WHAT EXPLAINS THE STADIUM CONSTRUCTION BOOM

by Robert A. Baade

Stadiums and arenas for professional sports are being proposed and constructed at a record pace. The impetus for stadium mania extends beyond the world of professional sports; financial developments in several sectors of the economy have conspired to foster the boom in stadium construction. The purpose of this article is to identify and analyze the genesis of this mania by looking at the various financial imperatives on the supply and demand sides of the professional sports industry and in the realm of state and local government.

A conservative estimate is that there are 30 stadiums proposed or under construction for the professional sports industry.[1] This number involves approximately one-third of professional sports' infrastructure, but if those owners who have expressed discontent with their current facilities are included, the number swells to almost one-half. Since the cost of an average stadium constructed today easily eclipses $100 million, the threat posed for taxpayers is substantial. In fact, the bill for the 30 stadiums that are under serious consideration or construction exceeds $4 billion.

A substantial portion of the pressure to build new stadiums emanates from the owners of professional sports franchises. The second section of the paper identifies and analyzes developments on the supply side of the professional sports industry that contribute to the sports facility construction boom. In part, the number and character of the stadiums proposed and under construction accommodate what owners perceive as fan needs and wants. The third section of the paper discusses structural changes in the U.S. economy that have influenced fan demands relating to stadiums and arenas. The fourth portion of the paper focuses on financial developments in state and local governments that have encouraged government participation in stadium projects even though many of these facilities serve as replacements for those structures considered economically obsolete from the owner's perspective. Conclusions and the practical implications of the recent spate of stadium construction are offered in the paper's final section.

Developments On The Supply Side Of The Professional Sports Industry

New or substantial renovations of playing facilities have been approved or are being planned for more than 60 professional sports teams, slightly over half

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the clubs operating in 1996, throughout the United States and Canada in the four major professional sports: baseball, basketball, football and hockey.[2] Several factors in addition to increasing player costs have intensified the interest in new stadium construction.

When the late Joe Robbie grew frustrated with the inability of the City of Miami to convince voters to fund a renovation of the Orange Bowl, he decided to privately finance the construction of a new stadium for his National Football League (NFL) Dolphins. Robbie hatched a plan in the mid-1980s (Dolphins Stadium hosted its first game in 1987) to parlay the up-front money he received from the sale or lease of luxury seats into the financing needed to build the stadium. Robbie's strategy can be viewed as a watershed if for no reason other than owners, in general, recognized the potential financial windfall promised by luxury seating. Auburn Hills in suburban Detroit (home of the NBA Pistons) and the United Center in Chicago (home of the NBA Bulls and NHL Blackhawks) are two examples of facilities that have delivered on that promise.

Unrestricted Stadium Income

For individual owners, venue revenues, dollar for dollar, are more valuable than revenues from more traditional sources, such as the team's share of national television broadcast revenues or the receipts garnered from the ticket sales to the general public (assuming no variation in the costs incurred in generating various revenues). Why? Because the league tax rate on shared revenues is greater than zero, while the effective tax rate on revenues that are not subject to sharing is zero. The NFL and other leagues, in general, have made no provision for the division of revenues from luxury seating and several other venue revenues such as fees for signage, in-stadium advertising, income from the operation of stadium clubs, etc. Until such provision is made (until the current roster of owners agree on the distribution of what is now their unrestricted stadium income), many venue revenues will remain the exclusive property of the team that generates them, and the primary incentive for new facility construction will persist.

Sports Cartels

Individual owner behavior with respect to "out-of-the-pool" revenue conforms to theory which is descriptive of the behavior of a cartel's individual members in at least two ways. First, when a cartel is conceived, the agreement reflects current institutions and market conditions. For example, initial league agreements in Major League Baseball (MLB) reflected the importance of gate receipts relative to other sources of revenue, such as fees from the local television broadcast of games. In general, once the rules governing the operation of the cartel are promulgated, it is difficult to modify them even when important institutional changes occur. In the case of MLB, the New York Yankees, Chicago Cubs, Atlanta Braves, to name a few teams, receive substantial revenues from the local television stations which broadcast their games. To share these revenues would enrich other MLB teams but at the expense of the teams responsible for them. Modifying league rules to reflect institutional change is a zero-sum game, and any change will be resisted by those who stand to lose.

