

MOR 479: The Business of Sports

Spring 2025

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:50 p.m.

4 units; Location: ACC 303

USC Marshall

School of Business

Professor: David M. Carter

Office Hours: By Appointment

Email: david.carter@marshall.usc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers a unique perspective about the business of sports by exposing students to specific managerial challenges and issues facing industry leaders. It does so by blending assigned readings, current developments in the sports-business industry, and guest speakers.

In order to address the flow of funds in the sports industry, the course examines the six most critical entities influencing the business of sport: (1) Professional sports franchises and leagues; (2) Amateur athletics, including collegiate sports; (3) Major special events such as the Olympics and World Cup; (4) Corporate America; (5) The media; (6) Sports anchored real estate; and (7) The public sector. This examination of the flow of funds requires close consideration of numerous industry stakeholders, ranging from network television and new media executives, corporate marketers and collegiate athletic department administrators, to elected officials and sports economists.

With the domestic sports business industry estimated at \$500 billion dollars annually, and the global sports business industry estimated at \$1.5 trillion annually, qualified professionals are required to manage this growing industry.

This course provides prospective sports management professionals with the insight necessary to establish successful careers in the sports business. We will be examining sports industry accounting methods and its financial and marketing strategies, as well as planning concerns and managerial philosophies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Describe the process involved in making managerial decisions in the sports management industry; requires knowledge of industry stakeholders as well as understanding of industry terms and concepts;
- 2) Analyze, evaluate, and critique the strategic decisions of key industry participants;
- 3) Devise a comprehensive strategy, including realistic recommendations, for an industry participant; and
- 4) Demonstrate orally and in written form the ability to analyze the sports management industry and provide strategic direction for industry participants.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required: *USC custom publishing package* of selected readings; and
The Sports Business Journal

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION: Numerous BUAD courses; those lacking sufficient Marshall School of Business coursework routinely struggle.

GRADING

Final grades represent how you perform in the class relative to other students. Your grade will not be based on a mandated target, but on your performance. Three items are considered when assigning final grades: (1) Your average weighted score as a percentage of the available points for all assignments (the points you receive divided by the number of points possible). (2) The overall average percentage score within the class. (3) Your ranking among all students in the class.

<u>GRADE COMPONENTS</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>%</u>
1) Article Analysis	50	5%
2) Contribution & Professionalism	200	20%
3) Two Exams	400	40%
4) Final Exam	<u>350</u>	<u>35%</u>
	1000	100%

EXPLANATION OF COMPONENTS

1) Article Analysis: Individual Dates TBD

During the course of the semester, each student will be responsible for submitting one (1) 500-word (maximum) analysis of a current sports business issue.

This analysis should include an explanation of the critical sports business issues at hand, as well as the stakeholders impacted and other critical observations. Additionally, most will also informally present the sports business issue selected to the class by describing its sports business implications and impacted stakeholders.

2) Exams: February 25th and April 10th

Each multiple-choice exam will consist of 20 questions and feature questions generated from assigned readings, lectures, current events, and guest speakers.

Students will have 30 minutes to complete each exam.

Should a student miss an exam for any reason, a make-up exam comprised of a timed 45 minute, 750-word maximum, essay will be required.

3) Contribution & Professionalism: Ongoing

Class will begin and end on time. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss and respond to questions pertaining to any and all assigned readings. As contribution and professionalism represents 20% of the course grade, students are encouraged to be involved in the discussion, both in the classroom as well as offline. Students should notify me in advance should they be forced to miss class.

This part of your grade will be based on effective contributions to class discussions. These include input that is relevant to the course content and the topic of discussion. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss and respond to questions pertaining to any and all assigned readings.

Effective class comments may address questions raised by others, integrate material from this and other courses, draw upon real-world experiences and observations, or pose new questions to the class.

Notably, it is difficult to demonstrate a high degree of participation given multiple absences from class, and thus such absences will impact students' point totals for contribution and professionalism.

4) **Final Exam: May 8th @ 2:00 PM**

The final exam requires students to analyze and outline the financial, marketing, and planning components in response to the question posed. Consider both the tangible and intangible implications when describing the effects on industry participants.

