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The NCAA Transfer Portal and Success in College Basketball

Andrew Girard

Abstract: College basketball was completely transformed by changes to the NCAA Transfer Portal in April of 2021. The NCAA no longer requires transfers to sit out a year of competition at their new school. Research has been conducted regarding both the Transfer Portal and success in college basketball. However, prior to this study, there was no research linking the two subjects. Therefore, I developed the following research question: When considering the newly adjusted Transfer Portal, is the number of players transferring into or out of a Division One men's college basketball team correlated with that team's win percentage in the following season? I collected data on the number of transfers into and out of each Division One men's college basketball program in the years 2021 and 2022 and on the wins and losses of these programs during the same years. Using the Spearman's rank correlation, I examined the correlation between several transfer-related variables and win percentage. During both 2021 and 2022, transfers in and total transfers (the sum of transfers in and transfers out) were correlated with win percentage ($p=0.003$ and 0.002 , respectively, in 2021; $p=0.006$ and 0.03 , respectively, in 2022) such that higher numbers of transfers correlated with higher win percentages. I conclude that more transfers into a Division One men's college basketball team program correlates with a higher win percentage, which may be explained by a positive effect of transfers on win percentage or by transfers being attracted to winning programs.

Keywords: College, Basketball, Transfer, NCAA

Introduction

Basketball has been an official National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sport since 1939 (NCAA, 2021). However, in recent years it has experienced unprecedented transformation. The entity responsible for this drastic change, the NCAA Transfer Portal, did not initially have a groundbreaking effect

on the sport (Pifer, 2021). However, after a few modifications to its regulations, the Transfer Portal completely revolutionized the sport of basketball (O'Brien, 2021). Before the Transfer Portal, when a student athlete wished to transfer, they had to ask their coach for permission before contacting other schools. The creation of the Transfer Portal allowed student athletes to transfer without permission and with more ease.

More importantly, recent modifications removed the requirement for transfers to sit out one year of competition. Teams are constantly reshaped and remodeled every year as thousands of student athletes transfer between universities. At times, it may seem that a team is completely changed overnight (Moore, 2022). Coaches have even overhauled their approach to team building, and many use transfers as a central part of their recruiting process (Lupton, 2021). Nevertheless, does adding a large number of transfers to a college basketball roster truly give that team a better shot at greatness? This study will examine the complex relationship between the number of transfers traveling into and out of a men's college basketball program and that program's success.

Literature Review

Key Definitions

NCAA - NCAA stands for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The NCAA is the largest governing body of college sports in the United States.

NCAA Transfer Portal - The NCAA Transfer Portal is the national database that is used by the NCAA to aid athletes in the process of transferring. More explanation will be provided later in the literature review.

Transfer (noun) - A transfer in this study is simply a college athlete who transfers between schools.

Transfer (verb) - To transfer is when a college student—with student athletes being the students of interest in this study—moves from one university to a different university.

Division One - The NCAA divides schools into three divisions: Division One, Division Two, and Division Three. Schools are divided into divisions based on their size and funding. Division One is the largest division, and it houses the largest universities with the most competitive sports programs. Division One is commonly abbreviated as D1 and will be referred to in this way throughout this paper.

Why Athletes Transfer

With so many college athletes transferring through the newly modified Transfer Portal, the motivations

and intentions of the transfers must be investigated. Although no two transfers are identical, there are many themes or patterns to why an athlete chooses to transfer.

One reason behind athlete transfers is coaching. Oftentimes a coaching change will cause a player to transfer (Pugh, 2016). If a coach is fired or leaves the program, then the person who originally recruited the player and to whom the player made a commitment is gone. Additionally, conflict between a player and a coach, or a player's general dislike of coaching style, can also be enough to lead a player to transfer. Studies conducted before the Transfer Portal was created found that complications in coaching are a main cause of players transferring out of a D1 basketball program (Pugh, 2016).

Moreover, talented basketball prospects typically expect to have significant playing time in games. So, if their playing time in games is lower than what they desire, then they will frequently transfer to a university that will give them a larger role on the team and more playing time (Norlander, 2023).

Lastly, studies have shown that academics and academic performance are important reasons D1 athletes transfer (Pugh, 2016; Gallup, 2020). Student athletes are still students and therefore generally want a quality education from the university they choose to attend. Failure to receive proper education might influence their decision to transfer. Some studies, however, have discovered that academics are the leading cause for players to stay at their current institution (Pugh, 2016; Gallup, 2020).

