



SPORTS ANALYTICS: IS ANALYTICS IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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WALT DEGRANGE

"Analytics don't work at all. It's just some crap that people who were really smart made up to try to get in the game because they had no talent. Because they had no talent to be able to play, so smart guys wanted to fit in, so they made up a term called analytics. Analytics don't work."

ESPN The Great Analytics Rankings (2015)



http://www.espn.com/espn/feature/story/_/id/12331388/the-great-analytics-rankings

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A screenshot of the ESPN website showing an article titled "In a Moneyball world, a number of teams remain slow to buy into sabermetrics". The article is dated February 23, 2015, and is categorized under "ALL-IN". The article features a sub-header "BOSTON RED SOX" and a photo of a Red Sox jersey. The text discusses the team's success under manager John W. Henry, who bought the club in 2002 and promoted Mike Epstein, a then-28-year-old Yale graduate with a law degree, to general manager. Epstein built a team based on sabermetrics, and two years later the Red Sox had their first World Series championship in 86 years. The article also mentions Bill James as a pioneer of sabermetrics and Tom Tippett as director of baseball information services. It notes that Epstein's 2011 departure for the Chicago Cubs was a loss for the Red Sox, as his assistant GM Ben Cherington stepped into his shoes. The article concludes by stating that unlike the A's, whose "Moneyball" strategies were designed to overcome payroll limitations, the Red Sox appear to have an almost unlimited budget for players. The left sidebar lists various MLB teams under three categories: ALL-IN, BELIEVERS, and ONE FOOT IN, with a SKEPTICS category at the bottom.

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Recent Championships



2015



2017

Challenges

- 2014-2017 Seasons (not all leagues have 2017 data)
- Team analytics have changed. 2015 ESPN ranking only performed once.
- Salary data issues

Criteria

- ESPN Analytics Ranking (1-5)
 - 5 – All-in
 - 4 – Believers
 - 3 – One foot in
 - 2 – Skeptics
 - 1 - Nonbelievers
- Did the team make the playoffs? (1-0)
 - 1-Yes
 - 2-No
- How far did the team go in the playoffs? (1-5)
 - 5 – Champion
 - 4 – Runner up
 - 3 – Loss in third round
 - 2 – Loss in second round
 - 1 – Loss in first round
 - (MLB 1.3, 2.6, 3.9, 5.2)

Analysis Goodness

- 32nd presentation
 - Universities
 - Meetup.com's
 - Professional analytics classes
 - Consulting
- Machine Learning
- R
- Math is fun!

<https://github.com/ltwalt/espnsports>

