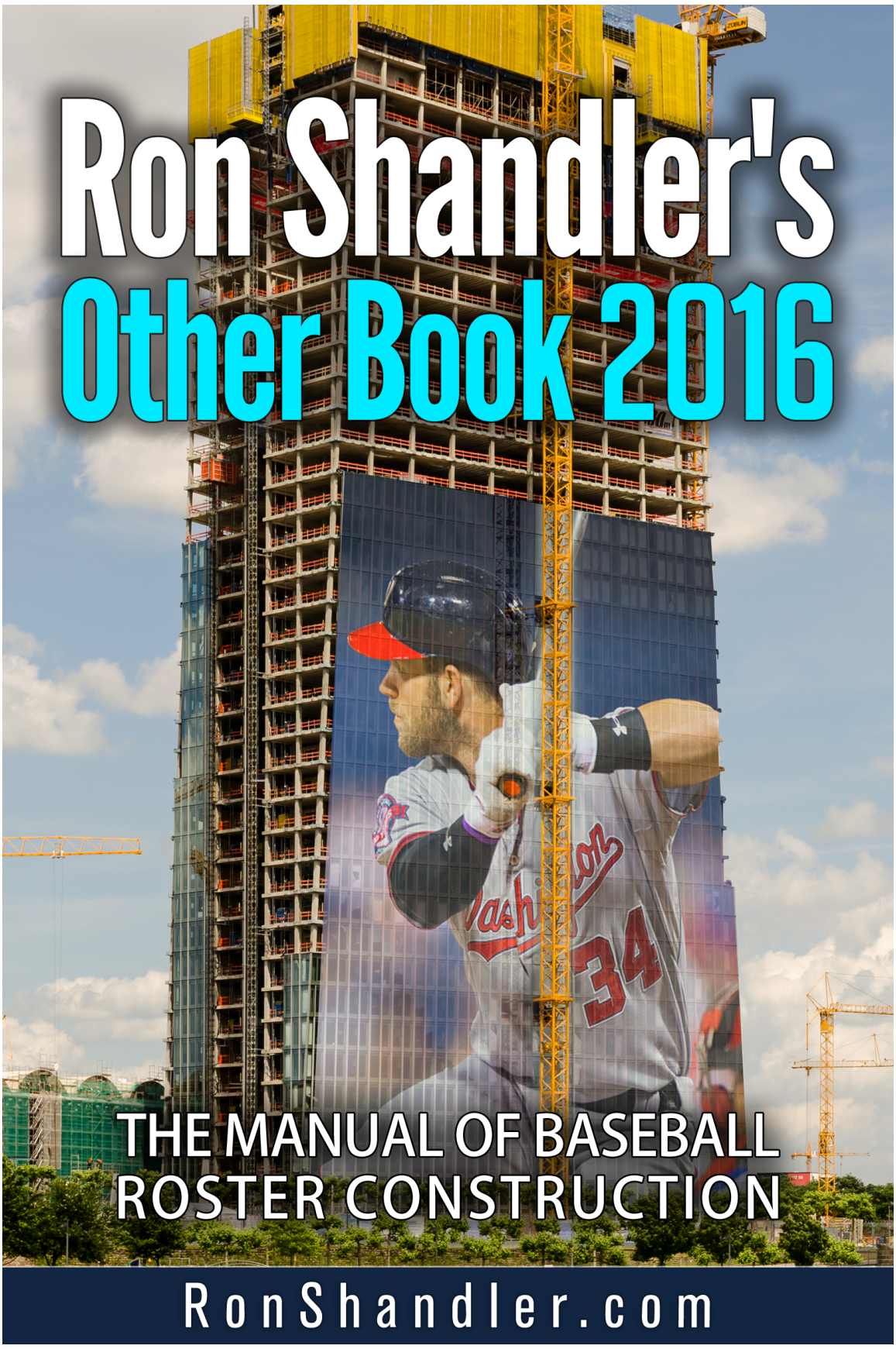
Ron Shandler's
Other Book 2016
THE MANUAL OF BASEBALL
ROSTER CONSTRUCTION
RonShandler.com

