

New York Giants: 2014 Financial Scouting Report

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Date: January 10, 2014

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Introduction

Welcome to one of the newest additions to the Over the Cap website: the offseason Financial Scouting Report, which should help serve as a guide to a teams' offseason planning for the 2014 season. This report focuses on the New York Giants and time permitting I will try to have a report for every team between now and the start of free agency in March. If you would like copies of other reports that are available please either e-mail me or visit the site overthecap.com

The Report Contains:

- Current Roster Overview
- 2013 Team Performances Compared to NFL Averages
- Roster Breakdown Charts
- Salary Cap Outlook
- Unrestricted and Restricted Free Agents
- Potential Salary Cap Cuts
- NFL Draft Selection Costs and Historical Positions Selected
- Salary Cap Space
- Extension Candidates
- Positions of Need and Possible Free Agent Targets

Any names listed as potential targets in free agency are my own opinions and do not reflect any "inside information" reflecting plans of various teams. It is simply opinion formed based on player availability and my perception of team needs. Player cost estimates are based on potential comparable players within the market.

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Thank you for the continued support.

Sincerely,

Jason Fitzgerald

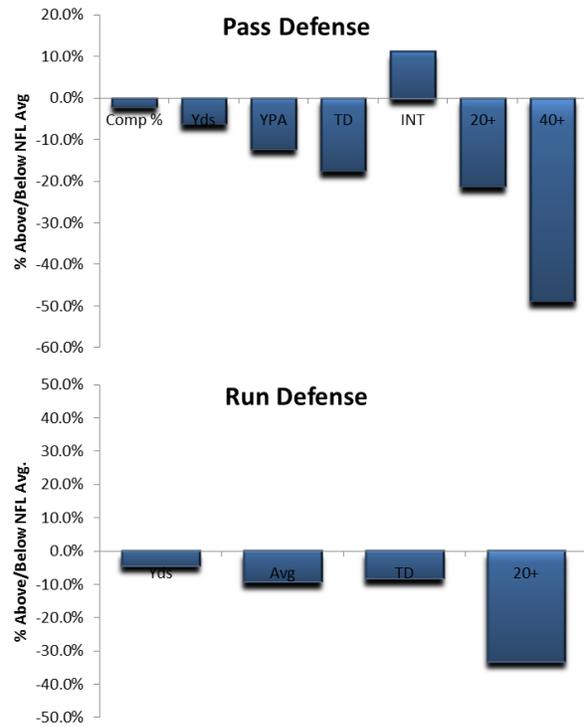
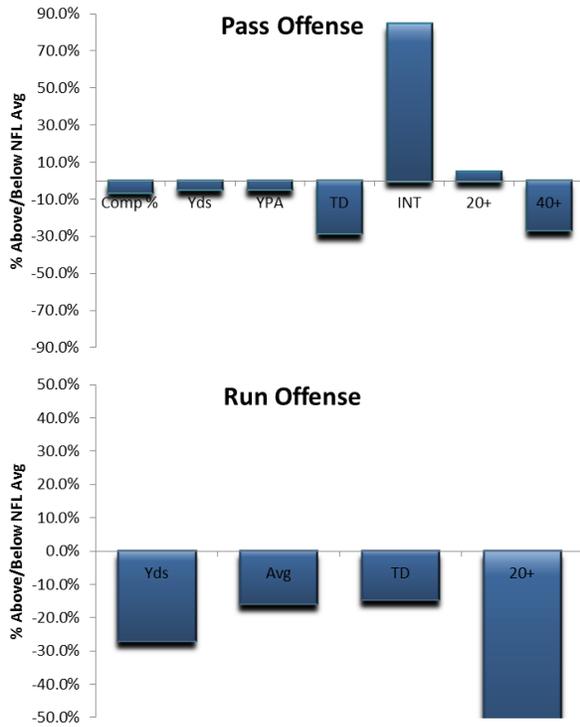
Current Roster: January 9, 2014

