

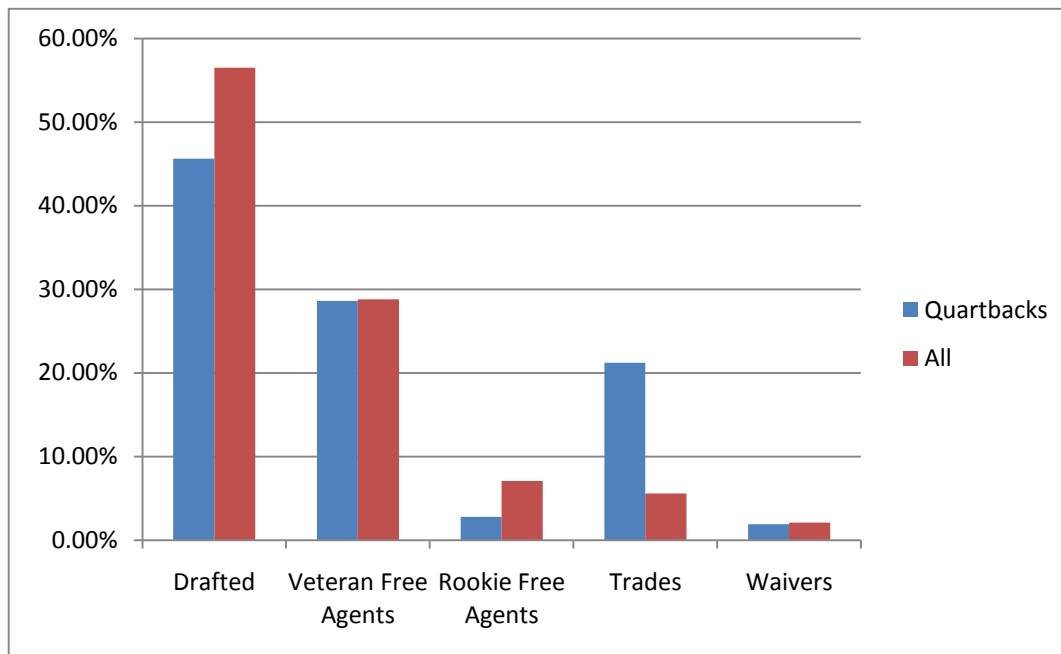
QBs: Grow Your Own or Buy One? By Tony Villiotti

In doing research for another article, I noticed a few teams (most notably the Chiefs and the Saints) had very few games started by quarterbacks they drafted. From 1990 through 2009, both the Chiefs and the Saints had nine games (out of 320) started by their own draftees. The purpose of this article is to look at the subject of “where starting QBs come from” in more depth.

This analysis was done using the number of starts. There were 9744 starts by quarterbacks during the study period (28 teams with 320 starts; the Jaguars and Panthers with 240 starts; the Browns with 176 starts; and the Texans with 128 starts.

The first step in the analysis was to compare the sources of QB starters to other positions. Here is how QBs stack up versus the average of all positions, again based on number of games started:

Chart: Percentage of Games Started by Means of Acquisition



As can be seen from this chart, the most significant differences in comparing QBs to all other positions are (1) there are far fewer QB starts from players initially drafted by that team (2) there are far more starts from QBs acquired via trade. There are fewer QB starts from Rookie Free Agents as well, but the order of magnitude is much smaller.

Quarterbacks are clearly the “outliers” when reviewing the games started data. The other playing positions are fairly consistent in the means of acquiring starters. In terms of percentage of starts by draftees, the range is pretty narrow (54.4% by tight ends being the low and 59.8% by wide receivers the high). Regarding trades, the number of starts acquired for the next highest position (wide receiver) on a percentage basis is less than half that of quarterbacks.

It should be noted that there is a slight distortion in these statistics due to the draft day trade of Eli Manning for Philip Rivers. The starts by these players are classified under trades, even though the substance of the transaction was really a “trade-up”. Even if the starts by the two QBs were reclassified as starts by a team’s own draftees, the substance of the analysis would not change. The percentage of starts by drafted players would increase from 45.6% to 47.1% and the starts by drafted players would decrease from 21.2% to 19.7%.

There is a wide variation when looking at the information by NFL team. At one end of the spectrum is the New England Patriots who have had 90% of their games started by drafted QBs (mostly Drew Bledsoe and Tom Brady) and at the other end are the aforementioned Chiefs and Saints with less than 3% of their games started by their own draftees.