Transfer Portal

A comprehensive understanding of this field of research requires an adequate explanation of the NCAA Transfer Portal. The NCAA Transfer Portal is the national transfer database that the NCAA uses to organize transfers. It was officially created in October 2018 when the NCAA removed the requirement for transfers to gain permission from their current university before transferring (Pifer, 2021). Through the Transfer Portal, transfers can notify their current school of their wish to transfer and then enter themselves into the Transfer Portal (Pifer, 2021).

Although the Transfer Portal was established in late 2018, its effect on men's college basketball was

not fully felt until April 2021. Prior to 2021, transfers were required to miss a year of competition unless they could acquire a waiver from the NCAA (O'Brien, 2021). After April 2021, this regulation was nullified; athletes are now immediately eligible to compete after they transfer.

Through this change in the NCAA's regulation of the Transfer Portal, the landscape of D1 men's college basketball was completely altered in likeness never witnessed before. The concept and approach of recruiting and coaching in college basketball has been altered greatly. Now transfers hold a much greater value than they previously did, and many coaches now center their teams around transfers (Marshall, 2023). Because of this, college basketball teams are dismantled and rebuilt between every season. The star players of many teams have come through the Transfer Portal, and many teams have several transfers every year (Marshall, 2023).

Transfer Portal in Other Sports

In reviewing the research literature, it is important to examine the impact of the NCAA Transfer Portal on other collegiate sporting events. College football and basketball are the largest collegiate sports by a considerable margin in both popularity and revenue (Loebner, 2014). Therefore, it is pertinent to explore the influence of the NCAA Transfer Portal on college football as well, even if only briefly. Similar to college basketball, the Transfer Portal has had a substantial impact on college football. Stephanie L. Dohrn from DePaul University explored the subject of transfers in college football, specifically at the quarterback position. By investigating more than one hundred different quarterbacks transferring in a single year, Dohrn highlighted how transfers have created a certain atmosphere of chaos in football (Dohrn, 2022). Although this chaos is similar to that created by the Transfer Portal in college basketball, there are several important reasons that this study focused on transfers in basketball.

Men's college basketball is similar in many cases to college football. However, certain aspects make basketball unique and well suited for further research (NCAA, 2022). First of all, college football teams typically have over fifty players while college basketball teams typically have around fifteen players. So, the impact of an individual transfer on a Division One

men's college basketball team is typically much greater than on a college football team. Compared with other NCAA sports, basketball sees a higher percentage of players transfer (NCAA, 2022). Therefore, men's college basketball is undoubtedly the sport that has experienced the greatest effect from the Transfer Portal.

Success in Men's College Basketball

In reviewing past research, no studies discuss the effects of transfers on a D1 basketball team's success. Conversely, several studies call attention to many other factors that influence a team's success. Some examples of variables that were shown to have a significant correlation with success were a team's points per game, opponents' points per game, three-point field-goal percentage, and opponents' field-goal percentage (Witkos, 2011). Additional research shows that the recruiting strategies of coaches can affect their team's success (Lupton, 2021). Since recruiting strategies are now often closely tied to how coaches utilize the Transfer Portal, these findings might indicate a correlation between transfers and success.

Although success in men's college basketball might seem relatively simple or straightforward to measure, it is much more complex than many realize. Undoubtedly, winning a national championship is the largest achievement a Division One basketball team can accomplish. To determine a champion, every year the NCAA holds the NCAA Division One Men's Basketball Tournament, more widely known as March Madness. The winner of this annual tournament is crowned the Division One men's college basketball national champion. However, a team can still be very successful without winning a championship. Often, the more a D1 college basketball team wins, the more successful they are considered (Witkos, 2011). So, theoretically a team could obtain a large number of wins and a high win percentage (wins divided by total games) over the course of the season but then underperform in the championship tournament. Even so, it is very common that teams who are successful in the regular season perform well in the postseason tournament (Wilco, 2023). In order to give a more holistic view of team success, both regular and postseason performance should be considered when contemplating the success of a college basketball team over the course of a season.

