

New York Giants

2015 record: 6-10	Total DVOA: -7.1% (20th)	2016 Mean Projection: 7.8 wins	On the Clock (0-4): 10%
Pythagorean Wins: 7.5 (16th)	Offense: -1.8% (19th)	Postseason Odds: 34.5%	Mediocrity (5-7): 35%
Snap-Weighted Age: 26.6 (15th)	Defense: 10.7% (30th)	Super Bowl Odds: 3.1%	Playoff Contender (8-10): 39%
Average Opponent: -5.0% (26th)	Special Teams: 5.4% (2nd)	Proj. Avg. Opponent: -1.1% (22nd)	Super Bowl Contender (11+): 15%
2015: If only the games lasted 58 minutes.			
2016: Money can't buy happiness, but it can buy a new defense.			

Everything came together for the New York Giants on a pair of charmed Super Bowl runs in 2007 and 2011. One can only imagine the Faustian deeds the Giants committed to earn those Lombardi Trophies, as the ensuing four seasons have largely delivered misfortune and underachievement. This off-season brought more change than the ultra-conservative organization has seen in a long time, but entering 2016, New York seems stuck between a new vision under Ben McAdoo and the old principles of the Tom Coughlin era.

Although Coughlin took the fall for the Giants' 1-6 slump to finish the 2015 season, some of the problems were seemingly out of his control. Start with injuries, which over the long haul will regress to the mean 99 percent of the time. The remaining one percent consists of the Giants, who finished dead last in Adjusted Games Lost for the *third* straight season. AGL is not a straight measure of games lost, but when factoring in adjustments for player role and injury designation, the Giants have lost somewhere between 137 and 141 games worth of production each of the past three seasons. Since 2001, when Football Outsiders began tracking AGL, no other team has lost as many games in any single season. In fact, the Giants have never ranked better than 22nd during the past six seasons of tracking. As you might imagine, injury luck does hold a moderate but meaningful relationship with winning percentage. From 2002-15, the correlation between AGL and winning percentage is -0.21. During the past three years, when the Giants have particularly suffered, the average correlation is -0.19. Of course, as those numbers insinuate, New York can't simply blame injury luck as the overriding factor in their recent disappointments. There are teams like the Patriots, who have won despite ranking 19th or worse in AGL five out of six seasons, and those like the Titans, who haven't won despite ranking seventh or better in half of the past six seasons.

Despite all those injuries, the Giants had the point differential of a roughly .500 team, but underperformed their Pythagorean win expectancy by 1.5 wins. Only three teams undershot their expected win total by a greater margin. New York fared extremely poorly in one-score games, finishing 3-8 in such contests. Again, only four teams had a worse winning percentage in one-score contests. The two are certainly related, and truthfully, the Giants and Coughlin deserve to shoulder the blame for their seemingly weekly shenanigans late in games. New York lost four games in which it was leading after three

quarters, the most of any team in the league. Astoundingly, the Giants lost five games in which they held a lead in the final two minutes of regulation, and lost three games after the opposing team took the lead on a field goal with one or zero seconds remaining.

Unfortunately for the Giants, the answer isn't as simple as retreating to the Hamptons for the summer and waiting for good ol' regression towards the mean to work its magic. After all, the Giants have to improve *past* the mean to make it back to the playoffs. While general manager Jerry Reese narrowly avoided the same fate as Coughlin, he is primarily responsible for the deterioration of the Giants' roster over the past few seasons. The Giants have hit on fewer picks than just about any other team during the past five drafts (2011-2015), a fact that becomes clear when comparing all 32 teams with Pro Football Reference's Approximate Value metric (Table 1).

Table 1. Best and Worst Drafting Teams, 2011-2015

Top 10 in AV from Draft Picks				Bottom 10 in AV from Draft Picks			
Team	Career AV	Pro Bowls	Games Started	Team	Career AV	Pro Bowls	Games Started
1. SEA	449	9	637	23. SD	254	1	514
2. HOU	338	5	598	24. PIT	253	2	417
3. CIN	333	8	520	25. NYJ	252	2	435
4. MIN	325	7	569	26. ATL	242	5	388
5. STL	325	5	595	27. IND	242	5	419
6. BUF	319	2	629	28. SF	235	2	398
7. WAS	313	4	535	29. CHI	233	4	460
8. CAR	299	9	405	30. DET	215	1	393
9. MIA	294	4	546	31. NO	195	3	362
10. ARI	293	9	482	32. NYG	195	2	337

Apart from the incandescent Odell Beckham Jr. (who accounts for both of New York's Pro Bowl selections in the table), the Giants have almost completely busted with their draft picks. Out of the 22 selections Reese made from 2011 to 2013, only Justin Pugh and Johnathan Hankins still remain on the roster. On a per-pick basis, the Giants' selections have garnered an average of 5.6 career AV per player, the lowest mark in the league.

