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Financing Small Market Baseball: A Case Study of the Auburn Doubledays

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Abstract

Professional baseball has been played in Auburn, New York, since 1958, but over the last few years, the team has experienced a period of financial losses. The biggest hit was in 2013, when the team lost $125,000. The City of Auburn, which owns the team, no longer has the money to support the franchise, so in order to keep baseball in Auburn, the team must become self-sufficient. Auburn is the second-smallest market in the league, so the community needs to get behind the team in order for it to stay in operation. New management came in for the 2014 season and turned the operation around, losing only $5,000 for the year. Data were collected over the course of the season on a number of different variables, and those variables were regressed on dependent variables to see what significantly impacted points of interest for the team. The goal of this research was to use the results generated from the statistical procedures to isolate trends in the data, in order to capitalize on them to create a better approach moving forward. Keeping the franchise in Auburn is the ultimate goal of the project, and implementing the results will be the first step on the way to accomplishing this goal.

Executive Summary

The city of Auburn, New York, has been home to a professional baseball team since 1958. Major League teams like the Washington Nationals, Toronto Blue Jays, New York Yankees and others have all sent players there to develop and refine the skills they need to become major league-caliber players. The team that currently plays in Auburn is known as the Doubledays, in tribute to famous Auburnian and creator of baseball, Abner Doubleday. The Doubledays are part of the New York Pennsylvania League, which is made up of fourteen teams from all over the northeast, and the team plays 38 home games a season. This league is the first stop for recent draft picks and international signings, as they hone their skills trying to make the big leagues.

Operationally, the teams in Auburn have struggled financially for the past few seasons, suffering consistent losses. The team has had to get bailed out by the city and other local foundations that want to keep baseball around. The year 2013 was the worst financially for the franchise, which lost almost $125,000. A repeat of that season would force the city to sell the franchise to someone who would relocate it elsewhere. The board that oversees operations decided to clean house and brought in a new general manager, who then hired his own staff. This new staff operated the team in 2014 and broke even financially, but expenses caused by prior wrongdoings created a $5,000 loss. Keeping baseball in Auburn hinges on the financial success of the operation as it moves forward, and there is no margin for error.

I was brought on to the team in the spring of 2014 as a finance associate. My job was to record all of the financial transactions and set up recording and control procedures to measure financial performance and keep costs low. My role with the team became that and so much more, due to the departure of the concessionaire, who was hired to run the concession stand. I learned a

lot about myself being thrust into something with no experience and no training. This opportunity also gave me insight into the fan experience and what they looked for in the ballpark.

Over the course of the season, data were collected on a wide range of variables. They included common ones like month, day, and time, to the different types of promotions being run on a particular day. These included fireworks, entrance giveaways, kids' group nights, and buyout nights. Using all of those as factors, statistical tests were done to see which were significant in changing the dependent variables. What was tested was the impact on ticket, concession, program, kids' game, and merchandise revenue, as well as turnstile attendance. Any significant factors that were discovered could then be used to determine trends that management could capitalize on to better their financial position moving forward.

My combining personal observations with the results from the statistical tests generated some important findings for the team. Thursdays became a point of discussion, because the promotion on that day is that some concession items are sold for a dollar. It is very popular, and attendance and ticket revenue increase, but expenses skyrocket, and the concession spending per person actually drops. This is an important tradeoff that must be managed effectively. Sundays were statistically shown to be not as popular, resulting in decreases in most of the dependent variables tested. General managers in this league, starting in 2016 can bid on days to host games, so it might be worth bidding on all the days but Sunday because of the significance of these results. Kids' Days were seen as very beneficial to the team in 2014. Kids' Days are group nights when a youth group, usually a Little League, is invited to come to the ballpark. The kids receive free tickets, but the parents have to pay admission. The data showed that these group nights brought in 10% of stadium capacity, and ticket revenue increased significantly as well. Kids'

Days are something the team is trying to implement as much as possible for the upcoming season.

The year 2014 was a year for the Doubledays when losses were decreased and strides were made to keep a team playing in Auburn for years to come. By continuing to operate fiscally responsibly and implementing what was learned in 2014, the team has a chance to one day be profitable again. With proper controls in place and the right front office staff running the operations, the future of baseball in Auburn will be more stable. Continuing the tradition of professional baseball for another 57 years in Auburn, New York, is the goal of the franchise as well as the goal of this research project.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Professional baseball has been played in the small city of Auburn, New York, every year since 1958. Auburn Community Baseball operates the franchise, but the team itself is owned by the City of Auburn. The current team that plays in town is known as the Auburn Doubledays, named after the creator of baseball, Abner Doubleday. Doubleday is actually from the Auburn area, so the name is in tribute to his legacy and what he did to develop the game. His legacy still lives on in the ballpark through the team's mascot, Abner, who interacts with fans during the games, sporting the thick mustache that Doubleday had. The team has been known as the Doubledays since 1996; before that it was called by the same name as its Major League Baseball parent club, whoever that was at the time. Currently, the team is affiliated with the Washington Nationals, and the Nationals are responsible for filling the roster with players. The Toronto Blue Jays, Houston Astros, New York Yankees and others have all had their players call Falcon Park home over the years.

The Doubledays are a member of the New York Pennsylvania League of Professional Baseball (NYPL). This league consists of fourteen teams spread throughout the northeast. As the name states, most of the teams used to be located in New York and Pennsylvania, but the league has since expanded since its inception in 1930. The team furthest north plays in Vermont, and the league stretches south to West Virginia. It is classified as Short Season A by Minor League baseball and becomes the starting point for players to begin their journey to the big leagues. Short Season A is the first rung on the organizational ladder that players must climb to make it to the big time. That means the Doubledays are made up of recent draft picks and signees from Latin America, and the average age of the team is around 21 or 22.

There is a wide range of markets that host NYPL teams. The largest market in the league is Brooklyn, and the smallest is Batavia, a small town south of Rochester. Auburn is the second smallest market in the league, and a lot of challenges are presented because of this. The team must work hard to develop and maintain a positive image in the community because the team needs support from a large portion of the community to sustain itself. Brooklyn needs just .2% of its population to attend a game in order to sell out, while the Doubledays need 9% of residents to attend. Small market baseball is a delicate business with a lot of risk and a huge reliance on community backing to succeed.

The Auburn Doubledays have had a recent history of consistent financial losses. Different foundations and organizations, as well as the city itself, have intervened to bail out the team by providing much-needed funds. In 2013, the team had its worst season, losing around $125,000. Auburn Community Baseball decided a change was necessary, so they went out and hired a new general manager, and he, in turn, went out and assembled his staff. I was brought on in January of 2014 as the Finance Associate. It was my responsibility to attempt to regain financial order and establish effective controls for financially sound operations in the future. The 2014 season saw the loss dramatically decrease to only $5,000, and if the expenses from prior years borrowing were removed, the team broke even. However, as is the case in small market baseball, one year does not keep a team operating. A consistent pattern must emerge, and financial stability is required to maintain operations. Taking the data collected over the course of the 2014 season will hopefully provide a roadmap to continuing the tradition of professional baseball in Auburn, New York.

Chapter 2

Reflection

My Experience

When originally approached with the opportunity to work for the Auburn Doubledays, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I was told that the organization had been going through a rough patch financially and had a problem keeping general managers around for periods longer than one year. When I arrived at the office for the first time in January 2014, I could not predict what the next few months would have in store for me, but if I could go back and reevaluate my decision, knowing what I do today, I still would not change what happened, and I would do it all again in a heartbeat.

The first day I arrived in Auburn was a cold day in January. Driving through the small community of Auburn, New York, I had no idea where I was headed. I could not see a ballpark with its standout features, like a grandstand or large parking lot, but upon arrival, I saw a little ballpark tucked in between houses and an industrial park. It was much smaller than I expected, to say the least. The office was even less like the stereotype ballpark, with just two rooms: one large staff room with desks and a conference table, and a ticket office. There is not a lot of room for staff in the stadium, which was all right because on that day the Doubledays had two employees, the general manager and me, who worked only one day of the week because of classes. My first task as the Finance Associate was to comb through the records from last year to determine who was a sponsor, how much they paid, and how much they should have paid. This task sounds simple, but it was quite the opposite. To make a long story short, I still have no idea of the answers to any of those questions, and that gave me an idea as to why the team had been

struggling struggled financially recently. If people were getting free advertising, then why would they have any incentive to pay?

That assignment occupied most of my time in Auburn that spring, in addition to my role as accountant, for which I would enter all transactions into Quickbooks and write any checks that needed to go out to the team's vendors. Once the school year concluded, I started working for the Doubledays full time. The largest project I was tasked with was to get the ticketing system figured out and to set up the printers to start printing season tickets. Again, this sounds simple, but in actuality, this process took a couple weeks of my time. Luckily, this was the middle of May, and the season did not start until June 13th, but time was critical, especially with the limited staff we had.

Our general manager wanted the team to use Glitnir for our ticketing system, because that is what they used at his former team, and he had background in it. However, because of the switch and the time Glitnir took to set up the system, it was a constant back and forth with them trying to hurry up the process. The most excruciating part of this song and dance was when the system was set up and tickets were ready to be printed. First of all, the printers we had at the ballpark were at least ten years old, and there was no literature on the Internet to explain how they worked. Basically, I had to troubleshoot the printer, as well as get it to network with the computers, because these types of printers are not the classic plug-and-go devices that home printers are. They require specific print options and configuration in order to transfer data onto the ticket.

