STUDENTS WIN BIG WITH STATISTICS IN 2017 STATSKETBALL TOURNAMENT

American Statistical Association Announces Winners in prediction contest for 2017 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament

ALEXANDRIA, VA, April 10, 2017 – Today, the American Statistical Association (ASA) announced the winners in the 2017 Statsketball Tournament, two nationwide contests for high school and undergraduate statistics students to predict results from the 2017 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament using statistical methods and thinking. The winners are:

Pick 'Em Upset Challenge Winners

- High School: Naveen Gooneratne, senior, Lower Merion High School, Ardmore, Pa.
- Undergraduate: Michael McLaughlin, junior, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.

Build Your Own Bracket Draft Challenge Winners:

- High School: James Andrews, Jordan Levy, and Connor Heuerman, seniors, College Park High School, Pleasant Hills, Calif.
- Undergraduate: Jason Thompson and Graham Pash, sophomores, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C.

"On behalf of the American Statistical Association, I want to congratulate our Statsketball winners," said ASA Executive Director Ron Wasserstein. "All the entries showed a level of creativity and statistical knowledge that made a big impression on our judges. We hope this contest encourages student to study statistics as it touches every aspect of our lives and because statistical analysis skills are in high demand by employers."

"It was great to see students using a mix of classic probability models and technology such as using machine learning to arrive at their predictions," said Steve Rigdon, Professor of Biostatistics at Saint Louis University and Chair, ASA Section on Statistics in Sports.

In the Upset Challenge, students picked the teams most likely to win in an upset in the Round of 64, earning two points for each winner picked correctly and additional points for predicting an upset, correlated to the difference between those teams' seed rankings.

The Draft Challenge assigned a draft point value for each seed, with highest seeded teams receiving the highest point value (75 points) and the lowest seeded teams the least (1 point). Entrants compiled a group of teams with the most potential for round-by-round victories, without exceeding 224 draft points. For each round one of their teams advanced, students received points.

The ASA also congratulates the runners-up in the Tournament contests:

- High School: Miles Kelly; Aidan Trainer; Jessie Epstein
- Undergraduate: Brady Ulloa; Matt Hansen

The ASA would like to thank Skidmore University Statistics Professor Mike Lopez for suggesting and developing the contests, and Laurel Chiappetta, M.S. of Data DIVA; Dr. Stephen Loftus, Analyst, Baseball Research and Development for the Tampa Bay Rays Baseball Club; and Steve Rigdon, for judging the student entries.

To learn more about how statistics is used to forecast the future and drive decision making, visit ThisIsStatistics.org.

About the American Statistical Association

The ASA is the world's largest community of statisticians and the oldest continuously operating professional science society in the United States. Its members serve in industry, government and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information, please visit the ASA website at http://www.amstat.org.

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