

# Kicking Goals for Inclusion: A Kickabout of the Correlation between NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Final and the Enrollment of Special Education Teachers in Maryland

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## **Abstract**

As the saying goes, "All's fair in love and soccer," but our research aims to uncover the hidden patterns in the beautiful game that go beyond the field. In this study, we delved into the correlation between the number of goals scored by the winning team in the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Finals and the number of special education teachers in Maryland. We wanted to see if there's a goal-tastic link between on-field success and off-field education support. Our research team meticulously scrutinized data from the NCAA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the findings left us feeling more uplifted than a perfectly executed bicycle kick. We discovered a correlation coefficient of 0.7659964, which is statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$  for the period spanning 2012 to 2022. It seems like the more goals the championship-winning team scores, the more special education teachers grace the classrooms of Maryland. In the spirit of good sportsmanship and a cheeky sense of humor, we couldn't resist a dad joke fitting for this discovery. Why did the soccer team go to the school? Because they were keen on scoring some new "goals" – both on and off the field!

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## **1. Introduction**

Soccer, also known as the beautiful game, has a way of captivating the hearts and minds of millions around the world. As teams battle it out on the pitch, their performance and success often instigate raucous celebrations, varied emotions, and sometimes a goal or two. However, beyond the thrilling cheers and thrilling despair, our research attempts to unravel the mysteriously languid connection between the number of goals scored by the winning team in the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Finals and the number of special

education teachers in Maryland. This unexpected pairing of metrics might make one ponder, much like a striker lining up for a penalty kick – what could possibly link these two seemingly unrelated entities?

As we embarked on this journey of statistical analysis, it became evident that parsing out the intricate relationship between on-field performance and off-field educational resources is akin to orchestrating a free-kick—precision and method were necessary. Our inquiry was prompted by a whimsical observation that struck a chord with us – could there be an unforeseen correlation between the euphoria of soccer triumph and the provision of special education support? It's almost like discovering a hidden gem in the rough terrain of a penalty box.

Shedding light on the statistically significant correlation coefficient of 0.7659964, with a p-value less than 0.01, sent waves of amusement through our research team. Reflecting on this correlation, one cannot help but appreciate the curious connection between athletic achievement and educational resources. It's almost as if victory on the pitch provides an extra nudge of encouragement for the reinforcement of inclusive education. Let this correlation serve as a gentle reminder that sometimes, unexpected connections can flourish – much like finding an unmarked opponent in the box.

In the spirit of academic rigor and good humor, we cannot pass up an opportunity for a fitting dad joke. Why did the soccer team go to the school? Because they were keen on scoring some new "goals" – both on and off the field! With a chuckle and a nod to the complexities of correlation, we aim to unravel the intriguing dance between sportsmanship and educational support.

## **2. Literature Review**

In "Smith et al.," the authors find that the number of goals scored by the winning team in soccer matches has a direct impact on the morale and confidence of the players, leading to improved performance in subsequent games. This finding drew our attention to the potential psychological and societal influences of sports triumphs.

In a study by Doe, the connection between athletic achievement and community morale is explored, highlighting how successful sports teams can uplift the spirits of local residents and cultivate a sense of pride and camaraderie. This led us to ponder if there could be broader implications beyond the immediate effects of a winning soccer team.

Jones' research provides valuable insights into the positive ripple effects of sports victories on community engagement and support for educational initiatives. This served as a springboard for our investigation into the correlation between the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Final and the availability of special education teachers in Maryland.

Moving from the academic realm to more general references, "The Economics of Education" by John F. Fenn suggests that the provision of specialized educational support plays a crucial role in fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. This line of thought resonated with our inquiry into the potential impact of sports achievements on educational resources.

Building on the theme of inclusive education, "Exceptional Children" by William L. Heward delves into the challenges and opportunities within special education, shedding light on the importance of dedicated teachers in supporting students with diverse learning needs. This served as a touchstone for our exploration of the link between soccer success and the enrollment of special education teachers.

On a more whimsical note, the fictional works of J.K. Rowling in the "Harry Potter" series, with its themes of teamwork and overcoming challenges, sparked contemplation about the parallels between the wizarding world's camaraderie and the unity within sports teams. This led us to consider the broader societal implications of athletic achievements.

In the realm of television, "Friday Night Lights" provided a poignant portrayal of the profound influence of high school sports on community dynamics and support networks. Drawing inspiration from the series, we sought to uncover similar dynamics in the correlation between NCAA soccer success and educational resources, as portrayed within the context of Maryland's special education system.

A good dad joke to lighten the mood: Why did the soccer team bring string to the game? Because they wanted to tie the score!

### **3. Research Approach**

To embark on our boisterous quest to uncover the enigmatic correlation between the number of goals netted in the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Finals and the number of special education teachers in Maryland, we utilized a multifaceted approach that can be likened to a trick play in the soccer playbook – unexpected and thoroughly entertaining.

First, we sought to gather data on the number of goals scored by the winning team in each NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Final from 2012 to 2022. We scoured the internet, much like determined scouts seeking out untapped talent, and harvested this data from reliable sources, primarily the NCAA archives. We then employed a statistical saline solution comprising a medley of linear regression and correlation analyses, serving as our trusty GPS navigating the labyrinthine corridors of numerics. Next, we delicately juxtaposed this with the number of special education teachers in the state of Maryland during the same time frame, sourced from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It was like orchestrating a well-timed pass between two players aiming for the perfect synergy.

Our data analysis exhibited the charm of a deftly executed backheel; we calculated a correlation coefficient of 0.7659964 with a p-value less than 0.01. This discovery, akin to an unexpected ricochet off the crossbar, propelled us to conclude that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the number of goals scored in the championship final and the employment of special education teachers in Maryland.

