



Colonel Musto
with the w

IS IT POSSIBLE?
IS IT PLAUSIBLE?
BECOME A
PROBABILITY
DETECTIVE.

Bob Lochel

Hatboro-Horsham High School

Mathcoachblog.com

Bob Lochel, @bobloch



Colonel Musto
with the w

WHO IS BOB?

26-year classroom veteran

AP Statistics Teacher

AP Statistics Reader and Table Leader


Algebra 1 and Prob/Stat Guy

Desmos Guy

Mathcoachblog guy

Suffering Philadelphia sports fan (not involved with the whole Santa v. Snowballs thing...)

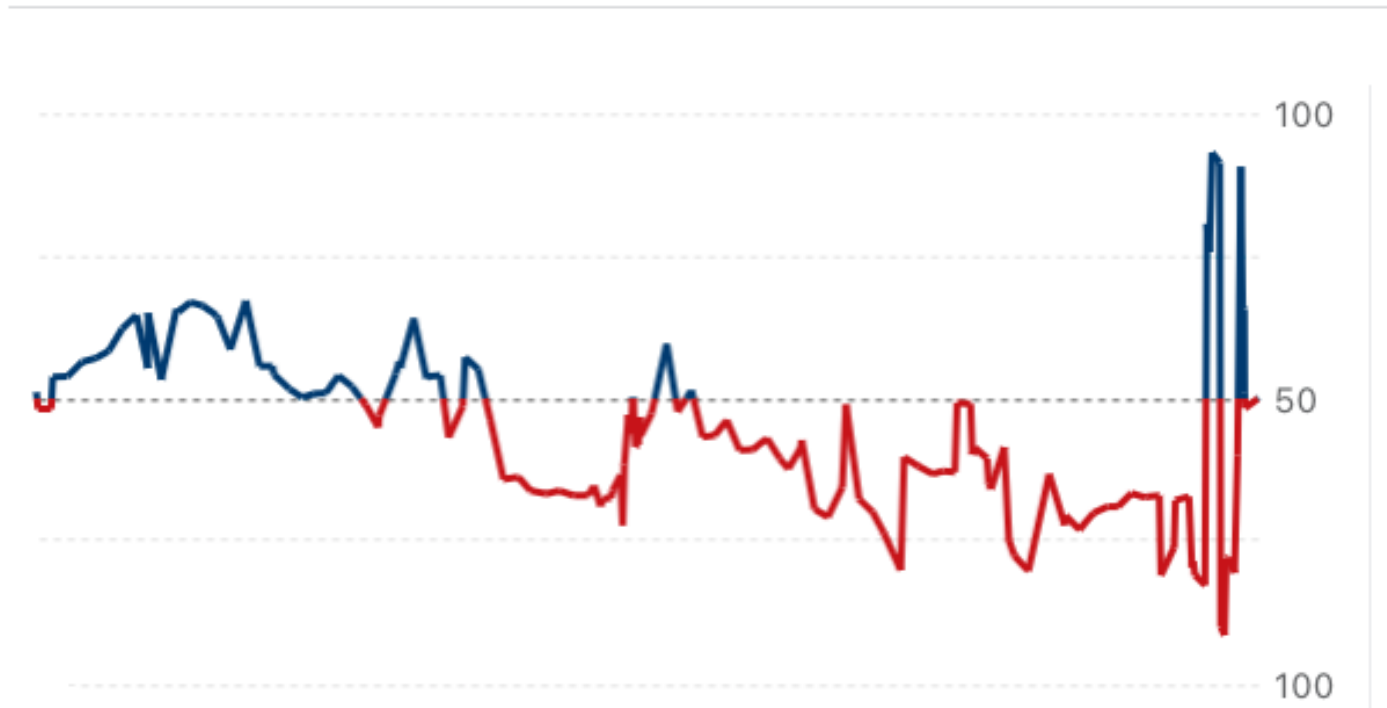
Bob Lochel, @bobloch



“All my elevens and sevens been
comin’ up sixes and nines.”
- Bruce Springsteen (Roll of the Dice)

What Do You Notice? What Do You Wonder?

Win Probability



The Bills and Chiefs gave us the greatest win probability chart in sports history



Charles Curtis

January 24, 2022 9:38 am ET



Listen to this article



I have seen many a win probability chart in my day.

And I have written a lot about them — from what we saw from the Falcons blowing a lead to the Cowboys to the Warriors blowing a 31-point lead to the 49ers' Super Bowl collapse against the Chiefs.

I can safely say that the one produced by an all-time unbelievable playoff game between the Kansas City Chiefs and Buffalo Bills is the all-time greatest chart ever. Even better than the one we saw from the Dolphins' miracle last-second win over the Patriots.

It resembles our collective heart rates skyrocketing as we watched the final two minutes and overtime. And it is glorious:



SportsCenter

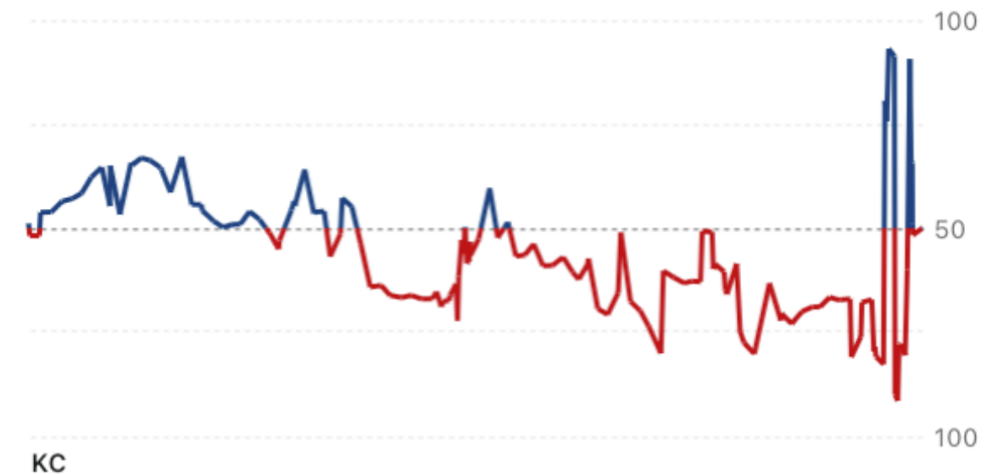
@SportsCenter · Follow



Unreal.

Win Probability

BUF



9:51 PM · Jan 23, 2022



32.9K



Reply



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THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS TALK

What is statistics about?

- Numbers
- Graphs
- Data
- Computing things
- Mean and median



STORYTELLING!

Holy Craps! How a Gambling Grandma Broke the Record

By Claire Suddath | Friday, May 29, 2009

It sounds like a homework problem out of a high school math book: What is the probability of rolling a pair of dice [REDACTED] times continuously at a craps table, without throwing a seven?

The answer is roughly [REDACTED] and on May 23, Patricia Demauro, a New Jersey grandmother, beat those odds at Atlantic City's Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa. Demauro's [REDACTED] roll lucky streak, which lasted [REDACTED] minutes, broke the world records for the longest craps roll and the most successive dice rolls without "sevening out." According to Stanford University statistics professor Thomas Cover, the chances of that happening are smaller than getting struck by lightning (one in a million), being hit by an errant ball at a baseball game (one in 1.5 million) or winning the lottery (one in 100 million, depending on the game). (Read "When Gambling Becomes Obsessive.")