Second, sports cartels are not immune from the threat facing all cartels. Sports leagues increase profits for individual members by making joint output and pricing decisions or acting as the sole bargaining agent in resource acquisition. Individual teams, however, recognize that their economic interests can be served better by breaking the league rules. If there is no effective prohibition against cheating, inevitably it occurs.

Jerry Jones And The Dallas Cowboys

Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys of the NFL, has emerged as an innovative maverick who breaks and bends the cartel's rules. Jones designed a financial strategy that emphasized revenue streams not designated for redistribution by the league office through agreement. Not coincidentally, the Cowboys have won three of the last four Super Bowls, emblematic of League supremacy, and have parlayed their on-the-field success into off-the-field riches. The Cowboys by most measures have become the single most valuable franchise in all of professional sports in the United States.[3]

Since the days of former Commissioner Pete Rozelle, the NFL has taken the view that the league represents a partnership for all practical business and economic intents and purposes. If the individual teams comprising a sports league constitute a wholly integrated joint venture (contests require at least two participants), then leagues realize their interests are advanced through creating competitive parity. The absence of closely contested games jeopardizes fan interest and league stability. From the NFL's perspective, Jerry Jones poses a threat in that his aggressive financial play potentially upsets competitive balance by skewing the distribution of revenues. What separates Jones and the Cowboys from the rest of the NFL pack is that the over $30 million generated annually through the operation of Cowboys' stadium is more than twice as much as the NFL runner-up in venue revenue generated in 1994.[4]

One method for addressing the problem personified by Jerry Jones is to level the economic playing field and extend revenue sharing to luxury seating and other income streams currently exempt from revenue sharing. Such a strategy requires stadiums for each team that, from an economic

perspective, qualify as state of the art. The NFL and other leagues have organized stadium committees whose function, in part, is to support the efforts of individual teams to convince their sometimes skeptical and financially strapped host cities to do their part to finance the NFL's efforts to uphold the ideal of league financial democracy. In the Winter 1994 edition of the *NFL Report*, the column headline *The Commissioner's Report* read: "First-Class Stadiums: NFL Priority".[5]

In addition, individual leagues recognize that entertainment dollars are scarce, and there exists interleague competition for consumer loyalty and spending. This financial contest has increasingly emphasized playing facilities; owners agree that fan-friendly structures are of significant strategic importance. To quote from *The Commissioner's Report* in the article cited in the preceding paragraph, Paul Tagliabue, the current NFL Commissioner wrote:

> "The survey (commissioned by *Money* magazine) reinforced our own priority on stadium matters. It is more important than ever that we as a league focus on our stadiums because of the high expectations of our fans. As the *Money* survey indicated, in this increasingly competitive entertainment environment, fans expect first-class service in the form of stadium convenience, comfort, cleanliness and value."

Venue Revenue

In light of Commissioner Tagliabue's emphasis on new stadiums, his message should sound a warning to the 16 cities in which NFL lease agreements expire in the next ten years. It would not be too much of an oversimplification to argue that planned or actual new stadium construction or renovation in professional sports is determined by an individual team's venue revenue as a percentage of the league average. Equation 1 represents this theory.

Equation 1: $FC_{i,t} = f(VR_{i,t-n}/\Sigma VR_{j,t-n}/k)$,

where, $FC_{i,t}$ = city *i*'s plan for or actual construction of a sports facility at time *t*;

$VR_{i,t-1}/\Sigma VR_{j,t-n}/k$ = venue revenue as a percentage of the league average for city *i* at time $t-n$.

One could expect that the coefficient for the independent variable $[dFC_{i,t}/d(VR_{i,t-n}/\Sigma VR_{i,t-n}/k)]$ would be negative. The lagged characterization of the independent variable reflects, in part, the time required to recognize a financial competition problem, since it takes time for a financial disadvantage in professional sports to manifest itself in a deterioration in competitiveness on the field (player contracts are generally multi-year and operating losses may be tolerated for a time). In addition it takes more than a trivial amount of time to negotiate the political obstacles to planning or building a new sports facility. Using this model it is not hard to understand why new baseball stadiums are being considered for Minnesota, Milwaukee and Cincinnati. The venue revenues, as a percentage of the league average, for these three cities in 1994 were 35 percent, 47 percent and 66 percent of the league average, respectively.[6] There are other MLB teams and teams in other professional sports that exhibit even lower revenue as a percentage of the league average than these three teams. Virtually all teams with deficient venue revenues are clamoring for new playing facilities.