Player	Position	Age	Potential Starter	Remaining Contract	Cap Charge	Cash Salary	Cap Savings
Eli Manning	QB	34	Y	2	\$20,400,000	\$15,650,000	\$13,400,000
Chris Snee	G	32	Y	1	\$11,750,000	\$7,250,000	\$7,250,000
Antrel Rolle	S	32	Y	1	\$9,250,000	\$7,250,000	\$7,250,000
David Baas	C	33	Y	2	\$8,225,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,775,000
Victor Cruz	WR	28	Y	5	\$7,424,000	\$5,524,000	(\$5,675,000)
William Beatty	LT	29	Y	4	\$7,400,000	\$4,900,000	(\$8,100,000)
Mathias Kiwanuka	43OLB	31	Y	2	\$7,050,000	\$4,425,000	\$1,800,000
Jason Pierre Paul	43DE	26	Y	1	\$3,561,000	\$2,211,000	\$861,000
Cullen Jenkins	DT	33	Y	2	\$3,266,666	\$2,600,000	\$1,933,332
Steve Weatherford	P	32	Y	3	\$2,925,000	\$2,050,000	\$300,000
Prince Amukamara	CB	25	Y	1	\$2,603,013	\$1,490,577	\$695,377
Justin Pugh	RT	24	Y	3	\$1,896,795	\$784,359	(\$4,545,897)
David Wilson	RB	23	Y	2	\$1,823,046	\$997,682	(\$825,364)
Zak DeOssie	LS	30	Y	2	\$1,150,000	\$950,000	\$750,000
Johnathan Hankins	DT	22	N	3	\$916,068	\$588,213	(\$655,710)
Rueben Randle	WR	23	Y	2	\$897,799	\$689,266	\$480,733
Jerrel Jernigan	WR	25	N	1	\$813,813	\$670,000	\$670,000
James Brewer	G	27	Y	1	\$758,023	\$650,000	\$650,000
John Conner	RB	27	N	1	\$740,000	\$740,000	\$740,000
Jayron Hosley	CB	24	N	2	\$706,250	\$577,500	\$448,750
Adrien Robinson	TE	26	N	2	\$666,413	\$570,000	\$473,587
Jacquian Williams	43OLB	26	N	1	\$664,670	\$645,000	\$645,000
Damontre Moore	43DE	22	N	3	\$658,813	\$515,000	\$227,374
Brandon Mosley	DT	26	N	2	\$645,146	\$570,000	\$494,854
Spencer Adkins	LB	27	N	1	\$645,000	\$645,000	\$645,000
Troy Kropog	G	28	N	2	\$645,000	\$645,000	\$645,000
Ryan Nassib	QB	24	N	3	\$608,400	\$495,000	\$268,200
Markus Kuhn	DT	28	N	2	\$581,474	\$570,000	\$558,526
Allen Bradford	ILB	26	N	2	\$570,000	\$570,000	\$570,000
Daniel Fells	TE	31	N	1	\$570,000	\$730,000	\$570,000
Marcus Dowtin	43OLB	25	N	1	\$570,000	\$570,000	\$570,000
Preston Parker	WR	27	N	2	\$570,000	\$570,000	\$570,000
Will Hill	S	24	N	1	\$570,000	\$570,000	\$570,000
Cooper Taylor	S	24	N	3	\$541,813	\$495,000	\$401,374
Michael Cox	RB	26	N	3	\$506,474	\$495,000	\$472,052
Charles James	CB	24	N	1	\$495,000	\$495,000	\$495,000
Kris Adams	WR	27	N	1	\$495,000	\$495,000	\$495,000
Larry Donnell	TE	26	N	1	\$495,000	\$495,000	\$495,000
Stephen Goodin	G	26	N	1	\$495,000	\$495,000	\$495,000
Eric Herman	G	25	N	2	\$420,000	\$420,000	\$420,000
Julian Talley	WR	25	N	2	\$420,000	\$420,000	\$420,000

2013 Performance Charts

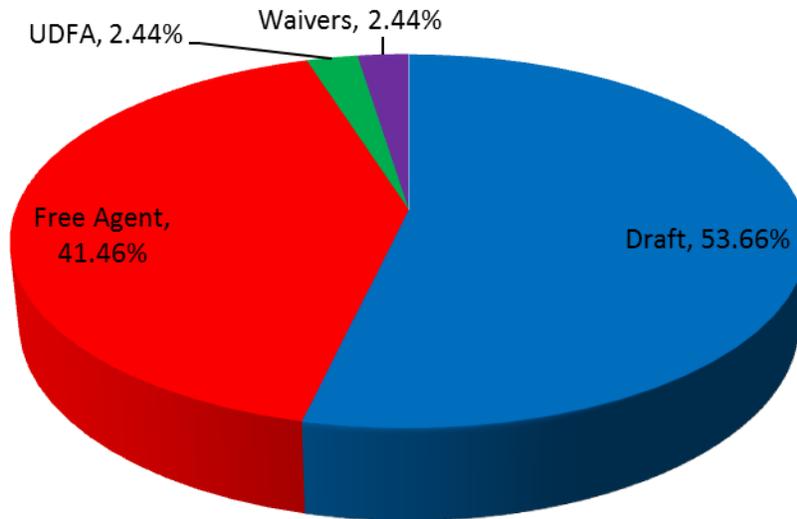


* Efficiency rankings calculate points scored and allowed compared to their 2013 schedule. A negative ranking means they scored less or allowed more points than their opponents' average. A positive ranking means they scored more or allowed less than the opponents' average.