Assumptions and Justifications

The validity of the research discussed throughout this paper depends on the following assumptions: The more a men's college basketball program wins over the course of a season, the more successful they are that season. Division One men's college basketball has possibly transformed on a larger scale in the past few years than it ever has before. These drastic changes on the sport's atmosphere can be attributed to the NCAA's recent modifications to the NCAA Transfer Portal (Aldave, 2023; O'Brien, 2021).

The Transfer Portal's impact is especially staggering when considering the short time that has elapsed since its alterations. Due to how recently this occurred, there is a lack of significant research surrounding it. Furthermore, there has been little to no research conducted on the relationship between team success and the Transfer Portal. Therefore, this research is unique and aims to sufficiently fill the gap in knowledge about the relationship and correlation between a program's utilization of the Transfer Portal and that program's success.

Research Question

When considering the newly adjusted Transfer Portal, is the number of players transferring into or out of a Division One men's college basketball team correlated with that team's win percentage in the following season?

Methods

Method Selection

I considered many methods, quantitative and qualitative. A quantitative approach best aligns with the research question. Correlation in this instance will be best proven or disproven through quantitative data and statistical analysis. Additionally, secondary data is the most feasible option for data in the project since all of the data on team transfers and wins in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 seasons have been collected and recorded online through repu-

table sources. See works cited for a complete list of the referenced sources by conference.

Procedure

The procedure for correlational research in this study was as follows. Initially, I created a spreadsheet to store the project data. I then recorded the number of transfers in, transfers out, net transfers, wins, and conference wins for each Division One men's college basketball team. Additionally, I recorded each team's win percentage and conference win percentage. See Appendix A for a common example of this procedure for several teams, and reference works cited for websites consulted during data collection. I obtained data on transfers in, transfers out, and net transfers from the 247Sports database and collected team's wins, win percentage, conference wins, and conference win percentage from each D1 conference's website. I collected data from the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 men's college basketball seasons. Before starting data collection, I received approval from an Institutional Review Board, which certified that the chosen method and procedure are both feasible and ethical. A 2022 study conducted on quarterback transfers in college football effectively used a similar procedure (Dohrn, 2022).

Transfer Portal Data

The official NCAA Transfer Portal is not available to the public, which presents a challenge (Dohrn 2022). However, the data that pertains to this project can be obtained from other credible databases. The 247Sports website and database provide a large amount of reliable data on the Transfer Portal. This includes lists of football and basketball transfers as well as details about player position, hometown, and information about the transfer's old and new schools. The resources offered by 247Sports were also successfully used in a similar study regarding Division One quarterback transfers (Dohrn, 2022). Unlike the NCAA Transfer Portal, data concerning wins and win percentage are publicly available through widely used and reliable sources such as the official conference websites for each Division One conference. I used these websites to collect each team's wins, conference wins, win percentage, and conference win percentage.

Statistical Analysis

I described continuous data using medians and interquartile ranges. I used the Spearman's rank correlation test to determine whether transfer-related variables (such as transfers in and transfers out) were correlated with win percentage in each season separately. This test produces both a Spearman's rho and a P-value. The Spearman's rho ranges from -1 to 1, with a 0 indicating no correlation and -1 and 1 indicating perfect correlations (either inverse or positive correlations). Additionally, the lower the P-value, the more confidence there is that the correlation was not due to random chance. I considered P-values < 0.05 to indicate statistical significance. I analyzed data using Stata Release 18 (StataCorp, 2023).

Defense of Method

The method and procedure chosen are acceptable choices for the following reasons. Discovering a correlation, or lack thereof, between transfers and win percentage can be done relatively easily through correlational research. Additionally, the choice of secondary data also sufficiently aligns with the project question and goal due to the wide variety of available sources on the subject and the reliability and efficiency of collecting data from 247Sports and several conference websites. The decision to code quantitative data proved to be superior to that of qualitative data, which would not match the research question or project goal as well as quantitative data. Finally, the choice of organizing the data in a spreadsheet allowed the researcher to better summarize the data and achieve the project goal.

Findings

The data were collected for two seasons of men's college basketball (2021-2022 and 2022-2023). Overall, the data consists of 352 teams for the 2021-2022 season and 361 teams for the 2022-2023 season. The descriptive statistics for the 2021-2022 season are shown in Table 1, whereas those for the 2022-2023 season are shown in Table 2.

