

Sports Leagues and Associations

Spotlight

How would you feel if you were given a backstage pass to some of the biggest sports leagues in the county? In the United States, every sport has a league or association that oversees its activities, including the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, and more. These organizations hire thousands of workers to help each season run smoothly. Whether you're a baseball fanatic, basketball lover, or football freak, you can get a job in the league or association of your choice and help guide the sport into the future.

Personal Connection

It takes a lot of people to create a successful sports season. Marketing managers, accounting coordinators, public relations managers, web admins, and others are specialized cogs in the machine of every sports league. If you have a passion for sports, working for a sport league or association is one way to get a front row seat.

- Do you love sports?
- Are you interested in sharing your favorite sports with the rest of the world?
- Are you curious about what happens behind the scenes to put on a successful sports season?
- Are you organized, creative, and a team player?
- Can you see yourself living, breathing, and thinking sports 24/7?

Other Connections

Working for a sports league or association is only one of many options when it comes to being employed in the world of sports. Other careers in sports include:

- Becoming a sports team manager, which involves managing athletes on a team either at the collegiate, semi-pro, or pro level.
- Coaching a youth, high school, collegiate, semi-pro, or pro team. The higher the level, the more experience you need to become a head coach or even assistant coach.
- Working as a PR representative for teams to spread the word about the team, ensure the players are depicted in a positive light, and maintain the team's overall public image.
- Helping teams bring in revenue through events and merchandise as a team marketing manager.
- Representing individual athletes as a sports agent to help them earn sponsorships, connect with the right teams, and pursue successful career.

Fun Facts/ "Did You Know?..."

Regulation Underwear: Did you know that umpires in Major League Baseball have to wear black underwear just in case they split their pants on the field? [Learn more.](#)

Ancient Olympic Games: The first Olympic games were held in 760 B.C., but there was only one competition, which was a footrace. [Read more here.](#)

A Valuable Industry: The sports industry as a whole in North America was valued at 71 billion dollars in 2018. [Read more here.](#)



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STEM Connection

Every spectator wants to feel like they are right next to the sidelines. In order to enhance the fan experience, several sports leagues and associations are turning to technology for help. Here are a few ways advancements technology are helping sports leagues connect with fans, get more accurate information, and maintain the integrity of the sports we love:

- Fan engagement is top priority: Live streaming, sports games, virtual reality, and so much more are all about fan engagement and keeping people invested in the game. The more fans interact, the more money the league has to invest in improvements and take care of players. [Read more.](#)
- Data, data, data: Data is everything in sports. From player statistics to crowd sizes, leagues and associations rely on data to tell them what's working and what isn't, where they might encounter problems, and how to proceed in the future. [Read more.](#)
- Instant replay gives leagues more credibility: Humans can only see so much. In the world of sports, everything happens at twice the speed, and sometimes it's hard to make the right call. That's where instant replay comes in, and leagues need to effectively implement and utilize it in order to maintain a reputation for fair play. [Read more.](#)
- Injury reduction technology keeps sports safe: Another major concern for leagues and associations is player safety. A prime example is the NFL, which put effort into the development of new helmets to reduce the amount of concussions players received. [Read more.](#)

Articles, Videos, and Podcasts of Interest

[This article](#) by a sports marketing graduate looks at 10 things to know about working in sports.

[This website](#) gives a detailed look at the massive list of jobs in sports, including league positions.

Sports Career Finder offers an FAQ with answers to your most pressing questions about working in sports. [Learn more.](#)

Fans of sports will love these TED Talk videos. [Watch now.](#)

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Journeys to Working in Sports Leagues and Associations

To get a job in sports, you're going to be faced with a lot of competition and will need to show what makes you stand out from the crowd. Many experts agree that it's important to get started as early as possible. Some of the most successful people in sport league associations started taking steps as teens in high school.

Read about the journey of one sport association communication specialist:

Melinda Travis has worked in both marketing and communications for major sports leagues including the NBA and MLB. Before she got her start, Melinda knew any early experience with sports would help her achieve her goals. She says to students looking to work in professional sports, "Get involved with your high school or collegiate athletic program. If you want to be a sports journalist, get involved with the school paper and start writing sports stories. If you want to be a sports therapist, volunteer as an assistant to your school's athletic trainer – anything and everything is relevant."

In her final years of college, Melinda knew her best shot of breaking into the world of professional sports was to secure an internship with a major team. She studied the names and faces of players, listened to hours of radio interviews, and stayed up to date with the latest sports news. Her hard work finally paid off when she landed an internship with the NBA's Orlando Magic.

Melinda found that developing relationships with other people in sports was the most important part of securing a permanent position in a professional sports league. She says, "Like any other job seeking endeavor, it's all about developing relationships." Melinda attended conferences, reached out to teams directly, and connected with professionals on social media to meet prospective employees. "You won't get hired if people don't know you exist so it's important to find a way to be top of mind with people in a position of influence." Melinda enjoyed a successful career working for the NBA and MLB before starting her own company in sports communication.

You can learn more about Melinda Travis's career path [here](#).

Since there are so many roles in sports leagues and associations, different careers require different skills. Undergraduate students can choose from a variety of majors that are applicable to working in a sports league. Read about Brenna Webb, who focused on athletic public relations and eventually earned a degree in sports management:

Brenna works in PR for the NFL and knows firsthand what it takes to make it in a sports career. Her first big opportunity came in the form of an internship, which is the case with most careers in sports. Her internship allowed her to make industry contacts who were later able to help her get a job with the NFL.

Her best advice for students pursuing sports careers is, "When it comes to education, the best education is experience and on-the-job training." It's important to do well enough in high school that you can move on to college and earn opportunities that will give you direct industry experience.

Brenna's story can be found [here](#).

