

Personnel Review: NFC South by Tony Villiotti

The effectiveness of a team's personnel decisions is ultimately judged by that team's won-lost record. There is more than one way to build a winning team, though, and **DRAFTMETRICS** believes that exploring the "how" for a team's success or lack thereof can be quite interesting.

There are two basic aspects of building a winning team - - hanging onto your good players and bringing in new talent. Everything beyond that is a matter of degree. If a team does not have many good players, there is a heavy emphasis on bringing in replacements. If a team has a solid core of players it can be very selective in adding talent.

Free agency and the salary cap make player retention a difficult issue. Players move from team to team to maximize their earnings or seek opportunities for more playing time. In some cases a team is forced to cut a player they would otherwise keep in order to stay under the salary cap. These factors make player retention a real balancing act as a team must continually weigh its options in order to maintain the proper investment level at each playing position.

A team has several options available to it when acquiring talent. It can seek help in the draft while maneuvering to move up or down to get the players it wants at a reasonable price. It can venture into the free agent market where they usually have to pay top dollar to land top of the line talent. It can make trades, usually surrendering draft choices for a player. Finally, it can "dumpster dive" and try to find bargains in released players, Canadian Football League players, undrafted free agents or on the waiver wire.

This is the seventh in a series of eight articles in which **DRAFTMETRICS** will review, by Division, the personnel moves of NFL teams over the past five seasons (2006-2010). In this review, **DRAFTMETRICS** will address the following for each team in the NFC South:

- How it got its starters
- The stability of its starting lineup
- Quarterbacks

The Source of Starters

NFL starters from 2006 through 2010 fall into one of several categories:

- They were on the roster in 2005 and continued with the team for part or all of the study period
- They were drafted from 2006-2010
- They were signed as veteran free agents from 2006-2010
- They were acquired via trade from 2006-2010
- They were obtained in another manner (waivers, undrafted free agents, etc.) from 2006-2010

During the 2006 through 2010 seasons, starts across all teams were distributed as follows:

- 44% of all starts were made by players on the same team's roster in 2005;
- 26% of all starts were made by players drafted by that team from 2006 through 2010;
- 30% of all starts were made by players signed as free agents, acquired via trade or any other source from 2006 through 2010.

DRAFTMETRICS will comment on each team's player acquisition activities as well as provide some comparative metrics. It should be recognized that it is impossible for a team to have favorable metrics for each activity. A team that retained a lot of its starters from the 2005 roster, for example, does not have as many starting spots to fill through the draft or free agency and will have fewer starters from those activities than a team with a poor starting point.

Stability of the Starting Lineup

Continuity is an important element in a team's success. Football is a team game and developing a cohesive unit from a collection of individual talents is a critical success factor. While a team is always striving to improve by replacing weaker links with stronger players, keeping the unit relatively intact is also important. Sometimes injuries interfere with this process and sometimes the continuing effort to find better talent results in a "revolving door" for certain positions in the starting lineup.

In addition to a **DRAFTMETRICS** commentary on this subject, a few metrics have been developed to aid in the analysis. The first is a "Stability Index" that is calculated for each team. The basis for the stability index is determining the number of games that are started by players who started for that same team in the previous season. The percentage of that number of games divided by 352 (16 games with 22 starters) is the stability index.

It is worth noting that for all NFL teams combined, the average number of starts by players who also started at least one game for that team in the prior year was 252.7, which is about 72% of all games started. The Steelers had the highest average with 296.2 games and the Lions at 187.8 games were the lowest.

Another metric used to measure continuity was to determine the number of players who started at least 13 games in each of the seasons. On average, NFL teams have 75 such players (or 15 per year). The highest was the Cowboys with 89 and the lowest was the Lions with 57. The intent of this metric is to determine how "settled" a team is at its starting positions. This can be affected by both injury and trying to find the right player.

Quarterbacks

It has been repeated ad nauseam that the NFL is a “Quarterback-Driven League”. There is no questioning the importance of this position so **DRAFTMETRICS** will comment on the success of each team in this area and list the QB starters during the study period for each team.

Before starting on the team analysis for the NFC South, here is each NFL team’s won-lost record for the 2006-2010 seasons.

