Sponsors And Sports Essay, Research Paper

Sponsors and Sports

In the world of sports, everything from the cups the athletes drink from to the

stadiums they play in is up for grabs. The four major sports are a playing

field for the teams as well as major companies hoping to influence the public.

While there are some positives and negatives to sponsors, a line has to be drawn

somewhere. The four major sports, Major League Baseball, the National Basketball

Association, the National Football League, and the National Hockey League all

generate millions of dollars from sponsors each year. Individual athletes

themselves command large endorsement contracts that in many cases exceed their

own salaries. And although the heads of these sports try to limit the influence

of companies, they are still a major part of every game played. One of the more

widely known sponsors of sports is Nike. Their rivalry with Reebok and other

shoe and apparel companies is seen on television and on the playing field.

Advertising their company is the major concern when displaying their logos in

sports. Beverages, fast foods, credit cards, automobiles and a wide variety of

companies spend their money on sports related ventures. They spend big dollars

to name stadiums and arenas after their companies. Television gives these

companies even more chances to influence the public with commercials that

companies might sometimes pay up to $1 million for. The uniforms that the

players wear are now being made my different manufacturers whereas five years

ago each league had all their teams wearing the same brand. The equipment being

used is also made by different companies. No matter what is being fought for,

sponsors create good and bad influences in each sport. Major League Baseball is

recognized as the most popular sport. They also play the most games which is a

plus to sponsors. Each game is seen as a chance to spread word of their company.

But MLB seems to be the least affected team wise by sponsors. This is probably

because of the strict rules set forth and also because of recent work stoppages

and labor disputes. MLB was once the leader in innovative ideas involving

sponsors. Billboards are placed around the stadium in strategic spots that will

be noticed by fans and television. Stadiums are now being renamed by companies

willing to spend millions to have the stadium named after the company such as

3Com Park in San Francisco. These short term deals can create a problem in the

future though. Athletes are not as widely chosen for endorsement contracts as

in other sports. This is probably because many players cannot make a huge

impact on the outcome of the games. Also many young athletes are not known

because collegiate baseball is not watched as much as other collegiate sports. A

positive effect that sponsors have on Major League Baseball is that they are

trying to help restore baseball as the national pastime. Baseball needs to

regain interest with the public and sponsors are coming up with new and exciting

ideas. More players are being endorsed and commercials are reaching out to the

youth who play the sport. Money being spent by various companies is being

redistributed so that the lesser markets can receive some money. Basically

anything that can attract people to the sport is good for baseball at this

moment. A negative effect that sponsors have on baseball is not really much of a

negative. Companies are not sponsoring baseball enough. The strikes and

disputes are the reason why. But sponsors should be more of a part of baseball.

More athletes should be endorsed and more impact on teams in smaller markets

need to happen for baseball to regain popularity. The National Basketball

Association could be easily summed up concerning sponsors as shoe wars. Nike,

Reebok, Adidas, Fila and anybody else are fighting for just about every athlete

in an effort to make money. The response has the public interested in

basketball and has made basketball a stable and profitable sport. Women’s

basketball is now picking up steam because companies are realizing that they

could make money on women too. These shoe wars have trickled down to the

collegiate level, where companies pay schools to wear their sneakers, and even

the high school level where basketball camps held yearly bring in the newest and

best talent available. A positive effect that sponsors have on the NBA is that

basketball is increasing worldwide. People like and watch the game and the

players. The majority of the public know Michael Jordan and Nike is a main

reason why. Young athletes can see their heroes and dream of playing basketball

because companies give basketball a good image. A negative effect though is that

these shoe wars sometimes lead to too much control. Players at the college and

high school levels know that if they are good enough, jumping to the NBA is

first on their list because of the money being offered. Nike and Reebok and the

other companies give more money to the players for endorsements than the players

make for their salary. This reason of playing in the NBA for the money is not

good. Also giving money to schools for wearing their shoes is not fair to the

players who must wear them. They see none of the money which gives them an even

greater reason to go to the NBA. The National Football League has made many

changes over the last five years. More companies are sponsoring teams than ever

before with the Super Bowl being the high point of corporate spending. Again,

Nike is a strong influence on players and teams. Recently they gave the Dallas

Cowboys $300 million to basically put their logo on everything. While this does

generate publicity for the NFL, some teams are seeing more money than other

teams. As in basketball, collegiate football is seeing a surge in popularity

because of sponsorship of various activities. A positive effect that sponsors

have on the NFL is that like in basketball, interest is growing. Companies use

different ways to show their football ties hoping to create interest in their

product. A negative effect is that some companies are trying to get too much

control. The situation with Nike and the Cowboys is under review. It can lead

to a terrible downfall for the NFL if too much power is held by one company.

The lesser teams will not have the money or the prestige to lure players to play

for their team. The National Hockey League is seen as number four in sports.

The reason in part is because of hardly any sponsors at all. It has always been

the same until recent. More air time is being given to hockey therefore a need

for sponsorship. Inline hockey is the fastest growing sport and ice hockey is

being watched more than ever. Companies have realized that hockey can be a very

healthy investment. They can have their names placed on the boards around the

rink which is almost always seen. Arenas are now being renamed such as USAir

Arena and Continental Airlines Arena in the quest to impact hockey and make some

money. Nike has made a huge step by acquiring a major manufacturer of equipment

named producing the Bauer brand in an effort to gain interest in hockey.

Uniforms are now being made by three different companies instead of one.

Players are now first seeing endorsements from companies. Hockey is growing at

a rapid pace. There are no negative effects on hockey. Everything is positive

because any kind of sponsorship is a plus. Hockey is trying to work upward and

be recognized as a major sport. Companies are just now realizing hockey’s

potential. Five years from now with more sponsors, hockey could be just as big

as basketball. The influences of companies on sports are for the most part

positives. Sponsors help make a sport grow with money for the teams as well as

themselves. More interest in sports lead to advancements in the games

themselves. The negative effects have to be monitored because on negative can

outweigh many positives. A step back in sport because of a sponsor will not be

good for the future of that sport. As long as the companies and the leagues

work together, sports will be able to grow.