

# BEST

## PRACTICES ORGANIZATIONS CAN LEARN FROM ANALYTICS IN SPORTS

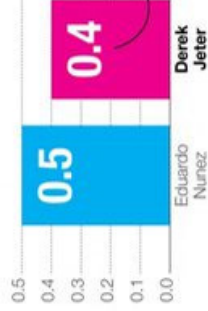
The use of modern data analytics is radically changing the way sports teams are managed. Here are five best practices your business should be emulating.

### 1 Make predictions

Why benching Derek Jeter could work

**Conventional wisdom suggests:** A legend with 3,316 hits and 5 championship rings, Derek Jeter is surely more valuable than Eduardo Nunez, his unknown backup.

**Analytics reveal:** ZIPS projections indicate that Nunez will actually deliver more Wins Above Replacement (WAR) in 2014 than the great Jeter.



How your business can benefit

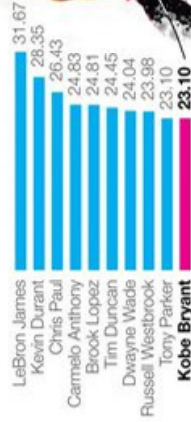
Use modern predictive analytics to make decisions based not just on what's happened in the past, but on what's likely to happen in the future.

### 2 Use all data

Why Kobe Bryant's shooting masks true efficiency

**Conventional wisdom suggests:** Kobe Bryant ranked 2nd in league in points scored and 3rd in points-per-game in 2013.

**Analytics reveal:** Based on his Player Efficiency Rating (PER), Kobe ranked as just the 10th most efficient player in 2013.



How your business can benefit

Don't make decisions based only on individual pieces of data. Connect to and consider all your data when making evaluations about a given program's efficiency and effectiveness.

### 3 Blend the old and new

Why football teams should (almost) never punt

**Conventional wisdom suggests:** Except in rare circumstances, football teams should punt on 4th down.

**Analytics reveal:** Combining 12 years of historical performance data with modern predictive analytics shows that punting on 4th down makes **statistical sense** only 45% of the time. Teams currently punt closer to 65% of the time, far more often than they should.

45% statistical sense when punting on 4th down

65% of the time teams punt on 4th down, not effective

How your business can benefit

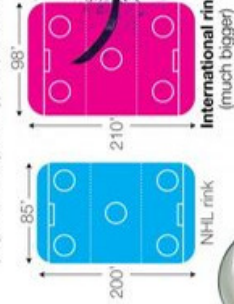
Using historical data to gain insight into past trends while also leveraging modern analytics to formulate a prediction of future performance can lead to smarter, more informed decisions in the here and now.

### 4 Consider context

Why the U.S. and Canada didn't choose the top players for their Olympic teams

**Conventional wisdom suggests:** In order to put together the best possible Olympic hockey team, simply choose the best 25 players.

**Analytics reveal:** Olympic nuances such as **rink size** and compressed schedule (12 days from start to finish) caused GMs to consider contextual factors such as speed and player familiarity over typical performance metrics.



How your business can benefit

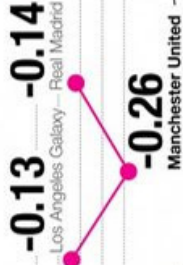
Understand the context of data so that decisions aren't made in a vacuum. Use sentiment analysis to understand human emotions behind contextual data and gain better understanding of how customers feel about your company.

### 5 Value data over intuition

Why David Beckham's teams performed better without him

**Conventional wisdom suggests:** With 92 goals in his decorated career, David Beckham was a valuable asset to every team he played on.

**Analytics reveal:** Based on **Goal Differential (GD)** Beckham's teams actually performed better without him in the lineup, most notably Manchester United, whose goal differential dropped by nearly half a goal when Beckham played versus when he didn't.



How your business can benefit

Don't assume the obvious to always be true. Rather than relying on intuition, make data the driving force behind key business decisions.

In sports, as in business, the lure of analytics lies in helping leaders make the best decision possible. Those who make data-driven decisions grounded in analytics will make the best decision more often than not.

Sources:

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