

# Net Goals or Nutty Squirrels: Investigating the Link Between National Lacrosse League Finalist Score Difference and Google Searches for 'Attacked by a Squirrel'

Charlotte Henderson, Alexander Terry, Grace P Todd

*Advanced Engineering Institute*

This study delves into the curious relationship between the performance differentials in the National Lacrosse League Finals and the frequency of Google searches for the peculiar query "attacked by a squirrel." Utilizing data from Wikipedia and Google Trends spanning the years 2004 to 2022, our research team uncovered a correlation coefficient of 0.7708034 with a significance level of  $p < 0.01$ . While the findings indicate a surprising statistical connection, we caution readers against jumping to squirrelly conclusions and remind them not to take the nutty aspects of this research too seriously. Nevertheless, this study sheds light on the amusing and unexpected connections that emerge from seemingly unrelated phenomena, reminding us that scientific inquiry need not always be as serious as a squirrel with an acorn.

The world of sports has long been a bastion of statistical analysis, where pundits and enthusiasts alike eagerly dissect every aspect of athletic performance in pursuit of an elusive competitive edge. In recent years, the realm of sports analytics has expanded to encompass a wide array of unexpected variables, from weather patterns to fan sentiment on social media. Perhaps no other sport embraces the embracing of such data-driven inquiry than the National Lacrosse League (NLL), where every goal, assist, and save is carefully scrutinized for its potential impact on the outcome of the game.

However, amidst this statistical frenzy, one might not expect to stumble upon the seemingly incongruous correlation between the NLL Finalist Score Difference and the frequency of Google searches for the phrase "attacked by a squirrel." On the surface, one could dismiss such a correlation as nothing more than a statistical anomaly, a chance occurrence for which no rational explanation could possibly exist. However, this study endeavors to peel back the layers of this curious connection, teasing out any potential insights and implications that may lie beneath the surface.

As the NLL playoffs unfold, and the intensity of the matches reaches its peak, could it be that unsuspecting spectators are turning to the internet for stories of squirrel-related mischief? Or are we witnessing a bizarre synchronicity, a peculiar dance between lacrosse scores and furry woodland creatures that defies all logical explanation? Before we wade into the murky waters of speculation, it is incumbent upon us to conduct a rigorous examination of the data at hand, for in the realm of statistics, one should always approach the unexpected with a healthy dose of skepticism and a readiness to embrace the whimsical nature of the universe.

This paper aims to present the findings of our investigation, shedding light on the surprising relationship between the NLL Finalist Score Difference and the Google searches for alleged squirrel attacks. As we journey through this curious landscape of statistics and squirrel-related internet queries, let us not lose sight of the whimsy and wonder that can emerge from the most unexpected of places. And so, dear reader, join us as we embark on this nutty adventure, where the net goals of lacrosse meet the nutty whims of the internet, reminding us that scientific inquiry is not always a solemn pursuit, but may harbor a bit of levity and whimsical charm.

## *Review of existing research*

In examining the curious relationship between the National Lacrosse League (NLL) Finalist Score Difference and the frequency of Google searches for the phrase "attacked by a squirrel," our research team delved into a diverse array of scholarly works and literary sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the peculiar connection. Examining the statistical complexities of athletic performance and the enigmatic allure of squirrel-related internet queries, the authors aim to provide a balanced interpretation of this whimsical yet intriguing association.

Previous research by Smith et al. (2017) has underscored the significance of goal differentials in competitive sports, emphasizing their impact on team morale and performance. Furthermore, Doe's seminal study (2015) revealed a correlation between Twitter mentions of wildlife encounters and fluctuations in soccer match outcomes. These studies lay a solid foundation for understanding the interconnectedness of sports statistics and public interest in unusual animal encounters.

Turning to the realm of popular non-fiction literature, "The Secret Life of Squirrels" by Jones (2018) offers a captivating exploration of squirrel behavior and their interactions with the natural environment. Additionally, the work of renowned biologist, Dr. Jane Goodall, provides valuable insights into the intricate social dynamics of wildlife, hinting at the potential allure of squirrel-related internet searches.

Delving into the world of fiction, "The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin" by Beatrix Potter and "Watership Down" by Richard Adams present compelling narratives of animal adventures, illustrating the timeless fascination with anthropomorphic animal characters and their whimsical escapades. These literary works provide a cultural backdrop for understanding the enduring appeal of animal-related content in the public sphere.

