

# Thirty Games Out and Sold Out For Months!

## An Empirical Examination of Fan Loyalty to Two Major League Baseball Teams

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### **Abstract**

The study focused on the measurement of fan loyalty to two Major League Baseball teams -- the Chicago Cubs and the Arizona Diamondbacks. Fans of each of the teams were surveyed and the level of team loyalty exhibited by the two groups of fans was compared. Based upon the win/loss records of the two teams, coupled with the fan attendance statistics at each team's home ball park, it was predicted that Cubs fans would demonstrate significantly higher levels of team loyalty than would Diamondbacks fans. Findings related to fan loyalty, fan knowledge of the game, competitiveness of the fans, and fan attendance are reported and managerial implications are provided.

**Keywords:** Brand Loyalty, Consumer Behavior, Sports Fan Behavior, Sports Marketing

“A few years ago, when the Cubbies were once again thirty games out of first place, a friend and I walked up to the ticket window at Wrigley Field. Our plan was to buy bleacher seat tickets for the afternoon game. The ticket guy actually laughed at us, shook his head and said: ‘What? Are you kidding me? Those seats have been sold out for months!’”

– *Authors’ experience at Wrigley Field.*

The authors’ experience at Wrigley Field aptly captures the essence of a well known phenomenon in professional sports: the extra-ordinary level of team loyalty demonstrated by Chicago Cubs fans across the nation and possibly around the world. To put it frankly, over the years, Major League Baseball’s (MLB) Chicago Cubs have a history of disappointing their fans – at least in terms of winning. In 2008, the Cubs had their best regular season record since 1935, winning 97 games...the best in the National League. Many fans expected the Cubs to win the World Series. But, the Cubs were ousted from the playoffs when they were swept by the Los Angeles Dodgers in three games...another in a long series of disappointments for Cubs fans. Of the four major professional U.S. sports leagues (Major League Baseball, National Football League, National Hockey League, National Basketball Association), the Cubs have the longest drought between championships. The last time the Cubs won the World Series was in 1908 – the same year in which the first Model T Ford rolled off the assembly line.

In sum, over their 130 plus year history, the Cubs have a well-earned reputation for seemingly finding new and creative ways to let down their fans. And that reputation does not seem to be waning in recent years. In 2003 and 2004, the team had its first back-to-back winning seasons since 1973. The 1969, 1984, 1989, 2003 – with the infamous Steve Bartman fan interference incident – and now 2008 (where in game two of the National League Divisional Series the Cubs fielded for the cycle by making an error at first, second, short and third) seasons represent memorable and relatively recent instances of when the Cubs managed, through a combination of blunders and sheer bad luck, to wilt under pressure and dash the hopes and dreams of their loyal fans.

Given those repeated frustrations, it would seem reasonable to predict that Cubs fans would become disillusioned and that attendance at Wrigley Field would ultimately suffer. Baade and Tiehen (1990), Becker and Suls (1983) and others have documented the positive relationship between a sports team’s winning record and fan attendance. Pan and his colleagues (1997) and Bristow and Schneider (2003) have suggested that a not unrealistic guiding principle of the relationship between sporting events and fans is that when a team consistently wins, fan attendance will likely increase; when a team loses consistently, fan attendance can be expected to decrease.

This does not, however, seem to be the case with fans of the Chicago Cubs. Despite the legendary team disappointments and collapses Cubs fans have suffered through over the years, fan loyalty to the Chicago Cubs remains strong and baseball fans continue to flock to the north side of Chicago. For example, in 2005 the Cubs finished 21 games out of first place and drew more than 3 million fans to Wrigley Field. In fact, during the last nine seasons (with only four winning records) the Cubs have enjoyed an average attendance of nearly 3 million fans per season. And 2008 was no exception, with the Cubbies drawing over 3.3 million fans to the Friendly Confines of Wrigley Field.

