

GOOD YEARS/BAD YEARS by Tony Villiotti

Before every draft, the "talking heads" and draft prognosticators pontificate on whether the upcoming draft will be a strong one or a weak one. Once all the results are in, though, how much of a difference is there really between the results of a "good" draft and a "bad" draft?

DRAFTMETRICS addresses this issue in this article. The results of drafts from 1990 through 2009 were analyzed for this article. As is the case with many **DRAFTMETRICS** analyses, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from more recent drafts because the careers of many drafted players are still evolving. This trade-off between more data points and more complete information is always considered in data selection and drawing conclusions.

As a first step in the analysis, **DRAFTMETRICS** developed a table that summarizes the results of each year's draft. This table is included on the next page. The columns in the table are explained as follows:

- A is the Draft Year
- B is the number of players drafted each year
- C through F summarizes the length of each players' career
 - The sum of the columns C through F equals column B
- G is the aggregate sum of the years played by all draftees
- H is the aggregate number of games started by all draftees
- I is the aggregate number of years the draftees started eight or more games
- J is the number of players who had at least one year where they started eight or more games
- K is the number of players who started eight or more games in their rookie season
- L through N summarizes the number of starter years for each player
 - The sum of column L through N equals column J
- O is the number of players who were original selections for one or more Pro Bowls (alternates and injury replacements don't count)
- P is the number of players who were original selections for three or more Pro Bowls (these players are also in O)
- Q is the number of players named All-Pro by the Pro Football Writers or Associated Press at least once
- R is the number of players names all-Pro by the Pro Football Writers or Associated Press at least three times (these players are also in Q)
- S is the number of players who played at least one game in 2009, and is intended to give an indication of how much the results are likely to change in the future
- T is the number of players who started at least eight games in 2009, and is intended to give an indication of how much the results are likely to change in the future

Draft Results by Year: 1990-2009

| Year | # Drafted | Length of Career | | | | Career Years | Career Starts | Starter Years | # of Starters | Rookie Starters | Years as Starter | | | Pro Bowl | | All Pro | | 2009 Status | |
|------|-----------|------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-----|----|----------|----|---------|----|-------------|---------|
| | | 0 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5+ | | | | | | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5+ | 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 |
| 1990 | 331 | 104 | 57 | 44 | 126 | 1,345 | 8,856 | 550 | 118 | 29 | 42 | 24 | 52 | 27 | 10 | 14 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 1991 | 334 | 114 | 55 | 34 | 131 | 1,308 | 9,001 | 561 | 117 | 29 | 34 | 32 | 51 | 25 | 11 | 14 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1992 | 336 | 106 | 61 | 41 | 128 | 1,336 | 9,042 | 568 | 117 | 23 | 38 | 21 | 58 | 24 | 10 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1993 | 224 | 17 | 35 | 35 | 137 | 1,407 | 10,198 | 655 | 125 | 38 | 32 | 29 | 64 | 28 | 16 | 15 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| 1994 | 222 | 32 | 39 | 39 | 112 | 1,191 | 8,339 | 525 | 104 | 27 | 38 | 18 | 48 | 23 | 8 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 1995 | 249 | 42 | 50 | 38 | 119 | 1,225 | 8,651 | 551 | 107 | 40 | 30 | 22 | 55 | 24 | 11 | 15 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| 1996 | 254 | 40 | 51 | 37 | 126 | 1,308 | 10,025 | 638 | 124 | 42 | 54 | 10 | 60 | 27 | 16 | 16 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| 1997 | 240 | 29 | 60 | 29 | 122 | 1,205 | 8,664 | 549 | 102 | 30 | 27 | 22 | 53 | 23 | 13 | 13 | 6 | 16 | 12 |
| 1998 | 241 | 37 | 54 | 36 | 114 | 1,202 | 9,173 | 576 | 113 | 38 | 32 | 20 | 61 | 21 | 11 | 12 | 3 | 24 | 13 |
| 1999 | 253 | 29 | 58 | 43 | 123 | 1,253 | 8,539 | 546 | 119 | 33 | 39 | 26 | 54 | 18 | 10 | 11 | 1 | 35 | 15 |
| 2000 | 254 | 36 | 49 | 44 | 125 | 1,245 | 8,520 | 547 | 116 | 40 | 34 | 25 | 57 | 18 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 49 | 28 |
| 2001 | 246 | 26 | 45 | 42 | 133 | 1,210 | 8,427 | 530 | 124 | 48 | 47 | 21 | 56 | 26 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 62 | 37 |
| 2002 | 261 | 34 | 51 | 50 | 126 | 1,160 | 7,606 | 491 | 133 | 45 | 59 | 25 | 49 | 17 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 87 | 47 |
| 2003 | 262 | 26 | 64 | 38 | 134 | 1,095 | 7,217 | 456 | 123 | 38 | 39 | 36 | 48 | 25 | 7 | 15 | 1 | 109 | 60 |
| 2004 | 255 | 27 | 51 | 49 | 128 | 983 | 6,226 | 403 | 123 | 45 | 53 | 31 | 39 | 21 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 106 | 59 |
| 2005 | 255 | 33 | 54 | 64 | 104 | 829 | 5,215 | 336 | 124 | 47 | 56 | 53 | 15 | 17 | 2 | 10 | 1 | 129 | 71 |
| 2006 | 255 | 30 | 57 | 168 | 0 | 732 | 4,610 | 293 | 121 | 51 | 58 | 63 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 165 | 78 |
| 2007 | 255 | 26 | 78 | 151 | 0 | 583 | 2,875 | 178 | 97 | 44 | 70 | 27 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 180 | 69 |
| 2008 | 252 | 30 | 222 | 0 | 0 | 395 | 1,814 | 106 | 78 | 32 | 78 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 196 | 74 |
| 2009 | 256 | 53 | 203 | 0 | 0 | 203 | 719 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 203 | 42 |