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Table 1

NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Transfers Prior to the 2021-2022 Season

Conference	N	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Total Transfers	Net Transfers
All	352	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 2]	2 [1 to 4]	0 [-1 to 1]
AAC	11	3 [1 to 4]	2 [2 to 7]	6 [3 to 10]	-1 [-3 to 0]
ACC	15	2 [1 to 3]	4 [2 to 5]	6 [4 to 7]	-1 [-2 to 0]
American East	10	0 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 1]	1 [1 to 1]	-1 [-0.5 to 1]
Atlantic 10	14	2 [1 to 3]	1 [1 to 2]	3 [2 to 5]	0.5 [0 to 1]
Atlantic Sun	11	0 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]
Big 10	14	2 [1 to 3]	3 [2 to 5]	4 [2 to 8]	-2 [-2 to 0]
Big 12	10	4.5 [3 to 5]	6 [3 to 7]	10 [6 to 13]	-1 [-3 to 1]
Big East	11	2 [0 to 3]	3 [2 to 5]	5 [3 to 9]	-1 [-3 to -1]
Big Sky	11	1 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	0 [0 to 1]
Big South	12	0.5 [0 to 1]	0.5 [0 to 1]	1.5 [0 to 2]	0 [0 to 0.5]
Big West	10	1 [1 to 1]	0 [0 to 0]	1 [1 to 2]	1 [0 to 1]
Conference USA	14	1 [1 to 2]	1 [0 to 2]	3 [1 to 4]	0 [-1 to 1]
CAA	10	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 1]	1.5 [1 to 3]	0 [-1 to 1]
Horizon	12	0.5 [0 to 1]	0.5 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	0 [0 to 0]
Ivy League	8	0 [0 to 0]	1.5 [1 to 2]	2 [1 to 2]	-1.5 [-2 to -0.5]
Mountain West	11	2 [1 to 4]	2 [0 to 2]	3 [2 to 7]	0 [-1 to 2]
MAAC	11	0 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]
MAC	12	1 [0.5 to 2]	1 [0 to 1]	2 [1 to 3]	0 [0 to 0.5]
MEAC	8	0.5 [0 to 2]	0 [0 to 0]	0.5 [0 to 1]	0.5 [0 to 1.5]
MVC	10	1 [0 to 2]	1 [1 to 3]	1.5 [1 to 5]	-1 [-1 to 0]
Northeast	9	0 [0 to 0]	0 [0 to 0]	0 [0 to 0]	0 [0 to 0]
Ohio Valley	10	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 1]	1.5 [1 to 5]	0 [-1 to 1]
PAC-12	12	2.5 [1 to 3]	4 [1.5 to 6.5]	6 [2 to 10]	-2 [-3.5 to -0.5]
Patriot	10	0 [0 to 0]	0 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]	0 [-1 to 0]
SEC	14	4 [4 to 4]	4.5 [4 to 7]	8.5 [7 to 12]	-1 [-3 to 0]
SWAC	12	1 [0 to 2]	0 [0 to 0.5]	1 [0.5 to 2]	1 [0 to 1.5]
Southern	10	0 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]	1.5 [1 to 2]	-0.5 [-1 to 0]
Southland	8	0.5 [0 to 2.5]	0 [0 to 0.5]	1 [0 to 2.5]	0 [0 to 2.5]
Summit	9	1 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 1]	1 [1 to 2]	0 [0 to 1]
Sun Belt	12	0.5 [0 to 2]	1.5 [0.5 to 3]	2.5 [1 to 3.5]	0 [-1.5 to 0.5]
WAC	11	1 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 3]	0 [0 to 0]
WCC	10	2 [1 to 3]	1 [0 to 1]	2 [2 to 4]	0.5 [0 to 2]

Note. All data presented as median [interquartile range].

