

Editorial

We are launching the Journal of Sports Analytics as an outlet for practical research on sports. Until now, if you discovered something interesting and practical that could help improve a team or a league, you had several imperfect outlets available to you to make your research a reality: you could write a blog post, you could try to discuss your findings in person with the relevant decision makers, you could present at a conference, or you could try to publish in one of the academic journals that focus on things other than practical impact. You could hope that someone interviews you or writes about your research, so that the decision makers might actually see it.

Blog posts can in fact contain very high quality research, but they exist in such a vast sea of other blog posts that it can be difficult to distinguish your research from the noise. Further, blog posts and even collaborative analytical websites are by their nature restricted to research by a small group of authors. Our journal seeks to highlight the highest quality research from anywhere and anyone in the world.

Attempting to discuss your findings in person, or even presenting at a conference, are good endeavors but they exist in an easily forgotten oral world, and often the only useful outcome is for you to be hired. That can be fine for those who are hired but it restricts the employer from seeing all available research, limiting themselves to just the new hire. If your employer wants to adopt better analytical practices, then they may have to hire yet another person, which could be a costly proposition.

In our experience, other journals that either allow or even encourage sports related submissions tend to focus primarily on things other than sports analytics itself. They may view sports research as an aspect of labor economics, or as an interesting outlet for novel statistical techniques, or a kind of applied econometrics, or something else. So a pure sports analytics paper submitted to those outlets often needs an additional coating or veneer to make it relevant to those journals' aims and scopes. At our journal, we have no

ulterior goal other than publishing the most interesting and practical research findings in sports analytics. In our view, sports analytics is a formidable and exciting research field all on its own. Indeed, reading a sports analytics piece is far more intriguing once all the unnecessary and irrelevant adornments have been removed. It is fine if we learn something profound about human nature or labor economics or econometric methods from a sports analytics paper; but it is also perfectly fine if we learn only about how to improve an aspect of sports itself. That is the main goal of this new journal.

We are very excited to be launching this journal and hope you will enjoy its contents over the years, as well as submit your own research to us for review. We are extraordinarily grateful to our advisory board and editorial board members and partners with whom we are launching this outlet, comprising the top analytical minds currently practicing in various teams and leagues and sports, as well as to our innovative publisher, IOS Press. We are also grateful to our external reviewers and all authors who have submitted to us. Even though our acceptance rate is highly selective and we cannot publish more than a small portion of what we see, we enjoy reading every submission.

The sports analytics field is entering an exciting time, as the deployment of analytics in sports has rapidly increased in recent years. Indeed, the analytics movement has permeated not just mainstream American team sports but also other popular sports around the world. As evidence, this inaugural issue contains papers on running, cricket and golf, and we expect papers on a wide variety of sports on an ongoing basis. We hope that the top researchers in different sports can benefit from a cross-pollination of the research ideas that are presented in this journal.

*Philip Maymin and Eugene Shen,
Founding Co-Editors-in-Chief*