2009 Starters Drafted Before 2000

- 1991 (1) Bret Favre
- 1994 (1) Kevin Mawae
- 1996 (5) Phillip Daniels, Brian Dawkins, Ray Lewis, Muhsin Muhammad, Terrell Owens
- 1997 (12) Ronde Barber, James Farrior, Jason Ferguson, Tony Gonzalez, Al Harris, Grady Jackson, Derrick Mason, Orlando Pace, Darren Sharper, Shawn Springs, Jason Taylor, Mike Vrabel
- 1998 (13) Flozell Adams, Matt Birk, Keith Brooking, Greg Ellis, Alan Faneca, Matt Hasselbeck, Olin Kreutz, Leonard Little, Peyton Manning, Randy Moss, Takeo Spikes, Hines Ward, Charles Woodson
- 1999 (15) Champ Bailey, Erick Barton, David Bowens, Donald Driver, Kelly Gregg, Torry Holt, Patrick Kerney, Jim Kleinsasser, Todd McClure, Donovan McNabb, Chike Okeafor, Mike Peterson, Joey Porter, Antoine Winfield, Damian Woody

The analysis shows that there are considerable differences in the results of the respective draft years. This is probably best illustrated by comparing 1993 and 1994. 1993 was one of the most successful draft years and 1994 was one of the least successful, so comparing these years gives an idea of the maximum spread in results. With only two active non-kickers (Mark Brunell and Jeff Zgonina) still active in 2010 from those drafts, the book is essentially closed on the results. In looking at the results it is fair to say the 1993 draft had considerably better results.

Comparison of 1993 and 1994 Draft Results

| Measure | 1993 | 1994 | % Difference |
|--|--------|-------|--------------|
| Players With Careers Lasting Five or More years | 137 | 112 | 22% |
| Total Career Years | 1,407 | 1,191 | 18% |
| Career Starts | 10,198 | 8,339 | 22% |
| Starter Years (number of years draftees started 8 or more games) | 655 | 525 | 25% |
| Starters (number of draftees who had at least one season starting 8 or more games) | 125 | 104 | 20% |
| Rookie Starters (number of draftees who started 8 or more games their rookie season) | 38 | 27 | 41% |
| Five-Year Starters(number of draftees starting 8 games or more for at least 5 seasons) | 64 | 48 | 33% |
| Pro Bowl Selections (at least once) | 28 | 23 | 22% |
| Pro Bowl Selections (at least three times) | 16 | 8 | 100% |
| All Pro Selections (at least once) | 15 | 12 | 25% |
| All Pro Selections (at least three times) | 3 | 3 | 0% |