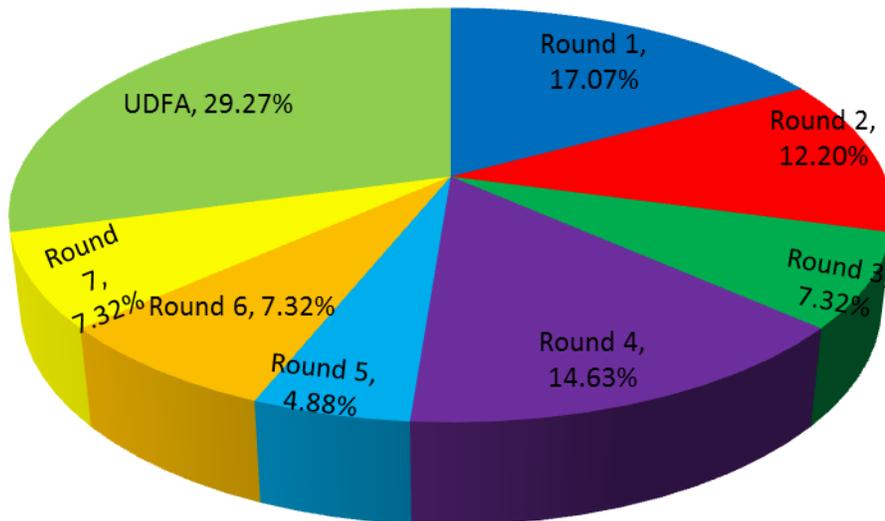


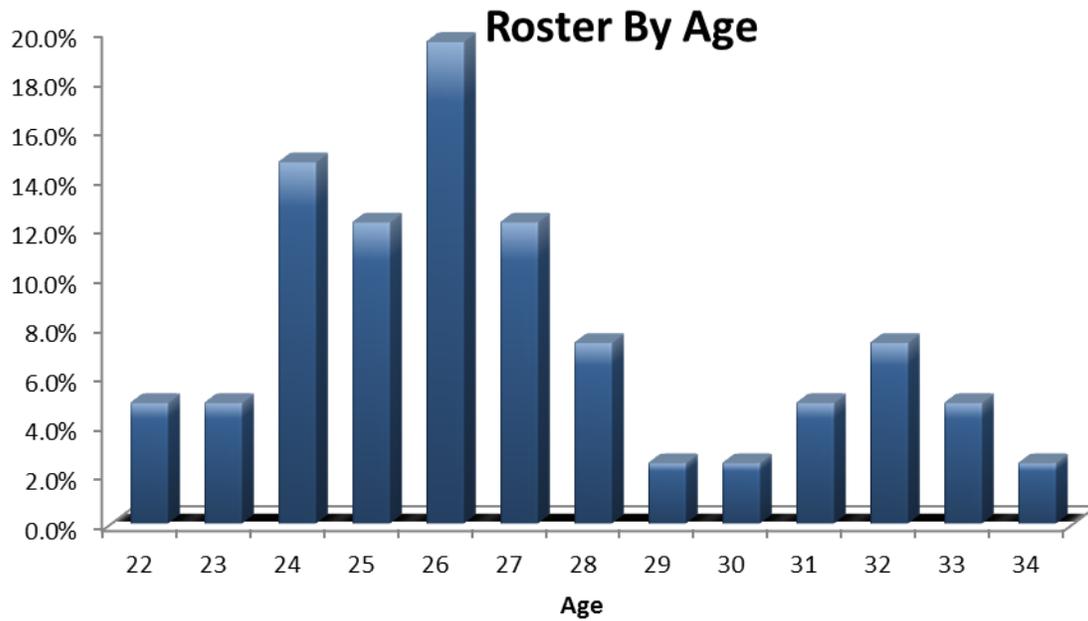
Roster Overview

Acquisition Strategy

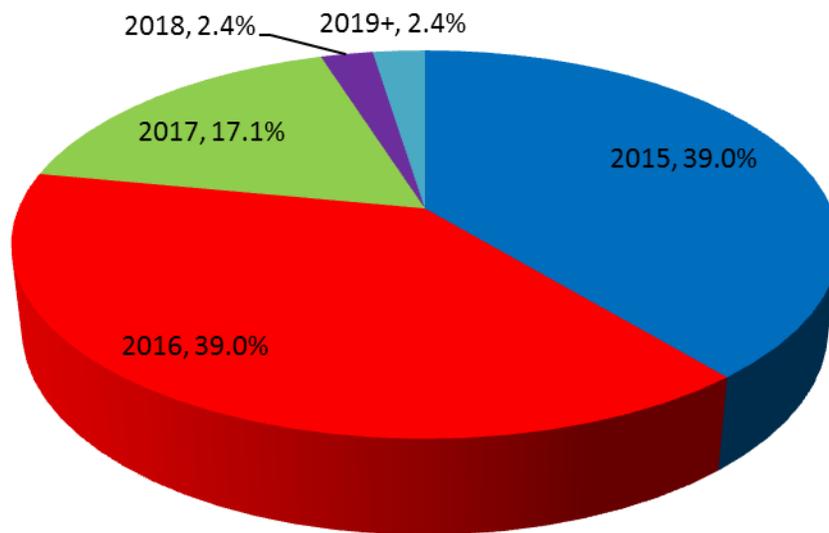


Roster By Draft Round





Turnover: Free Agents By Year



Salary Cap Overview



Moving forward the Giants have a significant investment on offense but are well below the rest of the NFL when it comes to salary cap dollars committed to the defense in 2014. The Giants have been highly active in re-signing their own players in free agency and 2014 marks a combination of the first meaningful dollar impact years of signings as well as the increased cap hits from years of restructuring veteran players for salary cap purposes.

