

Ranking NFL Teams by Draft Efficiency by Tony Villiotti

DRAFTMETRICS defines “draft efficiency” as getting more value than expected from the draft, given the number of choices a team has and the location (i.e., the round) of those choices. A team is efficient if it gets more value than expected; a team is inefficient if it gets less value than expected. Both efficiency and inefficiency, of course, are a matter of degree. For this article **DRAFTMETRICS** reviewed the draft outcome of each NFL team from 1991 through 2004 to determine the teams that are most efficient in the use of their draft choices. The years 2000 through 2004 were reviewed separately to give a more current flavor to the analysis.

In this analysis **DRAFTMETRICS** considered three factors:

- The number of draftees who become five-year starters
- The number of draftees who make the Pro Bowl at least once
 - As explained in earlier articles, **DRAFTMETRICS** credits a player with a Pro Bowl selection only if he was an original selection, regardless of whether the player played in the game
 - Injury or other replacements do not get credit for a Pro Bowl selection
- The number of draftees who are All Pro Selections at least once

The first step in the analysis was to calculate, based on historical averages, the expected outcomes for these three factors for each NFL team. The expected outcomes were then compared to actual outcomes for each team. The difference between actual and expected is a “variance”. The variances for each factor were added to arrive at a total variance and the teams were ranked by that total variance. A positive variance means a team did better than expected. A negative variance means a team did worse than expected. A small variance, whether positive or negative, indicates a team did pretty much as expected.

Following is the ranking by team for the 1991 through 2004 time period. The Browns and the Texans were excluded from the analysis due to the timing of their entry into the NFL.

Steelers	+ 17.6	Ravens	+ 1.2	Falcons	- 1.8
Packers	+ 11.3	Bucs	+ 0.7	Redskins	- 2.4
Patriots	+ 7.7	Cardinals	+ 0.7	Bills	- 2.6
Colts	+ 6.4	Panthers	+ 0.4	Jaguars	- 3.5
Seahawks	+ 5.8	Vikings	- 0.2	Chiefs	- 3.6
Giants	+ 4.6	Jets	- 0.2	Raiders	- 3.7
Titans	+ 4.5	Cowboys	- 0.5	Bears	- 6.3
49ers	+ 4.0	Eagles	- 0.6	Saints	- 7.5
Dolphins	+ 2.2	Bengals	- 1.1	Lions	- 9.1
Broncos	+ 1.7	Rams	- 1.7	Chargers	- 9.5

A more detailed comparison of expected and actual outcomes for each team is included in the Appendix.

12 of the teams are in the +2 to -2 variance range, which means they received about the value expected from the draft over the 14 year period. The Steelers and Packers were the most efficient teams in terms of drafting and the Lions and the Chargers were the least efficient.

When the more current period, 2000 through 2004, is reviewed the ranking is considerably different. This illustrates the cyclical nature of draft success.

Colts	+ 6.8	Bears	+ 1.4	Redskins	- 1.8
Cardinals	+ 6.6	Bengals	+ 1.0	Titans	- 2.0
Patriots	+ 6.6	49ers	+ 0.9	Dolphins	- 2.1
Giants	+ 5.7	Cowboys	+ 0.9	Bucs	- 2.3
Steelers	+ 4.5	Falcons	+ 0.6	Rams	- 3.1
Eagles	+ 4.2	Seahawks	+ 0.2	Raiders	- 3.7
Chargers	+ 4.1	Packers	- 0.2	Broncos	- 4.5
Ravens	+ 3.9	Chiefs	- 1.6	Bills	- 4.7
Panthers	+ 3.8	Jaguars	- 1.8	Vikings	- 5.1
Jets	+ 2.2	Saints	- 1.8	Lions	- 7.6

Three of the top five most efficient teams (Colts, Patriots, Steelers) from the 1991-2004 analysis remain in the top five for the more recent period while two of the bottom five (Raiders, Lions) remained there. The Chargers moved from having the worst performance in the 14 year period to seventh in the rankings for 2000-2004. The biggest drop off was the Broncos, falling from 10th place in 1991-2004 to 27th place in 2000-2004. The Patriots were the only team in the top three in both time periods while the Lions, unfortunately for them, were 29th and 30th in the two time segments.

