

# Preface

Sports has been an integral part of human culture since ancient times and plays a key role in the economy, politics, and lifestyle of any country. Today the sports industry is complex and impacts several economic markets such as television, advertising, clothing, and manufacturing. During the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, the world's first televised sporting event took place. A few years later in 1939 a college baseball game was the first televised sporting event in USA. Since then, the social media has played a complex and important role in sports. Today's Internet with Facebook, Twitter, and all types of social media sites in between make us more connected with other sports people and athletes. New marketing and economic models and tools have been developed based on these social networks and these new developments have a great influence on sports.

In addition, sports is characterized by a unique need for competitive balance. As early as 1964, the economist Walter Neale stated the 'Louis-Schmeling paradox' in that better profits could be made from a better product, which in boxing, meant two strong fighters. Louis could not have made it without a strong Schmeling. It is clear that in most businesses the ideal market position of a company is a monopoly. But in sports, it is much different. Given the paradox, a pure monopoly would be a disaster. Fans want to see a competitive balance among teams in order to keep their interest (Neale referred to this as 'inverted joint products').

Systems engineering tools can be used to study many issues in sports. For example, social network analysis deals with the interactions between individuals by considering them as nodes of a network, whereas their relations are mapped as network edges. The study of such structures lies at the intersection of different disciplines of research, including economics, sociology, and computer science. In practice, many kinds of networks have been studied, including friendship networks, scientific coauthorship networks, film collaboration networks, disease spreading networks, and urban growth networks.

This volume contains a collection of chapters, primarily based on selected talks at the international conference 'Social Networks and the Economics of Sports' that took place in Moscow, Russia, on May 27–29, 2013, enriched by several additional invited contributions from distinguished researchers around the world.

The topics covered by the chapters include:

- adaptive systems in sports;
- analysis of the Portuguese success in sport: comparing football with all the other Olympic sports;
- identification of the main trends in the senior sport tourism development in Russia;
- methods for valuation of football club;
- sports performance evaluation;
- methods of forming teams for club golf competitions;
- measuring the true ability of a team.

We take this opportunity to thank National Research University Higher School of Economics for organizing the great conference in Moscow; the authors of the papers for their dedication to this project that resulted in this excellent collection; the anonymous referees for their timely and constructive reports; and Springer management and staff for the support and technical assistance.

Gainesville, FL, USA  
Nizhny Novgorod, Russia

Panos M. Pardalos  
Victor Zamaraev

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Pardalos, P.; Zamaraev, V. (Eds.)

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