

The Styles of Sport & Their Impacts
on the Professional Sports Industry

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HN-300-E: Honors Capstone

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December 8, 2021

Introduction

What comes to mind when you say the word sports? Most likely it's the thought of playing some kind of game that you love or watching professionals play a game that makes their dreams come true. While these thoughts are true, there is more to sports than just playing a game. As children we first start with play, engaging ourselves in an activity for enjoyment without any guidance. As we get older, play evolves to games which takes our enjoyment from play but makes it competitive. Eventually sport is established as the competitive nature of games are met with rules to guide it. With sports being established, professional leagues arise to help manage and maintain the rules that create the competitive atmosphere for the world's best. Although sports are an experience that everyone shares worldwide, differences of how sports are carried out have created individual styles.

The worldwide differences has created two major styles to sport: the open style and the closed style. In North America, a majority of the professional sports leagues have adopted and used the closed style. This style has teams remain within the league they participate and creates affiliation.¹ Overseas, professional sports leagues throughout Europe used the open style of sport which introduces a promotion based system that rewards success and punishes poor performance. What these styles provide for sports has trickle down effects all the way to the grassroots level. Youth sports plays a major role in the continuation of sports worldwide. Here, future athletes are introduced to sports that might guide them for the rest of their lives but are taught how to be functioning members of society. Sports provides structure with rules that are to be followed while also teaching life lessons like cooperation. These young athletes are taught to

¹ Affiliation in sports refers to two or more teams from different leagues of the same sport working together.

cooperate with others, regardless of sex, gender, race, or creed in order to achieve a common goal.

Though sports are for everyone, the economics of sports is expensive. The cost of equipment can be very expensive but this doesn't include other expenses like travel, food, and dues to participate in an organized league. Who is to help these youth athletes cover all this? This is where the parental figures take up the burden usually. Now, depending on where a youth athlete is from, the style of sport can help ease this burden and allow for the youth athletes dreams to come true. Many benefits can be derived from using the open style of sport. Economics wise, it helps professional sports teams and leagues stay financially viable. As per the youth sports in countries that use this style, the economic burden that parents face from their children playing sports is shared with the professional sports team that their child plays through. The continuation of open style sport is healthier for sports than the continuation of closed style of sport.

Style of Sport's Effect on League Creation

There are key differences in the open and closed style of sport. Each create their own type of league.

Open Style

Open leagues are the common structure that many professional sports leagues in Europe use. The term open derives from these leagues' use of a promotion and relegation system. Relegation means the assignment of an entity to a lower classification. At the end of the season

the worst teams in these leagues are sent down to lower tier leagues.² Promotion is the assignment of an entity to a higher classification. At the end of each season, the best teams in lower tier leagues are promoted to the tier above them. Once a team makes the top tier league of that sport, there is no longer promotion as these teams compete for a title and fight the threat of relegation. Open leagues provide each team of a sport the opportunity to get promoted as long as they put in the effort to get there. Each team having an equal opportunity is another reason the word open is used to describe these types of leagues.

Overseas, the English Football League demonstrates the open style of sport. The English Football League (EFL) encompasses all of professional soccer in England.³ Among the EFL there are ninety-two football clubs in four professional leagues: The Premier League, The Championship, League One, and League Two. The rest of the many tiers of football are not considered full-time professional leagues and contain thousands of teams. These teams can be promoted to the full-time professional leagues as the EFL uses the open style of sport.

