

GOOD YEARS/BAD YEARS REVISITED by Tony Villiotti

In *GOOD YEARS/BAD YEARS*, available on this website, **DRAFTMETRICS** examined the issue of whether are good and bad draft years and, if there are, the degree of difference among the years. In this article, **DRAFTMETRICS** updates the data used for the analysis to include the years 1991 through 2010 and takes a fresh look at the subject.

The simple answer to the question of whether there are good and bad draft years is yes. Some years are definitely better than others. The degree of difference depends on what measurement is used.

DRAFTMETRICS reviewed six different measures in addressing this issue:

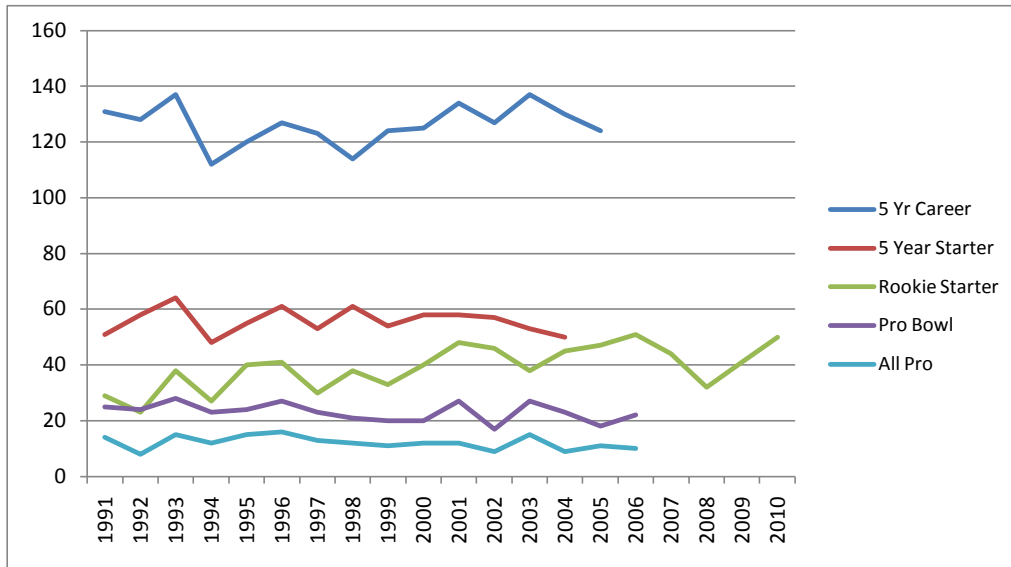
- Number of players drafted with 5-year careers
- Number of players drafted who started for 5 years
 - Definition of a starter is a player who started at least 8 games in a season
- Number of players who started as rookies
- Number of career starts
 - Measured at 3, 5 and 10 year intervals
- Number of players drafted who were selected for at least 1 Pro Bowl
- Number of players drafted who were selected as an All Pro at least once

The time period used for each measure varied and is summarized below. Different time period were subjectively assigned to various measures by **DRAFTMETRICS** based on what seemed most logical for that measure. Years are classified as average, below average or above average. A year is classified as average if its results are within 5% (higher or lower) than the average.

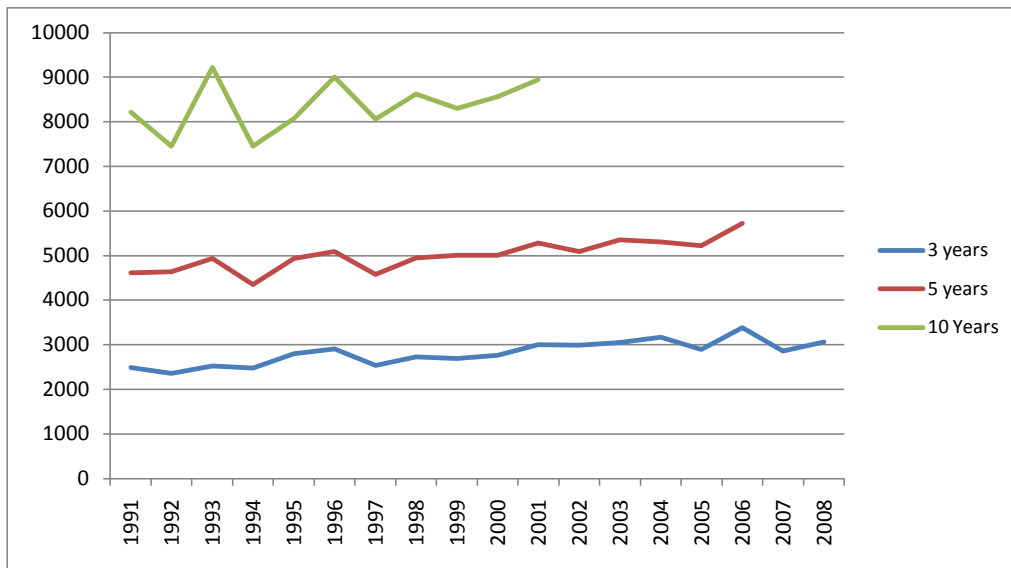
Measure	Time Period	Average	Number of Years			Best Year	Worst Year
			Below Average	Average	Above Average		
5-Year Career	1991-2005	126	2	10	3	137	112
5-Year Starter	1991-2004	56	2	9	3	64	48
Rookie Starter	1991-2010	39	6	7	7	51	23
Starts: 3 Years	1991-2008	2,817	5	7	6	3,389	2,363
Starts: 5 Years	1991-2006	5,007	4	8	4	5,729	4,350
Starts: 10 Years	1991-2001	8,356	2	6	3	9,226	7,452
Pro Bowl	1991-2006	23	5	6	5	28	17
All-Pro	1991-2006	12	4	7	5	16	8

