Drunks, Lampposts and Hockey Analytics

Michael Schuckers, PhD

And

Steve Argeris

Drunks and Lampposts

To paraphrase:

statistics is like a lamppost to a drunk – more for support than illumination

Drunks and Lampposts

- Actual quote is an insult attributed to the Scottish Poet Andrew Lang (or A. E. Housman):

"He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp posts - for support rather than for illumination."

2008 NHL Draft

Actual Draft:

22nd selection EDM

25th selection CGY

Jordan Eberle

Greg Nemisz

Central Scouting:

Jordan Eberle

Greg Nemisz

33rd Best NA Skater

22nd Best NA Skater
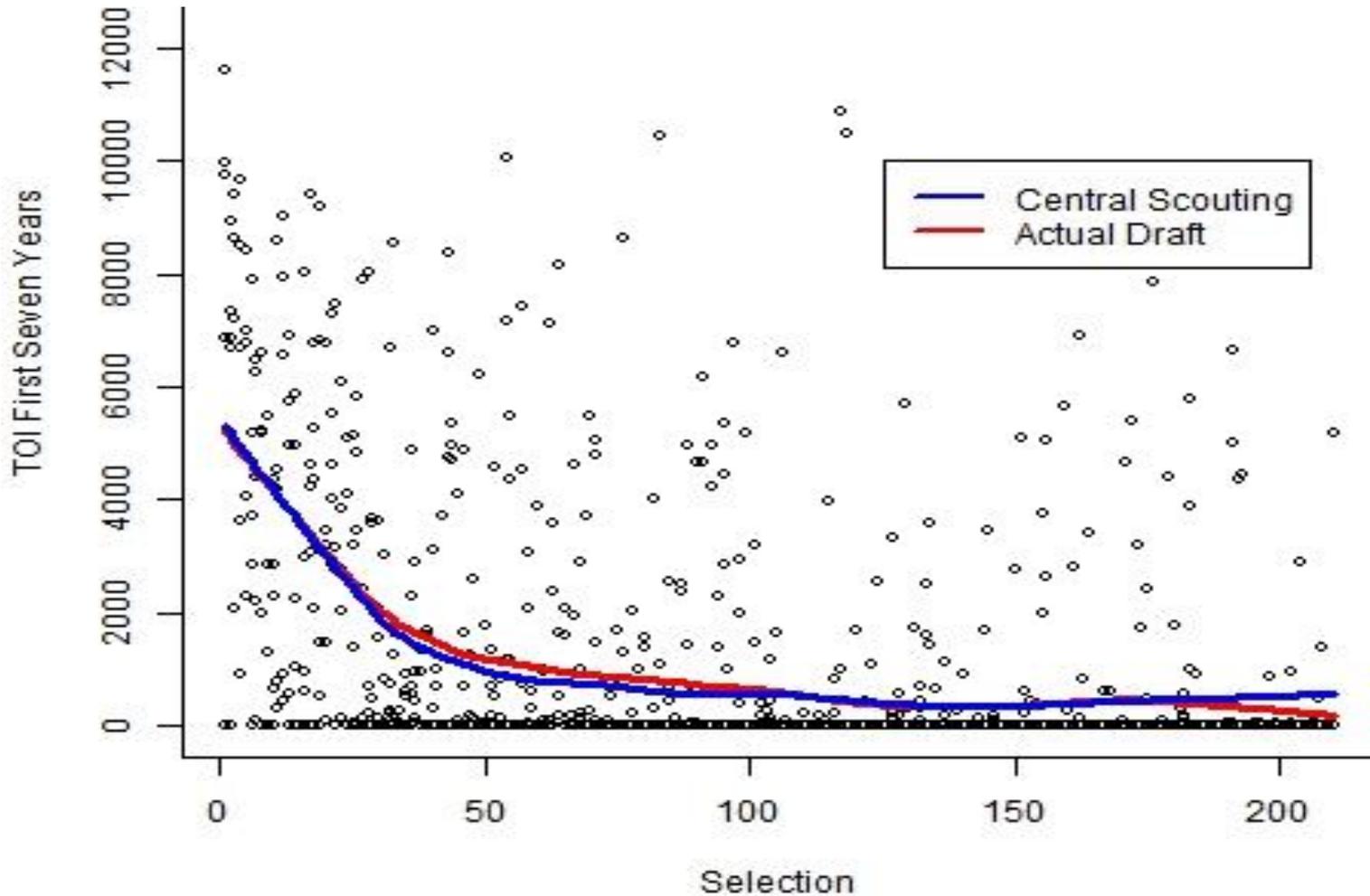
Central Scouting Service vs Teams

Two different rankings: CSS and actual draft

Think of CSS at 'the market' and do teams beat the market? And if so by how much?