The EFL's top tier for football is called the Premier League which has twenty clubs that compete all across England. At the end of the season, the bottom three clubs in the standings are relegated to the tier below the Premier League, the Championship. Likewise, the three best clubs from the Championship will replace these relegated clubs. At the top of the standings, the club with the most points will be crowned champion of the Premier League. Other positions in the standings secure clubs spots in tournaments held around Europe. Compared to the structure of the rest of the EFL, the Premier League looks different. The Championship is comprised of

² SportsBite, North American vs. European Sports Systems, <https://sportsbite.blog/north-american-vs-european-sports-system/>

³ The American English word soccer is referred to as football in England. This paper will follow British usage of the term.

twenty-four clubs with three clubs being relegated and three clubs being promoted each year. There exists a playoff for the clubs that finish between third and sixth to see who gets the last promotion spot. League One and League Two are very similar to how the Championship is structured but with very minor differences. In league One, there are twenty-four clubs and at the end of the season, the best three clubs get promoted to the Championship. Clubs who finish between third through sixth also have a playoff for the final promotion spot. At the end of the standings, the four worst clubs are relegated to League Two. League Two also consists of twenty-four club but the difference from the other leagues is the promotion and relegation numbers. At the end of a League Two season, the top three clubs gain automatic promotion. Clubs that finish fourth through seventh play in the playoff for the fourth promotion spot. At the bottom of the standings, only the two worst clubs are relegated. The two best clubs from the league below League Two enter the league for the following season. Promotion and relegation may seem unnecessary to some, but there are economic reasons for why it is used among the clubs in the EFL.

While promotion and relegation create a competitive balance among the leagues, the results of each season has financial consequences that are very important to the clubs that participate within these leagues.⁴ Depending on club position in the standings determines how much money a club will make from the leagues revenue. At the end of each season, the clubs of these leagues receive prize money for their participation. Depending on club position in the standings determines how much money a club will make from the prize money along with their

⁴ James Reade, *Why Is There Promotion And Relegation in European Soccer?*, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesreade/2020/10/08/why-is-there-promotion-and-relegation-in-european-soccer/?sh=50bb24ad70cd>

cut of the league's revenue. The prize money added with each clubs' cut of the revenue is equivalent to millions of dollars. So why are financials a major aspect of open sport?

Each season, the fear of relegation looms over clubs as they push for promotion and/or a title. Relegation and promotion leads to clubs investing money in their squads in hopes of achieving success in their respective league. These varying expenses that come from the hunt for success means that the newly promoted/relegated clubs face the risk of financial ruin.⁵ The risks of financial ruin comes with these clubs overspending, so there are parameters in place to prevent that. Clubs that are relegated receive parachute payments, which are payments of money that help ease the newly relegated clubs into their new league. These clubs will also receive a share of the revenue from the league they were relegated from for a couple of years. This money can help clubs balance their books as being relegated means a loss of a revenue stream. At the same time clubs have lost a revenue stream, players and other staff are being paid as if these clubs were receiving the revenue they once were. The imbalance in the clubs' financials can put the clubs into financial debt. Players in the open style of sport receive higher wages, so to combat that, the clubs either have to restructure contracts or move on from said higher paid individuals.⁶ The parachute payments and continued share revenue allows for the clubs to stay balanced as they get their finances in check avoiding permanent shutdown. Financial ruin via relegation is a problem that leagues that use the closed style of sport don't have to face.

⁵ SportsBite, North American vs. European Sports Systems, <https://sportsbite.blog/north-american-vs-european-sports-system/>

⁶ Roger Noll, *The Economics of Promotion and Relegation in Sports Leagues: The Case of English Football*, <https://siepr.stanford.edu/research/publications/economics-promotion-and-relegation-sports-leagues-case-english-football>

Closed Style

Closed leagues are a mirror opposite of the open leagues of Europe. These leagues are considered closed because the teams that participate remain in the league season after season. Unlike open leagues, when a team has had a poor season and sits at the bottom of the standings, they get to remain in the league. Likewise, when a team has had a great season and sits at the top of the standings of a lower tier league, they are not rewarded with promotion. Another major difference to open leagues is these closed leagues actually assist the weaker teams by giving them better draft picks which gives these teams better access to potential future stars in order to make these teams better. Though open and closed leagues differ in the way they operate, closed leagues also have lower tier leagues like open leagues. Since closed leagues don't allow for these lower tier teams to get promoted, American professional leagues have allowed for the teams to create affiliations with the lower tier teams. This affiliation creates a symbiotic relationship that allows for both teams to benefit from working with one another.

