

Statisticians Field Sports at Joint Statistical Meetings in Vancouver

At the world's largest annual gathering of statisticians, presenters focus on baseball and hockey

[**Note to editors:** ASA will be pleased to try to set up interviews with any of the presenters; contact rosanne@amstat.org. Press can register for the conference online at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/index.cfm?fuseaction=pressregistration>]

ALEXANDRIA, VA (PRWEB) JULY 22, 2010 – From baseball player ability and predicting batting averages to NHL shot location data and strategies for pulling the goalie, statisticians from across the United States and Canada will conduct sessions relating to baseball and hockey at the annual Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM), the American Statistical Association said today. Approximately 5,500 statisticians, many of them sports enthusiasts, will arrive in Vancouver by July 31 to attend the world's largest annual gathering of statisticians.

Some of the sports sessions on the schedule are listed below; each includes the title, presenter(s), a brief description and a link to the full abstract. Other sessions can be located by searching on keyword – baseball or hockey -- at

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=main>.

Complete program and registration information for JSM 2010 are available at the JSM web site at

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/>. Press registration is located at

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/index.cfm?fuseaction=pressregistration>.

Bridging Eras in Sports, Revisited – Activity #197: Roundtable

Presenter: C. Shane Reese, Brigham Young University

Reese discusses a paper he co-authored addressing the problem of comparing abilities of players from different eras in professional sports. Focus is on National Hockey League players, professional golfers, and Major League baseball players from the perspectives of homerun hitting and hitting for average. Within each sport, some of the players' careers overlap to some extent; this network of overlaps, or bridges, is used to compare players whose careers took place in different eras. The model used in the paper is a statistical time machine

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=309366

The Effect of Back-to-Back Games in the NHL: Top Shelf or Garbage Goal? – Activity #482

Presenter: Michael A. Rutter, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

Conventional wisdom in the National Hockey League (NHL) is that when a team plays games back to back, they perform at a lower than normal level due to fatigue. One area of concern is the fact that not all NHL teams play the same number of back to back games. If teams are truly affected when playing back-to-back games, the imbalance could have an effect on which teams make the Stanley Cup playoffs. This paper attempts to estimate the effect of NHL teams playing back to back games on the probability of winning or tying the game.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=308527

Strategies for Pulling the Goalie in Hockey – Activity #482

Presenters: David Beaudoin, Universite Laval, and Tim B. Swartz, Simon Fraser University

This project develops a simulator for matches in the National Hockey League with the intent of assessing strategies for pulling the goaltender. Novel aspects of the approach include breaking the game down into finer and more realistic situations, introducing the effect of penalties, and including the home-ice advantage. Some surprising strategies are obtained which do not appear to be used in practice. For example, results suggest that the best strategy for a team trailing by one goal with 3 minutes left in the game consists of pulling its goaltender until the score is tied, no matter the game situation (i.e. 5-on-5, 4-on-3, 4-on-5, etc.).

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=306603

Money Can't Buy You Love (But It Can Buy You Playoff Spots and Championships in Major League Baseball) – Activity #195

Jay R. Schaffer, University of Northern Colorado

The New York Yankees have long been thought of as the 800-pound gorilla in the room when it comes to baseball payrolls. For years the Yankees have outspent every other team in major league baseball to "buy championships." Sometimes it has paid off (championships in 2000 and 2009); other times it has not. The question to be asked by the rest of the teams in major league baseball is "does money buy playoff spots and championships?" This research argues that big dollar team payrolls do give an unfair advantage to some teams in major league baseball.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=306621

Exploring the Count in Baseball – Activity #325

Jim Albert, Bowling Green State University

The basic confrontation in baseball is between the pitcher and the batter. The count, the number of balls and strikes in the current plate appearance, gives significant information. Particular counts such as 3-0 favor the batter, and other counts such as 0-2 favor the batter. By exploring pitch-by-pitch data from the Pitch F/X database, we look at pitcher tendencies in different count situations. One objective is to devise new measures of pitching performance based on the count that may be helpful in distinguishing pitchers of different quality.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=306215

About the Joint Statistical Meetings

JSM, which has been held annually since 1974, is conducted jointly with the American Statistical Association (ASA), the International Biometric Society (ENAR and WNAR), the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS), and the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC). JSM activities include oral presentations, panel sessions, poster presentations, continuing education courses, exhibit hall (with state-of-the-art statistical products and opportunities), career placement service, society and section business meetings, committee meetings, social activities, and networking opportunities. JSM is open to members of ASA, SSC, ENAR/WNAR, and IMS, as well as non-members and has special pricing for students, seniors, K-12 teachers, and also offers one-day registrations. Complete information about JSM is available online at

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/index.cfm>.

About the American Statistical Association

Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, the American Statistical Association is the world's largest community of statisticians and the second oldest continuously operating professional society in the United States. For 170 years, the ASA has supported excellence in the development, application, and dissemination of statistical science through meetings, publications, membership services, education, accreditation, and advocacy. Its members serve in industry, government, and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information about the American Statistical Association, please visit the ASA web site at

<http://www.amstat.org> or call 703.684.1221.

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