Once the system was finally set up, it was time to print. However, because the printers were so rare, Glitnir had no sense of the dimensions or how to properly code them, so it took three days of troubleshooting to finally lay out the tickets correctly. It would have gone faster if I

had had access to the source code, so I could have gone in and corrected it myself, but Glitnir does not give up that control. I had to email pictures of the printed tickets to Glitnir, so they could fix them, and then repeat the process over and over. Finally, once that was all resolved, it became time to print. I personally printed the tickets, which took a full two days. Over 10,000 tickets were printed.

The next main challenge for the team before the season was to get the ballpark ready to host games. The most difficult part of this was the outfield wall. Falcon Park has a sixteen-foot-tall fence in the outfield, which is covered in advertisements. The signs that were previously attached to the wall were made of vinyl and had started to show signs of aging, mainly becoming brittle and fading. The team wanted to change up the signage and go with a mesh product instead, because it was cheaper and lighter. However, the mesh made it possible to see the plywood behind, whereas previously the signs had been painted onto the wall. Even though a new sign was hanging up, one could still clearly read what the painted sign behind it said. So that meant that the whole wall needed to get painted. This took a crew of ten people all day, two days before the team was due to arrive.

After the paint had dried overnight, the next day it was time to hang up all the signs for the season. As I mentioned earlier, the wall was sixteen feet tall, and the only way to reach the top was by an extension ladder. One had to physically manhandle the sign and take it up the ladder. The largest sign the team had was is sixteen feet high by twenty-four feet wide and weighed in at around thirty pounds. However, being up that high in the air caused the sign to act like a kite and blow in the wind. It was a challenge controlling the sign long enough, while balancing on the ladder, to get it screwed into the wall. I am perfectly fine with heights, but I was not comfortable being up on that ladder in the wind.

That was the last preseason project. It came time to open the gates for Opening Day. My job during the games was to oversee all of the cash positions in the ballpark and assist when possible. The positions I oversaw included the concession stand, the box office, the merchandise store, and more. I would provide these places with change or additional supplies and help out wherever I could. After the game was over, I would count out all of the drawers and verify the amounts. I would ultimately prepare the nightly cash deposit, as well as prepare the drawers for the next day. All in all, that took about three hours, depending on when I started and on the volume of cash that day. However, this routine was short-lived; only two weeks into the season, I was thrown a curveball.

Originally, to start the season, we had a group come in and run the concession stand for us. They ordered the food, staffed the stands and managed the food during the games. They tried to bring in an upscale and premium menu into the ballpark, but it did not go over as well as they anticipated. After two weeks, they packed up all of their stuff and left, leaving us with an empty concession stand and two days to do something about it before our next home game. Our general manager and a few guys from the Williamsport team, who were doing some consulting for us, sat all of the staff down individually and interviewed us for the new role of running the concession stand. I originally thought that it would be myself and one other guy running it together, but in the end, I was chosen to take over the reigns the run the stand.

I have no food preparation background, so I had no idea what was in store for me. Luckily, our general manager had some connections in the industry, and we had some people from the OnCenter in Syracuse work in the concession stand for us. I am lucky they did, because their knowledge and expertise allowed us to function smoothly and efficiently. Needless to say, this new addition to my job description took up almost 75% of my daily activities among

staffing, ordering, and stocking. I have decided that food and beverage director is not my optimal career goal in life. My life was so absorbed by running the concession stand that I had to work every single off day to catch up on things in advance of the next home game. I had to be forbidden from coming into the office before a certain time of day because the general manager knew I needed a break.

This trend continued until the season was over, at which point I returned to school for my final year. I also remained with the team on a part-time basis, coming out on Fridays to do any necessary accounting work, like recording transactions or writing checks. I learned a lot about Minor League Baseball, and about myself, from that summer and from my exposure to every aspect of the operation. I believe that I have a working knowledge of how teams function and what they need to do in order to be successful.

Myths and Misconceptions

From this work experience, I noticed that many people do not understand all that happens in Minor League baseball. They do not understand all that goes on and why teams make the decisions they do. Everything teams do is for a reason, and if the fans better understood this concept, then many operators' headaches would disappear.

Interactions with Players

One common misconception is that the front office and the players spend time together. This could not be further from the truth. Interaction between the groups was limited to when the staff would occasionally venture down into the clubhouse to get something or to talk with the trainer or manager. Only once do I remember a player walking into our office, and all he wanted was to see if a package had come for him. The team stayed down in the clubhouse when there

was a home game, either practicing, hitting in the batting tunnel, or playing cards with each other, all tasks that never involved us. All that being said, however, there were times that I got to spend with the players.

My longest interaction came with players on airport runs. The trainer would call us, saying how many players were flying in and what time their arrival was. This sounds easy, but the only problem was that the airport was in Syracuse, about forty-five minutes by car from Auburn. Because we were short-staffed and everyone had to do the jobs of five people, everyone hated airport runs. Thesewas not limited to just the beginning and end of the season. Players would get called up, or injured players from teams higher in the organization would come down to rehab with us almost every other day. Keeping up with constant player moves was always a struggle for the team and for the front office. Unfortunately for me, I had the biggest vehicle (a Honda Ridgeline pickup truck), so that meant I made all of the runs that had two or more guys coming in. Compounding this was the fact that I am semi-fluent in Spanish. *Yo sé un poquito* ("I know a little"). This is not enough to have complete conversations, but enough to be dangerous. That means I took the Hispanic player runs too. The car rides were awkward. Think of your spouse's family reunion, and it's your first time there, and then double that. Triple that for the Latin kids, who just sat there with a blank stare for the entire forty-five-minute ride.

The most enjoyable player interaction was going down to the clubhouse with the mail. This was the only time the players were excited to see us. I would usually bring another staff member with me because these players get tons of mail, and usually, big packages. Most of the guys paid no attention to us because they were not expecting anything. However, one pitcher from Venezuela would come up to me every day and quickly say his last name over and over again in anticipation of a letter or package. He was probably the only player in my memory that

never received anything, so every day I would respond, “Sorry, maybe tomorrow.” And then he would smile and walk away until the next day. It was a constant cycle, and I really did feel bad for him. He ended up being my best acquaintance on the team, and I wish him all the best in his pursuit of a long career. Mail-time and player runs were the extent of my seeing the players, even though we both performed our jobs 200 feet from each other for 100 days.

The Cost of Ballpark Food

This was the bane of my existence the entire time I spent in Auburn. As I mentioned, my job description morphed from finance to a multitude of things, and the one that took most of my time was Director of Food and Beverages. It would not be an Auburn Doubledays game if I did not hear someone remark, “The hotdog was $3 last year and now it’s $3.25. Are they trying to price themselves out of the market?” I heard it most of the time relating to beer. Two examples: “A 24-ounce can costs $2.50 at the gas station, why is it $7?” or “The prices of draft beer were lower last year.” The worst would be when people would call us during the day to complain about the food. It became an expected daily nuisance.

One day, the general manager had enough of one woman’s constant complaining about the price of food. He flat-out asked her, “Where do you like to eat?”

“Lasca’s,” she replied. Lasca’s is a local Auburn restaurant whose prices and cuisine compare closely to an Olive Garden or Carrabba’s.

Our GM then said, “Well, at Lasca’s a normal dinner will cost around $12 a person. Here at Falcon Park, you can get any main dish with fries and a 24-ounce soda for no more than $9. Our prices may seem high, but in actuality, going to the ballpark is like going out to a restaurant that has live entertainment.” The woman hung up.

Yes, it is true that ballpark prices for food are inflated compared to a retail outlet or a restaurant. However, what is commonly misunderstood is that the revenue generated from food is crucial to the survival of the team. When you go out to a restaurant, the price they charge covers food costs, employees, utilities and various other expenses. But at the ballpark, we need to cover all the same costs a restaurant has, plus more staff and team expenses, like hotels and transportation. If fans better understood this concept, then it would save people in the field the constant headache of answering why food prices are the way they are.

What Is So Hard About Running a Baseball Team?

What is so hard about running a baseball team? You open the gates and sell food and the players play. That is it. Right? Absolutely not. If it were that simple, then there would be baseball teams in every city and small town throughout the entire country. There is a delicate line between what is absolutely needed and what it would be nice for the fans to have, and these choices often go overlooked by fans. Everyone thinks they are the general manager or should be the general manager, and they are not afraid to let the front office know about it. Professional sports is the one profession, in my opinion, where every little thing the team does is up for debate. I don't go to the fire department and tell them they are putting out fires wrong. Firemen are professionals and are very good at what they do, and so are baseball front offices. These people dedicate their lives to providing communities with affordable entertainment in the form of baseball, so let them do their jobs. This was an all too common problem in Auburn this season, and every one of us on the staff got our taste of it.

On June 12th, the day before opening day, we brought in help to get the souvenir store set up and ready for the season. The woman who came in had a deep connection to baseball and had known our general manager in a prior job she had. She spent all day working on the store, and I

thought it looked fantastic. One season ticket holder, who had a connection to our board of directors, came in that day and wanted to change around the set-up in the store. She came into the office and said, “There is good, there is better, and there is best. This is just good, but I could make it best.”

