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| 28. Seattle Mariners | (#27) |
| 27. Arizona Diamondbacks | (#20) |
| 26. Colorado Rockies | (#21) |

The Sports Fan Loyalty Index provides an apples-to-apples comparison of the intensity with which fans within a team's SMSA support the home team versus corresponding values for fans of other teams in that market. "Fan loyalty correlates very highly with broadcast viewership, merchandise purchase, and ticket revenues. Happier fans too," noted Passikoff. "Everybody loves a winner, but it's important to note that win/loss ratios do not entirely govern fan loyalty. Even winning the World Series doesn't immediately jump a team to the top of the loyalty list. It certainly helps build loyalty, but there are three other emotionally-based factors that must be taken into account."

The four emotional drivers of fan loyalty include:

Pure Entertainment

How well a team does. But even more importantly than a win-loss ratio, how exciting is their play? "Winning the Series can add up to 20% to a team's loyalty score," noted Passikoff. "That certainly moves you up the list, but it doesn't load the loyalty bases for a team either."

Authenticity

How well they play as a team. And what support is provided? "A new stadium is an icon, but more often – because it happens more often – a new manager can help lift this driver. It certainly didn't hurt the Phillies," said Passikoff. But you can't buy Authenticity. "The Yankees had the highest payroll in baseball last year," said Passikoff, "nearly twice that of the Cardinals. Look who's #1."

Fan Bonding

Are players respected and admired? "We recognize that professional baseball players are the 'best-of-the-best,'" observed Passikoff, "But if you really have to think about 'who might that be on my team?' your Fan Bonding is going to take a bad hop."

History and Tradition

Is the game and the team part of fans' and community rituals, institutions and beliefs? "This is the most emotional of values when it comes to Major League Sports," said Passikoff. "It is often the fan loyalty driver that accounts for nearly all the loyalty that exists for a team. For example, it's worth noting it's been 106 years since the Chicago Cubs won a World Series, and 69 years since they won a National League pennant, but they remain among the top-5 teams when it comes to being part of the Chicago community."

"Overall league and team rankings correlate with viewership and merchandise sales, and since rankings can be influenced depending upon how loyalty drivers are managed, it's critical that team marketers do accurate scouting regarding the strategic ball they intend to pitch fans," said Passikoff. "Otherwise they can be literally thrown out by the fans."

"All teams – all brands, for that matter – can benefit from increased loyalty levels, but as

baseball is traditionally called America's 'National Pastime,' there's an extra emotional connection for fans." said Passikoff, "As this is just the start of the 2014 season, it's worth quoting Hall of Famer, Yogi Berra, who noted, 'It ain't over till its over,' and real emotional loyalty metrics can put a team into extra innings with their fans," noted Passikoff.

For fans of other sports, 2014 rankings for the NBA will appear just before playoffs later this month, the NHL in time for the Stanley Cup, and the NFL rankings in time for their kickoff in September.

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