

Issues in Work: NFL and Labor
Syllabus

575:394:01

Instructor: Allan Frost
Sundays 1:00pm-4:00pm
Labor Education Center
Room 137/Auditorium

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Course Overview

“The National Football League and Labor”

This course will study the current labor issues involving the National Football League and the National Football League Players’ Association. The agreement expires in March, 2011. The course will explore the relationship between the League and its players as well as between the union and its members – past and present. We will also consider the relationship of the League to Congress. The course will concentrate on issues such as revenue sharing, salary caps, free agency, guaranteed contracts, player injuries, pensions, and steroids. The course will also consider the bargaining tactics and strategies available to both sides as well as the possibility of a strike or lockout and its ramifications on the sport. Students will engage in collective bargaining as representatives of either the players or the owners.

Course Requirements

- This course meets once a week for three hours on Sundays, 1:00-4:00 from 2/6 through 3/6. Students are required to attend all sessions.
- You should read assigned readings before class so that you will be ready for exercises done in class.
- Since this course will be given contemporaneously with the actual negotiations, students are required to monitor the status of the negotiations by reading newspapers, websites and watching ESPN. The National Football League Players’ Association’s website and the League’s website (nflabor.com) are very helpful.

In the event the negotiations are settled we will modify the course accordingly. All reading materials are available through sakai except for the collective bargaining agreement which is available on the NFL Players Association website. There will be additional handouts and we anticipate at least one guest speaker – a current NFL player.

Week 1– Feb. 6, 2011

Introduction to the NFL and the Players' Association. We will explore the history of the League and the origin of the Players' Association and their bargaining relationship. We study the relationship of the parties to Congress and the role of the Commissioner. We will explore prior negotiations and strikes. We will consider the issues that the Players' Association has with its own members as well as former players.

Required Readings:

The Foreword by Jack Kemp to *Tailgating, Sacks, And Salary Caps* by Mark Yost.

New York Times article by Maggie Jones Patterson and Rob Ruck entitled "In the NFL's Early Playbook, Labor Peace Meant Prosperity for All."

Forbes listing of the value of each NFL franchise.

Page 78 of *Tailgating, Sacks and Salary Caps*, which lists the value of the NFL's television deals.

Week 2 – Feb. 13, 2011

We will study the 2006 negotiation and its significance. We will consider the tension among the owners. We will review provisions of the current collective bargaining agreement which consists of 344 pages.

Required Readings :

"Tailgating, Sacks and Salary Caps" chapter 10 pages 203 to 220.

The following pages of the Collective Bargaining Agreement: p. 3 Preamble; p. 9 Scope of the Agreement; p. 12 Section 1; p. 18 Sections 1 and 2; p. 21 Section 6; p. 34 Section 1 (a) and (b); p. 55 Section 5; p. 57 Sections 1-5 (g); p. 68 Section 1; p. 77 Sections 1-3; Page 154 Section 1; p. 169; Section 1-4; p. 170 Sections 1 (a) and 2 (c); p. 179 Minimum Salaries; p. 181 Section 12; p. 194 Section 2; p. 237 Final League Year.

Week 3 – Feb. 20, 2011

We will consider the major issues for the 2011 negotiations such as salary caps, revenue sharing, player injuries, additional regular season games, pensions, benefits and steroids. We will consider current status of the negotiations and the tactics and strategies available to the parties and the consequences of the parties not reaching a new agreement. We will divide the class between labor and management to begin the bargaining process.

Required Readings:

“Professional Football” by Kenneth Jost, www.cqresearcher.com, p. 75-79;

New York Times article by Judy Battista entitled “Players Union Votes to Protect Itself Against a Lockout.”

“NFL Negotiations 101” by Casey Gerald and David Madland pages 1 and 2.

New York Times article “Labor Battle Escalates.”

New York Times article “Suicide Reveals Signs of Disease Seen in NFL” by Alan Schwarz.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement: pages 28-37, pages 81-95; pages 200-217.

Week 4 – Feb. 27, 2011

The class will attempt to reach a resolution of the issues through collective bargaining.

Prepare arguments and bargaining strategies as assigned.

Week 5 – March 6, 2011

An examination will be given.