An Innovative mode: An Integrated CRITIC-Multivariate Linear Regression Framework with TOPSIS Multi-Criteria Evaluation

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Abstract. As the world's most influential multi-sport event, the Olympic Games have long faced challenges in constructing medal prediction models due to integrating multi-source data and quantifying uncertainties. Based on official data from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), this study proposes a prediction framework that combines multi-dimensional feature quantification with uncertainty analysis. First, a National Comprehensive Sports Strength Index is constructed using the CRITIC (Criteria Importance Through Intercriteria Correlation) method. This method calculates each factor's weight based on its variance and its correlation with other criteria. The index integrates factors such as event participation coverage, athletes' competitive levels, and historical medal data to reveal key influences beyond the host country effect. Next, a linear regression model optimized by gradient descent is applied. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of the test set improves by 13.7% compared to the baseline model, thus confirming the model's generalization ability. An innovative Project Competition Coefficient is introduced to address the challenge of predicting medal counts for countries that have not yet won medals. Combined with the TOPSIS (Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution) multi-criteria evaluation model, this coefficient quantifies the potential for winning medals. The analysis identifies countries like Samoa, which have the potential to succeed in less competitive events. Finally, a Monte Carlo simulation is introduced to apply random perturbations to the input data, generating 10,000 samples. A 95% confidence interval is constructed, with a coverage rate of 91.2%, significantly reducing prediction uncertainty. These findings give event organizers a basis for dynamic resource allocation and offer a quantitative tool to help non-traditional sports powerhouses develop differentiated strategies. This, in turn, contributes to the balanced evolution of the Olympic competitive landscape.

Keywords: Olympic Medal Predictions, CRITIC, TOPSIS, Monte Carlo Simulation.

1. Introduction

The Olympic Games, as the premier global sporting event, reflect national prowess and cultural influence. Dynamic planning systems leveraging predictive models enhance Olympic resource allocation efficiency, underscoring the strategic value of accurate medal forecasting in optimizing global sports resource distribution. However, modeling efforts confront multidimensional challenges: integrating discrete medal data with continuous economic metrics and heterogeneous datasets, compounded by the dynamic complexity of medal forecasting. Key complexities include threshold effects of host advantages, evolving event regulations, and technological disparities across training generations. These factors highlight the critical need for employing rigorous modeling methodologies to decode systemic patterns in Olympic medal distributions, advancing both theoretical understanding and practical resource management strategies.

Many scholars have used different models to make Olympic medal predictions; since Ball[1] proposed a correlation-based scoring model in 1972, the Olympic medal prediction model has been continuously improved. At the beginning of the study, OLS was widely used because the results were easy to interpret. For example, Baimbridge[2] has used OLS to predict the distribution of Olympic medals. However, the OLS model's predictions for non-winning countries were more biased because of the penalizing effect of its exponential function on more minor predictions.

Due to the shortcomings of OLS, some scholars have started to use models based on Poisson distribution; for example, Liu and Suen[3] use the Poisson model to deal with the discrete and zero-valued problem of medal counts. In addition, Forrest[4] also used the Tobit model to predict the

distribution of Olympic medals due to its advantages in dealing with zero-valued problems. However, the prediction accuracy of this model is low. Afterwards, Rewilak[5] uses a Tobit model based on the Mundlak transform, which can improve the prediction accuracy of the Hurdle model while solving the zero-value problem.

In recent years, many scholars have begun to use machine learning to predict sports programs. For example, Schlembach[6] uses a machine learning model based on socioeconomic indicators. The model uses multidimensional dynamic data to improve prediction accuracy through two-stage random forest regression. This method breaks through the limitations of traditional methods in dealing with zero-medal countries and long-term forecasting. However, the above studies lacked in-depth mining of past Olympic medal data and athlete data, which affected the prediction accuracy.

Forecasting models for Olympic performance can be enhanced by integrating socio-economic and host-related determinants. Bernard and Busse[7] demonstrate that larger populations correlate with higher probabilities of producing elite athletes, yet unobservable national characteristics explain performance variations between similarly populated countries. Although income elevation positively influences athletic outcomes, substantial medal count differences persist among economically equivalent nations, indicating multifactorial drivers. Scelles et al.[8] identify substantial host advantages, including reduced athlete travel fatigue, venue familiarity, spectator support, and strategic government investments in sports infrastructure initiated seven years pre-event.

