

## RRS: RATING THE CATCHERS

by Rich Bysina

The NFL rates passers by using four categories as a basis for their statistical performance: (1) percentage of completions per attempt, (2) percentage of touchdown passes per attempt, (3) percentage of interceptions per attempt and (4) average yards gained per attempt.

It's an equitable pass rating system and also provides a means of comparing passing performances from one season to the next.

In essence, the pass rating system measures quality rather than quantity.

For the same reason, why not adopt a similar system for pass catchers? Shouldn't a pass catcher's statistical performance record be based on standards in addition to the mere number of passes caught? In the past few years, the NFL has presented a second ranking -- total yards, but that's only another quantity rating.

For example (as actually happened in 1980), if player A catches 83 passes for 567 yards and 4 TDs, and player B catches 71 passes for 1,226 yards and 4 TDs, shouldn't player B be rated higher than player A? After all, player B accounted for 659 more yards than player A, by catching 12 fewer passes! Yet the NFL ranked player A as the conference's leading pass receiver, simply because he caught the most passes.

I believe it's time for a change in the way pass receivers are ranked each season. That's why I've developed a RECEIVERS RATING SYSTEM (RRS).

Complementing the NFL's Pass Rating System, RRS ranks all pass catchers by three performance criteria: (1) average number of receptions per game -- "3" being the standard; (2) average yards per reception -- "10" being the standard; and (3) percentage of touchdowns to total receptions -- "10%" being the standard.

Each pass catcher's totals are matched to a rating number in a table for point allocation, totaled, then converted to a "100" scale -- just as it's done for passers.

In the RRS, as in NFL's Pass Rating System, the base, or average standard, is 1.000; the bottom is 0.000. To earn a 2.000 rating, a pass catcher would have to perform to what amounts to near-record levels, i.e., "6" receptions per game, "20" yards per reception, and a "20%" touchdown rate.

Also -- and again, just as in the NFL's Pass Rating System -- the maximum pass catcher can achieve in any category is 2.375. To earn that, he would have to perform well above the existing NFL record in each category.

One of the advantages of using RRS is that pass catchers' ratings can be compared from one season to another. On the following page is a list of the NFL's top-rated pass catchers, based on Sportsgram's Receivers Rating System, for the past 50 years.

The numbers used in computing the Ratings were obtained from *Pro Football: The Early Years* and *The Sports Encyclopedia: Pro Football* (David S. Neft, Richard M. Cohen, Jordan A. Deutsch, authors; John Hogrogian, editorial consultant). Also, each player listed is presumed to have played the entire season. (If any player played in fewer games than his team's season total, his rating would be higher, since his "receptions per game" would be higher.)

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Rich Bysina is the author/creator of the popular SPORTSAGRAM feature, the puzzle series that has appeared in so many of the leading sports magazines and team newspapers. To help celebrate the 20th

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anniversary of the opening of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio (September 7th), Rich created a five-part series of crossword puzzles honoring all 119 Hall of Fame enshrinees.