Here in the United States, many professional sports leagues use the closed style of sport. An ideal view of American closed sport leagues can be seen from Major League Baseball (MLB) which is the top professional baseball league in the United States and Canada. The league consists of thirty teams divided into two sub-leagues of fifteen each. These sub leagues are then divided into three divisions of five teams each. Since the MLB is a closed league, relegation does. Another difference that the MLB has compared to other open leagues is it doesn't award the team with the best record the championship. Instead, the best six teams from each sub-league will enter a playoff with the winner of each sub-league playing each other for the MLB championship, The World Series.

Though Major League Baseball is the top tier baseball league in America, there are many minor leagues across the continent. Minor League Baseball, or MiLB, contains professional baseball at various tiers while other leagues, not named MiLB, run semi-professional baseball. The top minor league a part of the MiLB is known as Triple A baseball. This league has 30 teams that play and is structured the same as the MLB. Below Triple A is the second tier of the MiLB, Double A baseball, which is the third tier of professional baseball in America. Double A baseball isn't as similar to MLB as the league is separated into three sub-leagues based on geographical location.⁷ Single A is the lowest professional baseball league in America and sits below Double A on the MiLB totem pole. Single A is sizeable and divided into sections, a High Single A and a Low Single A. Both are split into three sub-leagues with thirty teams in each. Though both are Single A, the teams from High Single A don't play teams from Low Single A during their seasons. Below MiLB, there exists other minor league baseball leagues that have no affiliation to MiLB or MLB. Due to not having any relationship with the professional leagues above them, these semi-professional minor leagues are called independent minor leagues.

While open leagues allows for the free movement between league based on sporting merit, the teams in these leagues have no relationships between each other besides being competitors and trade partners. Since closed leagues have teams "locked in", the teams in the different leagues are connected via affiliation and is common throughout many American professional sports leagues. MLB utilizes affiliation to their teams' benefit as teams have a certain number of players that they can have on their roster in a given season. With an excess number of players, teams want to keep their players with the organization. Affiliation between

⁷ MiLB, *How the Minor Leagues Work*, <https://www.milb.com/news/gcs-173407668>

MLB and MiLB teams allow for players to keep playing while still being part of the MLB franchise they belong to. So what does each level provide in their relationship to an MLB team?

Triple A is the level of minor league baseball that is closest to the playing level of the major leagues and includes a variety of players. Some of the players that are in this league are the rising stars that the MLB team want to give game time to at an almost major league level. Along with the prospects, Triple A teams carry players with MLB experience and are in the minors to act as mentors or are rehabbing an injury.⁸ Double A baseball also contains a lot of talent but is used like a sieve to weed out players who can't cut it talent wise.⁹ Double A requires a lot of talent to play and it is known as the beginning of the upper minors since players who play here have a chance of making the majors.¹⁰ Most of a team's roster is comprised of players who are only beginning their baseball journeys. Similar to Triple A, there are older players with MLB experience on these teams that will act as mentors and guide the younger players. Single A is so diverse talent wise that it is divided up into many sections. Since the MLB draft is in the middle of the season, there is a shortened Single A season that allows the newest players from college or high school to get acclimated to professional baseball. Single A is a players first step in professional baseball and is divided into two sections to provide players many chances to succeed. At Low Single A, players experience a season of professional baseball with upwards to over 100 games. These teams rosters are made up of players that were recently drafted by MLB teams. After Low Single A baseball, the best players advance to High Single A. Not every player will go on to play in High Single A but for the ones who do, it acts as a way to prepare for the high standard of baseball that Double A baseball requires.

⁸ Andrew Simon, *Explaining the MLB Farm System*, <https://www.mlb.com/news/the-mlb-farm-system-explained>

⁹ MiLB, *How the Minor Leagues Work*, <https://www.milb.com/news/gcs-173407668>

¹⁰ Upper minors includes Double A and Triple A.

