

# **Predicting the Outcomes of the 2016 NCAA March Madness Men's Tournament Brackets: A Study of Fan Twitter Sentiment**

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## **Abstract**

Can the choice of words and tone used by Twitter users be used to predict the outcomes of the 2016 NCAA March Madness Men's Division I Basketball Tournament? If so, is it a better predictor than the experts? We investigate these questions by creating the UT Tyler March Madness System and pairing it with OpinionFinder, a sentiment analysis tool. Through our analysis, we find that fan sentiment predicts the winner 54% of the time which is slightly better than flipping a coin. The combined average of five experts was 56.8%. Fan sentiment is slightly less accurate than expert predictions. The experts chose most of the higher seeded teams in contrast to fan sentiment which chose the lower seeded teams.