

Assessing the Assessers: Evaluating NBA GMs

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How can we grade a GM?

Wins?

Championships?

Change in Wins?

The screenshot shows the Bleacher Report website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'b/r bleacher report' logo on the left and a menu of sports categories: NFL, CFB, MLB, NBA, SOCCER, NHL, CBB, UFC, WWE, GOLF, NASCAR, and MO. Below this is a sub-menu for the NBA section, including links for Home, Teams, 2014 NBA Draft, Archives, Top Writers, Tickets, Shop, Newsletter, and Odds. The main content area features a large heading 'Power Ranking All 30 NBA General Managers' and a byline 'By John Friel, Analyst Jun 25, 2012'. At the bottom of the article preview, there are social media sharing buttons for Facebook (SHARE) and Twitter (TWEET). In the background, a scoreboard for various sports is visible, including NFL games (DAL vs CHI, NYJ vs MIN) and MLB games (BAL vs MIA, PIT vs CIN).

Methodology

Current Average GM tenure in the NBA is ~5 Years

Current Median GM tenure in the NBA is 2.5 Years

Since 2000, 30 NBA GMs have had a tenure of 5 years or longer

Due to time constraints, I was able to analyze 13 General Managers (97 Seasons)

Transactions and Player Data from Basketball-Reference.com

Analyzed Free Agent Signings and Trades

Data from the 2000-2001 up to and including the 2013-2014 season was used

Player Value

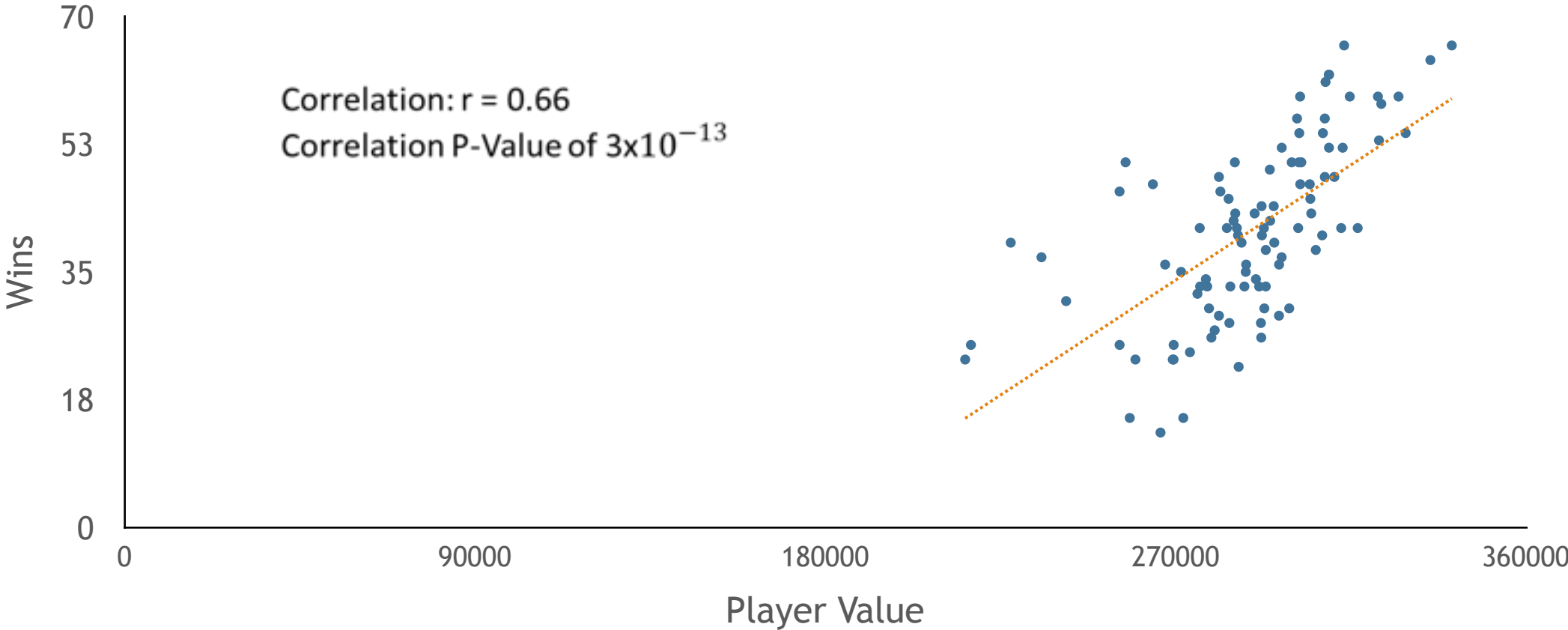
$PER * MP = PV$

PVA (Player Value Added) is the Player Value a GM adds per season

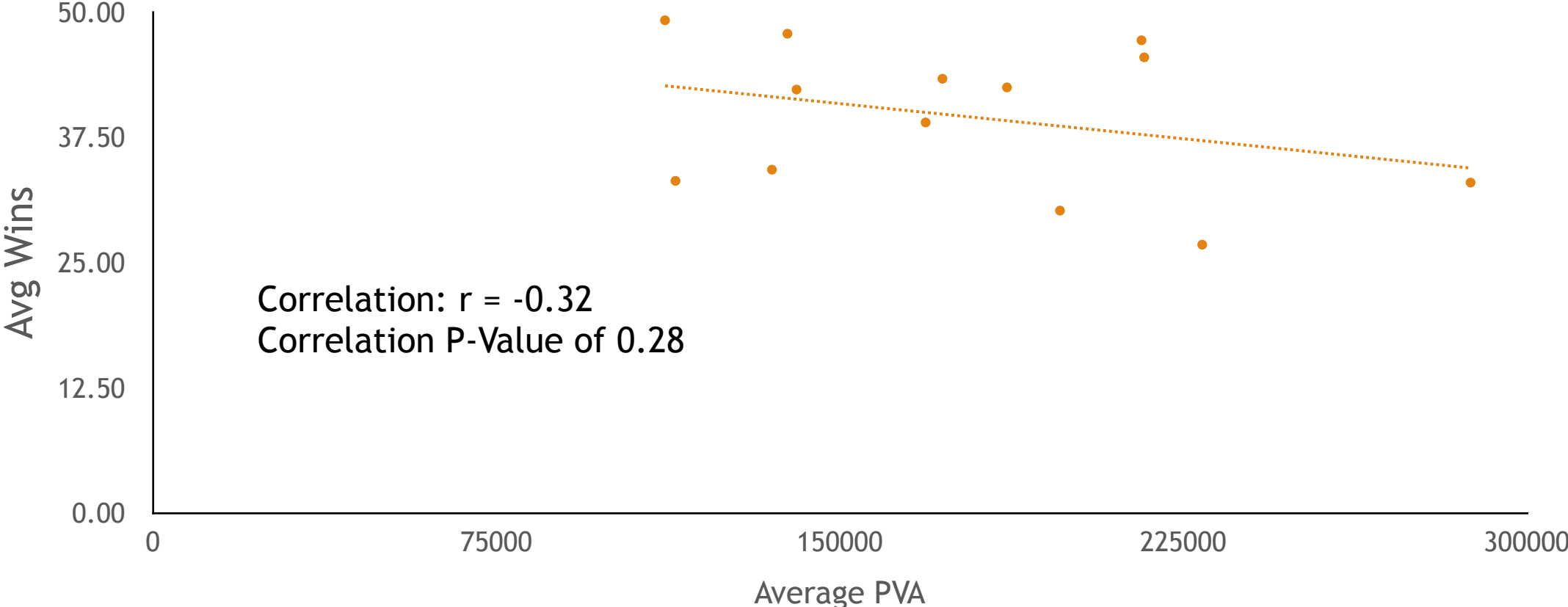
1 year PVA is the PVA added specifically to that year