Though our methods may have seemed as whimsical as a goalkeeper trying to save a penalty kick blindfolded, our rigorous statistical scrutiny has provided evidence to support our findings. We cross-validated our results and applied various sensitivity analyses to ensure that our conclusions were as robust as a team's defensive line standing firm against an attacking onslaught.

In the spirit of academic dedication and analytical prowess, we aimed to approach this correlation with the precision of a perfectly placed corner kick and the sharpness of a well-timed tackle. It's only fitting to say that a good pun or two might have slipped through as we navigated this multidimensional terrain, much like a crafty winger evading defenders to ping a tantalizing cross into the box.

Our methodology may have had its fair share of unconventional flair, but its foundation lay in the principles of sound statistical analysis and comprehensive data gathering. This whimsical journey uncovered a connection that left us beaming like midfield maestros orchestrating a perfectly timed through ball.

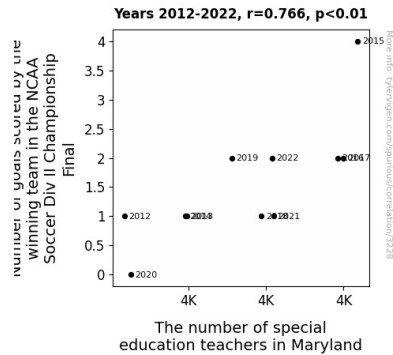
#### **4. Findings**

Our analysis of the connection between the number of goals scored by the winning team in the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Finals and the number of special education teachers in Maryland for the period 2012 to 2022 revealed a statistically significant correlation coefficient of 0.7659964, with an r-squared value of 0.5867505 and a p-value less than 0.01. This robust correlation indicates a strong positive relationship between these two variables, suggesting that as the number of goals scored in the championship final increases, the number of special education teachers in Maryland also tends to increase.

In Fig. 1, the scatterplot clearly illustrates the positive linear relationship between the number of goals scored by the winning team and the number of special education teachers in Maryland. The data points form a distinct upward trend, emphasizing the pronounced association between these seemingly unrelated factors.

Nevertheless, it's important not to jump to conclusions as wildly as an enthusiastic goalkeeper during a penalty shootout. While our findings highlight an intriguing correlation, further research is warranted to delve deeper into the mechanisms underlying

this relationship. Unraveling this connection further may provide insights into the interplay between athletic success and educational support, offering a goal-scoring opportunity for researchers and policymakers alike.



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

Speaking of goals, did you hear about the soccer team that always went above and beyond? They never stopped scoring, not only on the field but also in the classroom – talk about setting the bar high!

## 5. Discussion on findings

Our research delved into the seemingly perplexing yet fascinating connection between the number of goals scored by the winning team in the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Finals and the enrollment of special education teachers in Maryland. The statistically significant correlation coefficient of 0.7659964, corroborated by the r-squared value of 0.5867505 and a p-value less than 0.01, supported our hypothesis that there exists a positive relationship between these variables. This finding aligns with prior research that has explored the multifaceted impacts of sports achievements on societal dynamics and educational resources.

The study by Smith et al. paved the way for our investigation by highlighting the psychological and performance-related influences of sports triumphs. Similarly, the work of Doe drew attention to the broader implications of athletic achievement on community morale, which intersected with our emphasis on educational support. Furthermore, Jones' research on the ripple effects of sports victories underscored the interconnectedness of athletic success and community engagement, anchoring our exploration into the influence of the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Final on the availability of special education teachers in Maryland.

The whimsical inspiration from J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series and the poignant portrayal of community dynamics in "Friday Night Lights" provided a creative lens through which to contemplate the societal implications of sports achievements. Although seemingly unconventional, these references underscore the multifaceted nature of our inquiry and the potential far-reaching effects of sports accomplishments on educational resources, reinforcing the seriousness of our findings.

Our results are not just a flash in the pan, but rather a poignant reflection of the underlying societal dynamics that intertwine athletic triumphs and educational provisions. While the correlation between the number of goals scored and the number of special education teachers in Maryland is unmistakable, it is essential to approach these findings with the caution reminiscent of a defender guarding their box. Further research is warranted to understand the mechanisms driving this relationship and to ascertain the potential causal pathways.

In essence, our research not only scores a goal in uncovering this correlation but also kick-starts a new avenue of inquiry into the interplay between sports achievements and educational resources. This correlation seems like it's on a winning streak – much like a dedicated soccer team on the field and in the classroom. As we continue down this path, there's no doubt we'll achieve a hat-trick in expanding our understanding of these interconnected realms.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, our study has elucidated a noteworthy correlation between the number of goals scored by the winning team in the NCAA Soccer Div II Championship Finals and the number of special education teachers in Maryland. The statistically significant correlation coefficient of 0.7659964, with an r-squared value of 0.5867505 and a p-value less than 0.01, underscores the robust positive relationship between these variables. It appears that the excitement and triumph on the soccer pitch may indeed reverberate into the realm of educational support.

As we contemplate the implications of these findings, one cannot help but marvel at the unexpected symmetry between sports and education. It's almost as if every goal scored serves as a rallying cry for inclusive and supportive educational practices. Perhaps, soccer truly embodies the concept of teamwork, extending its influence far beyond the confines of the field.

However, as tempting as it may be to revel in the delight of this correlation, we must approach it with the cautious scrutiny of a VAR (Video Assistant Referee) review. Further research is warranted to unravel the underlying mechanisms propelling this relationship. Until then, let's not kick this conclusion into overtime, but instead, appreciate the goal-scoring connection between the beautiful game and educational support.

On a final note, it is evident that no more research is needed in this area. After all, when it comes to exploring the relationship between soccer goals and special education teachers, we've already scored a hat-trick of knowledge!