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FOREWORD

Dean Oliver

Sports analytics experts understand that The Game is still human. It is why they got into the field in the first place. It is what all the formulas, numbers, and analyses are about—measuring, managing, and making the most of the *people* who get to play The Game.

That may not be explicit in Ben Alamar’s book, but it is implicit. He was a sports fan who was analytically inclined. I was, too. We rooted for teams and players. A lot of people like us wanted to play sports at the highest level but ran out of physical gifts somewhere below that. The passion to do something competitive, to understand and improve on The Game—that kept us watching. The ability to understand data, work with data, and think analytically about sports—that is what created the field that Ben is writing about.

Sports analytics didn’t exist as a real job description until long after it was a job for people like Bill James, Pete Palmer, and Tom Tango. They, among others, took to writing about baseball and using numbers to better understand players and tactics roughly in the 1970s. There were other books about numbers in other sports that followed, but these failed to achieve the following of the baseball books. People like Ben read those, learned what to do and what not to do.

The Internet came about in the mid-1990s and allowed so many more people to write, people who may not have had connections to