Ron Shandler's Other Book 2016

The Manual of Baseball Roster Contruction

The Shandler Company, LLC
Port St. Lucie, FL
baseball@ronshandler.com

The complete work – along with additional essays and updates –
is also available with a membership to **RonShandler.com.**

CONTENTS

What Early Adopters are Saying About BABS

"I am a fan of BABS already. You have defined pools of players whose skill sets, combined with variability and risk, makes them generally equivalent. But it's the *Baseball Forecaster* that allowed you to create those pools in the first place. This is how I'm using the two compendiums of information you have created: they complement each other. Life would be harder without either one of them. They have given me effective, analytical tools I can use in constructing my fantasy teams, which is a form of intellectual play that I find immensely fun. Hugely fun." – B.Crenshaw

"Wow. That. Was. Awesome. I'm completely sold on the system, the ranking process and the spreadsheet that helps put it all together." – D.Morris

"Fantastic, thought provoking stuff, even for a grizzled veteran of 31 consecutive Roto seasons. I suspect a quarter of a century from now it is this stuff that you will be remembered and revered for. What did Earl Weaver like to say? It's what you learn after you know it all that is important. That could be your apt subtitle." – J.Morgan

Introduction

My Conversation with *You*

ME: Hey, welcome.

YOU: C'mon Ron, do we really need another fantasy baseball annual?

What? Already with the questions? How about a little "Hi Ron, how ya been? We've missed you at Baseball HQ but it's nice to see you're still doing the *Forecaster* and you got a cool new website going. How's the family?"

It would have been more polite, that's all.

But okay, it's a fair question. Do we really need another fantasy baseball annual?

Hmm.

"Need" is such a strong word. Do we really *need* churro dogs and nachos on a stick? Do we really *need* 7x7 Rotisserie and 50-man rosters? Do we really *need* Scott Boras? No, we don't need any of them, but they exist to enhance our baseball experience. Some people *do* need these things and for them, it makes life better.

If you've been reading me since 1986, maybe you're completely satisfied with the concepts and ideas I've written about. Maybe you are winning your leagues every year and gratified to be able to tuck me away as your secret weapon (I fold up small). But some of you might still find it challenging to project player stats with 100 percent accuracy. Some of you might be finishing as low as second place every so often. And to be painfully honest, I owned Chris Davis in 2014 and Adam Dunn in 2011; I'm not perfect. So, there is a place for this *other book*.

You really haven't answered my question.

Okay, okay. In the next two chapters, I am going to present you with long lists of facts about how bad we are at predicting the future. Individually, we know and acknowledge these facts. We'll nod our heads and say, "Yeah, yeah, projections are not gospel. I get it."

But no, we really don't get it.

We know that baseball cultivates a love affair with statistics. But, those numbers work best in *describing what has already happened*. Used correctly, they do a terrific job of that. But we take a massive leap of faith in proclaiming our aptitude as soothsayers. Yes, past statistics can be manipulated to project future performance,

but within a very wide range of outcomes. Extraordinarily wide. The problem is, for our fantasy leagues, we need far more precision than what we can currently achieve. Yet we continue to go into each season with meticulously-crafted rankings lists, and player values, and targets.

Are you saying that all my draft prep is a waste of time? Seriously?

It's not a complete waste of time, but we put far too much effort into the process and far too much credence in the minutia. We still look at a 30-HR performance – or 50 steals, or 200 strikeouts, etc. etc. – and fixate on those numbers as if they hold some religious significance. We are still seduced into making important decisions based on the wild allure of small sample sizes. We still try to ferret out patterns in the stats, even if what we're looking at is mostly noise. We still look at research results based on aggregate data and draw finite conclusions about individual players. And recency bias? Oh, don't get me started.

As hard as it is to comprehend, there is often not a significant difference between a 3rd round player and an 8th round player, or between a $19 player and a $9 player. And yet we agonize over ADPs and engage in bidding wars.

So, in this *other* book, I look at the process of building a viable fantasy baseball roster through an unorthodox lens. For over three decades, we've taken a bottom-up approach to roster construction, focusing on projecting player performance and then building from there. This book takes a top-down approach, focusing on the structure of the roster itself, and then filling in the pieces. After all, winning is not about nailing projections; it's about weighing skill versus risk, and balancing assets and liabilities.

