

THE YPP FACTOR (YARDS PER POINT)

by Phil Steele

In my College Preview Magazine the last 13 yrs I've posted an article called The YPP Factor and it has been well received. Much like the Turnovers=Turnaround article, the system has had even greater success when I took the same concept I used for college football and transferred it to the NFL. The ypp (yards per point) concept is based on the amount of points a team scored per the amount of yards gained and conversely how many points the defense allows per yards allowed.

As I have stated in other articles, the NFL is a league of parity. I've done a lot of statistical research and found that teams that benefitted from outstanding ypp's one year usually had a weaker record the next season. The opposite was true for teams that had weak ypp's one year as they generally have a better record the next year. Let's start off with teams that had poor defensive ypp's. Going back to '99 there have been a total of 181 teams that allowed 14.6 ypp or lower. This means that teams allowed points more frequently than the NFL avg. Of those 181 teams, 128 of them improved their record the next season (70.7%)! Last year there were 11 teams in this category, 9 of which improved and 2 had the same record. This year there are 8 teams that have a 70.7% chance of improving after having a poor ypp of 14.6 or less last season.

As with most of the charts, I also looked at teams on the opposite side of the spectrum and the results have been nearly the same. Taking a look at the defensive ypp, I found teams that allow a point every 16.3 yards gained or higher do not get the same benefit the next year. Of the 191 NFL teams since 1999 that fell into this category, 121 have had a weaker record the next year (63.4%). A couple of examples are the Chicago Bears in 2001 who allowed a ridiculous 1 point for every 24.7 yds gained and were extremely fortunate to finish 13-3. The next year they went back to the NFL avg allowing a point for every 14.8 yards allowed and their record plummeted to 4-12. In 2009 the team with the best defensive ypp was Dallas. The Cowboys allowed 20.2 ypp and finished with an 11-5 record. In 2010 their ypp shrank to 12.9, the worst in the league, and they finished with a 6-10 record. Ten teams made the list in '15 with 5 having a weaker record, but surprisingly, 3 teams actually had a better record. Then I tightened the parameters and s/'05 found that teams (incl New England and Kansas City LY) which had a ypp of 18.5 or higher in one year had a weaker or the same record the next season 44 out of 51 times (86.3%). LY there were 10 again with 6 having worse records and 4 having better. This year's list

S/'99 TMS WITH DEF YPP'S 16.3 OR HIGHER

Total	191
Weaker	121 (63.4%)
Improved	62 (32.5%)
Same	8 (4.2%)

S/'05 TMS WITH DEF YPP'S 18.5 OR HIGHER

Total	51
Weaker	42 (82.4%)
Improved	7 (13.7%)
Same	2 (3.9%)

GOOD D YPP GOING DOWN

NE	19.8	JAX	17.1
LAC	19.3	PHI	16.6
MIN	17.5	LAR	16.5
BAL	17.2	NO	16.5
KC	17.2		

S/'99 TMS WITH DEF YPP'S 14.6 OR LOWER

Total	181
Improved	128 (70.7%)
POOR D YPP GOING UP	

DEN	12.1	ARZ	13.8
HOU	12.7	WAS	14.3
CLE	12.8	GB	14.5
MIA	13.7	IND	14.5

includes 9 more teams that had a defensive ypp of 16.3 or higher and it includes New England (19.8) & LA Chargers (19.3) who both surpassed the 18.5 plateau.

Now let's look at the offensive ypp. Teams that had the most points scored on the fewest yards gained caught a lot of breaks and generally don't catch the same breaks the next season. Going back to 1999 there were 126 teams that had a ypp on offense of 14.15 or lower. Of those 126 teams, 99 (78.6%) had weaker or identical records the next season. Since 2003 the best off ypp was New England with 11.17 in

S/'99 TMS WITH OFF YPP'S 14.15 OR LOWER

Total	126
Weaker	90 (71.4%)
Improved	29 (23.0%)
Same	9 (7.1%)

S/'03 TMS WITH OFF YPP'S 13.30 OR LOWER

Total	52
Weaker	40 (76.9%)
Improved	6 (11.5%)
Same	6 (11.5%)

