

Saint Peter's University

The Saving Grace of Sports
How a Sports Franchise Can Save a City's Economy

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Honors Thesis

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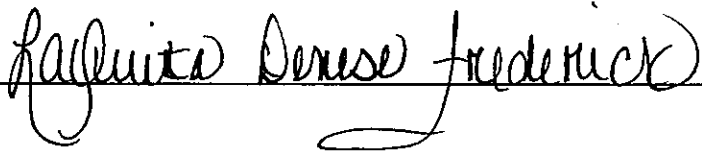


Table of Contents:

- Introduction – 2
- Indianapolis – 3
 - Background – 3
 - The Early Stages and the Indiana Pacers – 4
 - The Downtown Boom – 5
 - The Colts Arrival – 6
 - The NCAA’s Big Decision – 7
 - Today’s Impact – 8
- Cleveland – 9
 - Background – 9
 - LeEconomics – 10
 - The Success Effect – 11
 - The Cleveland Indians World Series Pursuit – 12
 - Future Endeavors – 13
 - Cleveland Conclusion – 14
- Conclusion – 15
- Works Cited - 17

Introduction

Debate is something that has always been at the forefront of sports. Analysts argue back and forth about who they believe will be the eventual champion. Fans are constantly battling with each other over the teams they support. However, one debate that occasionally gets overlooked is arguably the most important: can a sports franchise be an economic necessity for a city?

For decades there have been studies and projects done about the effect sports franchises can have on their surrounding area; but most of the focus falls on the role that taxpayer funding plays in stadium construction or the economic impact that revenue and job creation from specific franchises plays on the city that hosts them. Very few studies exist that determine exactly how a sports franchise can impact its surrounding area.

This is for a myriad of reasons. In larger cities with booming entertainment industries, the sports market is almost impossible to measure, as if fans were not spending money on the teams, they would simply repurpose those funds into an auxiliary entertainment market. Therefore, it shows no economic impact since the money is still being spent elsewhere. However, what about the smaller cities that have a more minor entertainment market? Are their sports teams then more valuable to the local economy?

This is a question that is often ignored when studies are done on sports and the economy. In areas that have a less dynamic entertainment and tourism industry, a sports team should be able to play a much larger role in not just the structure of a city's economy, but also the entire makeup of the culture of that area. Therefore, a sports franchise can, in the right environment, create an atmosphere of culture and tourism while defining the city's identity and drastically affecting the local community's economy. The cities Indianapolis and Cleveland will be used to prove this point, as they match the criteria of having a lackluster entertainment industry and a struggling tourism market.

Indianapolis

Background:

The city of Indianapolis was founded nearly 200 years ago on January 6th, 1821. In its 194 years of existence, the city has grown to be the largest city in Indiana, with a population of 855,164 and an annual gross metro product (GMP) of \$118.4 billion.¹ However, this was not always the case for the now thriving city.

When one thinks of Indianapolis, one major sporting event immediately comes to mind: the Indy 500. This legendary race has been centered in Indianapolis for 106 years now, and played a major part in the economic revolution that this city has encountered. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway was opened on August 12th, 1909, built to add to the booming automobile industry that had taken the city by storm. It's founder, Carl G. Fisher, was inspired by the level of excellence that countries such as France had in the automobile and racing industry, and he sought to recreate that in Indianapolis.

The first Indianapolis 500 took place just two years after the racetrack opened, and immediately became a massive success, leading to the atmosphere created around the race in the modern day. However, the Indy 500 alone was not able to bring the city out of its economic funk.