There are other benefits that minor league teams and major league teams get from being affiliates. Most minor league teams are privately owned but some teams are partially owned by owners of major league teams. With affiliation, the major league teams employ and pay the players that play for their minor league affiliates. In return, a percentage of the revenue made by the minor league teams goes back to the major league team. With major league teams employing the players, this allows for the minor league teams to focus on other financial situations that may be faced during a season. Without affiliation, these minor league ball teams would have to cover the financial aspects of the club whilst also employing their own players. Non-affiliated minor leagues do exist across the country.

Independent leagues are minor leagues that are separate from the affiliations between MLB and MiLB teams. By being independent, the financials of these teams is critical to remaining operational. These teams must make enough revenue to not only cover the costs of running the stadium, but also have to cover the employment of players and employees of the team. These teams rosters consist of both younger and older players both trying to achieve a chance at playing in the MLB. In some cases, the independent leagues will work with MLB but never will these team actually be affiliated to teams within the league itself.

Style of Sport's Effect on Player Procurement

The style of sport that a league uses effects the way that teams in these leagues acquire players to play for them.

Open Style

Open style of sport produces various ways for player procurement. The EFL, along with all other football leagues in Europe, utilize the transfer market in order to get players to play for

their clubs.¹¹ When a club is promoted from one league to the next, that club will look to buy players of a higher standard than they previously were playing with. This allows these clubs to compete at the higher level. The exact opposite will happen for teams that are relegated to lower levels. These clubs will have fire sales, with clubs in higher leagues willing to spend the money on the relegated clubs' players. Clubs within the EFL also go outside of England to get players. All over the world there are leagues structured similar to those in England. Clubs selling within England and around the world is an example of Porter's Five Forces, power of supplier.¹² By making deals within England and around the world, these clubs are not dependent on one club to supply them players. Though buying what you need is great, there is a limit to what you can spend.

Competition and fairness are major goals that leagues around the world strive to achieve regardless of the style of sport they use. Within the EFL there are rules that are put into place by the Football Association that deal with the finances and how each club should operate. These rules are a way for all clubs to have a fair chance in their respective leagues since some clubs have wealthier owners than others. UEFA, who is the governing body for football in Europe, has made their own rules that also applies to the clubs in England. The rules set up by UEFA and the Football Association are known as financial fair play.¹³ These rules force clubs to make sure their finances are balanced, so what clubs spend in transfers and other expenses must be matched or exceeded by revenue. This is looked at over a period of time and the expenses must not reach a certain amount of money. Furthermore, UEFA has also introduced rules that forces clubs to

¹¹ The transfer market in European football is a metaphorical market where clubs from all over the world can buy, sell, and loan players between each other.

¹² Gerard H. Th. Bruijl, *The Relevance of Porter's Five Forces in Today's Innovative and Changing Business Environment*, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3192207

¹³ Premier League, *What is Financial Fair Play*, <https://www.premierleague.com/news/102374>

have a portion of their roster be made of home grown players.¹⁴ These are players from the country that the clubs are based in. So how can teams bring in new players and not break any of these rules?

Each club may have their own creative solutions to not breaking financial rules, but one common solution that every club shares is having a youth academy, which are youth teams at different age levels that are run by the professional football clubs. Every Premier League team must have a youth academy and these academies adhere to strict guidelines.¹⁵ The youth academies start at U9 level and increase all the way to U23 which allows the professional clubs to monitor the players and produce talents from in house. The player isn't an official professional player until they sign a professional contract with the club. Clubs from the EFL will utilize their youth academies as a way to limit spending on players from other clubs and leagues. With youth academies, these clubs must spend millions on their youth facilities but to see a return on their investment, clubs hope to produce one player a year in order to "break even" on their investment.¹⁶

Since these clubs are operating in a global market, this need to produce one player a year resembles method of quality assurance¹⁷. These clubs look every year at the players the academy produces to test the quality of the academy and make sure that the money being invested isn't going to waste. For smaller clubs, the youth academy is a way to not spend money but also make

