Who's Worth It?

a sports salary and performance comparison app

conceived and designed by Katherine Pradt

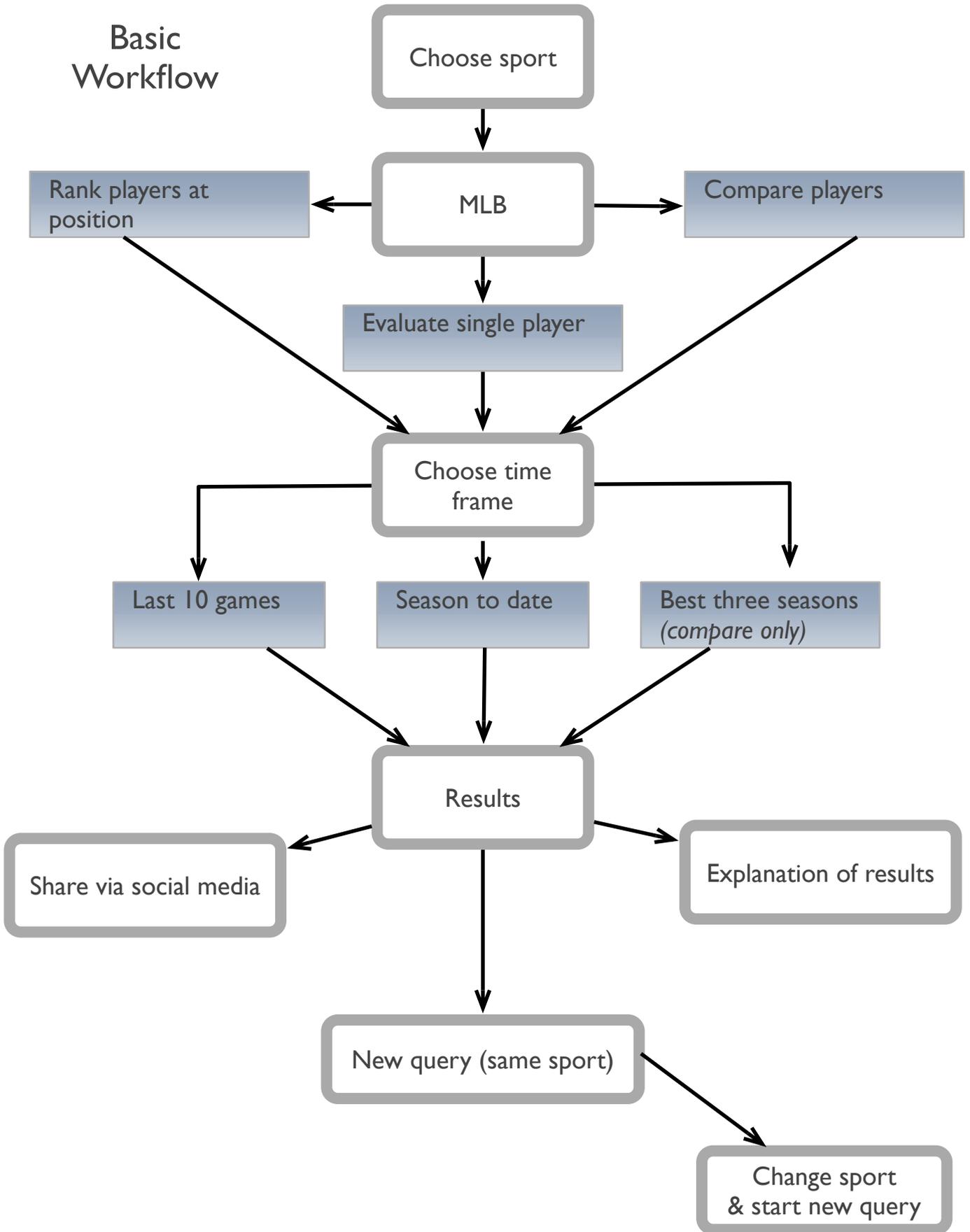as part of the 2015 Sports Illustrated Hackathon

