

ANIMAL Predictors

Paul the Octopus

Ahead of the European football championship in 2008, somebody at the Sea Life Centre in Oberhausen, Germany, sensed predictive powers in a resident Octopus named Paul. Two boxes of food were placed in front of Paul, one with the German flag, the other, the

opponent's. Paul chose Germany in six games, two of which Germany lost. Two years later, he went 8-0 in the 2010 World Cup, including "predicting" Germany's semi-final loss to Spain and Spain's victory in the final versus the Netherlands. Paul died about four months later.

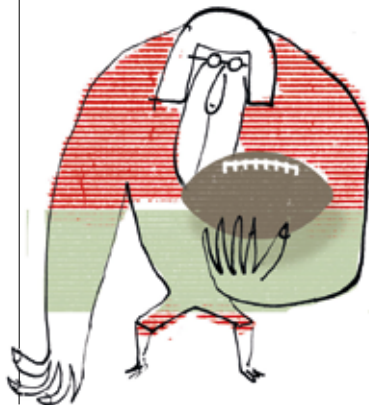


Oscar the Reaper Cat

Oscar, a therapy cat at Steere House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in the US city of Providence, Rhode Island, shows special affection for patients about to die. After Oscar "predicted" 25 deaths, caretakers at the hospital started calling the families of patients that Oscar graced with his attention. He seems to have foreseen more than 100 deaths, earning a feature story in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Eli the Superbowl Aficionado

Presented with two papier-mâché football helmets representing opponents in an upcoming Super Bowl, Eli the orangutan, a resident of Utah's Hogle Zoo, would choose one to bang around. Starting in 2007, the team's helmet he chose won the big game seven consecutive years. Eli died in 2014. His daughter Acara incorrectly predicted the Patriots would win last season's Super Bowl, dashing hopes she would inherit her father's gift.



Sonny the Sheep

New Zealander Sonny Wool correctly "predicted" all of his home team's matches in the 2011 Rugby World Cup. Sonny would choose between two boxes of hay, decorated with team flags. Described as anti-social around other sheep but a lover of human company, Sonny developed a fetish for rugby balls. After the 2011 games, he lost his touch. He retired after receiving death threats for incorrectly predicting an Ireland win over New Zealand.

Stock-Picking Monkeys

A Princeton economist wrote in 1973, "a blindfolded monkey throwing darts at a newspaper's financial pages could select a portfolio that would do just as well as one carefully selected by the experts." To sort of test that theory, The Wall Street Journal for 14 years ran a contest between human dart throwers and Wall Street experts. After 142 contests, the pros won, racking up an average 10.2 percent six-month investment gain over the dart throwers' 3.5 percent.

