Social Power and Influence In The NBA

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Brett Favre Breaks Our Internet
Social Media Has Hidden Power

_Could we use Machine Learning to play Social Media Moneyball?...Yes we can…_

Conor McGregor July, 2014
- 58 Retweets
- 146 Likes

Conor McGregor March, 2018
- 3,228 Retweets
- 23,601 Likes

16,000 % Increase in Engagement over 4 Years
New Contributors Feed into ML Social Power Feedback Loop

Find Social Handles ➞ Find Signals to Predict Pageviews

Our Prediction Algorithms Appear To Work

- Or we got really lucky….
Takeaways From Experience

- There are lot of hidden power in Social Network signals
- Possible to grow a platform without buying any traditional advertising
- Who really has the power...celebrities or social platforms...cracks are emerging?
- More to discover....
What Can Social Media Predict about the NBA?

- True Valuation of NBA Teams?
- True Player Performance?
- Attendance at games?
- Endorsement deals?
- Player Salary?
Collecting Data Sources is Always Painful

- Arena Attendance
  - Local Engagement & Willingness to Pay

- NBA Datasets
  - On The Court Performance

- Social Power, Influence and Performance NBA

- NBA Datasets
  - Salary
    - Pay for Performance

- Endorsements
  - Brand Value

- Census Data
  - Population Density & Real Estate Values

- Wikipedia
  - Global Popularity

- Twitter
  - Global Engagement & Influence

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NBA Teams

- True Valuation of NBA Teams?
- True Player Performance?
- Attendance at games?
- Endorsement deals?
Biggest Drivers of NBA Team Valuation?
Three Types of NBA Teams
Team Valuation Conclusions
What About NBA Players?

- Are fans or owners better able to recognize talent?
- If a player wants to make the highest salary, do they focus on their team or scoring?
- What is the relationship between social media and endorsements?

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NBA Player Social Power and Performance

NBA Players 2016-2017 Faceted Plot of Social Power and Performance

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Points/Game Predicts NBA Salary

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Do NBA Fans Value Team Play Over Points?


NBA Fans Value Player Skill More Than Salary, Points, Team Wins or Another Other Factor?

- PAGEVIEWS/WINS Correlation: 28%
- PAGEVIEWS/Points Correlation: 44%
- PAGEVIEWS/WINS_RPM Correlation: 49%
- SALARY_MILLIONS/TWITTER_FAVORITE_COUNT: 24%: 49%

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What about NBA Endorsements?
NBA Player Conclusions

- If players want to make the most money in Salary, they should switch to teams that let them score
- Many NBA Players Don’t Have Social Media Handles
- Fan Social Engagement is a better predictor of true performance metrics than salary (Smarter than owners).
Questions?

- How to learn more about Social Power in the NBA
  - Connect on LinkedIn
  - Read IBM Developerworks Article
  - Fork my social power on Kaggle
  - Buy my book on Pragmatic AI