APPENDIX: EFFICIENCY CALCULATIONS FOR 1991-2004

Team	# of Picks	Projected Results			Actual Results			Variances			
		5-Year Starter	Pro Bowl	All Pro	5-Year Starter	Pro Bowl	All Pro	5-Year Starter	Pro Bowl	All Pro	Total
49ers	112	24.6	10.0	5.4	25	12	7	0.4	2.0	1.6	4.0
Bears	128	28.3	11.8	6.2	25	8	7	-3.3	-3.8	0.8	-6.3
Bengals	122	29.9	13.2	6.9	31	12	6	1.1	-1.2	-0.9	-1.1
Bills	128	25.3	10.0	5.3	28	8	2	2.7	-2.0	-3.3	-2.6
Broncos	122	23.8	9.4	5.0	23	12	5	-0.8	2.6	0.0	1.7
Bucs	122	24.6	10.3	5.4	26	10	5	1.4	-0.3	-0.4	0.7
Cards	130	29.4	13.1	6.8	32	13	5	2.6	-0.1	-1.8	0.7
Chargers	130	27.5	11.2	5.8	20	9	6	-7.5	-2.2	0.2	-9.5
Chiefs	110	21.1	8.2	4.3	18	7	5	-3.1	-1.2	0.7	-3.6
Colts	116	26.3	11.3	5.9	25	15	10	-1.3	3.7	4.1	6.4
Cowboys	132	28.3	11.3	5.9	26	14	5	-2.3	2.7	-0.9	-0.5
Dolphins	125	23.0	9.0	4.8	24	10	5	1.0	1.0	0.2	2.2
Eagles	123	26.0	10.8	5.7	22	14	6	-4.0	3.2	0.3	-0.6
Falcons	116	24.5	10.8	5.5	25	9	5	0.5	-1.8	-0.5	-1.8
Giants	116	24.2	10.0	5.3	28	9	7	3.8	-1.0	1.7	4.6
Jaguars	96	21.3	9.4	4.9	23	6	3	1.7	-3.4	-1.9	-3.5
Jets	118	25.7	11.5	6.0	27	10	6	1.3	-1.5	0.0	-0.2
Lions	103	24.0	10.5	5.6	20	8	3	-4.0	-2.5	-2.6	-9.1
Packers	130	24.7	9.9	5.2	31	16	4	6.3	6.1	-1.2	11.3
Panthers	78	18.5	7.9	4.2	19	7	5	0.5	-0.9	0.8	0.4
Patriots	143	30.7	12.9	6.8	33	16	9	2.3	3.1	2.2	7.7
Raiders	106	24.0	10.3	5.5	20	8	8	-4.0	-2.3	2.5	-3.7
Rams	126	29.9	13.0	6.8	33	9	6	3.1	-4.0	-0.8	-1.7
Ravens	112	24.0	11.1	5.7	23	11	8	-1.0	-0.1	2.3	1.2
Redskins	101	22.5	9.8	5.1	21	12	2	-1.5	2.2	-3.1	-2.4
Saints	107	24.6	11.1	5.8	17	11	6	-7.6	-0.1	0.2	-7.5
Seahawks	113	25.8	11.4	6.0	26	14	9	0.2	2.6	3.0	5.8
Steelers	131	26.1	10.7	5.6	37	15	8	10.9	4.3	2.4	17.6
Titans	133	26.7	10.3	5.5	30	10	7	3.3	-0.3	1.5	4.5
Vikings	118	25.9	10.6	5.7	29	11	2	3.1	0.4	-3.7	-0.2

Minor differences due to roundings

APPENDIX: EFFICIENCY CALCULATIONS FOR 2000-2004

Team	# of Picks	Projected Results			Actual Results			Variances			
		5-Year Starter	Pro Bowl	All Pro	5-Year Starter	Pro Bowl	All Pro	5-Year Starter	Pro Bowl	All Pro	Total
49ers	46	10.0	4.0	2.1	11	4	2	1.0	0.0	-0.1	0.9
Bears	44	10.3	4.2	2.1	9	5	4	-1.3	0.8	1.9	1.4
Bengals	40	10.5	4.5	2.1	11	5	2	0.5	0.5	-0.1	1.0
Bills	44	9.7	4.0	2.0	8	2	1	-1.7	-2.0	-1.0	-4.7
Broncos	44	9.1	3.5	1.9	7	3	0	-2.1	-0.5	-1.9	-4.5
Bucs	36	4.7	1.7	0.9	5	0	0	0.3	-1.7	-0.9	-2.3
Cards	40	10.5	4.7	2.2	15	7	2	4.5	2.3	-0.2	6.6
Chargers	43	10.7	4.2	2.0	11	6	4	0.3	1.8	2.0	4.1
Chiefs	37	7.5	2.7	1.4	4	3	3	-3.5	0.3	1.6	-1.6
Colts	39	8.2	3.3	1.7	8	7	5	-0.2	3.7	3.3	6.8
Cowboys	38	7.7	3.0	1.4	7	4	2	-0.7	1.0	0.6	0.9
Dolphins	35	5.3	1.8	1.0	5	1	0	-0.3	-0.8	-1.0	-2.1
Eagles	37	7.7	3.3	1.7	9	5	3	1.3	1.7	1.3	4.2
Falcons	37	7.1	2.9	1.4	9	3	0	1.9	0.1	-1.4	0.6
Giants	39	8.1	3.4	1.7	10	5	4	1.9	1.6	2.3	5.7
Jaguars	49	10.3	4.4	2.1	11	3	1	0.7	-1.4	-1.1	-1.8
Jets	36	8.7	4.1	1.9	12	3	2	3.3	-1.1	0.1	2.2
Lions	38	9.3	4.2	2.0	7	1	0	-2.3	-3.2	-2.0	-7.6
Packers	40	8.3	3.3	1.7	9	4	0	0.7	0.7	-1.7	-0.2
Panthers	38	8.7	3.8	1.8	9	5	4	0.3	1.2	2.2	3.8
Patriots	44	8.8	3.7	1.9	11	6	4	2.2	2.3	2.1	6.6
Raiders	40	9.1	3.7	1.9	7	2	2	-2.1	-1.7	0.1	-3.7
Rams	42	9.5	3.8	1.9	11	1	0	1.6	-2.8	-1.9	-3.1
Ravens	41	7.9	3.5	1.7	9	5	3	1.1	1.5	1.3	3.9
Redskins	30	7.2	3.2	1.5	6	4	0	-1.2	0.8	-1.5	-1.8
Saints	38	8.3	3.6	1.8	7	5	0	-1.3	1.4	-1.8	-1.8
Seahawks	47	10.0	4.5	2.3	9	5	3	-1.0	0.5	0.7	0.2
Steelers	37	8.2	3.5	1.7	12	4	2	3.8	0.5	0.3	4.5
Titans	46	8.3	3.0	1.7	8	1	2	-0.3	-2.0	0.3	-2.0
Vikings	40	9.2	3.9	2.0	7	2	1	-2.2	-1.9	-1.0	-5.1

Minor differences due to roundings