¹⁴ Steve Bullough & James Jordan, *Youth Academy Player Development in English Football: The Impact of Regulation Since 2006*, <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/SBM-10-2016-0059/full/html>

¹⁵ Georgia Soccer, *Youth Academies in England's Premiership*, https://www.georgiasoccer.org/assets/65/6/the_youth_academies_in_england2.pdf

¹⁶ Georgia Soccer, *Youth Academies in England's Premiership*, https://www.georgiasoccer.org/assets/65/6/the_youth_academies_in_england2.pdf

¹⁷ OECD, *Quality and Internationalisation in Higher Education*, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/quality-and-internationalisation-in-higher-education_9789264173361-en;jsessionid=tVoMT50n8PIGzPedHvFBMBmr.ip-10-240-5-106#page=30

a profit. After a player has been promoted and spends a few years playing professionally, the club can sell the player, making a profit on what was spent to train him at the youth academy.

Closed Sport

Within the United States, youth sports play a major role in how MLB teams get their players. When children grow up in America, they try many sports including baseball, American Football, and Football. After sometime of playing these sports, some children chose to continue with only baseball. Baseball is an accessible sport to children as it comes in many forms. Wiffle ball allows for kids to play the game anywhere with less rules to follow while youth baseball provides structured leagues. These leagues vary in the level of skill and by age of the participants.

At the lowest level of youth organized baseball, there is tee-ball where kids learn the rules of baseball at a young age by playing a form that allows them to have fun and for everyone to participate. After tee-ball, recreational leagues are the next step where the children continue to have fun while developing skills for continuation in baseball. These leagues are usually run by the town or another organization that is working with the town to provide the sport to youth. The best players in these recreational leagues might move to more competitive leagues where they can harness their skills in a competitive environment.¹⁸ These competitive leagues contain privately owned teams for youth players that vary depending on skill and age called travel teams. Besides playing each other in leagues, these teams play at tournaments where the players get to showcase their talents and hopefully catch the eyes of scouts from other travel baseball programs and schools. Similar to the youth academies of English Football, professional baseball teams

¹⁸ USSSA, *About USSSA*, <https://www.usssabaseball.org/about-ussa>

have youth teams that they sponsor. The difference between these teams and youth academies is that these sponsored teams do not provide players a direct path to the pros like youth academies. Youth baseball continues as the players get older and attend high school.

High school is a very important place for Major League Baseball getting its players from. While players may be playing for a travel baseball team, by playing for high school, they are playing for two teams at a high level of play. This allows for an increased in developing skills and an increasing of getting noticed by college/Major League scouts. These scouts are looking for players with serious potential of playing baseball at the college or pro level. Some players are talented at such a young age that they can be drafted straight out of high school to the MLB but will spend time in the minor leagues. Those scenarios where players are drafted out of high school are rare, so most players end up going to college to play baseball. So how does college baseball help MLB teams get players for their team?

College baseball provides athletes a high level baseball game that helps the best players prepare for their journeys to Major League Baseball. With closed leagues, the worst teams are not relegated but instead are awarded higher draft picks that allows them to draft players out of college or high school based on reversed order of their wins and losses record. For multiple rounds, MLB teams will pick these high school or college players to build up their prospect pools. Unlike clubs in the Premier League and their use of youth academies to develop players, the MLB teams use their minor league teams to do that. A drafted player may spend a couple of years climbing the ladder of minor league baseball as the MLB team that drafted them waits for the player to develop into an MLB ready player. The way that MLB teams develop their younger

players, resembles how the assembly line acts as a production system for industrial companies.¹⁹ On an assembly line, each section is responsible for putting their touch on the final product. With the minor league system, each level of minor league baseball is a section that puts its touch on the development of a player. At the end, an MLB caliber player is ready for his MLB team to call him up to the majors and start his professional baseball career. Though this seems to work fine for the MLB teams, closed style of sport makes youth sports in America expensive.