Being in charge of the concession stand and spending almost all of the game inside the stand brought me into contact with many people who thought I was doing a horrible job. The most common complaint centered on the wait time in the food line. The way the ballpark was set up allowed us to have only one concession stand, which had one grill and two fryers to feed the entire crowd, and naturally that caused a bottleneck on incredibly busy days. There were only three points of sale that we could use to sell food from, and sometimes that was not enough either. What the fans did not understand was that we were operating beyond maximum capacity for the facilities available to us for concessions. There was a game where we almost reached maximum capacity, and it seemed as though everyone wanted food. I had anticipated the popularity of the game, so I brought in all the staff I could, but we still had me making pizzas, our sales guy on the fryer, and our general manager helping out in the front. These lines still would not stop, and the fans were restless, and that’s the one game we realized that this tiny concession stand could not service a full crowd. Of course, the fans thought we were just slow and did not know what we were doing, which was not true in the slightest. That night was the busiest I have ever been in my life doing anything, and I learned that concession operations was not my calling in life.

At the concession stand, we featured daily specials as a way to create variety for season ticket holders and to sell food that would spoil before the next home game. It was something the concession’s advisor (the general manager’s brother in law) and I came up with, and it got rave

reviews. I think that might have been the one aspect of the Doubledays that received more positive comments than negative ones. However, one day late in the season, we ran a BBQ bacon cheeseburger special that was a crowd favorite. It was the last day in the home stand, and we only had a limited number of burger patties, so that, by the sixth inning (we normally closed in the eighth), we sold out of the special. One fan did not appreciate that fact and decided to give my cashier and her runner the middle finger as she walked away.

The only other time anyone else in the concession stand was disrespected was the final Dollar Thursday of the year, when we sold hotdogs, 12-ounce beers and 12-ounce sodas, all for a dollar each. As expected, the lines at the stand were long, and my crew did the best it could to keep up. One fan was not thrilled with the quality of her hotdog and demanded to speak to the manager about it. The cashier went and got me and I came out to talk. The woman said, “I want to speak to the manager.”

“You are. I am the manager,” was my response.

“No the real manager.”

I tried to convince her who I actually was. “I oversee and operate all the food and beverage in the ballpark. There is nobody above me to speak to, so how may I help you tonight?”

“You are running a piece-of-s*** operation here. Look at all these lines and wait times and food prices and I could do a million times better than you. Look at this hotdog. Would you eat that?” As she says this she throws the hotdog in my face and walks away. This whole situation took place in front of the fans waiting in line for food, and the looks on their faces were priceless. Well, mine was too, I’m sure. I was floored that someone would act that way towards me, and I had season ticket holders come up after the game and say they had no problems with me or the food, and that I can’t please everyone. That is a completely accurate statement in my

mind, in response to which some people would argue it should be possible. After all, what's so hard about running a baseball team?

Working in Baseball is Glamorous

The common opinion is that workers of baseball teams have it easy and that working in baseball is something anyone could do. You get to watch the games and not worry about anything and on and on, things quite the opposite to the truth. I could count on one hand how many home games I got to watch in their entirety. For those playing at home, the correct answer is zero. Most of my time was spent either in the concession stand or at our other satellite concession locations, which included the bar down the first-base line and our group tent down the third-base line. It was on rare occasions, usually on slow nights during the week, when I had a chance to watch just a half-inning at most of a game. I would go on the field only if the promotions guy asked for my help in conducting an on-field contest, and that probably happened ten times at the most. Game nights were meant for fans to watch the games, and I took that very seriously, as did most of the staff.

Another aspect of working in baseball that is the opposite of glamorous occurs on rainy days, working with the grounds crew to put on and take off the tarp. It sounds simple, but to the contrary, it is very difficult. Fortunately and unfortunately for us, our tarp was actually in two pieces, one for each side of the infield. That's a good thing, because each of tarp weighs hundreds of pounds when dry. With a night's rain, handling them is like pulling a semi-truck. The key to a successful tarp dump is speed, so pulling a tractor-trailer with eight guys quickly is a struggle and a workout beyond anyone's imagination. The only one that actually enjoyed it was the team's strength coach, who saw it as a workout and always looked forward to it. He was crazy. And we were so lucky as to have the privilege of doing everything twice, because we had

two tarps. The whole process was muddy and wet and tiring and not even close to something anyone would want to line up to do, but tarp pulling was expected of all the front office staff members.

Another fun responsibility of most of the front office personnel was putting in appearances dressed as our mascot, Abner Doubleday. The costume itself could have been worse; it was just a normal baseball uniform with arms and a massive head. The only problem was—and I have photographic evidence to prove it—that this head had been worn for almost twenty years. Thinking about all the sweat accumulating in the head from all of those years, and being subjected to the absolutely putrid smell this caused made me almost vomit. It is probably the worst thing ever, and I give credit to the kid who volunteered to be Abner at games, and to all of those mascots across the country who endure unpleasant conditions for the benefit of the fans. I was "asked" (more of an implication than a request) if I wanted to be Abner at two Little League kickoff events in the Auburn area. I had zero mascot experience, but since I didn't have a choice, I dressed up as a former Civil War general and headed out to their ballparks. Unfortunately for me, I was too good a mascot my first time, and, according to the general manager, I was "a natural." That led to me having to do most of the appearances in that smelly and extremely hot head in the middle of the summer, and if I wasn't as busy as I was during the games, I would have probably had to do it then as well. There is nothing glamorous about being the mascot, but that is just part of the job in Minor League Baseball.

Fans do not fully realize how many hours the front office staff put in. The general impression is that workers have to be there for the home games, but otherwise they can take days off. Actually, it's the opposite. The front office staff work harder on days when the team is on the road than we do when they are at home, because most of those days, we merely set up and

manage game operations. On off days, we recap the prior games and then plan ahead for when the team is next in town. Also, the number of hours spent in the ballpark is staggering during the season, and I don't think that is well known by the general public. In my role as Director of Finance, I was responsible for verifying count-outs from all of the registers and then preparing a deposit with the day's revenue. Even with help from our group sales guy and the general manager, this process took hours, even on the slowest of nights. I think the fastest we ever did a count-out with remaking banks for the next day was 90 minutes. Our goal, time wise, was always to leave before midnight; some days this happened but others not so much. Working from 9 am to midnight is a 15-hour day, and on six-game home stands, the math works out to 90 hours, which is more than double the average person's workweek. There are very few days off, and those are limited to weekends when there are no games, and those times are spent catching up on sleep. I think if everyone knew the actual hours some staff members in baseball work, they would think twice before commenting about how easy it would be. I dare them to try it.

Player interactions, the story behind food prices, the difficulty of running a team and dealing with constant criticism and the less-than-glamorous side of baseball are all truths that many fans I encountered in Auburn did not quite grasp. Working in baseball is something that I enjoyed doing and can see myself doing in the , but it is not for everyone, and it is not as easy as people might think from an outsider's perspective. Making the operations and games look easy, as though anyone could handle them, means we are doing our jobs, and fans don't realize all the behind-the-scenes stuff we have to do in order to make the game an enjoyable experience for everyone.

Free Things Are Not Free

Minor League Baseball teams use creative ways to attract fans to games and a large part of that is entrance giveaways. We gave out magnet schedules, mini-bats, rally towels, and logo baseballs, just to name a few this season in Auburn. However, what fans may or may not understand is that, just because these are freely given, they are not donations. Sponsors pay for the opportunity to place their logo on a giveaway item, and they provide the team with the cost of production, which is built into their sponsorship package. Most teams do not have the resources to give things away without financial backing from a sponsor.

Another "free" item that we used in Auburn this year was the concept of buyout nights. Buyout nights are nights when a sponsor pays the team to essentially buy out the stadium, and the team gives the sponsor tickets (we gave out 5,000 per night in Auburn), with which the sponsor can do as they please. One time a bank did a buyout night, and they had tickets for their customers at all of their branch teller windows. Others distributed them to other businesses they had a relationship with. The general public just sees these as free tickets to the Doubledays, but in reality, somebody paid for them. Also, there is a hope that when these people come to the games, they spend more money on food than they normally would, because they did not feel the ticket cost in the wallet. Fans may view these tickets and giveaways and other items as free for them, and they are, but somewhere behind the scenes somebody paid for all those items in advance.

Some In-Game Promotions Are Fixed

It's the end of the third inning, which means it's time for the mascot race, when Abner would races against the sponsor's mascot, from the first-base dugout to the third-base dugout. On "go," the two would begin a frantic scramble around home plate towards our radio guy, who was

narrating the event for the fans and also marking the finish line. It seems completely spur-of-the-moment and unscripted to the fans, but that just means the mascots are doing a good job, because everything is planned out ahead of time. The outcome of the race is known before the race even starts. No stops were spared for this race. We used the grounds crew vehicle as a way to cheat, injuries were faked, Doubledays players helped by preventing the opponents' mascot from passing—all of it staged ahead of time. In order to provide the fans with a better experience, staging events like this ensures that something shocking or funny or different is bound to happen, and it does, and the crowd loves it.

Another in-game event we had was a trivia challenge entitled, "Are you smarter than the GM?" where randomly chosen contestants would attempt to name more correct answers to a broad question than our general manager could. Not all aspects of the game were fixed; the GM didn't know the question ahead of time and neither did the contestant. The contestant also did not know the game was fixed. What our general manager would do is this: There are 90 seconds between innings. Aftr the umpire had given the signal for one more warm-up pitch, the inning would start, so he would make the game last as long as possible without going overtime. If the contestant got one wrong right away, so would the GM—intentionally. If they had a back-and-forth volley of correct answers, then at time, the GM would guess wrong on purpose. There were times when he guessed incorrectly by accident, but for the most part, wrong answers were intentional, and normally the contestant won.

Just because some on-field promotions are staged doesn't mean all of them are. Those were the only two we used that strayed from a random outcome; the rest were games of chance involving fan contestants. Some examples were "dress like a Doubleday," "dance for your

dinner," and "minute to win it" games. The outcomes of these games were all unknown to the audience and the staff, and games like that are fun too.

