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## LIFE OF REILLY

For the price of a bus token, you can see NBA hoops. Really.

by Rick Reilly



Jeff Jacobson/Getty Images

Wait! Before you jump, swallow, impale, inhale or crawl inside the oven, think about the upside of this stock-market crash: It's never been cheaper to go to a game!

Sure, times are rougher than Russian toilet paper. Your 401K is now a 101K. Donald Trump just laid off three blow-dryists. But because of it, you can see great sporting events for the price of a can of Spam Lite!

Some fans with season tickets can't afford the parking, the \$7 Cokes or even the razor to shave beforehand. They're dumping them like AIG stock on places like StubHub.com and eBay. I have a friend who got two tickets to the Orange Bowl this year, plus parking, for \$10. That's cheaper than an actual bowl of oranges!

So I conducted an experiment. I started Monday at noon with a mythical \$100, just to see how many decent tickets I could purchase in 24 hours. I didn't figure any handling charges. We're trying to save cash here. Go by the guy's office and pick them up, you loafer!

Let's start with a little NBA. You've heard the average NBA ticket is \$48.83? Pah! I could've bought a ticket to the March 27 Nuggets at Mavericks game for \$1.99. No lie. A very good NBA game for less than actual nuggets (McDonald's, \$3.29). Events: One. Money left: \$98.01.

I would've had to pay a little more to see the Raptors-Rockets on March 3—\$3. Maybe I'll sue. Events: Two. Left: \$95.01.

Sick of the NBA already? OK, let's take in some college hoops. For \$7, I could've watched UCLA play President Obama's brother-in-law's Oregon State Beavers on March 5 at legendary Pauley Pavilion. Maybe you'll wind up Secretary of Beer. Events: Three. Left: \$88.01.

One game a night not enough? How much do you think it would cost to see Session 1 of the Big East tournament at Madison Square Garden on March 10? A hundo? Fitty? Wrong! Twelve bucks on TicketNetwork.com. That's less than it would cost Jim Boeheim to shave his head (Cost Cutters, \$15)! Events: Four. Left: \$76.01.

Let's stop all the spending madness and get back to some sensible buying. Wizards at Spurs on March 6? Would 99 cents be within your price range? True, it's a balcony corner seat at the blimp-hangar known as the AT&T Center in San Antonio—which means you're practically in Waco—but so what? By the second quarter, you'll be sitting behind Gregg Popovich! (Don't do it. He's 6'2".) Events: Five. Left: \$75.02.

**I could've taken in a little NASCAR—for six bucks. That's how much it would've cost to see the Friday qualifying for the Kobalt Tools 500 near Atlanta. That's less than a beer! You don't think Jeff Gordon's worth a beer?**

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### IN THIS ISSUE



Apr 6, 2009  
 Why is Manny so...

Or, that same day, I could've taken in a little NASCAR—for six bucks. That's how much it would've cost to see the Friday qualifying for the Kobalt Tools 500 near Atlanta. No, it ain't the race. It's faster than the race! Last year, the pole winner was Jeff Gordon. Six bucks? That's less than a beer! You don't think Jeff Gordon's worth a beer? Events: Six. Left: \$69.02.

And you might say, "Hold on. You want me to spend \$6 for a ticket in this economy? What should I eat? Toe lint?" No, you sneak a couple plain hamburger buns in under your coat (\$1.59 for eight at Albertsons) and have yourself a ketchup, mustard, onion, relish and pickle sandwich. Even better—your imagination adds any meat you want!

How about baseball? You can see major league baseball right now in this country for roughly less than it costs to watch algae form. For me, that's a toss-up. Still, how's Baltimore at Texas on April 13, \$4.50? You can't get a decent syringe for that! Events: Seven. Left: \$64.52.

Are you nuts for nets? How about a night at the Sony Ericsson Open in Miami, March 25? OK, it's pricey: \$14.56 (eBay), but Serena Williams, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are scheduled to play. What do you want, a post-match loofa? (We'll work on it.) Events: 8. Left: \$49.96

Got kids? How's the Harlem Globetrotters in Denver at the Pepsi Center on April 4: Three measly bucks. You can't get a bucket full of confetti for that (rubber bucket, \$10.49, Home Depot). Dating Miss Texas? You can see the Houston Rodeo on March 16, followed by a concert by Darius Rucker, aka Hootie. (Sorry, for \$4, you don't get the Blowfish, too.) Events: 10. Left: \$42.96.

We're way under budget here, so let's do something glamorous. How about watching the Tuesday practice day at the U.S. Open golf championship at Bethpage in NY, on June 16 for \$20? Get there early. Tiger likes to tee off about six a.m. Events: 11. Left: \$22.96.

Ok, how about some soccer? Good point. Screw soccer.

Gotta watch at least one hockey game. The Senators play the Lightning on March 29. You can be there for \$6. So have one less mocha chino this week. Events: 12. Left: \$16.96.

Now, let's do something really memorable. College World Series in Omaha, June 20, \$8.23. For that, you can buy two tickets and take Omaha-resident Warren Buffett. He could use some cheering up.

So that's 13 events, but leaves us only 50 cents. You think we're done? Think again, Bubba. The Yankees are playing two exhibition games at the new Yankee Stadium on April 3 and 4 against the Cubs and the bleacher tickets are going for the 1923 price of TWENTY FIVE CENTS A TICKET. Let's splurge and buy two. We can invite A-Rod's cousin. And to think that starting this season, four tickets to watch Jeter and the Cheaters from right behind home plate will cost \$810,000. Please. For \$810,000, we better be playing third base.

Yes, the nation's economy is coming apart like a Cub Scout potholder and we're probably all doomed. But you just saw 14 solid events—seven different sports—for exactly \$100.

Besides, what do you care? You're dating Miss Texas!

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