

# 台灣大專甲組棒球選手運動經紀人需求之研究

## Demand for Sports Agent Services by Elite Collegiate Baseball Players in Taiwan

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## **Abstract**

Baseball is unique among other sports in Taiwan, because it has become a “symbol of the Taiwanese spirit and Taiwan’s national sport”. In Taiwan, most competent amateur baseball players are college graduates or undergraduates. Some elite collegiate baseball players also become national team members. Most of them join professional baseball team in the future. This study focuses on the degree of demand for sports agent services by elite collegiate baseball players in Taiwan. Data were collected from a field investigation carried out on campuses and ball diamonds. A total of 239 questionnaires were gathered for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, Independent Sample t-testing and one-way ANOVA testing with Scheffe post hoc comparisons are used to assess degree of demand by elite collegiate baseball players for sport agent services. The results are as follows: the means and standard deviations show that most elite collegiate baseball players tend to need sports agent services. Such players perceived sports agent services as leading to greater career opportunities, more successful negotiations, and better financial plans and contracts. There were significant differences in degree of demand for sports agent services related to the variables of willingness to become professional baseball players. The findings should be useful for sports agents and collegiate team managers to enhance the degree of demand for sports agent services by elite collegiate baseball players.

**Keywords: elite collegiate baseball players in Taiwan, sports agent, demand for sports agent services**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Baseball is unique among the other sports in Taiwan as a “symbol of the Taiwanese spirit and Taiwan’s national sport” (Morris, 2004). Taiwan’s first professional sport league, the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL) was founded on October 23rd, 1989. The formation committee successfully recruited four business entities to form a four-club league. The CPBL held its inauguration game on March 17th, 1990, when the Uni-President Lions defeated the Brother Elephants with a score of 4-3. The nation already had a rich baseball history at the commencement of the professional baseball era. The CPBL includes four teams, Uni-President 7-Eleven Lions, Brother Elephants, La new Bears and Sinon Bulls. Each team play 120 games in a regular season (March through early October) not including the pre-season and the post-season playoffs (CPBL, 2010). Each professional team has 47 to 54 players; each major league team includes 25 players and each minor league team 22 to 29 players (Chen & Chen, 2009; CPBL, 2010). Every team in the CPBL wants to reach the championships every season. The question is how can this be done? One strategy is to recruit talented foreign professional baseball players, another is to draft high potential amateur players. Most competent amateur baseball players in Taiwan are graduates or undergraduates, with some collegiate baseball players becoming national team members. To help teams to select suitable players that will enhance their competence, the CPBL drafts amateur baseball players every year.

When an amateur baseball player is drafted into a professional baseball team they need someone to help negotiate the contract with the owner of the team. Family, teacher, friend or sport agent, the question is who can best help the amateur baseball player negotiate the most advantageous contract? Although it might be easier to trust a family member, teacher or friend a professional negotiator such as a sports agent may be more suitable. The sports agent is basically a middleman or broker for the services of an athlete who wishes to work for a salary. The term “sports agent” is synonymous with the terms “player agent” and “athlete agent”, and is defined as “a person who, directly or indirectly, recruits or solicits an athlete to enter into an agent contract or professional sport services contract with that person, or who for a fee procures, offers, promises or attempts to obtain employment for an athlete with a professional sports team” (Shropshire & Davis, 2008; Smart, 2005). As recently as ten years ago, few Taiwan athletes employed sports agents. In 1999 and 2000, three elite players, Hong-Chih Kuo, Chin-hui Tsao and Chien-Ming Wang, signed big contracts with the Los Angeles Dodgers, Colorado Rockies and New York Yankees, respectively. From this time on, Taiwan has exported many elite baseball players, discovered by scouts, to the United State and Japan every year. Therefore, most elite players in Taiwan know what a sports agent is.

This study looks at the demand for sports agent services by elite collegiate baseball players in Taiwan. A questionnaire survey is used to probe degree of demand. Descriptive statistics, Independent Sample t-testing and one-way ANOVA testing with Scheffe post hoc comparisons are used to analyze. Finally, we offer conclusions and propose suggestions to

help those interested in being sports agents and clarify what elite collegiate baseball players demand the sports agent do.