The fan behavior demonstrated by fans of MLB’s Arizona Diamondbacks more closely follows the team performance/fan attendance guideline suggested by Baade and Tiehen

(1990). In 1998, the team's inaugural season, the D'backs posted a record of 66 wins and 96 losses yet drew 3.6 million fans. Much of that attendance could reasonably be attributed to fan excitement about the new team, the introduction of Major League Baseball to the state of Arizona, and to the new Bank One Ballpark. For example, evidence suggests a strong and positive correlation between the opening of new Major League ballparks and fan attendance. During the years 1989 through 1993, the Cleveland Indians drew an average of slightly fewer than 18,000 fans per home game to the old Cleveland Municipal stadium. In 1994 when the new Jacobs Field opened, attendance at Indians games jumped to an average of over 39,000 fans per game. During the 1998 through 2000 seasons, the Pirates drew an average of 1.6 million fans per year to the venerable Three Rivers Stadium. In 2001, with the opening of the new PNC Park, the team drew nearly 2.5 million people – despite the fact that they lost 100 games that season and finished last in the league. During the next three years (2002-2004), the Pirates continued to post losing records and fan attendance slumped to a pre-PNC Park average of 1.6 million fans per season. In 2004, when the new Petco Park opened in San Diego, the Padres drew slightly more than 3 million fans, up from 2 million fans the year before – the final year the team played at Qualcomm Stadium.

The Arizona Diamondbacks, however, present a somewhat unique professional sports circumstance. Unlike the situation in Cleveland and Pittsburgh where MLB teams with long histories moved into new ballparks, in Arizona not only was Bank One Ballpark (now Chase Field) new, so too was the team itself. And in addition, the new ball club in Arizona experienced almost immediate success after the inaugural season. In only their second year (1999), the Dbacks won 100 games and captured the National League West division title – a feat the team repeated in 2001 and 2002. In their fourth year of existence, the Diamondbacks won MLB's ultimate prize – the World Series.

In 2003, the team's fortunes – in terms of win/loss record – started to change. And fan attendance reacted somewhat predictably. For example, during the team's "glory" years between 1998 and 2003, the Diamondbacks drew an average of nearly 3.1 million fans per year. From 2004 through 2006, a brief era where the team has posted losing records and experienced a disastrous 2004 season with only 51 wins and 111 losses, attendance fell to an average of 2.1 million. In 2008, a season in which the team started fast and tantalized fans with the hope of a second division crown in two years, the Dbacks drew over 2.5 million fans. In short, when the Diamondbacks were winning, fan attendance was strong; when the team began to lose consistently, fewer fans went to the ballpark in Arizona.

In summary, the Chicago Cubs and the Arizona Diamondbacks represent distinct Major League baseball dichotomies. The Chicago Cubs (sometimes under different club names, such as the Chicago White Stockings [1876-1890], Chicago Colts [1891-1897], and Chicago Orphans [1898-1901]) is one of MLB's charter teams and has a one-hundred thirty-two year history. The Diamondbacks, on the other hand, have a history that dates back to 1998. The Cubs play in a city that features a strong cross-town rivalry with the Chicago White Sox; the D'backs is the only MLB team in Arizona.

The two teams also experience different fan behaviors and, at least judging from attendance figures, fan support. Over the years, regardless of performance and win/loss records, the Cubs traditionally enjoy undying fan loyalty. Indeed, the sub-par performance of the ball club has become somewhat of a badge of honor for Cubs fans – as evidenced by the "wait 'til next year" t-shirts donned by some fans and by the "lovable losers" moniker fans have

applied to the Cubs. Diamondbacks fans have reacted in a more predictable manner, following the axiom suggesting that as a team's winning percentage increases, so too increases the numbers of fans who attend the team's games.

With those similarities and differences in mind, and with the further prompt supplied by the authors' experience of not being able to purchase bleacher seats at Wrigley Field – even when the Cubs were firmly rooted in the division cellar for the season -- the study reported in this manuscript was designed to empirically investigate and compare the team loyalty of Chicago Cubs fans with the loyalty of Arizona Diamondbacks fans. Specifically, the study was designed to test the following proposition:

*Given the win/loss records of the Cubs and win/loss records of the Diamondbacks, and given the attendance records of the two clubs, Cubs fans will demonstrate significantly greater levels of fan loyalty than will Diamondbacks fans.*

## **1. The Study**

### *1.1 Method and Subjects*

The Cubs data were collected from patrons at a restaurant/bar located across the street from Wrigley Field. Prior to data collection, the researchers met with the owner of the restaurant, and after presenting an outline of the research program, received the owners' consent to administer surveys to patrons of his establishment. Data collection began shortly after the business opened and was generally stopped approximately 45 minutes prior to the first pitch at home games at Wrigley Field.

