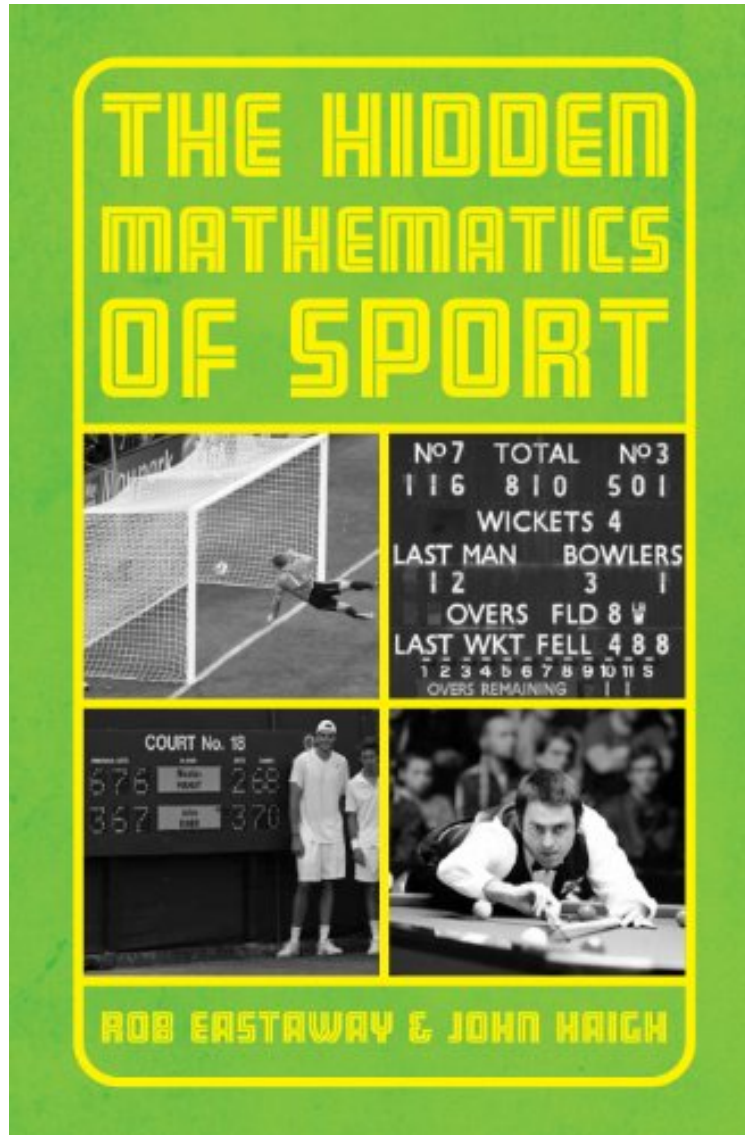


(Download free ebook) The Hidden Mathematics of Sport

## The Hidden Mathematics of Sport

*Rob Eastaway, John Haigh*

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**Rob Eastaway, John Haigh : The Hidden Mathematics of Sport** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hidden Mathematics of Sport:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Top notch education and entertainmentBy Aaron C. BrownFirst, two warnings: this book is the same as the author's "How to Take a Penalty." I came across that in hardback a few years ago and was not aware this Kindle book under a different title is identical. Second, the sports examples are a bit dated, mostly from the 80s and 90s, and are heavily slanted toward British sports. Americans unfamiliar with the rules of