## II. Method

Elite collegiate baseball players were surveyed on campus or playing fields during the summer vacation. We first contacted the coach finding whether he would prefer to help us or not. If the coach was willing to help us in this investigation, we then went to campus or playing field during practice. The coach helped us to gather players together and we then asked them whether they would agree to complete a questionnaire. The non-probability sampling technique method was used to collect a sample of 281 players. A total of 239 questionnaires were completed. The rest were not completed for unknown reasons. The response rate was 85.1%, which is deemed very acceptable in social research (Fowler, 1988). There were 95 freshmen, 75 sophomore, 48 junior and 21 senior respondents with 166 infielders and 73 outfielders. Of these, 118 were interested in becoming professional baseball players, 18 were not willing to and 103 had not yet decided.

### A. Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study is composed of two parts. Part 1 deals the demand by elite collegiate baseball players for sports agent services. Leisure attitude is measured using a Likert-type scale. It includes 9 statements that represent possible feelings towards demand for sports agent services. The response categories were: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neither agree nor disagree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The measure used is tested for validity in several different ways, including critical ratio and exploratory factor analysis, to ensure the validity of the measurements. The Cronbach's alpha reliability score is .889. Part 2 includes a number of demographic questions such as level in the school, infielder or outfielder and aspiration to become professional.

### B. Data Analysis

A total of 239 questionnaires were used in the data analysis. Frequency distribution and percentage were used to create a descriptive profile including the level in the school, infielder or outfielder and willingness to become a professional baseball player. The mean and standard deviation were used to indicate descriptive elite collegiate baseball player perceptions of degree of demand for sports agent services. Independent Sample t-testing was used to test differences in perception of demand degree for sport agent services between infielders and outfielders. One-way ANOVA testing with Scheffe post hoc comparisons was used to test for differences in perception of demand degree for sport agent services based on willingness to become a professional baseball player.

## III. RESULTS

A number of statistical techniques were used to analyze the response to the questions. Descriptive analysis was conducted to answer study questions relevant to the frequency

distribution for the elite collegiate baseball players' profile and means and standard deviations for degree of demand for sports agent services. The results are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. As can be seen in Table 1, from the overall sample of respondents, the freshman group was the largest of collegiate groups (39.7%), followed by the sophomore group (31.4%). Most of the respondents were infielders (70.7%). About half the respondents were willing to be professional baseball players (49.4%) in the future. Only a few were not willing (7.5%) and 43.1% respondents had not decided yet.

**Table 1 Frequency distribution of elite colligate baseball players' profiles**

Variables		Frequency	%
Level in your school	Freshman	95	39.7
	Sophomore	75	31.4
	Junior	48	20.1
	Senior	21	8.8
Infielder or outfielder	Infielder	166	70.7
	Outfielder	73	29.3
Aspiration of willingness to be professional baseball players	Yes	118	49.4
	No	18	7.5
	Not decided yet	103	43.1

Means and standard deviations for these 9 statements are presented in Table 2. It can be seen that the majority of respondents tend to have a positive demand degree as shown by the mean of 3.65 to 3.13. The results shown in Table 1 indicate that most elite collegiate baseball players tend to need sport agent services, as shown by the mean of 3.15. The variation among responses is indicated by the large standard deviation of 0.94. This means that the degree of demand for sports agent services by some elite collegiate baseball players is very high, but not others. Players consider that such services provided by sport agents such as better career opportunities, helping them to negotiate successfully with the corporation and financial planning are more important than other services such as public relations professional consulting.

**Table 2 Mean and standard deviations of demand degree for sports agent services**

Item	Means	Standard deviation
Sport agent's services	3.15	0.94
Professional consulting	3.13	0.94
Contracts	3.27	0.90
Financial planning	3.30	0.93
Public relations	3.20	0.95

Career planning	3.22	1.01
Legal consulting	3.23	0.97
Successful negotiation	3.47	0.97
More career opportunities	3.65	0.99

Independent sample t-testing was conducted to analyze the relationship for degree of demand for sports agent services between infielders and outfielders. The analysis results are shown in Table 3. There is no significant difference between demand by infielders and outfielders, as shown by the t-values of -0.218 to 1.289 (Tables 3). The analytical results show that all elite collegiate baseball players in Taiwan, whether infielders or outfielders, demonstrate the same degree of demand for sports agent services.

