

# BOOK REVIEW

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## JOURNAL OF AMATEUR SPORT

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### ***Sports Business Unplugged: Leadership Challenges from the World of Sports by Rick Burton and Norm O'Reilly***

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**S**ports Business Unplugged: Leadership Challenges from the World of Sports, written by Rick Burton and Norm O'Reilly, is a compilation of fifty of their most thought provoking columns once published in the *SportsBusiness Journal (SBJ)*. The columns are separated into four parts containing similar material, 'that felt timeless or consistently worth discussing' (p. XX). These parts contain an assortment of columns that ran in the *SBJ* from 2009 to 2015 during an era where 'the sports world evolved rapidly in response to new ideas, new technology, enhanced competition, and new media platforms' (p. XX). Drawing from years of experience, the authors discussed topics of marketing and sponsorship, gender equity and diversity, collegiate athletics, the Olympics, the global

context of sport, and the future of the sport industry. Overall, Burton and O'Reilly should be commended for organizing their most recent columns into a thoughtful 200-page volume involving the industry's most prominent issues.

Even though *Sports Business Unplugged: Leadership Challenges from the World of Sports* discusses noteworthy issues occurring in the sport industry, it is best to be consumed by sport practitioners, students, and those individuals looking for a casual read. As stated at the beginning of the volume, 'the impetus for this book came from industry contacts, *SBJ*, and our colleagues' (p. XX). Thus, readers looking for scholarly peer-reviewed articles with theoretical underpinnings should look elsewhere. The individual chapters are best interpreted as

‘opinion or insight pieces on an economic sector’, as described by Burton and O’Reilly (p. XIX).

The strongest aspect of the book is the shown through the careful selection of topics and examples incorporated in each individual column. Ranging from two to four pages each, the authors are able to examine prevalent situations through unfiltered insight pieces regarding mainstream ideas and concepts. Utilizing these key ideas and concepts, Burton and O’Reilly separated their columns into four parts. Part 1 discussed various industry examples involving marketing and sponsorship. In particular, these chapters combined marketing and sponsorship with other concepts such as gender equity, sports heroes and legends, and youth impact. Part 2 ‘The Olympics’, provided in-depth pieces surrounding the Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and economic realities impacting host cities. Part 3 contained an especially strong arrangement of columns focusing on the sport industry in Canada and other various countries. Finally, Part 4, ‘Making the Sports World a Better Place’, incorporated columns relating to the future of the sport industry. Burton and O’Reilly examined this overarching concept through topics surrounding the NCAA, diversity, virtual reality, and increases in participatory sports.

In conclusion, *Sports Business Unplugged: Leadership Challenges from the World of Sports* provided thoughtful insight to prevalent issues in the sport industry. Through their 50 separate columns, Burton and O’Reilly not only illustrated concepts such as marketing and sponsorship, the Olympics, the global industry of sport, and the future

of sport, but they also provided the readers with knowledgeable commentary. As challenges continue to impact the world of sports, analyses such as those written by Burton and O’Reilly will be vital to the ever-changing landscape of the sport world.

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