Patriots	63-17	Giants	48-32	Cardinals	37-43	Dolphins	32-48
Colts	61-19	Packers	48-32	Panthers	37-43	Redskins	32-48
Chargers	55-25	Bears	47-33	Texans	37-43	Bills	31-49
Steelers	51-29	Titans	45-35	Broncos	36-44	Chiefs	29-51
Ravens	50-30	Falcons	44-36	49ers	35-45	Browns	28-52
Saints	49-31	Jets	43-37	Bucs	35-45	Raiders	24-56
Eagles	48-31-1	Vikings	42-38	Seahawks	35-45	Rams	21-59
Cowboys	48-32	Jaguars	39-41	Bengals	33-46-1	Lions	18-62

The last division to be analyzed is the NFC West and that article will be posted on the website within the next week.

TAMPA BAY BUCS

Won-Lost Record

2006	4-12	2008	9-7	2010	10-6
2007	9-7	2009	3-13	All Years	35-46 Rank:21

Bucs Metrics

Metric	Bucs	NFL Average	Rank
Percentage of Games Started By:			
Players on 2005 Roster	41%	44%	17
Players Drafted from 2006 thru 2010	29%	26%	10
Players signed as free agents or acquired in trades	30%	30%	18
Stability Index	71.2%	71.8%	18
Number of Players who started 13 games or more in a season	70	75	23

Players Starting 32 Games or More

From 2005 Roster		Players Drafted: 2006-2010			Other Players Signed: 2005-2010			
Ronde Barber	80	Tanard Jackson	2007-106	46	Phillip Buchanon	FA	2006	33 - FA
Derrick Brooks	48 - W	Davin Joseph	2006-23	67	Jeff Faine	FA	2008	36
Michael Clayton	33 - W	Jeremy Trueblood	2006-59	68	Donald Penn	FA	2010	60
Joey Galloway	33 - W							
Earnest Graham	33							
Chris Hovan	63 - F							
Jermaine Phillips	44 - FA							
Barrett Ruud	68							
Alex Smith	33 - T							
John Wade	32 - FA							
Cadillac Williams	43							

**Bold indicates a player was not on the team at the end of the 2010 season with the letter designation indicating how they left the team
T= Traded; R = Retired; W= Waived; FA= Lost in Free Agency; F= Released**

Quick Take

The Bucs have done a good job rebuilding through the draft and free agency.

Players from 2005 Roster

The Bucs ranked 17th in the number of games started by players on their 2005 roster. All but one of their 2005 starters (Dexter Jackson) returned for the 2006 season, but the departures started before the 2007 season as nine 2005 starters played their last year for the Bucs in 2006. Ronde Barber, one of the Bucs two Pro Bowl selections in 2005, continues to be a constant for the Bucs. Derrick Brooks, their other Pro Bowler, started his last game in 2008 before retiring. Three other players from 2005 (Earnest Graham, Barrett Ruud and Cadillac Williams) started games in 2010.

The Draft

The Bucs ranked 10th in starts from 2006-2010 draftees. The 2006 draft yielded two immediate starters in 1st rounder Davin Joseph and 2nd rounder Jeremy Trueblood. 3rd round pick Maurice Stovall hung around but never really developed. 6th rounder Bruce Gradkowski was their main starter at QB as a rookie but has kicked around the NFL since then. The 2007 draft was a mixed bag. 1st rounder Gaines Adams worked his way into the starting lineup then was traded and tragically passed away. 2nd rounder Sabby Piscitelli was a disappointment. Arron Sears, another 2nd rounder, started his first two years then faded away due to an apparent neurological condition. 3rd rounder Quincy Black became a starter. 4th rounder Tanard Jackson earned a starting job but was suspended for a year by the NFL for substance abuse and his future is still in limbo. The 2008 draft produced three starters in 1st rounder Aqib Talib, 3rd rounder Jeremy Zuttan and 6th rounder Geno Hayes. 2nd rounder Dexter Jackson was an absolute bust. 2009 1st rounder Josh Freeman looks to be a gem. They had no 2nd rounder. Roy Miller, who started one season and is now a backup, came in the 3rd round. The 2010 draft looks promising as 1st rounder Gerald McCoy, 2nd rounder Arrelious Benn, 4th rounder Mike Williams and 7th rounder Cody Grimm all started as rookies. The Bucs were pretty successful in the draft and almost half their 2010 starters were from the 2008-2010 drafts.