**Table 3 Independent sample t-testing for demand degree for sports agent services between infielders and outfielders.**

Item	Variable	Means	Standard deviation	t-value
Sport agent's services	Infielder	3.13	0.91	-0.450
	Outfielder	3.19	1.00	
Professional consulting	Infielder	3.17	0.91	1.120
	Outfielder	3.03	1.00	
Contracts	Infielder	3.25	0.88	-0.541
	Outfielder	3.32	0.93	
Financial planning	Infielder	3.30	0.87	-0.140
	Outfielder	3.32	1.07	
Public relations	Infielder	3.25	0.96	1.289
	Outfielder	3.08	0.91	
Career planning	Infielder	3.20	0.99	-0.293
	Outfielder	3.25	1.08	
Legal consulting	Infielder	3.22	0.94	-0.218
	Outfielder	3.25	1.04	
Successful negotiation	Infielder	3.45	0.96	-0.404
	Outfielder	3.51	0.99	
More opportunities for careers	Infielder	3.61	0.95	-0.903
	Outfielder	3.74	1.07	

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) testing was conducted to analyze the relationship towards demand degree for sports agent services taking into consideration the demographic variables of level in the school and willingness to become a professional baseball player. The results are shown in Table 4 and Table 5. Table 4 shows the relationship between level in the school and degree of demand degree. The results of ANOVA testing show that there are no significant differences among the 4 groups for level in the school in

relation to the degree of demand for sports agent services (Table 4). The analytical results show that all elite collegiate baseball players in Taiwan, whether freshmen, sophomores, juniors or seniors, hold the same demand degree for sports agent services.

**Table 4 ANOVA results for level in the school and demand degree for sports agent services.**

Item	Variable	Means	Standard deviation	F ratio
Sport agent's services	Freshman	3.17	0.90	0.854
	Sophomore	3.01	0.99	
	Junior	3.27	0.93	
	Senior	3.22	0.93	
Professional consulting	Freshman	3.16	0.93	2.046
	Sophomore	2.94	0.99	
	Junior	3.17	0.86	
	Senior	3.44	0.89	
Contracts	Freshman	3.30	0.89	1.424
	Sophomore	3.10	0.92	
	Junior	3.40	0.93	
	Senior	3.37	0.74	
Financial planning	Freshman	3.31	0.91	0.074
	Sophomore	3.28	0.94	
	Junior	3.35	1.03	
	Senior	3.26	0.81	
Public relations	Freshman	3.28	0.92	0.445
	Sophomore	3.11	1.01	
	Junior	3.19	0.86	
	Senior	3.19	1.00	
Career planning	Freshman	3.25	0.97	0.697
	Sophomore	3.08	1.10	
	Junior	3.27	1.01	
	Senior	3.37	0.93	
Legal consulting	Freshman	3.25	0.94	0.071
	Sophomore	3.24	1.00	
	Junior	3.17	1.00	
	Senior	3.22	0.97	
Successful negotiation	Freshman	3.50	0.97	0.075
	Sophomore	3.43	0.99	
	Junior	3.48	0.96	

	Senior	3.44	0.97	
	Freshman	3.68	0.98	0.613
More career opportunities	Sophomore	3.74	1.06	
	Junior	3.50	0.92	
	Senior	3.63	0.97	

The relationship between elite collegiate baseball player's aspiration or willingness to become a professional baseball player and degree of demand for sports agent services was examined by conducting ANOVA testing. The test results are indicated in Table 5.

The results of ANOVA testing show that there are significant differences among the three groups for aspiration to become professional baseball players in relation to the demand degree for the following sports agent services: contract (F ratio is 6.004,  $p < .05$ ), career planning (F ratio is 4.054,  $p < .05$ ) and more career opportunities for career (F ratio is 6.380,  $p < .05$ ). One can see from Table 5 that elite collegiate baseball players wanting to turn professional gave higher ratings than did those who were not willing or had not decided yet. When running the Scheffee procedure, it was found that the willingness to become a professional baseball player group differed from the not willing to become a professional player group, but not from the undecided group.