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Table 2

NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Transfers Prior to the 2022-2023 Season

Conference	N	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Total Transfers	Net Transfers
All	361	1 [0 to 2]	1 [1 to 3]	3 [1 to 5]	0 [-1 to 1]
AAC	11	3 [1 to 5]	3 [2 to 6]	8 [3 to 10]	0 [-1 to 1]
ACC	15	2 [1 to 3]	2 [1 to 4]	5 [3 to 7]	-1 [-2 to 0]
American East	9	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 1]	2 [0 to 4]	0 [0 to 0]
Atlantic 10	15	2 [1 to 3]	3 [1 to 5]	4 [3 to 8]	-1 [-2 to 1]
Atlantic Sun	14	1 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	0 [-1 to 0]
Big 10	14	1.5 [0 to 3]	2.5 [1 to 3]	4 [2 to 5]	-1 [-2 to 1]
Big 12	10	3 [2 to 4]	5 [2 to 5]	8 [4 to 10]	-1.5 [-2 to 0]
Big East	11	2 [2 to 4]	2 [1 to 3]	5 [2 to 7]	1 [-1 to 2]
Big Sky	10	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 1]	2.5 [1 to 3]	0.5 [-1 to 1]
Big South	10	1 [0 to 1]	1 [1 to 1]	2 [1 to 2]	0 [-1 to 0]
Big West	11	1 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	2 [1 to 3]	0 [-1 to 0]
Conference USA	11	2 [1 to 3]	1 [1 to 3]	4 [2 to 6]	0 [-1 to 2]
CAA	13	1 [1 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	2 [1 to 3]	0 [-1 to 1]
Horizon	11	1 [1 to 2]	1 [0 to 3]	3 [1 to 4]	0 [-1 to 2]
Ivy League	8	0 [0 to 0]	1 [1 to 2]	1 [1 to 2]	-1 [-2 to -1]
Mountain West	11	2 [1 to 3]	3 [1 to 4]	4 [4 to 7]	0 [-2 to 2]
MAAC	11	1 [1 to 2]	0 [0 to 3]	2 [1 to 3]	0 [-2 to 1]
MAC	12	1.5 [1 to 2]	1 [1 to 2]	3 [3 to 3.5]	0 [-1 to 1]
MEAC	8	0 [0 to 1]	0.5 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	0 [-0.5 to 0]
MVC	12	1 [0.5 to 2.5]	2 [1 to 4]	3 [1.5 to 6.5]	-1 [-2 to 0]
Northeast	9	0 [0 to 0]	0 [0 to 0.5]	0 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 0]
Ohio Valley	10	1 [0 to 2.5]	1 [0 to 2.5]	2.5 [0.5 to 4.5]	0 [-1 to 0]
PAC-12	12	2 [0.5 to 2.5]	3.5 [2 to 4]	4.5 [3.5 to 6]	-1 [-2.5 to 0]
Patriot	10	0 [0 to 0]	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 2]	-1 [-2 to 0]
SEC	14	4 [2 to 5]	5.5 [4 to 7]	8.5 [7 to 12]	-2 [-3 to 0]
SWAC	12	0 [0 to 1]	0 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 2]	0 [-1 to 0.5]
Southern	10	1.5 [1 to 3]	2 [1 to 2]	3 [2 to 4]	0.5 [-1 to 1]
Southland	10	0 [0 to 2]	0 [0 to 1]	1 [0 to 3]	0 [0 to 1]
Summit	10	1 [0 to 1]	1 [1 to 2]	2 [1 to 3]	0 [-1 to 0]
Sun Belt	14	1.5 [1 to 2]	2.5 [2 to 3]	4.5 [3 to 5]	-0.5 [-2 to 0]
WAC	13	1 [0 to 2]	1 [0 to 2]	2 [1 to 3]	0 [-1 to 0]
WCC	10	2 [1 to 3]	1 [1 to 2]	3 [2 to 5]	1.5 [0 to 2]

Note. All data presented as median [interquartile range].

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Table 3

Correlations Between Transfer Activity and Win Percentage During the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Seasons

Transfer Activity	2021-2022		2022-2023	
	Spearman's rho	P value	Spearman's rho	P value
Transfers In	0.16	0.003	0.15	0.006
Transfers Out	0.13	0.02	0.03	0.59
Total Transfers	0.17	0.002	0.11	0.03
Net Transfers	-0.03	0.61	0.05	0.37

These tables present several overall trends for each variable. The median and interquartile range for both transfers in and transfers out were always positive although there were many varying values. Typically, the larger conferences, which attract more media attention and produce stronger teams, had higher values for transfers in and transfers out. These larger conferences also had higher values for total transfers, which is simply a reflection of the previous two variables. However, this trend ends for net transfers as there was little variance, and there was no clear pattern for different types of conferences.

