

## **Clinching and Elimination of Playoff Berth in the NHL**

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**Abstract**—This paper considers the problem of determining as early as possible when teams in the NHL are mathematically qualified or eliminated from the playoffs. A mixed integer program formulation to determine mathematical qualification and elimination will be given via the rules outlined by the NHL. We also give a slightly simplified version of the MIP that is more computationally tractable and computational results for the 2003–2004 NHL season in which our method is able to detect qualification and elimination earlier than the rules currently used by the sports media.

**Keywords**—Integer program, Formulation, NHL, Applications

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