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.