2016 Giants Schedule					
Week	Opp.	Week	Opp.	Week	Opp.
1	at DAL	7	at LARM (U.K.)	13	at PIT
2	NO	8	BYE	14	DAL
3	WAS	9	PHI	15	DET
4	at MIN (Mon.)	10	CIN (Mon.)	16	at PHI (Thu.)
5	at GB	11	CHI	17	at WAS
6	BAL	12	at CLE		

Reese’s problems haven’t come in the first round. While running back David Wilson saw his career end prematurely due to a neck injury, Reese’s four other first-round selections delivered one of game’s best receivers (Beckham), two starting offensive linemen (Pugh and Ereck Flowers), and a cornerback who was oft-injured, but a relatively useful starter when healthy (Prince Amukamura). Though he has hardly been a wizard, Reese has been a slightly above-average drafter in the first round. After Round 1, however, Reese has basically morphed into the homeless Cleveland man who purportedly told Browns owner Jimmy Haslam to pick Johnny Manziel. Going back to Approximate Value, Chase Stuart’s draft value table comes with an expected marginal AV for each draft slot over the first five years of a player’s career (in other words, the amount of value a player produces above a low replacement-level threshold). Obviously not every Reese pick from 2011-15 has played five seasons; to adjust for this, we can divide the expected five-year marginal AV by the number of seasons each draft pick has actually played. Adding up the expected marginal AV for each of New York’s Round 1-7 picks from the same timeframe, we can clearly see Reese’s failings in the middle and late rounds (Table 2).

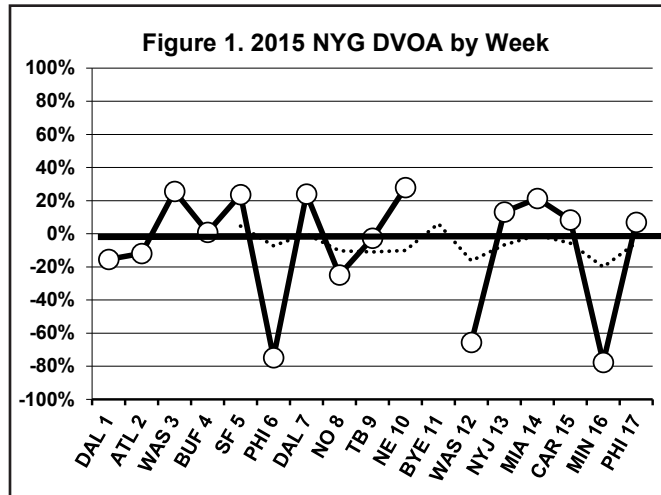
Table 2. Expected vs. Actual Value of Giants Draft Picks, 2011-2015

Round	Total Marginal AV	Expected Marginal AV*	Difference
1	46	44.4	+1.6
2	24	29.1	-5.1
3	-14	19.7	-33.7
4	-24	15.6	-39.6
5	-5	3.5	-8.5
6	-24	4.7	-28.7
7	-24	0.4	-24.4

*Five-year expected value adjusted for number of seasons played

The miss rate for later-round picks obviously increases, and this methodology isn’t perfect. It’s probably not entirely fair to divide Stuart’s expected AV the way we did—in theory, a player should steadily improve over his first five seasons and produce increasing AV, not the same AV over each of the five seasons. And almost every team will produce negative value in the later rounds, because how many Round 6 or 7 players even last five seasons in the league?

All that is nice, but it sure doesn’t buy Reese a free pass out of this mess. By this method, Weston Richburg, Reuben



Randle, and Devon Kennard (if you’re feeling charitable) are the only post-Round 1 players who have contributed anything meaningful above replacement value. Randle now plays for a division rival, while the oft-injured linebacker Kennard has flashed—see Week 4 versus Buffalo last season—but is not a lock to remain in the starting lineup this season. Most mid- to late-round picks will bust and thus produce little value, but it really only takes a couple useful players to break even, or at least come close. This is the idea behind the “quantity over quality” approach when it comes to draft strategy. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Reese has blatantly ignored this widely accepted axiom, failing to trade down even once (!) during the 10 drafts he has overseen in New York.

This approach, coupled with miserable mid-round results, has created a highly stratified stars-and-scrubs roster. The Giants as currently assembled resemble the guy at your fantasy auction who spends all his money on Antonio Brown and Adrian Peterson before checking out for the next few hours. So although any team would struggle to withstand the type of horrid injury luck New York has suffered through, it’s the Giants’ own fault that the drop-off to their backups is so cavernous. This is how last season’s Giants ended up starting a predictably overmatched undrafted first-year middle linebacker on opening day in Uani ‘Unga, or asking fullback Nikita Whitlock to double as a modern-day Rudy Reuttiger and play a handful of 3-technique snaps, a role he hadn’t occupied since his Wake Forest days.

The logical solution would be to overhaul the draft evaluation system and begin the multi-year process of rebuilding the roster’s foundation. For a patient organization with a new head coach, this holds especially true. Naturally, Reese did the exact opposite this offseason, unleashing a small country’s GDP on the open market under a brazen win-now operative. The Giants dished out just under \$110 million in guarantees to free agents from other teams, by far the most in the league this off-season. By doubling down on the stars-and-scrubs strategy, the Giants probably improved their short-term outlook. Given that Eli Manning turned 35 in January, perhaps New York felt the need to maximize its ceiling for the next two to three seasons, especially considering the dilapidated state of the NFC East.

Of course, for a team with as many holes on its depth chart as the Giants, that large of a spending spree forced Reese to choose which part of the roster to fix and which parts to leave unattended. Consequently, the Giants almost completely ignored their offense (fullback Will Johnson got the biggest new contract with a grand total of \$900,000 guaranteed over two seasons) and chose to invest their dollars in fixing a broken pass defense. To Reese's credit, this was probably the correct choice. New York finished 28th in pass defense DVOA in 2015, its worst ranking in the history of the metric (dating back to 1989). And with Amukamura and Robert Ayers leaving in free agency, the Giants desperately needed defensive talent to avoid sliding even further in 2016.