- i.e. the sum of all new players PV over only their first season on the team

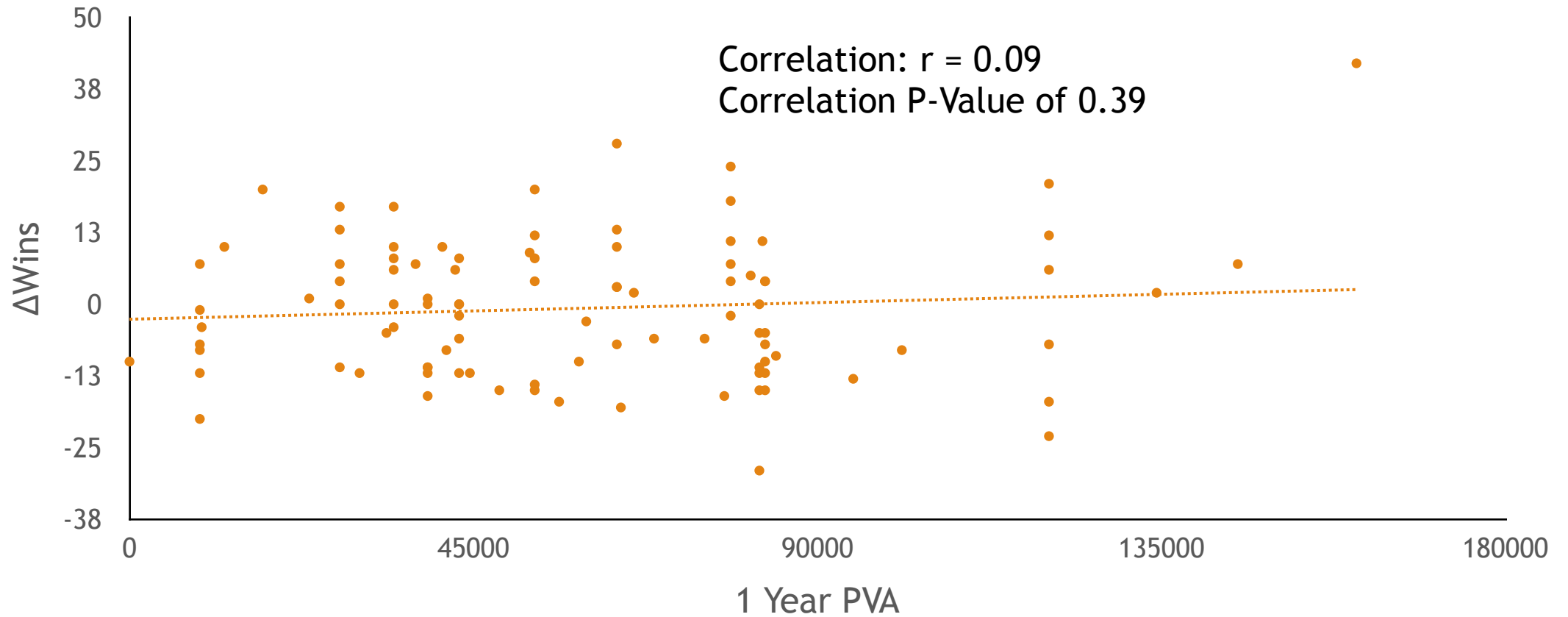
Player Value vs. Wins



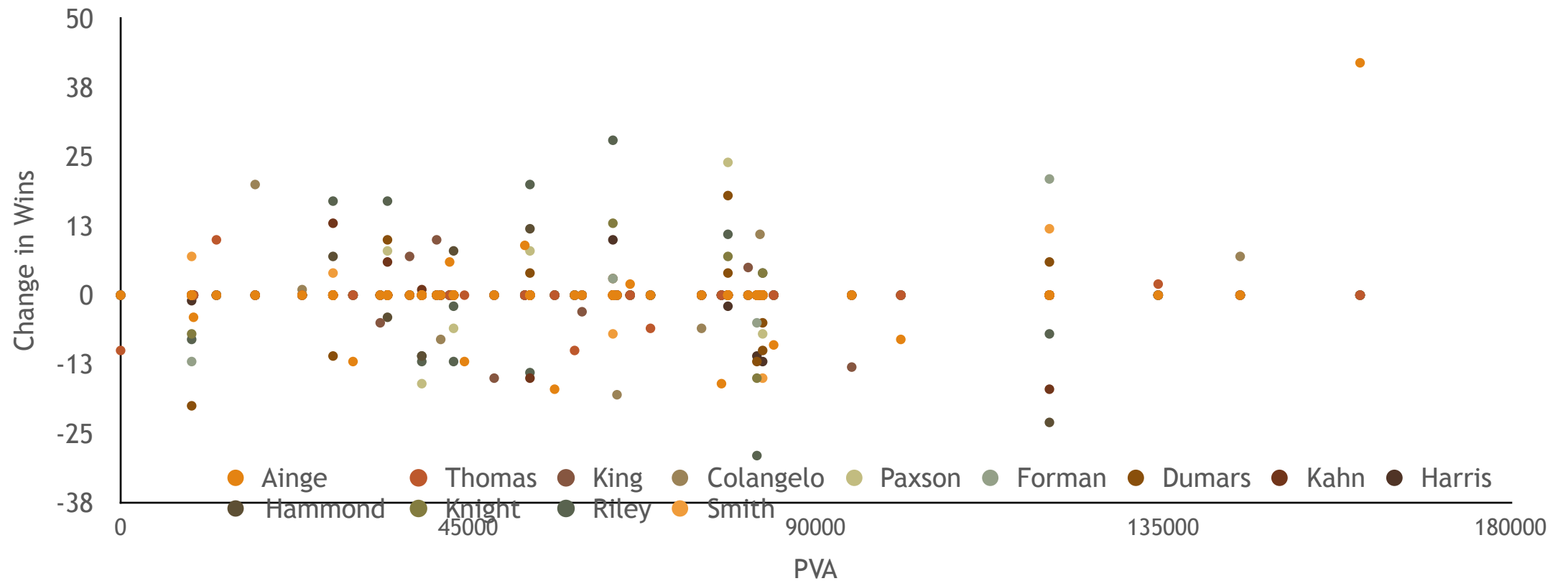
PVA vs Wins



1 Year PVA vs Δ Wins



1 Year PVA vs Δ Wins



What do we actually care about in a GM?

Does the team improve from year to year