Year-to-Year variations can be seen in the following graphs:

Graph 1: 5-Year Career, 5-Year Starter, Rookie Starter, Pro Bowl, All Pro by Year



Graph 2: Number of Starts after 3, 5 and 10 Years



Another way to look at the same information is by draft year and by measure.

- “+” indicates the year was above average;
- “-” indicates the year was below average;
- “A” indicates the year was average.
- “NA” indicates that the year fall outside of the measurement period

Year	5-Year Career	5-Year Starter	Rookie Starter	Number of Starts			Pro Bowl	All Pro
				3-Year	5-Year	10-Year		
1991	A	-	-	-	-	A	+	+
1992	A	A	-	-	-	-	A	-
1993	+	+	A	-	A	+	+	+
1994	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	A
1995	A	A	A	+	A	A	A	+
1996	A	+	A	A	A	+	+	+
1997	A	A	-	-	-	A	A	A
1998	-	+	A	A	A	A	-	A
1999	A	A	-	A	A	A	-	A
2000	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A
2001	+	A	+	+	+	+	+	A
2002	A	A	+	+	A	NA	-	-
2003	+	A	A	+	+	NA	+	+
2004	A	A	+	+	+	NA	A	-
2005	A	NA	+	A	A	NA	-	A
2006	NA	NA	+	+	+	NA	A	-
2007	NA	NA	+	A	NA	NA	NA	NA
2008	NA	NA	-	+	NA	NA	NA	NA
2009	NA	NA	A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2010	NA	NA	+	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

The raw data on which these analyses are based are included in the two appendices to this article.

DRAFTMETRICS draws the following conclusions:

- There can be fairly significant differences among draft years
- The differences are least significant when looking at the numbers of players with 5+ year careers and those who are starters for 5 years or more
 - About 2/3 of the data points are classified as average
 - For players with careers lasting 5 or more years, the worst year is 82% of the best year
 - For 5-year starters, the worst year is 75% of the best year

- There is a definite trend from about 2001 on for rookies to become starters faster
 - This influences both the number of rookie starters and the number of starts after 3 years
 - ALL the above average years for rookie starters are 2001 and after
- Regarding number of career starts, there tends to be wider variance between the best and worst draft years in the first three years after the draft year
 - This difference shrinks as the years progress
 - Beginning in the fourth year, there is consistently about a 20% spread between the best and worst years
- Early indications are that 2006 will shape up as one of the best draft years

Appendix 1: Draft Results by Year: 1991-2010

Year	# Drafted	Length of Career				Career Years	Career Starts	Starter Years	Rookie Starters	Years as Starter				Pro Bowl		All Pro		2010 Status (1)	
		0	1-2	3-4	5+					1-2	3-4	5+	Total	1	3+	1	3+	Active	Starter
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1991	334	114	55	34	131	1,310	9,015	562	29	34	32	51	117	25	10	14	3	2	1
1992	336	105	61	42	128	1,342	9,051	568	23	38	21	58	117	24	9	8	2	1	0
1993	224	17	35	35	137	1,408	10,194	655	38	32	29	64	125	28	16	15	3	1	0
1994	222	31	39	40	112	1,196	8,343	525	27	38	18	48	104	23	8	12	3	0	0
1995	249	41	50	38	120	1,235	8,697	554	40	31	22	55	108	24	11	15	4	4	0
1996	254	38	51	38	127	1,323	10,160	647	41	54	10	61	125	27	17	16	8	5	4
1997	240	28	60	29	123	1,222	8,777	555	30	28	22	53	103	23	13	13	6	10	5
1998	241	37	54	36	114	1,219	9,344	587	38	32	20	61	113	21	11	12	3	17	11
1999	253	28	58	43	124	1,283	8,732	557	33	39	26	54	119	20	10	11	1	22	11
2000	254	35	49	45	125	1,280	8,812	566	40	35	24	58	117	20	7	12	3	31	17
2001	246	26	45	41	134	1,260	8,943	565	48	46	21	58	125	27	13	12	3	49	34
2002	261	33	51	50	127	1,236	8,205	532	46	59	18	57	134	17	8	9	3	65	35
2003	262	26	63	36	137	1,185	7,982	504	38	37	34	53	124	27	9	15	2	89	47
2004	255	27	51	47	130	1,079	7,052	454	45	46	26	50	122	23	7	9	1	95	53
2005	255	33	53	45	124	946	6,249	404	47	49	46	33	128	18	5	11	1	119	68
2006	255	29	51	53	122	881	5,729	357	51	56	49	21	126	22	2	10	1	145	66
2007	255	26	52	177	0	747	3,885	239	44	68	41	0	109	12	4	7	1	164	62
2008	252	24	78	150	0	573	3,063	184	32	83	22	0	105	10	0	6	0	179	79
2009	256	31	225	0	0	397	1,811	109	41	77	0	0	77	4	0	1	0	194	68
2010	255	49	206	0	0	206	782	50	50	50	0	0	50	4	0	1	0	206	50