Returning defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo hasn't overseen an above-average defense since Taylor Swift was considered the bright new future of country music, which was also back when he could generate pressure with standard four-man rushes. So fittingly, a team whose championship identity was built on a fearsome pass rush reeled in the best pass-rusher on the market. Olivier Vernon isn't the best edge defender in the league, despite what his record-breaking average annual salary might suggest. But he is a significant upgrade on what the Giants rolled out last year, especially when Jason Pierre-Paul was sidelined while recovering from his catastrophic fireworks accident. Although Vernon accrued just 7.5 sacks last season, and has broken double-digit sack totals just once in his four-year career, he became one of the most consistent down-to-down pass-rushers in the league last season. Vernon posted 35.5 quarterback hurries last year, which ranked third among all defenders behind J.J. Watt and Carlos Dunlap. He accumulated an additional 30 quarterback hits, a total only Watt (33 hits) exceeded. In fact, Vernon's QB hit total nearly matched the combined production of New York's five qualifying edge defenders from 2015, as that quintet only managed 33 combined quarterback hits on their own.

Elite pass-rushing territory is new for Vernon, who nearly quadrupled his combined hits and hurries tally (20) from 2014. If he can sustain something close to what he did in 2015, though, Vernon's arrival should give the Giants two of the game's best pass-rushing bookends. The other half of that duo, Pierre-Paul, is coming off one of the more tumultuous seasons any player has endured in recent memory. Quietly, though, JPP reemerged as an elite pass-rusher in the eight games he did play in 2015. As with Vernon, sacks don't tell the full story with Pierre-Paul. Though he had just one sack, Pierre-Paul ended up with a whopping 32 hurries in his half-season, which ranked seventh in the league. That feat would be wildly impressive on its own given the number of games JPP played, but it's even more remarkable considering the life-changing physical adjustments Pierre-Paul had to make midstream. For reference, when JPP played 16 games and had all his digits in 2014, he only accumulated 24 hurries.

Given a whole offseason to adjust his game around his four-fingered reality (not to mention a custom glove which will replace the cumbersome club he played with in 2015), it won't be surprising if the impending free agent produces a season which allows him to blow away Vernon's contract. For now,

the Giants should enjoy a significant rebound in pass pressure. Last season's squad finished 30th in adjusted sack rate, bottoming out with the franchise's second-lowest sack total (23) since the 1970 merger. Vernon's signing might preclude New York from keeping JPP after 2016, but that's a problem for another day.

Unfortunately, Reese's other big-money deals may have only triggered more problems in the present day. Damon Harrison is a safe bet to help out New York's run defense, which has ranked 21st and 27th in DVOA the past two seasons. But even a premier run-clogger like "Big Snacks" isn't likely to fix the run defense on his own. The Giants surrendered plenty of big runs in part because their motley crew of linebackers had trouble sifting through traffic and shedding blocks. Whether you want to measure run defense by how often a defense penetrates the backfield to disrupt a carry or by how well a defense is able to limit big gains, the Giants were a bottom-half unit by all standards in 2015. Maybe Harrison creates more disruptive plays in the backfield and helps out in short-yardage situations, but the Giants could have built up a full rotation of run-stuffers (Terrance Knighton? Steve McClendon? Ian Williams?) with Harrison's \$9.25 million average annual salary.

At least Harrison should supply positive value. It's less clear how the Janoris Jenkins contract might turn out. Jenkins has appeared on plenty of highlight tapes for his five career touchdowns, but his ballhawking borders on reckless and ultimately makes him a net negative over the long haul. By adjusted success rate, Jenkins ranked 51st out of 75 cornerbacks who received at least 50 charted targets or eight starts in 2015. Disturbingly, that was an upgrade from his prior campaign, when he ranked 66th out of 77 qualifiers. As a long-armed corner who piles up lots of pass deflections, Jenkins is effectively a younger, inferior version of the Giants' top corner, Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, as well as an older, better-tackling version of their first-round pick, Ohio State cornerback Eli Apple.

The capper to all this? The Giants didn't even address the fundamental weakness to their pass coverage by signing Jenkins. While New York was a roughly league-average defense on passes to the perimeter, it floundered in the middle. The Giants ranked 25th in DVOA on passes to that section of the field, hardly a surprise when recalling their woes at linebacker and safety. This isn't a new personnel problem, as New York ranked 32nd in passes up the middle in 2014 and 19th in 2013. While New York did draft safety Darian Thompson (Boise State) and linebacker B.J. Goodson (Clemson), mid-round rookies usually aren't immediate saviors. Both have legitimate chances of starting this fall, a fact that says as much about the current personnel as it does about either prospect. A more measured offseason approach might have seen the Giants draft Apple and let him ripen behind DRC for a season or two, supplementing the pass coverage in the meantime with cheaper upgrades in the slot (Casey Hayward? Patrick Robinson?) and in the box (Tyvon Branch? Daryl Smith?). Instead, by tossing around money in a Leeroy Jenkins-style surge of excitement, Reese has purchased a few expensive ingredients for a recipe still missing several key components.

