

## Ladd Biro's Top 32 Defenses

Rankings are based on each player's projected position by the end of the 2007 season. This is a value ranking, NOT a recommended draft order. Certain players may be drafted significantly higher or lower based upon their perceived value to other owners. Stats listed are from 2006.

Levels		Elite	Near Elite	Marginal	Do Not Draft	Updated: 8/6/07		
Rank	Team	Rush YPG	Pass YPG	Sacks	INT/Fum Rec	PPG Allowed	Def TDs	Comment
1	Ravens	75.9	188.2	60	40	12.6	6	Tops in total yards allowed, points allowed and TDs - and 2nd in sacks -- in '06. The loss of Adalius Thomas and his 11.5 sacks will hurt. Depth is a concern as well, but starters Ray Lewis, Chris McAllister, Ed Reed and Terrell Suggs are among the best.
2	Bears	99.4	194.8	40	44	15.9	3	Had some breakdowns in '06, particularly in a suspect secondary, but was still the driving force behind the Super Bowl run. Devin Hester adds oomph to the special teams, and the offense's grind-it-out philosophy should keep most games low-scoring.
3	Jaguars	91.3	192.4	35	24	17.1	1	One of the league's stingiest units in '06, they are well positioned to dominate again this season. They still have the best pair of DTs in the game, along with the ball-hawking CB Rashean Mathis.
4	Patriots	94.2	200.2	44	35	14.8	0	After a solid '06, this unit remains intact, now that Asante Samuel has been franchised. The major addition of Adalius Thomas makes the Pats an elite defensive prospect, particularly given the support they will get from a prolific offense.
5	Cowboys	103.7	219.1	34	31	21.9	4	Expect an upgrade driven by defensive-minded head coach Wade Phillips. Demarcus Ware could be among the league's top playmakers, and Ken Hamlin will upgrade a shaky secondary.
6	Chargers	100.8	200.8	61	28	18.9	3	This is a unit in transition, with defensive coach Wade Phillips now in Dallas and LB Donnie Edwards in KC. Shawne Merriman is a beast when he's on the field, and the defense should improve if they can stay healthy this season.
7	Dolphins	101.1	187.9	47	27	17.7	3	At some point, age will catch up with Jason Taylor and Zach Thomas. Miami is hoping they have another stellar season in them, because the secondary is extremely vulnerable.
8	Steelers	88.3	212.1	39	29	19.7	2	Regressed in '06, but should rebound somewhat with fewer turnovers from the offense. Lost just one starter in the offseason (the aging Joey Porter).
9	Panthers	108.6	187.5	41	22	19.1	2	With Julius Peppers anchoring the line, and Dan Morgan returning from injury, Carolina should be better than the above-average unit of '06.
10	Raiders	134	150.8	34	23	20.8	4	If the offense could just give them a breather once in a while, this defense might be special. They are young and hungry, and sported the best pass defense in the league in '06. Consider them a major sleeper candidate, and consider starting them against below-average offenses.
11	Broncos	113.3	213.1	35	30	19.1	2	Feature the best CB tandem in the league in Champ Bailey and free-agent signee Dre Bly. But they need rookie Jarvis Moss to contribute asap to a weak pass rush.
12	Vikings	61.6	238.6	30	36	20.4	5	The league's toughest run defense was awful against the pass. If Erasmus James returns from injury, look for more of the same strengths and weaknesses.
13	Seahawks	126.8	203.5	41	26	21.3	2	Just so-so in '06, they have an elite LB corps and added DE Patrick Kerney and safeties Brian Russell and Deon Grant as free agents, so look for some improvement in the passing game.
14	Eagles	136.4	191.7	40	29	20.5	5	The secondary keeps them respectable, but they're a far cry from the elite units of the early '00s.
15	Jets	130.3	201.4	35	25	18.4	1	This is a young and improving defense comprised of a cast of no-names. Pro Bowl KR Justin Miller helps on special teams.
16	Packers	114.1	206.8	46	33	22.9	5	Excelled in sacks and turnovers, but gave up too many yards. AJ Hawk is one of the league's best young LBs, and the addition of Nick Collins should upgrade the secondary.
17	Chiefs	120.5	208.4	32	30	19.7	0	Adding Donnie Edwards immediately upgrades their LB unit, and their corners remain strong. But there's little reason to believe this squad will improve significantly in '07.
18	Saints	128.9	178.4	38	19	20.1	0	They weren't the perennial doormats we've come to expect in '06. The arrival of LB Brian Simmons should make them even better in defensive coach Gary Gibbs' second year at the helm.
19	Buccaneers	119.8	209.6	25	20	22.1	3	Age has finally taken its toll. Draft picks and free agent signees will help eventually, but it will take some time for this unit to regain its form.

20	Giants	114.4	228.1	32	28	22.6	2	A new defensive coordinator will try to turn this once-proud unit around, but Michael Strahan's possible retirement won't help. Offensive inconsistency won't either.
21	Bengals	116.4	238.6	35	31	20.7	1	An average unit at best that did little to improve themselves in the offseason.
22	Colts	173	159.3	25	26	22.5	1	Don't expect them to play like they did in the '06 playoffs. In fact, with the injury to DT Anthony McFarland, the release of Corey Simon, and free agent losses of Cato June and Nick Harper, they could return to being one of the league's doormats. Dwight Freeney and injury-prone Bob Sanders can't do it all on their own.
23	Redskins	137.3	218.2	19	12	23.5	0	They were downright awful in '06, in all phases of defense. London Fletcher-Baker and rookie Laron Landry are key additions, but they have a long way to go to become fantasy worthy.
24	Bills	140.9	188.7	40	24	19.4	4	Special teams is a strength, but the defense lost standout veterans Nate Clements, London Fletcher-Baker and Takeo Spikes. They will be hard to replace in the short term.
25	Cardinals	118.6	230.9	38	33	24.3	3	A new coaching staff will be installing a new 3-4 scheme. But the talent on this side of the ball is still deficient.
26	49ers	121	223.2	34	27	25.8	2	They made a lot of moves in free agency and the draft to upgrade this unit. It should show results, but likely not soon enough to matter this season.
27	Lions	125.6	220	30	30	24.9	1	They were pretty bad in '06, and there's no indication that will change in '07. Ernie Sims can be a dominant LB, but few other players stand out.
28	Browns	142.2	202.6	28	27	22.3	2	Kameron Wimbley is coming off an impressive rookie season, but this defense is unlikely to improve enough to warrant a roster spot.
29	Rams	145.4	189.7	34	32	23.8	2	The run defense was such an embarrassment in '06, opposing teams didn't need to pass. They've upgraded the DL in the offseason, which should lead to improvement eventually. But probably not this season.
30	Falcons	103.6	229.3	37	26	20.5	2	A new defensive coordinator, Mike Zimmer, will be forced to fill a number of holes left by free agent defections and offseason injuries. Won't get any help from their offense either.
31	Texans	122.3	215.3	28	22	22.9	3	Defensive Rookie of the Year DeMeco Ryans was a rare bright spot. Other than that, there's not much positive to say.
32	Titans	144.6	225.1	26	28	25	5	The league's worst overall defense will likely take a step backward, if that's possible, with Pacman Jones suspended for the year. Keith Bullock must feel like a one-man band.