Free Agent Signings

There were no huge free agent signings but the Bucs did sign a number of guys who came in and started for two years including Antonio Bryant, Phillip Buchanon, Kevin Carter, Jeff Faine, Jeff Garcia, Jovan Haye, Cato June, and Greg White. Current starter Sean Jones also came via the free agent market and Donald Penn was signed from the Vikings' practice squad and is starting for his 5th season. Not spectacular, but a solid job.

Trades

The Bucs were pretty active in trades, but most of them involved late round choices. Their biggest deal was acquiring Kellen Winslow for 2nd and 5th rounders. They also traded away a handful of players with Anthony McFarland traded for a 2nd, Gaines Adams for a 2nd and Alex Smith for a 5th. Their oddest trade was acquiring Jake Plummer for a 7th round pick. Plummer never reported but the Bucs has to surrender the pick anyway and it turned out to be Peyton Hillis. The Bucs also traded up a couple of spots to take Josh Freeman, certainly a good decision. Ryan Sims, a 1st round bust for the Chiefs, was the only other players acquired who started for a full season, with the Bucs surrendering a 7th round pick. The Bucs did okay in the trade market.

Stability

The Bucs had the 18th highest Stability Index. As mentioned earlier, they had very little personnel turnover in 2006 but 2007 brought a plenty of changes in the starters. New starters came from both the free agency market (B.J. Askew, Kevin Carter, Jeff Garcia, Jovan Haye, Cato June), the draft (Gaines Adams, Arron Spears and Tanard Jackson) and players from 2006 moving into starting roles (Phillip Buchanon and Donald Penn). Things were pretty stable in 2008 and 2009 but 2010 had plenty of turnover. Four new starters came from the 2010 draft, plus waiver pickup Ted Larsen and free agent

Sean Jones. LaGarrette Blount (another waiver pickup) started less than half the games but was an impact player.

Quarterbacks

After much scrambling, the Bucs seem to have their QB for the future in Josh Freeman. He is backed up by Josh Johnson who has one more year experience than Freeman.

Quarterback Starts

Player	How Acquired (Selection #)	Year Acquired	Number of Starts
Josh Freeman	D – 17	2009	25
Jeff Garcia	FA	2007	24
Bruce Gradkowski	D – 194	2006	11
Brian Griese	T	2008	5
Josh Johnson	D – 160	2008	4
Byron Leftwich	FA	2009	3
Luke McCown	T	2005	3
Chris Sims	D – 97	2003	3
Tim Rattay	T	2007	2

ATLANTA FALCONS

Won-Lost Record

2006	7-9	2008	11-5	2010	13-3
2007	4-12	2009	9-7	All Years	44-36 Rank: 13

Falcons Metrics

Metric	Falcons	NFL Average	Rank
Percentage of Games Started By:			
Players on 2005 Roster	36%	44%	22
Players Drafted from 2006 thru 2010	25%	26%	21
Players signed as free agents or acquired in trades	39%	30%	8
Stability Index	70.1%	71.8%	20
Number of Players who started 13 games or more in a season	79	75	10

Players Starting 32 Games or More

From 2005 Roster		Players Drafted: 2006-2010			Other Players Signed: 2005-2010			
Jonathan Babineaux	57	Jamaal Anderson	2007-8	47	John Abraham	T	2006	67
Michael Boley	42 - FA	Sam Baker	2008-21	35	Tyson Clabo	FA	2006	69
Keith Brooking	48 - FA	Justin Blalock	2007-39	62	Erik Coleman	FA	2008	33
Michael Jenkins	52	Thomas DeCoud	2008-98	32	Harvey Dahl	FA	2007	43
Todd McClure	80	Chris Houston	2007-41	37 - T	Tony Gonzalez	T	2009	32
Todd Weiner	34 - R	Curtis Lofton	2008-37	47	Grady Jackson	FA	2008	36 - FA
Roddy White	67	Matt Ryan	2008-3	46	Lawyer Milloy	FA	2006	46 - FA
					Ovie Mughelli	FA	2007	33
					Michael Turner	FA	2008	42

Bold indicates a player was not on the team at the end of the 2010 season with the letter designation indicating how they left the team
T= Traded; R = Retired; W= Waived; FA= Lost in Free Agency; F= Released

Quick Take

The Falcons have made great use of free agency to help build their team last two drafts. Add in Matt Ryan from the draft and Tony Gonzalez from a trade and you have a contender .