Data were collected during three different home stands of the Cubs. The first data were collected in late May/early June before games against the St. Louis Cardinals and San Diego Padres. The second phase of data collection occurred during the Kansas City Royals series in July. The final set of surveys was collected in late July/early August during the New York Mets series.

The authors approached customers, identified themselves and their institutional affiliation, summarized the purpose of the study, and determined if the individuals were Cub fans and interested in completing the survey. Individuals who were obviously not Cubs fans, such as, those adorned in New York Mets clothing, were the only individuals intentionally excluded from the study. Every other effort was made to get a representative sample of this convenience population. Due to the patrons' positive and, in many cases, enthusiastic responses to the researchers' requests for participation (the researchers were, in fact, occasionally approached by individuals who asked to be included in the research), systematic response data were not collected. A highly conservative and admittedly impressionistic response rate estimate would be 85%.

The participants were asked to complete a three-page questionnaire which included previously developed measures of nostalgia (Holbrook 1993), loyalty proneness (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, and Burton 1990), product expertise (Mishra, Umesh, and Stem 1993), and desire to win/competitiveness (Corfman 1991) as well as a number of questions which were specifically developed for the purposes of this study. These latter measures included descriptions of Wrigley Field and ratings of loyalty to the Cubs, likeability of the Cubs and many others.

The Diamondbacks data were collected from fans attending games at the ball park. The development of the research methodology began with meetings between the primary researchers and the Director of Promotions for the major league team. After those initial meetings, in which an outline of the research program was presented and modified, the researchers were granted permission to administer questionnaires to fans attending home games of the team early in the 2001 season. All data were collected during batting practice and pre-game warmups.

Within five to ten minutes after passing through the turnstiles and taking their seats, fans in various sections of the stadium were approached by the primary researchers, who, in an attempt to 1) identify the university with which they were affiliated, and 2) to illustrate that they were not employees or representatives of the team in question, wore hats and shirts bearing logos clearly identifying the university they represented. The researchers briefly identified themselves and their university, provided the fans with a synopsis of the purpose of the study, and asked fans to complete a short questionnaire that included previously developed measures of loyalty proneness (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, and Burton 1990), product expertise (Mishra, Umesh, and Stem 1993), and desire to win/competitiveness (Corfman 1991) as well as a number of questions which were specifically developed for the purposes of this study.

Those fans willing to participate received an ink pen, a clipboard, and a two-page (front and back) questionnaire that included completion instructions. The researchers provided clarification for those participants requesting further information and then reminded each participant to take as much time as necessary to complete the questionnaire. Finally, each participating fan was told that the researcher would leave, let the participant enjoy their snacks and refreshments, watch batting practice, and so on and that the researcher would return and collect the completed questionnaire. Although no systematic response data were collected, a highly conservative estimate of fan response rate would be 95%. Indeed, it was quite rare to have a fan decline to participate in the study. The data collection process was stopped approximately 30 minutes prior to the first pitch of each ball game.

Although the data collection methods were different, there is little reason to believe that the techniques themselves would systematically bias the outcomes. All results reported are based on questions that were exactly the same for the two samples.

## **2. Key Findings and Discussion**

### *2.1 Assessment of Fan Loyalty to the Home Town Team*

To assess the degree or extent of loyalty fans feel to their home town team, and to compare this loyalty between Chicago Cubs and Arizona Diamondbacks fans, a fan loyalty index was developed on the basis of fan responses to two separate questions. The first question asked, "Do you consider yourself to be a loyal (*name of team*) fan?" Responses were recorded as a simple yes/no dichotomy. Later in the questionnaire, the second question asked, "How would you characterize your loyalty to the (*name of team*)?" Responses to this question were recorded on a four-point scale ranging from "not at all loyal" to "less loyal than most" to "more loyal than most" to "diehard."

