

Does the effect of driving distance on PGA/LPGA tour earnings differ across genders?

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ECON 4990, Senior Seminar in Economics

T, TR 11:00-12:15

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Abstract

Since the early 21st century, the game of golf has seen a shift in importance of touch and finesse towards power and distance. Though many studies have observed the effects of individual golf statistics on earnings, none have examined if these effects fluctuate between genders. The purpose of my study is to show male and female professional golfers the effects of hitting the ball far and if their practice time might be better off spent practicing other areas of the game. By using player statistics from the 2015 PGA and LPGA cross sectional data set, this paper will examine if the effects that driving distance has on tournament earnings differentiates between men and women. Other econometric studies have found that there is an incentive effect for players to maximize effort in the final round, as well as to focus on their abilities from 100 yards and in to increase tour earnings. Those knowledgeable in golf should expect longer hitters to have an advantage over the field and therefor make more money. My study found that the impact of driving distance on tour earnings is different for men and women. Men who drive the ball further than average see a significant increase in tour earnings. Surprisingly, women who hit the ball further than average see a significant decrease in tour earnings. In addition, I found that the number of wins a player has to be the most significant for both men and women.