Focusing on the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, this study develops gradient descent-optimized linear regression models enhanced by Monte Carlo simulations to predict medal outcomes while balancing accuracy and interpretability. Leveraging historical data on medal counts, athlete participation, and event-specific performance, the framework innovatively quantifies national sports competitiveness through the CRITIC weighting method, generating a multidimensional "national comprehensive strength" index that dynamically integrates program-specific advantages—an advancement over conventional single-variable models. To address the limited predictive capacity of OLS models for non-medal-winning nations, competition intensity coefficients are derived from event-specific medal distributions. The TOPSIS algorithm is subsequently employed to evaluate these countries by measuring their proximity to ideal and negative-ideal solutions, producing comprehensive scores to estimate their inaugural medal probabilities. This data-driven, multi-indicator evaluation system surpasses qualitative approaches in scientific rigor and operational utility, enabling targeted strategy recommendations for sports development and international competitiveness enhancement.

2. Formula

2.1 Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression is based on classical linear regression[9], combining the assumption of linearity, the assumption of strict exogeneity, and the assumption of no multicollinearity. The final result is shown in equation (1):

$$y_i = \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \cdots + \beta_k x_{ik} + \grave{o}_i \quad (i = 1, 2, \ldots, n)$$

The model estimates the parameters by gradient descent[10][11]. Gradient descent is an iterative algorithm for optimizing an objective function, widely used in machine learning and deep learning. The method minimizes the loss function by gradually adjusting the parameters along the opposite direction of the gradient of the objective function. Its loss function is:

$$J(\theta) = \frac{1}{2n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (\hat{y}_i - y_i)^2 \ \theta$$

In the formula, n is the total number of samples.

The core idea of the gradient descent method is to update the θ parameter along the negative gradient direction of the loss function, and the update formula is:

$$\theta = \theta - \alpha \nabla J(\theta)$$

In the formula, α denotes the learning rate. In each iteration, the parameters are updated according to the calculated gradient and learning rate until the loss function converges or reaches the preset number of iterations. The parameters obtained at this time are the optimal parameters of the linear regression model.

2.2 TOPSIS Evaluation Model

TOPSIS is a commonly used comprehensive evaluation methodology that accurately reflects the gaps between evaluation programs. This study uses the TOPSIS algorithm to evaluate the probability of non-winning countries winning awards.

First, it is necessary to identify the decision variables and determine the sample data, assuming that there are a total of m decision indicators and n samples for each decision variable, and describing the samples under the decision indicators with the vector $x_{ij}(i=1,2\cdots n, j=1,2\cdots m)$. Since the variables have different types of indicators and magnitudes, it is necessary to normalize and standardize the original matrix. The following formula demonstrates the standardization process：

$$z_{ij}=\frac{x_{ij}}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n}x_{ij}^2}}$$

Next, it needs to find the maximum vector and the minimum vector. The maximum vector is:

$$\begin{aligned}Z^+&=(Z_1^+,Z_2^+,\cdots,Z_m^+)\\&=(\max\{z_{11},z_{21},\cdots,z_{n1}\},\max\{z_{12},z_{22},\cdots,z_{n2}\},\cdots,\max\{z_{1m},z_{2m},\cdots,z_{nm}\})\end{aligned}$$

The minimum vector is:

$$\begin{aligned}Z^-&=(Z_1^-,Z_2^-,\cdots,Z_m^-)\\&=(\min\{z_{11},z_{21},\cdots,z_{n1}\},\min\{z_{12},z_{22},\cdots,z_{n2}\},\cdots,\min\{z_{1m},z_{2m},\cdots,z_{nm}\})\end{aligned}$$

Afterwards, calculate the Euclidean distance between each evaluation object and the maximum and minimum vectors:

$$D_i^+=\sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^{m}(Z_j^+-z_{ij})^2}\qquad D_i^-=\sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^{m}(Z_j^--z_{ij})^2}$$

The final score obtained through normalization is:

$$\tilde{S}_i=\frac{S_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n}S_i}$$

3. 2028 Los Angeles Olympics Olympic Medal Standings Predictions

3.1 Data Preprocessing

The data in this paper comes from the official website of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and is recorded by the IOC at each Olympic Games.