Players from 2005 Roster

The Falcons rank 22nd in the number of games started by players from their 2005 roster. By the end of the 2007 season such key players as Alge Crumpler (released), Warrick Dunn (released), DeAngelo Hall (traded), Patrick Kerney (free agency) and Michael Vick (you know that story) were gone. Five players from the 2005 roster started at least one game in 2010.

The Draft

The Falcons ranked 21st in the number of starts from players taken in the 2006 through 2010 drafts. The 2006 draft did not provide much help. The Falcons had no 1st rounder and 2nd Jimmy Williams flopped. 3rd rounder Jerious Norwood rushed for over 600 yards in each of his first two seasons coming off the bench. The 2007 draft was much better and provided three rookie starters in 1st rounder Jamaal

Anderson (though Anderson was overall a disappointment) and 2nd rounders Justin Blalock and Chris Houston (subsequently traded). 4th rounder Stephen Nicholas also eventually became a starter. 3rd rounder Laurent Robinson was traded for late round picks in 2009. The Falcons had two 1st rounders in 2008 and hit on both of them with Matt Ryan and Sam Baker while 2nd rounder Curtis Lofton also started as a rookie. 3rd rounder Thomas DeCoud has been a two-year starter while fellow 3rd rounder Chevis Jackson was waived in 2010. Kroy Biermann was taken in the 5th and has contributed. The 2009 draft was not so good. 1st rounder Peria Jerry is on the verge of being considered a bust and 3rd rounder Chris Owens has been a backup so far. 2nd rounder William Moore moved into the starting lineup in 2010. Too soon to tell about the 2010 draft, though 2nd rounder Corey Peters did start as a rookie. 1st rounder Sean Weatherspoon started a handful of games in 2010 and the jury is out on 3rd rounder Michael Johnson. Ryan, of course, sticks out in their drafting. Otherwise, not as good as they might have hoped.

Free Agent Signings

The Falcons have made nice signings in free agency and also spotted some diamonds in the rough. In the free agent market they signed Erik Coleman, Grady Jackson (twice), Lawyer Milloy, Justin Peelle, Mike Peterson, Dunta Robinson and Michael Turner. They also picked up Tyson Clabo for their practice squad and then elevated him to the active roster, signed Harvey Dahl off the 49ers practice squad and picked up Brent Grimes after he was waived by the Packers and had him on the practice squad twice before he became a starter in 2009.

Trades

The Falcons have made as many significant trades as any team in the league:

- Acquired John Abraham in a three-way trade, for a 1st round draft choice
- In another three-way trade, acquired Ashley Lelie for TJ Duckett
- Traded Matt Schaub and a 1st rounder (#10) for a 1st rounder (#8) and two 2nd rounders
- Traded DeAngelo Hall for a 2nd and a 5th
- Acquired 1st, 3rd and 5th round choices for two 2nd rounders and a 4th and took Sam Baker
- Acquired Tony Gonzalez for a 2nd rounder
- Traded Chris Houston for 6th and 7th rounders

The Schaub trade wasn't looking very good until the Falcons got Matt Ryan in the draft but overall they made out okay in their trades.

Stability

The Falcons ranked 20th in the Stability Index. The biggest personnel changes took place in the 2008 season with some of the changes being "permanent" (e.g., the new starter continued into subsequent seasons) and some were temporary (only started for one season). The permanent changes were Matt Ryan replacing Joey Harrington and company; Curtis Lofton replacing Demorrio Williams; Harvey Dahl replacing Kynan Forney; Michael Turner replacing Warrick Dunn; and Justin Peelle replacing Alge Crumpler. The temporary new starters were Dominique Foxworth who replaced DeAngelo Hall but who

was subsequently replaced by Brent Grimes; Ben Hartsock replaced a combination of players but he was subsequently replaced by Tony Gonzalez; and Erik Coleman replaced Chris Crocker but Coleman was subsequently replaced by Thomas DeCoud.

Quarterbacks

The Falcons looked set for years with Michael Vick, then were forced to scramble to replace him in 2007. A combination of Joey Harrington, Chris Redman and Byron Leftwich held the fort that year. Matt Ryan took over in 2008 and he certainly looks to be the long-term answer. He is backed up by Chris Redman.