A three-level fan loyalty index was then developed based on joint answers to these two questions. With respect to the extent of their loyalty to the home town team, fans were classified as **diehard** if the jointly answered "yes" to the first question and "diehard" to the

second question. Fans were classified as **more than most** if they jointly answered “yes” to the first question and “more loyal than most” to the second question. Finally, fans were classified as **less than most** if they answered “yes” to the first question and “less loyal than most” to the second question. A total of 515 fans were classified into one or another of these three categories of loyalty; all other persons surveyed at either ballpark were excluded from any subsequent analysis.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of fans by degree of loyalty, by team. Clearly, there is a significant difference in team loyalty between Cubs fans and Diamondbacks fans (chi-sq = 36.8;  $p < .001$ ). First, far more Cubs fans (43.3%) than Diamondbacks fans (26.9%) are diehard fans. This difference was anticipated at the outset of the research; the Chicago Cubs had been in existence for more than 100 years longer than the Arizona Diamondbacks, and the rabidity of “Cubbie” fans is legendary (Golenbock 1999). Indeed, the Cubs enjoyed the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest attendance in team history in 2006, despite finishing in last place with the worst won/loss record in the National League (Sullivan 2006).

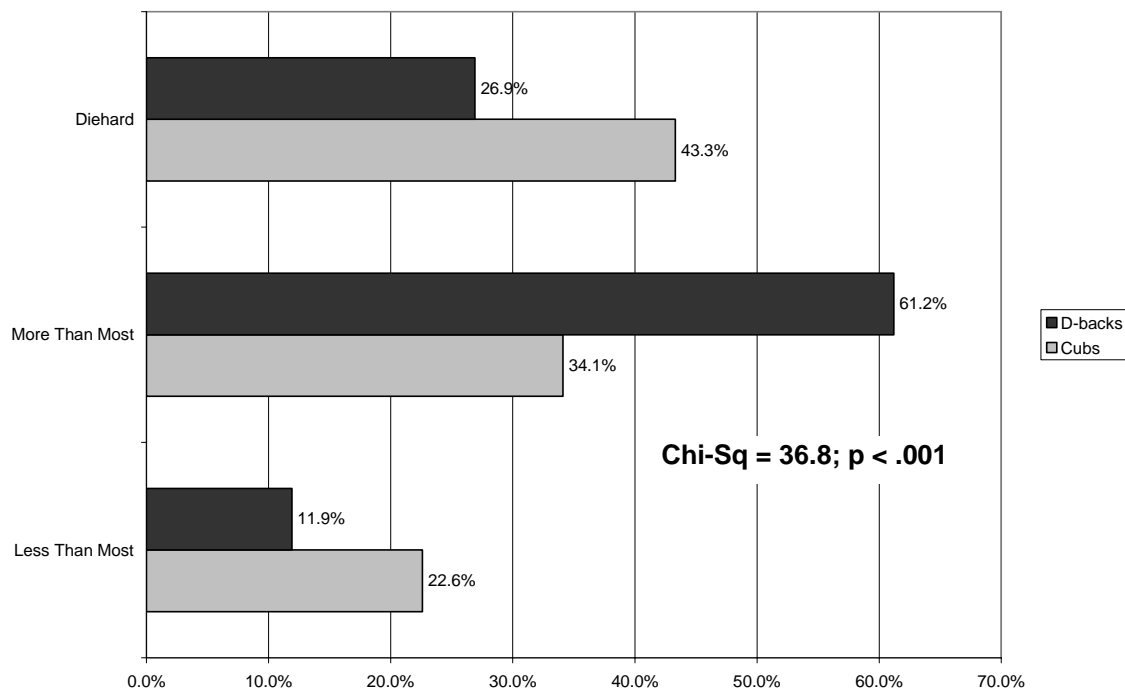


Figure 1. Degree of Loyalty by Market

What is more interesting about the findings in Figure 1, however, is that far more Cubs fans (22.6%) than Diamondbacks fans (11.9%) also consider themselves to be less loyal than most fans. This was a decidedly unexpected finding and suggests there are forces beyond just devotedly following one’s favorite team drawing people to ballparks, forces that are apparently stronger in Chicago than in Phoenix.

Although speculative, the authors offer several possible explanations for the tendency of Chicago Cubs fans to be more extreme in their fan loyalty as compared to Diamondbacks fans; that is, more likely to be at either end of the spectrum of fan loyalty. First, as the nation’s third largest market, Chicago provides a larger number of other professional sports franchises, including a second major league baseball team, the Chicago White Sox. It may be that these other professional sports team options dilute, diffuse or deflect the loyalty of some

Cubs fans, although the lines of demarcation between Cubs and White Sox fans are pretty clear geographically within the city. According to Chicago native and well-known comedian Bob Newhart:

*“The real personality test for Chicagoans is whether they are Cubs fans or White Sox fans. For years, the two baseball teams have divided the town. The Cubs play on the North Side in homey, ivy-covered Wrigley Field, while the Sox play on the South Side in a stone fortress now called U.S. Cellular field. The dividing line for fans is at Madison Street, which literally divides the North Side of the city from the South. (Newhart 2006, page 27)”*

Thus, while there are probably not too many residents who claim to be loyal fans of both teams, there may be some residents with such divided loyalty.