Firstly, address the countries that did not win any medals by conducting a differential set analysis and cleaning the project data. This includes standardizing country names, filling in missing values, deleting irrelevant fields, and performing other necessary operations. Secondly, a BP neural network[12] should be employed to fill in any remaining missing values, focusing on improving data completeness through time window processing and mean square error optimization. Next, merge and organize the data related to medal distribution, host country identification, and participation in sports events over the years to create a comprehensive dataset. Finally, all country names should be standardized to maintain data consistency.

3.2 Medal Prediction Model Based on Multiple Linear Regression

National Comprehensive Sports Strength: CSS_{nation}

The number of medals a country wins at the Olympic Games is related to its overall sports strength, which is directly linked to the events in which it participates. Based on the events each country competes in, we define the level of advantage of country i in event j as SD_{ij}. The advantage in a given event is also influenced by several factors, including the proportion of athletes from the country participating in that event, the athletes' award scores (quantified as 3 points for gold, 2 points for silver, and 1 point for bronze), and the ratio of medals won in that event to the total number of medals. To quantify the advantage in each event, relevant data is extracted, and the CRITIC (Criteria Importance Through Intercriteria Correlation) method is used to calculate the weights of each parameter. The parameters and their corresponding weights are presented in Table 1.

Table 1：National sports comprehensive strength quantitative data table

Parameters	Definition	Weight
NPS_sport	The country's share of the world's athletes competing in these Games	0.13
MD_sport	The ratio of the number of medals won by the country	0.15
MWE_sport	Number of MEDALS won per capita in the country	0.21
CS_sport	$HHI=\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} m_i^2}{M^2}$ $CS\_sport=1-HHI$	0.41
MP	The sum of the country's Olympic medal scores	0.1

Among these, m_i represents the number of medals won by the i_{th} athlete from the country in the given event, M represents the total number of medals won by the country in that event, and CS_{sport} quantifies the situation of the country's advantaged athletes in that event. By considering all relevant factors, the country's level of advantage in a specific event is derived.

$$SD_{sport}=\sum_{i=1}^{5} weight \times Pramenter_i$$

The comprehensive sports strength of the country can be obtained by summing the advantage levels of all the events th

$$CSS_i=\sum_{sport\in SP_i} SD_{sport}$$

In this equation, SP_i denotes the set of programs in which the i_{th} country participates.

Medal Count Prediction for Countries That Have Won Medals

For countries that have already won medals, a regression prediction model is established for forecasting. First, the variables are determined:

Table 2: Explanatory table of regression explanatory variables

X_n	Definition
X_1	Medal Count at the previous Olympic Games
X_2	Medal Count at the Second-to-Last Olympic Games
X_3	Hostility effect
X_4	Overall sporting strength of the country CSS_{nation}

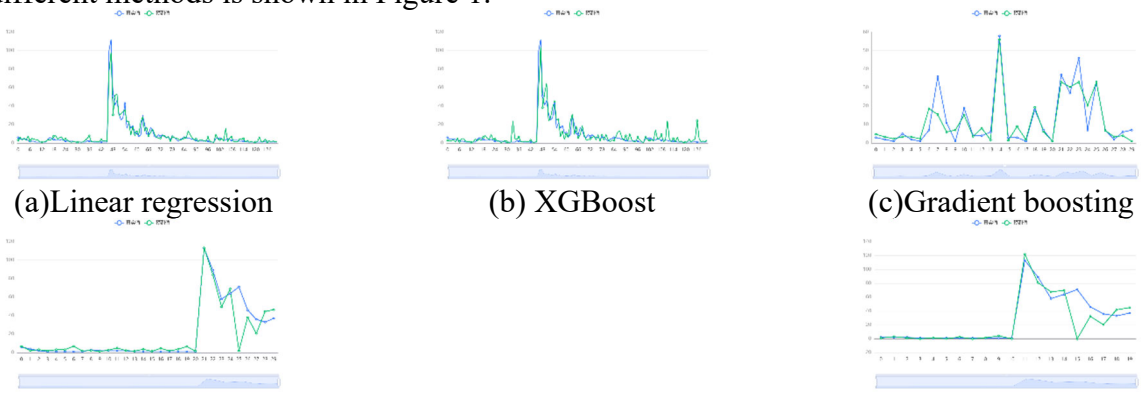
Next, a regression model for medal prediction needs to be established. With the rise of machine learning, methods such as linear regression (using gradient descent), BP neural networks, random forest regression, gradient random regression, and XGBOOST regression are applicable to this

problem. In this study, these methods are used for training and prediction, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of model training results

