



The University of Chicago  
Department of Statistics

MASTER'S THESIS PRESENTATION

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**Investigating Home Court Advantage and Officiating Bias in the  
NBA: Evidence from the 2006–2011 Seasons**

**THURSDAY, July 26, 2012, at 1:00 PM**  
110 Eckhart Hall, 5734 S. University Avenue

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores home court advantage in the NBA and a possible explanation for its existence, officiating bias. First, the magnitude of home court advantage is measured and its consistency across seasons is verified. Counter to findings for other sports, it is found that this advantage is greatest in games determined by large margins. Next, the officiating bias is quantified. Following from previous literature, this paper uses data on turnovers that result from discretionary calls by referees to determine the existence of officiating bias. Using play-by-play data from three NBA seasons, it is found that home teams receive significantly fewer discretionary turnover calls from officials. Consistent with previous research on home advantage, the officiating bias is diminished later in the game suggesting that in the fourth quarters of close games, officials do not exhibit a bias in favor of the home team.

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