Second, and more likely, there are reasons to attend professional baseball games beyond the opportunity to cheer the home team to victory, and Wrigley Field, home of the Cubs, may be attracting more of these types of attendees than Chase Field, home of the Diamondbacks. Sports management and marketing researchers have previously investigated the idea that there may be multiple sports fan segments, attracted to games and matches for different reasons. For example, Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw (1999) identified five fan segments; the temporary fan, the local fan, the dysfunctional fan, the devoted fan and the fanatical fan (with the latter segment most similar to the diehard classification used herein).

Similarly, Bristow and Schneider (2003) suggest three reasons why someone might attend an athletic event, including a) to watch/support their favorite team (i.e., the “loyal” fan), b) to participate in the tradition and history of the sport (i.e., the “sports” fan, and/or c) to socialize. It seems at least plausible that a relatively higher percentage of Cubs fans are also driven to attend games by the latter two motivations vis-à-vis Diamondbacks fans; at minimum, these alternative motivations would explain the relatively higher percentage of fans who consider themselves less loyal than most in attendance at Wrigley Field. Additional findings from the study lend at least partial support to this conclusion.

## *2.2 Product Knowledge and the Tradition/History of Professional Baseball*

As mentioned previously, professional baseball has a long history in Chicago. The Cubs, who started play in 1870 as the Chicago White Stockings, have represented Chicago longer than any other professional sports team has any other city. And, the Cubs play home games at Wrigley Field, the second oldest major league ballpark. Attendees at Cubs home games may include a larger number of “baseball fans” as opposed to “Cubs fans,” going to Wrigley Field to participate in the tradition and history of professional baseball, that uniquely American game. (This is likely to be especially so compared to Arizona Diamondbacks fans, whose team and ballpark were both relatively new at the time these data were collected; professional baseball simply has less history and less tradition in Phoenix than in Chicago -- discounting, of course, the pre-season grapefruit league.)

Devoted baseball fans should understand the game better than fans (who are only) supporting a particular team. Baseball knowledge was measured by administering an adapted version of a four-item product knowledge scale developed by Mishra, Umesh and Stem (1993), as follows:

1. I am very knowledgeable about the game of baseball.
2. I am a very experienced baseball fan.

3. I am an expert when it comes to understanding the game of baseball.
4. I am a very informed baseball fan.

Each of the four items was measured with a six point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree and 6 = strongly agree). Altogether, then, the resulting “knowledge of baseball” summed scale ranges from a minimum value of 4 (little or no knowledge of the game) to a maximum value of 24 (extensive knowledge of the game), as self-reported by fans at the two respective ballparks.

Table 1 presents analysis of variance results examining the relationship between mean baseball knowledge and two independent factors; location (Cubs versus Diamondbacks) and degree of loyalty (less than most versus more than most versus diehard). As shown in this table, knowledge of the game is significantly related to both factors and, most interestingly, to the interaction between the two factors, at least at the ten percent level ( $p = .087$ ).

Table 1. Analysis of Variance Results for Product (Baseball) Knowledge Scale

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Location	170.58	1	170.58	11.92	.001
Loyalty	1060.52	2	530.26	37.07	.000
Interaction	70.05	2	35.02	2.45	.087
Residual	7124.34	498	14.31		
Total	8425.49	503			

Table 2. Table of Means

Loyalty	Location		
	Cubs	Dbacks	Total
Less Than Most	16.2	14.0	15.6
More Than Most	18.2	17.9	18.0
Diehard	20.6	18.9	20.1
Total	18.8	17.7	18.3

As noted in the accompanying table of means (Table 2), Cubs fans exhibited greater product knowledge than Diamondbacks fans across all levels of loyalty, but especially so among diehard fans and those that are less loyal than most. The interaction suggests that not only are Cubs fans overall more knowledgeable about the game, but that this is especially so among fans who consider themselves to be either diehard fans or else less loyal than other fans, the two endpoints of our three-point loyalty index.