Model	Test Set's R^2	Validation Set's R^2
Linear regression	0.91	0.917
XGBoost	0.972	0.817
BP neural network	0.974	0.746
Random Forest Regression	0.984	0.801
Gradient Boosted Regression Trees	0.954	0.83

Table 4 reveals severe overfitting in models such as BP neural networks and XGBoost, evidenced by test-set residual sum of squares (R^2) values substantially lower than training-set results—except for gradient descent-optimized linear regression. This phenomenon arises from low-dimensional feature spaces (four variables) and limited sample sizes (500–1,000 data points spanning 2000–2024). Complex nonlinear models, requiring richer feature interactions or larger datasets, amplify noise capture under these constraints, impairing generalization. In contrast, linear regression demonstrates stability across datasets due to its simplicity, convex optimization properties, implicit regularization, and adherence to linear assumptions. These attributes enable robust performance even under conditions of feature scarcity, multicollinearity, and limited data.To further illustrate the predictive advantage of linear regression in this context, a comparative analysis of the prediction results from five different methods is shown in Figure 1.



(a)Linear regression (b) XGBoost (c)Gradient boosting

(e)Random forest (e)BP neural network

Figure 1: Comparison chart of modeled data predictions

Analysis of Figure 1 indicates that the linear regression model performs the best on the current dataset. Although linear regression cannot capture complex non-linear relationships, in scenarios with fewer features and a strong linear correlation between historical medal counts and the target variable, the model effectively balances fitting ability and generalization through a simple linear structure and gradient descent optimization, thus avoiding the risk of overfitting. In contrast, the BP neural network regression exhibits significant deviations and even negative predictions in high-value regions, with a notable decline in test set performance, clearly indicating overfitting. This may result from the excessive number of parameters in the neural network and insufficient data, leading the model to overly rely on noise in the training set. Both XGBoost regression and random forest regression provide relatively accurate predictions in mid-to-low value ranges but exhibit larger prediction errors in high-value regions. Gradient boosting tree regression has a narrow prediction range and fails to encompass the higher values of the true values, further exposing the limitations of tree models in predicting extreme values.

Therefore, establishing a linear regression model:

$$MEDAL_i = \alpha + \sum \beta_n \times X_n + \varepsilon_i$$

The data from all medal-winning countries between 2000 and 2024 were utilized for training, with the evaluation results presented in Table 4：

Table 4: Model evaluation results

	MSE	RMSE	MAE	MAPE	R^2
Test Set	34.354	5.861	3.053	55.534	0.91
Cross validation Set	38.985	5.896	3.254	80.054	0.905
Validation Set	19.178	4.379	2.551	40.062	0.917

In this study, 70% of the data served as the training set, while 30% was used as the test set. The model achieved a score of 0.91 on the training set and 0.92 on the test set, demonstrating good performance. Cross-validation did not result in significant improvements in the goodness of fit, suggesting that the model already exhibits strong generalization ability. Subsequently, the 2028 data were input into the model for prediction. The top ten countries in the projected medal standings are depicted in Figure 2.

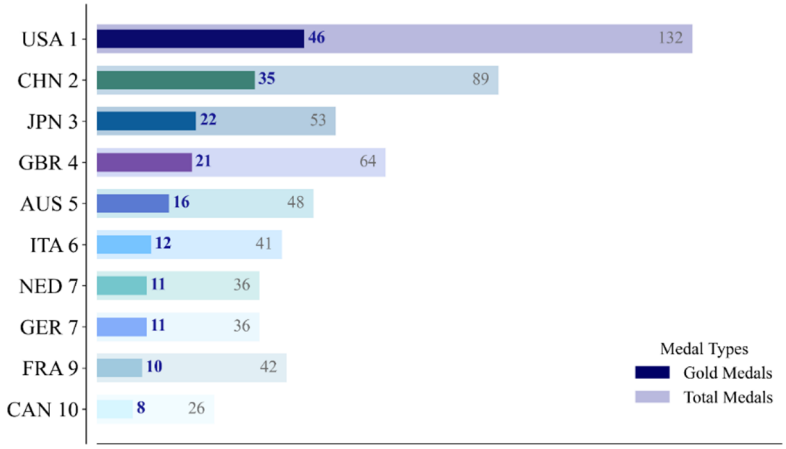


Figure 2: Bar chart of model-predicted 2028 Olympic medal Standings

Rankings are arranged from highest to lowest. The vertical axis represents country names, and the horizontal axis represents the number of medals. Lighter shades represent the predicted total number of medals, while darker shades represent the predicted total number of gold medals. The prediction results show that, compared to the Paris Olympics, the rankings of certain countries have changed in terms of total medal counts：