**Table 5 ANOVA results for those willing to be professional baseball players and demand degree of sports agent services.**

Item	Variable	Means	Standard deviation	F ratio
Sport agent's services	Yes	3.28	0.82	2.526
	No	2.83	1.04	
	Not decided yet	3.07	1.02	
Professional consulting	Yes	3.23	0.85	1.380
	No	3.00	1.19	
	Not decided yet	3.04	0.98	
Contracts	Yes	3.43a	0.80	6.004*
	No	2.72a	0.83	
	Not decided yet	3.18	0.96	
Financial planning	Yes	3.41	0.90	1.679
	No	3.06	0.94	
	Not decided yet	3.23	0.95	
Public relations	Yes	3.33	0.88	2.055
	No	3.06	0.87	
	Not decided yet	3.09	1.01	
Career planning	Yes	3.41a	0.98	4.054*
	No	2.94a	1.00	
	Not decided yet	3.06	1.03	

Law consulting	Yes	3.29	0.91	2.224
	No	2.78	1.06	
	Not decided yet	3.23	1.00	
Successful negotiation	Yes	3.56	0.84	2.230
	No	3.06	1.21	
	Not decided yet	3.44	1.05	
More career opportunities	Yes	3.83a	0.90	6.380*
	No	3.00a	1.14	
	Not decided yet	3.57	1.01	

\*significant at 0.05

a – indicates that there is a difference between these two groups

#### IV. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent or degree of demand perceived by elite Taiwanese collegiate baseball players for sports agent services. We expect to find some effect of demographic variables on demand degree for sport agent services. The results presented above lead to the following conclusions: First, most elite collegiate baseball players generally feel the need for sports agent services, but it seems not necessary. A few elite collegiate baseball players are found to have lower demand degree. These results suggest that the “sports agent” is a very new conception in Taiwan. Most elite collegiate baseball players simply concentrate on practice and competition, ignoring career planning which can be facilitated by consultation with specialists such as sports agent. Second, elite collegiate baseball players, who willing in becoming professional, have a higher degree of demand for sport agent services. This means that those players want to go on to become professional in the next stage have to deal with more complicated situations such as negotiation in Taiwan or abroad. Third, the demographic variable of willingness to become a professional baseball player has some influence on degree of demand for sports agent services such as contracts, career planning and more career opportunities. This may due to the fact that elite collegiate baseball players may have the opportunity to join more than one professional baseball team in which case the first question facing the player is what benefits each team provides. The two parties must first reach a compromise, discussing the content of contract clauses and negotiating with the team delegation. The final step is to sign a professional contract. For example, Guo, Fu-Lin, a well-known young infielder in Taiwan, signed a contract with the New York Yankees in 2009. In 2009, he was a high school student, just 18 years old, with no experience of negotiating with any commercial group. He was authorized a sports agent to negotiate with the New York Yankees. Most young men have compulsory military service in Taiwan, and Guo was no exception. For this military service, if Guo wanted to join any professional baseball team abroad, he had to be a student. Thus in the final agreement with the New York Yankees included a \$200,000 signing bonus and \$100,000 tuition.

#### V. Conclusion

This study provides new information about the degree of demand by elite collegiate baseball players for the services of sports agents in Taiwan. As we can see, most such players generally need the services of sports agents. The results also provide further evidence that services such as successful negotiation, more career opportunities, financial

planning and contracts are more in demand. We also note the influence on demand degree for sports agents by the elite collegiate baseball player is related to their willingness to become professional. The results have clear implications for sport agents or collegiate team managers who should provide suitable information about career opportunities, financial planning and negotiation with professional teams to find the best benefits for elite collegiate baseball players.

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### 摘要

對台灣而言棒球運動是國球，也是一項台灣精神的象徵。在台灣優秀的業餘棒球選手大都來自於傳統的大專棒球名校。他們有部份成為國家隊的成員，也是未來職業棒球隊所鎖定的目標。本研究旨在探討台灣大專甲組棒球選手對於運動經紀人的需求狀況，透過問卷在校園或是球場進行調查，共回收 239 份有效問卷進行分析，並利用描述性統計量、獨立樣本 t 檢定、單因子變異數分析及雪費法事後比較來進行評估。研究結果如下：1. 大部分台灣大專甲組棒球選手對於運動經紀人的服務有需求的存在。2. 而且大專甲組棒球選手們認為透過運動經紀人的協助，能夠有較好生涯發展、更成功的協商、更好的財務規劃及更好的合約。本研究結果有助於運動經紀人與大專甲組棒球隊教練確認大專甲組棒球選手對於運動經紀人的需求，並給予適時的服務及輔導。

**關鍵詞：**台灣大專甲組棒球選手、運動經紀人、運動經紀服務需求