



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO**

Department of Statistics

MASTER'S THESIS PRESENTATION

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Predicting the Winners of NBA Games

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Jones 304, 5747 S. Ellis Avenue

ABSTRACT

I explore the strengths and weaknesses of existing statistical models that can be used to predict the winners of NBA games and also present my own model, which has significantly different modeling assumptions. My model and the best existing model both achieve near 70% prediction accuracy. Existing methods such as linear least squares, Markov chains, and Elo ratings all attempt to find a ranking of each team in the league and use a limited amount of information. The method that I present uses all information present in a game's box score and attempts to predict a game without generating a ranking.