The Weatherman Is Always on Speed Dial

"The Doubledays are supposed to have a game tonight, but there is a chance of late afternoon showers that may last through the original planned first pitch." Yes, we put on the Weather Channel in the office and watch the radar, but we are not meteorologists; we work in baseball. Anyone can look at the radar and make a judgment call about the path of storm, but we have no idea of the severity or the duration of rain cells. That is why we put our faith in the experts and their judgment on whether we can get a game in or not. People always call in, asking, "Is the game still on?" or "Why haven't you cancelled yet? It's going to rain." We understand that the skies may look unfriendly, but we have experts saying it will clear, and the game will still go on. People might think that the general manager makes the call to cancel the game. Those people would be correct, but what they don't know is that a lot of other people have a say in when to call it. The weatherman is always on speed dial, and his opinion plays an important role in whether or not to play. The managers from both teams, as well as the umpires, have their input, with travel schedules, pitching rotations, and so forth, to think about. Also, something people might not know is that the Food and Beverage Director has a say as well, because if people are buying food, the game does not get cancelled right away. The team needs to pay for opening the gates and to pay employees. More people are included in the decision of when to cancel rained-out games than might appear at first sight.

A Large Season Ticket Holder Base is a Good Thing

Having a large number of season ticket holders is a blessing and a curse for baseball teams. On the one hand, it provides a lot of up-front money, and guarantees that there will be

people there for every game, so that salesmen will have fewer seats to fill to sell out the game. However, season ticket holders can be some of the cheapest fans in the entire stadium. In Auburn, the average season ticket is discounted over 25% off the normal retail price someone would pay at the box office. The more season ticket holders there are, the fewer seats are available to sell at full price. Obviously, if a seat would not sell for every single game at the window, then season ticket holders are good, but if there is demand, the team actually misses out on potential revenue.

Ticket price differences are clear, but an extension of this affects other locations in the ballpark. Season ticket holders generally do not buy souvenirs, and they also normally do not purchase very much from the concession stand, if anything. For example, one Auburn family purchases six seats, and all they buy among the six of them is one bottle of Mountain Dew for $3.25. That is it. So six seats in the stadium bring in $123.50 at the concession stand for the entire season. However, that is not true of all season ticket holders. Most buy a couple of beers or some food, but for every one of those there is one of the type cited above. Those people drive down per caps, and the team then ends up not maximizing the per seat revenue that they can.

Those are the main monetary reasons that season ticket holders may not be good for the team. In addition, most season ticket holders have a sense of entitlement because they bought tickets for every game. They demand more than the average fan in terms of offerings and promotions and perks, but they do not understand that these come with additional costs to the team that cannot be covered at current ticket prices. One of the most common requests is for wait service, so that people do not have to leave their seats for food. However, a premium service requires a premium price, which they do not want to pay, and if I had a dollar for every time a season ticket holder asked for wait service, I could buy the team. Having a large season ticket

holder base is good for teams, but there is a threshold at which season ticket holders start losing their value for teams, and that is a secret not many people know.

Chapter 3

Data Analysis

Background

Over the course of the 2014 season of the Auburn Doubledays, data were collected for each game. The data points were revenue figures from different areas of operations, as well as attendance numbers and other qualifying data, like the day of the week and any special event. Regressions were run for all the important numbers of the ballpark to determine what factors were statistically significant in the operations. For each dependent variable being tested, results were determined both with opponents and without opponents, to try to isolate significant variables that are under the team's control, because they have no say in what teams they play against. Once the significant variables are discovered, it is important to determine the rationale behind, and the implications of, the results, in order to develop an approach for future seasons to make the team profitable and self-sustaining.

The independent variables being used to build a model included the temperature and the temperature squared. This number was taken at the first pitch of all home games. The amount of rain was also included; it was based on National Weather Service weather reports in the Auburn area in the 24 hours prior to the first pitch. Days of the week and months of the year were also used, as were starting times of the games. Doubleheaders and Opening Day were the two game-related variables used in the regression. The four types of promotions tested were fireworks, giveaways, Kids' Days, and buyout nights. Fireworks happened after the game, and giveaways included: magnet schedules, car decals, lapel pins, rally towels, mini-bats, photo baseballs, and team photos. Kids' Days were group nights when different kids' groups were invited to come to

the ballpark and be recognized. Little Leagues were the most popular groups, but Boy Scouts and libraries were also included. Participating kids received a free ticket to the game, but the rest of the party was charged at the group ticket rate. Buyout nights were nights when a sponsor paid a fee to the team to be the game sponsor, in return for which they received 5,000 tickets to be dispensed however they pleased. Most sponsors gave them out to different people, so they were treated as though the people attending did not pay for the tickets themselves. Also, opponents are included and kept off, to see what remained constant and significant. The change in figures, in terms of the dummy variables (team, month, day, time), was based on a Wednesday game starting at 7:00 pm in the month of June against Batavia.

Literature Review

Dr. Rodney Paul, co-author of a 2007 paper on attendance in the New York Penn League (NYPL), examined factors that had a significant impact on attendance. He and his colleagues took data from all the games in the 2006 season and looked at how winning percentage, market economics, and promotions impacted game attendance. They concluded that population and income per capita were significant at the 1% level, meaning larger and wealthier cities drew more fans. The success of the team was also determined to be significant, with winning teams seeing increased attendance, as opposed to teams at the bottom of the league. This contrasted with the fact that the month of the year was not significant, so there was no drop-off at the middle or end of the season, but with there being games in a three-month period, it is hard to see much of an effect. In terms of promotions, fireworks, kids running the bases and merchandise giveaways were seen to have a positive and significant impact on attendance. Food- and beverage-related results, however, were not seen to be significant in increasing attendance at

NYPL games. Group-related promotions and reduced priced tickets were shown to increase attendance numbers, but not enough to be significant.

In conclusion, according to the findings by Dr. Paul and his colleagues, NYPL fans respond favorably to winning teams and promotions like fireworks, events, and merchandise giveaways. Also, the demographics of the area were seen to be contributing factors. Days of the week, like Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, showed positive and significant increases in fans, while days like Saturday and Sunday were not as popular as anticipated.

Ticket Revenue

The first dependent variable to be considered here relates to the revenue taken in per game. This included season ticket money, as well as individual game-day sales. Flex packs and pre-purchased ticket books were not included in this revenue number, but there were not many of those. This regression attempted to answer the question of what variables lead to increased ticket revenue for a single game, and this did not necessarily have to coordinate with actual attendance, merely revenue taken in. The following table shows the results of the regression output if teams are excluded from calculation.

Table 1: Ticket Revenue without Opponent

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	-28562.65	-1.07	.301
Temperature	816.2684	1.18	.253
Temperature Squared	-5.429769	-1.22	.241
Rain Amount	-840.0318	-1.16	.261
July	167.7894	.545	.593

August	-36.71658	-.076	.940
September	-1910.019	-2.07	.056
Sunday	-1838.323	-2.02	.062
Monday	-713.5458	-1.51	.152
Tuesday	-785.2626	-1.51	.152
Thursday	1575.029	2.72	.016
Friday	-326.2083	-.822	.424
Saturday	556.5875	.762	.458
2:00pm Start	1812.974	1.51	.153
5:00pm Start	1094.599	1.49	.156
Doubleheader	-605.6335	-1.26	.228
Opening Day	1465.457	1.17	.261
Fireworks	35.83302	.071	.944
Giveaway	-371.8645	-1.16	.265
Kids' Days	525.5291	2.08	.056
Buyout Night	-796.0088	-1.30	.213

The *r*-squared of the regression was .811, and the adjusted *r*-squared was .559. September was shown to have a negative and significant impact on ticket revenue, showing a decrease of $1,910 compared to Wednesday games. This result was a little biased, due to the fact that the team played only one game in September, and by that point, the team was out of playoff contention. Having just one event in that category explains most of that significance. Sunday was also found to be significant in reducing ticket revenue at the 10% level. This result is interesting

and goes along with the results Dr. Paul found, that teams did not draw as well on Sundays as would be predicted. The lack of revenue for the team could be the result of the Sunday promotion, which was Li'l Abners Club day, when kids under twelve got in for free.

Thursdays were also significant, but positively increased ticket revenue. As with Sunday, this more than likely had to do with the promotion associated with that day, Dollar Thursday. On these days, beer, hot dogs and soda were all sold for a single dollar, and fans in Auburn came for the bargain prices. However, tickets were not discounted, so fans had to pay full price to get in, which could explain part of the increase the regression results show. Kids' Days were also seen to significantly increase ticket revenue. Normally, when free tickets are given out, ticket revenue falls. With Kids' Day promotions, however, only the participating children received complementary admission, while parents and other family members still had to pay. The results reflect the idea that no parent is going to leave their child unattended at the ballpark, so tickets were always purchased.