## SPORTSAGRAM'S YEARLY TOP-RATED RECEIVERS IN THE NFL

<u>Year Receiver &amp; Team</u>	<u>Rec. Game</u>	<u>Avg. Yds.</u>	<u>TD%</u>	<u>Rating Points</u>	<u>Primary Quarterback</u>
1933 Shipwreck Kelly, Brooklyn Dodgers....	2.2	11.2	13.6	71.4	Benny Friedman
1934 Joe Carter, Philadelphia Eagles.....	1.5	14.9	25.0	96.6	Ed Matesic
1935 Tod Goodwin, New York Giants.....	2.2	16.6	15.4	84.2	Ed Danowski
1936 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	2.8	15.5	23.5	107.6	Arnie Herber
1937 Gaynell Tinsley, Chicago Cardinals..	3.3	18.8	13.9	96.8	Pat Coffee
1938 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	2.9	17.1	28.1	112.4	Cecil Isbell
1939 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	3.1	24.9	17.7	114.9	Arnie Herber
1940 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	4.1	14.8	15.6	97.7	Cecil Isbell
1941 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	5.3	12.7	17.2	105.6	Cecil Isbell
1942 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	6.7	16.4	23.0	137.3	Cecil Isbell
1943 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	4.7	16.5	23.4	123.5	Tony Canadeo
1944 Don Hutson, Green Bay Packers.....	5.8	14.9	15.5	110.6	Irv Comp
1945 Jim Benton, Cleveland Rams.....	4.5	23.7	17.8	125.5	Bob Waterfield
1946 Bill Dewell, Chicago Cardinals.....	2.5	23.8	25.9	123.7	Paul Christman
1947 Don Curriivan, Boston Yanks.....	2.0	32.6	37.5	120.4	Boley Danczewicz
1948 Mal Kutner, Chicago Cardinals.....	3.4	23.0	34.1	129.2	Ray Mallouf
1949 Ken Kavanaugh, Chicago Bears.....	2.4	22.6	31.0	120.9	Johnny Lujack
1950 Bob Shaw, Chicago Cardinals.....	4.0	20.2	25.0	127.4	Jim Hardy
1951 Elroy Hirsch, Los Angeles Rams.....	5.5	22.7	25.8	143.8	Norm Van Brocklin
1952 Billy Howton, Green Bay Packers....	4.4	23.2	24.5	137.2	Tobin Rote
1953 Billy Wilson, San Francisco 49ers...	4.3	16.5	19.6	111.7	Y.A. Tittle
1954 Harlon Hill, Chicago Bears.....	3.8	25.0	26.7	133.3	George Blanda
1955 Harlon Hill, Chicago Bears.....	3.5	18.8	21.4	115.3	Ed Brown
1956 Harlon Hill, Chicago Bears.....	3.9	24.0	23.4	133.8	Ed Brown
1957 Lenny Moore, Baltimore Colts.....	3.3	17.2	17.5	101.7	Johnny Unitas
1958 Del Shofner, Los Angeles Rams.....	4.3	21.5	15.7	114.7	Billy Wade
1959 Raymond Berry, Baltimore Colts.....	5.5	14.5	21.2	120.2	Johnny Unitas
1960 Buddy Dial, Pittsburgh Steelers.....	3.3	24.3	22.5	127.4	Bobby Layne
1961 Buddy Dial, Pittsburgh Steelers.....	3.8	19.8	22.6	122.3	Rudy Bukich (& Layne)
1962 Frank Clarke, Dallas Cowboys.....	3.4	22.2	29.8	127.0	Don Meredith
1963 Sonny Randle, St. Louis Cardinals...	3.6	19.9	23.5	123.4	Charley Johnson
1964 Terry Barr, Detroit Lions.....	4.1	18.1	15.8	105.4	Milt Plum
1965 Bob Hayes, Dallas Cowboys.....	3.3	21.8	26.1	125.6	Don Meredith
1966 Bob Hayes, Dallas Cowboys.....	4.6	19.3	20.3	121.8	Don Meredith
1967 Homer Jones, New York Giants.....	3.5	24.7	26.5	131.5	Fran Tarkenton
1968 Paul Warfield, Cleveland Browns.....	3.6	21.3	24.0	126.6	Bill Nelson
1969 Lance Rentzel, Dallas Cowboys.....	3.1	22.3	27.9	125.1	Craig Morton
1970 Gary Garrison, San Diego Chargers...	3.1	22.9	27.3	126.8	John Hadl
1971 Paul Warfield, Miami Dolphins.....	3.1	23.2	25.6	127.0	Bob Griese
1972 Gene Washington, San Francisco 49ers	3.3	20.0	26.1	121.5	Steve Spurrier
1973 John Gilliam, Minnesota Vikings.....	3.0	21.6	19.1	112.6	Fran Tarkenton
1974 Cliff Branch, Oakland Raiders.....	4.3	18.2	21.7	120.4	Ken Stabler
1975 Mel Gray, St. Louis Cardinals.....	3.4	19.3	22.9	119.2	Jim Hart
1976 Cliff Branch, Oakland Raiders.....	3.3	24.2	26.1	129.9	Ken Stabler
1977 Nate Moore, Miami Dolphins.....	3.7	14.7	23.1	111.4	Bob Griese
1978 John Jefferson, San Diego Chargers..	3.5	17.9	23.2	117.2	Dan Fouts
1979 Harold Carmichael, Phil. Eagles.....	3.3	16.8	21.2	108.3	Ron Jaworski
1980 John Jefferson, San Diego Chargers..	5.1	16.3	15.9	109.5	Dan Fouts
1981 Steve Watson, Denver Broncos.....	3.8	20.7	21.7	122.0	Craig Morton
1982 Wes Chandler, San Diego Chargers....	6.1	21.1	18.4	133.0	Dan Fouts

Note: From 1933-1949, receivers must have averaged at least two receptions per game to qualify for the rating (except 1934, when no receiver averaged as many as two per game); from 1950-1983, receivers must have averaged at least three receptions per game.

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