The percentage difference was calculated by dividing the 1993 results by the 1994 results and subtracting 1

DRAFTMETRICS draws the following conclusions from this information:

- By most measures, the difference between the best and worst draft is in the 20% to 30% range
- The differences are most pronounced in three-time Pro Bowlers and rookie starters
- There was no difference in three-time All Pro selections, probably due to the small number of players who reach that status

Comparing 1993 and 1994, while illustrative, borders on ancient history so **DRAFTMETRICS** also reviewed all years in the study period by comparing career starts. Career starts was chosen as a reasonable measure because it is easily quantifiable and it is possible to review the data at intermediate steps (e.g., comparing all drafts after the first four years after each draft year). The information analyzed was summarized into the following table and shows the results from the best and worst draft year at each one-year interval after the draft. An explanation of each column is as follows:

- A contains indicates the year being measured
 - In the “After 1st Year” row, 1990 playing results are considered for 1990 drafted players, 1991 playing results for 1991 drafted players and so on
- B shows the number of years of information considered for Columns C through I
 - The years include on the number of years of information available through the 2009 season. For example, the 2005 draft is included for five years because information is available from 2005 through 2009.

- C shows the highest number of cumulative career starts for each draft year at each one-year interval
- D indicates the year that had the highest number of cumulative career starts
- E shows the lowest number of cumulative career starts for draft year at each one-year interval
- F indicates the draft year that had the lowest number of cumulative career starts
- G shows the average number of cumulative career starts for each one-year interval
- H is E divided by G, representing the least number of starts as a percentage of the average
- I is C divided by G, representing the highest number of starts as a percentage of the average

Comparison of Each Draft Interval

| Number of Years Post-Draft | # of Yrs | High | High Year | Low | Low Year | Average | Low % | High % |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------|-----------|-------|----------|---------|-------|--------|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
| After 1st Year | 20 | 827 | 2006 | 446 | 1994 | 642 | 70% | 129% |
| After 2nd Year | 19 | 2,156 | 2006 | 1,328 | 1992 | 1,683 | 79% | 128% |
| After 3rd Year | 18 | 3,386 | 2006 | 2,375 | 1992 | 2,787 | 85% | 121% |
| After 4th Year | 17 | 4,610 | 2006 | 3,533 | 1994 | 3,907 | 90% | 118% |
| After 5th Year | 16 | 5,356 | 2003 | 4,347 | 1994 | 4,936 | 88% | 107% |
| After 6th Year | 15 | 6,308 | 2003 | 5,184 | 1994 | 5,877 | 88% | 107% |
| After 7th Year | 14 | 7,217 | 2003 | 5,968 | 1994 | 6,721 | 89% | 107% |
| After 8th Year | 13 | 7,898 | 1993 | 6,615 | 1994 | 7,407 | 89% | 107% |
| After 9th Year | 12 | 8,619 | 1993 | 7,088 | 1994 | 7,958 | 89% | 108% |
| After 10 th Year | 11 | 9,230 | 1993 | 7,450 | 1994 | 8,359 | 89% | 110% |
| After 11 th Year | 10 | 9,627 | 1993 | 7,753 | 1994 | 8,651 | 90% | 111% |
| After 12 th Year | 9 | 9,849 | 1993 | 7,971 | 1994 | 8,876 | 90% | 111% |
| After 13 th Year | 8 | 10,013 | 1993 | 8,133 | 1994 | 8,978 | 91% | 112% |
| After 14 th Year | 7 | 10,130 | 1993 | 8,254 | 1994 | 9,099 | 91% | 111% |
| After 15 th Year | 6 | 10,187 | 1993 | 8,316 | 1994 | 8,985 | 93% | 113% |
| After 16 th Year | 5 | 10,195 | 1993 | 8,339 | 1994 | 9,070 | 92% | 112% |
| After 17 th Year | 4 | 10,198 | 1993 | 8,850 | 1990 | 9,265 | 96% | 110% |
| After 18 th Year | 3 | 9,042 | 1992 | 8,854 | 1990 | 8,960 | 99% | 101% |
| After 19 th Year | 2 | 9,001 | 1991 | 8,856 | 1990 | 8,929 | 99% | 101% |

A full list of the information by draft year is included at the end of this article.