Borgata

Patricia Demauro



TIME

Holy Craps! How a Gambling Grandma Broke the Record

By Claire Suddath | Friday, May 29, 2009

BASIC CRAPS RULES

Roll 7 or 11 – win and roll again 😊



Roll 2, 3 or 12 – lose 😞

Roll 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 – this number is your “point”. Keep rolling until you make your point 😊, then start over, or until you roll a 7 (“crapping out”) 😞

SOME CRAPPY EXAMPLES

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
|  | winner |
|  | point |
|  | |
|  | |
|  | boo! |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
|  | point |
|  | |
|  | woo hoo! |
|  | woo hoo! |
|  | woo hoo! |
|  | boo! |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
|  | point |
|  | boo! |

Holy Craps! How a Gambling Grandma Broke the Record

By Claire Suddath | Friday, May 29, 2009

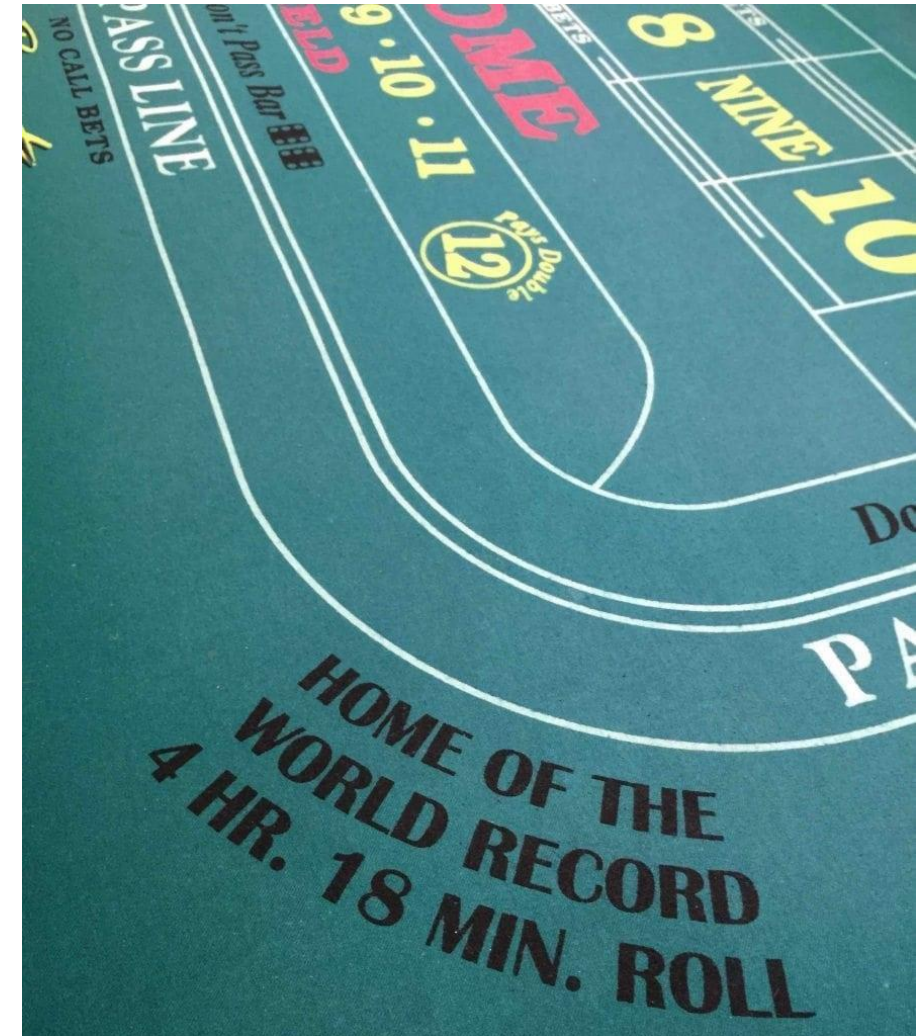
It sounds like a homework problem out of a high school math book: What is the probability of rolling a pair of dice 154 times continuously at a craps table, without throwing a seven?

The answer is roughly 1 in 1.56 trillion, and on May 23, Patricia Demauro, a New Jersey grandmother, beat those odds at Atlantic City's Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa. Demauro's 154-roll lucky streak, which lasted four hours and 18 minutes, broke the world records for the longest craps roll and the most successive dice rolls without "sevening out." According to Stanford University statistics professor Thomas Cover, the chances of that happening are smaller than getting struck by lightning (one in a million), being hit by an errant ball at a baseball game (one in 1.5 million) or winning the lottery (one in 100 million, depending on the game). (Read "When Gambling Becomes Obsessive.")



Patricia Demauro

Borgata





PROBABILITY EVENTS AS MYSTERY STORIES

- What's the claim? Is it possible? Is it plausible?
- What's the evidence?
- What are the clues?
- Is the mathematics correct?
- What are plausible alternate explanations?
- Where was Colonel Mustard? And just where did I leave my wrench?

An aerial photograph of a large baseball stadium, likely Yankee Stadium, during a game. The field is visible with its characteristic green grass and brown dirt base paths. The stands are filled with spectators. In the background, the New York City skyline is visible, including several tall buildings and the stadium's iconic three towers. The text "THE CASE OF THE FOUL BALL HOARDER" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

THE CASE OF THE FOUL BALL HOARDER



Cleveland Indians ✓
@Indians

Follow



Found him: Tribe Season Ticket Holder Greg Niel has caught four foul balls today. Nice work Greg!



Darren Rovell ✓
@darrenrovell

Follow



Odds of catching 4 foul balls in the game today, as an Indians fan did, are roughly 1 in



Shout out to Steve Wyborney...the master of "Splat Math"

Bob Lochel, @bobloch



Darren Rovell ✓

@darrenrovell

Follow



Odds of catching 4 foul balls in the game today, as an Indians fan did, are roughly 1 in 1 trillion according to

IS "1 IN A TRILLION" REASONABLE?

Major League Historical Totals (1871-present)

There is dispute over whether to include the National Association as a Major League

Years: 149
Games: 219,514
Runs: 1,991,970
At Bats: 15,014,556
Hits: 3,925,424
Home Runs: 304,676
Doubles: 668,062
Triples: 135,054
Stolen Bases: 308,756

Innings Pitched: 3,916,006
Strikeouts: 2,196,228
Walks: 1,385,136
Hit Batsmen: 110,359
Saves: 70,852
Errors: 535,358
Double Plays: 388,839
Players: 10,581
Managers: 1,000

Data is summed based on data available and may be missing some stats for some years

$$\frac{1\,000\,000\,000\,000}{219\,000}$$

$$= 4\,566\,210.04566$$

Source: www.baseball-reference.com



Darren Rovell ✓

@darrenrovell

Follow

Odds of catching 4 foul balls in the game today, as an Indians fan did, are roughly 1 in 1 trillion according to

$$\frac{35}{15432} = 0.002268014515$$

$$\boxed{0.00226801...}^4 = 2.64596027 \times 10^{-11}$$

ans

| | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 3 | 1.7772E-09 | 2.373E-10 | 1 in 562.67 Million | 1 in 4.21 Billion |
| 4 | 9.2138E-13 | 6.286E-14 | 1 in 1.09 Trillion | 1 in 15.91 Trillion |
| 5 | 3.702E-16 | 1.29E-17 | 1 in 2.7 Quadrillion | 1 in 77.5 Quadrillion |

**Uses binomial distribution

@hasmith33
Harrison Smith

Let's check that math!



