



The Anatomy of Competition in Sports: The Struggle for Success in Major US Professional Leagues

Christopher B. Doob

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Thousands of children across the United States dream of becoming professional athletes, yet less than one in a thousand high school seniors will go on to play in a major pro league. Of those select few, many will find that after a childhood of full-time commitment to their sport, their professional careers will likely be brief and injury-ridden. Within each of the top professional leagues in the U.S., the competition is fierce to not only *get* into the league, but to *stay* there—the average career in the National Basketball Association lasts less than five years, and in the National Football League only three and a half.

The Anatomy of Competition in Sports: The Struggle for Success in Major US Professional Leagues examines the role competition plays in each of the major sports leagues in the United States: Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Football League (NFL), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), the National Hockey League (NHL), and Major League Soccer (MLS). In order to provide a comprehensive review of competition within each sport, Christopher B. Doob scrutinizes the challenges faced at the youth level, opposition encountered by individuals competing to join a pro league, the obstacles pros must overcome throughout their careers, and the history of each league. Furthermore, Doob dissects competition across the sports by looking at such common influences as family, school, colleges, the draft process, coaches, and the playing conditions within the professional leagues. An additional chapter examines so-called "atypical pros"—such as disabled athletes, gay and lesbian players, and two-sport pros—who must face competitive challenges beyond the average athlete. A final chapter discusses life after the pros, including the legacy of debilitating injuries many former players face and the prospects of post-retirement jobs, such as coaching, managing, and broadcasting.

Highlighting the struggles many athletes must face, *The Anatomy of Competition in Sports* features vignettes about current and past professionals, including Mariano Rivera, Earl Campbell, Candace Parker, and Sydney Crosby. Drawing on diverse sources such as histories of each league, research studies, newspaper accounts, and personal narratives, this book is simultaneously thought-provoking and accessible for all sports fans.

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