In the end, the Giants will likely be dependent on their stars in the passing game on both sides of the ball. It feels weird that we've gone this long into the chapter without really discussing Eli Manning and the offense, but routine stability isn't nearly as exciting as total overhaul. Indeed, in promoting McAdoo, New York's primary motivation was to retain the coach who had reigned in the previously erratic Manning. While no offense with Beckham in its lineup is boring, McAdoo's system is inherently meant to limit variance. Manning has cut down on his turnovers, posting identical 2.3 percent interception rates the past two years, well below his 3.4 percent career rate before McAdoo's arrival. However, his passes have also become significantly shorter as more three-step concepts have worked their way into the playbook. Manning set a new career-high for attempts charted as short passes in 2014 at 47 percent, only to surpass that total in 2015 with 50 percent of his passes charted as short. Last season, 40 percent of his deep-ball passes went to Beckham; when Eli isn't targeting his All-Pro superstar, he's most likely checking down to a running back or throwing a short slant or stick route to the numbers.

There's nothing wrong with this approach, but it hasn't been good enough to produce anything beyond a roughly league-average offense. That's a far cry from Eli's 2008-12 heyday, when the Giants finished with a top-10 offense in four out of five seasons. Realistically, even with the money spent on defense, New York probably isn't snapping its four-year playoff drought unless it returns to that level. But given how similar the offense looks to its past two renditions, where can the Giants turn for that leap?

We can most likely rule out any meaningful help from the running game. A rushing attack which has finished 23rd, 23rd, and 30th in DVOA the past three years will probably end up near the cellar again. Lots of draftniks considered Paul Perkins an intriguing sleeper, but for now, the UCLA product is a fifth-round rookie whose skill set is redundant with Shane Vereen. Otherwise, the running game will return the same cast of characters, with several overmatched players receiving far too large a role in both the backfield and on the offensive line. At this point, the likes of Andre Williams, John Jerry, and Marshall Newhouse resemble mediocre *Survivor* contestants who last far too long because everyone else forgets they're still on the island.

Even without any huge improvements, the offense might get a slight boost by simply not being terrible in the red zone. The Giants had the 31st-ranked offensive red zone DVOA, a byproduct of eight turnovers and several late-game gaffes. Remember the earlier bit about New York's league-leading four blown fourth-quarter leads? In each of those instances,

a turnover (vs. Atlanta and the Jets) or clock mismanagement (vs. Dallas and New England) helped trigger the eventual comeback. It's too facile to say that New York's late-game woes will disappear with better red zone offense (or that the offense was to blame for those losses in 2015), but when the Giants were merely below average in the red zone in 2014, they were 12th in overall offensive DVOA. Merely regressing back to the top of the bell curve should help out the offense's bottom line.

Still, for the offense to really beat expectations, the passing game might need unexpected contributions from a pair of sources. For different reasons, it's shaky to bet on a huge 2015 season for either Victor Cruz or Sterling Shepard, the two most popular picks to emerge as the No. 2 wide receiver behind Beckham. Cruz will have missed nearly two full years when Week 1 rolls around, and was in the midst of a three-year decline in both DVOA and DYAR at the time of his injury. Meanwhile, Shepard received a lukewarm projection from Playmaker Score, which penalized him for his age and mediocre yards per catch figures at Oklahoma. Moreover, both are slot receivers with minimal experience playing on the perimeter, which may keep one of them glued to the bench even when New York shifts into three-receiver personnel. The opportunity should be there for at least one them; for an offense with a transcendent receiver, the Giants don't force-feed Beckham as much as one might expect. Just under 27 percent of New York's passes went to its No. 1 receiver, which ranked 11th in the league. If either Cruz or Shepard is capable of making plays beyond what the offensive structure calls for, he'll surely have the chance to shine.

Either way, the Giants likely need a couple pleasant surprises to move beyond their recent seven-win ceiling. New York's lineup on paper looks like an upgrade on what the Giants have fielded the past few seasons, especially if they catch some long overdue injury luck. However, this is far from a complete roster, and they no longer have the financial means to significantly alter their current hand or the security of knowing that this core works well together. Long-term, the Giants resemble a homeowner who has fixed up the living room and built a beautiful yard, but still has leaky plumbing, shoddy electricity, and an unfinished basement. That might not affect 2016's short-term results, and a playoff berth would surely appease a fan base which soured on the status quo by the end of 2015. But even as the roster's star power allows the Giants to dream about their ceiling, the floor will once again loom perilously low.

Sterling Xie

2015 Giants Stats by Week

Wk	vs.	W-L	PF	PA	YDF	YDA	TO	Total	Off	Def	ST
1	at DAL	L	26	27	289	436	3	-15%	-6%	18%	9%
2	ATL	L	20	24	388	402	-1	-12%	-2%	24%	14%
3	WAS	W	32	21	363	393	3	26%	24%	-20%	-19%
4	at BUF	W	24	10	303	313	1	1%	-37%	-34%	5%
5	SF	W	30	27	525	380	-1	24%	32%	12%	4%
6	at PHI	L	7	27	247	428	1	-75%	-58%	14%	-3%
7	DAL	W	27	20	289	460	4	24%	14%	13%	23%
8	at NO	L	49	52	416	608	1	-25%	4%	41%	12%
9	at TB	W	32	18	327	383	1	-3%	-17%	-1%	13%
10	NE	L	26	27	422	406	1	28%	13%	-19%	-5%
11	BYE										
12	at WAS	L	14	20	332	407	-3	-66%	-43%	22%	-1%
13	NYJ	L	20	23	355	463	0	13%	-3%	12%	28%
14	at MIA	W	31	24	429	363	0	21%	41%	12%	-8%
15	CAR	L	35	38	406	480	-1	8%	31%	22%	0%
16	at MIN	L	17	49	363	368	-3	-78%	-66%	11%	0%
17	PHI	L	30	35	502	435	1	7%	24%	31%	15%