It doesn't matter if you think Giancarlo Stanton will hit 35 HRs, or 40, or 45. You might be right; you'll probably be wrong. It matters how his overall profile – skill and risk – fits into a well-built roster. On Draft Day, successfully reaching statistical targets provides false comfort; how many post-draft standings projections ever come true? But creating a solid foundation and structure, and then building it out by arranging puzzle pieces provides a higher-level perspective that allows for better roster management.

Back in the 1990s, the greatest advantage you could have was possessing better information. The internet leveled that playing field and left us looking for other competitive edges. Over the past 15 years, we've gone through numerous iterations involving statistical modeling, news impact analysis and even game theory, but the goal was always to get *better player projections*.

This is different. That's why you need this other book.

Geez, it sounds like you're tossing off all the years of research you've done in the Baseball Forecaster and on BaseballHQ.com.

No, not at all. The *Baseball Forecaster* is still the bible of fanalytics and probably the most important resource for setting baselines for player performance. BaseballHQ.com still provides the deepest fantasy-baseball-relevant information anywhere and is the only online source of this caliber that is 100% baseball, 24/7/365. I'll also give a shout-out to my new home at ESPN.com. While targeting a much broader audience, the quality of their analysis is unparalleled for an organization that tries to be so many things to so many different types of fans.

> *Nice of you to pimp your work but you didn't answer my question again.*

Look, all that prior work was built on the foundation of accurate skills assessment. That still applies here. It is still important to be able to evaluate performance in its component parts and understand how that relates to the surface stats that we play our games with.

The difference here is that, once we've done that evaluation, I'm tired of having to make the leap to a statistical projection. In the *Forecaster*, we do all that evaluation and then are forced to cull it down to a single line of numbers. I've always hated doing that, but we need the data for our draft prep so I keep publishing the numbers. However, like I write in the Consumer Advisory in the front of the book each year, there are far more important things to look at beyond that stat line.

So here, in *Ron Shandler's Other Book* (RSOB), I get to say, "Sorry, I'm not going to do it." If you absolutely need to know how many bases Billy Hamilton is going to steal so you can plug it into your fantasy model, please do buy my *other* Other Book and subscribe to BaseballHQ.com. But if you're at least curious about trying a different way, well, that's why you must be reading this right now.

> *Sorry, but I'm not going to give up my stats. So am I going to get any use out of this book, especially if I don't have the Baseball Forecaster or subscribe to BaseballHQ.com?*

The short answer is, "yes." The longer answer is, "sure." You will probably get a little bit more out of RSOB if you also have those foundational info sources, but you'll do just fine without them. In fact, you might have a slight advantage over those who have spent the last 30 years with me on my quest for the Holy Grail. Without the *Forecaster* bias, you might have an easier time buying into a methodology that's far less quantitatively based.

In RSOB, players are not stat-producing machines; in fact, they are also pretty flawed as human life forms. Rather than attempt to figure out what type of numbers they are going to put up, my focus is on describing them in the most accurate non-statistical terms, and then assembling these formless entities into productive rosters.

Is this a reinvention of how to win at fantasy baseball? I prefer to think of it as just an alternative lifestyle.

> *Okay, I'm not sure I get it but I'm willing to follow along for awhile. But why did you call this "Ron Shandler's Other Book"? Doesn't it have its own identity?*

It certainly does. But I also spent over a decade as a marketer in Corporate America, so I get a bit pragmatic when it comes to stuff like this.

There is a story attributed to Dwight D. Eisenhower. When he was president of Columbia University in the 1940s, he was asked where sidewalks should be put in. He suggested to plant grass and wait. The most-worn walking paths would reveal themselves in time and be the optimal spots for sidewalks. While civil engineers will tell you this is a flawed approach, there is still some elegance to it.

The decision-making process was similar here. Rather than forcing a moniker (I kinda liked "Baseball Fivecaster"), I made a leap of faith as to where the grass would be worn down quickest. I figured most people would end up calling this Ron Shandler's other book, so that was the most fitting title.

