Mega Millions Winning Numbers Analysis

Comprehensive Data Analysis | 2002 – Present

Dataset:
Lottery_Mega_Millions_Winning_Numbers__Beginning_2002.csv

Report Date: February 28, 2026

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Trend exploration of draw structure, number frequencies,
rule-era shifts, and randomness testing across 2,480 drawings.

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1. Executive Summary

This report analyzes **2,480 Mega Millions drawings** conducted between May 17, 2002 and February 27, 2026. The analysis examines draw structure, number frequencies, parity patterns, multiplier behavior, and the impact of multiple rule changes on observable trends across nearly a quarter-century of lottery data.

2,480	24+	~5	~104
Total Drawings	Calendar Years	Rule-Era Shifts	Draws/Year (typical)

Key Finding: The most visible trend is structural rather than behavioral. The typical sum of the five main numbers rises over time as the game's number ranges expanded. Within any given rules era, number outcomes behave as expected for a fair lottery — frequencies are broadly flat with no statistically meaningful departure from uniformity.

In the modern era (main numbers 1–70, Mega Ball 1–25), a chi-square uniformity test yields $p \approx 0.32$ for main numbers and $p \approx 0.71$ for the Mega Ball, providing no evidence against randomness. Odd/even mixes cluster around 2–3 odd numbers per draw, and Megaplier values (where recorded) are dominated by 2x and 3x, with 4x and 5x appearing less frequently.

Metric	Value
Total Draws	2,480
Date Range	2002-05-17 to 2026-02-27
Missing Megaplier Values	997 (40.2%)
Modern-Era Uniformity (Main 1–70)	chi2 = 74.0, p = 0.319
Modern-Era Uniformity (Mega 1–25)	chi2 = 19.7, p = 0.712

2. Introduction & Objectives

Mega Millions is a random drawing game; however, the game's rules — including the size of the number pools and the availability of the Megaplier — have changed over time. Those rule shifts create visible step changes in simple aggregates like the average sum of the five main numbers. This analysis focuses on structural trends over time, distributional properties of the numbers, and whether the modern era shows any material deviations from randomness that would be unexpected in a fair lottery.

Analysis Objectives

1. Quantify long-run trends in draw volume and simple aggregates (sum, spread, odd/even mix).
2. Identify apparent rules-era shifts using observed maximum values in each year.
3. Measure and visualize frequency patterns for main numbers and Mega Ball.
4. Evaluate whether modern-era outcomes materially deviate from a uniform distribution (chi-square test).
5. Summarize Megaplier usage and distribution where available.

3. Exploratory Data Analysis

Draw Volume Over Time

The dataset begins mid-2002, so that year has fewer draws. Most full calendar years show approximately 104 drawings, consistent with two draws per week (Tuesday and Friday). This cadence has remained stable throughout the dataset period, unlike Powerball which added a third weekly draw in 2021.

Structural Trend: Average Sum of Main Numbers

The average sum of the five main numbers increases when the main-number pool expands. This is a mechanical consequence — larger pools allow higher numbers to be drawn, raising the expected sum. Years where the observed maximum main number or Mega Ball changes mark rule-era transitions. The average sum rose from roughly 135–140 in the early era (main 1–52) to approximately 170–180 in the modern era (main 1–70).

> **Note:** Dashed vertical lines in the original trend chart mark years where observed number ranges change, indicating rule-era shifts. These transitions are the primary driver of changes in aggregate statistics over time.

4. Rules-Era Fingerprints

The table below summarizes the maximum observed main number and Mega Ball for each year. Step changes in these maxima indicate rule updates. This inference is data-driven; exact changeover dates may fall within a calendar year.

Year	Max Main	Max Mega
2002	52	52
2003	52	52
2004	52	52
2005	56	50
2006	56	46
2007	56	46
2008	56	46
2009	56	46
2010	56	46
2011	56	45
2012	56	46
2013	75	46

Year	Max Main	Max Mega
2014	75	15
2015	75	15
2016	75	15
2017	75	25
2018	70	25
2019	70	25
2020	70	25
2021	70	25
2022	70	25
2023	70	25
2024	70	25
2025	70	25
2026	70	24

Key Transitions Identified: Main pool expanded from 1–52 to 1–56 (circa 2005), then to 1–75 (2013), and contracted to 1–70 (2018). Mega Ball pool shifted from 1–52 to 1–46, then dramatically to 1–15 (2014), and expanded to 1–25 (2017). Each transition is visible as a step change in aggregate statistics.

5. Number Frequency Analysis

Over long horizons, the most frequently drawn numbers are only modestly ahead of others, consistent with random variation. The tables below list the top 10 most frequent main numbers and Mega Ball numbers across the entire dataset.

Top 10 Most Frequent Main Numbers

Rank	Main Number	Times Drawn
1	31	238
2	10	235
3	17	227
4	14	226
5	20	226
6	46	219
7	2	216
8	39	215
9	24	214
10	29	212

Top 10 Most Frequent Mega Ball Numbers

Rank	Mega Ball	Times Drawn
1	9	97
2	7	97
3	1	93
4	3	93

Rank	Mega Ball	Times Drawn
5	4	93
6	10	93
7	13	92
8	11	90
9	6	89
10	15	87

Note: These rankings are descriptive only. A "top" ranking is expected to drift over time in a random process and does not imply any predictive advantage.