WHAT ASSUMPTIONS WERE MADE? ARE THEY APPROPRIATE?

$$\frac{35}{15432} = 0.002268014515$$

- Foul balls are equally likely for all in attendance.

$$\frac{35}{15432} = 0.002268014515$$

$$\boxed{0.00226801...}^4 = 2.64596027 \times 10^{-11}$$

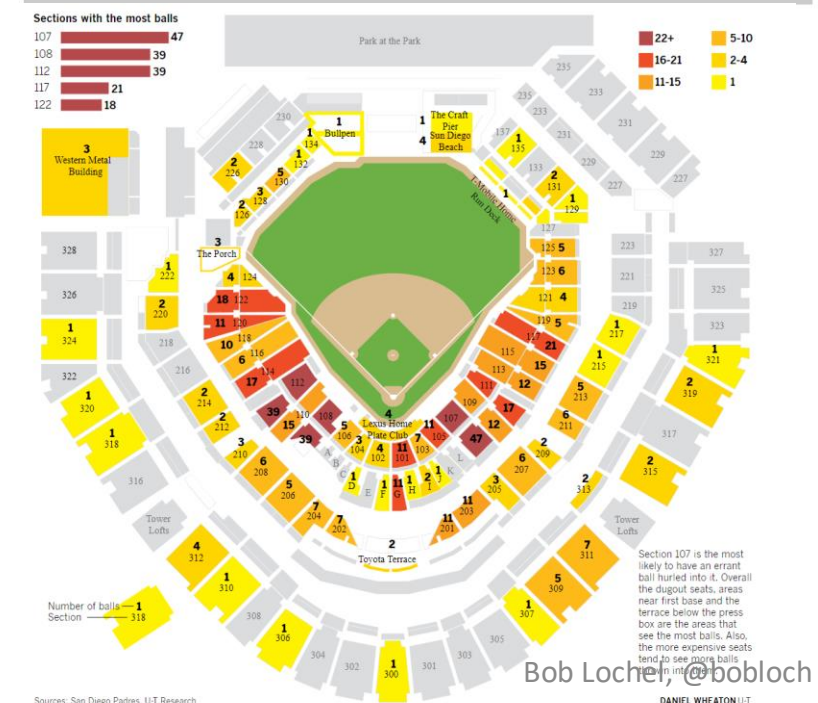
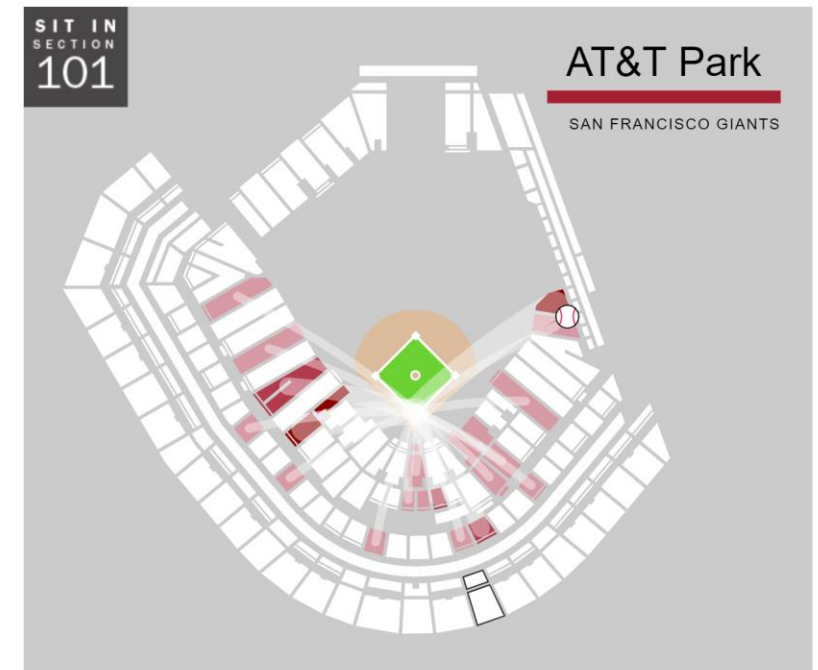
ans

- Foul balls are independent events.

Van Niel's stroke of luck is even more incredible when one takes into consideration the fact that he wasn't sitting in his usual seat. Van Niel took advantage of Progressive Field's season-ticket exchange, which landed him, his brother and his two nephews in Section 160 down the third-base line, according to Lom.
 -bleacherreport.com



Source:
<https://time.com/foul-ball/>



MEANWHILE....LATER THAT SEASON....

A fan at the Los Angeles Angels at Minnesota Twins game took catching a foul ball to an entirely new level by mastering the art and hauling in a whopping four balls during the night.

Tyler Mason of FOX Sports North gave the details:



Tyler Mason
@tylermason21



You've got to be kidding me. The same guy caught his FOURTH foul ball of the night. Unreal.

♡ 9:44 PM - Sep 9, 2013



👤 See Ty

That's the word from [Fox Sports North](#), which notes, "He barely had to move in most cases, too, as the foul balls were hit right to him." Lucky duck.

An aerial photograph of Fenway Park during a baseball game. The stadium is filled with spectators, and the green field with its distinctive mowed stripes is clearly visible. In the background, the Boston city skyline is visible under a clear blue sky. The text "GUILTY OF FOUL PROBABILITY" is overlaid in yellow on a grey rectangular background, and "SHENNANIGANS" is overlaid in yellow on another grey rectangular background below it.

GUILTY OF FOUL PROBABILITY SHENNANIGANS

THE CASE OF THE FOUL BALL
HOARDER

POWERBALL
POWERPLAY

THE CASE OF TOO MANY POWERBALL WINNERS



JUST THE FACTS...

- In Powerball, 5 white numbers from 1-69 are drawn, and one red number from 1-26 is drawn.
- To win the jackpot, a player must match all 5 white numbers and the red number. If there are multiple jackpot winners, the money is split amongst winners.
- Players who select all the white balls correctly, but not the red ball, earn “second prize”, typically \$100,000.

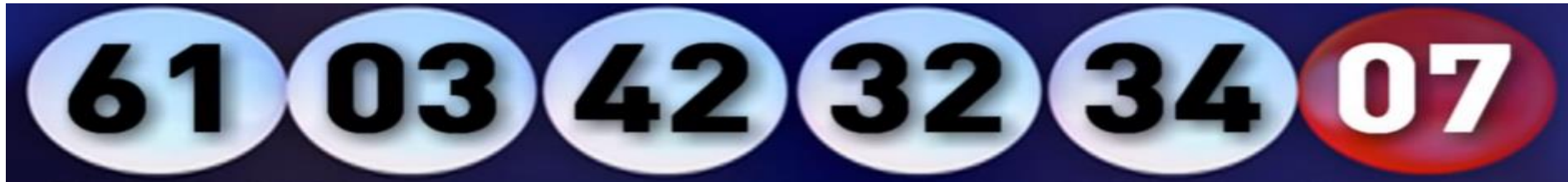
JUST THE FACTS...

