Introduction

Baseball is a sport with many different teams, and while many fans have a favorite team to watch, some don't. Furthermore, some hardcore fans like to follow as many teams as possible, but only have a limited amount of time to watch baseball. How do we determine which teams are going to provide the most excitement?

Related Statistics

There are currently a few different ways that various sources try to rank how exciting a team is to watch. Sites such as Bleacher Report[1] and Sports Illustrated[2] both have a concept of "Watchability Rankings". However, when one reads their articles, these rankings appear to be rooted in the analyst's opinion about the team and the players. Another, more numerical approach to ranking a team's aesthetic appeal is NERD[3]. This statistic has a version for both pitchers and teams, and the team version takes into account Park-Adjusted Batting Runs Above Average, Park-Adjusted Home Run Rate, Baserunning Runs, Bullpen Strength, Defensive Runs, Payroll, Batter Age and Luck. This is currently the standard for watchability that sources like Fangraphs use.

Description of Statistic

The statistic I am presenting as an alternative to NERD will be called Team Excitement Ranking (TER). The goal of this statistic is to present a viewer with a ranking of which teams will be most exciting to watch. It takes into account both historical data from past years, and data

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[1] https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2691804-predicting-mlbs-10-most-exciting-teams-to-watch-in-2017
[2] https://www.si.com/mlb/2018/04/02/watchability-rankings
[3] https://blogs.fangraphs.com/nerd-scores-return-with-something-not-unlike-a-vengeance/

from the current year. This means a viewer could look up a TER at the start of the season, but the TER will react as the season moves forward. TER takes into account the following factors and the assumptions that drove their inclusion:

- Number of World Series wins in the last 5 years
    - A team that wins a World Series will increase the excitement around a team as they have proven their potential. An arbitrary value of 5 years cutoff was chosen because a World Series win would lose its effect over time.
- Average stadium attendance over last 5 years
    - Stadium attendance is correlated with how exciting a team is to watch.
- Wins this season
    - A team that wins more is more exciting to root for and watch.
- Big contract players this season
    - A team that has more big name, recognizable players are more exciting to watch. We will further assume that how famous a player is, is directly correlated to how much they are being paid. This part will be measured by counting the number of players in the top 10% of salaries in the league.
- Home runs this season
    - Of all of the individual plays, a home run is one of, if not the most exciting.

Argument for Statistic

One of the strengths of TER is the fact that it is rooted in numbers rather than opinions. This makes it superior to the watchability lists from sources such as Bleacher Report or Sports Illustrated. In comparison to NERD, it is superior because it does not make the same poor assumptions that NERD does. First off, NERD park adjusts various statistics, but the park a

team plays at definitely impacts how exciting they are to watch, so this should not be adjusted. Furthermore, it makes the assumption that a lower payroll is better than a high payroll. This is a poor assumption in today's media obsessed world. When a player like Mike Trout gets paid a record breaking amount of money, it generates a lot of buzz around him and the team he is on. Age is another poor assumption to take into account. Surely Ichiro Suzuki's name grew as he got older, especially at the end of his career when he played his last few games before retirement. By avoiding these poor assumptions, TER is the best statistic for evaluating how exciting a team is to watch.

Limitations of Statistic

Although TER has many strengths, there are still a few limitations, the largest being the concept of a prior favorite. Many people become fans of a team for different reasons such as proximity to a team or having an inherited favorite. TER does not take this into account, and it becomes more difficult to say who is most exciting to an individual. In regards to the actual statistic's construction, the current plan is to combine these different factors equally weighted. More research would have to be done to determine if some of these factors are more important than others. This is a great future improvement that could be added.