When it came to developing as a truly modern city, Indianapolis lagged far behind. In the 1960's, the residents of Indianapolis lovingly nicknamed their city "Nap Town", as they joked that that was the only thing to do in the city. The downtown area only had two restaurants, one hotel, and empty streets after 5:00pm. Often, pigeons filled the streets more than people, so much so that the city had a whole team dedicated to shooting pigeons to lower their population. Aside from its main attraction in the Indy 500, all except those who lived and worked there forgot the city even existed. Former Indiana University Athletic Director Fred Glass dubbed the city, "a racetrack in the middle of a cornfield". However, by the 1970's, the landscape of the city began to change, and much of that shift can be attributed to the success of sports teams in the region.²

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/places/in/indianapolis/>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWrHGilo-YQ>

The Early Stages and the Indiana Pacers:

The first major sports team to call Indianapolis home was the Indiana Pacers, who were founded as an American Basketball Association (ABA) team in 1967. While the ABA only lasted for nine seasons, the Pacers found immediate success, appearing in five of the league's nine title games, winning three of them. The Pacers' first stadium was the Indiana State Fairgrounds Stadium, but after their initial success, the team moved to the Market Square Arena, which would have far bigger of an impact than just serving as the home of the Pacers. After the ABA's final season in 1976, the Pacers made the jump to the National Basketball Association (NBA), where they have found success, but have yet to win an NBA title. Despite no championships, the Pacers have a dedicated fan base, and played a vital role in the revitalization of Indianapolis' downtown area, as well as the city's economy as a whole.

From the first tip-off, the Pacers were a hit in their area. The Fairgrounds were consistently sold out, as fans would pack the arena to see their team play. A city that was formerly dead every night and weekend, came together to support the one team and event that their city had to offer, and gave residents something to bond over. As the team continued to sellout their first arena, plans for a bigger stadium began to take shape, and ultimately, the Market Square Arena came to life. Compared to the Fairgrounds, which were located in the suburbs, Market Square was built directly in the center of downtown Indianapolis. Immediately, the stadium brought life to a once dead area. Not only did the Pacers continue to bring fans into the arena, but concerts, tournaments, and more began drawing fans of all kinds to the city. The Market Square Arena was a cornerstone of the Indianapolis revolution.

Despite this initial success, the end of the ABA nearly spelled disaster for the Pacers. Indianapolis was on the verge of losing their beloved basketball team, and created a last-ditch effort to keep their team and give them a shot to join the NBA. With \$2,000,000 needed to keep the franchise in Indy, Bob and Nancy Leonard launched the 1977 Pacers Telethon with the hopes of selling 8,000 season tickets to keep the team at home. After arguably the most stressful and emotional week in recent Indianapolis memory, the group sold 8,028 tickets, allowing the Pacers to remain in Indy and the city's renaissance to continue.³ When pressed with the possibility of losing their beloved team, the community came together, and beat the odds to keep the Pacers, showing just how passionate this city was about sports.

³ <https://www.indystar.com/story/sports/nba/pacers/2016/02/17/how-slick-leonard-saved-pacers-1977-telethon/80486326/>

The Downtown Boom:

Thanks to the Pacers sales success and initiative to remain in Indianapolis, downtown saw a surge that no one could have predicted. Fans continued to pack Market Square Arena for not just basketball games, but for concerts, tournaments, and more. As a result of all this foot traffic, downtown began to transform, as restaurants, shops, and hotels seemingly multiplied in the area. Mayor William Hudnut saw the success that sports brought to downtown, and knew that there was much more to it than just basketball and Market Square Arena. Under his visionary planning, the city of Indianapolis was able to unfurl a sports strategy that saved the city, and put them on the map.

While Market Square Arena continued to be the main attraction in Indianapolis, even hosting the city's first National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Basketball Final Four in 1980, Hudnut began expanding the sports reach in Indy. Despite not having the facilities to do so, the city of Indianapolis made it their goal to become the "Amateur Sports Capital of the Country". Thanks to the generous funding of the likes of Eli Lilly and more, sports venues began popping up throughout the city, and the results were astounding. From 1977 - 1991, Indianapolis hosted over 330 amateur sporting events, generating over \$1 billion in income and bringing in more than 4.5 million spectators.⁴ The sports strategy was working its magic.

