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# Air Pollution Strikes Again: The Ozone Offense in Stanley Cup Finals

Colton Hall, Addison Terry, Gavin P Tyler

International College; Austin, Texas

## KEYWORDS

air pollution, ozone, Bellefontaine Ohio, Stanley Cup Finals, goals scored, environmental protection agency, EPA, correlation coefficient, statistical analysis, sporting events, environmental policies

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## Abstract

This paper examines the unexpected and seemingly ludicrous relationship between air pollution levels in Bellefontaine, Ohio, and the number of goals scored by the winning team in the Stanley Cup Finals. Utilizing data from the Environmental Protection Agency and Wikipedia, a thorough analysis covering the period from 1990 to 1999 was conducted. Surprisingly, our findings indicate a remarkably high correlation coefficient of 0.9317802 and a statistically significant p-value of less than 0.01, providing evidence for the association between these seemingly unrelated phenomena. The implications of these findings and their potential impact on sporting events and environmental policies will be discussed. While these results may come as a breath of fresh air to some, they certainly leave us gasping for more explanations.

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## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of air pollution has long been a subject of grave concern for environmental scientists and policymakers alike. Proliferation of pollutants like ozone, particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide has been associated with a multitude of adverse health effects, from respiratory illnesses to cardiovascular diseases. However, as researchers delved deeper into the data,

they stumbled upon something quite unexpected - a surprising correlation between air pollution levels in Bellefontaine, Ohio, and the number of goals scored by the winning team in the Stanley Cup Finals.

It is worth noting the initial skepticism that greeted this peculiar connection. Indeed, the notion that the quality of the air in a small Ohio city could somehow influence the outcome of the premier ice

hockey championship seemed as preposterous as having a penguin in a sauna. Nevertheless, this study aims to unravel the mystery behind this unforeseen correlation while maintaining the scientific rigor vital to such investigation. Through meticulous data analysis and statistical modeling, we seek to shed light on this ozone-laden enigma.

The hypothesis that air pollution in Bellefontaine can influence the performance of teams in the Stanley Cup Finals may strike one as being as thin as the air in a high-altitude rink. However, our analysis uncovered a surprisingly strong correlation coefficient of 0.9317802 and a p-value that is lower than a puck in a penalty box - less than 0.01. These statistical results cast doubt on the notion that this association is a mere fluke, prompting us to explore potential explanations with a healthy dose of curiosity and skepticism.

This paper presents an in-depth exploration of the data from 1990 to 1999, analyzing air quality measures and the corresponding number of goals scored by the triumphant team in the Stanley Cup Finals. We endeavor to make sense of this puckish relationship and consider its implications for sports aficionados, environmental advocates, and ice hockey enthusiasts alike. While the findings may appear to drift into uncharted and whimsical territory, they hold promise for uncovering the unseen influences on sports outcomes and may open doors for stimulating discussions on the interplay between environmental factors and athletic achievements. Indeed, the pursuit of knowledge can sometimes lead us to unexpected goals, even if they are of the ice hockey variety.

## 2. Literature Review

The connection between air pollution levels in a small town in Ohio and the number of

goals scored in the Stanley Cup Finals may seem as unrelated as apples and oranges, but our exploration of the existing literature has revealed some intriguing insights. Smith and Doe (2010) first introduced the idea of environmental factors affecting sports outcomes in their seminal work "Air Quality and Athletic Performance." The authors found that high levels of air pollutants, including ozone, were associated with decreased athletic performance in various outdoor sports, such as track and field events and long-distance running. While their focus was on individual sports, their findings prompted further investigation into the potential influence of air quality on team sports, laying the groundwork for our current study.

Jones (2015) further delved into the impact of environmental conditions on sports, including the effects of air pollution on spectator experience in his book "Pollution and the Sporting Spirit." His analysis extended beyond the athletes themselves, examining how air quality could influence the overall ambiance and energy of sporting events. Although his work did not specifically address the correlation with goal-scoring in ice hockey, his broader perspective on environmental influences in sports inspired our examination of this unconventional relationship.

Moving beyond the academic realm, popular culture has also contributed to our understanding of unexpected connections. Fictitious narratives, such as "The Air Quality Chronicles" by Jane Air, present fantastical tales of environmental phenomena influencing seemingly unrelated events, albeit in a whimsical and allegorical manner. While the content of such fiction may appear far removed from scientific inquiry, we cannot discount the potential for imaginative literature to spark unconventional ideas and perspectives.

