

Do Defenses Win Championships?

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Rankings of Past Superbowl Champions

Year	Champion	Champion Defense Rank	Champion Offense Rank
2016	Denver Broncos	4	16
2015	New England Patriots	8	11
2014	Seattle Seahawks	1	18
2013	Baltimore Ravens	12	16
2012	New York Giants	25	8
2011	Green Bay Packers	2	9
2010	New Orleans Saints	20	1
2009	Pittsburgh Steelers	1	22
2008	New York Giants	17	16
2007	Indianapolis Colts	23	3
2006	Pittsburgh Steelers	4	15
2005	New England Patriots	2	7

Moskowitz and Wertheim

- In the first 45 super bowls, the better defense won 29 times, while the better offense won 25
- In 427 playoff games, the better defense won 58% of the time, while the better offense won 62%
- In 10,000 regular season matchups, the better defense has won 66.5% and the better offense has won 67.4% of the time
- Essentially a stalemate

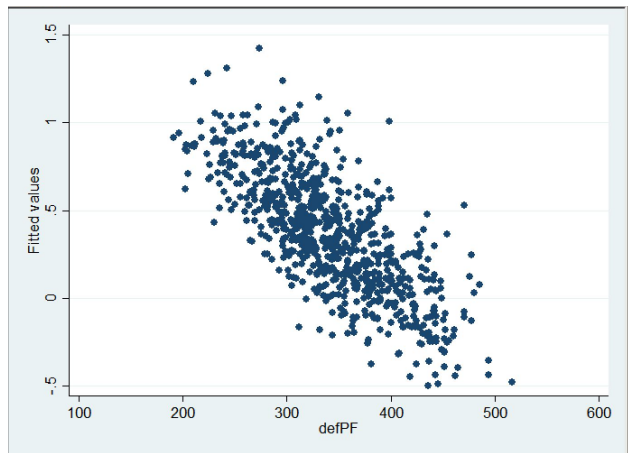
Regressions

	(1) winpercent	(2) playoffteam	(3) SBteam
defpa	-0.00179*** (-22.04)	-0.00338*** (-9.18)	-0.000196 (-0.83)
defydsplay	0.00963 (0.96)	-0.00981 (-0.22)	-0.0929** (-3.19)
offpf	0.00161*** (36.17)	0.00310*** (15.32)	0.00103*** (7.98)
offyp	0.000299*** (4.16)	0.000909** (2.78)	0.0000827 (0.40)
todiff	0.00106** (2.76)	0.00273 (1.57)	0.000407 (0.37)
_cons	0.507*** (13.73)	0.523** (3.12)	0.258* (2.41)
N	780	780	780
R-sq	0.843	0.503	0.144
adj. R-sq	0.842	0.499	0.139

