

Investigating the role of talent and chance in individual sports: from Fencing to Tennis Tournaments

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It is a widespread belief that success is mainly due to innate qualities, rather than to external forces. This is particularly true in sport competitions, where individual talent is considered the only ingredient in order to reach success. In this talk, following a line of research started in [1-2] I will discuss the results of recent papers [3-4], where the relative weight of talent and chance has been explored in fencing and tennis by means of statistical analysis of real data and agent-based models. Numerical simulations approximate very well real data for values of chance almost equal or greater than that of talent. It seems then, that the role of chance in individual sports is heavily underestimated. Keep assessing merit without considering the bias of chance is risky, as it creates a huge disparity between comparable talents and it consequently influences not only sports results but also future career development.

References

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