- In a typical Powerball game, there are about 4-5 second-prize winners.
- In a drawing in May 2005, there were 110 second-chance winners.
- Cost: about \$800,000 vs \$19,000,000

JUST THE MATH



JUST THE MATH



OF POSSIBLE POWERBALL DRAWINGS:

$$\text{nCr}(69,5) \cdot 26$$

$$= 292\,201\,338$$

PROBABILITY OF WINNING JACKPOT:

$$\frac{1}{\text{nCr}(69,5) \cdot 26}$$

$$= 3.422297813 \times 10^{-9}$$

PROBABILITY OF WINNING SECOND PRIZE:

$$\frac{1}{\text{nCr}(69,5)} \cdot \left(\frac{25}{26} \right)$$

$$= 8.5557445326 \times 10^{-8}$$

SIMULATOR:

http://www.adamlamers.com/lottery_simulator

Powerball Simulator

Jackpot: \$1,400,000,000

| Your Numbers | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| 7 | 17 | 52 | 66 | 69 | 1 |
| 5 | 48 | 57 | 58 | 67 | 18 |
| 3 | 33 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 4 |
| 3 | 20 | 28 | 42 | 46 | 21 |
| 25 | 42 | 49 | 52 | 55 | 12 |

Drawing

| | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 14 | 30 | 37 | 48 | 52 | 15 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|

Powerplay: 3x

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Total Drawings: | 108,329 |
| Total Spent: | \$1,624,307 |
| Total Winnings: | \$355,745 |
| Time spent playing: | 1,042 years |
| Actual win odds: | 1:5.35 |
| | -78% |

| Win Breakdown | | \$ Won (before Powerplay) | Actual Odds |
|---------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------------|
| 5 White + Powerball | 0 | \$0 | 1:Infinity |
| 5 White | 0 | \$0 | 1:Infinity |
| 4 White + Powerball | 1 | \$50000 | 1:108329.00 |
| 4 White | 19 | \$1900 | 1:5701.53 |
| 3 White + Powerball | 40 | \$4000 | 1:2708.23 |
| 3 White | 926 | \$6482 | 1:116.99 |
| 2 White + Powerball | 772 | \$5404 | 1:140.32 |
| 1 White + Powerball | 5888 | \$23552 | 1:18.40 |
| Powerball Only | 14313 | \$57252 | 1:7.57 |

Record wins above: \$100



Bob Lochel
@bobloch



Class today is obsessed with this Powelball simluator:
adamlamers.com/lottery_simula...

One student actually hits the jackpot....a cry of "I'm so good at gambling!" is heard.

Sorry [@hhcoralreef](#)....you may want to have a convo with your son today.

9:25 AM · Jan 3, 2018 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

JUST THE FACTS...

- Lottery officials tracked down winners, spread out in 26 states.
- "We expected four or five and ended up with 110," Chuck Strutt, executive director of the Multi-State Lottery Association, said Wednesday. "That's well beyond the realm of normal possibilities."

Fortune Cookie Has Got Their Numbers

By Michelle Garcia
Special to The Washington Post
Thursday, May 12, 2005

NEW YORK, May 11 -- "All the preparation you've done will finally be paying off," read the fortune in Jacquelyn W. Garrett's cookie. The prophecy caught her eye, but it was the numbers stretched across the slip of paper that paid off for her. She played them in the Powerball lottery and won second prize.



Jacquelyn Garrett, with lottery representative Sidney Chambers, was among 110 people with winning tickets. (Tennessee Education Lottery)

TOOLBOX

Is it possible?
Is it plausible?
Are there reasonable alternative explanations?

Lottery officials followed the fortune cookie trail, locating the distributor and then narrowing down the cookie makers to three possibilities. The New York Times on Wednesday identified the fortune cookie factory as Wonton Food, a Queens-based company that cranks out 4 million cookies a day.

Derrick Wong, a sales executive at Wonton Food, said the company started printing lottery numbers on fortunes 10 years ago, to distinguish itself from competitors. Numbers are randomly chosen from a big bowl, lottery style, he said.

If the winners had chosen 12 instead of 10, they would have struck the \$25 million jackpot. "It actually would have been better for us," said Strutt, explaining that jackpots are divided among the winners.

Garrett said she got her fortune cookie at her favorite Chinese restaurant in suburban Nashville. "I didn't recognize the numbers would mean anything," said Garrett, a schoolteacher. "I was just interested in the fact that this was something positive to me."



POWERBALL
POWERPLAY®

THE CASE OF TOO MANY POWERBALL WINNERS

NOT GUILTY DUE TO DELICIOUSNESS

A photograph of a voting station. Several white voting booths with 'VOTE' printed on them are set up in a room. People are seen voting at the booths. A person with a backpack is walking away from the camera on the right. The room has a wooden floor and a yellow wall. The text 'THE CASE OF THE BIMODAL ELECTION' is overlaid in white.