Table 2: Ticket Revenue with Opponent

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	43644.77	1.85	.107
Temperature	-1112.300	-1.87	.104
Temperature Squared	7.267960	1.92	.097
Rain Amount	-1966.423	-3.31	.013
Williamsport	603.2702	.762	.471
Mahoning Valley	665.9152	2.49	.042
State College	1699.713	3.83	.006
Hudson Valley	1067.653	2.08	.077

Lowell	1058.997	2.59	.036
Jamestown	2364.645	6.98	.0002
Tri-City	2246.970	3.50	.010
Vermont	1727.893	2.14	.070
July	-651.7388	-1.46	.187
August	-1151.663	-2.33	.053
September	-756.4686	-.485	.642
Sunday	-795.6248	-1.01	.347
Monday	-489.6650	-.970	.3642
Tuesday	-889.6511	-2.60	.036
Thursday	2084.181	2.67	.032
Friday	63.54946	.094	.928
Saturday	1146.740	1.11	.302
2:00pm Start	891.2384	.518	.621
5:00pm Start	717.8755	.628	.550
Doubleheader	-1393.512	-2.09	.075
Opening Day	506.9572	.438	.675
Fireworks	-124.6070	-.271	.794
Giveaway	-182.4140	-.487	.641
Kids' Days	104.2039	.303	.771
Buyout Night	-1177.513	-1.41	.202

With the inclusion of the opponent in the regression analysis, the results change slightly. Temperature squared becomes significant at the 10% level, with an increase in temperature leading to more ticket revenue. The amount of rain also was significant in these findings, with a loss in revenue of $1,966 per inch of rainfall in the 24 hours preceding a game. As for the opponents, all of the teams, with the exception of Williamsport, produced a statistically significant increase in revenue compared to Batavia. This means that Batavia was not the best ticket revenue-drawing opponent, even though that team is the closest geographically to Auburn.

August became negatively significant to ticket revenue with the incluson of opponents, with a decrease of $1,151 compared to a June game, and September went from being significant to insignificant. In terms of the days of the week, Thursday remained significant in both regressions, showing the impact and importance of Thursdays in Auburn with regards to ticket revenue. Tuesday became significant with the addition of opponents, with a negative value, which is consistent with the general mindset that midweek games do not draw as well compared to others. Doubleheaders caused a decrease in ticket revenue, and that was to be expected because there were two doubleheaders during the season, and both were on lesser-drawing days of the week. What is interesting in these results was that Jamestown played in a doubleheader, and they were the most significant team in terms of increased ticket revenue compared to Batavia. So the negative of the doubleheader, compared to the positive of Jamestown, was a little confounding. However, Jamestown no longer has a team, so this result does not mean much in terms of future projections.

Turnstile Attendance

This dependent variable consisted of the number of fans who actually walked through the gates of Falcon Park for every game. This number is less than tickets sold, because not everyone who buys tickets shows up for the games, mainly sponsors and season ticket holders. The goal of this regression was to show which variables actually lead to increased attendance, not just more ticket revenue, to enable the team to use the results to determine what drives the people of Auburn to come down to the ballpark.

Table 3: Turnstile Attendance without Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	-6693.20	-1.01	.331
Temperature	183.5356	1.05	.312
Temperature Squared	-1.175582	-1.02	.325
Rain Amount	-449.2578	-1.75	.010
July	43.14648	.612	.550
August	-63.18159	-.665	.516
September	-368.1099	-1.99	.066
Sunday	-212.7244	-1.18	.256
Monday	-101.3905	-.858	.404
Tuesday	12.72440	.058	.955
Thursday	520.8263	3.57	.003
Friday	34.54961	.261	.797
Saturday	168.0137	1.22	.240
2:00pm Start	470.3949	2.19	.045

5:00pm Start	167.5705	.999	.334
Doubleheader	-62.49382	-.610	.551
Opening Day	429.0456	2.18	.046
Fireworks	93.06557	.873	.396
Giveaway	66.71466	.855	.411
Kids' Days	220.6730	4.24	.0007
Buyout Night	577.6078	4.11	.0009

The *r*-squared of this regression was .816, and the adjusted value was .571, so it is somewhat correlated. The amount of rain that fell in the period before the game is significant at the 1% level, with almost 450 fewer fans attending for every inch of rainfall, compared to the average Wednesday crowd. Unfortunately, the team has no control over the weather, and the turnaway due to rain is unavoidable. September was also significant, but as was mentioned in the ticket revenue section, there was only one game in September, and the team was out of contention. One data point for a month is not enough to statistically conclude anything in terms of trends or patterns.

Thursday was also significant at the 1% level for turnstile attendance. Dollar Day is a popular promotion in Auburn; the discounted food and drinks get the crowds out in packs, and that is reflected in the results, with over 520 more fans going through the gates than there would be on a normal Wednesday. With a sold-out capacity of just over 2,400 people, that increase relates to filling up the park an extra 20% of capacity on Thursdays. At the 5% significance level is the 2:00 pm start, with an increase of 470 fans over the Wednesday night average. This result is interesting because there only three games started at 2:00 pm, and one of them was the last

game of the year, which the regression showed was a loser in terms of turnstile attendance. What made this number positive has to do with the limited sample size, as well as the Father's Day game, which was played at 2:00 pm, and there was a pretty substantial crowd that day. Also significant at 5% was Opening Day. Everyone always wants to see the first game of the year, and even though it rained, the results show that people still came through the gates that night.

Two promotions were statistically significant at the 1% level. One was Kids'Days. Targeting groups of kids to come to the ballpark ensures that the game will be decently attended, and having parents bring their kids essentially guarantees a minimum of two people per family. These extra 220 people coming on weeknights really helped turnstile attendance numbers, as seen in the regression output. Buyout nights also resulted in substantial increases in attendance, approaching 578 additional fans over a normal Wednesday. Giving out 5,000 tickets to a sponsor produced an average return of around 578, which is just over 10%, the projected redemption rate of a normal buyout night. That was almost 25% of the stadium capacity and really helped to fill the stands during nights that normally were not so popular.

Figure 4: Turnstile Attendance with Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	6338.318	1.52	.173
Temperature	-156.0125	-1.48	.183
Temperature Squared	1.021365	1.49	.179
Rain Amount	-1008.139	-5.16	.001
Williamsport	186.8769	.979	.360
Mahoning Valley	96.79289	1.16	.284
State College	412.6869	2.83	.026

Hudson Valley	305.6196	2.02	.084
Lowell	182.9086	1.10	.306
Jamestown	750.7433	5.05	.002
Tri-City	331.2651	1.86	.106
Vermont	215.4234	1.15	.288
July	-98.24507	-.803	.448
August	-182.2032	-1.65	.143
September	8.422038	.023	.982
Sunday	-12.03789	-.040	.969
Monday	-137.1515	-.726	.491
Tuesday	-113.4429	-.688	.534
Thursday	515.4449	2.50	.041
Friday	-103.2727	-.463	.658
Saturday	122.1716	.444	.670
2:00pm Start	168.7773	.397	.703
5:00pm Start	-64.60003	-.219	.833
Doubleheader	-393.5306	-2.11	.073
Opening Day	456.0712	1.57	.160
Fireworks	87.59491	.669	.525
Giveaway	57.09997	.568	.588
Kids' Days	215.8817	3.33	.013
Buyout Night	349.6672	1.49	.179

With opponents included in the regression, the data correlated more with an *r*-squared of .961 and an adjusted *r*-squared of .806. Like the results without the opponents, the amount of rain was statistically significant, but more so in this output, with an inch of raining causing just over 1,000 fewer fans to show up for a game. An inch is a substantial amount of rain, and normally the field would not be playable with that much water, but it makes sense that bad weather keeps fans away. Three visting teams—State College, Hudson Valley and Jamestown—drew a statistically significant amount more than the Batavia games did. The sample size, especially for Hudson Valley (three games), was not enough to enable definite conclusions to be drawn from the data.

Thursday was the only day of the week that was significant; the results show an increase of around 515 fans compared to a Wednesday game, which is very similar to the result from the regression without the opponents. Not so popular with Auburn fans were the doubleheaders. The results show that almost 400 fewer fans showed up for doubleheaders compared to regular games. Monday and Tuesday showed a negative impact on the turnstile numbers, and these were the days of the doubleheaders, so part of this influence might be caused by the day of the week. Also double the amount of baseball in one day is a lot for some people to handle, so doubleheaders are generally less popular. This common belief amongst operators was demonstrated by these findings.

The only promotion in this regression that was significant was that Kids' Days adding about 215 people. This finding was mentioned above in the "Without Opponent" section, where it was also found to be significant, which demonstrates the power of kids' group nights and their impact on turnstile attendance.

Concession Sales Per Capita

After determining what variables impact ticket sales and who shows up for the games, it is important to know what factors affect spending in different areas of the ballpark. The biggest revenue generators inside the park are the concession areas. It is important to determine what factors increase and decrease spending, in order to properly staff and stock the stands and to optimize expenses.

Figure 5: Concessions Per Capita without Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	69.70858	1.88	.080
Temperature	-1.638946	-1.68	.113
Temperature Squared	.010830	1.70	.109
Rain Amount	.854261	.898	.383
July	-.901995	-2.45	.027
August	-.578929	-2.03	.060
September	-2.537481	-2.45	.027
Sunday	-1.643109	-2.42	.029
Monday	-.333029	-.645	.529
Tuesday	-.519750	-1.01	.329
Thursday	-1.430126	-2.42	.029
Friday	-.152000	-.220	.829
Saturday	.678969	1.29	.217
2:00pm Start	1.077586	.995	.336
5:00pm Start	1.139325	1.72	.106

Doubleheader	.017328	.048	.962
Opening Day	1.717820	1.56	.140
Fireworks	-.676816	-1.24	.233
Giveaway	-1.283703	-3.99	.001
Kids' Days	-.017426	-.064	.950
Buyout Night	-1.750011	-3.26	.005

All three of the months of July, August, and September were statistically significant in the regression and lowered the per cap compared to June. This was a consequence of the departure of the concessionaire, who operated only in June, after which the team took over operations for the remaining months. The team brought the concession menu back to the basics and allowed fans to choose whether they wanted a combo meal or not. In contrast, the old menu had a lot of premium options that were only sold as a combo, so prices were higher because fans lacked a choice. With the new menu, the per cap did decrease, as evidenced by the regression results, but so did food and labor costs, which are not reflected in the regression. The cost percentages were still exactly where the team wanted them; they just took in less revenue per fan than they had in June.

