

## 2011 PLAYER ACQUISITION ACTIVITY by Tony Villiotti

The player acquisition activities of every NFL are reviewed annually by **DRAFTMETRICS** reviews. In this analysis **DRAFTMETRICS** determined how each NFL team acquired each of the players who started games for them during the 2011 season. The players are then placed into one of five categories:

- **Own Draftees.** This category includes all players who were drafted by team for which they are starting, excluding players who were reacquired via trade or free agency (e.g., the Steelers lost Larry Foote in free agency and then re-acquired him also through free agency, so his 2011 starts are in Veteran Free Agents, not in this category)
- **Veteran Free Agents.** This category includes all players signed as free agents and who had either previous NFL experience or were drafted by another team.
- **Undrafted Rookie Free Agents.** This category includes all undrafted players who never played for another NFL team. This includes both players who made the team immediately out of college and those who “bounced around” for more one season before making their NFL debut.
- **Trades.** This category includes players acquired via trades.
- **Waivers/Others.** This includes all players acquired through waivers or not otherwise included in the above four categories. For 2011, only players acquired through waivers are included here but in earlier years players acquired through the expansion draft are also included.

The most significant observations from the 2011 analysis are:

- Teams with more games started from their own draftees tended to be more successful, though there are a number of exceptions
  - The Patriots had fewer games than normal started by their own draftees
  - The Colts had more games than normal started by their own draftees
- The recent trend of slight increases in the reliance on a team’s own draftees continues, but overall results for 2011 are not markedly different than results of prior years
- More games were started by players acquired as Undrafted Rookie Free Agents than in any season since 2001

The breakdown by category for each of the past five years is as follows:

Year	% of Games Started by Players Acquired by Category				
	Own Draftees	Veteran Free Agents	Rookie Free Agents	Trades	Waivers/Other
<b>2011</b>	57.6%	25.9%	8.5%	6.6%	1.4%
<b>2010</b>	57.5%	24.4%	7.7%	8.9%	1.5%
<b>2009</b>	57.2%	27.1%	7.3%	6.8%	1.5%
<b>2008</b>	56.1%	29.7%	7.0%	6.1%	1.1%
<b>2007</b>	55.3%	31.5%	6.4%	5.8%	1.0%

Results for the last 20 years, both in total and by team are available at <http://www.draftmetrics.com/files/TeamProfile2011.pdf> .

The analysis of the 2011 season showed there was no single path to success. The Patriots, for example, had only slightly more than half of its starts made by its own draftees and the Giants were also below the league average in that category. There was a general tendency, though, for teams with more starts from their own draftees to be more successful.

The top 10 teams in terms of 2011 starts from their own draftees combined for an 89-71 record. The bottom 10 teams had a cumulative record of 72-88 and the “middle” 12 teams had a combined record of 95-97. So on balance it is better, but not absolutely necessary, to rely on the draft as the principal source of a team’s starters. A listing of the team in each category is as follows:

Top 10 Teams		Middle 12 Teams		Bottom 10 Teams	
Team	# of Starts	Team	# of Starts	Team	# of Starts
Panthers	266	Broncos	213	Jets	187
Steelers	264	Chargers	212	Bears	183
49ers	257	Falcons	210	Bengals	182
Bucs	243	Vikings	208	Patriots	181
Colts	240	Browns	207	Dolphins	180
Titans	236	Cards	203	Seahawks	180
Packers	233	Saints	202	Raiders	168
Cowboys	220	Chiefs	200	Bills	155
Ravens	220	Jaguars	199	Rams	125
Eagles	215	Giants	197	Redskins	121
		Texans	193		
		Lions	188		

When looking at starts by veteran free agents, the message seems to be that the middle of the road is better. Teams with the 10 highest number of starts by veteran free agents compiled a not so good 67-93 record. The teams with the 10 fewest number of starts broke even at 80-80 while the middle group of 12 led the way with a 109-83 record. A listing by team is as follows:

Top 10 Teams		Middle 12 Teams		Bottom 10 Teams	
Team	# of Starts	Team	# of Starts	Team	# of Starts
Rams	163	Lions	106	Browns	73
Redskins	150	Texans	103	Cowboys	72
Bills	141	Seahawks	101	Raiders	72
Chiefs	112	Dolphins	100	Chargers	70
Bears	112	Ravens	98	Saints	65
Jaguars	110	Bengals	98	Bucs	61
Cards	109	Vikings	92	Panthers	58
Titans	108	Jets	86	Packers	58
Giants	108	Falcons	79	Steelers	44
Eagles	107	Patriots	78	Colts	33
		49ers	76		
		Broncos	76		

Starts by a team's own draftees and veteran free agents accounted for, on average, over 83% of all the starts in the NFL last season. Several teams, though, deviated pretty substantially from the average. The Raiders had almost double the average number of starts from other sources with 112 starts (equivalent to seven starters of the 22 total starters) including 75 starts from players acquired in trades and 37 from undrafted rookie free agents. The Titans were on the other end of spectrum with only 8 starts from other sources. The 10 teams with the most starts from other sources combined for a 75-85 record; the bottom 10 teams had a 89-71 record; and the middle 12 teams were 92-100. A listing by team is as follows:

Top 10 Teams		Middle 12 Teams		Bottom 10 Teams	
Team	# of Starts	Team	# of Starts	Team	# of Starts
Raiders	112	Chargers	70	Giants	47
Patriots	93	Rams	64	Steelers	44
Saints	85	Broncos	63	Jaguars	43
Redskins	81	Falcons	63	Cards	40
Colts	79	Packers	61	Chiefs	40
Jets	79	Cowboys	60	Ravens	34
Bengals	72	Lions	58	Eagles	30
Browns	72	Bears	57	Panthers	28
Dolphins	72	Bills	56	49ers	19
Seahawks	71	Texans	56	Titans	8
		Vikings	52		
		Bucs	48		

If this kind of analysis interests you, you should make it a point to visit our "Team Acquisition Profiles" at <http://www.draftmetrics.com/files/TeamProfile2011.pdf>. A complete analysis of each NFL teams for the past 20 years can be found at that site, plus a summary of their drafting record for that same 20 year period.