And it makes for a great Abbott & Costello routine:

Hey, do you know the name of Ron Shandler's other book?

> *Ron Shandler's Other Book*.

Yes, what's the name of Ron Shandler's other book?

> *Ron Shandler's Other Book*

That's what I'm asking you. What's the name?

> *That's what I'm telling you. Ron Shandler's Other Book*

That's right. What's the name of it?

> *Ron Shandler's Other Book*

And so on, for at least eight more minutes, in black and white.

Where do we begin this expedition into otherness?

We begin with the decision-making process. How do you decide which players to draft? How do you decide what strategies and tactics to employ? How do you decide when to pull the trigger or pull the plug?

Most decisions in life come down to whether to take action and do something, or to avoid something. When we are thinking about drafting a player, or trying a new strategy, or cutting an underperformer, we are trying to consider the potential benefit of making a good decision versus the potential pain of making a bad decision. Research has shown that people are more motivated to minimize losses than maximize gains; we are far more likely to act out of fear of pain than quest for gain.

Let's start by inflicting some pain.

Chapter 1
How the Stats are Out to Get You

"This is a very simple game. You throw the ball, you catch the ball, you hit the ball. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes it rains."
Nuke Laloosh, Bull Durham

The structure of the game of baseball lends itself to analysis. The result of each at-bat is an individual event that can be measured. But this measurement is always *after the fact*. We can count how many home runs a player hits, but that is only after he's hit them. The problem comes when we try to take the next apparently logical step. If a specific event chronicles a real, measurable skill and we can count it and track it over time, then can't we also predict it?

No, not really, at least not with the level of precision necessary to have meaningful control over building a fantasy baseball team. But every year, the quest continues to create, enhance and fine-tune predictive models.

> *Again, are you dissing all the work we've put into advanced baseball analysis over the years?*

No, there is nothing wrong with more and better data. The metrics in my *other* other book, at BaseballHQ.com, now-mainstream sabermetric gauges like WAR and wOBA, advanced granular data from PitchF/X, Statcast and heat maps – are all very, very important. The better that we can *describe* the elements of performance, the better we can assess skill.

Then we often take the next step and try to use those methods to *validate statistical output*. That's a reasonable exercise too. Yes, Bryce Harper hit 42 home runs, but when we deconstruct events into granular components such as contact rate, exit velocity and batted ball distance, we can get a sense of how "real" those 42 HRs were. We can determine whether Harper's skill set supported that home run output in general terms.

But then we take it a step too far; we try to attach a number to it. He should have hit 3 more HRs, or 2 fewer HRs, all things being equal. Here's the problem: *all things are never equal.* You can never replicate one season's performance in another season. So while this is an interesting exercise, it provides little actionable information when it comes to subsequent years.

Tell me that the indicators point to an increase or decrease in power skills, show me the areas of growth or erosion, even go out on a limb and tell me that a player is

going to fall off a cliff – but don't tell me that Albert Pujols is going to hit 31 HRs. Don't tell me that Dee Gordon is going to steal 55 bases. Don't even tell me that Jake Arrieta is going to have an ERA somewhere between 2.29 and 2.54.

For more than 30 years, we've been told that we need these numbers to play the game. We need a set of projections, and we need to convert them into dollar values or ranking positions. We need to build budgets and roster plans, and set statistical targets based on all this data.

But no matter how exhaustive a job we do in assembling our draft prep materials, the numbers we use to plan out our rosters are *always wrong*. Pujols never hits exactly 31 HRs and his eventual output might not be anywhere close to that number. Gordon will not steal exactly 55 bases. And Arrieta's ERA – even with a range to work with – is almost as likely to end up somewhere outside that range as inside it.

> *Yes, no projection is going to be exact. But can't we expect that the over-projections and under-projections are going to even out across an entire roster?*

No, not at all. In fact, your league's winners and losers will most likely be determined by a basic report card of overs and unders. The team with the most or biggest over-performers will always have the best odds of winning, regardless of how close your projections were overall. To wit:

Last year in the FSTA experts league, my overall draft report card was pretty damning. I had five on-par picks, nine profitable picks and 15 outright losers, including six in the first eight rounds. By all rights, this team should have been a disaster. But my nine winners were *big winners*, including Jake Arrieta (9th round), J.D. Martinez (14), Manny Machado (15), Xander Bogaerts (16) and Dallas Keuchel (19). I finished one day short of a title, even though my overall prognosticating prowess was nothing to write home about.