GOOD O YPP GOING DOWN

LAR	12.1	DET	13.2
BAL	12.4	NE	13.8
PHI	12.8	JAX	14.0
		NO	14.0

S/'00 TMS WITH OFF YPP'S 17.45 OR HIGHER

Total	104
Improved	71 (68.3%)
POOR O YPP GOING UP	

NYG	20.4
DEN	18.0
MIA	17.5

2007 and they had five fewer wins in 2008. They were close again in 2010 finishing with an off ypp of 11.24 and dropped by a game in 2011. I wanted to sharpen the numbers even more so I looked at how teams have done following a season in which they had an offensive ypp of 13.30 or lower. I was surprised that it has occurred 52 times since 2003 and only six teams (11.5%) improved their record with 40 (76.9%) having a weaker record & 46 (88.5%) the same or weaker. This season, seven teams fit into the 14.15 or lower standard for this system (four below 13.30).

Conversely, teams that moved the ball but had trouble getting in the end zone have high ypp's. Those teams generally become more productive on offense the next season and their record improves. Going back to 2000, there has been a total of 104 teams in the NFL that had an offensive ypp of 17.45 or higher. Of those 104 teams, 76 (73.1%) had the same or better record the next season with 71 (68.3%) having a stronger record. The 2012 Kansas City Chiefs had the worst number since I had been keeping track of the stat at 24.2 and went on to improve their record by an incredible 9 wins. The Oakland Raiders were the worst in 2006 at 23.4 and were +2 wins the following season. The St Louis Rams were at 19.8 in 2008 but in 2009 had the worst numbers (25.5) in more than 5 seasons. It was rare to see a team make the same list in B2B years but the Rams went from 1-15 in 2009 to 7-9 in 2010. This year three teams make the list with the New York Giants having the high mark at 20.4.

I've also been tracking teams that appeared on both of the "Going Up" or "Going Down" sections and you can see those results in the boxes shown below.

<p>TEAMS IN BOTH GOING UP CATEGORIES</p> <p>2006-2017</p> <p>28-7-8 (80%)</p> <p>This Year's Teams: Denver, Miami</p>	<p>TEAMS IN BOTH GOING DOWN CATEGORIES</p> <p>2006-2017</p> <p>32-6-4 (84%)</p> <p>This Year's Teams: New England, LA Rams, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Jacksonville, New Orleans</p>
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I hope you enjoyed this article as much as I enjoyed writing it, as I love analyzing statistics. I will be doing other similar articles for both college football and the NFL on my website: PhilSteele.com. If you have any ideas or would like to add comments, check out the Phil Steele fansite on Facebook or follow me on Twitter @philsteele042.

