry, focusing on the abuses and inefficiencies that have plagued the game since the 1990s, when franchise owners appointed their colleague Bud Selig as MLB's independent commissioner.

## Book Information

Paperback: 198 pages

Publisher: Brookings Institution Press; Exp Upd edition (March 24, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 081579729X

ISBN-13: 978-0815797296

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #917,252 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in [Books > Law >](#)

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[Entertainment > Entertainment](#) #1577 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics &](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Andrew Zimbalist's "May the Best Team Win" explains to the reader just how much the game aspect of baseball has dwindled over the years. Many owners nowadays seem to want to maximize profits

out of their teams, not wins. He goes into detail about the history of the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) and their fights against ownership. It is interesting to note that while the union is portrayed as the goat for many of the past labor work stoppages, after reading this book one can understand why the union's grievances with ownership are what they are. They have also harbored feelings of distrust not just against the owners, but against commissioners as well:

Ueberroth and his role in the collusion scandal of the 1980s, and Selig and his ludicrous demands thrown on the bargaining table along with his claim after the 2001 season that Major League Baseball was in the red by millions of dollars. Zimbalist studies Major League Baseball's exemption from antitrust legislation, how it came about, and how it is congressionally and judicially deemed today. While it seems baseball will retain exemption so long as they can police themselves, given the bevy of problems plaguing the game (or, rather, business) today, it seems that the government must sooner or later step in and right the many wrongs. If baseball were not exempt from antitrust legislation, notwithstanding the fact that owners could sell a team to municipalities and amateurs could challenge the right of a team to withhold exclusive rights to their services for up to seven years, one would find out just how much money ownership really lost and by how much the number would differ from Selig's number.

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