

Is a Salary Cap Necessary?

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As long as sports have been played, there have been people arguing over how much athletes should be paid. Do they really deserve what they are paid? What about teams that can't afford to spend millions of dollars on certain players? Does that mean that they are deprived of a winning season based on financial insufficiency? The real question is whether or not teams should be able to buy themselves many star athletes and put them on the same team. Do professional organizations need to enforce a salary cap in order to prevent this from happening?

Cody Peters (2011) expresses his opinion in his article "Major League Issues: Why Baseball Needs a Salary Cap". As is seen in his title, Peters believes that it is necessary for major leaguers to have a salary cap in order to make the game fairer. He explains that some teams are spending a ridiculous amount of money to get star players while another teams are scraping the bottom of the barrel to put a team together. He implies that some teams are obtaining more talent because of their financial expenditures while other teams are suffering to even create a team, let alone generate a winning team. He believes that while money doesn't necessarily guarantee success, it sure gives an advantage to those who can afford it. On the other end of the argument, Stefan Fatis (2008) believes that athletes are worth the money and managers are reasonable in their decision to invest in them. In his article "What Recession? We're Ballplayers" he explains that athletes get paid according to how much they are perceived to be worth. This is based on their skill and he believes that teams should continue to pay players high salaries if they are good at what they do. He believes they are justified in doing so because those players bring them a greater fan base and the possibility of winning. Fatis declares that if teams can afford to construct a super team of athletes, they should go for it.

Although both Peters and Fatis explore the advantages and disadvantages of soaring

players' salaries, Fatis makes me lose interest quickly because of his large vocabulary that doesn't mean much to me while Peters keeps my attention throughout the article because his simple voice and examples that I can relate to. Both articles obtain viable information about the issue, but Peters helped me to relate to how other fans really feel and ultimately persuaded me of the need for a salary cap for professional athletes.

Cody Peters isn't necessarily a sports writer and is technically not an expert on the matter. However, he uses ethos and has established credibility because of his writing for a blog called the Bleacher Report. He has read over 44,000 articles on sports events and has written 14 articles. These statistics create a feeling for the readers that they can trust Peters' information and opinion. This particular article that he wrote had a purpose to persuade people, especially baseball fans, that Major League Baseball needs a salary cap. The fact that Peters has studied up on current baseball events and is a fan of the sport himself helps to make his argument more valid.

Peters uses pathos the most in his article by exploring how fans feel about the disadvantage that poorer teams have in producing a winning team. While discussing how a single player, Alex Rodriguez, earned \$33 million in 2010 while both the Pittsburgh Pirates and the San Diego Padres both spent under \$40 million for their whole team that year, Peters dives in to the fans' acceptable reaction. He says, "If I'm a Pirates fan and I see that statistic, I immediately consider changing teams or just sticking to the Steelers and Penguins. If I'm a Padres fan, I am not that worried because they were one game out of the N.L. Wild Card spot" (Peters, 2011). By using emotional reactions to this event and others, Peters puts into perspective why salary caps are such a concern and why fans are upset over the issue.

The author also uses ethos and logical facts to shock the reader and further explain what

he thinks is a problem with salary caps. He expounds on the difference that salary caps create between teams by comparing how much the New York Yankees spent last year compared to the Texas Rangers. He declares “Last year, we saw again that buying players can’t always buy you a ring. The Yankees spent a whopping \$206.3 million in salary last year, only to find themselves losing to the Texas Rangers in the ALCS...who went to the World Series by spending only \$55.25 million in salary” (Peters, 2011). This example demonstrates the issue that is being discussed and provides logic to his argument. The evidence that he uses in the numbers and statistics describe how much some teams spend compared to others and shocks the reader into disbelief. The use of logic helps the reader make sense of the problem and get a clear understanding of the unfair advantage that some teams have because their salaries are so much higher than other, poorer teams (Peters, 2011).