It is difficult to calculate a direct ΔPV due to a GM's actions

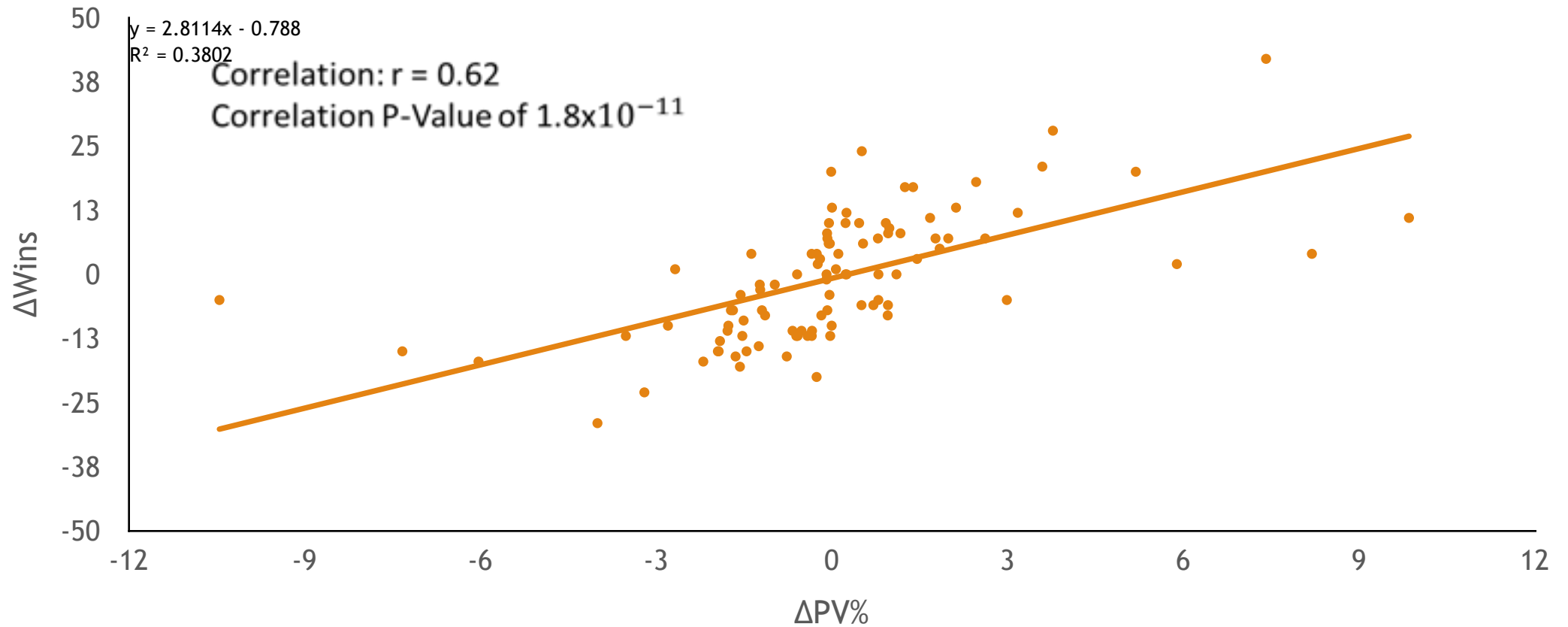
How can we measure improvement due to roster management?

- Track how the player value created due free agent signings and trades benchmarks relative to previous years
- Is a GM actually making his team better?

