

Syracuse University

Basketball Analytics Competition

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Stopping the 2021-22 Golden State Warriors

Inaugural Competition – January 27, 2023

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Case Overview

On June 16, 2022, the Golden State Warriors won their fourth NBA Finals in the past decade, defeating the Celtics 4-2. Aside from Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, and Andre Iguodala as the foundation of these championship rosters, the pieces around them have changed for each championship run. This past season, no team was able to shut down the Warriors in the regular season or the playoffs. **In this project, you will play the role of an NBA Team Basketball Analytics department and compile a thorough, metric-driven strategy for how to best defend last season's Golden State Warriors.** Included is advanced Play-by-Play and Play Results data from all regular season and playoff games played by the Warriors in the 2021-22 season provided by Sports Info Solutions (SIS). Additionally, there is a data dictionary defining all variables within both datasets. This should give you insight on the Warriors' offense and how they were defended, which is valuable information you will analyze within your presentation.

You must create a succinct game plan for a coaching staff to follow when facing the Warriors during the regular season **AND** playoffs. This question is designed to be open-ended and can be approached in multiple different directions. However, it must answer the following questions:

- Which strategies were successful in limiting the Golden State offense?
- Which strategies did the Warriors take advantage of the most?
- Why did the Warriors offense improve during the run in the playoffs?

Within your report, your team must also highlight three players on the Golden State Warriors and explore their tendencies using analytics, similar to an analytical scouting report. This can be done within the defensive game plan or completely separately. The report should include comparisons between each player's offensive style and differences in how each player would be defended.

You are allowed to use outside data to supplement the data given to you by SIS, however the SIS data must be prominently featured in your methodology and presentation. Additionally, any outside data used must be publicly available (NBA.com, basketball-reference.com, etc.).

Case Requirements

At a minimum, you must address each of the following items in your presentation as outlined in the case overview:

- Examination of the Warriors' offense (play types, zones of the court, tendencies, etc.)
- Defensive game plan(s) to limit the Warriors' offense in the regular season **AND** playoffs
- Focused analytical scouting report on three key individual Warriors players

In addition to satisfying the requirements above, you will be judged on the following criteria:

- **Overall Process:**
 - Clear presentation and understanding of the problem being presented
 - Depth of statistical tools utilized to obtain results
 - Methodological soundness
 - Strength and reasonableness of conclusions and recommendations
- **Creativity:** Elements of unique intuition and methodology beyond the requirements stated in the case
- **Clarity and Communication:** The organization and succinctness of your presentation. Being convincing with your results is important in impacting decision-making. Strong visualizations are expected. Presenters should be dynamic in their delivery.

The judges for this competition all work within basketball analytics full-time. Thus, they are all extremely knowledgeable regarding current trends in basketball and have thoroughly analyzed the questions included in this prompt. Teams should take this into consideration when creating their presentations; know your audience! Each presentation will be **20 minutes in total**, which consists of **15 minutes of presentation** and **5 minutes of questioning by judges**.

This competition is solely for undergraduate students to compete against each other and showcase their analytical skills. Therefore, teams are prohibited from receiving help from any faculty, family, friends, colleagues, or students not registered on that team. Additionally, teams are not allowed to contact individuals associated with an NBA team or judges prior to the competition.

The presentation schedule for Friday, January 27, 2023 will be sent out to each team captain in the next few days. Each team must submit their final presentation to cusebasketballanalytics@gmail.com by **9:00 PM EST** on **January 26, 2023**. Late submissions will not be accepted. Good luck!