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New England Symposium on Statistics in Sports

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New England Symposium on Statistics in Sports

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Abstract

The organizers of the 2007 New England Symposium on Statistics in Sports proudly introduce an issue of JQAS focused on papers presented at the conference.

KEYWORDS: statistics

The role and complexity of statistics in sports has grown in recent years. Professional sports teams use statistical analyses to evaluate players for making draft picks or trades, teams evaluate game strategies, sports organizations develop ranking and ratings of players and teams, and analysts evaluate concepts such as “streakiness” and “excitement.” Successful evolution of the application of statistics to sports would include extensive collaboration and interaction between sports analysts and professional statisticians. Unfortunately, this collaboration is frequently suboptimal. Academic statisticians often work in isolation developing statistical methods for sports applications. Meanwhile, sports organizations typically do not have access to well-trained statistical expertise and cutting edge statistical tools for the analysis of sports data.

The New England Symposium on Statistics in Sports (NESSIS) was established to enhance the communication and collaboration between statisticians and quantitative analysts connected with sports teams, sports media, and universities. The first NESSIS was held on September 29, 2007 at Harvard University and drew nearly seventy abstracts and more than one hundred registrants. The inaugural event was sponsored by the Statistics in Sports Section of the American Statistical Association (ASA), the Boston Chapter of ASA, the Harvard University Department of Statistics, and the Section on Operations Research in Sports of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences. NESSIS featured talks, a poster session, and a panel discussion on the analyses of data from basketball, baseball, football, soccer, hockey, tennis, golf, racing, and the Olympic Games. The event began with a presentation of the interpretation and perception of statistics in the media by Alan Schwarz of the New York Times and ended with a panel discussion on the incorporation of statistics into sports, moderated by Sean Grande, “voice” of the Boston Celtics. This special issue of the Journal for the Quantitative Analysis of Sports highlights some of the presentations at NESSIS.

The founders of NESSIS hope that the enthusiasm generated from bringing together academic statisticians and analysts connected with sports organizations and media have increased the collaborative opportunities between these two worlds. Future NESSIS events will be planned that will continue to encourage the development of cutting edge statistical thinking in sports applications. Additional information about NESSIS, including photos and links to conference videos, may be found at:

<http://www.amstat.org/chapters/boston/nessis07.html>.