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Patriots And The Belichick System In The Age Of Parity

During Pete Rozelle's time as the Commissioner of the National Football League, he had few ambitions higher than that of achieving parity in the League he so loved. Rules were shaped and reshaped in his 29-year tenure in an attempt to ensure that every team in the NFL would have the opportunity to compete for a title, and to prevent the type of dynasties that had previously held sway over professional football - the dynasties once enjoyed by the Packers, Cowboys, Steelers, and 49ers of the football world. The desire for parity played a role in every key NFL decision - from revenue-sharing to free agency to the order of the draft - and few could argue with the results. In fact, only one team has managed to create anything close to a dynasty over the last ten years of the League's history: the New England Patriots.

From 2000 until today

A glance at any list of Super Bowl Winners over the last ten years reveals that the Patriots are really the only team to escape the gravitational pull of parity and soar into the stratosphere. Under Bill Belichick's leadership, the Patriots have appeared in four of the last ten Super Bowls and won three of those contests. Their appearances in the title game are double that of their nearest competitors, the Indianapolis Colts and Pittsburgh Steelers, making the Patriots the only true dynasty of the age of parity. Under Belichick, the Patriots have won their division six of ten times, won their conference four times, and managed a winning record of one-hundred and sixteen wins to only forty-five losses. That remarkable streak of success also includes an undefeated regular season campaign in 2007.

System success

Some have attributed Belichick's winning ways to what they say is an underrated quarterback in Tom Brady. Others simply believe they have benefited from an imagined decline in the across the board level of talent in the NFL. Most scoff at both notions. While Brady has been an effective field general for the team, there is no arguing with the fact that it is Belichick's overall coaching and management system that has allowed the Patriots to prosper in the age of parity.

The system works

Ten years of watching the Patriots win are certainly enough for any objective observer to understand how they do it. The truth is that, like Vince Lombardi with Green Bay in the 1960s, Belichick has created a team goal that involves only one thing: winning. No matter who takes the field, self-interest must be set aside for the collective betterment of the team as a whole. Offensive and defensive players all know what is expected of them, and they know that outburst driven by ego will get them benched and even traded in the Belichick system. Anything that disrupts the team's cohesiveness is ruthlessly eliminated. As a result, the Patriots have filled their roster with players who act like a team, and win as one. The team is satisfied with nothing short of winning the division, conference, and title games.

He has instilled this mindset within the halls of management and within the locker room, and has enabled the Patriots to rise above the mediocrity of middle-ground NFL parity and find a place among the few elite teams in the modern National Football League.

Freddie Brister is a huge fan of all sports and recommends checking out his [New England Patriots Blanket](#) and [Boston Red Sox bedding](#) at his shop.

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