The formation of the Indiana Sports Corp, the nation's first sports commission, in 1979 only helped further the city's growing status as a national landmark. Big events such as the 1980 Final Four and the 1982 National Sports Festival slowly put Indianapolis on the map, giving it an identity as a true sports city. All of this culminated in 1987, when Indianapolis played host to one of the biggest amateur sporting events in the world: the Pan Am Games.

Thanks to the construction of the amateur sport facilities, the Indianapolis Sports Corp was able to win the bid for the 1987 Pan Am Games, with the iconic Indianapolis Motor Speedway serving as the host venue for the event. Throughout the two weeks, nearly 4,400 athletes from 38 different countries competed in Indy, resulting in a massive \$175 million revenue for the city, with just a \$30 million expense to host. With those figures, Indianapolis became the first city to not just

⁴http://www.americanoutlook.org/uploads/1/3/3/1/13311122/final_winter2011_web.pdf

break even, but make a profit by hosting the Pan Am Games, proving that the sports strategy had some serious merit to it.⁵

Because of all of this success, and the overwhelming love of sports that the residents of Indianapolis had, the town was able to begin construction of the Hoosier Dome, which would ultimately change the future of the city forever.

The Colts Arrival:

After the incredible success and results that amateur sports brought to Indianapolis, Hudnut and a team of the city's most important businessmen and investors put together a plan to build the biggest arena in the city at the time. The Hoosier Dome was initially built as an extension to the city's convention center, and a means for the city to host bigger sports events. However, one ultimate goal was always in mind: for it to host an NFL team one day.

Thanks to some hefty investments, as well as a bit of taxpayer funding, the Hoosier Dome was built and opened in 1984, and immediately served as a center for the city to host trade shows and conventions. As the dome underwent construction, what felt like divine intervention occurred. Robert Irsay, owner of the Baltimore Colts, grew dissatisfied with the city's refusal to help the team build a new stadium. As he looked for a place to move his team, the city of Indianapolis was just finishing the construction of the Hoosier Dome, which just so happened to be the perfect place for an NFL team to call home. After a series of negotiations, the Colts agreed to move to Indianapolis, and the final stages of the city's revolution were thrown into high gear.

With the Colts now residing in Indianapolis, the downtown area of the city boomed to reach new heights. As the area boomed, building projects began shooting up, including Bank One Tower (now Salesforce Tower) in 1990, OneAmerica Tower in 1982, and Market Tower in 1988. When the Colts selected Peyton Manning with the first overall pick in the 1998 NFL Draft, it sparked years of success that brought the team to a whole new level, and the city followed with it.

The arrival of the Colts to Indianapolis changed the trajectory of the city's sports strategy for the better. While the Colts played there yearly, the Hoosier Dome (which eventually was renamed to the RCA Dome in 1994) also held numerous events, including four Final Fours, WrestleMania VIII, the NCAA Men's Track and

⁵ Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, page 1075

Field Championships from 1989 – 1999, and even the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) World Championships. Thanks to all of these events, and the incredible atmosphere the city provided, another huge sports organization was ready to make the move there as well.

The NCAA's Big Decision:

The National College Athletic Association called Kansas City home for over 40 years, but began searching for a new location in 1997, allowing cities to cast bids for their future location. In the end, the search came down to two finalists: Kansas City and Indianapolis.

In 1999, the NCAA decided to move its headquarters to Indianapolis, quoting quite a few massive factors in their decision. First, Indianapolis had the RCA Arena, which held over 30,000 more people than Kansas City's Kemper Arena.⁶ Second, Indianapolis was actually a more central location, considering that the large majority of NCAA colleges were located east of the Mississippi River. Finally, the organization saw the incredible strides that Indianapolis had made in revitalizing their city, as well as the incredible atmosphere the city had when the NCAA hosted events there. The NCAA moved into downtown Indianapolis, and installed the NCAA Hall of Champions across the street years later.

