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The Inherent Flaw in the NBA Playoff Structure

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Abstract : Introduction: The NBA is an example of mediocrity and this will be evident in the following paper. The study examines and evaluates the characteristics of the NBA champions. As divisions and playoff teams increase, there is an increase in the probability that the champion originates from the mediocre category. Since it's inception in 1947, the league has been mediocre and continues to this day. Why does a professional league allow any team with a less than 50% winning percentage into the playoffs? As long as the finances flow into the league, owners will not change the current algorithm. The objective of this paper is to determine if the regular season has meaning in finding an NBA champion. Statistical Analysis: The data originates from the NBA website. The following variables are part of the statistical analysis: Rank, the rank of a team relative to other teams in the league based on the regular season win-loss record; Winning Percentage of a team based on the regular season; Divisions, the number of divisions within the league and Playoff Teams, the number of playoff teams relative to a particular season. The following statistical applications are applied to the data: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, Analysis of Variance, Factor and Regression analysis. Conclusion: The results indicate that the divisional structure and number of playoff teams results in a negative effect on the winning percentage of playoff teams. It also prevents teams with higher winning percentages from accessing the playoffs. Recommendations: 1. Teams that have a winning percentage greater than 1 standard deviation from the mean from the regular season will have access to playoffs. (Eliminates mediocre teams.) 2. Eliminate Divisions (Eliminates weaker teams from access to playoffs.) 3. Eliminate Conferences (Eliminates weaker teams from access to the playoffs.) 4. Have a balanced regular season schedule, (Reduces the number of regular season games, creates equilibrium, reduces bias) that will reduce the need for load management.

Keywords : alignment, mediocrity, regression, z-score
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