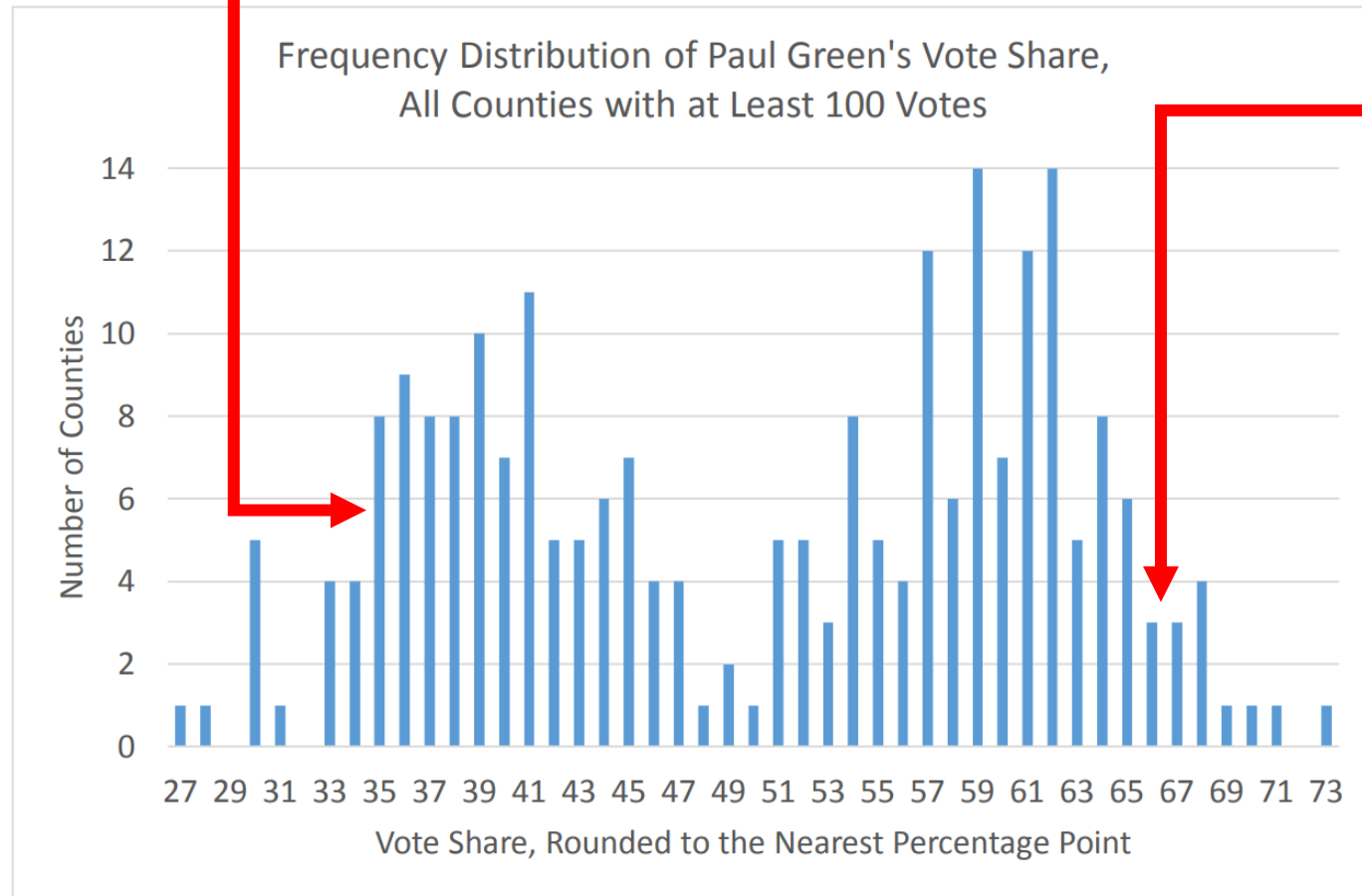
THE CASE OF THE BIMODAL ELECTION

JUST THE FACTS...

- 2016 Texas state Supreme Court primary election between Paul Green and Rick Green.
- 233 counties in Texas voted and the percentage vote for each candidate per county was tabulated.

Figure 2. Results Portfolio for the March 1, 2016 Republican Primary for Position 5 on the Texas Supreme Court, between Paul Green and Rick Green.

(a) Histogram of Vote Shares across Counties



Paul Green: 35%

Rick Green 65%

Paul Green: 67%

Rick Green 33%

VOTE SHARE FOR PAUL GREEN,
PER COUNTY.

Describe what you observe.
Could random chance explain
these results?

What plausible alternate
explanations exist?

Ballot for the 2017 Democratic primary for Common Pleas Court

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----|
| <p>JUDGE OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS</p> <p>(Vote for not more than 9)</p> <p>Juez de la Corte de Primeras Instancias</p> <p>(Vote por no mas de 9)</p> | STELLA TSAI 9TH WARD | 13 | DANIEL R SULMAN 9TH WARD | 24 | | |
| | VIKKI KRISTIANSSON 15TH WARD | 14 | | | JON MARSHALL 45TH WARD | 35 |
| | DEBORAH CIANFRANI 34TH WARD | 15 | LEON GOODMAN 36TH WARD | 26 | DAVID CONROY 48TH WARD | 36 |
| | JOHN MACORETTA 22ND WARD | 16 | DEBORAH CANTY 42ND WARD | 27 | MARK J MOORE 21ST WARD | 37 |
| | RANIA MAJOR 30TH WARD | 17 | | | DANYL S PATTERSON 4TH WARD | 38 |
| | HENRY MCGREGOR SIAS 2ND WARD | 18 | WENDI BARISH 5TH WARD | 29 | TERRI M BOOKER 40TH WARD | 39 |
| | LAWRENCE J BOZZELLI 2ND WARD | 19 | LEONARD DEUTCHMAN 9TH WARD | 30 | LUCRETIA C CLEMONS 22ND WARD | 40 |
| | VINCENT FURLONG 58TH WARD | 20 | ZAC SHAFFER 30TH WARD | 31 | | |
| | BRIAN MCLAUGHLIN 66TH WARD | 21 | JENNIFER SCHULTZ 21ST WARD | 32 | CRYSTAL B POWELL 44TH WARD | 42 |
| | SHANESE JOHNSON 50TH WARD | 22 | VINCENT MELCHIORRE 26TH WARD | 33 | BILL RICE 53RD WARD | 43 |
| MARK B COHEN 53RD WARD | 23 | | | Write In Por Escrito | | |

Ballot for the 2017 Democratic primary for Common Pleas Court

JUDGE OF THE COURT OF
COMMON PLEAS
(Vote for not more than 9)

Juez de la Corte de Primeras Instancias
(Vote por no mas de 9)

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|
| STELLA TSAI 9TH WARD | 13 | DANIEL R SULMAN 9TH WARD | 24 | | |
| VIKKI KRISTIANSSON 15TH WARD | 14 | | | JON MARSHALL 45TH WARD | 35 |
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| MARK B COHEN 53RD WARD | 23 | | | Write In Por Escrito | |

Percent of the vote arranged by ballot position

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 7.7% Tsai ✓ | 4.1% Sulman | |
| 7.6% Kristiansson ✓ | | 0.9% Marshall |
| 5.3% Cianfrani ✓ | 4.0% Goodman | 3.4% Conroy |
| 3.6% Macoretta | 4.7% Canty ✓ | 1.5% Moore |
| 3.7% Major | | 2.0% Patterson |
| 3.8% Sias | 3.9% Barish | 1.7% Booker |
| 2.9% Bozzelli | 1.5% Deutchman | 5.7% Clemons ✓ |
| 4.3% Furlong ✓ | 4.8% Shaffer ✓ | |
| 3.2% McLaughlin | 4.1% Schultz | 3.0% Powell |
| 4.5% Johnson ✓ | 2.9% Melchiorre | 0.7% Rice |
| 4.4% Cohen ✓ | | |

SOURCE: Philadelphia City Commissioners

JOHN DUCHNIESKIE / Staff Artist

What do you notice? What do you wonder?
Is there sufficient evidence that ballot position matters?

Primary and runoff elections in Texas provide an ideal test of the ballot order hypothesis, because **ballot order is randomized within each county** and the state offers many counties and contests to analyze. Doing so for all statewide offices contested in the 2014 Democratic and Republican primaries and runoffs yields precise estimates of the ballot order effect across 24 different contests, including several not studied previously. Except for a few high-profile, high-information races, the ballot order effect is large, especially in down-ballot races for judicial positions. There, the empirical results indicate that going from last to first on the ballot **raises a candidate's vote share by nearly ten percentage points**. The magnitude of this effect is not sensitive to demographic and economic factors.

Darren Grant, Sam Houston State University (May, 2017)