Style of Sport's Effect on Youth Sports

Professional teams are not the only party involved with sports that is affected by the styles of sport. Depending on which country a youth athlete is playing in, whatever style they use influences how youth sports operate.

Closed Sport

Although youth sports are for everyone to play, they are expensive. In the United States, the financials of youth sports relies on the parents or guardians of the youth athlete. With youth baseball, the various levels of play have their own costs. Recreational leagues are provided for by the town, meaning the parents or guardians may only pay hundreds of dollars for their child to play one season. For those kids that are playing travel baseball, the sport gets more expensive. At the lowest level of travel baseball, 8U, parents or guardians of these youth baseball players could be paying just above \$1,000 a year in dues alone. As the youth athlete gets older, so does the price as at the 13U level dues reach upwards of \$2,000. The dues continue to rise in price as the player gets older or joins a better travel baseball program.²⁰ Though dues are a major part of

¹⁹ Nils Boysen, Malte Fliedner, Armin Scholl, *Assembly Line Balancing: Which Model to Use When?*, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925527307000965>

²⁰ Travelball247, *The Cost of Doing Business: Insights Into the Finances of Travel Baseball*, <https://travelball247.com/the-costs-of-doing-business-insights-into-the-finances-of-travel-baseball/>

what parents or guardians are responsible for, they are only a portion of what needs to be covered in order for their child to play organized youth baseball.

Equipment to play the game of baseball is yet another major expense for youth athletes. Gear for baseball includes bags, helmets, glove, bats, cleats, and perhaps batting gloves. These necessary pieces of equipment can be costly for the parental figures of the youth athlete. Some pieces of equipment are yearly purchases as they either get worn out from usage or simply the youth athlete outgrowing the equipment. With equipment, there is a hidden cost with regards to the size of the equipment because as the youth athlete gets older, the equipment gets larger, and the price increases. Since these youth athletes are children, they will hit growth spurts which will force certain pieces of equipment to be replaced quicker than normal. After only playing one year of youth baseball, the expenses from equipment could have the parental figures paying another couple hundred dollars. Something to keep in mind is that these expenses continue as a youth athlete enters high school baseball. With a youth athlete playing more, the rate at which equipment gets worn out increases as well. Some youth athletes may play different positions on different teams and require specific equipment. The average cost for baseball equipment is around \$615 per year but for those playing for a travel team and high school team, this yearly expense could be doubled.²¹ Combining the costs of dues and equipment, parental figures are dishing out roughly \$2,000-\$5,000 a year to play organized baseball.

Other indirect costs are also another burden that must be put on the parents or guardians of these youth baseball players. As a player gets older and better, the player may go to camps or

²¹ Ohio University, *Cost of School Athletics are Increasing*, <https://onlinemasters.ohio.edu/blog/cost-of-school-athletics-are-increasing/#:~:text=Expensive%20Interscholastic%20Sports%20Equipment&text=The%20average%20cost%20for%20baseball%20equipment%20is%20%24615.>

private lessons in order to develop their skills. Like equipment, the older these youth athletes get, the more expensive camps and private lessons get. Older youth baseball players may even start certain specific training as they look to become a certain position. This helps youth athletes get looked at by college scouts and get a foot in the door with a college baseball program. Lastly, with a child playing travel baseball, tournaments are a very common. These youth athletes' parental figures also have to cover the travel expenses to and from the tournaments destinations, the costs to stay in hotels, and any other expenses such as food. For one year alone, it can be very expensive to play youth travel baseball. This sport being expensive is what makes it almost exclusive when in reality it should be inclusive.