For the 2021-2022 season, both transfers in and total transfers were significantly positively correlated with win percentage, as indicated by a positive Spearman's rho. Additionally, transfers out was also positively correlated with win percentage. For the 2022-2023 season, transfers in and total transfers continued to have significant positive correlations with win percentage. However, there was no significant correlation for transfers out, unlike the previous year. For both years net transfers had little to no correlation, as indicated by a Spearman's rho consistently close to zero and a high P-value.

Figure 1

Correlation Between Transfers In and Win Percentage During the 2021-2022 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Season

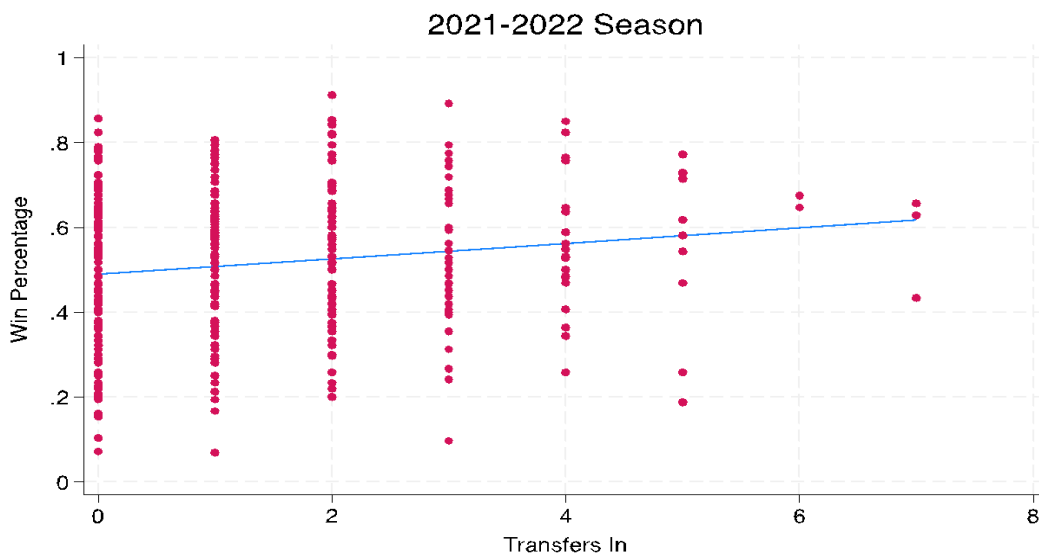
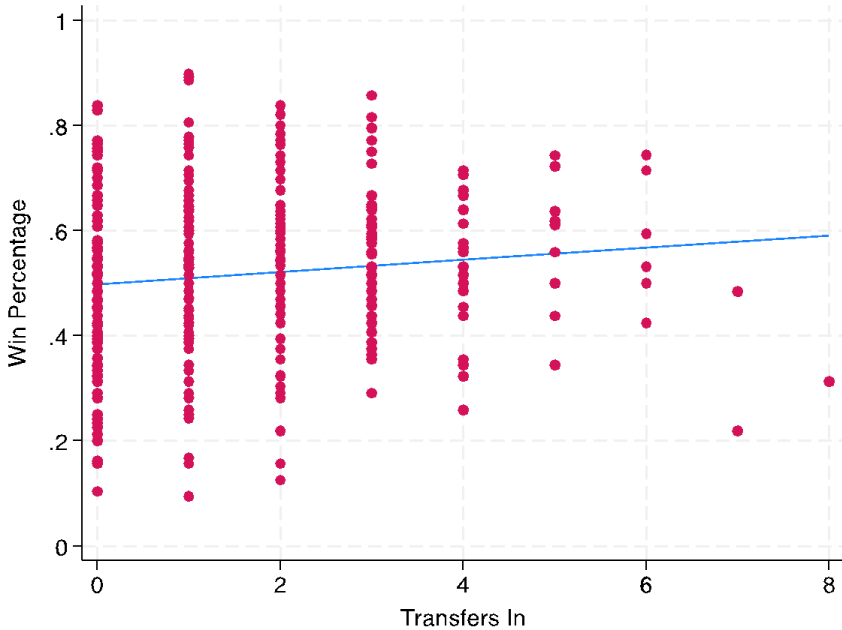


Figure 2

Correlation Between Transfers In and Win Percentage During the 2022-2023 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Season



Below, Figures 1 and 2 show a visual representation of the correlation between transfers in and win percentage. The correlation can be clearly seen through the line of best fit for both seasons. Although the points in the scatterplots vary greatly, the previous statement holds true as a clear positive linear slope is seen in the line of best fit.