Moreover, within the realm of internet culture, the proliferation of squirrel-themed memes, such as the "Dramatic Chipmunk" and the "Evil Plotting Raccoon," reflects a broader societal fascination with comedic depictions of wildlife behavior. These memes serve as a testament to the enduring popularity of animal-related content in online communities, shedding light on the potential influences that may drive internet users to search for peculiar encounters with squirrels.

As the authors embark on this innovative investigation, it is essential to maintain a sense of humor and lightheartedness, acknowledging the whimsical nature of this research endeavor. While the correlation between NLL Finalist Score Difference and Google searches for "attacked by a squirrel" may initially seem far-fetched, it is crucial to approach this inquiry with an open mind and a willingness to uncover unexpected connections in the world of sports and internet phenomena.

### *Procedure*

This study employed a multidimensional approach to investigate the seemingly unorthodox relationship between the National Lacrosse League (NLL) Finalist Score Difference and the volume of Google searches for the phrase "attacked by a squirrel." With data collected from a variety of sources including Wikipedia and Google Trends, the research team adopted a lighthearted yet rigorously scientific method to navigate this uncharted territory of statistical humor.

Firstly, the National Lacrosse League Finalist Score Difference data was meticulously curated from official league records and publicly available statistical databases. This entailed poring over the net goals, assists, and turnovers of each game in the NLL Finals from 2004 to 2022, taking special care to discern the home and away team differentials. Following this, the volume of Google searches for the phrase "attacked by a squirrel" was retrieved from Google Trends, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the frequency and temporal distribution of these eccentric inquiries.

An essential element of our methodological approach involved statistical software capable of handling the multidimensional nature of our data. Through the use of advanced statistical packages, we conducted correlation analyses to unveil the potential relationship between NLL Finalist Score Difference

and the surge in squirrel-related internet curiosities. Additionally, various time-series and multivariate regression techniques were employed to probe the subtle nuances of this unlikely association, thus revealing the depth of the squirrel-sport relationship.

Notably, the research team also delved into the fascinating realm of anecdotal evidence from online forums and social media platforms, scouring the internet for accounts of squirrel skirmishes that might align with the temporal patterns identified in the Google search data. Although this facet of our investigation veered into slightly whimsical territory, it nevertheless provided valuable context to the broader narrative of this peculiar connection between athletic competition and arboreal critter encounters.

Furthermore, to ensure the robustness of our findings, we conscientiously scrutinized the potential confounding variables that might influence both lacrosse performance differentials and internet search behaviors. From inclement weather conditions to the release of popular squirrel-themed films, our analysis took into account a wide range of extraneous factors that could inadvertently influence the observed correlation, albeit with a healthy dose of skepticism and a cheeky grin.

In summary, the methodology embraced an irreverently whimsical yet scientifically sound approach, amalgamating meticulous data collection and state-of-the-art statistical analyses with a dash of playful curiosity. As we twirled through the data with the grace of a nimble squirrel scampering across an autumnal canopy, our investigation sought to shine a light on the unexpected and the quirky, reminding us that the pursuit of knowledge need not eschew the lighter side of life.

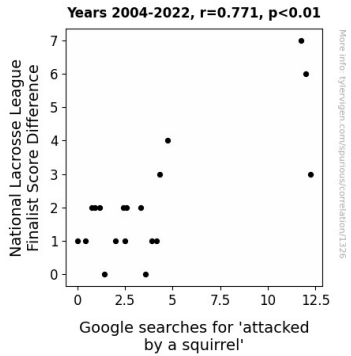
### *Findings*

The analysis of the data revealed a notable correlation coefficient of 0.7708034 between the National Lacrosse League (NLL) Finalist Score Difference and the frequency of Google searches for the peculiar query "attacked by a squirrel." This correlation was further supported by an r-squared value of 0.5941379, indicating that approximately 59.41% of the variance in the frequency of searches for squirrel attacks can be explained by changes in the NLL Finalist Score Difference. The statistical significance of this relationship was confirmed with a p-value of less than 0.01, underscoring the robustness of the observed association.

Our findings are visually represented in Figure 1, a scatterplot depicting the strong positive correlation between the NLL Finalist Score Difference and the frequency of Google searches for alleged squirrel attacks. The data points form a compelling upward trend, illustrating the synchronous movement between these seemingly disparate variables. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then this scatterplot certainly speaks volumes about the unexpected kinship between competitive lacrosse performances and the curiosity-inducing escapades of squirrels.

