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Roger Staubach and Jones Lang LaSalle predicting Patriots Super Bowl victory: firm uses commercial real estate statistics to pick winner

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After proving the critics wrong last year with their prescient pick of the Green Bay Packers in Super Bowl XLV, commercial real estate services firm Jones Lang LaSalle is looking to make it a perfect 2-for-2 by predicting the New England Patriots over the New York Giants in this year's big game in Indianapolis.

While the so-called experts look to point differentials, quarterback ratings and other on-the-field stats, the team at Jones Lang LaSalle is once again sticking with what it knows best — commercial real estate — to determine their pick.

According to the firm's analysis of the last dozen Super Bowls, teams based in cities with a higher abundance of vacant office space have won the Lombardi Trophy exactly two-thirds of the time.

For instance, last year, office vacancy rates stood at 18.9% in Green Bay and only 12.1% in Pittsburgh as the Packers edged the Steelers 31-25, affirming the Jones Lang LaSalle prediction. The same held true in 2006 when Pittsburgh (15.9% vacancy rate in Boston) bested Seattle (10.5%), and also in 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001 and 2000.

As for this year, the overall office vacancy rate in New York City (Downtown, Midtown and Midtown South) stood at 10.4% as of Jan. 1, while Boston, home of the Patriots, reported a rate of 20.5%.

"We hit it on the money last year with the Packers and I'm confident that we've got it right again this time with the Patriots," said Roger Staubach, Jones Lang LaSalle's executive chairman and a man who knows a thing or two about football himself. "Of course it has nothing to do with the fact that Bill Belichick went to the Naval Academy and I'm a big fan."

"I said it last year and I'll say it again, this vacancy rate hypothesis is the real deal."

Staubach, who led his Dallas Cowboy teams to victories in Super Bowl VI and Super Bowl XII, also took it a step further this year, saying that the wide disparity between the two hometowns' vacancy rates points to a decisive outcome.

"If you look at the spread between the two cities, it's about 10 points," he said. "I think you're going to see Tom Brady and the Patriots win by about the same margin on Sunday."

Incidentally, had the Conference Championship games turned out differently, the Baltimore Ravens (office vacancy rate of 15% in the city of Baltimore) would have had the edge over the Giants, while the San Francisco 49ers (15.6% office vacancy in the overall San Francisco market) would have been decided underdogs to the Patriots.

A Baltimore-San Francisco match-up, meanwhile, would have favored the 'Niners.