Baseball should aspire to be a sport for everyone that brings people together from all walks of life. What prevents this sport from being so inclusive is the economics of the United States. With a rough estimate of parental figures spending \$4,000 a year for their child to play youth baseball, this could be a serious expense for certain households. People living in poverty cannot afford to spend \$4,000 a year on their child's sport as this would take away 12.5% of the household's income at the lowest. On the other end of the economic classes, this \$4,000 expense for a child to play youth baseball could only take away 1% of the household's income at the highest end of the spectrum.²² With youth baseball being so expensive, this limits who gets the chance to play. Some kids will only get the chance to play recreational baseball because of its low expense. Some households have more than one child who wish to play youth sports. In this case the cost now multiples by the number of children per household. Certain areas where people

²² In 2019, the median household income was roughly \$68,000 per household (census.gov). Current economic classes add even more burden to play a youth sport in America. For a household of three, the income of \$32,000 or less would have these families in or near poverty. Above the poverty line, the middle class is a vast income level ranging from \$32,000 to around \$370,000 (money.usnews.com). This income level is so vast that the middle class is divided into three sections: low, middle, and upper. Above the middle class is the rich who have a household income of above \$370,000.

live, limit access to the sport and a proper education which is important for future well-being.²³ Exclusivity is the problem that the closed style of sport has produced within the United States.

Parental involvement in their child's athletic careers doesn't stop at just the youth level of sport. As youth athletes gets older and develops their skills, the athletes and their parental figures will get a clearer view if the next level of baseball is possible. Of course there are late bloomers but travel baseball acts like a sieve that slowly weeds out the weaker skilled players until skilled players, ready to make the jump to college baseball, are left. Some players may use recruitment sites or hire someone to help get their name out there to scouts in order to help make the jump to college baseball. This can be another cost that the parental figures of youth athletes may be responsible for. A typical college baseball team roster has 35 players on it with over 70% getting financial aid.²⁴ Players that receive financial aid usually get priority in playing time as the college is paying for their education. This leaves the other 30% of players needing a way to fund their education. While some college students will take it upon themselves to pay for their education some parental figures will pay for their child's college education. While this is lucky for the athlete, the parental figures keep piling expenses on from their child playing baseball. Now, not every college baseball player gets drafted or gets to play some kind of professional baseball after going to college. Some players will join the workforce, creating careers that don't involve baseball at all. If the end of the line for these athletes' baseball careers is college baseball, thousands of dollars that were spent for almost 20 by the parental figures did not

²³ Kristine L. Bowman, *The Inadequate Right to Education*, https://www-jstor-org.sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/stable/j.ctv1jhvp0q.6?refreqid=excelsior%3Af36922ba65d9caaa9fdcf30011d40cbc&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

²⁴ Adam Martin, *Loaded Rosters, Covid-19 Will Make the 2021 College Baseball Season Interesting*, https://www.ocolly.com/sports/loaded-rosters-covid-19-will-make-the-2021-college-baseball-season-interesting/article_b6b91f2a-770a-11eb-938e-9731ba82bb3e.html#:~:text=Typically%2C%20a%20college%20baseball%20program,includin%20g%20financial%20aid.

produce a desired outcome. While baseball has taught these youth players important social skills, this money spent on baseball without the desired outcome is another flaw from the closed style of sport.

Open Sport

Overseas, youth sports are run differently which allows for people from any social and economic class to participate. Depending on what level of youth sports a child is playing in an open sport league, effects the financial involvement of the parental figures. Recreational sports has parents paying for their child's involvement in youth sports similarly to America with recreational baseball. If a child joins a youth academy, this eliminates all of the costs of playing youth sports that the parents or guardians would be responsible for.²⁵

Within open leagues, the professional teams take on the responsibility for the financials involved with youth sports. In the EFL, the professional football clubs fully fund their academies which causes parents to pay nothing for their child to participate in a more competitive youth sport environment.²⁶ These professional clubs provide the youth players in the academies with everything they need. Football wise, the youth players get training at a professional level and any equipment that these players might need, the clubs pay for. Also, youth academies provide the youth footballers access to training facilities, sports specialists, sufficient diets, and other necessities that a player would need to better themselves as an athlete. What is being provided in youth academies at no cost, parents or guardians in North America would be responsible for paying for it all.

