The Mediocrity of the Minnesota Vikings

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# Introduction

The Minnesota Vikings may be one of the most tortured sports franchises in history, with four Super Bowl appearances and the 5th most playoff appearances by any franchise but no league championships to show for it. The Vikings are perhaps the best example of Minnesota’s sports mediocrity, with each of its major men’s sports teams (Timberwolves, Twins, Wild, and Vikings) consistently making the playoffs but never winning a championship over the last 20 years. The last time Minnesota won a sporting title in a men’s sport was the 1991 world series win by the twins, 33 years ago.

# Research Question

This then leaves every frustrated Minnesota sports fan with a question; we all feel that our teams our mediocre yet rarely bring up statistics to back up this claim. Is there some way we as a tortured fanbase can simply show a chart to summarize the mediocrity of the Vikings past 20 seasons?

# The Data

The data used to examine this question was scraped from pro-football reference. The data is season by season stats for each team from 2003 to 2022, which had to be pulled via 3 different pages and then combined vis python script. Basic data cleaning was done after this to make column headers more readable, remove NA values, and ensure data was aligned properly.

# Methodology

The methodology for this project is relatively straightforward. First, an ML model was built to determine which team statistics were most important as indicators of winning a Super Bowl. After the stats were identified, visualizations were created showing the Vikings year over year stats compared to the league average as well as the Super Bowl winner from each season. These plots would illustrate to the world just how mediocre a franchise the Vikings truly are over an impressive amount of time.

# Results

## Graph 1: Opponent’s Offensive Yards vs the Vikings

This graph shows the offensive yards gained by opponents vs the Vikings defense year over year. The gold line is the Super Bowl winner from that year, the blue line is the league average, and the purple line is the Vikings.

A graph with lines and numbers

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

## Graph 2: Vikings Offensive Yards

This graph shows the offensive yards gained by the Vikings offense year over year. The gold line is the Super Bowl winner from that year, the blue line is the league average, and the purple line is the Vikings.

A graph showing the growth of the company

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

## Graph 3: Opponent’s Points Scored vs the Vikings

This graph shows the points scored by opponents vs the Vikings defense year over year. The gold line is the Super Bowl winner from that year, the blue line is the league average, and the purple line is the Vikings.

A graph with lines and dots

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

## Graph 4: Offensive Rank Vs Defensive Rank of NFL Franchises

This scatter plot shows the offensive and defensive ranks of NFL franchises over the last 20 years. The gold dots are franchises that won a Super Bowl in that timeframe, the blue dots are franchises that have not, and the lone purple dot is the Vikings.

A graph with blue and orange dots

Description automatically generated

## Graph 5: Division Win Rate, League Average vs the Vikings

This simple column chart shows the league average division win rate vs the Vikings division win rate over the last 20 seasons.

A blue and purple squares

Description automatically generated

# Conclusion

Ultimately, the Vikings are the definition of a mediocre sports franchise. A Swiss watch is no more consistent than the Vikings’ football mediocrity. The people of Minnesota may remained tortured for a while longer, but at least we can revel in our minimal relevance.

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