

**The University of Chicago**  
**Department of Statistics**  
**Master's Thesis Presentation**

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**Potential Payoffs from Streakiness in Major League Baseball**

**THURSDAY, July 29, 2010, at 2:00 PM**  
**110 Eckhart Hall, 5734 S. University Avenue**

**ABSTRACT**

In the United States, competitive sports consists of a regular season of a set number of games, followed by playoffs, in which only qualifying teams can compete. In Major League Baseball, a regular season consists of 162 games in two leagues, where four of the top teams in each league make the post season playoffs. Playoffs are structured in such a way that the top qualifier from each league plays the bottom qualifier, and the second and third place teams play against each other in a series of games. The phenomenon of streakiness exists where a team has significantly different probabilities of winning throughout the season; in a hot streak, a team is more likely to win, whereas in a cold streak, it is more likely to lose. In this paper, I investigate whether a team, when matched with a slightly better opponent, is observed to have a higher probability of winning a playoff series that is streaky than if the series is non-streaky.