

Rocket League

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1. Introduction

This case study deals with the practical application of the Cross Industry Standard Process for Data Mining, in short CRISP-DM. The main objective is the analysis of Rocket League match replays in order to predict the skill of each player in a specific match.

This documentation will follow the six phases of CRISP-DM, thus in each section, a phase will be described, however the process is iterative, therefore it will anticipate in each section analysis that can be chronologically distant.

2. Business understanding

In this step the objective is to determine and understand the context and the scope of the project. So it has a lot in common with the initial steps of any significant project undertaking.

2.1. Determine Business Objectives



Figure 1: One of the main Rocket League artworks

In recent years video games gained a lot of popularity, above all, multiplayer games; some of this are considered competitive and many sportive events take place around them. Rocket League is a multiplayer competitive online game which is an hybrid that unifies soccer with car race games.

Thus, each match follows more or less soccer rules, but instead of human players there are cars controlled by the players. The number of players per team can be 1 (duel), 2, or 3 (standard). In our study we will focus on the main modality, that is 3vs3.

2.1.1. Ranking System



Figure 2: Rocket league rankings

In each modality, the player, after playing 10 online matches, is classified into a rank, based on the result of the 10 played matches. The ranks (visually shown in figure 2) are:

- Bronze I
- Silver I
- Gold I
- Platinum I
- Diamond I
- Champion I
- Grand Champion I
- Supersonic Legend
- Bronze II
- Silver II
- Gold II
- Platinum II
- Diamond II
- Champion II
- Grand Champion II
- Bronze III
- Silver III
- Gold III
- Platinum III
- Diamond III
- Champion III
- Grand Champion III

Each rank, is split in four divisions (Division I, II, III and IV). And, each rank with its divisions is itself a discretization of a number, that is the Match Making Ranking (MMR). The MMR goes from 0 to potentially infinity, however the last rank: Supersonic Legend, takes the interval [1861, +Infinity]. A detailed view on MMRs and rankings is shown in table 1.

When the player starts playing, it is assigned an MMR of 600, that correspond to Gold III Division II. The MMR increase or decrease basing on the outcome of the

Tier	Division I	Division II	Division III	Division IV
Supersonic Legend	1.861 — 2.008	—	—	—
Grand Champion III	1.709 — 1.739	1.745 — 1.773	1.788 — 1.814	1.832 — 1.860
Grand Champion II	1.575 — 1.598	1.600 — 1.636	1.638 — 1.660	1.677 — 1.701
Grand Champion I	1.435 — 1.458	1.460 — 1.494	1.498 — 1.527	1.537 — 1.559
Champion III	1.315 — 1.333	1.335 — 1.366	1.368 — 1.394	1.402 — 1.420
Champion II	1.195 — 1.213	1.215 — 1.246	1.248 — 1.275	1.282 — 1.300
Champion I	1.075 — 1.093	1.095 — 1.127	1.128 — 1.148	1.162 — 1.180
Diamond III	995 — 1.003	1.004 — 1.027	1.028 — 1.051	1.052 — 1.060
Diamond II	915 — 923	924 — 947	948 — 971	972 — 980
Diamond I	835 — 843	844 — 867	868 — 891	892 — 900
Platinum III	773 — 778	779 — 797	798 — 816	817 — 825
Platinum II	715 — 718	719 — 737	738 — 756	757 — 765
Platinum I	655 — 658	659 — 677	678 — 696	697 — 705
Gold III	595 — 598	599 — 617	618 — 636	637 — 643
Gold II	535 — 538	539 — 557	558 — 576	577 — 585
Gold I	475 — 478	479 — 497	498 — 516	517 — 524
Silver III	415 — 418	419 — 437	438 — 456	457 — 467
Silver II	355 — 358	359 — 377	378 — 396	397 — 414
Silver I	295 — 298	299 — 317	318 — 336	337 — 354
Bronze III	235 — 238	239 — 257	258 — 276	277 — 290
Bronze II	172 — 178	179 — 197	198 — 216	217 — 233
Bronze I	0 — 118	121 — 137	140 — 155	157 — 172

Table 1: MMRs intervals related to each Division and Rank in Rocket League

matches it plays, obviously if he wins it will increase, viceversa if he loses. How much it can gain or lose at the end of the match is based on the number of played matches. In the first match, the gain/loss is +/-150. In the second match the values is halved, in it logarithmically decrease, until after some dozen of matches, it converge to +/- 10.