Quarterback Starts

Player	How Acquired (Selection #)	Year Acquired	Number of Starts
Matt Ryan	D – 3	2008	46
Michael Vick	D – 1	2001	16
Joey Harrington	FA	2007	10
Chris Redman	FA	2007	6
Byron Leftwich	FA	2007	2

CAROLINA PANTHERS

Won-Lost Record

2006	8-8	2008	12-4	2010	2-14
2007	7-9	2009	8-8	All Years	37-43 Rank:17

Panthers Metrics

Metric	Panthers	NFL Average	Rank
Percentage of Games Started By:			
Players on 2005 Roster	41%	44%	18
Players Drafted from 2006 thru 2010	33%	26%	3
Players signed as free agents or acquired in trades	26%	30%	23
Stability Index	72.7%	71.8%	16
Number of Players who started 13 games or more in a season	80	75	7

Players Starting 32 Games or More

From 2005 Roster		Players Drafted: 2006-2010			Other Players Signed: 2005-2010			
Thomas Davis	53	Jon Beason	2007-25	64	Tyler Brayton	FA	2008	44
Jake Delhomme	43 – W	Charles Godfrey	2008-67	42	Na'il Diggs	FA	2006	46 – W
Chris Gamble	67	Ryan Kail	2007- 59	47	Chris Harris	T	2007	44 – T
Jordan Gross	72	Jeff King	2006-155	62	Ma'ake Kemoeatu	FA	2006	41 – F
Brad Hoover	39 – F	Richard Marshall	2006-58	46	Damione Lewis	FA	2006	36 – W
Ken Lucas	44 – W	DeAngelo Williams	2006-27	37				
Julius Peppers	60 – FA							
Steve Smith	72							
Travelle Wharton	56							

Bold indicates a player was not on the team at the end of the 2010 season with the letter designation indicating how they left the team
T= Traded; R = Retired; W= Waived; FA= Lost in Free Agency; F= Released

Quick Take

They did a solid job of drafting but should stay away from trades. 15 of their 2010 starters were drafted by the Panthers between 2006 and 2010 and four more were drafted by the Panthers prior to 2006.

Players from 2005 Roster

Coming off an 11-5 season in 2005 with a loss in the NFC championship, the Panthers ranked 18th in the number of starts from players on their 2005 roster. Five players from that roster (Thomas Davis, Chris Gamble, Jordan Gross, Steve Smith and Travelle Wharton) are still playing for Panthers. A few others, most prominently Julius Peppers and Jake Delhomme, played for the Panthers through the 2009 season before leaving. Seven starters were gone before the 2006 season, three of those leaving in free agency including their two leading tacklers on defense.

The Draft

The Panthers ranked 3rd in starts by players taken in the 2006 through 2010 drafts. The 2006 draft brought DeAngelo Williams in the 1st round, Richard Marshall in the 2nd, James Anderson in the 3rd and Jeff King in the 5th. All four were starters for the Panthers, with King starting the most games of the quartet. Jon Beason, a day one starter, was selected in the 2007 1st round. 2nd rounder Ryan Kail has started for three seasons. 3rd round Charles Johnson became a starter in his 4th season. In 2008 Jonathan Stewart was taken in the 1st round and has been productive, though he hasn't started many games. The Panthers had a second 1st rounder in Jeff Otah and he has started two seasons and missed 2010 due to injury. 3rd rounder Charles Godfrey has been a three-year starter. A second 3rd rounder Dan Conner became a starter in 2010. Carolina had no 1st round pick in 2009 but selected Everette Brown and Sherrod Martin in the 2nd. Brown has been a bust but Martin has become a starter. 3rd rounder Corvey Irvin was also a bust, but 4th rounders Tony Fiametta and Mike Goodson look like they will be productive players. The Panthers had no 1st rounder in 2010 but took Casey Clausen in the 2nd. Clausen started as a rookie but now looks superfluous with the drafting of Cam Newton. The jury is still out on Armanti Edwards but 6th rounder David Gettis got off to a good rookie start. A solid job of drafting.

Free Agent Signings

The Panthers haven't been overly active in pursuing free agents but did get some help with Tyler Brayton, Na'il Diggs, Ma'ake Kemoeautu, Damione Lewis and Keydrick Vincent. They also reacquired Muhsin Muhammed, one of their 1996 draftees who was lost to the Bears in free agency. He returned to the Panthers to start the 2008 and 2009 seasons before retiring.