Trends and Splits

	Offense	Rank	Defense	Rank
Total DVOA	-1.4%	19	10.5%	30
Unadjusted VOA	1.6%	13	10.2%	28
Weighted Trend	-1.8%	16	13.5%	31
Variance	10.8%	30	3.9%	9
Average Opponent	3.2%	27	-1.9%	23
Passing	12.1%	18	23.5%	28
Rushing	-12.2%	23	-6.7%	21
First Down	-8.0%	25	8.5%	24
Second Down	11.2%	8	0.5%	16
Third Down	-9.9%	22	29.2%	30
First Half	-1.0%	17	5.2%	21
Second Half	-1.8%	17	15.5%	30
Red Zone	-39.3%	31	-9.8%	9
Late and Close	14.2%	4	12.6%	28

Five-Year Performance


Year	W-L	Pyth W	Est W	PF	PA	TO	Total	Rk	Off	Rk	Def	Rk	ST	Rk	Off AGL	Rk	Def AGL	Rk	Off Age	Rk	Def Age	Rk	ST Age	Rk
2011	9-7	7.8	9.1	394	400	+7	8.5%	12	10.5%	7	2.4%	19	0.3%	15	25.2	13	53.1	30	27.4	13	27.6	8	26.1	20
2012	9-7	10.2	9.5	429	344	+14	13.4%	7	12.8%	7	1.5%	16	2.0%	10	26.1	12	56.6	28	27.8	8	27.2	13	26.2	13
2013	7-9	5.6	5.5	294	383	-15	-15.7%	27	-22.0%	31	-11.4%	6	-5.1%	28	80.9	32	60.3	32	27.4	12	27.4	7	26.1	15
2014	6-10	7.5	7.0	380	400	-2	-5.8%	21	-0.3%	15	4.9%	24	-0.6%	15	65.9	31	71.3	30	26.6	20	27.6	5	26.7	3
2015	6-10	7.5	7.4	420	442	+7	-7.1%	20	-1.8%	19	10.7%	30	5.4%	2	66.9	31	71.8	31	26.2	22	27.0	13	26.5	8

2015 Performance Based on Most Common Personnel Groups

NYG Offense					NYG Offense vs. Opponents					NYG Defense				NYG Defense vs. Opponents			
Pers	Freq	Yds	DVOA	Run%	Pers	Freq	Yds	DVOA	Run%	Pers	Freq	Yds	DVOA	Pers	Freq	Yds	DVOA
11	81%	6.0	6.1%	30%	Base	19%	4.9	-19.2%	58%	Base	34%	6.4	8.4%	11	53%	6.2	9.1%
21	8%	3.8	-25.8%	74%	Nickel	66%	6.1	10.3%	35%	Nickel	51%	6.4	13.6%	12	23%	6.7	12.6%
12	6%	7.1	20.6%	51%	Dime+	14%	6.0	2.6%	9%	Dime+	12%	6.1	7.5%	21	8%	5.3	-9.4%
22	2%	2.2	-45.5%	94%	Goal Line	1%	-0.3	-80.6%	86%	Goal Line	2%	-0.1	-1.7%	13	4%	9.0	48.6%
01	1%	8.2	58.5%	0%						Big	1%	4.8	23.1%	10	4%	5.8	23.4%

Strategic Tendencies

Run/Pass	Rk	Formation	Rk	Pass Rush	Rk	Secondary	Rk	Strategy	Rk
Runs, first half	37% 18	Form: Single Back	76% 15	Rush 3	6.4% 19	4 DB	34% 13	Play action	17% 23
Runs, first down	50% 10	Form: Empty Back	6% 19	Rush 4	67.6% 14	5 DB	51% 20	Avg Box (Off)	6.10 28
Runs, second-long	28% 23	Pers: 3+ WR	83% 2	Rush 5	15.6% 31	6+ DB	12% 16	Avg Box (Def)	6.21 21
Runs, power sit.	47% 28	Pers: 2+ TE/6+ OL	10% 30	Rush 6+	10.4% 7	CB by Sides	71% 22	Offensive Pace	28.50 4
Runs, behind 2H	24% 17	Pers: 6+ OL	1% 21	Sacks by LB	13.0% 28	S/CB Cover Ratio	27% 8	Defensive Pace	29.52 7
Pass, ahead 2H	53% 7	Shotgun/Pistol	69% 8	Sacks by DB	4.3% 26	DB Blitz	10% 13	Go for it on 4th	0.84 20

Although most teams use 11 personnel as their primary package in today's NFL, nobody has done it quite like the Giants. At 81 percent, they are the first team to use a single personnel package more than 75 percent of the time since we started tracking specific personnel packages six years ago. (That's based on positions, not having the exact same men on the field.)  The