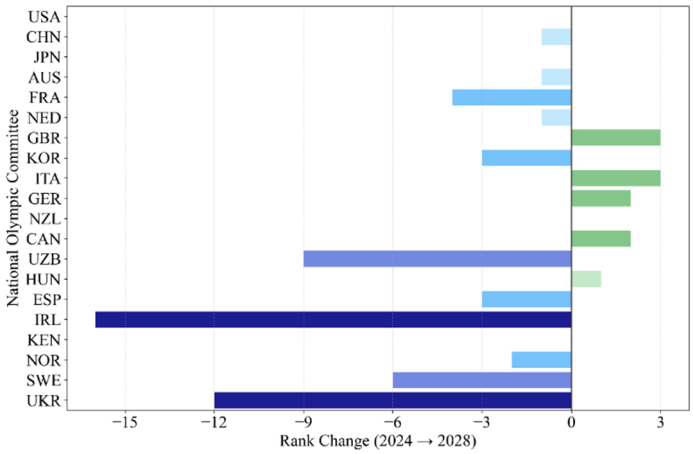


Figure 3：Bar chart of changes in Model-Predicted table rankings

In Figure 3, the vertical axis represents the country names. The baseline to the left indicates a decline in ranking, while to the right indicates an improvement.

3.3 Medal Count Prediction for Non-Medaling Countries

Due to the penalty effect of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) model on smaller predicted values, predictions for countries that have not won medals may exhibit significant bias. Therefore, a separate modeling approach is adopted for these countries. Initially, data extraction identifies countries that have never secured a medal. As of the current analysis, 67 countries fall into this category. These

nations often face resource constraints, making it challenging to excel in highly competitive events. However, by strategically allocating resources to less contested sports, they may achieve their first breakthroughs.

In summary, for countries without medals, the competitiveness of the events they engage in is a critical factor warranting quantification. This study defines the competitiveness of an event as:

$$R_k = \frac{1}{n} \times \left(1 - \frac{1}{P_{\text{total}}} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \left(\frac{P_j}{P_{\text{total}}} \right)^2 \right)$$

Assume that there are a total of K events in the current Olympic Games, and the competitiveness coefficient for the k_{th} event is defined as $R_k (k = 1, 2, \cdots, K)$. The data from the last four Olympic Games are used for this event. In these four Games, the average number of participating countries per event is n, and the total number of medals awarded is P_{total}. For all participating countries, the number of medals won by the j_{th} country is $P_j (j = 1, 2, \cdots n)$. This definition effectively measures the concentration of medal wins in an event. The larger the R_k, the more competitive the event. The total competitiveness parameter for the i_{th} country is then defined as:

$$R_i^{sum} = \sum_{k \in E_i} \frac{R_k}{E_i}$$

Where E_i is the set of events in which the i_{th} non-medaling country participates.

Subsequently, data from the last four Olympic Games for each non-medaling country—such as the number of participants and the number of events they participated in—are extracted as additional variables. These variables are used to assess the country's commitment to the Olympics. The TOPSIS method is employed for ranking, and the ranking results are shown in Figure 5, which presents the top ten countries.

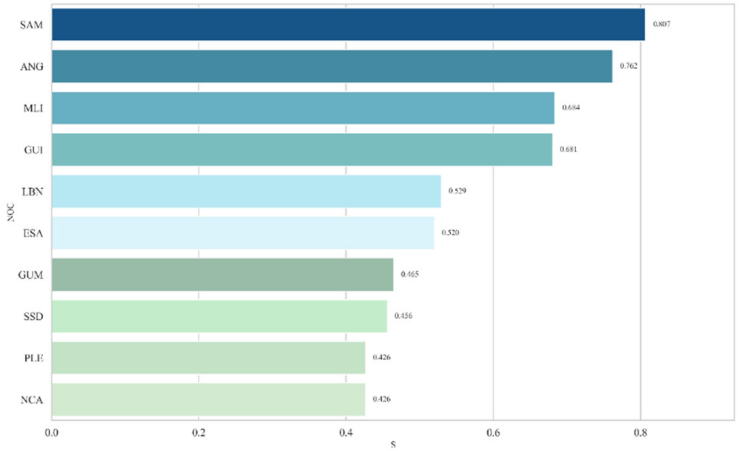


Figure 4: Medal Probability Rankings for Non-Winning Nations

3.4 Sensitivity Analysis

In order to analyze the uncertainty of the predicted values, this paper uses Monte Carlo simulation and incorporates confidence intervals to measure the reliability of the model predictions. Specifically, we train a linear regression model using gradient descent, add random perturbations to the input data, and then perform multisampling to generate N sets of predicted values and calculate the mean and standard deviation of the distribution of these predicted values.