Once again the Dallas Cowboys can be used to exemplify the changing financial structure of professional sports as it relates to the emerging importance of venue revenues. In 1982, gate receipts, broadcast revenues and other revenues (this category presumably incorporates venue revenues) constituted 34 percent, 58 percent and 8 percent, respectively, of total revenues for professional football.[7] In 1995 the Cowboys venue revenues of approximately $37 million accounted for more than 30 percent of the team's total revenues which a relatively recent publication placed at $100 million in 1995.[8]

Economic Obsolescence

One major lesson gleaned from the experience with new stadium construction is that stadiums are replaced not because of their physical obsolescence, but because of their economic obsolescence. Consequently, the shelf life of stadiums and arenas has been substantially reduced. Three of the more egregious examples of the perils the new economics of sport pose for facilities and cities can be found in Charlotte, Miami and Minneapolis. Despite having built an arena for the NBA Hornets in 1988, the second largest in the league,[9] Charlotte's arena generates only 37 percent of the NBA arena revenue average. The emphasis on luxury seating and the relative paucity of it in the current facility (12 suites) has compelled debate for a new arena in Charlotte.

Miami also has an eight year old arena for the NBA Heat. It, too, has suffered financially as a consequence of 16 luxury suites and an NBA low 14,503 seats. Broward County, just a short distance up the coast from Dade County, in which Miami is located, has sought the NBA Miami Heat and the NHL Florida Panthers as tenants for a new arena it is proposing to build. In the ensuing financial tug of war, a "Solomon compromise" (from the perspective of team owners) has been struck. Broward County will host the Panthers in a new arena and Dade County will construct a new facility for the

Heat. A 30-mile stretch of I-95 will now be occupied by three arenas. The Panthers will play in a $212 million facility in Sunrise, and the Heat will occupy a $165 million arena in Miami. Meanwhile, the $53 million Miami arena, on which the city still owes $39 million, has an uncertain future.[10]

From the point of view of taxpayers in the two counties, stadiums have been overbuilt (oversupplied) in metropolitan Miami. Separate owners for the local NBA and NHL franchises coupled with the normal operation of league cartels have conspired to produce this outcome. Both owners feared that sharing an arena would mean revenue disputes and compromises; each owner believed that revenues and profits could be maximized in an exclusive facility. The negative externality (includes a negative pecuniary externality brought about by the increased facility competition for highly attended events in the greater Miami area) could be addressed by the private sector. If incentives existed that encouraged sharing a facility or if the firms merged under a single owner, the externally would be internalized. The public sector policy prescription is also straightforward. The appropriate procedure would be to impose a tax (decrease the subsidy), thereby moderating the incentive to build both arenas. County governments, through providing subsidies, instituted policies diametrically opposed to reducing the oversupply of sports facilities in metropolitan Miami.[11]

Minneapolis built a domed stadium in 1982 to accommodate the NFL's Vikings and the MLB's Twins. The new stadium debate in Minneapolis is compelled by the same forces extant in Charlotte, but with an additional important dimension at work. The multipurpose facility, particularly as it relates to accommodating both football and baseball, is on the endangered species list. As is true in Miami, the owners of sports teams in Minneapolis do not want to share stadium proceeds with other team owners. Consequently, multipurpose stadiums for football and baseball (domed football stadiums used for basketball as well) will not likely exist beyond the year 2000. Recent events confirm the trend. In Cincinnati (Hamilton County voters approved separate new stadiums for the MLB Reds and NFL Bengals), Milwaukee (the NFL Green Bay Packers will no longer play three regular season games in Milwaukee's County Stadium, home of the MLB Brewers), Cleveland (the MLB Indians now play in Jacobs field, an exclusive baseball park), and Seattle (the MLB Mariners have succeeded in convincing King County to build a baseball-only, retractable dome stadium; the NFL Seahawks have threatened to move to Los Angeles if relevant governments do not fund a new stadium for their exclusive use).