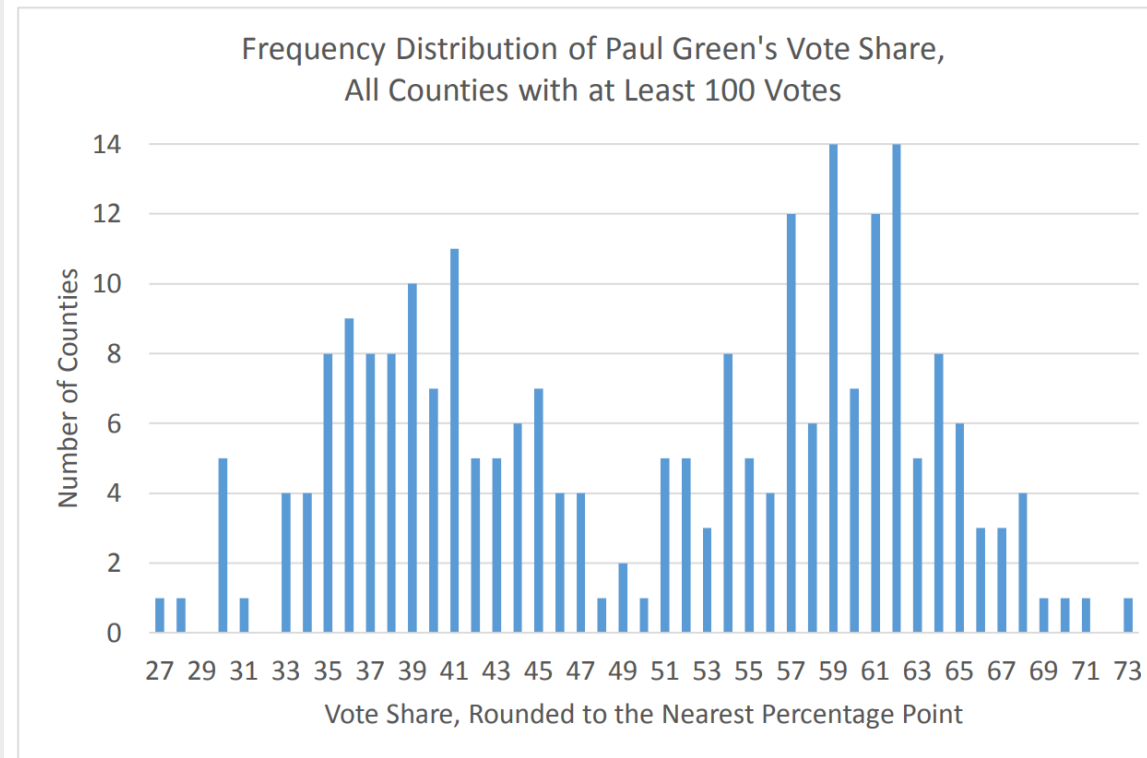
Source:

<https://www.shsu.edu/dpg006/ballot%20order.pdf>

THE “PERFECT STORM” - GREEN v. GREEN

Figure 2. Results Portfolio for the March 1, 2016 Republican Primary for Position 5 on the Texas Supreme Court, between Paul Green and Rick Green.

(a) Histogram of Vote Shares across Counties



(b) Randomization Tests.

Paul Green is listed first on 121 of 233 ballots, or 51.9%.
Rick Green is listed first on 112 of 233 ballots, or 48.1%.

ESTABLISHING BALLOT POSITION IN PHILADELPHIA



Tim Dowling with the Horn & Hardart can | Photo Credit: Holly Otterbein

Bob Lochel, @bobloch



The Man Who Solved 'Jeopardy!'

James Holzhauer has taken the game to its logical conclusion.

Why James Holzhauer Is Bad for 'Jeopardy!' (Column)

America Has a James Holzhauer Problem and It's Reaching Crisis Proportions

How 'Jeopardy!' Champion James Holzhauer Is Ruining the Show

WHICH WOULD YOU SELECT?

| SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST | -OLOGIES | VISITING ITALY | WHOSE SONGS? | QUOTATIONS BY THE NUMBER | THE SILENT LETTER IN... |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| \$400 | \$400 | \$400 | \$400 | \$400 | \$400 |
| \$800 | \$800 | \$800 | \$800 | \$800 | \$800 |
| \$1200 | \$1200 | \$1200 | \$1200 | \$1200 | \$1200 |
| \$1600 | \$1600 | \$1600 | \$1600 | \$1600 | \$1600 |
| \$2000 | \$2000 | \$2000 | \$2000 | \$2000 | \$2000 |

SELF-PORTRAIT
OF THE ARTIST

-OLOGIES

VISITING
ITALY

WHOSE
SONGS?

QUOTATIONS BY
THE NUMBER

THE SILENT
LETTER IN...

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$800

\$800

\$800

\$800

\$800

\$800

\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

SELF-PORTRAIT
OF THE ARTIST

-OLOGIES

VISITING
ITALY

WHOSE
SONGS?

QUOTATIONS BY
THE NUMBER

THE SILENT
LETTER IN...

\$400

\$400

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\$800

\$800

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\$1200

\$1200

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\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1600

\$1600

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\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

SELF-PORTRAIT
OF THE ARTIST

-OLOGIES

VISITING
ITALY

WHOSE
SONGS?

QUOTATIONS BY
THE NUMBER

THE SILENT
LETTER IN...

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

WHAT IS JAMES DOING?
ARE DAILY DOUBLES RANDOMLY ASSIGNED?

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

A close-up view of the top section of a Jeopardy! game board. It features six blue rectangular tiles with white text, each representing a category. The categories are: 'SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST', '-OLOGIES', 'VISITING ITALY', 'WHOSE SONGS?', 'QUOTATIONS BY THE NUMBER', and 'THE SILENT LETTER IN...'. The board is set against a dark background with blue and orange lighting accents.

SELF-PORTRAIT
OF THE ARTIST

-OLOGIES

VISITING
ITALY

WHOSE
SONGS?

QUOTATIONS BY
THE NUMBER

THE SILENT
LETTER IN...

He employs a controversial method known as the "Forrest Bounce," in which the contestant jumps around from category to category, choosing tiles out of order to throw off his or her opponents.

Holzhauer is not the first to master the "Forrest Bounce." Previous contestants like Arthur Chu and Chuck Forrest (who the method is named after) have used it to both confuse opponents and rack up the most amount of money in a short span of time by starting from the bottom of each category, where the clues are hardest. — cnn.com

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

SELF-PORTRAIT
OF THE ARTIST

-OLOGIES

VISITING
ITALY

WHOSE
SONGS?

QUOTATIONS BY
THE NUMBER

THE SILENT
LETTER IN...

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

7.6% of Daily Doubles

24.9% of Daily Doubles

36.4% of Daily Doubles

31.1% of Daily Doubles

SELF-PORTRAIT
OF THE ARTIST

•OLOGIES

VISITING
ITALY

WHOSE
SONGS?

QUOTATIONS BY
THE NUMBER

THE SILENT
LETTER IN...

21.3%

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$400

\$800

\$800

\$800

\$800

\$800

\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1200

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$1600

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

\$2000

WHAT DO YOU PREDICT
FOR THE OTHER COLUMNS?

| SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST | •OLOGIES | VISITING ITALY | WHOSE SONGS? | QUOTATIONS BY THE NUMBER | THE SILENT LETTER IN... |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 21.3% | 13.2% | 18.4% | 18.8% | 16.7% | 11.6% |

DOES DAILY-DOUBLE HUNTING WORK?

| | James Holzhauer | Ken Jennings |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Categories With 0 Correct | 11 | 15 |
| % of Bottom-Row Clues Responded To Correctly | 58.59% | 53.16% |
| Daily Doubles Played | 76 | 69 |
| Daily Doubles Correct | 72 | 59 |
| Daily Double %age | 94.74% | 85.51% |
| Average Daily Double Wager | \$8,984 | \$3,265 |
| Total Net Gain On Daily Doubles | \$654,416 | \$159,299 |
| Average Net Gain On Daily Doubles | \$8,611 | \$2,309 |
| Average Score At End Of First Round | \$12,564 | \$9,327 |
| Average Lead At End Of First Round | \$8,273 | \$5,555 |



THE CASE OF THE BIMODAL ELECTION

NOT GUILTY DUE TO RANDOMNESS

A person in a dark jacket and jeans is walking through a field filled with numerous large, cylindrical hay bales. In the background, there is a large red barn and a line of trees under a cloudy sky. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an overcast day.

THE CASE OF HAY FEVER

Bob Lochel, @bobloch

JUST THE FACTS...

- On the TV show “The Amazing Race”, teams of 2 complete a series of challenges in a race around the world.
- In the infamous “Hay Fever” task, there are 270 large hay bales, of which 20 contain clues. When a team finds a clue, they can move to the next challenge.
- There are 7 teams remaining.



