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**Research Question:** How does out of conference scheduling impact a division 3 Lacrosse team's chance to make the NCAA tournament?

**Abstract:** As a division 3 lacrosse player myself, I am constantly thinking about sports analytics. With the lacrosse landscape becoming increasingly competitive, teams are becoming more and more strategic with who they choose to play. Their hope is that their schedule will allow them to thrive and play deep into the NCAA tournament. Some teams choose an easier out of conference schedule while others choose difficult ones. These differing strategies have very different effects. Previously, there was a committee that judged each team's resume. Now, there is a mathematical system that analyzes a variety of statistics and determines the tournament bids. With the new system, teams are getting worried about how to set themselves up for success. It is apparent that schools need to find the right balance between out of conference difficulty to ensure they are winning while also playing other top teams.

**Data:** This data is highly tractable because it is all publicly available.

I would need to go onto the NCAA website the scrape the list of tournament teams for each year.

I would also need to go to inside lacrosse to scrape a variety of different conference and out of conference statistics.

**Strategy:** To conduct my research, I want to look back at the past 10 seasons to see if I can determine the right strength of schedule and opponent to gain a better understanding of how schools should be setting up their seasons. I then want to look at last year's information to determine the impact of the new selection formula. I believe that this new formula will drastically impact the way teams are selected. Using these two I want to compare and try to help schools understand the effects of the new NCAA selection formula.

**Stakeholders:** This study has a lot of stakeholders. The first thing that comes to mind is the college coaches themselves. First and foremost, coaches strive for playoff appearances and determining the best way to construct their schedule is extremely valuable information. Next, the athletes would care because if they understand the analytics behind the tournament decision making then this could drastically impact the types of schools they want to go to in order to be in a position to play in more post season games. Finally, the colleges and universities care a ton. Athletics is a major financial driver

for many schools and if their teams go further into the playoffs, more attention is drawn to their school.

**Ethical Concerns:** I want to see if the new formula has any inherent biases. Last year the system seemed to favor teams from a certain conference so it would be interesting to look at this and try to uncover the true reasoning behind the statistics.

**Originality:** Not many studies have been done on division 3 lacrosse at all. Additionally, since this process is new, I am positive that no one has done significant research on this topic so it would be incredible to be the first to dive deeper into this concept.