Thus, while other interpretations remain possible, the following seems supported by these data. Fans drawn to any ballpark to participate in the tradition and history of major league baseball should be more knowledgeable about the game. Chicago Cubs fans are more knowledgeable about the game than Arizona Diamondbacks fans. It seems likely, then, that a higher percentage of Chicago Cubs fans are motivated to attend games out of an interest or loyalty to the game rather than to the team, which, in turn, should and did show up in higher numbers of Chicago fans claiming to be less loyal to the Cubs than Arizona fans claiming to be less loyal to the Diamondbacks.



### *2.3 Fan Competitiveness: An Alternative Explanation*

To paraphrase Sesame Street's Kermit the Frog, "it's not easy being a Cubs fan." The year before the Cubs data were collected, the team finished 30 games out of first place, with a record of 67 wins and 95 losses. Indeed, the Cubs managed only five winning seasons during the preceding two decades. To characterize the on-field performance of the Chicago Cubs as "mediocre" is, perhaps, overly generous. Meanwhile, the year before the Diamondbacks data were collected (one season later), the team finished just 12 games out of first place, with a record of 85 wins and 77 losses. Indeed, the team finished first in its division the preceding year, in only its second year of existence as a major league baseball team. To characterize the on-field performance of the then three year old Arizona Diamondbacks as "good" is, perhaps, an understatement, especially considering they won the World Series the very next year.

Simply put, during the period of data collection, and in the relevant past, the Arizona Diamondbacks fielded a far more competitive team than did the Chicago Cubs. It may be more difficult for some fans to feel or express devoted, fanatical or diehard loyalty to a team with relatively poor quality, or on-field performance, especially so for fans that consider themselves to be highly competitive. We might, therefore, expect to find elevated levels of competitiveness among Cubs fans who consider themselves less loyal than most Cubs fans when compared to Diamondbacks fans who consider themselves less loyal than most Diamondbacks fans, the Cubs fans clearly having to reconcile their support for a typically non-competitive team with their own professed competitiveness.

Fan competitiveness was measured by administering a three-item desire to win scale developed by Corfman (1991), as follows:

1. I want to win at whatever I do.
2. I am a competitive person.
3. I dislike losing.

Each of the three items was measured with a six point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree and 6 = strongly agree). The resulting summated "competitiveness" scale ranges from a minimum value of 3 (little self-reported competitiveness) to a maximum value of 18 (considerable self-reported competitiveness).

Table 3 presents analysis of variance results examining the relationship between mean level of competitiveness and the same two independent factors; location (Cubs versus Diamondbacks) and degree of loyalty (less than most versus more than most versus diehard). As shown in this table, there is a significant location by loyalty interaction at the five percent level ( $p = .016$ ). Judging from the insignificant main effects, location and loyalty are both related to competitiveness only through an interactive, combinatorial effect. Based on the associated table of means, Cubs fans who consider themselves either diehard fans or less loyal than most other fans tend to be more competitive than Diamondbacks fans expressing these levels of loyalty and, for that matter, than Cubs fans who consider themselves to be more loyal than most but not diehards.

As expected, marginally loyal Cubs fans tend to exhibit quite high levels of competitiveness, especially compared to marginally loyal Diamondbacks fans; some Cubs fans find it difficult to muster a more enthusiastic level of loyalty given their heightened desire to win, and, it

Table 3. Analysis of Variance Results for Competitiveness Scale

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Location	18.29	1	18.29	2.31	.129
Loyalty	24.24	2	12.12	1.53	.217
Interaction	65.60	2	32.80	4.14	.016
Residual	3998.66	505	7.92		
Total	4106.79	510			

Table 4. Table of Means

Loyalty	Location		
	Cubs	Dbacks	Total
Less Than Most	14.9	13.6	14.6
More Than Most	14.1	14.7	14.4
Diehard	15.2	14.5	15.0
Total	14.8	14.5	14.7

follows, to be associated with a “winner.” On the other hand, marginally loyal Diamondbacks fans expressed less competitiveness than more loyal or diehard Diamondbacks fans; for highly competitive people, it is simply easier to be loyal to a competitive team.

