Math of Games

Week 9 Journal/Ch. 2 Study Guide

Due: start of class, 23 April 2012

Terms

Research the following concepts related to baseball statistics. Write up a one-paragraph summary for three of them, clearly indicating which players’ performances are being measured.

1. on-base percentage
2. slugging percentage
3. batting average
4. runs batted in
5. earned run average
6. walks per inning

Short Essays (Pick one)

1. What qualities of professional baseball, according to Paul DePodesta, make it a more interesting place to work than Wall Street? Come up with three arguments that support the opposite opinion. Then discuss any similarities you might imagine between the two work environments. Illustrate your points with examples from film, literature, or news stories.

2. To predict the future professional career of a new recruit, managers and scouts have to extrapolate based on previous performances. The reliability of this extrapolation depends greatly on the size of the historical data they have to work with. Scouts who let their imaginations sway them to sign high school players, whose performance had not been thoroughly tested, are exposing the team to risks that Billy “wanted nothing more to do with” (p 31). Describe some situations in your life where you’ve had to extrapolate from previous experiences to decide what to purchase. Qualitatively assess the risks involved if the purchase didn’t work out. Then compare the reliability of your extrapolations for the various purchasing situations, taking into account (i) the intrinsic variability of the product line and (ii) the amount of historical data you were able to muster for each situation.