With the NCAA now centered in Indianapolis, the city was given the rights to host far more national college sports events than before. Since the move in 1999, Indianapolis has hosted four Men's Basketball Final Fours, three Women's Basketball Final Fours, and a whopping 32 different Big Ten Championships and Tournaments in football and basketball. Each of these events brought significant revenue, with the Final Four estimated to bring \$300 million to the region that hosts it, as well as major national attention.⁷ However, the NCAA is just the tip of the iceberg that is the effect of sports on modern Indianapolis.

Today's Impact:

Thanks to the sports strategy laid out decades ago, Indianapolis is now seen as one of the prime sporting cities in the nation, and its economy is booming as a

⁶ www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-19394241.html

⁷ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chris-smith/2013/04/01/the-money-behind-the-ncaa-final-four/#4c42c2ac6e07>

result. The Pacers franchise is currently valued at \$880 million.⁸ Meanwhile the Colts are valued at a sizable \$2.175 billion.⁹ However, both are dwarfed by the NCAA, which rakes in nearly \$1 billion in annual revenue.¹⁰

The impact that sports have had on the city goes far beyond the value of their teams though. Thanks to the success of Peyton Manning and the Colts, the city was able to construct the amazing Lucas Oil Stadium in 2008. As a result, the city has had the opportunity to host a myriad of concerts, huge college events like the Final Four, and of course, the Super Bowl in 2012. All of these events have brought more and more tourists and fans to the region, which have increased revenue for the area and given the city more publicity.

As a whole, sports have a major impact on Indianapolis' economy as well, generating roughly \$3.3 billion in yearly revenue in the city, while also employing 9,684 people in the region.¹¹ The Indy 500 generates an estimated \$336 million annually, while the 2012 Super Bowl generated \$178 million.¹² Since 1994, annual attendance to the downtown area of Indianapolis has skyrocketed 84 percent and \$12.4 billion has been invested in the area since 1990.¹³ Much of that can be contributed to the sports events there. Downtown Indianapolis is now home to a NFL team, a NBA team, a minor league baseball team, 200 restaurants, 300 shops, 28 museums, and 12 theaters.¹⁴ Clearly, that's quite an increase from the two restaurants that inhabited the area in the 1960's. When it comes to sports franchises saving a city and reviving the economy, the city of Indianapolis is the textbook example.

⁸ <https://www.forbes.com/teams/indiana-pacers/>

⁹ <https://www.forbes.com/teams/indianapolis-colts/>

¹⁰ <http://www.businessinsider.com/ncaa-tournament-makes-a-lot-of-money-2017-3>

¹¹ <https://petm.iupui.edu/doc/community/sports-economic-impact.pdf>

¹² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-motor-indy500-business/indy-500-to-supercharge-indianapolis-economy-idUSKCN0YI2E3>

¹³ <http://www.fairbridgeproperties.com/news-blog/2015/6/26/downtown-indy-releases-updated-project-list-boasting-136-billion-in-new-downtown-development>

¹⁴ <https://www.citylab.com/life/2013/08/sports-teams-really-can-save-city/6479/>

Cleveland

Background:

Unfortunately, Cleveland does not have the same endearing story that the city of Indianapolis has. Unlike Indy, who used sports to build a reliable economy and bolster their city's infrastructure to a level of modern sustainability, the city of Cleveland is still searching for better ways to lift the city out of poverty and make massive improvements to the infrastructure and system.

However, just because Cleveland lacks the financial stability of a city like Indianapolis, does not mean that sports do not play an integral part of the economy that exists there. While Indianapolis constructed a culture of sports by starting small with amateur sports and building its way up to professional sports, the city of Cleveland has had major league teams for decades now.

Tragically, those teams that they have had for decades are commonly linked together under one umbrella: being terrible. Up until LeBron James joined the team, left, then came back to win a title, the Cleveland Cavaliers were one of the worst franchises in NBA history. The Cleveland Browns have been the laughing stock of the NFL for over 20 years now. And the Cleveland Indians, while successful at the moment, have not won a championship in well over 50 years.