With this system, the player, will be classified in its most appropriate rank after some matches and, therefore will compete with players of the same skill level.

Our business objectives are, therefore two:

- Analyze the statistics of each player of a match and predict its rank based on the performances that he shown;
- Divide players into categories based on the statistics of the match

This work will result in a system able to measure the skill shown in a match for each player, and in a categorization useful to analyze the play styles.

2.2. Determine Data Mining Goals

The first goal is a classification/regression task. It is important to establish the granularity of the output. It is impossible to carefully determine each Division as they can change from a match to another, therefore the minimum granularity is the rank; however we still have 22 classes, that is quite high for a classification task. Thus, we could increase granularity by considering only the ranks without levels e.g. Silver instead of

Silver II. We can see also this task as regression, as we can predict the MMR. We could also predict the MMR and then discretize into ranks.

The criteria will be based on accuracy and F1 score, we will accept an accuracy higher than 0.7.

The second goal is a clustering task. In this case the success criteria is qualitative, the objective is to define a categorization of play styles, therefore if the recognized clusters and centroids have a significant meaning we can consider the task fulfilled.

3. Data understanding

In this step the objective is to consider the available data, understand their properties, check its quality and explore it through statistical methods.

3.1. Collect initial data

The data is collected through a platform called *ballchasing.com* that allows players to download a plugin for the game that will automatically load their replays to the platform.

The replays are then viewable into a web based frontend and is possible to analyze different statistics from the replay. The platform provides also different HTTP API:

- Get replay: returns the binary replay file given the ID;
- Get replay list: returns a json involving summary of replays (including the ID to get the full replay) given different filters;
- Get replay statistics: returns a full detailed statistics of the game for each player given the replay ID;
- Upload replay: used by the plugin to upload replays;
- Delete replay.

It is important to clarify that a replay is not a video file as usual, but a large binary file containing various metadata on the match and the players and a table in which are listed all the information necessary to review the match. Therefore, for each instant (*frame*) of the game, are listed position, direction and velocity vector of each player and the ball, and also other information of the input the players (e.g. player is using boost, player is drifting, etc...).

Extracting features from the raw replays can be very challenging, and the amount of possible features is quite high. However, the main problem about raw replays is API limitations, as it is possible to download only 200 replays per hour. Instead, we can download the replay statistics, as they are very detailed and provide stats about all the players, furthermore the limitation is 2000 per hour.

Thus, in this project, we used the calculated stats from the APIs. Each downloaded replay is saved in a JSON file. These, are hierarchical files contain also a lot of metadata and other useless for our task information about the match (e.g. stadium, car personalization of each player etc...). We discarded this data and take the stats about the six players in the match, which then results in 6 rows for each replay.

Data was collected using *random sampling* from the date. The date is sampled from a range starting from August 2021 until February 2022, that's because are the dates of the two last "*Seasons*" of Rocket League. At the end of each season there is a soft reset of ranks: the MMR doesn't change but the players have to do again 10 matches where the MMR change at the end of the match is higher. I decided to not consider older seasons because the *playstyle* and the distribution of players in Rocket League changes over time.

However, we have to discard some player rows where the rank information was missing. This is due to the fact that the rank in that match wasn't determined yet.

3.2. Describe data and features

The resulting dataset counts **NOTE: data len** rows and 85 features in our data, let's briefly describe them:

Core Stats

- **shots**: shots performed;
- **shot_against**: shots the players undergoes while he is acting as goalkeeper;
- **goals**: goals performed,
- **goals_against**: goals taken:
- **saves**: goals saved,
- **assists**: assists performed,
- **score**: score cumulated at the end of the match,
- **mvp**: tells if is the most valuable player in the match,
- **shooting_percentage**: shots compared to the teams shots