Trades

The Panthers have been involved in very few trades and that's probably a good thing considering their track record. Here's a summary of their trades:

- Their best trade was acquiring Chris Harris from the Bears for a 5th round choice. Harris started for three seasons and was then traded back to the Bears for Jamar Williams. Harris started every game for the Bears in 2010 while Williams played in only three games and was not tendered a contract for 2011.
- Traded Kris Jenkins for a 3rd and 5th
- Acquired Tank Tyler for a 5th
 - Tyler was acquired in midseason 2009 and waived before the 2010 season
- Traded for the 43rd pick in the draft in order to select Everett Brown and gave up the #17 pick in the subsequent year draft
 - Also got the #111 pick and took Mike Goodson, mitigating the damage
- Obtained the 89th pick in the draft to take Armanti Edwards in exchange for the 33rd pick the following year
- Traded down to allow the Jets to select Darrelle Reavis but received picks used to take Jon Beason and Ryan Kail in exchange - - a fair deal

Stability

The Panthers had the 16th highest Stability Index, right in the middle of the pack. The largest personnel turnover occurred between the 2005 and 2006 seasons. Starters Brentson Buckner, Brandon Short and Steve Davis were released; Marlon McCree, Will Witherspoon and Tutan Reyes were lost in free agency; and Jeff Mitchell retired. In addition, Jordan Carsten and Keary Colbert lost their starting jobs and Dan Morgan and Travelle Wharton missed most of the season due to injury. New starters were Jeremy Bridges, Thomas Davis, Na'il Diggs, Chris Draft, Geoff Hangartner, Kris Jenkins, Keyshawn Johnson; Ma'ake Kemoeatu, Evan Mathis and Shaun Williams. A number of the new starters (Draft, Johnson, Mathis and Williams) were just one year fixes and had to be replaced after the 2006 season. Significant upgrades came in 2007 as Jon Beason and Jeff King stepped into the starting lineup and Ryan Kail served a one apprenticeship before becoming a starter in 2008. In addition, Travelle Wharton returned from injury to regain his starting spot.

Quarterbacks

The Panthers got a number of good years out of Jake Delhomme, but they had to begin adjusting to life without him in 2009. 2010 was rough as Casey Clausen became the starter by default. 2011 draftee Cam Newton looks like he will be the future for the Panthers in the QB-rich NFC South.

Quarterback Starts

Player	How Acquired (Selection #)	Year Acquired	Number of Starts
Jake Delhomme	UDFA	1997	43
Matt Moore	W	2007	13
Casey Clausen	D – 48	2010	10
Vinny Testaverde	FA	2007	6
David Carr	FA	2007	4
Chris Weinke	D – 106	2001	3
Brian St. Pierre	FA	2010	1

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Won-Lost Record

2006	10-6	2008	8-8	2010	11-5
2007	7-9	2009	13-3	All Years	49-31 Rank: 6

Saints Metrics

Metric	Saints	NFL Average	Rank
Percentage of Games Started By:			
Players on 2005 Roster	31%	44%	26
Players Drafted from 2006 thru 2010	26%	26%	19
Players signed as free agents or acquired in trades	43%	30%	5
Stability Index	74.3%	71.8%	15
Number of Players who started 13 games or more in a season	76	75	16

Players Starting 32 Games or More

From 2005 Roster		Players Drafted: 2006-2010			Other Players Signed: 2005-2010			
Jammal Brown	45 – T	Reggie Bush	2006-2	41	Drew Brees	FA	2006	79
Josh Bullocks	36 – FA	Marques Colston	2006 -252	57	Scott Fujita	FA	2006	54 - FA
Charles Grant	54 – F	Sedrick Ellis	2008 – 7	39	Jonathan Goodwin	FA	2006	47
Devery Henderson	50	Jahri Evans	2006-108	80	Scott Shanle	T	2006	73
Mike McKenzie	39 – W	Roman Harper	2006-43	67	Jeremy Shockey	T	2008	35
Jamar Nesbit	35 – F	Carl Nicks	2008-164	35	Jonathan Vilma	T	2008	47
Will Smith	77							
Jon Stinchcomb	80							

Bold indicates a player was not on the team at the end of the 2010 season with the letter designation indicating how they left the team
T= Traded; R= Retired; W= Waived; FA= Lost in Free Agency; F= Released

Quick Take

An excellent job using free agency and trades to improve the franchise.

Players from 2005 Roster

The Saints rank 26th in the NFL in starts by players on their 2005 roster, understandable since they were coming off a 3-13 record in 2005. Four players (Devery Henderson, Lance Moore, Jon Stinchcomb and Will Smith) from the 2005 roster started games in 2010 and only Smith was a 2005 starter. Half the starters from 2005 were gone before the 2006 season and only a small handful of the remaining starters played significant roles going forward.

