

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20051]

Proposed title of the session

Economic History of Sport

Abstract

The sports sector attracts large numbers of spectators, TV viewers, participants, media interest and is the beneficiary of a host of public policy concessions and subsidies. The day to day lives of large portions of the population across many countries are largely influenced by sport, in particular professional team sports and other elite competitions such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cup. The sector has increasingly fallen under the lens of economists, and the field of sports economics now attracts research across a wide variety of economic methods. Part of this lies in the peculiar nature of sports – namely the requirement for a rival to produce output. Hence, by its very nature, the sporting sector yields an unique style of competition rarely observed in other parts of the economy. Sports also, partially as a result of this feature, also are characterized by a range of public policy exemptions which permit restrictive labour practices (salary caps and player drafts) and exemptions from ant-trust laws. At least part of this is to maintain competitive balance between rivals. Moreover, its popularity and possible externalities lead to large public subsidies.

Despite the large and increasing volume of economic research in the area, the history of sport has attracted less attention from economic historians. However, modern spectator sports were established in the mid-nineteenth century.

This session will host a variety of papers examining the history of sport. Papers will address long run issues in sports economics, including: the structures and comparative evolution of leagues and competition in different continents (Pomfret), the effectiveness of competitive balance measures and their impact on demand (Wilson), infrastructure and crowd attendance in the 19th century (Frost), labour market integration in US and Japanese baseball (Kawaura and La Croix), mega-event development (Mignot), anthropometrics and sport (Inwood and Ross), and sports within the workplace (Vamplew). These topics encompass comparisons between regions (Europe, North America, Japan, Australia) and across sports (Football, Ice Hockey, Baseball, Cycling, Australian Football). It is intended that this session will provide a platform for a wider research agenda in the field and enable scholars from both economic history and sports economics to link. Should the session be accepted we will be happy to have an open call for papers. Similar calls have been made already through sports researcher groups (regarding interest in the session) in Europe and North America.

The conveners are in the process of finalizing a publication with Edward Elgar on public policy and sport. Initial discussion with this publisher indicate that they are interested in publishing a conference volume in the Economic History of Sport based on this session, should it proceed. A formal proposal will be submitted should the session be accepted by the organizing committee.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Dr. John Kyle Wilson (University of South Australia [Australia])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
2. Prof. Richard Pomfret (University of Adelaide/Johns Hopkins Bologna [Australia])

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Richard Pomfret (University of Adelaide/Johns Hopkins Bologna [Australia])
3. Sumner La Croix (University of Hawai'i-Manoa [United States of America])
4. Kris Inwood (University of Guelph [Canada])
5. Wray Vamplew (University of Central Lancashire UK [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])
6. Frost Lionel (Monash University [Australia])
7. Akihiko Kawaura (Doshisha University [Japan])
8. Andrew Ross (University of Guelph [Canada])
9. Jean-Francois Mignot (Sorbonne [France])