Boost Stats

- **bpm**: boost consumption per minute;
- **bcpm**: boost collected per minute;
- **amount_collected_big**: Amount of boost collected with big pads. Boost can be collected through big or mini pads, big ones are at the edges of the playing field, and fulls the boost, mini ones are scattered trough the field and refill only 13%;
- **amount_collected_small**: amount of boost collected with mini pads;
- **amount_stolen_big**: amount of boost stolen to other players from big pads
- **amount_stolen_small**: amount of boost stolen to other players from mini pads
- **count_collected_big**: number of big pads taken,
- **count_collected_small**: number of mini pads taken,

- **amount_overfill**: amount of boost extra boost taken from big pads
- **amount_overfill_stolen**: amount of boost extra boost taken from big pads to steal from other players
- **amount_used_while_supersonic**: amount of boost used while in supersonic speed (useless as it is max speed)
- **time_zero_boost**: amount of time player has zero boost in the match;
- **time_boost_0_25**: amount of time player has boost between 0 and 25;
- **time_boost_25_50**: amount of time player has boost between 25 and 50;
- **time_boost_50_75**: amount of time player has boost between 50 and 75;
- **time_full_boost**: amount of time player has full boost;
- **percent_zero_boost**: percent of time player has zero boost in the match;
- **percent_boost_0_25**: percent of time player has boost between 0 and 25;
- **percent_boost_25_50**: percent of time player has boost between 25 and 50;
- **percent_boost_50_75**: percent of time player has boost between 50 and 75;
- **percent_full_boost**: amount of time player has full boost;
- **avg_amount**: average amount of boost in the match;

Movement Stats

- **avg_speed**;
- **avg_speed_percentage**: average speed compare to max speed;
- **total_distance**: total distance covered in the match
- **time_slow_speed**: time spent moving slower than if you were boosting/dodging, i.e. just using throttle, less than 1400 uu/s;
- **time_boost_speed**: time spent moving at boost speed, e.g. while holding boost/dodging, 1400 + uu/s;
- **time_supersonic_speed**: time spent moving at supersonic speed, 2200 + uu/s;
- **percent_slow_speed**: percentage time spent moving slower than if you were boosting/dodging, i.e. just using throttle, less than 1400 uu/s;
- **percent_boost_speed**: percentage of time spent moving at boost speed, e.g. while holding boost/dodging, 1400 + uu/s;

- **percent_supersonic_speed**: percentage of time spent moving at supersonic speed, $2200 + uu/s$;
- **time_ground**: amount of time spent on the ground
- **time_low_air**: amount of time spent in air but at low altitude w.r.t. the field
- **time_high_air**: amount of time spent in air but at high altitude w.r.t. the field
- **percent_ground**: percentage of time spent on the ground
- **percent_low_air**: percentage of time spent in air but at low altitude w.r.t. the field
- **percent_high_air**: percentage of time spent in air but at high altitude w.r.t. the field
- **time_powerslide**: amount of time spent powersliding
- **count_powerslide**: number of times player uses powerslide;
- **avg_powerslide_duration**;

Positioning Stats

- **avg_distance_to_ball**;
- **avg_distance_to_ball_possession**: Average distance to the ball while possessing the ball
- **avg_distance_to_ball_no_possession**: Average distance to the ball while not possessing the ball
- **avg_distance_to_mates**;
- **time_defensive_third**: amount of time player is in 1/3 of the field where his net is;
- **time_neutral_third**: amount of time player is in the neutral third;
- **time_offensive_third**: amount of time player is in 1/3 of the field where the opponent net is;
- **percent_defensive_third**: percentage of time player is in 1/3 of the field where his net is;
- **percent_neutral_third**: percentage of time player is in the neutral third;
- **percent_offensive_third**: percentage of time player is in 1/3 of the field where the opponent net is;
- **time_offensive_half**: amount of time player is in opponent half;

- **time_defensive_half**: amount of time player is in his team half;
- **percent_offensive_half**: percentage of time player is in opponent half;
- **percent_defensive_half**: percentage of time player is in his team half;
- **time_behind_ball**: amount of time the player is closer to its net than the ball;
- **time_infront_ball**: amount of time the player is closer to the opponent net than the ball;
- **percent_behind_ball**: percentage of time the player is closer to its net than the ball;
- **percent_infront_ball**: percentage of time the player is closer to the opponent net than the ball;
- **time_farthest_from_ball**: amount of time he is the player farthest from ball;
- **time_closest_from_ball**: amount of time he is the player closest from ball;
- **percent_farthest_from_ball**: percentage of time he is the player farthest from ball;
- **percent_closest_from_ball**: percentage of time he is the player closest from ball;
- **time_most_back**: amount of time he was the last defender of its team;
- **time_most_forward**: amount of time he was the first attacker of its team;
- **percentage_most_back**: amount of time he was the last defender of its team;
- **percentage_most_forward**: amount of time he was the first attacker of its team;
- **goals_against_while_last_defender**;