But, there remains one “outlier” in the table of means; diehard Cubs fans tended to be more, not less, competitive, more so even than marginally loyal Cubs fans. In previously addressing this seeming paradox, Bristow and Sebastian (2001) suggest that some highly competitive people may enjoy or derive satisfaction in cheering for an underdog, a most appropriate descriptor of the Chicago Cubs. So, highly competitive Chicagoans may be drawn in opposite directions; while some are disinclined to profess extensive loyalty to a team with year in and year out poor on-field performance, other highly competitive people are drawn to such a team for exactly that reason. Highly competitive Arizonians, on the other hand, have (to date) no such dilemma needing to be reconciled. At minimum, this explanation dovetails well with the mean levels of competitiveness reported in Table 3.

#### *2.4 Socializing and the Less Loyal Baseball Fan*

There is still another plausible contributing reason why the Chicago Cubs might have both more diehard fans and more fans who declare themselves less loyal than most others when compared to the Arizona Diamondbacks. Some fans – highly devoted diehards – come to the ballpark primarily to cheer on their favorite, the home team. Others are drawn by a love of the game. Others still enjoy the competitive, win or lose atmosphere of big league sports.

But, still others may come for less intense reasons, including the opportunity to socialize with friends, family and/or colleagues. There are, of course, many ways to effect a social outing, including dinner and drinks, walks in the park, shopping trips, stage and movie theaters and many more in addition to amateur and professional sporting events. In addition, professional sports events are relatively expensive outings. According to the Sports Fans of America Association (2002), a professional baseball game cost the average family of four about \$120 to attend in the early 2000s. Combining a relatively high price along with numerous

competing entertainment alternatives, we would anticipate that fans who come to a major league baseball game to socialize, whether with family or friends or colleagues, would be less frequent attendees. Therefore, markets with a large percentage of people who attend games infrequently are likely to be markets with a higher percentage of “socializing” fans, and, consequently, a higher percentage of fans who claim to be less loyal than others.

These suppositions tend to be borne out with the findings shown in Figure 2 and Table 5. Figure 2 documents that Cubs fans attend games far less frequently than Diamondbacks fans (Chi-Sq = 150.0;  $p < .001$ ). Indeed, three times as many Diamondbacks fans (12.7%) as Cubs fans (3.6%) attend at least two games per week, and only half as many Diamondbacks fans (36.3%) as Cubs fans (73.7%) attend games less than once per month.

Table 5 shows that frequency of game attendance (dichotomized into “less than once per month” versus “once per month or more”) is significantly related to extent of fan loyalty for both the Cubs (Chi-Sq = 7.8;  $p = .020$ ) and the Diamondbacks (Chi-Sq = 10.7;  $p = .005$ ). In both markets, increasing loyalty translated into higher percentages of fans attending one or more game per month during the season, although at consistently elevated percents in Phoenix versus Chicago. Combining these results, it seems plausible to conclude that the Cubs attract a higher percentage of fans who attend games less often (probably reflecting an increase in the number of fans attending games for their opportunity to engage in social interaction) and, who are therefore, less loyal. Again, this helps to explain how the Cubs simultaneously attract a relatively high percent of both diehard fans and fans that express themselves to be less loyal than most fans.