Look at 1998 to 2002 drafts

- Use Iain Fyffe's CESCIN combines CSS to single rating

- Responses : TOI (Slides), GP (Paper), and GVT (Paper)

- Smoothing Lines: LOESS Regression

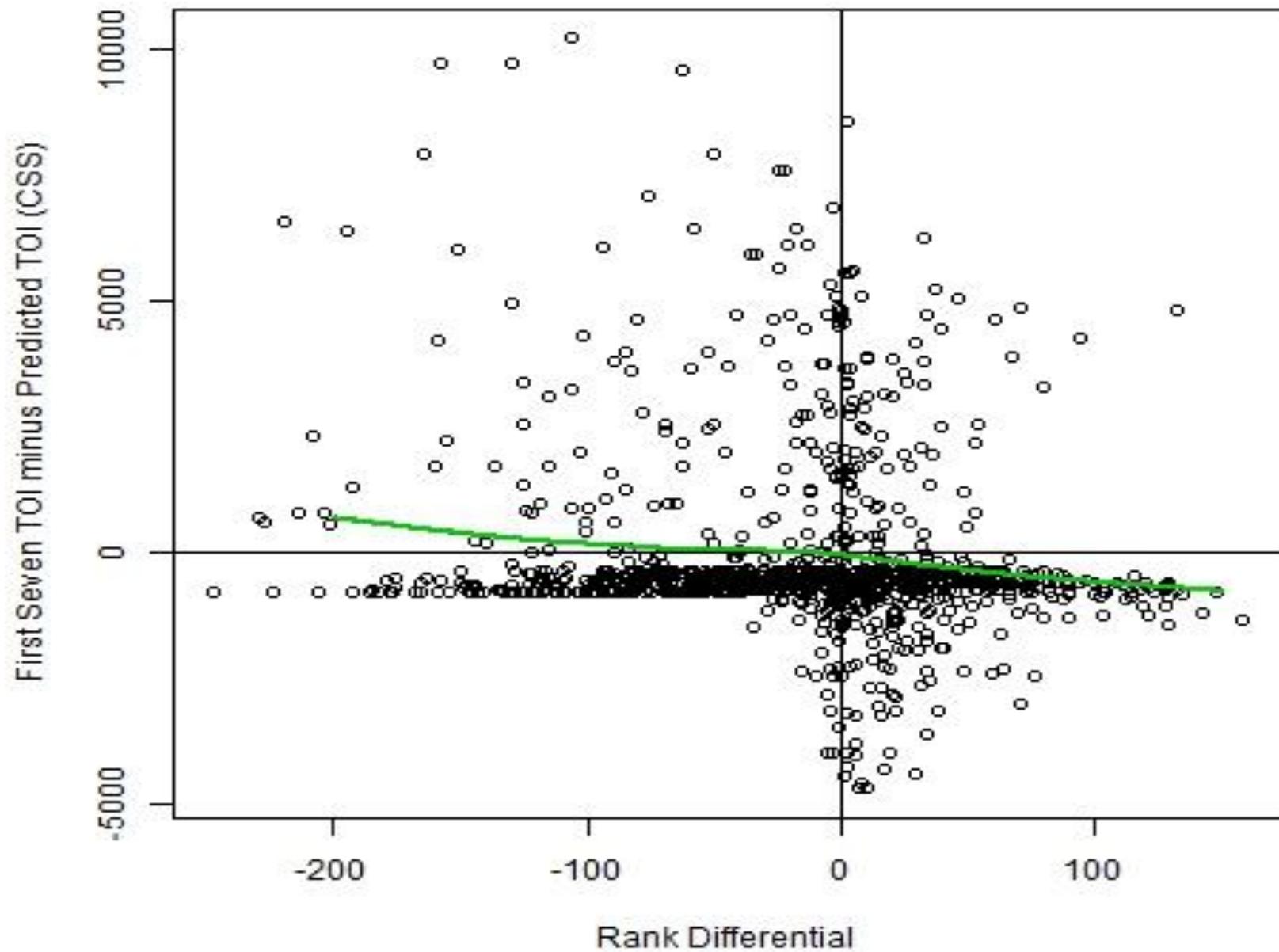# Career TOI 1ˢᵗ Seven Years

Teams do better

But what about Eberle and Nemisz, not comparable on our graphs

Solution:

Rank Diff: Actual Selection – CSS Rank

Metric Diff: Actual TOI – Predict CSS TOI

What to spend on Scouting?

Average yearly gain for TOI $1.7MM

for GP ($2.5MM) and GVT ($5.3MM)

Roughly same if we repeat by position

YEAH SCOUTS!

Corr team surplus (1998-2000) vs (2001-2002)

r=0.2 (p>0.10)

Illuminations

- Scouting Value ~$2MM/year

- Scouts value comes from 2nd and 3rd rounds

- Central Scouting better in last round

- Some teams draft better than others…..probably not

- New Draft Value Pick Chart (1st 7 years TOI)

THANK YOU

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