1024-15-192        **Anjela Y Govan\*** (`aygovan@ncsu.edu`), 381 Harrelson Hall, Box 8205, Raleigh, NC 27695-8205, and **Carl D Meyer** (`meyer@ncsu.edu`), 241 Harrelson Hall, Box 8205, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-8205. *Applying theory of Markov Chains to the problem of sports ranking.* Preliminary report.

The search engine Google uses the basic theory of the finite, discrete-time Markov chains to rank (i.e. determine the order of importance) web pages. With modifications this technique can be used to rank National Football League (NFL) teams as well as National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball teams. The beauty and the difficulty of the resulting algorithm is in its flexibility. We can use only win-loss records of the teams, include each game's score differences, or expand the algorithm to use any combination of the game statistical data. The question is what game statistics are most relevant to the team's rank. (Received January 08, 2007)