Assuming that the distribution of the predicted values is normal, we calculate a confidence interval for the predicted values based on a set confidence level (e.g., $\alpha = 95\%$):

$$CI = [\mu_{\hat{y}} - z_{\alpha/2} \cdot \sigma_{\hat{y}}, \mu_{\hat{y}} + z_{\alpha/2} \cdot \sigma_{\hat{y}}]$$

In this formula, $z_{\alpha/2}$ is the critical value in the standard normal distribution with respect to the confidence level. In this paper, the stability of the predicted values is assessed by the width of the confidence interval; the narrower the confidence interval, the more reliable the model prediction. Also, this paper analyzes whether the confidence interval contains the actual value to verify the validity of the model prediction.

The data for 2028 were brought into the model to obtain the uncertainty in the predicted values, as shown in Figure 6.

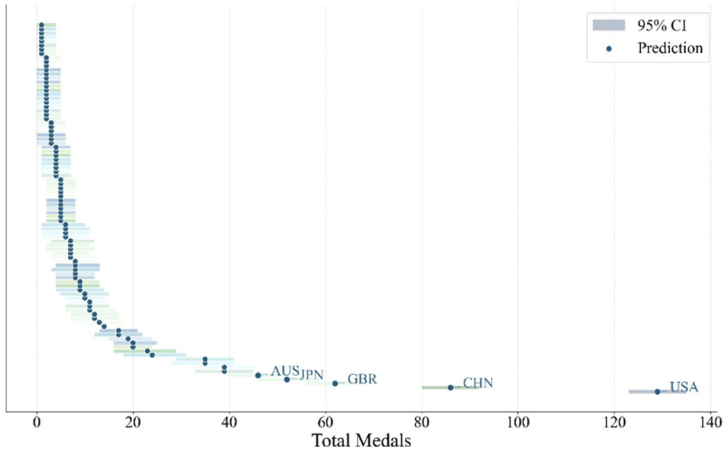


Figure 5: Histogram of Uncertainty in Medal Table Forecast Results

Figure 6 visualizes the results of the projections of the number of medals for each country at the 2028 Olympics and their uncertainties. The horizontal axis of the chart shows the total number of medals won, and the vertical axis shows the ranking in the medal table. The error bars or shaded areas at the top of the bars indicate confidence intervals, the width of which reflects the stability of the prediction: the narrower the interval, the more reliable the model's prediction of the number of medals for that country.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study develops a high-precision model to predict medal standings for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics by integrating multidimensional historical features: prior medal records, host nation effects, and athlete participation metrics. The CRITIC weighting method objectively quantifies national sports capabilities. A regularized linear regression framework demonstrates superior generalization, achieving significantly higher test-set R^2 values than benchmark models.

Predictions identify the United States leading the medal table, leveraging systemic advantages and host benefits, while China and Japan maintain strong competitiveness. Declines in Ireland and Ukraine correlate with infrastructure deficits and geopolitical constraints. For 67 non-medal-projected nations, an Olympic event competitiveness matrix (incorporating participation breadth, athlete cohort size, and event-specific intensity) quantifies medal probabilities via TOPSIS analysis. Samoa emerges with the highest probability of securing its first medal through strategic focus on low-competition events.

Monte Carlo simulations validate prediction reliability by computing confidence intervals through stochastic input perturbations. Interval widths quantify prediction stability, with ground-truth coverage confirming model robustness.

The framework provides Olympic organizers with resource allocation insights and assists developing nations in formulating targeted sports policies. The quantified confidence intervals enable dynamic training prioritization, while the competitiveness matrix promotes equitable global sports development. Methodologically, the hybrid CRITIC-TOPSIS approach and probabilistic uncertainty quantification establish a generalizable paradigm for sports performance prediction, demonstrating theoretical and practical innovation.

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