Baseball and Money – Project 1

As a group, we decided to use a dataset from Kaggle.com called Baseball Databank (<https://www.kaggle.com/open-source-sports/baseball-databank>). There are several CSV files including data on players, teams, salaries, and playoff games that enabled us to develop some interesting questions. These questions include:

1. For teams that make it to the playoffs, does high spending on player salaries mean they win more often?

2. Do “star players” make a big enough difference that they justify their contracts?

3. Do specific players make a noticeable difference when they change teams?

The data was merged, cleaned, and organized to allow for easier examination. We began by noting how many times a team made it to a playoff game or world series game. In addition to their record, the team’s salary was recorded to see if there was a correlation between how much money a specific team spend and if they had a winning record. We chose to investigate further into four teams and their spending habits: the Oakland A’s, Detroit Tigers, New York Yankees, and St Louis Cardinals mainly because they were four very different teams with seemingly different spending strategies. The Yankees are known for having expensive taste. Oakland is notorious for its use of data analytics to get the most for their money. Detroit and St Louis are more middle of the road spenders, with some success in their playoff appearances. St Louis was actually the team with the most playoff games.

Finding answers to our questions was not straight forward. There were two cases in which a “star player” switched teams and it coincided with a World Series appearance. Obviously there are many other factors in play and limitations to what we can determine from this data. We conclude that money helps, but it is not the only factor that makes a team successful.