

The Best Strat-O-Matic 2013 Football Offensive Cards

By Meredith Adkins

Quarterbacks

I use a system of rating that is based primarily on completion chances in the RIGHT columns since passing RIGHT is the most important thing a QB must do. The MUST RUN chances are factored in and interceptions subtract from the rating. Since the Short Pass is the most important (you need this to convert 3rd and long), it has the heaviest weight in my rating system.

Peyton Manning has, by far, the best QB ranking. His rating is 10% better than the next best QB, which is Drew Brees. And his rating is 10% better than the next QB, Phillip Rivers. He is followed closely by Josh McCown. Geno Smith of the New York Jets is the worst rated starting QB.

The Manning card is one of the best Strat QB cards ever, rivaling the famed 1984 Dan Marino card. It is the best Short Pass card (IMHO) ever made by Strat-O-Matic. It is a little weak Flat, but it is among the best in this year's set Long, and the aforementioned Short is legendary. And did I mention that he has 3 top rated WR's to throw to as well as a second level TE? Double-teaming will be an exercise in futility. A fun thing to do would be to have Manning throw against his own defense. Even playing a nickel, it will be hard pressed to stop him.

The best Long Passers are Manning, Brees, and Ben Roethlisberger.

The best Short Passers are Manning, Brees, McCown and Tony Romo.

The best Flat Passers are Matt Ryan and Dominique Davis, then Christian Ponder and Scott Tolzien. Only Matt Ryan has enough attempts to play regularly. Interesting that the two best Flat passers are from the same team, something I've never seen before.

The most significant Must Runners are Michael Vick, Terelle Pryor, Chase Daniel, Brock Ostweiler, and Tyrod Taylor. But check out Scott Tolzien! Not many chances of a Must Run, but he's the best I've seen when it does come up!

Running Backs

My rating system does not compute exact yardage totals, but is rather based on chances to get 8 or more yards while wrong. A higher weight is given for inside running. Extra credit is also given for RB's with high number of chances to gain a yard or more in the Lineback right column (since this helps get first downs in those 3rd and short situations). Also factored in are chances for breakaway runs. A breakaway run is defined as a run of 35 yards or more.

After last year's Super set of runners (especially Adrian Peterson!), this year's set seems pale. The best card this year (Jamaal Charles) would just rate 6th among last year's cards.

The best-ranked RB is Jamaal Charles, followed by LeSean McCoy, then Adrian Peterson and Toby Gerhart (!).

Charles' card is balanced very evenly across the 3 types of run. He is also very good at getting a yard right- a very useful thing for those 3rd and short situations. The fumbles are a bit high, but not debilitating. A great bonus is his passing card. His card matches a good Tight End card; it even has some completion chances in the Long columns. Overall, a very versatile and useful card.

McCoy and Peterson are next. They are also balanced cards, just not quite as good as Charles'. McCoy is nice in that he has very few fumbles.

Gerhart's card is worth noting in that called wrong, he is actually better than Peterson (if you discount the breakaway runs). Calling him right, though, kills his effectiveness. Also he only has 36 attempts, so he will have little usefulness in leagues that limit carries.

The best RB's, if you discount breakaway runs, are Gerhart, Charles, Fred Jackson, Chris Polk (11 carries), McCoy, and Marshawn Lynch.

The best breakaway runner is C.J. Spiller. After that is DeMarco Murray (a boom or bust card). After that comes Chris Ivory.

The best RB to get a yard called Right is Charles. Next are Donald Brown and Mike Tolbert.

The RB with the most chances to get 8 yards or more on a Lineback is Polk. For Off Tackle, it's Polk again. For End Run, it's Marshawn Lynch.

Philadelphia has the best RB set. This is determined by multiplying the card value times the number of carries and summing them up.

The team with the worst set of RB's is Cleveland.

The worst RB with more than 100 carries is Willis McGahee.

Noteworthy items:

There are only two RB's in the set that have chances to gain more than 9 yards called right.

Receivers

There's not much variation in chances on receiver cards. The number of chances to catch a pass is standardized. For Flat, the possibilities are (Wrong) 32, 30, 26, 25, 22, 21, and 18. For Short Passes, they are (Wrong) 30, 26, 22, 18, 16, and 12. For Long Passes, they are (Wrong) 21, 18, 15, 12, 10, 6, and 0.

I have seen some rate the receivers 6 through 0 using the following:

Flat Pass: 6=32, 5=30, 4=26, 3=25, 2=22, 1=21

Short Pass: 6=30, 5=26, 4=22, 3=18, 2=16, 1=12, 0=0

Long Pass: 6=21, 5=18, 4=15, 3=12, 2=10, 1=6, 0=0

There were 7 receivers who received the maximum rating in each pass category. Brandon Marshall, Calvin Johnson, Andre Johnson, A.J. Green, Josh Gordon, Julio Jones, and Demaryius Thomas.

Following is the totals for each category of receiver:

<u>Flat</u>	<u>Short</u>	<u>Long</u>
32 - 22	30 - 29	21 - 15
30 - 64	26 - 44	18 - 27

There are 41 TE's, 3 TE/BB's, 8 HB's and 3 FB's (I am counting Charles Clay as a HB, but he also plays TE. I am counting Marcel Reese as a FB, but he can also play HB) who have receptions on their Long Pass card. This is important for leagues that use the rule prohibiting throwing to a receiver unless he has a reception on his card in that column.

Interesting Items and Gnarly Receiving #'s:

Rob Gronkowski, has some Gnarly yards Flat. This is one where after you read a Receiver result, your opponent will tell you to read your Flat column, not the Short...and you'll be able to say: "I did!"

Josh Gordon has the best yardage receiving card in the set.

Ladarius Green does not have many catches but they're very worthwhile.

There are several players with very nice cards who had fewer than 20 actual catches. Notable receivers include: Michael Crabtree, Ladarius Green, and Malcolm Floyd.

As always, I welcome comments. My email address is MertAdkins@lycos.com.