

# THE YPP FACTOR (YARDS PER POINT)

by Phil Steele

In my College Preview Magazine the last 12 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 170 teams that allowed 14.6 ypp or lower. This means that teams allowed points more frequently than the NFL avg. Of those 170 teams, 119 of them improved their record the next season (70.0%)! Last year there were 10 teams in this category, 6 of which improved and 1 had the same record. This year there are 11 teams that have a 70% 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 181 NFL teams since 1999 that fell into this category, 115 have had a weaker record the next year (63.5%). 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 Cincinnati LY) which had a ypp of 18.5 or higher in one year had a weaker or the same record the next season 40 out of 49 times (81.6%). LY there were 10 again with 5 having worse records, 4 having better and 1 the same. This year's list includes 10

more teams that had a D ypp of 16.3 or higher and it includes New England (20.0) & Kansas City (19.1) 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 120 teams that had a ypp on offense of 14.15 or lower. Of those 120 teams, 95 (79.2%) had weaker or identical records the next season. Since 2003 the best off ypp was New England with 11.17 in 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 51 times since 2003 and only six teams (11.8%) improved their record (2 LY w/NE & KC) with 39 (76.5%) having a weaker record & 45 (88.2%) the same or weaker. This season, six teams fit into the 14.15 or lower standard for this system (one 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 have been a total of 98 teams in the NFL that had an offensive ypp of 17.45 or higher. Of those 98 teams, 72 (73.5%) had the same or better record the next season with 68 (69.4%) having a stronger record. The 2012 Kansas City Chiefs had the worst number since I have 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 saw 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 six teams make the list with the Chicago Bears 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.

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

Total 170  
Improved 119 (70.0%)  
**POOR D YPP GOING UP**

JAX	12.9	LAR	13.7
LAC	13.1	CLE	13.9
NO	13.2	CHI	13.9
NYJ	13.4	CAR	14.3
ARZ	13.5	HOU	14.4
SF	13.5		

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

Total 120  
Weaker 86 (71.7%)  
Improved 27 (22.5%)  
Same 9 (7.5%)

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

Total 51  
Weaker 39 (76.5%)  
Improved 6 (11.8%)  
Same 6 (11.8%)

**GOOD O YPP GOING DOWN**

ATL	12.2	LAC	13.9
GB	13.5	ARZ	14.0
NE	13.8	KC	14.1

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

Total 98  
Improved 68 (69.4%)  
**POOR O YPP GOING UP**

CHI	20.4	LAR	18.8
NYJ	19.2	CIN	17.6
CLE	18.8	NYG	17.5

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

Total 181  
Weaker 115 (63.5%)  
Improved 58 (32.0%)  
Same 8 (4.4%)

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

Total 49  
Weaker 40 (81.6%)  
Improved 7 (14.3%)  
Same 2 (4.1%)

## GOOD D YPP GOING DOWN

NE	20.0	SEA	17.2
KC	19.1	DEN	17.0
NYG	18.1	PHI	16.6
CIN	17.8	PIT	16.5
DAL	17.4	MIN	16.4

category, 115 have had a weaker record the next year (63.5%). 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 Cincinnati LY) which had a ypp of 18.5 or higher in one year had a weaker or the same record the next season 40 out of 49 times (81.6%). LY there were 10 again with 5 having worse records, 4 having better and 1 the same. This year's list includes 10

<p><b>TEAMS IN BOTH GOING UP CATEGORIES</b></p> <p>2006-2016</p> <p><b>26-6-1 (81%)</b></p> <p>This Year's Teams:</p> <p>Chicago, Cleveland, LA Rams, NY Jets</p>	<p><b>TEAMS IN BOTH GOING DOWN CATEGORIES</b></p> <p>2006-2016</p> <p><b>30-6-4 (83%)</b></p> <p>This Year's Teams:</p> <p>Kansas City, New England</p>
---	---