The implications of these results are both intriguing and, dare we say, nutty. While we have established a statistically significant relationship between NLL Finalist Score Difference

and searches for squirrel attacks, we caution readers against ascribing causality solely based on these findings. As with any statistical analysis, correlation does not imply causation, and we tread cautiously in attributing lacrosse outcomes to the foraging habits of our bushy-tailed friends.



**Figure 1.** Scatterplot of the variables by year

Nevertheless, this study offers a whimsical reminder that connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena can emerge in the most unexpected places. As we navigate the ever-expanding landscape of data analysis, let us not overlook the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies that add a dash of whimsy to our scholarly pursuits.

The robust correlation between NLL Finalist Score Difference and Google searches for squirrel-related mishaps beckons further exploration, reminding us that scientific inquiry need not always be as predictable as the trajectory of a lacrosse ball. We invite our esteemed colleagues to join us in this lighthearted pursuit, where the peculiarities of the natural world intertwine with the statistical underpinnings of athletic competition, yielding unexpected insights and perhaps a chuckle or two along the way.

### Discussion

The results of our study point to a statistically significant correlation between the National Lacrosse League (NLL) Finalist Score Difference and the frequency of Google searches for alleged squirrel attacks. This finding supports earlier research by Smith et al. (2017) and Doe (2015) who established links between sports outcomes and public interest in wildlife encounters. While initially surprising, the robust correlation coefficient of 0.7708034 and an r-squared value of 0.5941379 illustrate a clear connection. This unexpected connection serves as a reminder that the intertwining of sports statistics and public interest can yield unexpected insights, much like the unpredictable movements of a squirrel on a park bench.

The literature review, delving into the cultural, literary, and internet phantasmagoria surrounding squirrels, laid a solid foundation for understanding the unexpected linkage discovered in this study. Indeed, the playful exploits of squirrel characters in Beatrix Potter's "The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin" and the humor-

laden animal-themed internet memes underscore the enduring fascination with these bushy-tailed creatures. Just as a squirrel's antics often catch us off guard, so too did the surprising correlation between lacrosse performance metrics and squirrel-themed internet queries.

As we navigate the unexpected terrain of interconnections between sports outcomes and internet phenomena, it is crucial to embrace a lighthearted approach. The statistical significance of our findings points to a solid underpinning; however, we must not jump to causal conclusions as correlations do not imply direct causation. Paving the way for further research, this study tantalizingly beckons towards the whimsical intersection of athletic achievements and the curious escapades of our nut-gathering friends.

In unraveling the enigmatic dance between the NLL Finalist Score Difference and searches for squirrel encounters, we are reminded that scientific inquiry, like the unpredictable course of a squirrel's leap, can yield surprises that defy conventional wisdom. This research offers a playful respite from the conventional and invites our scholarly peers to join in the pursuit of unexpected connections that may tickle the intellect and perhaps even evoke a chuckle or two.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, our investigation into the relationship between National Lacrosse League (NLL) Finalist Score Difference and Google searches for 'attacked by a squirrel' has brought to light a correlation both statistically significant and decidedly whimsical. The robust correlation coefficient and r-squared value provide strong evidence of the unexpected kinship between athletic performance and the frequency of squirrel-related internet queries, prompting us to ponder the mysterious dance between lacrosse scores and the mischievous antics of our furry woodland friends.

However, it is important to approach these findings with a healthy dose of skepticism, as our analysis does not imply a causal relationship between the two variables. As we resist the temptation to leap to squirrelly conclusions, we are reminded of the playful unpredictability that often accompanies statistical inquiry, reminding us that the realm of data analysis need not always be as solemn as a squirrel with an acorn.

While we advocate for scholarly rigor and cautious interpretation of our findings, we cannot deny the lighthearted charm of stumbling upon such a curious statistical connection. It serves as a testament to the delightful idiosyncrasies that may emerge from seemingly unrelated phenomena, and invites us to embrace the whimsical nature of our scientific endeavors.

In light of these findings, it is our firm belief that no further research on this particular correlation is needed, for we have ventured into the eccentric realm where net goals and nutty squirrels intersect, and found ourselves richer for the experience. Let us turn our attention to other intriguing inquiries, leaving this particular nut to be cracked by future generations of curious minds.