Demolitions Stats

- **inflicted**: demolitions inflicted to opponent players;

- **taken:** demolitions taken by opponent players.

We can right away notice that there are a lot of features correlated, all the time / percent features are a repetition and we could keep only one among the twos.

Among these we can distinguish **categorical** and **numeric features** ([table 2](#)):

Categorical	
mvp	
Dicsrete	
saves	goals_against_while_last_defender
assists	shots
goals	inflicted
taken	
Continuous	
percent_closest_to_ball	time_offensive_half
avg_speed_percentage	percent_boost_25_50
amount_collected_small	amount_collected
bcpm	percent_farthest_from_ball
avg_distance_to_mates	percent_high_air
percent_slow_speed	time_behind_ball
time_supersonic_speed	percent_offensive_half
count_powerslide	time_zero_boost
percent_ground	shooting_percentage
count_stolen_small	amount_stolen_small
avg_speed	percent_behind_ball
percent_zero_boost	avg_powerslide_duration
time_boost_50_75	amount_stolen_big
goals_against	percent_defensive_half
time_most_back	percent_defensive_third
time_farthest_from_ball	percent_low_air
count_collected_small	time_full_boost
time_offensive_third	time_defensive_half
amount_collected_big	count_collected_big
time_high_air	amount_stolen
time_defensive_third	shots_against
avg_amount	time_neutral_third
time_slow_speed	percent_most_forward
percent_neutral_third	avg_distance_to_ball_no_possession
time_closest_to_ball	total_distance
percent_boost_0_25	time_low_air
time_infront_ball	avg_distance_to_ball
score	time_boost_25_50
time_boost_0_25	time_boost_speed
amount_overfill	time_boost_75_100
bpm	time_ground
avg_distance_to_ball_possession	time_powerslide
percent_boost_50_75	percent_boost_75_100
percent_most_back	percent_boost_speed
count_stolen_big	amount_used_while_supersonic

percent_offensive_third	percent_supersonic_speed
amount_overfill_stolen	time_most_forward
percent_full_boost	percent_infront_ball

Table 2: Categorical and discrete feature distinction

3.3. Verify data quality

All of our data is automatically collected, thus, is not subject to human errors. We cannot ensure that data is *accurate*, so that stored value is the actual value, but we can assume it always because of the collection process.

Data is *incomplete*. There where a bunch of missing data in some dozen of rows in columns:*percent_closest_to_ball* *percent_farthest_from_ball*, *percent_most_forward*, *avg_distance_to_mates*, *time_most_back*.

Missing values in this case are originated from leaving the match before the end, causing errors in the calculation of the metrics. We can notice that most of the missing values are in Bronze ranks, because they tend to care less about their rank and the game in general (leaving a ranked match will count as a loss and will ban you for short period from the ranked matches).

Data is *consistent*: the only measurement is time, and it is always in seconds. All other features are just numbers. Data is *up-to date*: is collected from replays of the two last seasons, and, until the game mechanisms change, it isn't obsolete.

3.4. Clean data

In order to calculate summary statistics on our data we need to get rid of missing values and errors in our data. In this case the most appropriate solution is also the most simple, so, removing this rows from the dataset.

