



# **Mathletics: How Gamblers, Managers, and Sports Enthusiasts Use Mathematics in Baseball, Basketball, and Football**

*Wayne L. Winston*

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*Mathletics* is a remarkably entertaining book that shows readers how to use simple mathematics to analyze a range of statistical and probability-related questions in professional baseball, basketball, and football, and in sports gambling. How does professional baseball evaluate hitters? Is a singles hitter like Wade Boggs more valuable than a power hitter like David Ortiz? Should NFL teams pass or run more often on first downs? Could professional basketball have used statistics to expose the crooked referee Tim Donaghy? Does money buy performance in professional sports?

In *Mathletics*, Wayne Winston describes the mathematical methods that top coaches and managers use to evaluate players and improve team performance, and gives math enthusiasts the practical tools they need to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of their favorite sports--and maybe even gain the outside edge to winning bets. *Mathletics* blends fun math problems with sports stories of actual games, teams, and players, along with personal anecdotes from Winston's work as a sports consultant. Winston uses easy-to-read tables and illustrations to illuminate the techniques and ideas he presents, and all the necessary math concepts--such as arithmetic, basic statistics and probability, and Monte Carlo simulations--are fully explained in the examples.

After reading *Mathletics*, you will understand why baseball teams should almost never bunt, why football overtime systems are unfair, why points, rebounds, and assists aren't enough to determine who's the NBA's best player--and much, much more.

## **Mathletics: How Gamblers, Managers, and Sports Enthusiasts Use Mathematics in Baseball, Basketball, and Football Details**

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## **From Reader Review Mathletics: How Gamblers, Managers, and Sports Enthusiasts Use Mathematics in Baseball, Basketball, and Football for online ebook**

### **John says**

Took me a while to get through, but that's ok as each chapter is really a short essay of its own. I skimmed more than a few of them. It is very interesting stuff, though there were a few leaps/assumptions made that I didn't quite understand, or in some case, that I disagreed with. Would be fun to have a talk with this author.

This is a good book to read to help a runner think a bit outside the box. We tend to get stuck in our ways of thinking and this reminds us that it's always worth it to re-examine our beliefs. Our doctrinal adhesions as it were.

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### **Chris says**

I think this would work a lot better as a text book, where you work w/ some of the data he presents hands/on. He does offer access to a bunch of ss online so that you can participate as you read along, however, not taking advantage of that had me not get as much into this book as might have otherwise. Still, I enjoyed a lot of the research that has been done and the counter-traditional results that are out there.

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### **Cristian Keller says**

It's not simple for me to rate this Book. On the one hand it's very interesting. You can find many useful things about sports Statistics. It can be useful for sportman, betters, coaches and so on. On the other hand it's too specifically for USA Sport (Baseball, Football and Basket). And in my case sometimes I have problem to understand some things especially on Baseball.

I think it's very useful for USA readers. Perhaps for others less.

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### **Richard says**

Has some interesting insights into the games we watch. The math can get pretty heavy. Even without understanding all the math involved, the conclusions drawn from the calculations can be interesting.

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### **Nelson says**

Would be five stars if the title weren't ridiculously cheesy and if it were more updated. This book accompanies Winston's Coursera class. I've found useful data and methods useful to my research, both in his class (the effect of penalties on MOV in NCAA) and in this book (calculating win probabilities).

Also, this book has been peer reviewed.

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### **John says**

I didn't really find anything in there that you wouldn't already learn from college stat/probability course but had some interesting stuff but better for someone that doesn't already know anything. 3 stars cause I would recommend this book but not for trading or if you already have a grasp of statistics.

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### **Brian Lindawson says**

Stats and Sports. Interesting stuff. Couldn't focus on the math by the end. Liked Moneyball more

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### **Jeramey says**

Reads much more like a textbook than I expected, but still highly informative. Definitely not the first "sports and math" book I would read. If you're well versed in statistical analysis or really into the use of math in sports, you'll enjoy this book.

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### **Roger Grinde says**

Lots of examples of how data, models, and statistics (a.k.a., analytics) are used in sports. Winston goes right to demonstrate various analyses, without any of the background theory. This keeps the discussion at a level where any reader can read it, and essentially pick and choose where to focus. He also provides an extensive list of references in an annotated bibliography for those wishing to delve deeper. My primary criticism is that, while you can download the files used in the book, a number of the files he references in the book are not in the downloadable zip file.

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### **Paul Dilley says**

I read only the baseball section, which was a good description of the most widely used "classic" sabremetric statistics spread out over about 17 chapters. It was published in 2009, so nothing about the Statcast "revolution," and very little on probabilistic modeling and its dis/advantages (though some forecasting and a chapter on MonteCarlo simulation). Definitely not written at the level of an undergraduate introduction, but of course that's not an inherent fault. And despite the playful title, the writing is textbook-dry and contextual narrative is scarce, choppy and disappointing. There are some gems like a six sentence isolated paragraph on why the Yankees underperform, beginning with "Most baseball fans are surprised that the Yankees, with their huge payroll, do not win the World Series every year" (69). I also laughed when reading the two-paragraph section entitled "Is Alex Rodriguez (A-Rod) Overpaid?" The answer speaks for itself: "Therefore, for A-Rod to generate fair value over the next ten years he would need to continue to produce at the level of his phenomenal 2007 season for the 2008-2016 seasons" (82).

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### **Ben Foutty says**

Baseball section was great the rest was very lacking

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### **Alpha says**

Overall, pretty good. A nice introduction to statistics in sports, this book did a fantastic job at keeping the content at an approachable level for a newcomer to the field. I personally wasn't as interested in the process and was hoping for a more in-depth look at the field, but I'd highly recommend this book to someone who hasn't heard of Sabermetrics or Bill James or is interested in starting their own statistical analysis of sports data.

3.5/5

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### **Safervas says**

Vry usefull

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### **Nick Black says**

<http://www.advancednflstats.com/2010/...>

<http://sabermetricresearch.blogspot.c...>

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### **Erik says**

It was a super technical book essentially if you wanted to do your own statistical model with few observations. There is some good history on different statistical models (Sagarin) but it was definitely like a textbook and not a lot of takeaway observations similar to Freakonomics.

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