The following tables shows the percentages of games started by means of acquisition for each of the NFL teams.

Table: Percentage of Games Started by QBs by Means of Acquisition

Team	Own Draftees	Veteran Free Agents	Rookie Free Agents	Trades	Waivers	Expansion Draft
Average	45.6%	28.6%	2.8%	21.2%	1.8%	0.1%
49ers	29.1%	33.1%	0.0%	37.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Bears	45.9%	37.8%	0.9%	5.9%	9.4%	0.0%
Bengals	53.4%	21.3%	0.0%	4.7%	20.6%	0.0%
Bills	58.8%	18.1%	0.0%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Broncos	29.1%	24.7%	0.0%	46.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Browns	54.0%	19.3%	0.0%	7.4%	19.3%	0.0%
Bucs	64.1%	30.6%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Cardinals	47.8%	46.9%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%
Chargers	40.0%	10.9%	0.0%	49.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Chiefs	2.8%	34.4%	0.0%	59.4%	3.4%	0.0%
Colts	79.7%	18.8%	0.3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%
Cowboys	57.8%	15.9%	25.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Dolphins	50.9%	36.9%	1.9%	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Eagles	70.6%	28.1%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%
Falcons	45.0%	16.9%	3.4%	34.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Giants	48.8%	24.1%	0.0%	27.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Jaguars	45.8%	0.8%	1.7%	48.8%	0.4%	2.5%
Jets	46.9%	33.1%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Lions	53.4%	45.3%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Packers	18.1%	2.8%	0.0%	79.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Panthers	25.8%	70.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%
Patriots	90.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Raiders	15.3%	69.4%	0.0%	15.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Rams	17.8%	45.6%	18.1%	18.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Ravens	42.2%	40.0%	0.0%	17.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Redskins	60.6%	18.1%	0.0%	21.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Saints	2.8%	35.0%	10.0%	50.0%	2.2%	0.0%
Seahawks	23.1%	17.5%	18.1%	41.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Steelers	78.8%	21.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Texans	60.2%	10.2%	0.0%	29.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Titans	58.8%	38.1%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vikings	48.1%	26.9%	0.9%	24.1%	0.0%	0.0%

When looking further at the starts by traded players, about three-fourths of the starts over the 20-year study period came from 20 trades, as listed below:

Player	Traded to	# Starts	Traded By	Year	Consideration
Bret Favre	Packers	253	Falcons	1992	1992 1 st round choice
John Elway	Broncos	133	Colts	1983	1984 1 st round choice, Ron Solt, Mark Hermann
Mark Brunell	Jaguars	117	Packers	1995	1995 3 rd and 5 th round choices
Matt Hasselbeck	Seahawks	117	Packers	2001	Exchange 2001 1 st round choice, plus 2001 3 rd rounder
Steve Young	49ers	115	Bucs	1987	1987 2 nd and 4 th round choices
Trent Green	Chiefs	88	Rams	2001	2001 1 st round choice
Eli Manning	Giants	87	Chargers	2004	Rivers, 2004 3 rd round choice, 2005 1 st and 5 th rounders
Aaron Brooks	Saints	82	Packers	2000	K.D. Williams and 2001 3 rd round choice
Stan Humphries	Chargers	76	Redskins	1992	1993 3 rd round choice
Chris Chandler	Falcons	67	Titans	1997	1997 4 th and 6 th round choices
Philip Rivers	Chargers	64	Giants	2004	Manning (also received additional compensation)
Jim Everett	Rams	57	Titans	1986	Kent Hill, Willam Fuller, 1987 1 st and 5 th ; 1988 1 st round
Drew Bledsoe	Bills	48	Patriots	2002	2003 1 st round choice
Jim Everett	Saints	47	Rams	1994	1995 7 th round choice
Boomer Esiason	Jets	42	Bengals	1993	1993 3 rd round choice
Warren Moon	Vikings	39	Titans	1994	1994 4 th round choice and 1995 3 rd round choice
Matt Schaub	Texans	38	Falcons	2007	Exchange 2007 1 st round; 2007 2 nd & 2008 2 nd rounders
Rich Gannon	Vikings	35	Redskins	1993	1994 5 th round choice
Jeff George	Falcons	35	Colts	1990	Chris Hinton, Andre Rison, 1990 5 th and 1991 1 st rders
Mark Brunell	Redskins	33	Jaguars	2004	2004 3 rd round choice
Total		1573			