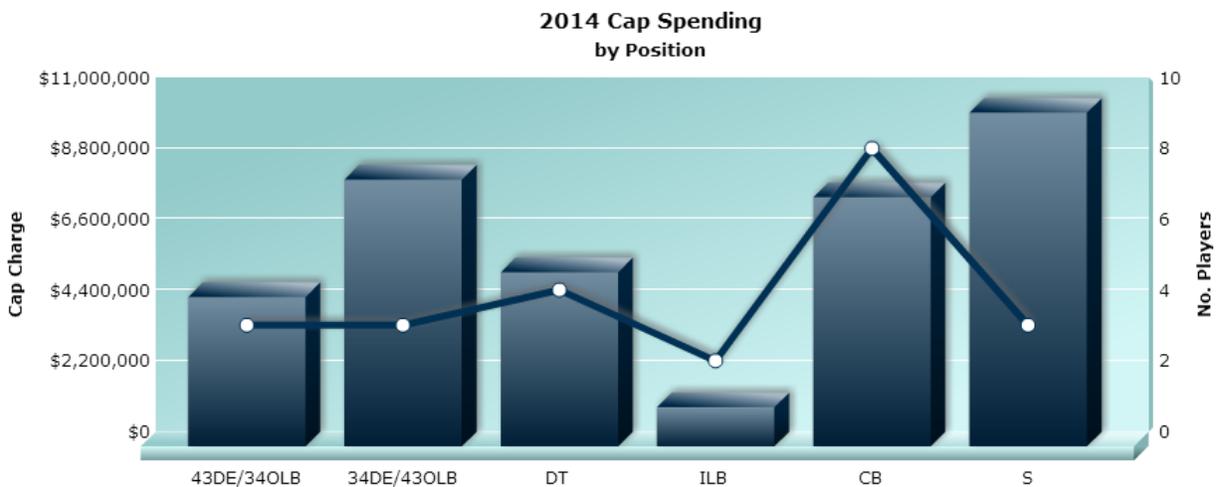
Of the Giants top six cap hits, five come from the offensive side of the football. Those five players (QB Eli Manning, G Chris Snee, C David Baas, LT Will Beatty, and WR Victor Cruz) account for \$55,199,000 in salary cap charges in 2014. That number represents over 80% of the Giants entire budget currently spent on the offense and will represent 44% of the typical salary cap limit in the 2014 League Year. The Giants commitment to investment on offense should be unquestioned. In addition to those five players the Giants also have two 1st round investments on the roster in RT Justin Pugh and RB David Wilson as well as a 2nd rounder in WR Reuben Randle who are all still playing on low cost rookie contracts.

Unfortunately for New York those investments failed to pay off last season. Baas, Snee, and Wilson all spent much of the season on Injured Reserve. Beatty, just one year into his contract extension, was one of the worst tackles in the NFL. Manning threw 27 interceptions and looked nothing like the player who once won two Super Bowl MVP's. The Giants passing game was slightly below average and their big plays, often a staple of the offense, were way down while turnovers were way up. The running game was among the worst in the NFL and the team scored 27% less points than expected based on their schedule as the red zone struggles continued. The Giants, as presently constituted, are arguably the least productive offense in the NFL based on cost. It is an unsustainable model that will likely be changed somewhat in the 2014 offseason.



The Giants defense, especially following a trade for MLB Jon Beason, played much better than the offense in 2013. The team held opponents to 9.6% below their average, which was the 9th most efficient defense in the NFL. The Giants will have a number of free agents this season from their defense, which leaves them with some low spending on this side of the football. The Giants only have two high priced players on the defense, S Antrel Rolle and DE Mathias Kiwanuka. There are also two first round picks on rookie contracts (DE Jason Pierre-Paul and CB Prince Amukamara) to add to the investment side.

The team currently has just over \$33 million committed to their entire defense next year, not including futures contracts for players with no experience, which have added around \$3 million in charges to the defense. That \$33 million on the entire defense is just 60% of the cost of the top five paid players on offense. The team will have some decisions to make in free agency when it comes to this side of the ball, but they are incredibly underinvested as things stand right now compared to the way they have approached handling the offense.



Free Agents

The Giants have 23 unrestricted free agents from their 2013 roster:

Name	Position	2014 age	Cost Grade (10 scale)
Hakeem Nicks	WR	26	★★★★★★★
Linval Joseph	DT	28	★★★★★
Justin Tuck	DE	31	★★★★★
Jon Beason	ILB	29	★★★★
Brandon Myers	TE	29	★★★★
Trumaine McBride	CB	29	★★★
Stevie Brown	S	27	★★★
Terrell Thomas	CB	30	★★
Corey Webster	CB	32	★★
Ryan Mundy	S	29	★
Mike Patterson	DT	31	★
David Diehl	RT	34	★
Andre Brown	RB	28	★
Shaun Rogers	DT	35	★
Josh Brown	K	35	★
Kevin Boothe	G	31	★
Bear Pascoe	TE	28	★
Brandon Jacobs	RB	32	★
Keith Rivers	OLB	28	★
Louis Murphy	WR	27	★
Aaron Ross	CB	32	★
Peyton Hillis	RB	28	★
Curtis Painter	QB	29	★

When you are talking about this many players obviously you are talking about a team that is facing a potential major facelift in the coming season. The Giants in 2013, due to a number of factors with their salary cap, chose to sign a number of one year contracts with players which has bloated the size of this list. The average age of the Giants' free agents is 29.9 years old so this is an older group of players, many of whom would be cheap if they decided to retain them. The question the Giants must answer is after missing the playoffs for two straight seasons and seeing the team regress should you really want to bring these players back?