(1) 2010 Status indicates the number of players who appeared in NFL games during the 2010 season and the number of players who started 8 or more games

2009 Starters Drafted Before 2000

- 1991 (1) Bret Favre
- 1996 (4) Brian Dawkins, Ray Lewis, Lawyer Milloy, Terrell Owens
- 1997 (5) Ronde Barber, James Farrior, Tony Gonzalez, Derrick Mason,, Mike Vrabel
- 1998 (11) Flozell Adams, Matt Birk, Keith Brooking,, Alan Faneca, Matt Hasselbeck, Olin Kreutz, Peyton Manning, Randy Moss, Takeo Spikes, Hines Ward, Charles Woodson
- 1999 (11) Champ Bailey, Erick Barton, Donald Driver, Kelly Gregg, Reggie Kelly, Todd McClure, Donovan McNabb, Mike Peterson, Joey Porter, Antoine Winfield, Damian Woody

Appendix 2: Cumulative Number of Games Started by Draft Year

Draft Year	Cumulative Number of Starts in Years Following Draft																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1991	526	1537	2488	3570	4609	5515	6434	7184	7742	8216	8468	8635	8761	8820	8881	8938	8970	8986	9902
1992	450	1311	2363	3516	4639	5658	6595	7427	8037	7452	8714	8907	8975	9023	9048	9048	9051	9051	9051
1993	584	1508	2520	3706	4939	5948	7000	7898	8614	9226	9623	9845	10025	10126	10183	10191	10194	10194	
1994	447	1354	2472	3539	4350	5188	5969	6618	7092	7454	7757	7975	8137	8258	8320	8343	8343		
1995	632	1605	2799	3872	4939	5836	6629	7295	7732	8070	8332	8510	8619	8676	8686	8697			
1996	665	1697	2903	4019	5090	6065	6977	7796	8445	9008	9508	9812	10027	10105	10160				
1997	532	1512	2540	3615	4574	5508	6357	7076	7629	8067	8315	8522	8693	8777					
1998	629	1624	2723	3849	4953	5980	6854	7531	8152	8625	8947	9172	9346						
1999	604	1610	2696	3855	5009	5960	6718	7374	7885	8298	8556	8732							
2000	619	1640	2769	3883	5012	6012	6865	7588	8155	8561	8812								
2001	706	1837	3007	4210	5283	6262	7065	7819	8444	8943									
2002	756	1856	2990	4043	5093	6087	7008	7704	8205										
2003	703	1857	3046	4205	5356	6308	7221	7982											
2004	777	1945	3174	4319	5308	6214	7052												
2005	774	1824	2901	4093	5226	6249													
2006	826	2154	3389	4613	5729														
2007	667	1761	2865	3885															
2008	656	1800	3063																
2009	712	1811																	
2010	782																		
Average	652	1697	2817	3929	5007	5919	6767	7484	8011	8356	8703	8901	9073	9112	9213	9043	9140	9410	9477
Low	447	1311	2363	3516	4350	5188	5969	6618	7092	7452	7757	7975	8137	8258	8320	8343	8343	8986	9051
High	826	2154	3389	4613	5729	6308	7221	7982	8614	9226	9623	9845	10027	10126	10183	10191	10194	10194	9902
Low % of Avg	69%	77%	84%	89%	87%	88%	88%	88%	89%	89%	89%	90%	90%	91%	90%	92%	91%	95%	96%
High % Avg	127%	127%	120%	117%	114%	107%	107%	107%	108%	110%	111%	111%	111%	111%	111%	113%	112%	108%	104%