



# SQL Analysis: The Best Basketball Mascots of the 1990s

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**Tools used:** Google BigQuery

**Dataset source:** NCAA Basketball (Google Cloud Public Datasets)

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## Project Goal

In this project, I was tasked with analyzing NCAA Division 1 men's basketball data to identify which university mascots were the "winningest" during the 1990s. The results were intended to support a sports article with a lighthearted look at team mascots and their success on the court.

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## Research Question

*Which NCAA Division 1 basketball teams (and mascots) had the highest average wins between 1990 and 1999?*

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## Data Sources Used

- `bigquery-public-data.ncaa_basketball.mbb_historical_teams_seasons`
  - `bigquery-public-data.ncaa_basketball.mascots`
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## 🧠 SQL Query Used

```
1 SELECT
2   seasons.market AS university,
3   seasons.name AS team_name,
4   mascots.mascot AS team_mascot,
5   AVG(seasons.wins) AS avg_wins,
6   AVG(seasons.losses) AS avg_losses,
7   AVG(seasons.ties) AS avg_ties
8 FROM `bigquery-public-data.ncaa_basketball.mbb_historical_teams_seasons` AS seasons
9 LEFT JOIN `bigquery-public-data.ncaa_basketball.mascots` AS mascots
10 ON seasons.team_id = mascots.id
11 WHERE seasons.season BETWEEN 1990 AND 1999
12    AND seasons.division = 1
13 GROUP BY 1,2,3
14 ORDER BY avg_wins DESC, university
```

## 🔍 Query Breakdown

- **LEFT JOIN** was used to combine season stats with mascot info (not all teams have mascot entries).
- Filtered to **Division 1** teams and seasons from **1990 to 1999**.
- Used **AVG()** to calculate average wins, losses, and ties per team over the decade.
- Sorted by **average wins** to identify top-performing programs.

## 📊 Results: Top Mascots of the 90s

Query results

Job information <b>Results</b> Chart   JSON   Execution details   Execution graph							
Row	university	team_name	team_mascot	avg_wins	avg_losses	avg_ties	
1	University of Kentucky	Wildcats	Wildcat	29.1	5.9	0.0	
2	University of Kansas	Jayhawks	Jayhawk	28.0	6.5	0.0	
3	University of North Carolina, Ch...	Tar Heels	Sheep	27.100000000000...	7.9	0.0	
4	Duke University	Blue Devils	Devil	27.1	7.4	0.0	
5	University of Arizona	Wildcats	Wildcat	25.999999999999...	6.399999999999...	0.0	

## 🧠 Observations

- **“Wildcat”** mascots dominated the 1990s — both Kentucky and Arizona ranked in the top 5.
- Other winning mascots include **Devils**, **Jayhawks**, and even **Sheep**.
- The use of **LEFT JOIN** allowed teams without a known mascot in the mascots table to still appear in the results.

## Key Learnings

- Learned to combine tables from different datasets using JOIN on IDs.
- Practiced aggregation functions like AVG() and GROUP BY.
- Got a real example of shaping raw sports data into a format usable in storytelling or journalism.