The most difficult decision comes at the top of the list with WR Hakeem Nicks. Nicks is a talented player but a combination of injuries and attitude has seemingly derailed his career. Nicks has not made an impact since 2011 and has scored just three touchdowns in the last two seasons. The Giants sat him down for one week due to an injury that seemed to be more about sending a message to him about preparation and expectations than injury. It seemed clear that neither side wanted the other at the end

of the season and we only have him graded as high as we do because of the NFL trend to overpay limited production receivers such as Mike Wallace and Percy Harvin simply based on perceived talent. Nicks could be the first receiver to challenge that and end up signing for much less than the \$11 million plus he has anticipated.

The reason the decision is difficult is because the team would like to protect their investment in Nicks which would come via a franchise tag where they utilize the tag in hopes of trading him for a 2nd round draft pick. But doing that brings about great risk. The tag will tie up over \$10 million in cap space until Nicks is either traded or extended. There is also a risk that no team will trade for him and meet his contract demands, leaving the Giants with a \$10 million piece that they did not want in the first place. However, without the tag the Giants would get no draft compensation in 2014 for Nicks and possibly no compensatory pick in 2015. It would seem unlikely that the Giants would extend him.

DE Justin Tuck had suffered through two down seasons before bouncing back in 2013 to record 11 sacks, though six of those sacks came in games against the Redskins. Tuck is one of the emotional leaders of the defense but he is 31 years old and the Giants will be thinking about turning the page. It is unlikely that Tuck will record double digit sacks again, but an extension would keep Tuck a Giant for his entire career. Former Giant Osi Umenyiora signed for \$4.25 million a season in 2013 and Tuck is a more useful player than Umenyiora so you would probably be looking at \$5.5 to \$6 million a season to keep him a Giant for the next three years. The Giants do believe in tradition and he was a key component of the two Super Bowls from this era, but it will be a hard choice to keep him.

DT Linval Joseph is one player who should be retained without question. He is under 30 and a quality run defender making one of the reasons why the Giants played so well against the run in 2013. Based on skillset and how he is used I would estimate that he will be paid around the Paul Soliai/Domata Peko level, which is between \$5.5 million and \$6 million a season. He would probably earn somewhere between \$8 and \$10 million guaranteed on a four year contract. Joseph could wait to see what Melton and Soliai get in free agency, but I would think New York would be proactive in their approach.

The Giants got a shot in the arm when they traded for MLB Jon Beason who really solidified a poor group of linebackers. Beason, who had struggled with injuries for the last two seasons, indicated that he would like to return to New York so I would think both sides will try to work out a contract. Beason has a high upside but with the injury history the Giants will need to have an incentive laden contract. Beason played last year on a \$3.25 million contract between Carolina and New York. He'll get a raise from that figure but I don't think they can justify going over \$5 million. They should try to settle in the low to mid \$4 million range with incentives that can push him in the third tier of inside linebackers, who all earn just over \$5 million a season.

The team will likely offer S Stevie Brown a low cost incentive laden deal to play in 2014. Brown had a terrific season in 2012 and signed a RFA tender in 2013 for \$2.03 million. Unfortunately Brown, who has struggled with injuries throughout his career, tore his ACL in the preseason and missed the entire year. Brown is only 27 so it will be in his best interests to take a one year prove it deal on a team that knows

him and will feature him on the defense next year. Playing for around the same amount as his did last year would seem to be fair and would give him a chance at free agency in 2015.

CB Trumaine McBride who has bounced around the NFL for a few years seemed to find a role with the Giants and started 10 games for them in 2013. He is not a big name player but could provide the team with a starting option at the position as well as depth off the bench. The high standard for this type of player is Kyle Arrington of the Patriots who earns \$4 million a season. McBride won't get that much but should be pursued at a lower cost.

The run defense was also helped by DT Mike Patterson who will be 31 next year. Since the position is a lower cost position, and the investments for older players often short term, he is another free agent the Giants should bring back. He played last year on a minimum salary benefit contract and that level of salary will likely remain in 2014.

Similar to Patterson, S Ryan Mundy played on the minimum salary benefit and that makes him a logical choice to bring back next year. Mundy could try to push for slightly more money but I am not sure how many takers would exist at \$1 million or more, so I do believe he should be back next season to play a role on the defense.

The Giants have worked with CB Terrell Thomas, who has battled injuries, for years to keep him in a Giants uniform but under fair salary cap charges, but it may be time to move on from him. While Thomas was healthy he did not look dynamic by any means. He can fill a role in the slot but he is going to be 30 and the Giants can't afford to pay him more than the minimum. He may be able to earn slightly more elsewhere and that might be good for both sides.

K Josh Brown will play for the minimum and that is probably a good cost for a kicker. If they are happy with Brown there is no need to shop elsewhere.... G Kevin Boothe did his best to fill in at Center last year but the team needs better interior linemen. Still he will be cheap and can be an option to come off the bench as a backup. He'll get a minimum deal and a tryout in camp... LB Keith Rivers could be signed for a year and brought to camp but similar to the deal with Boothe it would just be for the minimum and a look in camp. They need to get better at that position and not stick with the status quo.

