

# RECORDER

## Bar Talk

PEOPLE AND PRACTICES

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### Number people

Quick. In the history of sports, which team is the best?

Have your answer?

Richard Climan and Eric Reifschneider think they've worked it out mathematically.

The New York Yankees is by far superior, they say, followed by the Boston Celtics and Montreal Canadiens.

How are they so sure?

The Cooley Godward partners teamed up with mathematician Patrick Worfolk, of TZero Technologies Inc., to develop an index ranking 34 sports dynasties — professional sports franchises that have dominated their rivals for an extended period of time — over the past century.

Their so-called Dynasty Index is based on a complex mathematical equation that includes three factors: the length of time a team was dominant, the number of championships it won during that period, and the number of teams it competed against.

"We've taken something of a tongue-in-cheek approach to this," Climan, the head of Cooley's M&A group, said.

"We believe in our numbers," Reifschneider added, "but we're not pretending to be serious sports journalists."

They did catch the attention of a sports writer at *The Wall Street Journal* who wrote about the index a couple of weeks ago. Climan and Reifschneider had gotten a write-up in the paper seven years ago when they developed their first index, which rated teams based on the probability they wouldn't win a championship over a period of years.

The two told the *Journal* about their new index just before the Super Bowl. The New England Patriots were favored to win for the third time in four years, and the Cooley lawyers raised the question of whether this record would turn the Patriots into a true dynasty.

"The Patriots' success is nothing to write home about," Reifschneider said. "It's a

blip on the screen."

The Cooley lawyers compare the Dynasty Index to the Richter Scale, which measures the severity of earthquakes using a similar logarithm.

The New York Yankees Dynasty Index of 13.5 would be like an earthquake that causes "California [to fall] into the ocean," Reifschneider said, while the Patriots' 3.9 rating is comparable to earthquakes that go unnoticed.

During their reign from 1923 to 1962 the New York Yankees won 20 World Series competing against at least 15 teams. The Cooley partners gave it a 13.5 index rating, which they say is 1,000 times more powerful than the Boston Celtics, which comes in at No. 2 with a 10.4 rating.

Born and raised in New York City, Climan is an avid Yankees fan. His office is filled with memorabilia, including a baseball signed by the 1961 team and photos of the 1961 season lineup and Mickey Mantle sliding into home.

He is delighted to have mathematical proof — at least by his equation — that the Yankees are the most powerful dynasty in the history of North American professional sports.

"After what the Red Sox did to the Yankees in October, New York sports fans desperately need something to lift their sagging spirits," Climan said. "The Dynasty Index gives these grieving fans a reason to celebrate."

— Brenda Sandburg



#### ON THE CHARTS:

Cooley Godward lawyers Richard Climan, left, and Eric Reifschneider collaborated with a mathematician to come up with the best sports dynasties in history.

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