

Research Question

Is a previous season's driving distance a significant predictor of current performance, and if so, how has its effect changed over time?

Background Information

- Golf ball rollback rule
- Rise of speed-training
- Lengthening of professional golf courses

Hypotheses

1. Driving distance is a significant predictor of professional golfers' success.
2. Driving distance's effect size has grown since 2018.
3. Driving distance's effect size in comparison to other factors has also increased.

Existing Literature

- USGA article: Longer hitters do not receive a disproportionate technological advantage from modern balls
- GolfWRX article: Driving distance has increased over time due to tech and athleticism, but scoring averages have improved only slightly
- MyGolfSpy article: Player skill levels differ far more in distance than accuracy, and additional distance strongly improves greens-in-regulation rates and scoring, implying distance is more important than fairway accuracy for performance

Method of Analysis

1. Visual Analysis of Driving Distance
2. Base Logistic Regression Analysis
3. Temporal Evolution Effects

Results/Findings

- Driving distance is a significant predictor of next season performance, with a coefficient estimate of $\sim .005$ more cuts made per event played, and $\sim .008$ top 10 finishes per event played
- Driving distance is a significant predictor throughout 2018 - 2025 seasons, with the exception of 2024. Its effect size generally increases with time.
- Driving distance's standardized effect size has grown to surpass all other metrics when predicting cuts made

Conclusions

- Hypotheses all hold true
- Further research: how does driving distance impact greens in regulation?

Graphs