That accounts for 12 of the 23 free agents and probably the only ones who merit potential new deals with the team. Here are some brief thoughts on the other players.

Brandon Myers never fit in with the offense and failed to capitalize on playing with Manning, who traditionally has liked his Tight Ends. His contract should void this season and there is no reason for the Giants to entertain the idea of bringing him back at any cost...CB Corey Webster has been ineffective for some time and could not stay on the field last season. He may end up being just a minimum salary player at this point, but it should be for another team not the Giants.

RT David Diehl had many good years with the Giants, but the last few have been anything but. He restructured his contract last year to stay on the team but he'll likely retire next season...RB Andre Brown battled back from injury but was ineffective and had fumbling issues by the end of the year that

saw him benched. The Giants need a dynamic playmaker and Brown's fumbling may have cost him a role with the team. DT Shaun Rogers has a lot of wear and tear on his body and he has broken down with injuries the last two seasons which likely spells the end of his career....I can't see the upside of bringing back Bear Pascoe as the team should have better options at the position...RB's Brandon Jacobs and Peyton Hillis were players only in uniform because of desperation. Both had their moments but the team will move forward...WR Louis Murphy caught 6 passes in 14 games.

In addition to the above the Giants have five restricted free agents:

Name	Position	2014 age	Proj. Tender
Spencer Paysinger	LB	26	ROFR
Henry Hynoski	FB	26	ROFR
Mark Herzlich	LB	27	None
Da'Rel Scott	RB	26	None
Jim Cordle	C	27	None

Paysinger, who played over 700 snaps last year, would be the one player who I think is a lock to get the lowest tender offer and come back next season. He started 11 games and is only 26 and it makes much more sense for the Giants to keep him than Rivers. Paysinger has more upside and can play a role for a longer time.

Hynoski is a bit of a question mark because he is coming off of injury but I think he is important to what the Giants do on offense. The RFA tenders are not guaranteed so even though the cost might be a bit high for the position he could be cut in camp if he does not look good or is beaten out by John Conner. The proper course of action is to tender Hynoski and then look for a pay reduction in return for some guarantees and the Giants have traditionally been good with their injured talent so that could be a possibility.

There should be no reason to keep the other names on this list under anything but the minimum salary.

Potential Salary Cap Cuts

Earlier it was mentioned about the high spending the Giants have on offense and how that has to get back in order, which it will when certain players are released. The most likely release is G Chris Snee who will save the Giants \$7.25 million in both salary cap space and cash payments. Snee has been the person that the Giants have gone to the most over the years for salary cap relief and now it's probably time to cut him to gain that relief. Snee will be 32 in 2014 and is probably nearing the end of his career after hip surgery followed by a trip to IR over the last two years. There is obviously a relationship between he and the coach and it would be possible that he takes a token salary for the year for an opportunity to reclaim a job, but if not they will need to release him.

Releasing C David Baas only saves the Giants \$1.775 million in cap, but they would avoid \$5 million in payments to him by releasing him, which is significant. Baas has never really lived up to the contract he signed with the team a few years ago and was injured last year, not a good combination as a player makes a turn into the stage of his contract where the guarantees are gone as is the dead money protection. The Giants could hold onto Baas through the draft to see if they can find a suitable replacement, but it would seem like a strong possibility that he will not be on the team in September.

A more difficult decision will be the one on 32 year old S Antrel Rolle. Rolle has a \$9.25 million salary cap charge and the team can save \$7.25 million by releasing him from his contract. Rolle, however, has become the veteran leader of the team defense and is probably one of the best players the team has for doing off the field interviews. Rolle does everything the organization asks of him and I have to imagine the Giants would prefer to keep him for the remainder of his career. I think a small extension is a real possibility, but Rolle may need to be released first before that negotiation will occur.

DE Mathias Kiwanuka saves the Giants \$1.8 million in cap space if released. Kiwanuka never developed into the player the Giants had hoped but he is certainly competent. His future may hinge on decisions made about Justin Tuck. Kiwanuka's actual cash salary is only a hair above \$4.4 million which is high, but not a ridiculous figure considering the position he plays. New York should approach him about renegotiating his contract down for the season and if that fails releasing him and exploring their other options in free agency. He may still be there to sign a much lower cost deal in April.

2014 NFL Draft

The Giants hold the 12th pick of the first round and will select between 10th and 13th in every round thereafter. The Giants may owe a draft pick to the Carolina Panthers for Jon Beason. It was reported that it was a conditional 7th round draft selection. A conditional draft selection can be contingent on a number of items ranging from playing time to contract status. If based on playing time the Giants should surrender a pick. If it is based on contract status it would mean the Giants would not forfeit a pick if Beason becomes a free agent in March.

Round	Pick	Salary Cap
1	12	\$1,892,036
2	11	\$886,791
3	10	\$580,969
4	13	\$533,400
5	12	\$468,200
6	11	\$447,515
7	10	\$435,455

The 2014 salary cap cost of the Giants rookie class should be \$5,244,366. However, each draft pick will be replacing a player already factoring in to the top 51 equation, so the net cost of the whole class will be, at the most, \$2,304,366.