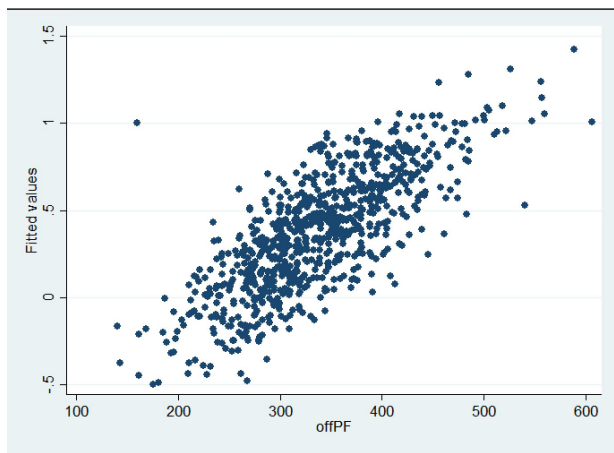
t statistics in parentheses

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

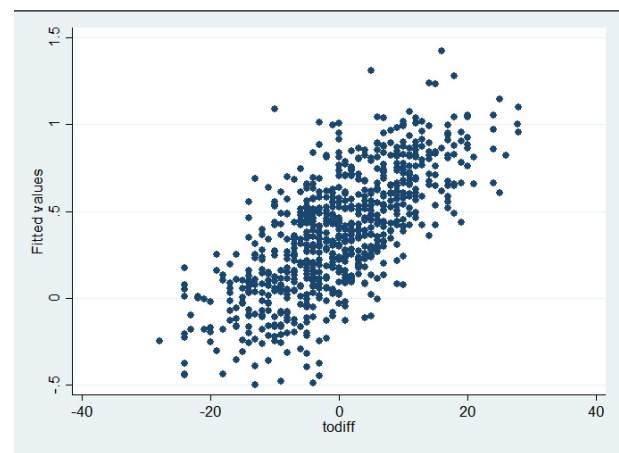
Likelihood of Making the Playoffs



Defense Points Allowed



Offense Points Scored



Turnover Differential

Logit Comparisons

Logistic regression

Number of obs = 780

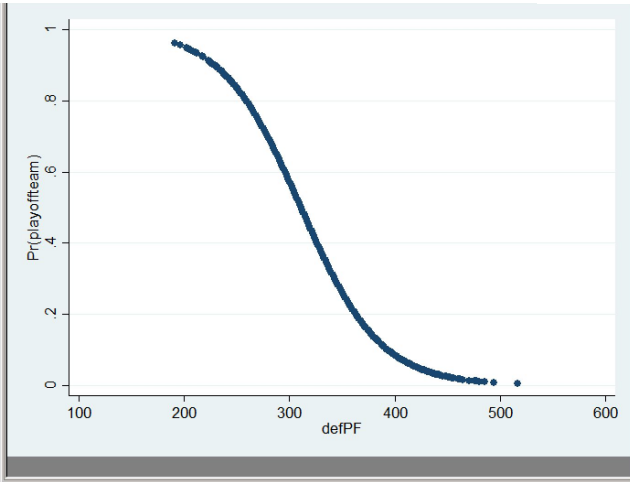
LR chi2(2) = 538.14

Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

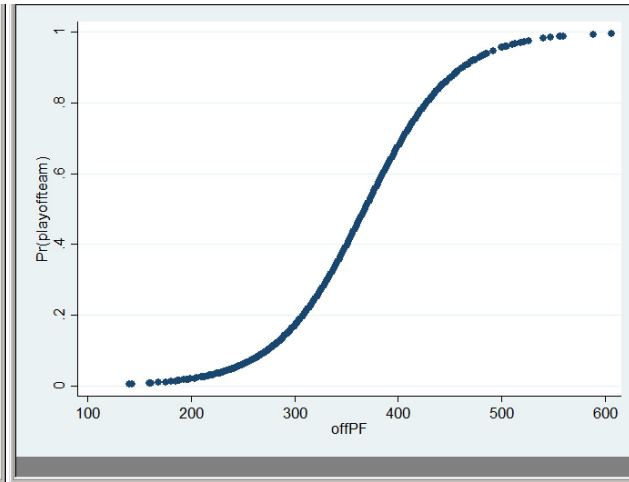
Pseudo R2 = 0.5222

Log likelihood = -246.17583

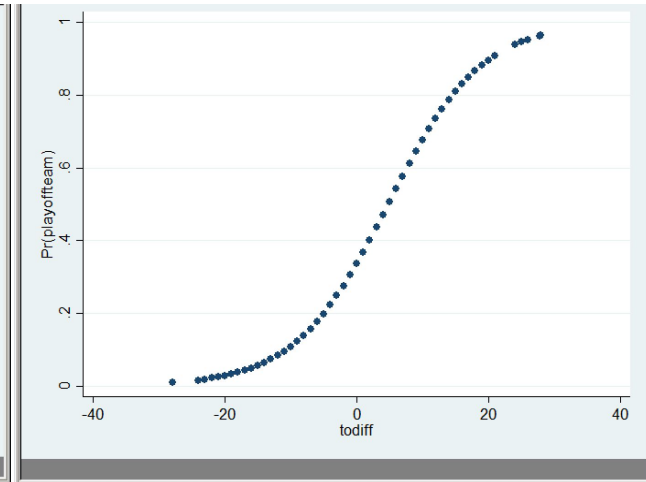
playoffteam	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
defpa	-.0345042	.0029561	-11.67	0.000	-.0402981	-.0287103
offpf	.0304041	.0025585	11.88	0.000	.0253896	.0354187
_cons	.2519848	.9423895	0.27	0.789	-1.595065	2.099034



Defense Points Allowed



Offense Points Scored



Turnover Differential