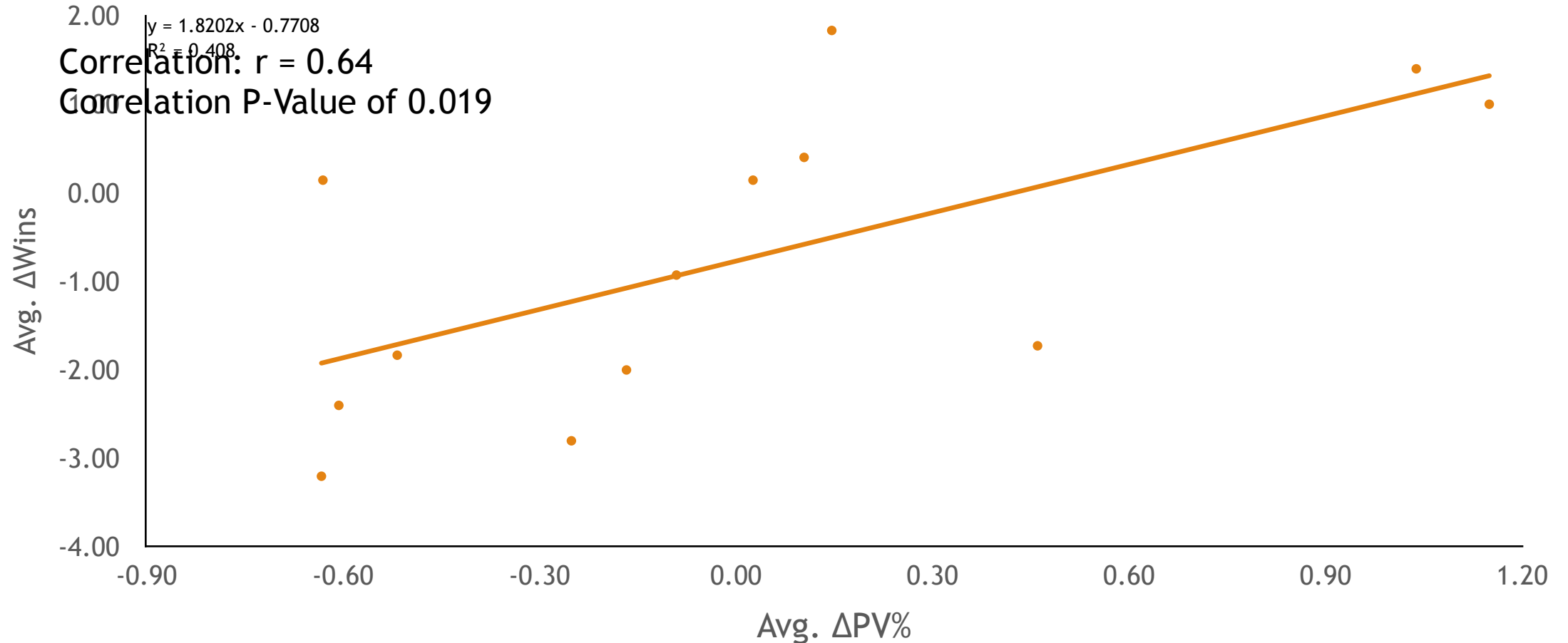
Calculate $\Delta PV\%$

$$\Delta PV\% = 100 * \left(\frac{PVA_{1 Year}}{PV_{n-1}} - \frac{PVA_{1 Year}}{PV_n} \right)$$

$\Delta PV\%$ vs $\Delta Wins$



Aggregated $\Delta PV\%$ vs $\Delta Wins$



GM	Δ Wins	Δ PV%
Bryan Colangelo (Raptors 2006-2012)	1.00	1.15
Gar Forman (Bulls 2009-P.)	1.40	1.04
Danny Ainge (Celtics 2003-P.)	-1.73	0.46
John Paxson (Bulls 2003-2008)	1.83	0.15
Billy Knight (Hawks 2003-2007)	0.40	0.10
Pat Riley (Heat 1995-P.)	0.14	0.03
Joe Dumars (Pistons 2000-2013)	-0.93	-0.09
Billy King (76ers 1998-2006)	-2.00	-0.17
Isiah Thomas (Knicks 2003-2007)	-2.80	-0.25
John Hammond (Bucks 2008-P.)	-1.83	-0.52
David Kahn (Pacers 1995-2004)	-2.40	-0.61
Otis Smith (Magic 2005-2011)	0.14	-0.63
Larry Harris (Bucks 2003-2007)	-3.20	-0.63