This assignment – *for which students will have forty-five minutes to complete* – will be graded based upon the following:

- Grasp of Assigned Question (10%)
- Identification of Primary, Secondary, & Tertiary Industry Stakeholders (20%)
- Potential Marketing Impacts (20%)
- Financial Considerations (20%)
- Strategic Planning Issues (20%)
- Organization of the Exam (10%)

DRAFT

ASSIGNED READINGS

Week	Date	Key Topic	Reading	Sub Topics
1.1	1/14	Course Introduction		
1.2	1/16	Overview of Industry Stakeholders	In-Class Group Discussion: Current Events	Industry Silos; Concentration of Power.
2.1	1/21	Pro Sports	<u>PwC 2024 Sports Outlook</u> <u>Deloitte 2024 Sports Industry Outlook</u>	Latest Market Trends; Areas for Growth across Sports Business.
2.2	1/23	Pro Sports	<u>In Class Discussion</u> The Economics of Pro Sports Forbes Franchise Values <u>Sportico</u> “How Sports Teams, Leagues and Owners make Money”	Reasons for Ownership; Sources of Revenue & Expense; Trends in Revenue & Expenses; Role & Importance of Operating Incomes; Determinants of Economic Viability; Revenue Multiples; Tax Implications of Franchise Ownership; League/Sports Credit Ratings; Impacts of Rising/Falling Player Costs; Ownership Factionalization.
3.1	1/28	Pro Sports	<u>In Class Discussion</u> The Economics of Pro Sports Forbes Franchise Values <u>Sportico</u> “Broncos Sale Will Offer Record \$3B Tax Write-Off...”	
3.2	1/30	Pro Sports	<u>Golf Digest</u> “The Master’s is the Golf Industry’s Ignition Switch” <u>Forbes</u> “The Masters Tournament at Augusta is Leaving \$269 M on the Putting Green”	Alternate Business Models.

			<u>Sportico</u> “Masters Handshake Deals Are a Shrewd Tradition” <u>Washington Examiner</u> “Masterful Economics at Augusta”	
4.1	2/04	Pro Sports		<i>Guest Speaker #1</i>
4.2	2/06	College Sports	<u>“The NCAA Cartel”</u> Why it Exists, How it Works, and What it Does” <u>Wall Street Journal</u> “Big 10 Strikes \$7. B Deal” <u>Sports Business Journal</u> “Big 12 Scores Big Win...” <u>The Athletic</u> “Future of College Football, Inc.”	Differences Between College & Pro; Critical Dates in NCAA History; NCAA Structure & Funding; Revenue Distribution; Landmark Legal Rulings; Sports as a Branding Tool; Title IX Defined & Applied; Name, Image & Likeness; Financial & Reputational Risks; Potential for Reform; Current State of the NCAA.
5.1	2/11	College Sports	<u>Moody’s Investors Service</u> “Eye on the Ball: Big-Time Sports Pose Growing Risk for Universities” <u>New York Times</u> “How Rich Donors and Loose Rules are Transforming...” <u>The Athletic</u> “College Athletes Are Getting Closer to Becoming Employees”	See Above
5.2	2/13	No Class		
6.1	2/18	College Sports		<i>Guest Speaker #2</i>
6.2	2/20	Exam Review Session		
7.1	2/25	<i>Exam #1</i>		
7.2	2/27	The Olympics & World Cup	<u>The 2023 Olympic Marketing Fact File</u> (pages 5-8 & 23)	Games’ Management Structure; Revenue Stream Reliance; Role of Television; Global Non-Business Considerations;