Giants threw 27 percent of their passes in the middle of the field, and the numbers show that was a good strategy. The Giants had only 1.2% DVOA on passes to the left side (31st) and 23.9% DVOA on passes to the right side (22nd) but 101.6% DVOA on passes up the middle (seventh). (Remember that DVOA on passes by side is generally high because sacks, deliberate throw-aways, and passes batted down at the line are removed.) ☹️ The offense ran just eight wide receiver or tight end screens, the lowest total in the league. ☹️ Opponents blitzed Eli Manning on just 16 percent of pass attempts, the lowest figure of any offense we've tracked since we began game charting. Blitzes against the Giants rarely brought pressure (a league-low 24 percent of blitzes were marked with pressure) because Manning excelled at hitting the hot read for a short gain—the Giants dropped from 7.2 yards per play against a standard pass rush to 5.8 against five rushers and 4.5 against six or more. This was a big change from previous seasons, when Manning usually saw his yards per pass go up against big blitzes. ☹️ The Giants ranked among the top three teams for running back draws for the fifth straight season. They averaged 4.8 yards with -5.1% DVOA, a slight improvement from 2014. ☹️ New York ranked sixth in offensive DVOA when playing at home but just 25th in road contests, the largest home-road split in the league last season. (There's no real consistency in this from year to year; it's just a fun fact.) ☹️ The Giants edged out the Saints for the worst third-and-short defense, posting a 40.4% DVOA in such situations.

Passing

Player	DYAR	DVOA	Plays	NtYds	Avg	YAC	C%	TD	Int
E.Manning	404	-1.9%	646	4225	6.5	5.4	62.9%	35	14

Receiving

Player	DYAR	DVOA	Plays	Ctch	Yds	Y/C	YAC	TD	C%
O.Beckham	304	10.3%	158	96	1454	15.1	6.2	13	61%
R.Randle*	167	10.0%	90	57	801	14.1	3.6	8	63%
D.Harris	45	-2.7%	57	36	396	11.0	3.8	4	63%
M.White	-46	-40.2%	20	7	88	12.6	1.0	1	35%
H.Nicks*	-36	-44.5%	14	7	54	7.7	3.1	0	50%
P.Parker*	-32	-47.4%	12	5	40	8.0	5.8	0	42%
W.Tye	51	5.1%	62	42	464	11.0	4.6	3	68%
L.Donnell	-15	-12.6%	41	29	223	7.7	3.0	2	71%
J.Cunningham*	-36	-39.3%	16	8	59	7.4	3.3	0	50%
D.Fells*	12	18.5%	7	6	60	10.0	6.2	0	86%
S.Vereen	103	8.4%	81	59	498	8.4	7.2	4	73%
R.Jennings	29	-0.9%	40	29	296	10.2	10.7	1	73%

Rushing

Player	DYAR	DVOA	Plays	Yds	Avg	TD	Fum	Suc
R.Jennings	117	5.6%	195	863	4.4	3	1	56%
A.Williams	-83	-30.9%	88	257	2.9	1	0	34%
S.Vereen	9	-4.8%	61	260	4.3	0	0	41%
O.Darkwa	27	7.7%	37	153	4.1	1	0	46%
B.Rainey	-16	-118.2%	5	18	3.6	0	1	40%
W.Johnson	-7	-31.2%	4	7	1.8	1	0	25%

Offensive Line

Player	Pos	Age	GS	Snaps	Pen	Sk	Pass	Run	Player	Pos	Age	GS	Snaps	Pen	Sk	Pass	Run
Weston Richburg	C	25	15/15	1016	4	0.0	1.0	4.0	Geoff Schwartz*	RG	30	11/11	673	3	4.0	6.5	1.0
Justin Pugh	LG	26	14/14	967	5	2.0	3.0	2.0	John Jerry	RG	30	16/8	644	3	0.0	2.0	3.0
Ereck Flowers	LT	22	15/15	963	10	3.0	21.0	1.0	Dallas Reynolds*	C	32	16/2	222	1	0.0	1.0	1.0
Marshall Newhouse	RT	28	14/14	937	8	4.0	7.5	2.0									

Year	Yards	ALY	Rank	Power	Rank	Stuff	Rank	2nd Lev	Rank	Open Field	Rank	Sacks	ASR	Rank	Press	Rank	F-Start	Cont.
2013	3.48	3.27	30	70%	10	25%	31	1.10	18	0.45	28	40	7.6%	18	27.4%	25	6	23
2014	3.62	3.76	22	61%	20	20%	18	0.94	29	0.47	28	30	5.0%	10	23.5%	15	18	37
2015	4.02	3.96	11	47%	30	19%	11	1.10	21	0.59	23	27	5.1%	6	23.3%	11	13	28
2015 ALY by direction:			Left End 2.71 (30)			Left Tackle 3.55 (19)			Mid/Guard 4.2 (6)			Right Tackle 3.9 (11)			Right End 3.25 (20)			

It's no exaggeration to suggest that the Giants may have fielded the NFL's worst tackle tandem. Rookie Ereck Flowers assumed blindside duties much earlier than anyone expected, and proceeded to post the second-worst blown blocks per snap rate of any left tackle in the league. Newhouse was also below average by that metric, and drew a team-high five holding penalties. New York will stomach its growing pains with Flowers, who might fare better if he doesn't once again play through a high ankle sprain for much of the season. Newhouse, on the other hand, is someone the Giants seem eager to upgrade from, showing interest in Eugene Monroe earlier this offseason. ☹️ The Giants were the only team in the league not to draft or sign an undrafted offensive lineman this offseason. None of New York's backup linemen were drafted higher than the sixth round, though, so the back end of the depth chart isn't exactly filled with promising developmental prospects. The only reserve currently on the roster with more than one career start is Byron Stingily, who served as a fill-in swing tackle on Tennessee's woeful line from 2011-14.

