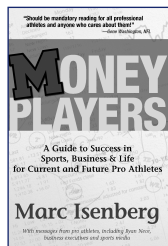


Money Players: A Guide to Success in Sports, Business & Life for Current and Future Pro Athletes

By Marc Isenberg

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM J. ROBERS



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After spending his life studying money and sports, Marc Isenberg recently released the book providing all of that information in one place: *Money Players: A Guide to Success in Sports, Business & Life for Current and Future Pro Athletes*.

Professional athletes are some of the most fortunate and highly compensated members of our society. However, they also can be among the most vulnerable and inexperienced when it comes to money, business, and politics—all of which factor into the life of a professional athlete. *Money Players* gives athletes (and those who care about them) the background they need to understand the complex world of professional sports and how to deal with many of the issues facing current and future professional athletes.

Throughout the book, the reader is reminded of the short earnings life of a job as a professional athlete. The book has the following self-proclaimed number one financial goal: “Be able to afford to spend more money every year for the rest of your life.” To accomplish this goal, readers are taught the basics of investing, insurance, and tax and estate planning, specifically for a career in professional sports.

Along with easy-to-follow tips on choosing an ethical agent and other advisors (as well as guidelines on gauging their performance), current and former professional athletes warn newcomers of the mistakes they have made and the lessons they have

learned. The book includes advice from many current and former athletes, including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Charles Barkley, Len Elmore, Magic Johnson, Steve Kerr, Danny Ainge, Curtis Martin, and Ken Ruetters. In addition, Ryan Nece fittingly contributes the book’s preface—which is apropos of Nece’s father Ronnie Lott’s contribution of the preface to Isenberg’s previous book, *The Student Athlete Survival Guide*.

Not all aspects of the life of a professional athlete are within his or her control; however, readers are encouraged to control the parts of life that they *can* control. This includes character, which Isenberg rightfully touts as an important part of being (and staying) a professional athlete. He reminds athletes to think

CONTENT SUMMARY

- Journey to the Promised Land—Issues to be considered during college, including NCAA rules, the choice to stay in school or go pro, the selection of an agent, and preparing for the draft.
- The Business of Your Life—How to build a team of advisors and keep track of them, along with mistakes made by athletes in the past.
- Money Matters—How to make the short-term income last well into retirement through investing, insurance, and tax and estate planning.
- Body and Mind Matters—Issues faced by many professional athletes, including alcohol use, infidelity, mental issues, gambling, and performance-enhancing drugs.
- Today’s Big-Dollar Era of Professional Sports—The growth of professional sports and the emergence of the players associations.
- Beyond the Field—How to relate to the media and fans, involvement in the community, and transitioning to a life after professional athletics.

of the long-term consequences of their decisions, rather than the short-term enjoyment.

The book addresses both historical and contemporary legal issues in sports, including NCAA rules, the tricks that unscrupulous agents use to lure athletes both in compliance and noncompliance with those rules, and the negative consequences for the would-be clients. Accordingly, the book makes it easier for good agents to recruit athletes. For that reason alone, the book should be a must-read for every ethical agent and his or her clients.

Moreover, the book explains the implications of the emergence of strong player unions, the fight for free agency, collective bargaining agreements, published salary information, drug testing, gambling, personal conduct, and more. For example, through reflection on the history of players unions and leagues, Isenberg explains how and why professional athletes became some of the most highly compensated members of society, and the benefits athletes currently receive through the hard work of those who came before them.

Professional and college athletes alike, their families, friends, advisors, coaches, compliance officers, agents, and anyone who works with—or wants to work with—professional athletes will discover something of value in *Money Players*. Isenberg does not make any guarantees or absolute statements. Instead, he offers a book that serves as an unbiased, informative guide for athletes facing the various issues of a job or career in professional sports. Clearly and concisely written, logically organized, and aided by cartoons and quotes from former and current professional athletes, this book makes even the most complex aspects of being a professional athlete readily comprehensible to athletes and their advisors alike.

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