Compensatory selections are received following the completion of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th rounds of the draft. The round received is dependent upon the quality of free agent lost in 2013 versus the quality of free agent gained in 2014. The Giants did lose a number of mid-priced free agents in Martellus Bennett, Osi Umenyiora, and Chase Blackburn while only signing Brandon Myers to a legit contract. That should result in the Giants picking up two mid round draft picks.

The following table lists the cost for each 2014 compensatory draft pick.

Round	Salary Cap
3	\$546,504
4	\$495,146
5	\$456,140
6	\$439,670
7	\$431,474

While every draft is unique there are certain patterns that usually emerge over time. The Giants will expect to find starters with their first two picks in the draft. Over the last ten years the predominant position available around the 12th pick in the first round (number 10 through 14) is the Defensive Tackle position which accounts for 22% of all selections, though that is partially skewed by last season being so DT heavy. The next closest positions would be DE/OLB (18%) and then an even 10% each for Offensive Tackle, Quarterback, and Cornerback. New York loves pass rushers so it could be another season where they grab a replacement for Tuck, Pierre-Paul or Kiwanuka.

With the 41st through 45th picks in the draft the most popular picks are Wide Receiver (18%), Linebacker (12%), Offensive Tackle (12%), Safety (10%), and Running Back (10%). While I don't think New York would select a potential upgrade at Left Tackle due to the commitment they made to Beatty, many of these other positions would fit a need for next season.

Salary Cap Space

Assuming a salary cap limit of \$126.3 million for the 2014 League Year, the Giants, for the first time in a few years, should have little trouble being cap compliant and will not have to restructure multiple contracts to sign players in free agency. Without making any moves, New York should be around \$11.5 million under the salary cap once escalators are accrued. Assuming that Snee and Bass are both released, that number will rise to about \$20.5 million. New York can get further cap relief by reworking the Kiwanuka and Rolle contracts discussed earlier or releasing them outright.

Provided the team does not franchise Nicks, this should be enough to re-sign the free agents they want while adding a few pieces to the team. The Giants should not have to restructure Manning's contract for cap purposes this year. While they could save nearly \$7 million in a restructure, the team should be concerned about him moving forward. If Manning plays poorly in 2014 the Giants will be able to release

him with minimal salary cap concerns in 2015. If he plays well they can extend him and take lower cap charges in the 2015 year than if they restructure and then extend.

Extension Candidates

39% of the Giants roster could become free agents in 2015, so there could be considerations for contract extensions of a handful of players. The most obvious veteran extension would be Antrel Rolle. If the Giants want Rolle to finish his career as a Giant the only way it can occur is if they sign him to a two or three year contract extension. Both sides may want to wait and see what the Steelers will do with Troy Polamalu before agreeing on a number. Polamalu is a declining veteran who will almost surely need to be extended or released in February due to the Steelers cap issues. His contract would likely serve as a high water mark for Rolle. Otherwise Rolle should probably earn somewhere in the ballpark of the \$3.5 million Ryan Clark earned in Pittsburgh or \$3.17 million Roman Harper received in New Orleans.

DE Jason Pierre-Paul is entering the final year of his contract and there will likely be serious negotiation discussions regarding him. The Giants believe strongly in keeping their pass rushers and it would be hard to imagine them letting him walk after the season, though they would have the Franchise tag at their disposal if they choose to use it. In the past New York has gotten very good contracts with Osi Umenyiora and Justin Tuck by being proactive with their contract decisions. Pierre-Paul is coming off a down year in which he battled injuries and had to adjust to being the focus of blocking schemes. That should give the Giants some leverage in negotiations.

Still this will not be an easy contract to agree on. There is a big split in the DE market between the perceived great player and next level of talent, with almost no middle ground. At the top of the market is Mario Williams at \$16 million a year and the bottom of tier 1 DE's is Chris Long at \$12.05 million. The tier 2 market starts at \$8.3 million a year. Pierre-Paul is going to view himself as a better and more disruptive player than Long was at the time of his extension, but off of last season the Giants are going to try to push him into that blank tier that does not exist right now. There are a number of young pass rushers all getting new deals this year which could set the stage for a contract for Pierre-Paul. If New York can't sign him for less than Long's number I believe they would hold off on a deal.

The Giants will exercise their 2015 option on CB Prince Amukamara which extends his contract to 2015. While Amukamara has not been a great player he would fit in with the next level of good cornerbacks. His future may lie in where the corner market goes this season when the high end players like Richard Sherman likely receive contract extensions. Based on last years numbers Amukamara should be extended in the \$5 to \$6 million a year range, but based on past numbers his side should feel that one somewhat standout season should bump him into the Jason McCourty and Lardarius Webb range of contracts that are over \$8 million a season. Those two deals are the ones that have made the league take pause at the salaries being paid to non-elite corners.

If Nicks is not kept in New York, the Giants could extend WR Jerrel Jernigan. Jernigan had a big game at the end of the season and the team noted about how well he played and openly wondered why he did not get more opportunities. Some of that could be posturing to show Nicks the options that the team

has, but he is a former draft pick that they may want to keep as a potential target in the future. Due to the fact that he has had little opportunity so far he has little statistics to fall back on to try to get a large deal. If he plays his contract out he could earn well into the second tier market if he plays as well as the Giants hope. Jernigan could look for security and take a two or three year extension for somewhere around \$3 million a year which would really benefit the Giants if he did play well.

