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SPORTS ANALYTICS

INTRODUCTION TO SPORTS ANALYTICS

The most meaningful way to differentiate your company from your competitors, the best way to put distance between you and the crowd is to do an outstanding job with information. How you gather, manage and use information will determine whether you win or lose.

—BILL GATES

Analytics is a relatively new and rapidly evolving set of tools in the business world, and these tools are being adapted more and more to the world of sports. Analytics includes advanced statistics, data management, data visualization, and several other fields. Because this list is ever changing, implementing an analytics program to gain a competitive advantage is not a straightforward process. Every sports organization faces its own set of challenges in introducing and developing analytics as part of the decision-making process, but understanding the components of an analytics program will help managers maximize the competitive advantage they can gain from their analytic investment.

The push in sports—as in business—to use analytic tools comes from advances in computing power and the availability of massive amounts of data to both teams and the public, which create an opportunity for competitive advantage. Having access to information that competitors do not has a long history of providing teams and businesses with advantage. Teams such as the Oakland A's, Tampa Bay Rays, and San Antonio Spurs have embraced the use of analytics, and all three clubs, though they are in small markets and so have limited resources, have seen tremendous success, in part because of the