Analysis & Conclusions

Through quantitative data analysis, this study identified multiple significant correlations between transfer activity and win percentage in Division One men's college basketball. These findings were consistent across two separate basketball seasons. This is the first study, to my knowledge, to identify correlations between Division One men's college basketball transfers and win percentage. Several previous studies examined college transfers, and other previous studies examined success in Division One men's college basketball. However, there was no data connecting the

two fields, which is where the current study becomes relevant. In order to better contribute to the scholarly conversation, the data analysis as well as conclusions will be rationalized and explained.

Transfers In and Transfers Out

Throughout the study, transfers in and transfers are the most frequently referenced variables since they are the simplest, as well as the most visible, statistics related to college basketball transfers. Additionally, all of the variables analyzed in the study were tested with team win percentage rather than a number of wins. Because of the wide variation in the different number of games played across the two seasons for every team, number of wins was not seen as a favorable metric. Instead, win percentage could compare team success more fairly despite the varying number of games played by different teams.

I conducted statistical analysis of the data using the Spearman's rank correlation test (See Table 3). In both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 seasons, the Spearman's

rho for transfers in was a positive value, 0.16 and 0.15 respectively. Additionally, the corresponding P-values were significant (<0.05). Therefore, there is a significant positive correlation between transfers in and win percentage. This means that Division One men's college basketball teams that had a high number of transfers in were more likely to have a high win percentage, or vice versa. This finding does not prove a causal relationship, but if future research confirms and explains the relationship between transfers in and win percentage, coaches may use this data when developing their recruiting strategies by focusing on bringing in transfers, which connects to the findings in Lupton's study on recruiting strategies and team success (Lupton, 2021). Additionally, transfers in could be added to the list of factors that may positively affect team success from Witkos' study on success in college basketball (Witkos, 2011). Regarding transfers out and win percentage, the Spearman's rho was 0.13 for 2021-2022 but only 0.03 for 2022-2023. Furthermore, the P-value for 2021-2022 was 0.02, while that for 2022-2023 was 0.59. Obviously, there is a large inconsistency between the two seasons examined. Because of a lack of conclusive data, it cannot be deduced that there is a correlation between transfers out and win percentage in these two seasons of Division One men's college basketball.

Net and Total Transfers

Additionally, other variables involving different combinations of transfers in and transfers out were tested. Net transfers were calculated by transfers out subtracted from transfers in, whereas total transfers were the sum of transfers in and transfers out. Over the course of both seasons, net transfers had the lowest Spearman's rho (-0.03 and 0.05), even having a negative Spearman's rho in the 2021-2022 season. Moreover, the P-values for net transfers, 0.61 and 0.37, were consistently higher than those for the other variables (See Table 3). These results indicate that there is no correlation between net transfers and win percentage. However, the results were drastically different for total transfers, which had possibly the most significant correlation to win percentage. The Spearman's rho value in the 2021-2022 season was the highest of all variables at 0.17, and the 2022-2023 Spearman's rho value was not far behind at 0.11. Meanwhile, the P-value for total transfers in the 2021-2022 season

was the lowest at 0.002, and that for the 2022-2023 season was also particularly low at 0.03. These high Spearman's rho values paired with substantially low P-values clearly show a significant positive correlation between total transfers and win percentage. Similar to transfers in, if confirmed by future research, coaches could utilize these findings by making sure their team has a high number of total transfers. This also relates to the findings in Lupton's study on recruiting strategies and team success, although the study never explicitly mentioned total transfers (Lupton, 2021). Furthermore, Witkos' previously mentioned list of factors that positively affect team success in college basketball can add total transfers in addition to adding transfers if future research confirms these results (Witkos, 2011).