On average, how many hay bales do you feel it will take to find a clue?

What is the probability you find a clue in the first hay bale you check?
What is the probability it takes you 2 hay bales to find a clue?



TEAMS ARRIVE AFTER COMPLETING PREVIOUS TASK

Hayden and Aaron Arrive

Depart second



Lori and Bolo Arrive

"Vintage" Couple Arrives

Bob Lochel, @bobloch

JUST THE MATH

| Let X = the number of haybales checked until success | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| $P(x = 1)$ | $\left(\frac{20}{270}\right) = 0.0740740740741$ |
| $P(x = 2)$ | $\left(\frac{250}{270}\right)\left(\frac{20}{269}\right) = 0.068842076277$ |
| $P(x = 3)$ | $\left(\frac{250}{270}\right)\left(\frac{249}{269}\right)\left(\frac{20}{268}\right) = 0.0639614813171$ |
| $P(x = 4)$ | $\left(\frac{250}{270}\right)\left(\frac{249}{269}\right)\left(\frac{248}{268}\right)\left(\frac{20}{267}\right) = 0.0594099152308$ |
| $P(x = 5)$ | $\left(\frac{250}{270}\right)\left(\frac{249}{269}\right)\left(\frac{248}{268}\right)\left(\frac{247}{267}\right)\left(\frac{20}{266}\right) = 0.0551663498572$ |

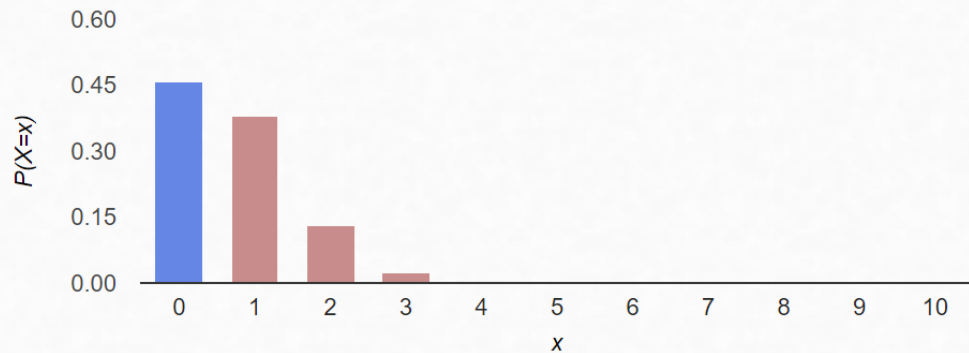
About a 32% chance you find one clue within the first 5 hay bales.

BUT.....

JUST THE (MORE ADVANCED) MATH

Hypergeometric Distribution $X \sim HG(n, N, M)$

$n =$ $N =$ $M =$
 $x =$ $P(X \geq x) =$



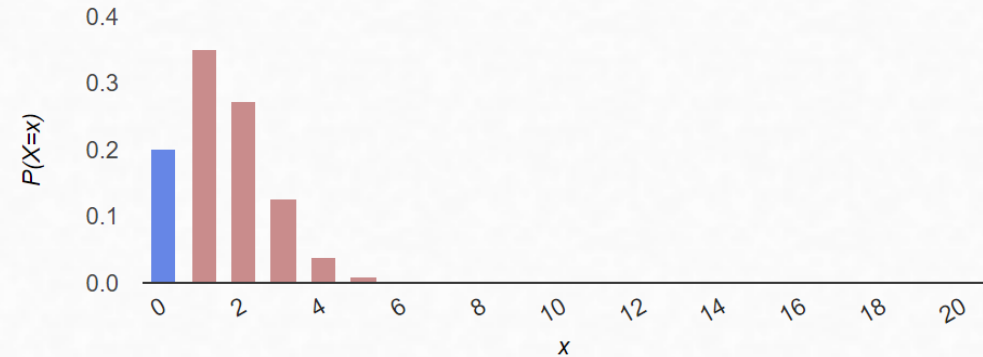
$\mu = E(X) = 0.741$ $\sigma = SD(X) = 0.814$ $\sigma^2 = Var(X) = 0.663$

Help

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Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science
University of Iowa

Hypergeometric Distribution $X \sim HG(n, N, M)$

$n =$ $N =$ $M =$
 $x =$ $P(X \geq x) =$



$\mu = E(X) = 1.481$ $\sigma = SD(X) = 1.129$ $\sigma^2 = Var(X) = 1.275$

Help

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BACK FROM OUR MATH COMMERCIAL BREAK....

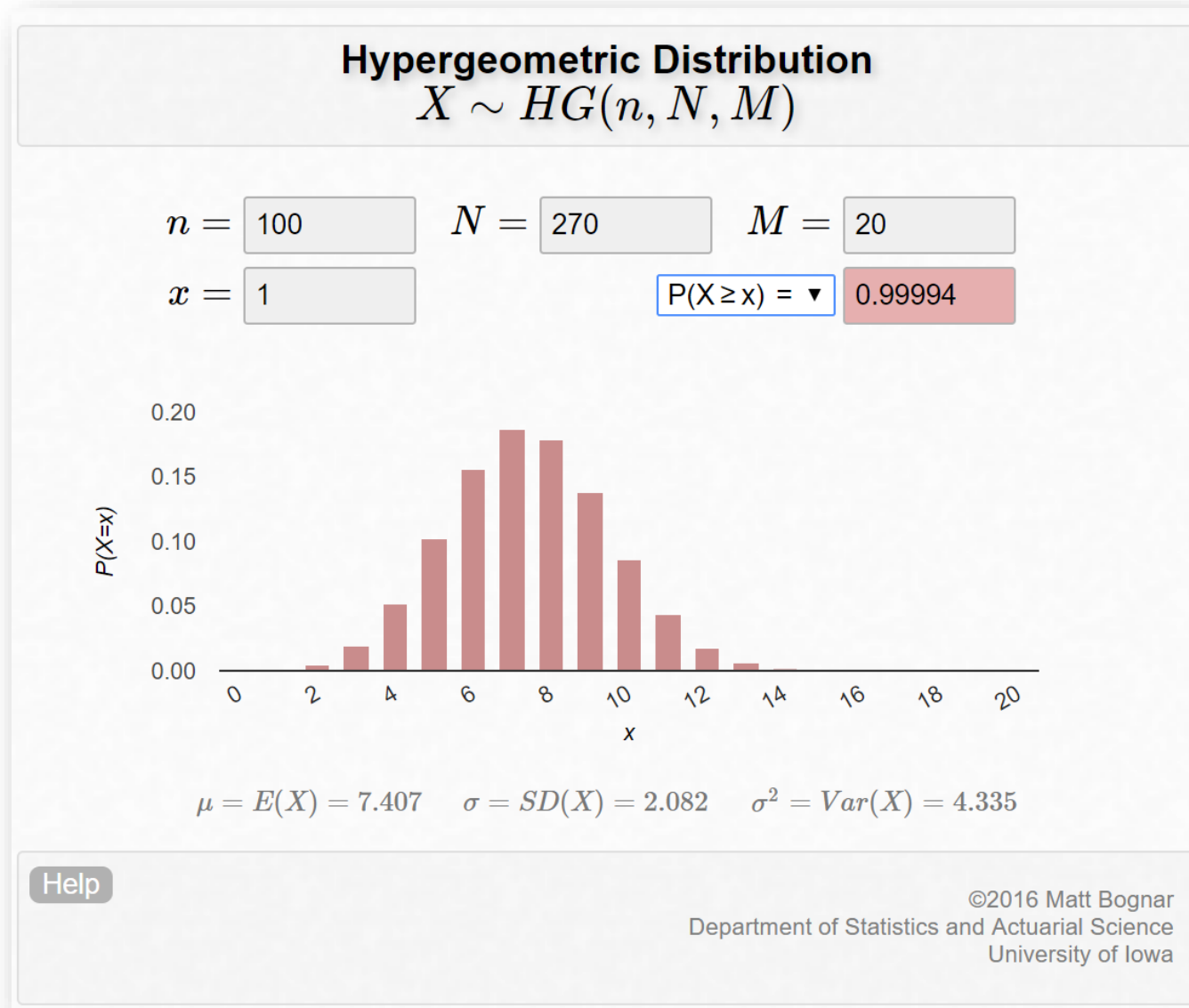


ochel, @bobloch

A LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT....



A LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT....



A person in a dark jacket is walking through a field filled with numerous large, round hay bales. In the background, there is a large red barn and a line of trees under a cloudy sky.

THE CASE OF HAY FEVER

NOT GUILTY AND STILL LOOKING...

A man in a dark suit and tie stands next to a large, colorful Plinko game board. The board is tilted and features a grid of numbers at the bottom. To the right of the board is a set of stairs with a white railing. A woman in a blue sweater and brown pants stands to the left of the man. The background is a stylized game show set with green and red elements.

THE CASE OF THE PLINKO WINNER

JUST THE FACTS...

- The game Plinko was first played in 1983.
- Contestants strive to win the “big prize” in the center slot.
- Contestants can earn up to 5 Plinko chips to play.



GALTON BOARD!



WHERE SHOULD I RELEASE MY CHIP?

WOO HOO!

JUST THE MATH

A Plinko chip encounters 12 rows of pegs on its journey down the board.
Safe to assume each pegs yields a 50-50 event (left or right)

Releasing the chip down the middle is optimal strategy...

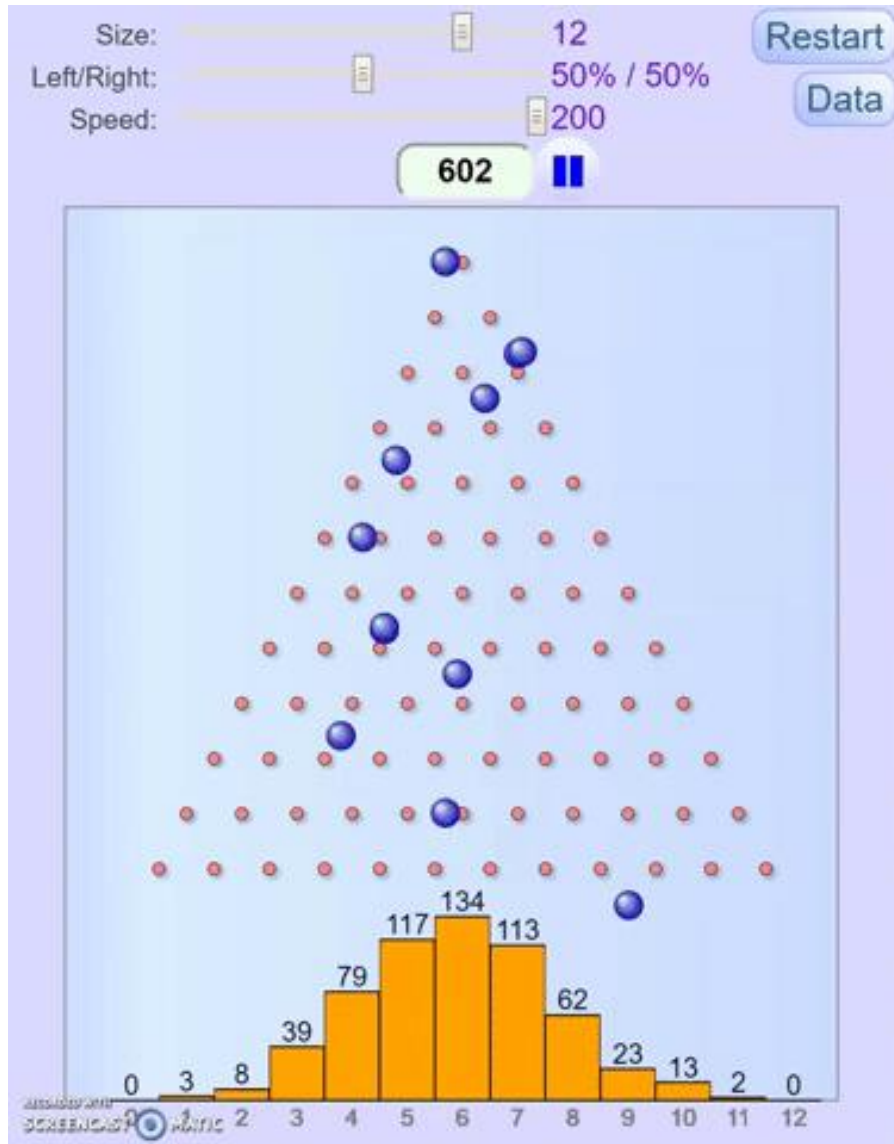
Check out Game Show talks from Bowen Kerins

$$\binom{12}{6} (.5)^6 (.5)^6 = 0.2255859375$$

Since the year 2000, there have been **2091** Plinko chip releases...
303 have landed in the center slot (just **14.5%**). What gives?

Thanks tpirstats.com!

LET'S SIMULATE!



Galton Board:

<https://www.mathsisfun.com/data/quincunx.html>

JUST THE FACTS...

- On an 2008 episode of the show a contestant earned 5 Plinko chips.
- The first three Plinko chips each landed in the middle slot, a \$30,000 win!
- This segment never aired, so it is not known where the chips were released.

JUST THE MATH

PROBABILITY OF 3 MIDDLE SLOTS IN A ROW

Dropping down the middle:

$$(0.22559)^3 = 0.0114804664229$$

Using historical data:

$$(0.145)^3 = 0.003048625$$

**PRODUCERS STOPPED TAPING BEFORE
THE 4TH CHIP WAS RELEASED AND THE
SEGMENT NEVER AIRED....
WHY????**



DREW CAREY ON SIRIUS XM



A man in a dark suit and tie is standing on a game show set, leaning forward and playing the Plinko game. He is holding a disc and about to drop it into one of the slots at the top of the board. The Plinko board is large and colorful, with various colored sections and a spiral of discs. To the left, a woman in a blue sweater and brown pants is standing and watching. The background is dark with green and purple decorative elements.

THE CASE OF THE PLINKO WINNER

**GUILTY - MUST ENDURE RICE A RONI
IN PERPETUITY**



PROBABILITY EVENTS AS MYSTERY STORIES

- Use scenarios which deserve investigation! Leverage the “Gasp”
- Is it possible? Is it plausible?
- What’s the evidence?
- What are the clues?
- Is the mathematics correct?
- What are plausible alternate explanations?



Colonel Musto
with the w

IS IT POSSIBLE?
IS IT PLAUSIBLE?
BECOME A
PROBABILITY
DETECTIVE.

Bob Lochel

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