NFL PREVIOUS YEARS YPP RESULTS

AFC	2017		2016		2015		2014		NFC	2017		2016		2015		2014	
	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF		OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF
Baltimore	12.4 (2)	17.2 (5)	16.2 (23)	16.1 (11)	17.5 (26)	13.4 (29)	14.3 (7)	17.9 (4)	Arizona	17.1 (24)	13.8 (28)	17.1 (24)	13.8 (28)	14.0 (5)	13.5 (28)	13.4 (4)	16.4 (10)
Buffalo	16.0 (19)	15.8 (14)	14.2 (8)	15.1 (19)	15.2 (14)	15.9 (15)	14.9 (11)	17.3 (7)	Atlanta	16.5 (21)	16.2 (10)	16.5 (21)	16.2 (10)	12.2 (1)	14.9 (21)	17.7 (28)	16.1 (12)
Cincinnati	18.1 (18)	21.8 (16)	17.6 (28)	17.8 (4)	13.7 (5)	19.5 (1)	15.3 (13)	16.7 (10)	Carolina	14.3 (8)	15.5 (17)	14.9 (13)	14.3 (23)	11.7 (1)	16.8 (9)	16.4 (20)	14.5 (23)
Cleveland	21.1 (32)	12.8 (30)	18.8 (30)	13.9 (25)	19.1 (30)	14.0 (25)	17.4 (27)	17.4 (6)	Chicago	17.4 (28)	16.0 (11)	20.4 (32)	13.9 (24)	16.5 (22)	13.9 (28)	16.4 (21)	13.6 (28)
Denver	18.0 (30)	12.1 (32)	15.5 (18)	17.0 (7)	16.0 (20)	15.3 (18)	13.4 (4)	13.8 (27)	Dallas	15.0 (13)	15.3 (19)	14.3 (9)	17.4 (5)	19.5 (31)	14.9 (21)	13.1 (3)	16.1 (11)
Houston	15.1 (15)	12.7 (31)	17.4 (26)	14.4 (22)	16.4 (21)	15.9 (16)	14.8 (10)	18.1 (3)	Detroit	13.2 (4)	15.1 (20)	16.1 (22)	15.8 (14)	15.5 (18)	14.0 (26)	17 (25)	17.1 (8)
Indianapolis	17.3 (26)	14.5 (25)	14.2 (7)	15.6 (16)	15.4 (16)	14.9 (22)	14.2 (6)	14.9 (21)	Green Bay	15.3 (17)	14.5 (26)	13.5 (2)	14.9 (20)	14.5 (9)	17.2 (7)	12.7 (2)	15.9 (13)
Jacksonville	14.0 (7)	17.1 (6)	16.9 (25)	12.9 (32)	14.8 (11)	13.4 (30)	18.6 (30)	14.4 (25)	LA Rams	12.1 (1)	16.5 (8)	18.8 (29)	13.7 (26)	17.0 (24)	17.8 (5)	15.5 (17)	15.9 (14)
Kansas City	14.5 (10)	17.2 (4)	14.1 (6)	19.1 (2)	13.1 (3)	18.4 (2)	14.4 (9)	18.8 (2)	Minnesota	14.9 (12)	17.5 (3)	15.4 (17)	16.4 (10)	14.1 (6)	18.2 (3)	15.5 (16)	16.1 (12)
LA Chargers	17.0 (23)	19.3 (2)	13.9 (4)	13.1 (31)	18.6 (29)	14.6 (24)	15.7 (18)	15.6 (15)	New Orleans	14.0 (6)	16.5 (9)	14.5 (11)	13.2 (30)	15.9 (19)	13.9 (27)	16.4 (22)	14.5 (24)
Miami	17.5 (29)	13.7 (29)	15.0 (14)	15.8 (13)	17.1 (25)	15.5 (17)	14.4 (8)	14.7 (22)	NY Giants	20.4 (31)	15.4 (18)	17.5 (27)	18.1 (3)	14.2 (7)	15.2 (19)	15.5 (15)	15 (19)
New England	13.8 (5)	19.8 (1)	13.8 (3)	20.0 (1)	12.9 (2)	17.2 (6)	12.5 (1)	17.6 (5)	Philadelphia	12.8 (3)	16.6 (7)	14.7 (12)	16.6 (8)	15.5 (17)	14.9 (20)	13.4 (5)	15 (20)
NY Jets	16.4 (20)	14.8 (22)	19.2 (31)	13.4 (29)	15.3 (15)	16.2 (11)	18.5 (29)	13.1 (30)	San Francisco	16.9 (22)	14.7 (24)	16.0 (20)	13.5 (27)	20.4 (32)	16.0 (14)	17.1 (26)	15.1 (18)
Oakland	18.8 (25)	15.0 (21)	14.4 (10)	15.3 (17)	14.9 (12)	14.6 (23)	17.8 (28)	12.7 (32)	Seattle	14.4 (9)	15.6 (15)	16.0 (21)	17.2 (6)	14.3 (8)	16.9 (8)	15.3 (14)	16.8 (9)
Pittsburgh	14.9 (11)	15.9 (12)	15.3 (16)	16.5 (9)	14.9 (13)	18.2 (4)	15.1 (12)	15.4 (16)	Tampa Bay	17.4 (27)	15.8 (13)	15.7 (19)	16.0 (12)	17.6 (27)	13.1 (31)	16.9 (24)	14.4 (26)
Tennessee	15.0 (14)	14.7 (23)	15.0 (15)	15.1 (18)	16.7 (23)	12.9 (32)	19.1 (32)	13.6 (29)	Washington	15.2 (16)	14.3 (27)	16.3 (24)	15.8 (15)	14.6 (10)	16.1 (13)	19.1 (31)	13 (31)