Stefan Fatsis also uses ethos to his advantage and established his credibility as a writer through many years of experience. He has been a sports writer for the Wall Street Journal, has written many books, and is currently employed as a sports journalist for the New York Times, where the article came from. His purpose in this article was to explain to sports fans why athletes get paid so much. Fatsis is able to use his credibility to convince readers that he knows what he is talking about, letting them know that they can trust him due to his advanced experience as a journalist and sports writer.

Fatsis uses similarly uses pathos in order to explore the emotions of both the fans and athletes that are affected by sports caps. Fatsis shows the athletes’ argument by quoting the Los Angeles Dodger’s player Manny Ramirez who said, “Gas is up and so am I” (Fatsis, 2008). This shows that players think that they deserve to be paid more because they believe that they earn it, just like anybody else trying to earn a living. Fatsis also explores the emotions of some fans by

quoting sports fan Andrew Zimbalist, who expressed his feelings on why payrolls for certain athletes are acceptable. He stated that, “It makes superheroes a little more superhuman. That’s part of the allure of sports” (Fatsis, 2008). The idea and feeling explored here is that it is tolerable for players to earn more money based on how well their performance is. It just makes sense for them to make more money if they are better. The fact that Fatsis explores the emotions of opposite sides makes his argument more convincing and helps the reader to understand why others would feel that a salary cap is not desired for athletes because some of them deserve to be paid more.

Fatsis also uses ethos to make sense of his argument. He mostly justifies putting together a stacked team while doing this. He rationalizes manager’s spending money on star players in order to create a better team. He says, “Put the best product on the field you can afford, period” (Fatsis, 2008). This is logical because in order to make a winning team, there need to be athletes that can perform at the highest level. Other teams also want these athletes managers have to spend a lot of money in order to get them to come play for their team. He also says that these players receive “money well deserved and well spent” (Fatsis, 2008). because the acquisitions of star players boost not only the skill of the team, but also the revenue of the organization. He explains that fans are more willing to come and spend money to see a team play if they are good and provide excitement. This logic also helps readers to understand why teams don’t want a salary cap and why they believe it would not be beneficial for anyone if there were a salary cap (Fatsis, 2008).

While both articles written by Fatsis and Peters contained practical information about salary caps and helped to shed light on both sides of the argument, I would have to say that Peters’ article persuaded me the most. The elements that are the most important to me in

persuasive writing are the evidence, connection to the audience, the perspective of the writer, and the voice used. Both articles used evidence really well as was already discussed and it was about evenly matched between the writings based on this criteria. However, Fatsis used a perspective of an expert on the subject and used a very formal style of writing that made it hard for me to connect with his writing. The vocabulary that he used is not what I would normally use and made it difficult to follow effectively. For example, he said, “Fans ultimately might expect their favorite team to be fiscally responsible, if for no other reason than to mirror their own economic problems” (Fatsis, 2008). This isn’t how I would think or talk and it doesn’t really relate to how I feel. To me, it seemed as if he was purely using facts and statistics to make his argument and didn’t seem to put much emotion into his writing. Peters, on the other hand, seemed to be like me; he seemed to be just a fan that had done his homework and expressed his opinion with passion. For example, he says that he is “irked over the fact that the same teams make it to the playoffs year in and year out” (Peters, 2011). This is exactly how I feel and knowing that Peters feels this way as well makes his argument more convincing to me. This helped me to connect with him and understand where he was coming from. While I didn’t necessarily agree with his opinion, he made it clear why he thought that way and why he argued for a salary cap. For me, this is why Peters’ article was more effective in persuading me of his opinion.

Like I said, both articles were well written and contained valuable information about salary caps, but the overall feel of the articles forced me to pick Peters’ article as more convincing. He explained his thinking and feelings clearly in a way that I could relate to while Fatsis’ article was harder to relate to and follow because of his formal style of writing and lack of emotion. While I agree with not having a salary cap, Peters convinced me otherwise. However, would salary caps really make that big of a difference? Are they really necessary to keep the

game fair? That is a question that sports fans have argued about for a long time and will continue to debate for an unforeseeable future.

## References

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