

PRAISE FOR THE PATRIOTS

“This is as close as it gets to being an all-time great football team, and if they win [a third] Super Bowl, they will have to be classified as that.”¹

– *Bill Walsh, Hall of Fame coach who won three Super Bowls with the San Francisco 49ers*

“Belichick, owner Bob Kraft and personnel director Scott Pioli have fashioned a formula other franchises are struggling to emulate. It is now called, around the league and in most teams’ front offices, doing things ‘the Patriots way.’”²

– *Len Pasquarelli, ESPN*

“Bill [Belichick] has done the best coaching job in football. Bar none.”³

– *Don Shula, Hall of Fame coach of the 17-0 1972 Miami Dolphins*

“The Patriots... should someday occupy a historical place in the pantheon of outstanding teams.”⁴

– *Paul Zimmerman, Sports Illustrated*

“That’s one of the great coaching jobs in the history of this league.”⁵

– *Ernie Accorsi, New York Giants general manager*

“[Bill Belichick]’s clearly the diamond of the coaches in this league and deserves special notice, credit and praise... Bill is probably the standard for the rest of us in the league, how he manages the game, his team... He’s a Hall of Fame head coach. He may be as good as there has ever been.”⁶

– *Mike Martz, St. Louis Rams head coach*

“The Patriots’ achievement is not only unprecedented but also remarkable when you consider how competitive our league is today. Congratulations to the entire Patriots organization on this extraordinary milestone.”⁷

– *Official statement of NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue on the Patriots’ NFL-record 19-game winning streak*

“This is the preeminent organization in American team sports, providing a blueprint [for success]. It’s a feat that should be heralded as a sporting miracle.”⁸

– *Jay Mariotti, Chicago Sun-Times*

“It’s the most incredible thing I’ve seen in sports.”⁹

– *Philadelphia Eagles owner Jeff Lurie, on the 2001 Patriots’ Super Bowl win*

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“Their streak [is] on top of all the others. . . .If you’re really good today, you’ve got to replace a \$10 million player with a \$400,000 player almost every year, and the Cadillac has to keep running.”

– *Ron Wolf, general manager of the Super Bowl XXXI-winning Green Bay Packers*

“It’s just a phenomenal thing they’ve done here in the past two years. It’s borderline unbelievable.”¹⁰

– *Wayne Chrebet, New York Jets wide receiver*

“They do a better job of evaluating talent, developing and coaching talent . . .than anybody in the National Football League, and they’ve done it in spite of injuries, in spite of the cap, in spite of free agency. Everybody can learn from them.”¹¹

– *Carl Peterson, Kansas City Chiefs general manager*

“[Patriots owner Bob Kraft] brought a vision to the task of rebuilding a team . . . and basically rescued the franchise. He delivered a state-of-the-art, privately-financed stadium and two Super Bowl championships within a decade. . . .He is a model sports owner and CEO.”¹²

– *NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue*

“We need to get as many Bob Krafts as we can into this league . . . He doesn’t only want to build the Patriots but to build the league.”¹³

– *Jerry Jones, Dallas Cowboys owner*

“They play very, very, very smart. Dean Smith, in his book, *The Carolina Way*, says the underlying theme of everything he wants from his teams are play hard, play smart, play together. The Patriots are the epitome of that in the NFL. . . .Their streak is phenomenal.”¹⁴

– *Bill Polian, president of the Indianapolis Colts and 5-time NFL Executive of the Year*

“There’s no disgrace in losing to New England, everybody does it these days.”¹⁵

– *Dave Bolling, Tacoma News Tribune*

“[Belichick is] the greatest coach in the game and one of the greatest of all time . . . He has stepped into the territory of a legend.”¹⁶

– *Vic Carucci, NFL.com national editor*

“From start to finish, it’s the best coaching job anyone has [ever] done.”¹⁷

– *Bill Parcells, multi-Super Bowl winning coach, on the 2001 Patriots’ Super Bowl victory*

“The Rams [were] the most formidable offense the NFL’s ever seen... [Winning Super Bowl XXXVI] was the best coaching job I’ve ever seen.”¹⁸

– *Ron Jaworski, ESPN analyst and former NFL quarterback*

“Opposing teams have to ask two questions—first, how do you build an organization like this? Second, how do you stop this Instrument Of Death now that someone else *has* built it? [Theirs is] the most impressive streak in the history of professional football... I stand in awe of what this team has done.”¹⁹

– *Doug Farrar, Seahawks.net*

“The longest winning streak in NFL history... [is] perhaps the most remarkable achievement in the annals of U.S. team sports... The Patriots are unique because their roster’s neither brimming with Hall of Famers nor the product of steadfast continuity. They have no lock on the great players of the era and, in fact, have willingly rid themselves of premium talents coveted by their rivals... They often fill the gaps by shopping garage sales, by finding a use for the unwanted... They’ll gladly whip your high-priced free agent with an undrafted nobody.”²⁰

– *Bob Dicesare, The Buffalo News*

“They’ve really set the model for other teams to look at and say, ‘Hey, if you want to win games, this is kind of how you should orchestrate it.’ ... Their players get it. They understand that it is about the team. ... It’s not the name on the back of the jersey, it’s the emblem on the side of the helmet that you want to play for. And you want to coach for, really.”²¹

– *New York Jets head coach Herman Edwards*

“Belichick is currently the best coach in the league—something that’s not arguable anymore. Nobody is as prepared as this group. It’s almost as if they relish the challenge. Take away their star players, so what? They’ll scheme you and beat you with what they have left.”²²

– *Pete Prisco, CBS Sportsline*

“You know you’re good when teams take satisfaction in playing you close.”²³

– *Kimberly Jones, The Star-Ledger*

“Patriots players have bought into a successful system that is revolutionizing the game in a fashion that hasn’t been seen in the NFL since the Bill Walsh heyday with the 49ers back in the ’80s. ... In a me-first era in professional sports, [Belichick] has somehow resurrected old-fashioned notions of team and made them paramount... Nobody on the Patriots treats touchdowns, or any other on-field accomplishment, as the first step in a marketing scheme.”²⁴

– *Mark Starr, Newsweek*

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“Like Belichick, Paul Brown and Tom Landry... were dry and colorless characters, the antithesis of the classic emotional model of the American football coach, the Knute Rockne, Vince Lombardi, Bear Bryant type. But as Brown’s and Landry’s franchises eventually influenced all their rivals, so have Belichick’s Patriots begun to change the way other NFL teams operate. ...The 21st Century organization man, Belichick, has made the Patriots the bellwether franchise of this NFL generation.”²⁵

– *Frank Deford, Sports Illustrated*

“[The Patriots’ lack of obvious Hall of Famers] might define New England, in the end, as the best *team* of them all.”²⁶

– *Len Pasquarelli, ESPN*

“It’s an unbelievable thing they’ve done.”²⁷

– *Mike Holmgren, Seattle Seahawks head coach and Super Bowl-winning head coach*

“New England VP of player personnel Scott Pioli [is] the state-of-the-art roster-builder in football right now, a guy who can deal with [salary] cap troubles by making smart decisions on second-day draft choices and middle-class free agents.”²⁸

– *Peter King, Sports Illustrated*

Al Michaels: “‘Genius’ is thrown around too loosely, but, when it comes to defense, tell me someone better than Belichick.”

John Madden: “There’s no one better.”²⁹

– *Monday Night Football*

“The machine has won 26 of 27.”³⁰

– *ESPN “Sports Center”*