3.5. Data exploration

Let's see some statistics from our data:

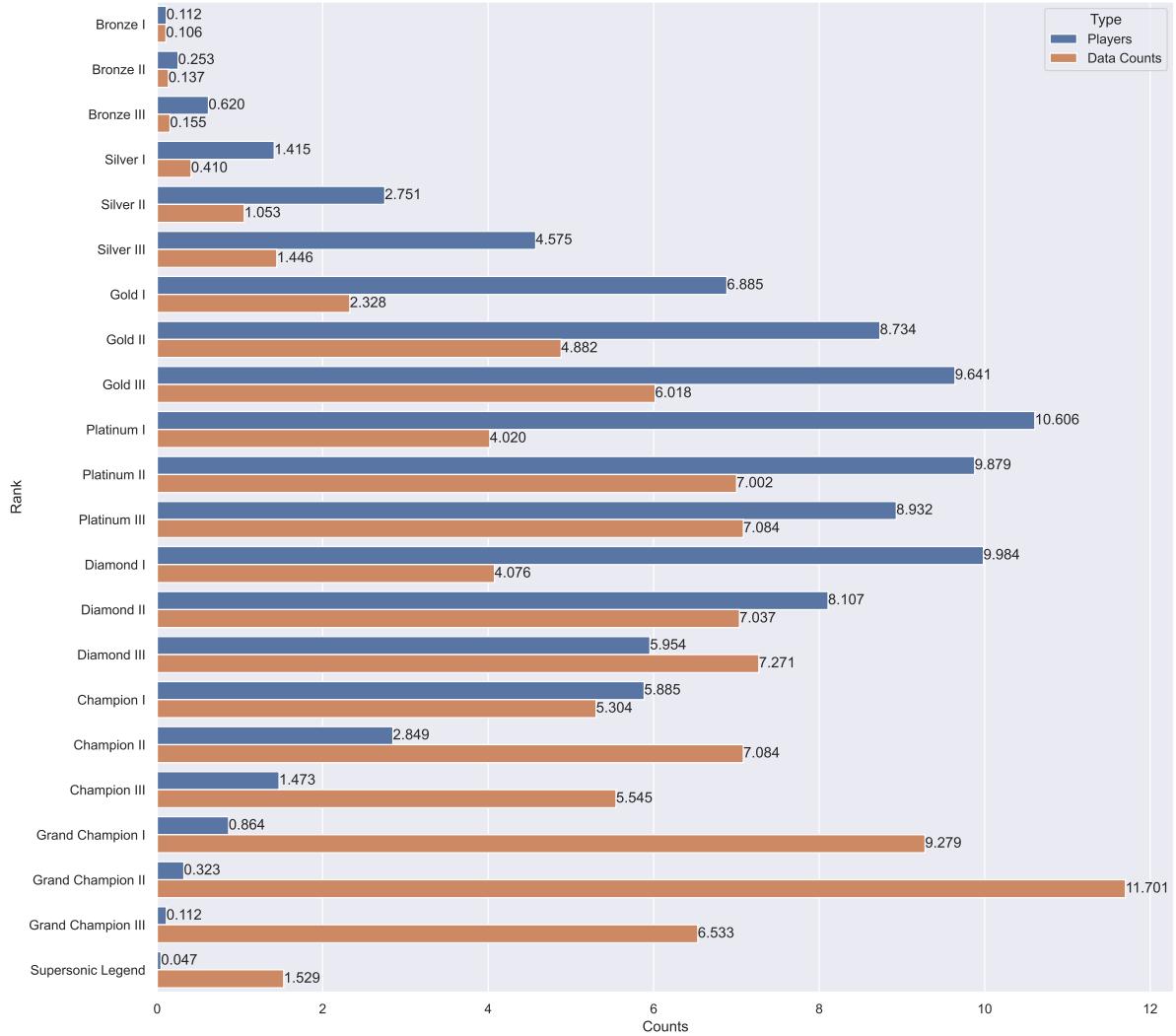


Figure 3: Distribution of players ranks (blue) vs. distribution of ranks in data (orange)

We can notice that the the bronze class had very few examples. This has two main reasons, the first one is that there are actually very few players in bronze, it's very difficult to get there basing on how ranking system works. The second reason is that players in bronze are casuals players that even don't know about the plugin necessary to upload replays. We can see the distribution of ranks for the current season (Season 5) in figure 3.5 (orange). In the same figure we can see in blue the actual distribution of players, that is more or less normally distributed and centered. The data distribution is instead shifted to the right; as we said, skilled players tends to use and know about the plugin.

4. Data preparation

Data selection was automatically performed during the collection of the dataset. As already said, replays are randomly sampled between two dates representing two Rocket League seasons.