The Draft

The Saints ranked 19th in games started by players who were draft selections made in 2006 through 2010. They traded away five of their 15 picks in the first three rounds of the five-year study period to either move up or acquire veteran players, so that accounts for some of the ranking. The 2006 draft was a good one in 1st rounders Reggie Bush, 2nd rounder Roman Harper, 4th rounder Jahri Evans and 7th

rounder Marques Colston. They had no 3rd round pick. The 2007 draft was not nearly as productive, bringing Robert Meacham in the 1st, Osama Young and Andy Alleman in the 3rd and 4th rounder Jermon Bushrod, who became a starter in 2009, in the 4th. 2008 1st rounder Sedrick Ellis was an immediate starter and 2nd rounder Tracy Porter started in his 2nd year. 5th rounder Carl Nicks has been a three-year starter. They had no 3rd rounder. 2009 brought Michael Jenkins, who became a full-time starter in 2010, in the 1st round. They had no 2nd or 3rd round pick. Kicker Thomas Morstead came in the 5th round. The jury is still out on the 2010 draft, though 3rd rounder Jimmy Graham saw considerable action. A pretty good job of drafting given their trading away of picks.

Free Agent Signings

The Saints made a number of key signings in free agency, most notably Drew Brees. Other signings included Alex Brown, Heath Evans, Scott Fujita, Jonathan Goodwin, Jabari Greer and Darren Sharper. The importance of the Brees signing cannot be overestimated.

Trades

The Saints have been very active traders. Some of the more significant trades are as follows:

- Traded Wayne Gandy for Bryan Scott and a 7th
- Acquired two-year starter Jeff Faine in a 2nd round trade down
- Acquired two-year starter Hollis Thomas in a 4th round trade down
- In a trade of 2003 busts, acquired Bethel Johnson for Johnathan Sullivan
- Acquired five-year starter Scott Shanle for a 7th
- Traded Donte Stallworth for Mark Simoneau and a 4th
- Acquired Jason David for a 4th
- Acquired Jonathan Vilma and a 4th for a 3rd and an earlier 4th (5 draft positions earlier)
- Traded up to select Sedrick Ellis (#7 and #164 picks for #10 and #78 picks)
- Acquired Jeremy Shockey for a 2nd and a 5th
- Acquired David Thomas for a 6th
- Traded Jammal Brown and a 5th for a 3rd

Good marks for their trading activity.

Stability

The Saints were 15th in the Stability Index. They had a tremendous turnover in 2006, comparatively little in 2007 and 2010 and moderate turnover in 2008 and 2009. The turnover in 2006 was very heavy on offense with Drew Brees replacing Aaron Brooks; four new offensive linemen with Jon Stinchcomb (back from injury), Jahri Evans, Jeff Faine and Jamar Nesbit replacing LeCharles Bentley, Wayne Gandy, Montrae Holland and Kendyl Jacox; Marques Colston replacing Donte Stallworth; Mark Campbell replacing Ernest Conwell; and Reggie Bush replacing Antowain Smith as a part-time starter. An entirely new linebacker trio led the defensive changes as Scott Shanle, Scott Fujita and Mark Simoneau replaced Colby Bockwoldt, Sedrick Hodge and Ronald McKinnon. Elsewhere on defense Hollis Thomas replaced

Darren Howard and the combination of Roman Harper and Omar Stoutmire replaced Dwight Smith. Practically all of these changes lasted beyond the 2006 season as only Campbell was not a starter in 2007.

2008 brought a modest influx of talent as the Saints traded for Jeremy Shockey and Jonathan Vilma, added Sedrick Ellis and Carl Nicks through the draft and elevated Jonathan Goodwin to the starting lineup. 2009 brought another handful of changes as David Thomas was added in a trade; Darren Sharper came over in free agency; Tracy Porter and Jermon Bushrod worked their way up from reserve status to the starting lineup; and Remi Ayodele, after bouncing from practice squad to practice squad since 2006, moved into the starting lineup.

Quarterbacks

Drew Brees is obviously the man. He is backed up by Chase Daniel, an undrafted free agent originally signed by the Redskins.

Quarterback Starts

Player	How Acquired (Selection #)	Year Acquired	Number of Starts
Drew Brees	FA	2006	79
Mark Brunell	FA	2008	1