Defensive Front Seven

Defensive Line	Age	Pos	Overall									vs. Run					Pass Rush			
			G	Snaps	Plays	TmPct	Rk	Stop	Dfts	BTKl	Runs	St%	Rk	RuYd	Rk	Sack	Hit	Hur	Dsrpt	
Cullen Jenkins*	35	DT	16	733	28	3.1%	74	19	6	3	17	71%	56	1.8	26	3.0	8	15.5	1	
Jay Bromley	24	DT	16	479	36	4.0%	60	26	2	1	35	74%	48	2.7	60	0.0	6	2.0	0	
Johnathan Hankins	24	DT	9	410	31	6.2%	30	22	2	0	29	69%	59	2.4	51	0.0	2	5.5	1	
Markus Kuhn	30	DT	10	313	20	3.6%	66	19	1	0	16	94%	1	1.5	13	0.5	2	3.0	0	
Damon Harrison	28	DT	16	568	71	9.3%	3	63	12	1	69	90%	9	1.4	7	0.5	3	4.0	0	

Edge Rushers	Age	Pos	Overall									vs. Run					Pass Rush			
			G	Snaps	Plays	TmPct	Rk	Stop	Dfts	BTKl	Runs	St%	Rk	RuYd	Rk	Sack	Hit	Hur	Dsrpt	
Kerry Wynn	25	DE	15	579	54	6.4%	21	33	9	2	50	60%	87	3.0	75	0.0	2	4.5	2	
Robert Ayers*	31	DE	12	569	45	6.7%	15	38	19	4	28	82%	15	2.0	38	9.5	13	23.0	3	
Jason Pierre-Paul	27	DE	8	502	31	6.9%	11	25	8	3	20	80%	23	1.8	29	1.0	6	32.0	6	
George Selvie*	29	DE	12	370	25	3.7%	73	21	3	3	20	80%	23	2.8	66	1.0	4	8.5	0	
Damontre Moore*	24	DE	14	279	21	2.7%	--	15	8	1	9	56%	--	6.6	--	4.0	8	7.0	1	
Olivier Vernon	26	DE	16	943	59	6.7%	14	52	25	4	43	86%	9	1.4	19	7.5	30	35.5	0	

Linebackers	Age	Pos	Overall									vs. Run					Pass Rush			vs. Pass					
			G	Snaps	Plays	TmPct	Rk	Stop	Dfts	BTKl	Runs	St%	Rk	RuYd	Rk	Sack	Hit	Hur	Tgts	Suc%	Rk	AdjYd	Rk	PD	Int
Jonathan Casillas	29	OLB	15	673	85	10.1%	61	42	18	5	34	53%	79	4.2	71	2.0	0	4	22	58%	32	5.5	26	3	1
Devon Kennard	25	OLB	9	487	59	11.7%	48	28	7	3	40	53%	80	3.8	57	0.0	5	9	10	56%	--	6.6	--	2	1
Uani' Unga*	29	MLB	13	433	63	8.7%	66	21	10	5	27	41%	89	3.7	50	0.0	1	1	15	27%	73	9.6	66	4	2
Jasper Brinkley	31	MLB	15	420	66	7.9%	--	34	11	6	44	64%	--	2.8	--	1.0	0	0	6	63%	--	7.1	--	0	0
J.T. Thomas	28	OLB	12	400	43	6.4%	81	22	1	5	26	62%	50	3.4	38	0.0	0	4	6	50%	--	8.7	--	1	0
Kelvin Sheppard	28	MLB	16	709	104	11.9%	46	59	21	8	70	59%	59	3.0	25	0.0	0	2	19	46%	56	8.5	64	1	0
Keenan Robinson	27	ILB	12	546	65	10.9%	53	33	10	11	31	58%	60	5.4	86	0.0	0	0	14	57%	34	7.1	52	3	1

Year	Yards	ALY	Rank	Power	Rank	Stuff	Rank	2nd Level	Rank	Open Field	Rank	Sacks	ASR	Rank	Press	Rank
2013	3.56	3.62	8	66%	19	21%	13	1.00	7	0.44	5	34	6.1%	28	22.7%	23
2014	4.81	4.31	28	62%	13	16%	27	1.37	31	1.00	29	47	7.8%	6	29.4%	2
2015	4.35	3.97	22	67%	17	20%	19	1.18	21	0.88	22	23	4.1%	30	25.9%	13

2015 ALY by direction: Left End 5.37 (30) Left Tackle 3.96 (19) Mid/Guard 4.04 (22) Right Tackle 3.11 (7) Right End 3.51 (19)

After a strong sophomore season, Johnathan Hankins regressed against both the pass and the run before a torn pectoral prematurely ended his third season. With Damon Harrison's arrival, the Ringo of New York's defensive line should get more pass-rushing opportunities from the 3-technique spot after largely playing the 1-tech in 2015. There really wasn't a Giants linebacker who was above average at any single skill last season. Devon Kennard showed some extremely promising flashes in coverage as a rookie in 2014, but struggled and couldn't stay healthy under a greater burden in 2015. Keenan Robinson was also excellent in coverage two years ago (for Washington) and could win the starting MIKE role over Jasper Brinkley and Jonathan Casillas. Like Kennard, though, Robinson regressed in coverage last year, and has always been a liability against the run. B.J. Goodson was the first linebacker Jerry Reese selected before Round 5 since 2010. He went in the fourth round instead. (Tune in next year to see if Reese will ever draft a linebacker before Saturday.) At 6-foot-1 and 245 pounds, Goodson is more of a downhill thumper who can help in run support and as an occasional blitzer (5.5 sacks his senior year). And while he wasn't particularly adept in coverage at Clemson, his strong agility testing at the combine suggests he has the physical tools to help out there eventually.