Yet, fans keep coming to watch their teams play day-in and day-out, and that is simply because that's what the city of Cleveland is built on. While the teams may let their fans down almost every season, they keep coming back for more. In such a socioeconomically depressed area, hope in their team is what brings them back year after year. Sports are so firmly entrenched in the history of that city, that the residents would rather sit through decades of suffering and failure than spend money elsewhere or do something else. That's true commitment.

As a whole, the city of Cleveland has a \$129.4 billion GMP, which is good for just third in the state of Ohio, sitting behind the likes of Cincinnati and Columbus for economy size.¹⁵ Within that market, the three professional sports teams earn about

¹⁵ <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/money/2017/09/26/cincinnati-leapfrogs-cleveland-columbus-no-1-economy-ohio-28th-nationwide/703487001/>

\$865 million in yearly revenue. The Browns lead the charge with \$365 million.¹⁶The Indians follow closely at \$271 million.¹⁷ Then the Cavaliers round things out with \$233 million.¹⁸

While each team is responsible for some level of economic growth and profitability in the city, Cleveland has one secret weapon that has skyrocketed both its economy and tourism in recent years. His name is LeBron James.

LeConomics:

The Cleveland Cavaliers changed the course of their team history in 2003 when they selected Akron phenom LeBron James with the No. 1 overall pick in the Draft. His legendary play catapulted the team to national acclaim, including a trip to the NBA Finals in 2007 and back-to-back MVP awards in 2009 and 2010.

All of this success did one thing for the Cleveland economy: it boosted it. The entire state of Ohio rallied around their hometown star, and spent millions upon millions of dollars coming to see him take the court. He was a superstar, but more importantly, he was their superstar.

Unfortunately, that just made his departure for Miami in 2010 all the more painful. When LeBron hit the road to win some titles with the Heat from 2010-2014, the Cavs revenue bottomed out, downtown Cleveland suffered as a whole, and the area began to regain the bleak outlook it once had.

However, all of that changed once again when LeBron announced that he was coming home after the 2014 season, looking to make good on his promise to bring the first ever NBA championship to his hometown. With that return, came the return of the downtown area's booming economy.

First, a quick look at the Cavs revenue tells the entire story. In 2010, the Cavs brought in roughly \$159 million in revenue, just as LeBron left for Miami. The subsequent years saw a rough decline in cash for the Cavs, culminating in a brutal 2013 in which the team only brought in \$128 million. Fast-forward to 2015 after James' return, and the Cavs were once again making \$149 million; however, that was just the start. Now going into LeBron's fourth season back in Cleveland, the Cavs

¹⁶ <https://www.forbes.com/teams/cleveland-browns/>

¹⁷ <https://www.forbes.com/teams/cleveland-indians/>

¹⁸ <https://www.forbes.com/teams/cleveland-cavaliers/>

racked up a ridiculous \$233 million this past season, a 47% increase from 2010. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg of LeBron's economic effect.¹⁹

An initial look just at the number of restaurants in the immediate area of the stadium shows LeBron's impact. Studies found that within a mile of the stadium, LeBron's presence on the roster of a team increases the number of restaurants and bars by 13%, as well as their employment records by over 23%. However, the study also mentions that, "These effects are very local, in that they decay rapidly as one moves farther from the stadium." Beyond the one-mile radius, the effect drops off significantly. In a 1-7 mile radius from the stadium, the increase drops to just 10.7%, and beyond seven miles, the data shows no correlation.²⁰

To put a more concrete number behind those statistics, one can look at the actual number of restaurants around Quicken Loans Arena in downtown Cleveland. During James' first stint as a Cavalier, there were roughly 190 restaurants in the Quicken Loans Arena area. During his four-year departure from the team, it dipped down to 170. Now, with LeBron back in the full swing of things, there are over 210 establishments in that same downtown Cleveland area.²¹

LeBron's direct impact on the Cleveland economy could likely be much less significant if he weren't such a talented player. Therefore it goes without saying, success sells, and that's what the Cleveland economy can really thank for its Cavaliers boost.