²⁵ Youth Academies for football are the open sport equivalent to travel teams.

²⁶ Georgia Soccer, *The Youth Academies in England's Premiership*, https://www.georgiasoccer.org/assets/65/6/the_youth_academies_in_england2.pdf

Youth academies also provide athletes off the field training focusing on sports education. These youth academies teach players important life skills like building character, self-care, and other social skills needed for life after youth academy football. The main purpose of physical and sports education is to influence these youth athletes' internal motivation and attitudes towards physical activities which helps the clubs create well-rounded professional athletes that will be able to function in society post football.²⁷ By putting a focus on sports education, youth academies create a well-rounded combination of sports and education that North American youth sports don't provide.

Youth academies also eliminate the worry about college and the costs that parents would have to pay for their child's education. With youth academies, players move up the ranks from team to team until they reach the U18s team or the U23s team. If a player in the youth academy has made one of these teams, they will not attend college. Instead they will be focusing fully on making football their career. Youth academy footballers don't need to worry about impressing college scouts as the professional club that the youth academy is attached to will provide the best players with the opportunities to advance to the next level. Unlike North American sports' utilization of college sports to produce players, this isn't the case for college sports in England. Though youth academies are great for youth development in football, they aren't the only option that exists.

Of course, children who don't go to youth academies can still get to play football, but the parents do have to pay. Schools provide children a chance to play youth sports just like they do in North America. Here, children can play and develop their football skills on their own terms.

²⁷ Elena Bendikova, *Lifestyle, Physical and Sports Education and Health Benefits of Physical Activity*, http://www.erjournal.ru/journals_n/1393749142.pdf

The schools gives children access to play for the team but the parents will have to pay for dues and the equipment that they might need. Just like North America, as the youth athletes get older, the equipment gets more expensive. Another way children can play youth football in school is through independent schools. Parents will pay the dues for their child to attend the school and from there the child could potentially play for the schools team. These options are not so inviting as the costs for attending an independent school could not be affordable for some families. Though these expenses can occur for those that don't make it to a youth academy, open style of sport creates opportunities for everyone to be allowed to play youth sports.

Conclusion

Although both open style and closed style of sport have their flaws, open sport is healthier for sports in general. In regards to the formation of professional leagues, open sport allows for many levels of the same sport to exist. These professional teams in open leagues need to perform at their very best each season and will be rewarded for doing so. Open leagues also create millions of dollars in revenue each season with the wealth being distributed. There are rules and stipulations that help these teams remain financially viable. The player procurement for these teams comes in many ways from the use of open sport. These different avenues allow for many different pathways for athletes to play at top professional levels. At the roots of sport, youth sports are better in countries that use open sport because they provide numerous opportunities for children to participate. At the highest level of youth sports, the cost is so little that it doesn't prevent anyone from anywhere from gaining a chance at becoming a professional athlete.

Though the EFL and the MLB are two examples of professional leagues in open and closed sport countries, there are many other top professional leagues that utilize either system. American professional sports have been moving towards the open style of sport, but this shift is taking some time. There are many reasons for it but stubbornness and greed are at the forefront of why America is so behind in the shift from closed sport to open sport. The American fan is stubborn with regards to change even when it is minor changes to the way things are run. A major change that mirrors how European sports are run would create massive outcry. Furthermore, the closed style of sport being associated with American professional sports almost creates a sense of patriotic pride for American sports fan. A change to open sport would have fans feeling a Europeanization of their beloved sports. In terms of greed, the owners of these professional teams are reluctant to shift to open sport cause of the economic implications involved. A shift to open sport would mean that teams could not string poor seasons together in hopes of being rewarded with better draft picks. If open sport was used in America, teams with a poor season would be relegated and revenue would be lost for both team and team owners. It could take decades if North American professional sports leagues actually completely shift to open leagues but it will be worth it. The continuation of open style sport means that sports around the world become more inclusive and create more financially viable sports enterprises. The future of sports lies in the hands of open sport.

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