Defensive Secondary

Secondary	Age	Pos	Overall								vs. Run					vs. Pass									
			G	Snaps	Plays	TmPct	Rk	Stop	Dfts	BTKl	Runs	St%	Rk	RuYd	Rk	Tgts	Tgt%	Rk	Dist	Suc%	Rk	AdjYd	Rk	PD	Int
Landon Collins	22	SS	16	1093	117	13.1%	11	47	16	8	50	58%	6	5.1	15	36	8.8%	52	10.7	44%	65	7.6	42	8	1
D.Rodgers-Cromartie	30	CB	15	889	71	8.5%	41	29	12	7	15	40%	39	6.4	29	68	20.5%	44	13.8	54%	29	6.9	17	14	3
Brandon Meriweather*	32	FS	13	834	66	9.1%	43	21	8	13	33	33%	46	6.7	34	20	6.3%	21	17.4	61%	24	9.7	60	6	2
Prince Amukamara*	27	CB	11	765	73	11.9%	3	28	10	3	15	40%	39	8.3	49	55	19.3%	38	12.5	52%	38	7.5	35	6	1
Trevin Wade	27	CB	16	529	54	6.0%	--	22	13	6	12	50%	--	10.5	--	33	16.7%	--	10.8	46%	--	8.4	--	4	0
Jayron Hosley*	26	CB	14	528	35	4.5%	--	12	2	6	9	22%	--	8.2	--	28	14.0%	--	12.8	49%	--	10.2	--	5	1
Craig Dahl*	31	SS	15	429	48	5.7%	67	14	7	6	16	38%	42	8.8	54	21	12.8%	63	18.0	41%	67	10.5	65	3	0
Trumaine McBride*	31	CB	15	342	30	3.6%	--	11	6	8	4	50%	--	2.8	--	27	21.2%	--	8.3	50%	--	7.5	--	4	3
Janoris Jenkins	28	CB	15	1039	80	9.4%	24	41	15	10	10	70%	6	7.6	42	68	20.5%	46	12.7	49%	51	7.7	37	14	3

Year	Pass D Rank	vs. #1 WR	Rk	vs. #2 WR	Rk	vs. Other WR	Rk	vs. TE	Rk	vs. RB	Rk
2013	8	-11.6%	9	-33.7%	2	-22.0%	5	-18.7%	6	14.9%	28
2014	21	7.8%	23	-3.1%	15	1.1%	18	13.9%	25	2.1%	20
2015	28	-1.7%	15	1.1%	16	-6.0%	12	20.5%	27	8.5%	21

By adjusted yards per target, Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie has improved each of the past three seasons. The degree of difficulty was probably higher in 2015, as DRC toughed out numerous lower-body and back issues to play 15 games, though he had to leave early in three different contests. The 30-year-old is probably more of a health risk now than he has been throughout his durable career, but with a cap hit that stays between \$8 million and \$8.5 million the next three seasons, DRC's contract looks reasonable amid a booming cornerback market. ☹ Predictably, rookie safety Landon Collins was much more comfortable and productive playing closer to the line. Collins was a positive contributor in the running game, but posted some porous coverage charting numbers. The Giants often had to drop Collins deep because of Brandon Meriweather's even more limited skill set, but that might change with the third-round selection of Darian Thompson. The Boise State product arrives with pro-ready instincts as a deep centerfielder, and is likely the best free safety on the roster. The young safety duo will experience its share of growing pains, but it won't be more painful than watching Meriweather and Craig Dahl play significant snaps again. ☹ Eli Apple isn't likely to play much his rookie year given his redundancy with Rodgers-Cromartie and Janoris Jenkins, and that's fine. Apple was one of the least experienced corners in the draft, and needs to grow out of his tendency to grab receivers and draw penalties. Unfortunately, that leaves some uninspiring options for the slot cornerback job, with Trevin Wade the current favorite.

Special Teams

Year	DVOA	Rank	FG/XP	Rank	Net Kick	Rank	Kick Ret	Rank	Net Punt	Rank	Punt Ret	Rank	Hidden	Rank
2013	-5.1%	28	0.7	17	3.3	11	-4.2	24	-20.5	31	-4.6	23	-12.8	32
2014	-0.6%	15	3.7	8	7.0	6	-5.9	29	-5.2	23	-2.8	19	-13.3	30
2015	5.4%	2	9.5	2	-3.1	24	9.1	2	7.4	6	4.0	8	-6.4	24

Apart from serving as a surprisingly solid fill-in receiver, Dwayne Harris was also back to being one of the game's best returners after a down 2014 in Dallas. Combining kick and punt returns, Harris provided 11.3 points of net value over average. On kickoffs, only Cordarrelle Patterson exceeded Harris' value. ☹ Josh Brown's field goal percentage was above 90 percent for the second consecutive season, but his short kickoffs cancelled out roughly half of that value. Brown was the league's most actively harmful kicker in the latter department, subtracting minus-5.7 points of gross value on his kickoffs. Consequently, the Giants finished 30th in touchback percentage. Of course, with the rule change devaluing touchbacks by moving them to the 25, Brown's weakness may no longer be a disadvantage, significantly upping his value if he can remain accurate on field goals.