This table indicates the following:

- 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

Cumulative Number of Starts for Each Draft Year by 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 |
| 1990 | 555 | 1553 | 2596 | 3614 | 4767 | 5819 | 6645 | 7251 | 7760 | 8152 | 8458 | 8659 | 8752 | 8808 | 8834 | 8839 | 8850 | 8854 | 8856 |
| 1991 | 532 | 1539 | 2491 | 3574 | 4625 | 5530 | 6435 | 7190 | 7752 | 8215 | 8467 | 8634 | 8760 | 8819 | 8880 | 8937 | 8969 | 8985 | 9001 |
| 1992 | 450 | 1328 | 2375 | 3538 | 4651 | 5668 | 6621 | 7447 | 8043 | 8458 | 8705 | 8898 | 8966 | 9014 | 9039 | 9039 | 9042 | 9042 | |
| 1993 | 584 | 1508 | 2522 | 3709 | 4942 | 5952 | 7004 | 7898 | 8619 | 9230 | 9627 | 9849 | 10013 | 10130 | 10187 | 10195 | 10198 | | |
| 1994 | 446 | 1348 | 2464 | 3533 | 4347 | 5184 | 5968 | 6615 | 7088 | 7450 | 7753 | 7971 | 8133 | 8254 | 8316 | 8339 | | | |
| 1995 | 632 | 1605 | 2798 | 3879 | 4913 | 5804 | 6594 | 7260 | 7703 | 8041 | 8297 | 8475 | 8584 | 8641 | 8651 | | | | |
| 1996 | 666 | 1695 | 2874 | 3975 | 5036 | 5991 | 6901 | 7716 | 8366 | 8933 | 9432 | 9733 | 9948 | 10025 | | | | | |
| 1997 | 532 | 1512 | 2527 | 3596 | 4551 | 5482 | 6330 | 7048 | 7601 | 8039 | 8287 | 8494 | 8664 | | | | | | |
| 1998 | 629 | 1636 | 2732 | 3855 | 4956 | 5983 | 6846 | 7533 | 8154 | 8627 | 8949 | 9173 | | | | | | | |
| 1999 | 612 | 1610 | 2691 | 3860 | 5005 | 5949 | 6708 | 7357 | 7868 | 8281 | 8539 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | 616 | 1621 | 2747 | 3845 | 4974 | 5974 | 6827 | 7550 | 8117 | 8520 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | 706 | 1834 | 3007 | 4212 | 5285 | 6263 | 7066 | 7820 | 8427 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2002 | 755 | 1843 | 2961 | 4003 | 5038 | 6016 | 6933 | 7606 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | 701 | 1856 | 3050 | 4205 | 5356 | 6308 | 7217 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2004 | 777 | 1945 | 3176 | 4321 | 5309 | 6226 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2005 | 774 | 1822 | 2900 | 4092 | 5215 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2006 | 827 | 2156 | 3386 | 4610 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2007 | 667 | 1760 | 2875 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | 654 | 1814 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2009 | 719 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Average | 642 | 1683 | 2787 | 3907 | 4936 | 5877 | 6721 | 7407 | 7958 | 8359 | 8651 | 8876 | 8978 | 9099 | 8985 | 9070 | 9265 | 8960 | 8929 |
| Low | 446 | 1328 | 2375 | 3533 | 4347 | 5184 | 5968 | 6615 | 7088 | 7450 | 7753 | 7971 | 8133 | 8254 | 8316 | 8339 | 8850 | 8854 | 8856 |
| High | 827 | 2156 | 3386 | 4610 | 5356 | 6308 | 7217 | 7898 | 8619 | 9230 | 9627 | 9849 | 10013 | 10130 | 10187 | 10195 | 10198 | 9042 | 9001 |
| Low % of Avg | 70% | 79% | 85% | 90% | 88% | 88% | 89% | 89% | 89% | 89% | 90% | 90% | 91% | 91% | 93% | 92% | 96% | 99% | 99% |
| High % Avg | 129% | 128% | 121% | 118% | 109% | 107% | 107% | 107% | 108% | 110% | 111% | 111% | 112% | 111% | 113% | 112% | 110% | 101% | 101% |