The Success Effect:

Since LeBron's return to Cleveland, to say the team is good would be a massive understatement. In three seasons, the team has made it to three straight titles, winning their first ever NBA title in the 2016 NBA Finals. Since 2014, the team has a combined regular season record of 161-85, along with a 43-16 postseason record.

Needless to say, the Cavs incredible success under the leadership of LeBron has a resounding impact on their economic success. According to a 2015 economic

¹⁹ <https://deadspin.com/lebron-and-the-500m-lie-how-sports-economic-impact-st-1658861205>

²⁰ <https://www.ohio.com/akron/business/study-finds-lebron-james-on-roster-impacts-economy-near-arena-cleveland-rocks-when-he-s-in-lineup>

²¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/01/lebron-james-means-a-lot-to-cleveland--and-its-economy.html>

impact study, home playoff games result in a \$3.6 million impact on the local economy, while NBA Finals games shoot up to \$5 million.²²

Using those figures, the Cavs have given the Cleveland area a \$112 million economic impact from their postseason successes alone, with \$72 million coming from their 20 home playoff games and \$40 million from eight home games in the NBA Finals. This comes from things such as tourism, increased media presence, and a higher foot-traffic in the area, which leads to more visits to local restaurants and shops. Not to mention, the city took home \$927,000 in tax revenue from Games 3 and 4 of the 2016 NBA Finals alone.²³

Beyond the effect of the numerous playoff games, the Cavaliers success also culminated in one incredible spectacle, which brought millions of people through the Cleveland area, as well as millions of dollars in revenue.

After the team's historic NBA Finals win in 2016, the Cavs did something that every team does post-championship: held a parade. On June 22nd, 2016, over 1.3 million people descended onto the Cleveland area to watch as the team paraded through the streets, celebrating the incredible win.²⁴ That's more than triple the actual population of the city, which stands at 396,000. With so much tourism, hotels, restaurants, and more local spots were jam-packed throughout the event. Fortunately, for Cleveland, the Cavaliers are not the only sports franchise currently succeeding.

The Cleveland Indians World Series Pursuit:

After years and years of misery, the Cleveland Indians have skyrocketed to the top of the MLB world. The 2016 season saw the Indians make a trip to the World Series, where they lost a heartbreaking Game 7 at home to the Chicago Cubs, who snapped their 108-year World Series drought with an unforgettable extra-innings win.

Fortunately, that run in the postseason did not go to waste for the city, as the area reaped the economic benefits of the historic run. In the three rounds that the

²² <http://rethinkcleveland.org/Media-Center/News/The-King-James-Effect.aspx>

²³ <http://rethinkcleveland.org/Media-Center/News/The-King-James-Effect.aspx>

²⁴ <https://www.sbnation.com/2016/6/22/12005550/cavaliers-parade-cleveland-attendance-1-million>

Indians played in last season, they hosted eight home games at Progressive Field, each bringing in massive sums of money and an enormous economic impact.

The team estimated that each home playoff game, similar to the Cavs, had an average economic impact of \$3 million. Therefore, with eight home games, the Indians gifted the Cleveland area \$24 million during the 2016 postseason alone. However, some believe that the impact was even larger. David Gilbert, leader of the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, estimated that each home World Series game was worth between "\$8 million and \$10 million". By his estimates, the Indians run in the 2016 World Series alone may have resulted in a \$32 million to \$40 million impact, and their most recent playoff success would have resulted in \$6 million in direct profits.²⁵

Future Endeavors:

While the success of their teams leads to increased revenue for the Cleveland area, the city is also getting an incredible opportunity to generate a positive economic impact from Major League Baseball. The MLB announced that the city of Cleveland will host the 2019 All-Star Game, which is comprised of a five days of festivities that includes a fan festival, the Home Run Derby, the actual All-Star Game itself, and much more.

