Doug Marcum

DSC 680 – Project 1 - 10 Questions and Answers

1. How do you think technology impacts the sports betting community for better or worse?

   This is interesting because I believe there are aspect to both pros and cons when it comes to technology and the sports betting community. As more information is available and using that information to make predictions becomes more normalized, I believe people will almost view wagering in the same light as stock market predictions and stock selections. Maybe more like options trading, but still in that arena. However, one aspect to technology and sports betting that is frightening is live, in-game wagering. I fear that this new tool causes those with gambling problems to have access to gambling outlets at too high of a rate. This could result in an increase in gambling addiction issues, as well as individuals overextending themselves financially.

2. Are there certain features that are associated with winning in comparison to losing teams?

   After researching a number of features, it was interesting to see how little differentiates a winning and a losing team. This is seen season over season, as the 'circle of life' comes to life. Parity is very high in the NFL. However, turnovers caused by a team's offense and those generated by a team's defense are great indicators in determining a team being successful or not.

3. How are you accounting for factors like weather, injured players, and so on?

   With the models created, weather and injuries were not directly taken into consideration. The purpose of the project was to create models that could be built or implemented by a general gambler. I realize that this a bit of a stretch to begin with but trying to incorporate a specific players injury into the model would be very difficult. However, since the bookkeepers are constantly adjusting the odds based on this information, in a general manner, this information is included into the models, just not directly or in a shape that can be registered.

4. Why does this matter and why should I care?

   Even if some is not interested in sports wagering, the industry is becoming monolithic. With revenues in the billions, the needs to better inform the consumer is valuable. Additionally, any avenue that can be explored to better understand our abilities with predictive analytics should be explored.

5. Beyond utilization in gambling, are there aspect from this research that can be applied to other areas of sports in general?

   I believe so. By exploring how teams perform against certain scenarios is a vital tool for teams. All sports gather data to better understand their opponent, and the data the gaming industry collects is no different. Even the outcomes, in terms of winners and losers, are the same.

6. Based on the models used, could the information be used for playoff scenarios?

   This is a difficult question to truly answer. While the models could generally be used, the teams that are in the playoffs exceed the results of the mean of the league, thus them being rewarded with continued play. For better accuracy, I would recommend reconstructing the models to include playoff data, or even better, constructing models specific to playoff scenarios.

7. Even with better information, betting on sports is a guessing game. Do you believe that this type of project gives false truths to gamblers?

   This is a tricky question, as it really depends on the gambler. If someone is just enjoying the thrill of a wager here and there, with no worry about losing the funds or the outcome, then this project can actually benefit them. If the gambler has a gambling issue, then a project like this could give them false hope, and only sink them further. I would say 70% “No”, 30% “Yes”.

8. You mention that while the data is publicly available, it is difficult to find central repositories to utilize. Why do think this is the case?

   Not to sound like a conspiracy theorist, but information is power. The more informed the consumer is, the better their selection process becomes. Even being a sports fan, with a career in data, it was difficult for me to gather all the information I needed. Even from reliable sites, the data was spread out and disconnected. In all honesty, it is more likely just a coincidence.

9. How do you see sports betting evolving over the next 5 to 10 years?

   The industry as a whole is being embraced by organizations I never would have imagined. The NCAA had threatened the state of Indiana for years, that if they legalized sports wagering or opened casinos around Indianapolis, they would relocate their headquarters from the city. The NFL and NHL said they would not allow franchises in Las Vegas if gambling on their sports was allowed. In both instants, they only thing to change was to threat dropped by the NCAA, NFL, and NHL.

   With this, I think sports is going to more incorporated directly into the major leagues, with gambling available in the stadiums. The elements available to be wagered on will continue to grow. The federal government will become more involved in the regulation of all, bookkeepers and sporting leagues, to maintain a certain level of cleanliness.

10. If you continue with improving these models, what features would you focus on and/or what features would you introduce?
    Moving forward, I would want to move away from creating a model for an average gambler and increase the complexity. It would be interesting to incorporate weather and certain positional play into the models. Additionally, team game play (looking at specific plays called throughout a

season) being evaluated would be interesting. The best thing about working with sports data is that it is practically limitless on what one can review.