Developments On The Demand Side Of The Professional Sports Industry

So far, the analysis in this article has focused on the supply side of the stadium issue. However, there are factors that determine the demand for professional sports which are essential to explain the number of stadiums built, their design and location in the past and present. The supply of stadiums and their amenities are derivative to fan spending in total and in particular. In this regard several general trends can be identified.

Teams and stadiums have followed the migration of the United States population to the West and South and from the central cities to city peripheries. From earliest times, stadium locations have been influenced by predominant modes of transportation. First, rail and bus links encouraged central city locations for stadiums, and then the emergence of the automobile contributed to the development of the suburban stadium appropriately described as a playing facility surrounded by a sea of asphalt.

Increased Incomes, Increased Demands

As incomes have increased throughout most of the 20th century, stadiums have reflected income trends and accompanying shifts in demand patterns. As affluence spread, fans have moved from the outfield grass, to hardback bleacher seats, to individual seats with armrests, to luxury loges. The market for spectator sports has also become more segmented as the distribution of income in the United States becomes more skewed; the demand for luxury loges and stadium clubs reflects the growing inequality of income in the 1980s and 1990s. In short, stadium location and design past and present takes its cues from the fans. Skyboxes are built because certain fans want them and can afford them. Increased venue revenues in professional sports reflect demographic shifts, corollary shifts in demands and team responses to these structural changes in the economy.

Clearly the distribution of income in the United States has become more skewed during the 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, income has been increasingly concentrated in the hands of the top fifth and top five percent of all income recipients. This greater concentration at the top of the income ladder allows for a greater demand for the luxury seats and amenities that are critical to the financial success of the new generation of stadiums.

Consider the information recorded in Table 1 on the distribution of income during 1980 through 1992.

Table 1

Percent Distribution of Aggregate Income by Quintile for the United States in 1980 and 1992

	1980 (all families)	1992 (all families)
Lowest fifth	5.2%	4.4%
Second fifth	11.5%	10.5%
Third fifth	17.5%	16.5%
Fourth fifth	24.3%	24.0%
Highest fifth	41.5%	44.6%
Top five percent	15.3%	17.6%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 114th Edition, 1994, Table No. 716, p. 470.

Of course, demand is determined by more than income, but the growing inequality in the distribution of income correlates very strongly with the current character of the demand for professional sports spectating. In a recent issue of *American Demographics*, it was observed:

> ". . .Today, baseball is a sport for the well-off. The likelihood of attending a baseball game increases steadily with household income. Twenty-one percent of adults with household incomes of $75,000 (the upper limit for the fourth quintile in Table 1 was $64,300 in 1992) or more attend baseball games making them 72 percent more likely than the average to do so.
>
> Other major sports also have an upscale audience. Football, basketball and hockey all have above-average attendance rates among those with household incomes of $40,000 or more.
>
> Baseball's customers are much more upsacle than they were ten years ago. People with household incomes of $50,000 or more were more likely in 1995 than in 1985 to attend baseball games (Dortch, 1996)."[12]

Baseball stadiums, in particular, have become smaller and more elegant. This trend reflects the growing inequality in the distribution of income. More is concentrated in fewer hands.

The Local Government Imperative

The construction of professional sports stadiums has required an infusion of public funds for two reasons. First, professional sports leagues function as cartels, and, to enhance the financial performance of the member teams, leagues maintain an excess demand for franchises. Cities compete with one another for the limited supply of teams, and the winning city bid has included government financial assistance for the construction of sports infrastructure. Gresham's law has application to the sports industry. Those cities that do not provide subsidies risk losing or not acquiring a franchise. If an investment in professional sport is not prudent, then it follows that "bad money does chase out good money" as a consequence of city competition for the limited number of teams.

Second, the cost of a contemporary stadium is staggering, and despite increased revenues from luxury seating, stadium clubs, personal seat licenses, etc., few stadiums hold the promise of a profitable operation.[13] Even when a stadium is advertised as a private project, close scrutiny of the stadium financial particulars generally reveal government subventions in the form of land offered at below-market value, tax abatement or the provision of infrastructure such as streets, public transportation access, sewers, etc.