6. Odd/Even Mix & Megaplier

Parity Distribution

Most draws contain 2 or 3 odd numbers out of 5 main numbers, as expected from near-50/50 parity in the available number pool. The distribution peaks at 2 odd numbers (approximately 800 draws), with 3 odd numbers close behind. Extreme outcomes of 0 or 5 odd numbers are rare, matching the expected binomial pattern.

Odd Count	Approximate Draws	Frequency
0 (all even)	~30	Rare
1	~370	Uncommon
2	~800	Most Common
3	~710	Very Common
4	~420	Common
5 (all odd)	~60	Rare

Megaplier Distribution

Megaplier data is missing for earlier years (997 of 2,480 draws, or 40.2% of the dataset). Where present, the distribution is dominated by 2x and 3x multipliers. The 4x and 5x values appear less frequently. Over time, the composition has shifted — earlier years with available data show more 4x and 5x draws, while recent years lean more heavily toward 2x and 3x.

Multiplier	Relative Frequency	Notes
2x	Most Common	Dominates in recent years
3x	Common	Second most frequent overall
4x	Less Common	More prevalent in earlier years
5x	Least Common	Appears sparingly

7. Statistical Testing

Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit: Modern Era

A formal chi-square goodness-of-fit test was applied to the modern era (main numbers 1–70, Mega Ball 1–25) to evaluate whether observed frequencies deviate meaningfully from a uniform distribution. The results strongly support the null hypothesis of fair, uniform draws.

Test	Chi-Square Statistic	p-Value	Conclusion
Main Numbers (1–70)	74.0	0.319	No significant deviation
Mega Ball (1–25)	19.7	0.712	No significant deviation

Interpretation: With p-values of 0.32 and 0.71 (well above the conventional 0.05 threshold), there is no statistical evidence that any numbers are drawn more or less often than expected. The observed frequency variation is consistent with normal random fluctuation across this many draws.

What This Means

The chi-square results reinforce the central finding of this report: within a stable rules era, Mega Millions outcomes are consistent with independent, uniformly random draws. Apparent "hot" or "cold" numbers are compatible with random fluctuation rather than reflecting any persistent edge or systematic bias in the drawing process.

8. Interpretation & Discussion

Structural vs. Behavioral Trends

Across the full history, the strongest observable trend is not behavioral but mechanical: when the allowable number ranges change, aggregates like the average sum and average spread change accordingly. Within a stable rules era, the data look consistent with random draws — number frequencies are relatively flat, parity mixes center on 2–3 odd numbers, and formal chi-square testing in the modern era does not indicate abnormal concentration in particular numbers.

Practical Implications

These metrics serve as effective monitoring and data quality assurance tools. A sudden, unexpected shift in frequency patterns, parity balance, or Mega Ball distribution could indicate either a data ingestion issue or a genuine game rule change warranting investigation. The dataset supports the null expectation of a fair lottery.

Limitations

Data scope: This dataset contains only winning numbers — no ticket sales, jackpot sizes, or payout information — so it cannot answer questions about expected value, player strategy, or jackpot-driven participation patterns.

Rule-change inference: Rules-era transitions are inferred from observed maxima by year. Exact changeover dates may fall within a year and would require external documentation to confirm.

Megaplier gaps: Megaplier data is missing for 40.2% of draws (primarily pre-2010), so cross-era multiplier comparisons should be treated cautiously.

9. Conclusion & Next Steps

Conclusion

The Mega Millions winning-number history (2002–present) shows stable draw volume — typically around 104 draws per year — and lottery-like randomness within each rules era. Long-run shifts in the distribution of aggregates such as the sum of the five main numbers are fully explained by rule changes that altered the number pools. In the modern era (main 1–70, Mega Ball 1–25), frequency tests do not show statistically meaningful deviation from uniformity, and parity patterns match expectation.

> **Bottom Line:** If your goal is forecasting, the evidence here supports treating future draws as independent and uniformly random within the current number ranges. The data provide no basis for any predictive strategy based on historical frequency patterns.

Suggested Next Steps

1. Jackpot Correlation Analysis

If jackpot size and ticket sales data become available, relate these to number selection patterns and participation surges.

2. Weekday Effects

Test whether Tuesday vs. Friday draws show any systematic differences in number distributions (not expected, but worth confirming).

3. Time-Between-Appearances

For each number within a single rules era, analyze the gaps between consecutive appearances to verify consistency with geometric waiting-time distributions.

4. Cross-Lottery Comparison

Compare structural properties (parity, sum distributions, consecutive-number rates) between Mega Millions and Powerball to confirm parallel randomness characteristics.

This report was prepared for trend exploration and data quality monitoring. Frequency analysis of lottery numbers does not confer any predictive advantage. Mega Millions drawings are independently random events.

For Data Analysis Services

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