For feature selection the situation is different, the number of features is quite high and we can early see that some of the are correlated, thus we plot a correlation matrix [table 4](#):

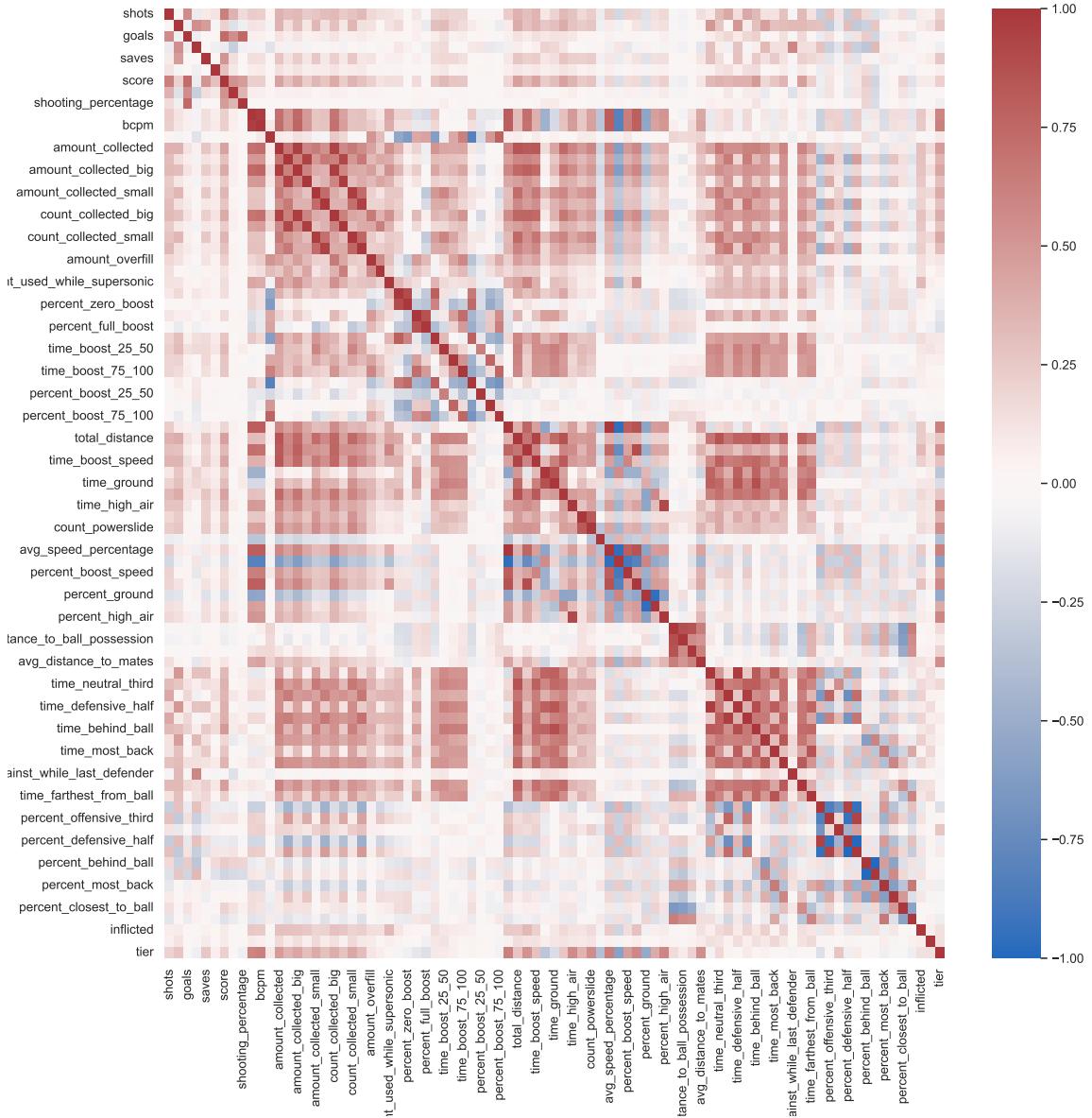


Figure 4: Features correlation matrix

By this selection we removed 42 features, thus, nearly halving the dataset vertically.