Sunday was a statistically significant day with a negative effect, dropping the per cap on that day to over a $1.64 less than a Wednesday. This could be a result of the promotion the team ran on Sundays, when kids got a free juice drink and ice cream. The team paid a unit cost of 20 cents for both items together, which, on a normal day, would have cost the purchaser $4.00. That lost revenue could partially explain the drop, and the rest might be due to the fact that people do not buy as much food Sundays. Thursday was also significant, with a negative effect of selling

everything for a dollar that day. What was gained from increased ticket revenues was lost in decreased concession spending per person. People were buying more food, but they were paying drastically less for it, which decreased the spending per fan by almost $1.50, and the expenses only increased. That is the tradeoff teams make when deciding whether or not to do concession-related promotions.

Giveaway days, according to the data, had a negative impact on the concessions' per cap, and most of this was probably a coincidence, because most giveaways were on days of the week that had per caps lower than on normal days. A giveaway just happened to take place then, as opposed to its causing the lower spending. Surprisingly, buyout nights resulted in a lower per cap in the concession stand. The general thought is that when people get in for free, they spend some money in the concession stand and maybe some on merchandise, but the data show the opposite effect. People in Auburn get a free ticket and then decide to have a free night at the ballpark and do not spend any money. Hopefully, the free experience is enjoyable and the fans will come back and pay full price next time.

Figure 6: Concession Per Capita with Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	52.96072	.672	.523
Temperature	-1.289316	-.606	.563
Temperature Squared	.008964	.639	.543
Rain Amount	4.316500	2.03	.082
Williamsport	1.301680	1.38	.211
Mahoning Valley	.889532	1.12	.301
State College	-.113769	-.091	.930

Hudson Valley	.832413	.487	.641
Lowell	2.017069	1.93	.095
Jamestown	-.764339	-.891	.403
Tri-City	.788264	.507	.628
Vermont	1.763189	1.63	.148
July	-1.668731	-2.54	.038
August	-1.306648	-2.09	.075
September	-4.949247	-2.31	.054
Sunday	-2.933444	-2.13	.071
Monday	-.189047	-.113	.913
Tuesday	.005419	.004	.997
Thursday	-.540139	-.542	.605
Friday	.765564	.590	.574
Saturday	.847681	.434	.678
2:00pm Start	3.966620	1.42	.198
5:00pm Start	2.695409	1.30	.235
Doubleheader	.921992	.805	.448
Opening Day	1.354257	.760	.472
Fireworks	-.246720	-.340	.744
Giveaway	-1.328815	-3.77	.007
Kids' Days	-.522104	-1.55	.166
Buyout Night	-.363745	-.286	.783

The most surprising result from this regression the significance of the amount of rain. Although prior regressions proved that rain keeps fans away from the ballpark, those who do come spend more than the average fan would at a game by over $4.00.

The Lowell Spinners are the only team that provided a significant variation from Batavia in terms of per caps in the concession stand, with an increase of just over two dollars. The cause of that exactly is unknown, but it is highly unlikely that that the presence of the team caused it. July, August, and September were also significant in this regression, for the same reason as before, with the change of concession operators and economic models. Sunday again was significant, which was more than likely related to the free items for kids, which is a main reason why people spend money in the concession stand in the first place.

Giveaway nights again were significant at the 1% level, and a combination of things beyond the straight giveaway promotion causes this to be significant. Both with and without opponents, concessions yield fairly similar results as to what is significant.

Kids' Games Per Capita

The kids' games at Falcon Park included a bounce house, an inflatable batting game and a pitching speed-reader. The first two were free of charge, and the pitching game was two dollars for four throws. The games were down the right field line and not in the most highly trafficked areas. The only reason to be down there was to play with the games. The per capita number was based on turnstile attendance, which included fans of all ages. It was not possible to accurately separate out the kids from the adults in the attendance figures, but, obviously, adults were not playing these games. The actual per cap number from the regression will be lower than it

actually is, but the significant factors are present, regardless of who was included in the regression.

Figure 7: Kids' Games Per Capita without Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	1.287229	.529	.604
Temperature	-.030719	-.479	.639
Temperature Squared	.000198	.467	.647
Rain Amount	-.137339	-2.90	.011
July	.049806	1.45	.168
August	.034775	1.33	.204
September	-.095821	-1.22	.241
Sunday	-.021631	-.287	.778
Monday	.014546	.274	.788
Tuesday	-.039118	-.831	.419
Thursday	-.032982	-.926	.369
Friday	-.024528	-.894	.386
Saturday	.012632	.328	.748
2:00pm Start	.016857	.175	.864
5:00pm Start	.003286	.058	.955
Doubleheader	-.014425	-.551	.590
Opening Day	.177127	2.03	.060
Fireworks	-.008775	-.215	.832
Giveaway	-.047945	-1.51	.152

Kids' Days	.038569	1.07	.303
Buyout Night	-.035157	-1.29	.216

Not much correlation exists in the regression, with an *r*-squared of .542 and an adjusted *r*-squared of -.069, so there is not a lot that can be inferred based on the results of this test. The amount of rain in the 24 hours before first pitch was significant and reduced the amount of kids' game revenue by about thirteen cents a person. This is not surprising, because rain keeps most people away, especially families, which leaves season ticket holders as the main fans in attendance. These people are not the ones spending money on the speed pitching.

The only other significant variable was Opening Day, and that caused a 17-cent increase per capita. There was an extended rain delay for that game, which gave kids time to go down and throw on the speed pitch game without missing the ball game. That could be the reason for the increase on that day. There were fireworks that night, so families were given an incentive to come down to the park and not leave, as they would have for most other rainy games. What is surprising in this result is that Kids' Days were not statistically significant, especially because most of the groups were area Little Leagues. The logical thought would be that amateur baseball players would want to play a baseball game like speed pitching. The data do show an increase per capita on those days, which was to be expected; the result, however, was not significant.

Figure 8: Kids' Games Per Capita with Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	.11647	.019	.985
Temperature	-.008416	-.053	.960
Temperature Squared	.000087	.082	.937

Rain Amount	-.286167	-1.55	.164
Williamsport	.114324	1.22	.263
Mahoning Valley	.047050	.842	.428
State College	.067208	1.17	.279
Hudson Valley	-.020055	-.207	.842
Lowell	-.032147	-.348	.738
Jamestown	.075705	1.17	.279
Tri-City	.102314	.840	.429
Vermont	.081940	.693	.511
July	.123754	2.02	.084
August	-.017464	-.189	.855
September	-.190853	-1.29	.238
Sunday	-.006320	-.044	.966
Monday	.046135	.340	.744
Tuesday	-.054926	-.581	.580
Thursday	.064700	.571	.586
Friday	.038588	.336	.747
Saturday	.064653	.582	.579
2:00pm Start	.169849	.923	.387
5:00pm Start	.044252	.389	.709
Doubleheader	-.020612	-.232	.823
Opening Day	.309285	1.87	.105
Fireworks	.016154	.253	.808

Giveaway	-.023202	-.359	.730
Kids' Days	.032721	.496	.635
Buyout Night	.064844	.522	.618

In terms of correlation, this regression is very similar to the one without the opponents, with an *r*-squared of .661, which is stronger than the other one, but has an adjusted *r*-squared of -.693. Having a negative adjusted *r*-squared means that the variables are not good predictors for the model. Put another way, the kids' game income is not related to any of these independent variables, and that makes the revenue very hard to predict for the team. The only significant term in this regression is the month of July, which increased revenue by twelve cents per person compared to June, and this finding was not revealed by the other regression. Also, none of the significant factors from omitting the teams was significant when the teams were added in. More sampling needs to be done in order to shore up the model and generate statistically significant results from which conclusions can be drawn.

Program Sales Per Capita

The team used to sell programs for two dollars, but last season, the team lowered the price to a dollar in hopes of moving more programs. Also, included in the program were advertisements signed by some of the Doubledays; if someone received a signed program, then they won a prize. By adding this incentive, it was hoped that program sales would increase. The aim of this regression was to discover what additional factors influenced program sales, in hopes of increasing sales in the future.

Figure 9: Program Sales Per Capita without Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	.481306	.524	.608
Temperature	-.010240	-.416	.683
Temperature Squared	.000071	.433	.672
Rain Amount	.032069	1.07	.304
July	-.017735	-2.41	.029
August	-.015595	-1.10	.289
September	-.008269	-.284	.781
Sunday	.019603	.600	.558
Monday	.017267	1.13	.276
Tuesday	.020818	.609	.552
Thursday	-.024520	-1.09	.291
Friday	.012580	.536	.600
Saturday	.006391	.322	.752
2:00pm Start	.025350	.725	.480
5:00pm Start	.006359	.264	.795
Doubleheader	-.007079	-.439	.667
Opening Day	-.000108	-.007	.995
Fireworks	.007299	.601	.557
Giveaway	-.014286	-1.34	.199
Kids' Days	-.012849	-1.35	.198
Buyout Night	-.031815	-1.71	.108

Just like the kids' games regression, the programs per cap regression did not have many significant variables; only the month of July was significant at the 5% level. From a sales standpoint, the month of July was not a great program-selling month, as is evidenced by the results of the regression. August was not a good month, either, and that is also shown in the table, but it was not enough to be significant. This time, the adjusted *r*-squared was positive at .398, and the *r*-squared was .742, meaning there was some correlation in the regression, but it was not strong.

