

Title – Measuring Greatness in the NBA

Program of Study – Sport Management

Presentation Type – Choose one of the following: Physical Poster

Subtype – Choose one of the following for poster or oral presentation types: Theoretical

Abstract

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The “greatest player ever” debate stems from the controversy of how to measure a player’s effectiveness and contributions. Some analysts focus their arguments on a player’s statistics and advanced analytics. Others prefer to go by the basic eye test, measuring a player’s value based on his apparent dominance of the game. Another analyst may argue that awards, whether the awards are for most valuable player (MVP), championships, All-Star games, or other designations, play the largest role in a player’s worth to a team. Even though the tendency is to focus on one category of comparison, a player’s career is too complex to use only one category to rank players. In basketball, there are also so many exceptions in these points of comparison due to the team aspect of the sport. These factors all play a role in determining who is the greatest NBA player of all time. The research explores the literature surrounding the benefits and drawbacks of using various criteria to determine the GOAT. Future research could include the creation of an analytic that weighs these factors against each other to create a true measurement for greatness. Finally, research could be completed on how to compare players across different eras and how rule changes in the NBA like the addition of the three-point line have changed the game. These additional factors could be added to create a more accurate measurement of greatness in the NBA.