cricket, rugby, darts and snooker will have a little difficulty following parts of the book, although nothing that can't be fixed by five minutes of Internet research. There are a lot of books on mathematics and sports. One distinguishing characteristic is how much genuine sport interest and insight there is. I generally don't like books in which sports are used as pure illustrations, especially when the author doesn't know or care much about them. This book evidences a strong and sincere love of sports as a spectator. The problems that appeal to the author are armchair speculations rather than anything of direct use to a player or coach. Nevertheless, he manages to capture much of the excitement and the personalities, this is not just a book about math. This fan enthusiasm suffuses the book and adds spice to the message. Another distinguishing characteristic is the type, level and seriousness of the mathematics. All of the problems the author considers are real mathematics, not just putting numbers on things. There are interesting problems from geometry, probability, game theory, combinatorics, logic and other areas of elementary mathematics. Even mathphobes should be able to follow the text, and the appendices should satisfy a secondary school precalculus student. Even more accomplished mathematicians will find the discussions interesting, even if they consider the underlying theorems to be trivial. The math is serious, if not basic. Finally you have to ask how closely the sports and math are tied. At one extreme there are math story problems with sports themes, which are neither entertaining nor a good way to learn math. Here the math is strongly related to actual interesting questions in sports, although the author simplifies the analyses to the point that the answers are not actually applicable. For example, there is considerable discussion about measuring home field advantage, but no reference to the fascinating literature about why it exists. The author discusses enough sport to motivate an interesting math question, solves it (or describes the solution and puts the details in an appendix), but keeps the discussion short and non-technical enough that the math answer illuminates an aspect of the sport question without trying to get closer to an answer. The writing is clear and stylish, and should delight anyone with even mild interest in both subjects. While it is not deep, it does illustrate how to think like an applied mathematician, and it pulls out some surprising and entertaining results. It will heighten your appreciation of sports, and sharpen your mathematical wits. I recommend it highly.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Dreadful  
By Athan  
This is a book that contains the trivia you need to understand if you were to commentate on a British sport such as cricket or darts or snooker, with some football and tennis and golf mercifully thrown in. If you don't have a guest on the show to tell you what he'd do if he was in the athlete's shoes, or how things will pan out due to peculiarities of the rules, this book is an OK start, it will get you going. That's fine, but its masquerading as a book about the hidden mathematics of sport, and that it ain't. I hold an AB in Applied Math from Harvard, an MSc in Pure Maths from Imperial and another degree where some math was necessary, I use math at work about once every couple months (perhaps less often, but when I do its proper math of the kind that's taught in grad school, not undergrad) so I know math when I see it and there's barely any math in here. Like, not by a long shot. What we have here is a string of dorky, pedantic observations of the kind that will get you in trouble with the fair sex, really. It is not a very interesting mathematical property of number 11 that you can arrange the winners of the world cup as follows: 1962 Brazil 1966 ----- England 1970 ----- Brazil 1974 -----  
Germany 1978 ----- Argentina 1982 ----- Italy 1986 -----  
Argentina 1990 ----- Germany 1994 ----- Brazil 1998 ----- France 2002 Brazil  
This is an extreme, but typical example of how far the bottom of the barrel had to be scraped to put together this list of dorky, inconsequential facts. Also, suppose that, like me, you don't know the rules of Rugby or Cricket or Snooker. Well, you won't find them here. You won't find the rules that are relevant to the dorky, pedantic, not-mathematical-at-all observations, even. I'm not asking for a full rulebook here, I'm just begging for the necessary background to follow the argument. Also, the one or two sports I know about the author gets WRONG. So the guy who came third in the 1950 F1 Championship was not called Luigi Fagiola. His name was Luigi Fagioli, with an i, OK? That's the plural for the word bean in Italian. There's a nice mathematical fact for you. And in the Eurovision Song Contest (another British sport), yes, Cyprus always awards us Greeks 12 points, but if the author had his facts down he would have noticed that we always award them 10. Why am I supposed to trust him when he describes the other sports I don't know about? So why did you read it, then, Athan? I hear you ask, and the answer is that it was assigned to the son of a friend of mine who is ten and attends (time to name and shame) Westminster School and I've offered to help junior out. Well, now I know why he does not like it; it's unfathomably boring. I don't like it either. If he was told to read the book for PE, I'd be like well, this is a bit premature, he's probably not yet playing to the level where it matters that he follow the recommendations for when it's best to do your best tennis serve and when your safe serve but at least I would understand. But whoever had him read this for math is a dangerous charlatan.

How to beat the odds, how to always win at tennis, and how to take a penalty and score every time all using the power of mathematics