

Preseason Polls and the Final Standings

Is there a correlation between them for the Mountain West Conference Women's Volleyball Teams?

I took the Preseason Poll and matched it with the Final Standings for the Women's Volleyball teams for all eleven years that the Mountain West Conference has existed (1999 - 2009).

I calculated the sum of the differences between the preseason rank and the team's place in the final standings. Then I computed the correlation coefficient.

The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to 1. A value of 1 implies that a linear equation describes the relationship between X and Y perfectly, with all data points lying on a line for which Y increases as X increases. A value of -1 implies that all data points lie on a line for which Y decreases as X increases. A value of 0 implies that there is no linear correlation between the variables.

In examining the data below, the coaches and sportswriters did an excellent job of predicting the final standings for the Women's Volleyball teams in the Mountain West Conference. For most of the years, the correlation coefficient was near 1. The best year was the year 2000 when the correlation coefficient was .97, and every team finished in the order predicted (there were some ties which prevented the correlation coefficient from being 1.0). The worst year was the first year of the conference when the correlation coefficient was only 0.59592. Air Force and New Mexico were predicted to finish 8th and 6th, respectively, but actually tied for fourth place.

The coaches and sportswriters predicted the conference champion correctly only four times out of the eleven years (in 1999, 2000, 2004, and 2005). Air Force was predicted to finish in last place all eleven years and actually did finish there in all but two of those years.

2009 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Utah (8) | 3 |
| 2. | Colorado State (4) | 1 |
| 3. | New Mexico (3) | 3 |
| 4. | BYU (2) | 5 |
| 5. | TCU | 2 |
| 6. | UNLV | 7 |
| 7. | San Diego State | 6 |
| 8. | Wyoming | 8 |
| 9. | Air Force | 9 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 9.

The correlation coefficient is 0.86281.

2008 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Colorado State (13) | 2 |
| 2. | Utah | 1 |
| 3. | BYU (1) | 6 |
| 4. | New Mexico | 3 |
| 5. | UNLV | 4 |
| 6. | TCU | 4 |
| 7. | San Diego State | 7 |
| 8. | Wyoming | 8 |
| 9. | Air Force | 9 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 9.

The correlation coefficient is 0.86032.

2007 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | BYU (8) | 2 |
| 2. | Colorado State (5) | 1 |
| 3. | Utah | 4 |
| 4. | UNLV (1) | 2 |
| 5. | New Mexico | 6 |
| 6. | San Diego State | 8 |
| 7. | Wyoming | 7 |
| 8. | TCU | 4 |
| 9. | Air Force | 9 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 12.

The correlation coefficient is 0.7813.

2006 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | BYU (6) | 2 |
| 2. | Utah (6) | 1 |
| 3. | Colorado State (2) | 3 |
| 4. | UNLV | 4 |
| 5. | Wyoming | 5 |
| 5. | San Diego State | 6 |
| 7. | New Mexico | 6 |
| 8. | TCU | 6 |
| 9. | Air Force | 9 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 6.

The correlation coefficient is 0.93417.

2005 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | BYU (7) | 1 |
| 2. | Utah (3) | 3 |
| 3. | Colorado State (3) | 2 |
| 4. | UNLV | 4 |
| 5. | TCU | 8 |
| 6. | San Diego State | 5 |
| 7. | Wyoming | 6 |
| 8. | New Mexico | 7 |
| 9. | Air Force | 9 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 8.

The correlation coefficient is 0.88333.

2004 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Colorado State (14) | 1 |
| 2. | BYU | 3 |
| 3. | Utah (1) | 1 |
| 4. | San Diego State | 6 |
| 5. | Wyoming | 5 |
| 6. | UNLV | 4 |
| 7. | New Mexico | 7 |
| 8. | Air Force | 8 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 7.

The correlation coefficient is 0.85858.

2003 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Utah (5) | 2 |
| 2. | Colorado State (2) | 1 |
| 3. | BYU | 3 |
| 4. | San Diego State (1) | 4 |
| 5. | UNLV | 5 |
| 6. | Wyoming | 5 |
| 7. | New Mexico | 8 |
| 8. | Air Force | 5 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 7.

The correlation coefficient is 0.84772.

2002 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Utah (6) | 3 |
| 2. | Colorado State (1) | 1 |
| 3. | BYU (1) | 4 |
| 4. | San Diego State (1) | 2 |
| 5. | UNLV | 5 |
| 6. | Wyoming | 6 |
| 7. | New Mexico | 7 |
| 8. | Air Force | 8 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 6.

The correlation coefficient is 0.88095.

2001 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | BYU (5) | 3 |
| 2. | Colorado State (3) | 1 |
| 3. | Utah | 2 |
| 4. | San Diego State | 4 |
| 5. | UNLV | 5 |
| 6. | New Mexico | 7 |
| 7. | Wyoming | 6 |
| 8. | Air Force | 8 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 6.

The correlation coefficient is 0.90476.

2000 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team (1st votes) | Final Standings |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Colorado State (4) | 1 |
| 1. | BYU (4) | 2 |
| 3. | Utah | 3 |
| 4. | San Diego State | 4 |
| 4. | UNLV | 5 |
| 6. | New Mexico | 5 |
| 7. | Wyoming | 7 |
| 8. | Air Force | 8 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 3.

The correlation coefficient is 0.9708.

1999 MWC Preseason Poll and Final Standings

| Preseason | Team | Final Standings |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | BYU | 1 |
| 1. | Colorado State | 2 |
| 3. | Utah | 3 |
| 4. | UNLV | 6 |
| 5. | Wyoming | 8 |
| 6. | New Mexico | 4 |
| 7. | San Diego State | 6 |
| 8. | Air Force | 4 |

The sum of the differences between preseason and final rankings is 13.

The correlation coefficient is 0.59592.