Figure 10: Program Sales Per Capita with Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	.096638	.102	.921
Temperature	-.003090	-.127	.903
Temperature Squared	.000037	.233	.822
Rain Amount	.109987	2.09	.075
Williamsport	.008407	.255	.806
Mahoning Valley	-.007126	-.464	.656
State College	-.034115	-1.31	.233
Hudson Valley	-.016995	-.708	.502
Lowell	-.016970	-.453	.664
Jamestown	-.077589	-2.22	.062
Tri-City	.020035	.537	.608
Vermont	.032036	1.09	.312
July	-.006911	-.217	.834

August	-.043702	-2.28	.057
September	-.053403	-.924	.386
Sunday	.037929	.528	.614
Monday	.050110	1.02	.342
Tuesday	.051749	1.11	.302
Thursday	.008242	.174	.867
Friday	.062943	1.12	.298
Saturday	.039663	.688	.514
2:00pm Start	.058497	.835	.432
5:00pm Start	.033113	.650	.537
Doubleheader	.057048	1.56	.162
Opening Day	-.031978	-.812	.443
Fireworks	.017888	1.03	.337
Giveaway	-.004921	-.192	.854
Kids' Days	-.028200	-2.11	.073
Buyout Night	.030882	.612	.560

Adding the opponents to the regression for programs per capita made the correlation a little stronger, with an *r*-squared of .879 and an adjusted *r*-squared very similar to the one before. There are a few more significant variables in this result compared to one without the opponents. The amount of rain was the only statistically significant variable that increased the per cap on program sales. This could be coincidental, or it could be that people wanted something to read during the rain delay. Also, the only people going to games with a lot of rain in the forecast were

season ticket holders, and those were the normal program purchasers. The same amount of programs were purchased every day; however, there were less people in attendance, which increased the per cap.

Jamestown was the only significant team in the regression, and that might be from the timing of their visits. They did not come until late in July and in August, which are two months that sold fewer programs. They were significant, for the most part, due to the timing of the contests. August is significant in these results, and July is not, so adding the teams reversed the significant months for program sales drop-offs. Either way, the programs did not sell as well later in the season as they had in June.

Kids' Day was a promotion that had a significant impact on the program sales decreasing the per cap by almost 3 cents for programs. This had a lot to do with the nature of the promotion, with families and groups attending the games. A family of four would buy only one program. That, by its nature, lowers the per cap. So the additional family members on these Kids' Days probably explains the drop in the per cap.

Merchandise Sales Per Capita

The merchandise was purchased before the season started and was not reloaded at any point during the year. The only addition was Team Card Sets in August; otherwise; the merchandise remained the same all year, or until certain items sold out. No sales or special discounts or promotions were offered in the merchandise store. The revenue was all generated from walkup sales on the night of the game. The regression, in combination with what was actually sold, should give a good representation of what types of items sell well on certain days and should indicate if reordering is necessary, based on the data.

Figure 11: Merchandise Sales Per Capita without Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	41.58435	3.88	.001
Temperature	-1.060828	-3.73	.002
Temperature Squared	.006900	3.69	.002
Rain Amount	-.051842	-.095	.926
July	-.300649	-2.71	.016
August	-.008638	-.091	.929
September	.268658	1.07	.300
Sunday	.084890	.283	.781
Monday	.002212	.009	.993
Tuesday	.165514	.578	.572
Thursday	-.391730	-1.74	.103
Friday	.167201	.683	.505
Saturday	-.255022	-.850	.409
2:00pm Start	-.176572	-.547	.593
5:00pm Start	.098239	.504	.622
Doubleheader	-.479602	-4.71	.0003
Opening Day	-1.152425	-2.92	.011
Fireworks	-.122664	-.717	.484
Giveaway	.094147	.613	.549
Kids' Days	-.250496	-2.06	.058
Buyout Night	-.702866	-3.32	.005

In this regression, as opposed to some of the other per cap tests, quite a few variables ended up being significant The *r*-squared hovers around the level of the others, at .725, and the adjusted *r*-squared shows a similar trend, at .358, meaning there is some correlation, but it is not strong. As the temperature rose, the data show that the spending per fan on merchandise decreased. There are a number of possible explanations for this. The first is that on cold nights, some fans purchased jackets from our stand. Second, June was colder then the following months, so as it got warmer there was decreased demand for merchandise, because most fans had already been exposed to everything by that point. July was a negatively significant month and that fits with the idea, just mentioned, of a stale inventory. The merchandise in the stand in July had been there since the beginning of the season, and no new items were added until August, so it was a slower month of sales for that reason.

None of the days of the week or start times were significant, meaning spending was about the same per person per day, which is information that is useful for stocking and staffing purposes. Doubleheaders, however, showed a decrease in spending, and again, that could mostly be explained by timing in the year when these games took place. What is surprising, however, is that Opening Day was significant, but had a lower per cap than the typical Wednesday game. All of the inventory was new at that point, and it was the first chance to buy items, but nobody did. That could be because the rain that day keeping people tucked under the overhang in the stadium. Opening Day, in theory, should be a solid merchandise day, but the data from last season showed the opposite.

Two promotions were also negatively significant: Kid's Days and and buyout nights. Kids' Days' are interesting because kids drive most of the merchandise sales at the ballpark. As

for group buyout nights, the plan is for lower-priced items to sell well, but that was not the case last season. The data have already shown that the fans who come with free tickets on buyout nights do not buy food, now we can see that they do not buy merchandise, either. This shows that when people in Auburn get free tickets to the Doubledays, most intend to have a free night out at the ballpark and not spend any money, and the results of the regressions prove this.

Figure 12: Merchandise Per Capita with Opponents

Variable	Coefficient	T-Statistic	Probability
Constant	44.05807	3.05	.019
Temperature	-1.145395	-2.91	.023
Temperature Squared	.007513	2.84	.025
Rain Amount	.272835	.335	.748
Williamsport	-.002272	-.004	.997
Mahoning Valley	-.108652	-.314	.763
State College	-.541280	-.984	.358
Hudson Valley	-.179265	-.317	.760
Lowell	-.429909	-.751	.477
Jamestown	-.417972	-.863	.417
Tri-City	.313177	.515	.622
Vermont	-.098192	-.160	.877
July	-.036113	-.109	.917
August	-.148756	-.521	.619
September	.576773	.537	.608
Sunday	1.045852	1.72	.280

Monday	.549903	.854	.421
Tuesday	.529753	1.10	.307
Thursday	-.110135	-.202	.846
Friday	.654868	1.03	.337
Saturday	.287518	.396	.704
2:00pm Start	-.699171	-.527	.615
5:00pm Start	-.326890	-.362	.728
Doubleheader	.196853	.367	.725
Opening Day	-1.357214	-1.86	.105
Fireworks	-.203397	-.502	.631
Giveaway	.215563	.853	.422
Kids' Days	-.340743	-1.74	.125
Buyout Night	-.284189	-.428	.681

Adding the opponents into the regression for merchandise changed a lot of the variables that were significant to insignificant. The only significant variables in this new regression are those relating to temperature; increases in temperature were seen to decrease merchandise sales per capita, as explained earlier. The correlation, on the other hand, has a stronger *r*-squared at .810, but has an adjusted *r*-squared showing essentially no correlation, at .051. All of these regressions show the results of the data collected in the 2014 season, and now the challenge is to use these results for the benefit of the team.

Chapter 4

The Future of Baseball in Auburn

With the Auburn Doubledays continually sustaining losses every single year, the franchise has put itself on the ropes financially. Last year, the team turned it around, taking a $125,000 loss from the year before and turning it into only a $5,000 loss. Most of this extra expense came from interest and debt relief measures to cover from the year before, so if those are removed from consideration, the team operationally broke even. That is still not enough to keep the team in Auburn for an extended amount of time, but hopefully, by combining the results from the regression analysis with my on-site observations while working in Auburn for a season, the staff can determine the best ways to maximize revenue while cutting expenses, with the goal of keeping baseball in Auburn for the extended future.

The team cannot control what Mother Nature is going to do and how much rain the area will receive this summer. If this past winter is any indication, then there will be a lot of tarp-pulling in the future for the team. The amount of rain and the temperature both negatively impact attendance and some revenue drivers, but these factors are out of the hands of team. They really just need to hope for a good weather season when they are at home. Also having the weatherman on speed dial will help them try to get as many games in as possible to avoid doubleheaders, because the data show that those are worse financially than a rain-delayed game.

In regard to the Doubledays' opponents, there is absolutely nothing the team can do about them. The statistical findings on the Batavia Muckdawgs showed that those games did not draw very well compared to the rest of the league. Also, the team that was most statistically significant was the Jamestown Jammers, a franchise that relocated to West Virginia over the winter, so even if there was something significant there, it really does not matter anymore. The team has no

control over their opponents, and this is mainly why they were omitted from some of the regressions, just to see what the outcome would be. There is also a possibility that the winning percentages of both the Doubledays and their opponents matter in predicting some of the dependent variables, such as turnstile attendance, but later regressions done by another member of the Doubledays staff showed that winning percentage was not a significant factor in any of the calculations.

