

YPP Offensive Factor

By Phil Steele

The last 8 years the teams in the Boxes on this page are an amazing 166-41-34 doing what the charts expected either Going Up or Going Down! Metrics, Metrics, Metrics. I put this article in for the first time in 2004 & it continues to be an accurate forecaster of whether a team will record will finish with a stronger or weaker record the next year. First of all, let me explain what YPP is exactly. A YPP is simply yards per point. An offense is more efficient when their YPP is a lower number. If a team had an offensive YPP of 10.0, that would mean for every 200 yards gained, they scored 20 points. Meanwhile, if they had an offensive YPP of 20.0, then for every 200 yards gained, they only scored 10 points. Defenses want to have a higher YPP. Inverting the same thought, if a team allowed 200 yards and had a 20.0 YPP, that means they would allow just 10 points for every 200 yards the opposition traveled, whereas a 10.0 YPP would be 20 points for every 200 yards allowed. When I started this research in 1990, the average YPP for a team was 15.44. With all the rule changes slanted to the offense, it is no surprise that the median has dropped significantly since then (13.87 in '20, 14.1 '21, 13.9 '23, 14.3 '24).

This year I did five years of research for the FCS. I looked at the 2024 season based on 2025's YPP's. I looked at the 2025 season based on 2023's YPP's. I did the 2023 season based on the 2022 YPP numbers. I did the 2022 season based on the 2021 YPP numbers. I skipped 2021 as it would have been based on the wacky Fall/Spring season of 2020 and I also skipped the unusual and disruptive 2020 season. The next year I used was 2019 and that was based on 2018's results. Therefore unlike the FBS version which has 23 years of research this FCS version has just 8 years but the numbers were similar.

I found teams that had a high Offensive YPP (move the ball but do not score) the previous year generally have a stronger record the next season. Let's look at teams that had an unusually high YPP the previous year (an inefficient offense). If you look at the chart in my FBS magazine you will see that 36 teams have had a YPP greater than 22.4 since 1990 and ALL 36 have had a stronger or identical record the next year.. The FCS numbers are listed below. Since there are less years I pulled it down to 15.2 and higher and there were 200 times it happened in the 5 years with a 73.0% success rate. 23 teams were 19.6 or higher and those had a success rate of 91.3%.

OFFENSIVE YPP	PREV YEAR YPP	Happen Times Last 5 yr	Stronger Record Next Yr	Same Record Next Yr	Weaker Record Next Yr	Stronger Or Same Record S/1990
PREVIOUS YEAR	19.6 or higher	23	17	4	2	91.3%
Last 5 years	16.56-19.59	92	56	12	24	73.9%
	15.2-16.55	85	44	13	28	67.0%
	15.2 or higher	200	117	29	54	73.0%

GOING UP : 13 teams had an Offensive YPP higher than 17.9 (Last year teams 9 teams, 7-1-1 improve at 17.9+):
Samford (23.1), Northwestern St (22.1), Columbia (19.9), Portland St (19.5), Fordham (19.5), Tenn St (19.4)
Utah Tech 19.4 (18.5), Charleston Sthrn (18.9), VMI (18.3), Mercyhurst (18.3), Northern Iowa (18.2), Robert Morris (18.1), Murray St (18.1).

Teams that had an extremely low YPP the previous year, usually have a weaker record the next season. The statistics are not as dominant as the high YPP, usually because there are some teams that benefit from turnovers on a yearly basis, keeping their YPP low. Still, according to the FBS chart, teams whose YPP were less than 11.50 the previous year had either a weaker or the same record 74.2% of the time the next year. The results were surprising at the top as the 11.77 or lower category actually had a little lower success rate than the next category. Just like the FBS stats this category did not have as much success with the overall success rate at 66.8% as opposed to the 73.0% success rate in the box above. That is partially attributed to the power teams being dominant every year in the YPP and those teams having solid records every year. Here is the Chart for teams that had beneficial YPP last year.

OFFENSIVE YPP	PREV YEAR YPP	Happen Times Last 5 yrs	Weaker Record Next Year	Same Record Next Year	Stronger Record Next Year	Weaker Or Same Record S/1990
PREVIOUS YEAR	11.77 or lower	43	25	5	13	69.7%
Last 5 years	11.78-12.75	107	65	7	35	67.2%
	12.76-13.3	64	34	7	23	66.7%
	13.3 or lower	214	124	19	71	66.8%

GOING DOWN : Here are the teams with the lowest Offensive YPP last year: (12.0 or less 6-2 weaker record last year!)
Tarleton (10.8), Alabama St (10.9), UTRGV (11.1), SF Austin (11.1), Tenn Tech (11.1),
Montana (11.1), Montana St (11.4), North Dakota (11.8), Harvard (12.0),

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