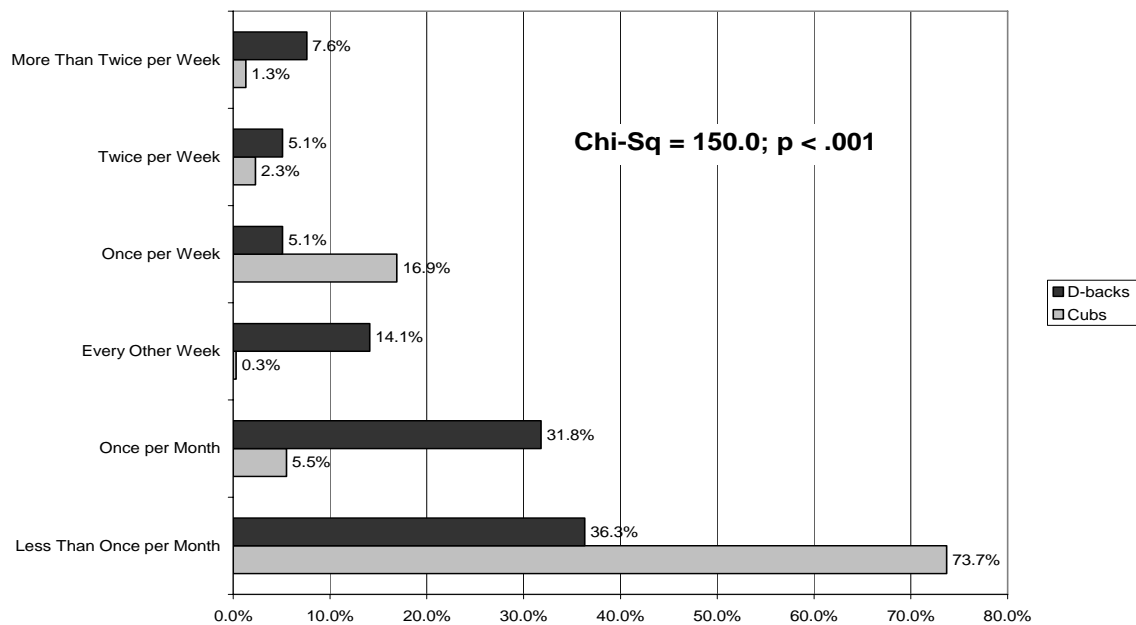


Figure 2. Frequency of Attendance by Market

Table 5. Frequency of Game Attendance by Location and Loyalty

		Extent of Fan Loyalty			
Location	Game Attendance	Less Loyal	More Loyal	Diehard	Total
Cubs	Less Than Once/Month	84.5%	71.0%	66.2%	73.7%
	Once/Month or More	15.5%	29.0%	33.8%	26.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
D-Backs	Less Than Once/Month	62.5%	35.8%	24.1%	36.3%
	Once/Month or More	37.5%	64.2%	75.9%	63.7%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### 2.5 Managerial Implications

To recapitulate, the major results of the study are:

- \* As compared to Diamondbacks fans, more Cub fans are diehards;
- \* As compared to Diamondbacks fans, more Cub fans indicated they were less loyal than most fans;
- \* Cub fans are more knowledgeable than Diamondback fans (especially for those who are diehard fans);
- \* Diehard Cub fans tend to be more competitive than their Diamondback counterparts;
- \* Cub fans attend home games less often than Diamondback fans.

A major implication of the results for managers is that baseball fan behavior, like all human behavior, is complex and multiply determined or motivated. More specifically, the results suggest that baseball fans not only attend games to cheer on their home team (diehards) but also to enjoy the tradition and history of the game and simply to socialize and have fun. This is actually good news for owners and managers of professional baseball teams since it suggests that there are other ways to fill a ballpark than fielding a winning team.

One such way is to do whatever is possible to promote the history and tradition of the game. With its ivy-covered walls, natural grass, old fashioned scoreboard, closeness of the seats to the field, and simply years of existence, it's hard to imagine a major league ball park that represents the history and tradition of the game better than Wrigley Field. The results suggest that some fans do indeed attend games at Wrigley to participate in the game's history and tradition. Managers and owners cannot, of course, easily change the structural features of their current venues to replicate those of Wrigley, but they can certainly keep these considerations in mind when they build new ball parks. Moreover, there may be other ways to capture fans with this motivation. Major League Baseball, for example, celebrated Jackie Robinson Day on April 15, 2007 which was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic day when he broke the game's color barrier. Players and coaches around the league honored his contribution to the game by donning the sacred number 42. Baseball trivia contests represent another way in which the history and tradition of the game can be promoted along with

articles in programs and information guides. Statues of the game's greats, such as, Stan Musial outside Busch Memorial Stadium, and the retired numbers of Hall of Famers, Ernie Banks' 14 on one foul pole at Wrigley and Billy Williams' 26 on the other, can also support history and tradition. Yet another way to promote the history and tradition of the game is to take fans on guided tours of ball parks with historians of the game, a practice carried out at Wrigley.

The results also suggest another need that managers can satisfy to increase attendance at their ball parks--social interaction. Many venues already have family sections, picnic areas, restaurants, and luxury boxes to address this motivation. Promotions, such as family day and organized group outings, also tap into this motive. Perhaps, resurrecting "ladies day" or creating comparable days would also help satisfy fans' need to socialize.

Finally, putting a winning team on the field does seem to matter for most markets with some exceptions, such as, Wrigley. Comments on how to accomplish this end are clearly beyond the scope of this paper. The phenomenon of the exceptional fan, the Cub fan, still remains intriguing and worthy of further research.

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