As for the months of the year, all of the regression results were based on June, which was problematic, because the way the team operated then was completely different from how it operated in August, and different still from how it will run going forward. This was mainly in regard to the concession stand and the drop in per caps as the season went on, but in actuality, the per caps were exactly where the team wanted them to be, given the amount of expenses incurred under the new management. As the season goes on, its freshness starts to fade, so it is imperative to continue to give people reasons to return to the ballpark. The play on the field can do that, but the front office has no control over the players, so the atmosphere is what is important to the staff. For Auburn in particular, the New York State Fair coincides with the end of the season and draws people away from Doubledays games and to the concerts and other events at the fair, so the month of the year is important for the team. The first home game is June 25th in 2015, so there will not be many June games, which, based on the regressions, is not the most ideal situation.

In terms of days of the week, there are some days that turned out better for the team than others. Mondays through Wednesdays are not good days for any baseball team; they require good promotions or good group nights to make them financially profitable. The rest of the days are good or bad, depending on the organization. Thursdays present an interesting predicament for

Auburn. The increased attendance and extra ticket revenue associated with Dollar Thursday are good for the franchise. However, those benefits are offset by the extremely low food margins, as well as by the extra expense of increased staff for the night. That is something that the team has to figure out in the long run: whether the promotion is ultimately worth operating. However, that promotion is something that Auburn fans love, and taking that away any time soon will not be good for the team's image in the community. Friday and Saturday nights are the times when the the team needs to make a large portion of their game day revenue, because they have the highest attended games, when people all pay full price for everything. Sunday is the drop-off day for the Doubledays. Thursdays through Saturdays draw good crowds and a lot of revenue, and then that drops dramatically on Sundays, as is shown in the data. Even the kids' club promotion, with free admission for kids under 12, still does not have the impact needed to make the day profitable. The worst part for the 2015 Doubledays is that the team has nine home games on Sundays. That is, just under 25% of all the games this season at home take place on a day when the regressions estimate poor revenues. This offseason, the New York Penn League is starting to implement an auction system for choosing home dates, to start in 2016. Each general manager will get a certain number of points to place on games, and whoever bids the most for certain days of the week will get them at home, schedule making inclusive, of course. The team has already talked about placing all of its points on Saturday July 4th, because the thought is that this will be a huge draw game for the team. Beyond next season, the team could choose to use its points to stay away from Sundays, because the data show that baseball on Sundays in Auburn is not good financially for the team.

In terms of start times, 7:00 pm is the go-to first pitch time for all games except Sunday games, when it fluctuates between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm. The standard time is 5:00 pm for that

day, with the idea to give people the chance to go to church, run errands, mow the yard and then enjoy a baseball game at night to end the day. Moving the game times up is merely for team travel purposes, so if the team has a long bus ride ahead of them, or if they are going into a day off or to the All-Star Break, then the games get pushed up to 2:00 pm. Fans think that the front office decides the times, when in reality, at this level of professional play, the manager makes those decisions for the team, and there is nothing the front office can really do about it. This season, there will be a Monday game that starts at noon. At first, starting a weekday game at that time does not make much sense, but the thought is to make it a camp day, where kids who go to camp all over can come during the day and enjoy the baseball game. Apparently, these types of events are extremely popular and well attended, so this might be the first of many camp days for the Doubledays under this new management team.

Based on the data, the Doubledays and doubleheaders do not get along. These days end up not being economically profitable for the team and become long days at the office, with the team's having to play twice the amount of baseball. Technically, in the NYPL, a doubleheader consists of two seven-inning games, so it is not two full games—but close enough. That in and of itself causes confusion amongst the fan base. The regression shows the negative aspects of these doubleheaders, and the team should do whatever it takes to avoid having to play two games in a day. Falcon Park has a state-of-the-art drainage system, and the field is in excellent condition. However, the tarps that cover the field do not work properly, and they leak like a sieve, so hopefully the rain will stay away, and all of the games will get played as scheduled. The worst thing for the front office is when the team is on the road and gets rained out. The make-up game is then played the next time the teams meet up again, so that means that the Doubledays can end up hosting a doubleheader when not a single home game is rained out. This is frustrating

because, through no fault of the front office, the franchise has to bear the burden of having a doubleheader played at home. A doubleheader is something that is virtually unavoidable and something that no team wants to deal with.

Opening Day is something that only happens once a year, and it is inevitable, so the only thing that teams can do is to spread hype about the season and hope that translates into people coming down to the ballpark, which it normally does. Capitalizing on and then extending the momentum from Opening Day into the first week and then into the rest of the season is the biggest challenge for operators and the ultimate goal of marketing efforts.

Fireworks are always a fan favorite at ballparks across the country and in all levels of Minor League Baseball. There is also no point of diminishing returns for benefits with the addition of fireworks shows, according to a study done by Dr. Rodney Paul and colleagues. Especially if the team can get the cost of the show covered by sponsors, putting on the display does not cost the team a dime, and any extra revenue generated from the additional fans is the benefit of having fireworks. Although they were not statistically significant in the regression models, fireworks nights were good revenue nights, compared to weekends without fireworks. Even though there is no significant upside to having fireworks in Auburn, there is also zero downside to having them, as long as they are sponsored, so the good outweighs the bad. The team is looking to have six fireworks shows in the 2015 season, spread evenly throughout the year.

Giveaways, according to the regression data, do absolutely nothing to increase attendance or revenue. It could be that fans do not want the items being given away, but regardless, the expense of having to purchase these items does not result in any benefits for the franchise. A lot of times it is a bigger hassle to order, store and distribute the giveaway item than the returns to

the team warrant. Giveaways are a long-time baseball tradition and not something to be abandoned, but thinking about decreasing the number or coming up with something creative might be needed to make them profitable. The other idea would be to do giveaways on better-attended nights, but that defeats the purpose of actually having a giveaway in the first place. It is just one of those things that the data suggest not doing, but an entrance giveaway is baseball Americana at this point.

Kids' Days are one of the best promotions the team does to generate more revenue and increase attendance. Honoring these kids on the field before the game and giving them free admissions gives them and their parents a reason to come to the game and, hopefully, the kids love coming to Falcon Park and want to come back multiple times, so that the team gets a lifelong fan at a young age, and that is important. Also, by attracting groups to the ballpark, even if 25% or 30% of a group's members attend a game, that is still a couple hundred people showing up, including parents and other family members. The data showed significant increases in revenue and turnstile attendance numbers on Kids' Days, which are promotions the team is planning to run in the upcoming season. Having at least one, or maybe even two, groups for most nights adds fans beyond the regulars who come to the games, and it helps the team improve their financial position, as well as gives the players a better atmosphere to play in.

Buyout nights brought mixed results for the 2014 Auburn Doubledays. These nights were successful in getting a large attendance, with the results of the regressions showing more than 500 additional fans over those on a Wednesday night, which is around 20% of the total capacity of the stadium. Giving out 5,000 tickets and getting over a 10% redemption rate is great for attendance, and the sponsor has already paid for the tickets. Assuming this 10% rate, the sponsor actually paid the group price beforehand for all of the tickets that were redeemed. The hope is

that people who get in for free have a little extra money that they can spend at the concession stand, or maybe on merchandise. However, the results of the data analysis show that, on buyout nights, these fans were not spending very much, and the finding was statistically significant. They wanted to have a free night with free tickets, so they would not purchase food or anything else. The hope is that these freeloaders will enjoy themselves and have a great time and want to come back, and when they do, they will the full price of attending the game.

All of these factors played into determining what factors influenced the revenue streams in the ballpark, as well as attendance figures. The hope of these regressions is to ultimately make better forecasts for games, in order to properly staff them and keep expenses at appropriate levels given the data projections. This team made a huge stride this past season to almost becoming profitable, and with a little more effort, and the use of these regression models, profitability will no longer be a stretch for the Doubledays, as it once was.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Baseball and Auburn, New York, have become synonymous to the residents of the area, because a professional team has played there since 1958. Even though the quality of baseball is nowhere near the major league level, the whole spectacle of minor league baseball is what they come for. The fans of the team understand that the franchise has fallen on hard times, but what might not be apparent to them is how close they are to losing the team. Another couple years of financial losses, and the city will look to sell the team, because the City of Auburn is just as cash-depleted as the baseball team is. Turning a $125,000 loss from 2013 into only a $5,000 loss last season is a step in the right direction towards keeping baseball in Auburn. However, the team is not home free yet. Continued support is needed from the community, and the team has spent all of this offseason trying to bolster public perceptions of the team.

I learned that minor league baseball should have job descriptions, because what started off as my original job title and duties morphed into so much more. I also realized that bringing a successful operation to Auburn is possible with the right strategies and practices. Our general manager, the head of marketing, and I all traveled to Williamsport to see a game. They invited us out to observe their operation and to ask them any questions we had. The three of us concluded from the visit that our operation was essentially no different from theirs. What differed was only that they had been doing it longer, and their stadium was bigger. That moment, the three of us saw what could be possible in Auburn, and that became the day that I wanted to see the change happen. The community is counting on us to keep baseball there, and accomplishing that feat and turning around a struggling organization is something I want to be a part of.

Using firsthand experience and observations from the 2014 season, one can start to notice the types of fans that come, and more important, what motivates them to come back again. For some, it is the fireworks. For others, it is the really cheap beer on Thursday nights. Still others just want to see some baseball and enjoy a summer night at the ballpark. Everyone wants different things, and it is important to capture every single fan and give them a reason to come back again and again. The regression analysis for this study brought to light some trends, like the importance of Kids' Days for attendance and ticket revenue and how Dollar Thursday is a double-edged sword. Some ideas for how the team could do better can be taken from the results of the data analysis. There is statistical evidence to show the influence of different factors on the bottom line. Baseball in Auburn is a tradition and something that should continue indefinitely, and hopefully, with the results of the regression and the knowledge acquired on the market, this hope can be turned into reality.

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