This will turn into a massive economic opportunity for the city. Just two years ago, the city of Cincinnati hosted the festivities, and experts estimated that the Ohio city saw a \$60 million to \$65 million impact from the event. However, that's not even close to the impact that the event has had on other cities. In 2014, San Diego hosted the MLB All-Star Game, and experts believe that this event alone had an \$80 million impact on the city. David Gilbert currently estimates that the event will bring in somewhere between \$60 million and \$65 million in 2019, just as it did in Cincinnati. However, he also acknowledged that this was a conservative guess, calling it a "pretty safe estimate". This isn't the first time the city has hosted the event either, as they reported a \$37.6 million impact from the 1997 All-Star Game. The key to this event is the influx of out-of-town visitors that will be pouring into the city for the festivities. Cincinnati reported that over 200,000 fans headed to Cincinnati for the 2015 contest, and took up over 17,000 hotel rooms during the

²⁵http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2016/11/clevelands_world_series_loss_w.html

five-day period. With figures like that, Cleveland is perfectly set up to enjoy some massive benefits from this event.²⁶

Cleveland Conclusion:

For the city of Cleveland, as is with many cities, the strength of their sports economy revolves around the success of their teams. As long as the Indians keep winning, and the Cavaliers keep making the playoffs with LeBron James at the helm, the downtown area of the city will continue to thrive as a result of its sports.

²⁶ <http://www.craainscleveland.com/article/20170205/NEWS/170209906/mlb-all-star-game-could-be-an-economic-home-run-for-cleveland>

Conclusion

The connection of sports to the economy is one of the most fickle matters of the sports world. There are so many factors that can go into this field of study, including: the location of the team, the location of the stadium, the success of the team, the players, the amount of jobs offered, and many, many more attributes that are key to proper measurement. However, that does not mean that one can't get an idea of just how valuable sports teams are to their surrounding areas, especially when the cities struggle in the entertainment industry.

While the economic impact is obviously important, the effect that these organizations have on their surrounding community is astounding as well. LeBron James is a noted philanthropist in Ohio, consistently giving large donations to schools, public works initiatives, and even Ohio State University. Beyond that, the LeBron James Family Foundation has made a profound impact, including recently opening up a school for at-risk students.²⁷ Meanwhile, the Indianapolis Colts support numerous charities, including those created by former players, like the Pat McAfee Foundation, which provides scholarship to the children of US military personnel, and Gary Brackett's Impact Foundation, which assists children affected by cancer.²⁸

Along with tremendous social initiatives, having prominent sports teams proves to be an incredible marketing opportunity for any city, but especially those that are not often in the spotlight. LeBron James is one of the biggest names in sports, and because he is synonymous with the city of Cleveland, the entire area has benefited from his rise to stardom. Every Spring, Indianapolis becomes the center of NFL attention, as the NFL Combine is hosted at Lucas Oil Stadium. Notable players have also made waves with their media appearances, like Peyton Manning in numerous shows and commercials, and the likes of Andrew Luck and Reggie Wayne on the hit television show *Parks and Recreation*.²⁹ Each marketing opportunity that these teams bring turns into benefits for the surrounding area, as more and more attention is brought to the city.

Cleveland and Indianapolis are shining examples of just how powerful sports can be in the right setting. In Indianapolis, the introduction of sports to political

²⁷ <http://www.12up.com/posts/4858797-lebron-james-opening-public-school-for-at-risk-kids-in-akron>

²⁸ <http://www.colts.com/community/players-in-the-community/foundations.html>

²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo9KQebGuTU>

strategy and infrastructure created one of the most sports-centric and prospering cities in the nation, as more and more large companies take their business to Indianapolis thanks to the work that sports teams did for that city. In Cleveland, the incredible impact that just one player can have on his surrounding area is shown at the forefront, as LeBron James has made an outstanding impact on his community, not just economically, but socially as well.

These scenarios likely would not have been nearly as successful had they been in different cities. A player like LeBron James would never have a significant impact on a city like New York, because New York's economy and entertainment and tourism industry is already so strong. The proper setting is needed for a sports team to truly have an impact on not just the economy, but the tourism and culture of an area as well. This data just proves that theory.

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