			<p><u>Journal of Economic Perspectives</u> “Going for the Gold: The Economics of the Olympics”</p> <p><u>IOC</u> “Economic Benefits of Hosting the Olympic Games”</p> <p><u>CNN</u> “Hosting the Olympics Has Become Financially Untenable”</p> <p><u>LA28 Financial Statements</u></p> <p><u>“Corruption in the Bidding, Construction and Organization of Mega-Events”</u> “An Analysis of the Olympics and World Cup”</p>	Economic Impact; Future Challenges.
8.1	3/04	The Olympics & World Cup		<i>Guest Speaker #3</i>
8.2	3/06	Corporate America	<p><u>The Athletic</u> “As the Rose Bowl’s Presenting Sponsor Deal Ends...”</p> <p><u>Sportsbusinessnews.com</u> “Microsoft’s NBA Deal Puts Tech Giants among the Leagues’ Highest Paying Partners”</p> <p><u>ADWEEK</u> “Home Depot Built Its ESPN College Gameday...”</p> <p><u>Ministry of Sport</u> “How Dr Pepper Used College Football to Surpass Pepsi”</p> <p><u>Advertising Age</u> “How Dr Pepper’s Fansville is Thriving”</p>	Rationale for Acquiring Naming Rights; Contractually Obligated Income; Pros & Cons of Sponsorship; Conflicts of Interest; Brand Management; B2B vs. B2C Marketing.
9.1	3/11	The Media	<p><u>Barron’s</u> “Football Season is Here and It’s a Key Moment for the Future of TV”</p> <p><u>Sports Business Journal</u> “NFL Leads Record Year”</p>	Audience Fragmentation; Platform Development; Streaming Group Impacts; Alliance vs. Transaction Model;

			<p><u>Sportico</u> “NFL Media Partners Won’t Imperil TV Model...”</p> <p><u>CNBC</u> “Disney’s Shift to Streaming...”</p> <p><u>New York Times</u> “How ESPN Went from Disney’s Financial Engine to its Problem”</p> <p><u>Bloomberg</u> “ESPN’s Jimmy Pitaro Will Decide the Fate of Cable TV”</p>	Viewership Migration & Monetization.
9.2	3/13	No Class		
10.1	3/18	<i>Spring Break</i>		
10.2	3/20	<i>Spring Break</i>		
11.1	3/25	Sports Anchored Real Estate (via Zoom)	<p><u>Major League Winners</u> Chapter 1: “Urban Change”</p> <p><u>The Fields of Green</u> “Key Principles of Sports Anchored Developments”</p> <p><u>Realogic</u> “Stadium Anchored Mixed-Use Development”</p> <p><u>The Guardian</u> “The Stadium Is Secondary...”</p> <p><u>Mortenson</u> “Rise in Adjacent Sports Developments...”</p> <p><u>Mortenson</u> “Economic Considerations of Sports-Anchored Developments”</p>	Core Considerations; Expanding the Gameday Experience; Adaptive Reuse; Residential Transformation; Commercial Conversion; Public Sector Buy-In.
11.2	3/27	No Class		
12.1	4/01	Public Sector/Policy	<p><u>Sports Business Journal</u> “Increased Sophistication is Leading to New Mixed Use...”</p>	Direct vs. Indirect Revenue; Economic Impact vs. Activity; The Multiplier Effect; Importance of Externalities.

			<u>Forbes</u> “Tennessee Titans Focus on Strengthening Nashville...” <u>Tennessee Titans</u> “One Community Program Overview” <u>Micronomics</u> “The Economic Impact of Super Bowl LVI” (pages 1-21)	
12.2	4/03	Public Sector/Policy		<i>Guest Speaker #4</i>
13.1	4/08	Exam Review Session		
13.2	4/10	<i>Exam #2</i>		
14.1	4/15	Current Events Discussion		
14.2	4/17	No Class		
15.1	4/22			<i>Guest Speaker #5</i>
15.2	4/24			<i>Guest Speaker #6</i>
16.1	4/29	Course Wrap-Up & Career Opportunities		
16.2	5/01	Final Exam Review Session		

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

Using Artificial Intelligence is Prohibited

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Use of Recordings

Pursuant to the *USC Student Handbook* (<https://policy.usc.edu/studenthandbook/>, pages 13 and 27), students may not record a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class. In addition, students may not distribute or use notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property based on USC classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than personal or class-related group study by students registered for the class. This restriction on unauthorized use applies to all information that is distributed or displayed for use in relationship to the class. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy may subject an individual or entity to university discipline and/or legal proceedings.

Open Expression and Respect for All

An important goal of the educational experience at USC Marshall is to be exposed to and discuss diverse, thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial ideas that challenge one's beliefs. In this course we will support the values articulated in the USC Marshall "[Open Expression Statement](#)."

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Add/Drop Process

Students who do not attend the first two class sessions may be dropped from the course if they do not notify the instructor prior to their absence.

Retention of Graded Coursework

Final exams and all other graded work which affected the course grade will be retained for 90 days after the end of the course *if* the graded work has not been returned to the student. If a graded paper is returned to you, it is your responsibility to file it.