Why do cities financially support professional sports even when a growing body of evidence indicates the financial contribution of sports to a large metropolitan economy is marginal, perhaps negative?[14] Stadiums represent one aspect of a larger city financial strategy or trend that evolved over decades and came to full bloom in response to President Ronald Reagan's new federalism. President Reagan stressed state and local fiscal autonomy. This meant the federal government shared less with state and local governments, and state governments shared less with local governments. Less money from higher levels of government coupled with growing urban financial needs forced local governments to become more creative and enterprising in dealing with their financial crises that cut on both the revenue and cost sides. To be precise, direct local government spending increased by 90 percent over the Reagan years (from $259 million in 1980 to $491 million in 1988), while the fraction of total state and local government revenue provided by the federal government decreased from 18.4 percent in 1980 to 13.3 percent in 1988.[15] What emerged is local government that can be characterized as more entrepreneurial, including more prone to taking risks.

Risk-Taking

Such risk-taking sometimes produces unfortunate outcomes such as the financial devastation recently of Orange County, California. Local and state governments are more likely to exercise risk in business ventures than in financial wheeling and dealing. These levels of government have invested heavily in entertainment-related activities. The proliferation of theme parks, convention centers, festivals and lotteries complement more traditional commercial and industrial investments, and they are all manifestations of local government entrepreneurial urges that attempt to garner more local residents' discretionary income as well as lure new dollars from beyond the immediate area.

Destination Cities

In this regard, public support for and subsidies to professional sports stadiums and arenas are not substantially different from other edifice complexes and strategies. Cleveland's decision to spend $100 million to build the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is only a difference in degree not kind with its commitment of $400 million for Gund Arena (home of the NBA Cavaliers) and Jacobs Field (for the MLB Indians).

Thomas Dorsey has characterized the relatively recent behavior of municipal government very well:

> "I think what we are entering now is the entrepreneurial phase of municipal government . . . You are seeing a linkage between airport, highway, convention center, stadia financing. They are being integrated into a single economic package that's designed to draw people into that entity—a destination city."[16]

The destination city will provide an inflow of funds to replace those no longer furnished by higher levels of government. That is the hope of local government officials, and professional sports stadiums are an important spoke in a strategy born out of economic imperative.

Conclusions And Policy Implications

Sports stadiums and arenas are being planned and built in unprecedented numbers. There is a temptation to attribute the intense pace of construction to rapacious owners and greedy players. To be sure, financial developments on the supply side of the professional sports industry have contributed significantly to stadium mania, but economic developments elsewhere in the economy are co-conspirators.

Skyboxes and stadium clubs would not be built if there was no demand for them. Indeed, the market segmentation manifested in current stadium design reflects a growing inequality in the distribution of income in the United States and a growing corporate presence at the ballpark. Business once promoted and conducted in boardrooms and restaurants now is facilitated in skyboxes and stadium clubs.

State and municipal governments have countered the financial stress brought on by a more parsimonious federal government and other negative trends, such as suburban relocation of businesses, by becoming more entrepreneurial. Stadiums, arenas and convention centers constitute part of a broader developmental strategy that is designed to improve a local or state government balance of payments position and, to a large extent, replace the inflow of money no longer provided by higher-level governments. The emphasis is on making the city or state a destination for consumers and businesses beyond the state and municipal borders.

This strategy is inherently risky; it is workable as long as few others employ it. The extent to which cities and states embrace the strategy jeopardizes a substantial taxpayer investment. The cost of new stadiums and arenas planned between now and the year 2000 exceeds $4 billion. The danger is that cities live in an Alice-In-Wonderland world where they have to run faster and faster just to stay where they are. At this point it would be prudent for state and local governments to collectively reassess the destination strategy at least as it relates to professional sports.