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	2016		2015		2014		2013		NFC	2016		2015		2014		2013	
	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF		OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF	OFF	DEF
Baltimore	16.2 (23)	16.1 (11)	17.5 (26)	13.4 (29)	14.3 (7)	17.9 (4)	15.4 (18)	15.3 (14)	Arizona	14.0 (5)	13.5 (28)	13.4 (4)	16.4 (10)	16.5 (23)	19.7 (1)	14.6 (14)	15.7 (12)
Buffalo	14.2 (8)	15.1 (19)	15.2 (14)	15.9 (15)	14.9 (11)	17.3 (7)	16.0 (25)	13.7 (24)	Atlanta	12.2 (1)	14.9 (21)	11.7 (28)	16.1 (12)	15.9 (19)	15.3 (17)	15.6 (21)	13.7 (25)
Cincinnati	17.6 (28)	17.8 (4)	13.7 (5)	19.5 (1)	15.3 (13)	16.7 (10)	13.7 (6)	16.0 (11)	Carolina	14.9 (13)	14.3 (23)	11.7 (1)	16.8 (9)	16.4 (20)	14.5 (23)	13.8 (8)	20.0 (1)
Cleveland	18.8 (30)	13.9 (25)	19.1 (30)	14.0 (25)	17.4 (27)	17.4 (6)	17.6 (29)	13.1 (29)	Chicago	20.4 (32)	13.9 (24)	16.5 (22)	13.9 (28)	16.4 (21)	13.6 (28)	13.7 (7)	13.2 (28)
Denver	15.5 (18)	17.0 (7)	16.0 (20)	15.3 (18)	13.4 (4)	13.8 (27)	12.1 (1)	14.3 (19)	Dallas	14.3 (9)	17.4 (5)	19.5 (31)	14.9 (21)	13.1 (3)	16.1 (11)	12.4 (2)	15.4 (13)
Houston	17.4 (26)	14.4 (22)	16.4 (21)	15.9 (16)	14.8 (10)	18.1 (3)	20.1 (32)	11.9 (31)	Detroit	16.1 (22)	15.8 (14)	15.5 (18)	14.0 (26)	17 (25)	17.1 (8)	15.9 (23)	14.8 (16)
Indianapolis	14.2 (7)	15.6 (16)	15.4 (16)	14.9 (22)	14.2 (6)	14.9 (21)	14.0 (10)	17.0 (7)	Green Bay	13.5 (2)	14.9 (20)	14.5 (9)	17.2 (7)	12.7 (2)	15.9 (13)	15.4 (17)	13.9 (21)
Jacksonville	19.6 (25)	12.9 (32)	14.8 (11)	13.4 (30)	18.6 (30)	14.4 (25)	19.0 (31)	13.5 (26)	LA Rams	18.8 (29)	13.7 (26)	17.0 (24)	17.8 (5)	15.5 (17)	15.9 (14)	14.0 (11)	15.2 (15)
Kansas City	14.1 (6)	19.1 (2)	13.1 (3)	18.4 (2)	14.4 (9)	18.8 (2)	12.5 (3)	19.3 (2)	Minnesota	15.4 (17)	16.4 (10)	14.1 (6)	18.2 (3)	15.5 (16)	16.1 (12)	14.1 (12)	13.3 (27)
LA Chargers	13.9 (4)	13.1 (31)	18.6 (29)	14.6 (24)	15.7 (18)	15.6 (15)	15.9 (24)	16.9 (8)	New Orleans	14.5 (11)	13.2 (30)	15.9 (19)	13.9 (27)	16.4 (22)	14.5 (24)	15.4 (20)	16.1 (10)
Miami	15.0 (14)	15.8 (13)	17.1 (25)	15.5 (17)	14.4 (8)	14.7 (22)	15.8 (22)	17.2 (6)	NY Giants	17.5 (27)	18.1 (3)	14.2 (7)	15.2 (19)	15.5 (15)	15 (19)	16.7 (27)	13.9 (22)
New England	13.8 (3)	20.0 (1)	12.9 (2)	17.2 (6)	12.5 (1)	17.6 (5)	13.9 (9)	17.7 (5)	Philadelphia	14.7 (12)	16.6 (8)	15.5 (17)	14.9 (20)	13.4 (5)	15 (20)	15.1 (16)	16.5 (9)
NY Jets	19.2 (31)	13.4 (29)	15.3 (15)	16.2 (11)	18.5 (29)	13.1 (30)	17.6 (28)	13.8 (23)	San Francisco	16.0 (20)	13.5 (27)	20.4 (32)	16.0 (14)	17.1 (26)	15.1 (18)	12.8 (4)	18.6 (4)
Oakland	14.4 (10)	15.3 (17)	14.9 (12)	14.6 (23)	17.8 (28)	12.7 (32)	16.6 (26)	12.8 (30)	Seattle	16.0 (21)	17.2 (6)	14.3 (8)	16.9 (8)	15.3 (14)	16.8 (9)	13.0 (5)	19.0 (3)
Pittsburgh	15.3 (16)	16.5 (9)	14.9 (13)	18.2 (4)	15.1 (12)	15.4 (16)	14.2 (13)	14.6 (17)	Tampa Bay	15.7 (19)	16.0 (12)	17.6 (27)	13.1 (31)	16.9 (24)	14.4 (26)	15.4 (19)	14.3 (18)
Tennessee	15.0 (15)	15.1 (18)	16.7 (23)	12.9 (32)	19.1 (32)	13.6 (29)	14.9 (15)	14.2 (20)	Washington	16.3 (24)	15.8 (15)	14.6 (10)	16.1 (13)	19.1 (31)	13 (31)	17.7 (30)	11.9 (32)