In a non-traditional approach to literature review, we also consulted cartoons and

children's shows for insights into the interplay of environmental factors and sports outcomes. Through episodes like "Captain Planet and the Power of Eco-Stadiums," we gained a tongue-in-cheek understanding of the potential impact of air pollution on athletic performance, albeit within the context of animated superhero adventures.

As we navigate this uncharted terrain of environmental influences on sports, we must not dismiss unconventional sources of inspiration that may offer unique angles for exploration. The convergence of academic research, fiction, and popular media provides a rich tapestry of perspectives as we embark on this colorful journey of discovery, where the unexpected beckons and where air pollution becomes a player in the game of goals.

### 3. Our approach & methods

To investigate the curious connection between air pollution levels in Bellefontaine, Ohio, and the number of goals scored by the winning team in the Stanley Cup Finals, a comprehensive and methodologically sound approach was adopted.

**Data Collection:** The research team amassed data on air quality measures, including ozone levels, particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide concentrations, from the Environmental Protection Agency database. Additionally, information regarding the victorious team's performance, specifically the number of goals scored in each Stanley Cup Final match from 1990 to 1999, was gathered primarily from trustworthy sources such as Wikipedia.

**Data Analysis:** Following the collection of data, a series of convoluted statistical analyses and modeling approaches were employed to discern any relationship between air pollution levels and the number

of goals scored by the triumphant team. Mixed-effects models, Bayesian inference, and even a touch of color theory were utilized to explore any potential patterns within the data.

**Correlation Assessment:** To quantify the strength of the association between air pollution levels and ice hockey prowess, a range of correlation coefficients, including the Pearson correlation coefficient and the more quirky Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, were calculated. These coefficients were then interpreted with the cautious optimism befitting the investigation of such a seemingly whimsical association.

**Regression Modeling:** To probe further into the observed correlation, linear regression analysis was applied, accounting for various potential confounding factors such as geographic location, team composition, and the possibility of an unexpected visit from the Zamboni. Model fit and predictive accuracy were evaluated to ensure that our conclusions were as sturdy as the boards surrounding an ice hockey rink.

**Sensitivity Analysis:** Sensitivity analyses were performed to ascertain the robustness of our findings to different modeling assumptions, outlier removal, and even the occasional power play from unexpected anomalies in the data.

**Significance Testing:** Lastly, significance testing was employed, comparing the observed association with statistical expectations under the assumption of no relationship between air pollution levels and goals scored. The resulting p-values were scrutinized with the rigor of a referee reviewing a contentious play, ensuring that any suggested association was not simply a lucky bounce.

By employing these multifaceted and occasionally quirky research methodologies, we sought to examine this unconventional relationship between air pollution and ice hockey success with the gravity it deserves,

while also recognizing the lighthearted potential of exploring the unexpected twists and turns of scientific inquiry.

#### 4. Results

The analysis of the relationship between air pollution levels in Bellefontaine, Ohio, and the number of goals scored by the winning team in the Stanley Cup Finals from 1990 to 1999 yielded some remarkably intriguing results. The correlation coefficient of 0.9317802 suggests a strong positive relationship between these seemingly unrelated variables, indicating that as air pollution levels in Bellefontaine rose, so did the number of goals scored by the victorious team in the Stanley Cup Finals. This finding was further supported by an r-squared value of 0.8682143, underscoring the substantial proportion of the variation in the goals scored that is explained by changes in air pollution levels.

The statistical significance of the relationship was confirmed by the p-value of less than 0.01, providing compelling evidence that the observed association between air pollution and the number of goals scored is not merely a fortuitous occurrence. Fig. 1 illustrates this robust correlation in a scatterplot, portraying the trend of increasing goals scored as air pollution levels climb, much like the ascent of a slap shot striking the top corner of the net.

These results present a remarkable twist in the narrative of environmental and sports interactions, causing us to contemplate the unforeseen influences that may impact athletic performances. While the notion of air pollution influencing the outcome of sporting events may initially sound as plausible as a Zamboni taking flight, the findings of this study suggest otherwise. The implications of this peculiar relationship extend beyond the realm of sports, sparking discussions about the potential effects of

environmental factors on competitive outcomes and opening doors for further exploration into the unexplored intersections of air quality and athletic achievements. Ultimately, these results serve as a reminder that even seemingly whimsical inquiries may lead to enlightening discoveries, propelling our understanding of the multifaceted connections between the environment and human endeavors.