Deleted feature	Correlated feature	Motivation
time_offensive_half	time_offensive_third	trivial
time_defensive_half	time_defensive_third	trivial
time_behind_ball	time_infront_ball	trivial
time_ground	time_low_air, time_high_air	sum up to 1
time_slow_speed	time_boost_speed, time_supersonic_speed	sum up to 1
time_most_back	time_most_forward	trivial
time_most_forward	time_infront_ball	player whos most forward is usually infront of the ball
percent_defensive_half	percent_offensive_half	trivial
percent_behind_ball	percent_infront_ball	trivial
avg_speed	percent_slow_speed	trivial
percent_ground	percent_low_air, percent_high_air	sum up to 1
time_farthest_from_ball	time_defensive_third	defender is most of the time farthest from ball
percent_boost_75_100	percent_boost_X_Y	sum up to 1
time_boost_0_25	percent_boost_0_25	trivial
time_boost_25_50	percent_boost_25_50	trivial
time_boost_50_75	percent_boost_50_75	trivial
time_boost_75_100	percent_boost_75_100	trivial
time_defensive_third	percent_defensive_third	trivial
time_offensive_third	percent_offensive_third	trivial
percent_offensive_half	percent_offensive_third	Third is more specific than half
percent_defensive_half	percent_offensive_third	Third is more specific than half
percent_defensive_third	percent_offensive_third percent_neutral_third	sum up to 1
percent_slow_speed	percent_boost_speed	sum up to 1
avg_amount	percent_boost	trivial
avg_speed_percentage	avg_speed	trivial
time_defensive_half	percent_defensive_half	trivial
time_offensive_half	percent_offensive_half	trivial
count_collected_big	amount_collected_big	trivial
count_collected_small	amount_collected_small	trivial
count_stolen_big	amount_stolen_big	trivial
count_stolen_small	amount_stolen_small	trivial
time_low_air	time_boost_speed	When jumping in low air players usually use boost
time_high_air	percent_high_air	trivial
time_supersonic_speed	percent_supersonic_speed	trivial
time_zero_boost	percent_zero_boost	trivial
time_full_boost	percent_full_boost	trivial
amount_stolen	amount_stolen_big	trivial
amount_collected	amount_collected_big	trivial
avg_distance_to_ball	avg_distance_to_ball_possession	avg_distance_to_ball is more general than avg_distance_to_ball_possession
total_distance	time_boost_speed	The fast player is the more it travels
time_powerslide	count_powerslide	trivial
bcpm	bpm	Boost consumption is directly connected to boost usage

Table 3: List of deleted features and the correlated ones

The adopted criterion is based on logical correlation, thus, by inspecting correlations, the removed features are the ones where we can find a motivation for the correlation, otherwise the correlation can be spurious.

In order to further reduce the dimensionality of the dataset another two tests have been ran: the information gain test and the chi square test, results are shown in [figure 4](#) and [figure 4](#):



Figure 5: Information gain results



Figure 6: Chi square test results

The results gave another insight on some kind of features uninformative. The features that are strictly related to the specific match and not on the playstyle and skill of the player. Such features are *goals*, *mvp*, *assists* and *goals_against_while_last_defender*.

4.1. Data construction

In this step there will be gonna built the final dataset provided to the models.

Features of this dataset have different measurement units and scales, therefore features with bigger scales will be considered more important for some models, for example linear regression. We need to scale the data. The used scaling technique is

called *Robust Scaling*. It subtract the median and divides using the *interquartile range* (*IQR*) instead of the mean and the standard deviation differently from normalization. It has been used the IQR between the 1st quartile (25th quantile) and the 3rd quartile (75th quantile). This procedure has been applied to all the features except for some groups that needed particular attention. The first groups are the **percentual** features, they range from 0 to 100, therefore the normalization is useless; they have been simply divided by 100 to make them range from 0 to 1.

Other groups are:

- *avg_distances*: which includes distance to ball with and without possession and distance to mates
- *overfill*: which includes amount of boost overfill, amount overfill stolen and stolen with big pads

These groups of features have relations and constraints that can be removed by the normalization, for example *amount_overfill* is always greater than *amount_overfill_stolen*, and their difference is important. Therefore, each group, has been standardized like it is a unique features, in order to keep the relations

References