Free Agent Positions of Interest

Guard

The upgrading of the offensive line has to be the top priority for the Giants in 2014. They could not run the football last season and Manning was terrorized by the pass rush for most of the season.

Unfortunately for teams looking for help inside, there are few options available in free agency. Both Geoff Schwartz and Jon Asamoah of the Chiefs are free agents and could draw some interest. Travelle Wharton of the Panthers could be a one year stop gap that helps stop the bleeding. Considering the lack of talent that may be the best strategy for the Giants may be to draft some players at the position and consider players like Wharton, Willie Colon or other veteran options to simply hold the fort for a season.

Center

If there is a position with potential stars available in free agency it's this one. The top of the market is currently held by Ryan Kalil at just under \$8.2 million a year but the market has pulled back since he signed his contract so prices could be cheaper. At the top of the free agent list is the Browns Alex Mack. If the marketplace has not changed he should earn more than Kalil, but if things have cooled off might fall a bit under. While there is an outside possibility that the Browns could franchise him, the price tag for a Center would seem to be far too high to use the tag as the tag is essentially based on the salaries of Left Tackles in the NFL.

Both Evan Dietrich-Smith and Brian De La Puente are free agents this season. The Packers usually re-sign their players which could pull Dietrich-Smith off the list, but considering they have not yet extended him it could be a signal that the prices are far enough apart that he tests free agency. The Saints have salary cap issues and may not be able to pay the \$5 to \$6 million a year De La Puente will probably command. Giants fans will probably be disappointed if none of the big names are available to the team in March.

Running Back

With Wilson's durability and talent both a giant question mark the Giants will clearly be looking at options to improve their running game. The question I would have is whether they feel they should spend money at the position or look for a bargain with some upside potential. The Giants have always been willing to take players back that have a history with the team and if he can pass a physical they could go into the bargain bin and bring back Ahmad Bradshaw on a minimum salary contract. Injuries are always an issue with Bradshaw but he is familiar with the system, is strong in pass protection, and will not cost much.

If Mark Ingram is cut from New Orleans the Giants might take a flier on him to see if a change of scenery does him good, which is what happened with Reggie Bush when he was released from the Saints a few years ago. Ingram has not gotten much of a chance in New Orleans and because of that might be willing to take a short term contract to prove his talent, much like Bush did with Miami. The Giants would be a good landing spot if released and he would not hamper their salary cap. Considering the Giants window with Manning could be small a two year deal would fit in perfectly with their planning.

If not re-signed by Oakland, the Giants might consider the option of Rashad Jennings. He played well in Oakland and probably earned himself a multi-year contract. Oakland had no QB or offensive line and Jennings was still able to put together some big games for the Raiders so he should be attractive if the cost is right.

Some people may suggest the Giants pursue Maurice Jones-Drew because he is a veteran that doesn't make noise, but that is a name they should stay away from. MJD looked finished in Jacksonville and he has a lot of wear on his tires. I think the same goes for Steven Jackson if released by the Falcons. The Giants need the potential of someone more dynamic than these types of players.

Tight End

New York likes to utilize the Tight End position in the passing game, but does not want to spend top level money to do so. They have shown a willingness to take chances on talented players looking to play on the cheap to prove they deserve a bigger contract. Names that could fit that mold in 2014 are Dustin Keller and Brandon Pettigrew. The Jets' Jeff Cumberland could also be someone that the team views as a viable receiver to pair with Manning on the cheap.

Outside Linebacker

It seems as if the Giants have been searching for years for more athletic players with some range to play the position and this year really is no different. That being said there is not much available which will make this a position to look for in the draft more than free agency. They could take a low cost contract out on a guy like James Anderson or Jo-Lonn Dunbar, but these players do not improve the quality of starter at the position.

Cornerback

This is a thin position for the team and one where the quality of available player might be too much to pass up. I would not expect the Giants to be in the mix for top tier players, but the second tier of players could be an intriguing option for the team. The second corner tier should consist of Vontae Davis at the top followed by Tarell Brown, Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, and Sam Shields. These players may fall in the \$5 to \$6.5 million a year range.

The Giants could also go on the one year plan and look at players who are released from contracts. Possible releases would be Asante Samuel, Dmitri Patterson, Derek Cox, and Cortland Finnegan. All have question marks with Samuel having the least questions. These players should max out at \$3 million for a year if that much.

Safety

With Mundy a free agent, Rolle a potential cut, and Brown an unknown, the Giants might consider jumping into the mix of talented Safeties that will be available in March. The two biggest names are Jairus Byrd of the Bills and TJ Ward of the Browns. Byrd was franchised last season by the Bills and while the Bills say they want to retain him the relationship between the two sides would seem icy. Signing Byrd would likely signal moving on from Brown. Ward is a bit more of a run defender and all around player than Byrd. He is also a franchise. Donte Whitner would be the third rated available Safety and fit into a similar mold as Ward. He is a solid all around player. San Francisco could have a hard time fitting Whitner within their salary cap so he could see free agency in March. I don't believe the Giants would entertain the thought of second tier players and would be better off maintaining who they currently have than going that route.