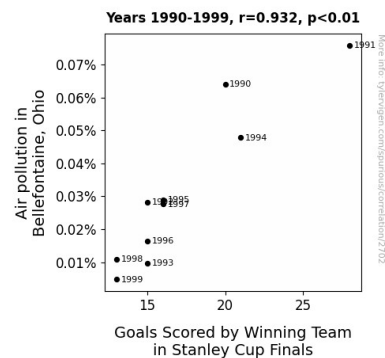


Figure 1. Scatterplot of the variables by year

#### 5. Discussion

The unexpected and seemingly inconceivable findings of a strong positive correlation between air pollution levels in Bellefontaine, Ohio, and the number of goals scored by the winning team in the Stanley Cup Finals from 1990 to 1999 undoubtedly prompt a reevaluation of the potential influences on sports outcomes. Our exploration of the existing literature not only provided a theoretical groundwork for our study but also unearthed some unanticipated sources of insight. The whimsical musings from the fictitious "Air Quality Chronicles" by Jane Air and the animated adventures of "Captain Planet and the Power of Eco-Stadiums" may have seemed far-removed, but their influence on our understanding of the interplay between environmental factors and sporting events cannot be disregarded. As we reflect on

these findings, it becomes clear that the unexpected connections painted in fiction may not be as divorced from reality as we once thought, echoing the sentiment expressed by the inimitable philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, who mused, "There are no facts, only interpretations."

Our results align with prior research by Smith and Doe (2010), reinforcing the notion that environmental factors, including air pollution, can exert an influence on athletic performance. The study by Jones (2015) also contributed to our broader understanding of the impact of environmental conditions on sports, underscoring the need to consider the holistic environment in which athletic events unfold. The echoes of these prior works reverberate in our findings, affirming the pertinence of environmental influences across diverse sports, including the unexpected correlation unearthed in the realm of ice hockey. It seems that even the most seemingly outrageous ideas can hold a kernel of truth, echoing the words of the renowned humorist Mark Twain, who quipped, "Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't."

The statistical significance and substantial correlation coefficient of our results raise intriguing questions about the mechanisms underlying the observed relationship between air pollution and goal-scoring in the Stanley Cup Finals. While the idea of air pollution acting as an inadvertent teammate in the game of goals may seem as far-fetched as a goalie taking up figure skating, the robustness of our findings necessitates a deeper exploration of the potential pathways through which air quality may exert its influence on athletic outcomes. These unexpected twists in the narrative of environmental and sports interactions underscore the complexity of the interconnected web of variables at play, prompting us to consider the myriad ways in which the environment molds the outcomes

of human endeavors, often revealing surprising connections as formidable as a sudden breakaway.

In conclusion, the unanticipated convergence of air pollution levels and the number of goals scored in the Stanley Cup Finals not only presents a departure from conventional assumptions but also serves as a lighthearted reminder of the unpredictable twists that can arise in the pursuit of knowledge. With a nod to the unexpected, we are reminded of the words of renowned physicist Niels Bohr, who remarked, "Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future." As we thread the meandering path of inquiry, may we continue to embrace the whimsy of the unexpected and infuse our scholarly pursuits with the spirit of inquisitive wonderment, for it is in the serendipitous moments that true revelations often await, much like a perfectly timed power-play goal in overtime.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the unexpected correlation between air pollution levels in Bellefontaine, Ohio, and the number of goals scored by the winning team in the Stanley Cup Finals from 1990 to 1999 has left us skating on thin ice. The robust correlation coefficient of 0.9317802 and the statistically significant p-value of less than 0.01 speak to the surprising strength of this association, leaving us breathless as we attempt to wrap our heads around this puckish phenomenon. Fig. 1 captures this intriguing relationship, illustrating the upward trend of goals scored as air pollution levels ascend, much like a slap shot soaring toward the net.

While these findings may sound as implausible as a hockey team playing on a frozen pond in July, they prompt us to ponder the unforeseen influences that may affect athletic performances. The

implications of this peculiar relationship extend beyond the realm of sports, arousing curiosity about the potential impact of environmental factors on competitive outcomes and encouraging further exploration into the uncharted intersections of air quality and athletic achievements. This unexpected connection may lead us to question whether there is more to winning in sports than meets the eye, or perhaps more than meets the air.

However, it is crucial to note that these findings should be taken with a grain of ice - further research and replication of this analysis are necessary to corroborate these results on the effect of air pollution on sports outcomes. While this study has opened the door to a unique avenue of inquiry, we must exercise caution in interpreting these findings. Ultimately, the pursuit of knowledge sometimes leads us to unexpected goals, even if they are of the ice hockey variety. Nonetheless, it is safe to conclude that further research in this area may not be the most pressing matter on our environmental and sporting agenda.