This app is intended to contribute to the everpresent, unending discussions among sports fans (the kind that happens in sports bars). Baseball fans, for instance, can spend hours—years, even—debating questions like these: What was the greatest era for pitchers? Who would hit more home runs in the modern game, Mickey Mantle or Babe Ruth? Does Pete Rose belong in the Hall of Fame? And, of course, fans of all sports endlessly discuss the specific question that this app addresses: Who among active players is worth the ridiculous amount of money that he is paid?
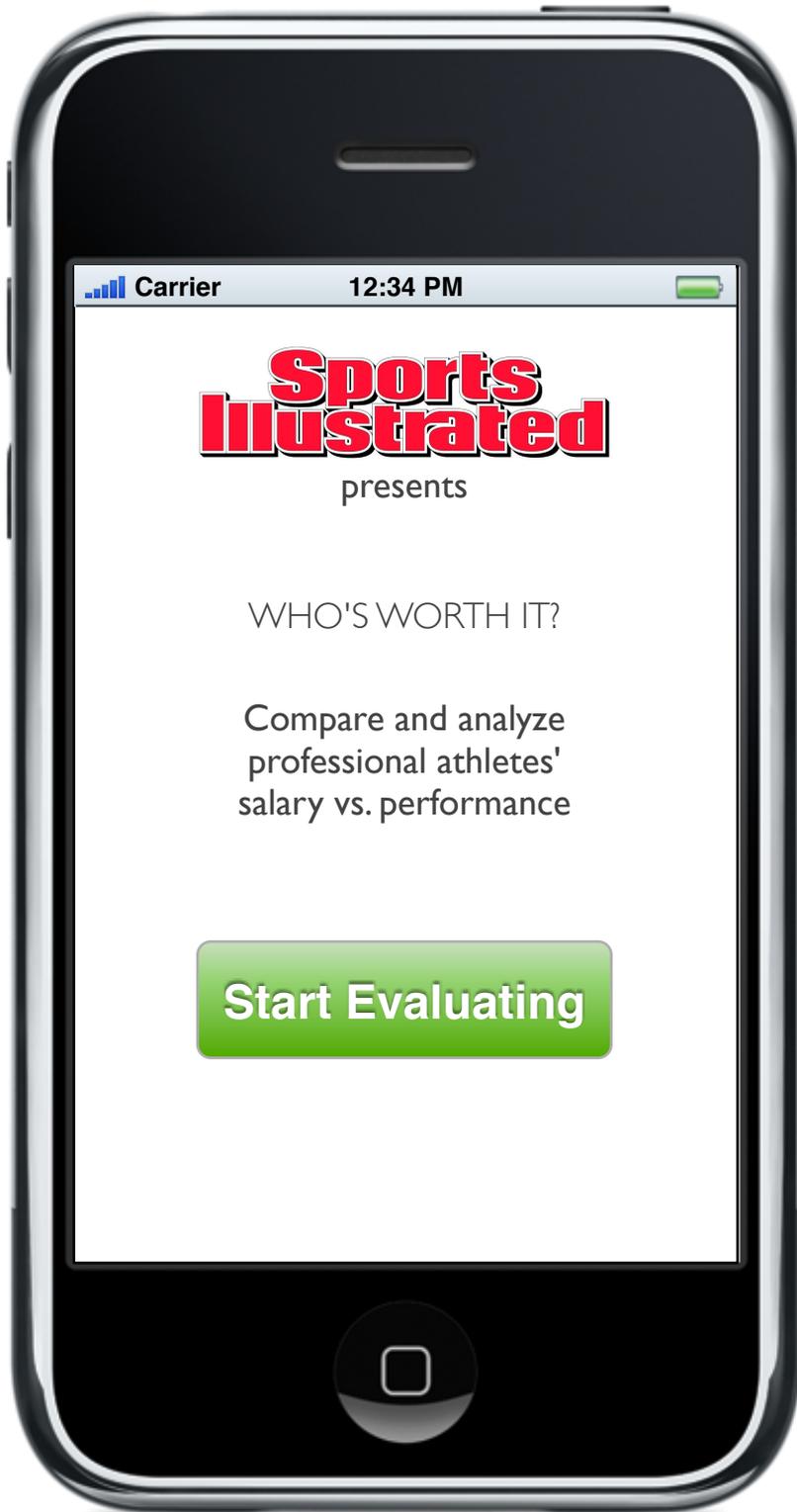
To answer or at least address that question, the app makes a few assertions and assumptions. (More fodder for argument, of course.) For example, we take as a given that some professional athletes *are* worth the money. In other words, this app does not determine or even address the actual monetary value to a team of a player's performance; it seems impossible to quantify the economic impact of, say, a single player's hitting streak, when there are so many factors affecting ticket sales, merchandising, and other revenue streams —as well as many factors other than performance that contribute to what a player is paid.

Instead, we compare a player's pay and performance to an average of the starters at his position. The inflation of salaries is such that the ratio of the money earned by the highest-paid players to average earnings is much greater than high performance is to average performance; in other words, the highest-paid starting pitcher might make 300% more than the average for a starting pitcher, but his performance is unlikely to be more than 50% better.

What follows is an illustration of the way the app will function, through user workflows (limited, for simplicity's sake, to baseball alone) and wireframes.

Basic Workflow

Choose sport

↓

Rank players at position ← MLB → Compare players

↓

Evaluate single player

↓

Choose time frame

↓

Last 10 games   Season to date   Best three seasons *(compare only)*

↓

Results

Share via social media ← Results → Explanation of results

↓

New query (same sport) → Change sport & start new query

Sports Illustrated

presents

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Compare and analyze
professional athletes'
salary vs. performance

Start Evaluating

WHO'S WORTH IT?

CHOOSE A SPORT

SI.com

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Individual player

Compare two players

All players at position

SI.COM

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Compare two players

ENTER PLAYER NAME #1

select and type name

GO

OR CHOOSE TEAM AND POSITION

Arizona Diamondbacks

Atlanta Braves

Pitcher

Catcher

First Base

GO

SI.com

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Compare two players

Adrian Beltre

Chase Headley

Choose time frame

◉ Last 10 games

◯ Season so far

◯ Best three seasons

GO

SI.com

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Compare two players

Adrian Beltre

ENTER PLAYER NAME #2

select and type name

GO

OR CHOOSE TEAM AND POSITION

Arizona Diamondbacks

Atlanta Braves

Pitcher

Catcher

First Base

GO

SI.com

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Running player comparison

Adrian Beltre vs. Chase Headley

over the last 10 games

SI.com

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Adrian Beltre vs. Chase Headley
over the last 10 games

Beltre: 43 AB, 14H, 3HR,
8RBI, .326BA
Salary for 10 games: $987,654.32

Headley: 34 AB, 6H, 1HR,
4RBI, .176BA
Salary for 10 games: $802,469.13

More

SI.com

WHO'S WORTH IT?

Adrian Beltre vs. Chase Headley over the last 10 games

Beltre was **55% more effective** than the average 3rd baseman
His salary is **286% higher**

7   **PROBABLY WORTH IT**

Headley was **7% less effective** than the average 3rd baseman
His salary is **232% higher**

2   **DEFINITELY NOT WORTH IT**

Another one!