Rationale of Transfers

Although these data reveal a correlation between transfers in and win percentage as well as a correlation between total transfers and win percentage, this does not necessarily prove causation. Many may misinterpret the data as meaning that adding transfers to a team directly causes an increase in win percentage, but it may not. The correlations could also mean that more successful teams draw in more transfers, which connects to several studies mentioned earlier in the literature review (Pugh, 2016; Gallup, 2020). Possibly, this correlation between transfers in and win percentage has revealed a new finding in the rationale for transfers. Different studies, such as Pugh's from 2016 and Gallup from 2020, have suggested that different factors, such as a player's like or dislike of a coach, academics, and playing time, are all leading factors in a player's reasoning when transferring. However, these studies do not cite the program's success and win percentage as a main reason that players transfer. Therefore, the correlation discovered in this study could have potentially revealed previous team success as an additional factor for a player's rationale in transferring.

Limitations

This study has limitations that should be acknowledged. First of all, not all Division One men's basket-

ball teams were included in the data analysis due to a lack of data in the 247Sports database. Although the data included most teams, five teams in the 2021-2022 season were excluded along with nine teams in the 2022-2023 season. This exclusion of several teams could potentially affect the data analysis and the significance of the correlations being studied. It would be beneficial for future research to potentially use another database to gather the data for these final missing teams.

One additional limitation was the small sample size available. Since the Transfer Portal was changed in 2021, only two seasons of data are currently available. Therefore, the sample size of the data was relatively small with only two years' worth of data. Although the study included more than seven hundred total teams, more seasons added would give the results more validity. Additionally, there was some variance in the results between the two seasons. The availability of several more seasons of data would allow a larger certainty in the conclusions drawn. In future research, more data will be available because more time will have passed. This will allow larger sample sizes and the development of an even better understanding than this study provides.

Lastly, the observational study design means that a causal relationship between transfer activity and win percentage cannot be proven. A randomized controlled trial would provide insight into the effect of transfers on win percentage, but this type of study is infeasible, making observational studies like this one an appropriate alternative. Additionally, with more detailed data and a larger sample size, future observational studies can use multivariable regression to adjust for potential confounders when analyzing the relationships between transfer activity and future win percentage.

Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

Through extensive research on the correlation between transfers and team success in Division One men's college basketball, many important conclusions have come to light. First, significant positive correlations were found between transfers in and win percentage and between total transfers and win percent-

age. These discoveries can potentially aid coaches in their future recruitment and allow them to increase the success of their teams. Although transfers in and total transfers were found to have significant positive correlations with win percentage, transfers out and net transfers were not. For future research, a larger sample size is recommended and multivariable regression should be used to adjust for potential confounders. Future seasons must also be analyzed to see if these trends continue or halt. Finally, the number of Division One teams excluded from the study because of lack of data should be minimized.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Visual Aid of Data

Team Name	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Net Transfers	Total Transfers	Wins	Losses	Win Percentage	Conference	Conf. Wins	Conf. Losses	Conf. Win %
Boston College	3	5	-2	8	13	20	39.4%	ACC	6	14	30.0%
Clemson	2	4	-2	6	17	16	51.5%	ACC	8	12	40.0%
Duke	2	4	-2	6	32	7	82.1%	ACC	16	4	80.0%
Florida State	2	2	0	4	17	14	54.6%	ACC	10	10	50.0%
Georgia Tech	1	1	0	2	12	20	37.5%	ACC	5	15	25.0%
Louisville	2	3	-1	5	13	19	40.6%	ACC	6	14	30.0%
Miami	2	5	-3	7	26	11	70.3%	ACC	14	6	70.0%
NC State	1	4	-3	5	11	21	34.4%	ACC	4	16	20.0%
North Carolina	3	3	0	6	29	10	74.4%	ACC	15	5	75.0%
Notre Dame	1	1	0	2	24	11	68.6%	ACC	15	5	75.0%
Pittsburgh	1	5	-4	6	11	21	34.4%	ACC	6	14	30.0%
Syracuse	3	4	-1	7	16	17	48.5%	ACC	9	11	45.0%
Virginia	2	2	0	4	21	14	60.0%	ACC	12	8	60.0%
Virginia Tech	2	3	-1	5	23	13	63.9%	ACC	11	9	55.0%
Wake Forest	5	6	-1	11	25	10	71.4%	ACC	13	7	65.0%
Albany	2	2	0	4	13	18	41.9%	America East	9	9	50.0%
Binghamton	1	0	1	1	12	17	41.4%	America East	8	10	44.4%