The reality is that professional sports are not a major contributor to state and local economies. Most of the spending on professional sports substitutes for other recreational spending within the community or is compensated for by financial outflows triggered by characteristics in some ways unique to the professional sports industry.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Johnson, Kerry and Belko, Mark. "Super Stadiums: Bait or Burden." *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, October 29, 1995, p. A1.
2. This figure was determined through combining the information provided in the Johnson and Belko *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* 1995 article that identified facility construction plans for the MLB, NFL and NHL with the NBA construction plans identified in a September 18, 1995 survey undertaken by *USA Today*. See Johnson and Belko, op. cit., p. A1.
3. See, for example, "Sports Value," *Financial World*, August-September 1995, p. 3. In this supplement to the regular *Financial World* magazine, the value of the Dallas Cowboys was estimated to be $238 million.
4. In 1994, stadium revenues for the Cowboys were $37.3 million and $15.4 million for the Miami Dolphins, the NFL stadium venue runner-up. The third-place finisher, the Philadelphia Eagles, generated $8.3 million in venue revenues. See Bob Verdi, "Browns Move Bears Watching—and Worrying", *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1995, Section 4, pp. 1 and 5.
5. National Football League. "The Commissioner's Report." *NFL Report*, Winter 1994, p. 2.
6. *Financial World*. "Speaking of Numbers: Who Needs New Venues and Where to Build Them." *Sports Value*, August-September 1995, p. 3.
7. Waggoner, Glen. "Money Games." *Esquire*, June 1982, pp. 49-60.
8. Pierson, Don. "Jerry's Way." *Chicago Tribune*, November 23, 1995, Section 4, p. 1.
9. The Charlotte Coliseum has 23,906 seats. The Alamodome in San Antonio can be configured to seat more for basketball, but the NBA Spurs are threatening to leave San Antonio if a new arena for their exclusive use is not provided.
10. Heylar, John. "For Team Owners, More Is Never Enough." *The Wall Street Journal*, May 3, 1996, p. B7.
11. There is another possible solution to the problem of overbuilding. Ronald Coase (1962) has theorized that the private sector will take measures to internalize externalities that exist. Transactions costs and/or a lack of information could prevent the development of a social institution or a merging of firms/teams necessary to such internalization. Stadiums may be oversupplied because of misinformation or overestimations of revenues generated by the stadiums separately. In such instances, it is conceivable that the public sector could bribe the teams into sharing a facility. Indeed, the public sector should pursue such a strategy, theoretically, as long as the bribe is less than the cost of building and operating a second stadium and the money value of the negative pecuniary externalities created by inter-stadium competition for highly attended events. Alternatively, the public sector could bribe one team into selling out to the other owner thus internalizing the externality through a merger.

There is some evidence that the Coase theorem has applicability to hockey and basketball. Teams in the NBA and NHL are increasingly under the control of a single owner or ownership by the compatibility of site lines for basketball and hockey that allow the sports to be played in the same arena. No such compatability exists for football and baseball (football/baseball and either basketball or hockey for that matter), and the resulting transaction costs (moveable seating, for example) are likely sufficiently high to discourage the merger Coase hypothesized.

12. Dortch, Shannon. "The Future of Baseball." *American Demographics and Consumer Trends*, April 1996, p. 24.
13. Shropshire (1995) looked at a sample of ten cities that built or plan to build a stadium or arena in 1995 or 1996. The average cost of building these ten stadiums or arenas was estimated at $159.5 million. The lowest priced facility, $120 million, was an arena built in Vancouver in 1995. See Stropshire, Kenneth L. *The Sports Franchise Game: Cities in Pursuit of Sports Franchises, Events, Stadiums and Arenas*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press). 1995.
14. See, for example: (1) Robert A. Baade and Richard F. Dye, *The Impact of Stadiums and Professional Sports on Metropolitan Area Development, Growth and Change*, Spring 1990. (2) Andrew Zimbalist, *Baseball and Billions*, (New York: Basic Books, Harper Collins publishers), 1992. (3) James Quirk and Rodney D. Fort, *Paydirt*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 1992. (4) Benjamin A. Okner, Subsidies of Stadium and Arenas, in Roger G. Noll, editor, *Government and the Sports Business*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution), 1974, pp. 325-347. (5) Mark S. Rosentraub, et al., "Sport and Downtown Development Strategy: If You Build It, Will Jobs Come?" *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1994, Volume 16, Number 3, pp. 221-239.
15. Merski, Paul G., et al. *Facts & Figures on Government Finance*. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press). 26th Edition, 1991, p. 163.
16. Heap, Peter. "Cities Often Dream Up Stadiums Before Thinking of Payment." *The Bond Buyer*, June 11, 1996.