So we really can't rely on the projections getting us to where we need to go. Yet every spring we go back through the same process all over again.

> *Well, of course. What else can we do?*

But isn't that the definition of insanity? Doing the same thing over and over, and expecting a different result?

> *I don't really see it that way. I see it as we're using the best methodology that we have. Until someone finds a better way…*

Challenge accepted.

You wouldn't know it from all this extreme analysis going on, but baseball *is* a simple game. Even fantasy baseball tends to dig far deeper into the minutia than is necessary.

Here is a rundown of many of the lessons, truisms and proclamations we've been following over the years. The research findings are all valid; the cited authors are from the *Baseball Forecaster* and other sources (if no author is cited, it's my own research). Our application of these findings is where things go off the rails. You can't really assimilate hundreds of pieces of input and cull it all down to a single projected stat line that has any real value.

You've read all the following before, as individual facts, at different times. Now it's time to read them again, together in one place, to reach one inescapable conclusion.

The Baseline

With the tools currently available to us, the maximum projective accuracy we can hope to achieve is 70 percent. This is a number that we've been throwing around for a long, long time.

But what that means is, the *best* we can hope to be is 30 percent wrong. Thirty percent is a lot! It means being off by nine HRs for a 30-HR hitter, 60 strikeouts for a 200-K pitcher or 12 saves for a 40-save closer. That's the best level of wrongness we can reasonably expect to achieve. And few of us will ever achieve "best."

> *Seriously? Is this true?*

Eh, I don't know. That's the number we've been using, and frankly, I'm not sure how they arrived at 70. It's possible there could be a better system out there – one that exceeds 70 percent – but I don't know that you'd be able to prove it.

> *Why?*

Because the proof comes after the baseball season is over but one season represents only a single data point for analysis. We'd need to see a system that produces forecast data over multiple seasons to provide a significant enough sample size. You can't reasonably do that for future seasons, but I suppose you could go back and regenerate forecasts for past seasons. However, when you have actuals already available from past seasons, the temptation is to create a model that fits *all* of the historical data. I'm not sure you could really produce something actionable.

In the end, that 70 percent figure is too "macro" to have any real impact on a 23-man roster. This is a point I will be coming back to over and over again.

> *Maybe you can't evaluate an entire season of projections on a macro basis, but what about individual players? That's all that matters anyway.*

Sure, we can try. There are overall skills metrics that are considered good evaluators of talent, like on base-plus slugging (OPS). But let's say that I project a player to have an OPS of .838 and he ends up with an OPS of .838.

Um, that would be great!

Except, this:

	HR	SB	BA	OBP	Slg	OPS
Lorenzo Cain	16	28	.307	.361	.477	.838
Lucas Duda	27	0	.244	.352	.486	.838

If I projected Cain numbers and he produced like Duda, I'd hardly call that a successful projection. But OPS thinks so.

Baseball analysts use statistical processes like "average mean squared error" to compare the accuracy of one set of metrics to another. You'll see this method used for projections too. There are studies that involve a group of forecasters, often compared to a control group – like a simple age-adjusted, weighted three-year average (the Marcel Method) – and to each other.

Using these studies to determine the best system has little value. The test groups typically cover hundreds, or thousands, of players. The variance between any one system and another usually amounts to percentage points over the entire study group. It's not something that's going to provide much benefit for a tiny sample of a 23 players on a fantasy roster. There is no way that you can cover your risk of volatility over a roster size of just 23 players. (See? I told you we'd be coming back to this.) So you can almost pick any system and have just a good of a chance of winning as any other.

Statistical Volatility

According to the research of Patrick Davitt of BaseballHQ.com, normal production volatility varies widely over any particular 150-game span. A .300 career hitter can hit anywhere from .250 to .350, a 40-HR hitter from 30-50, and a 3.70/1.15 pitcher from 2.60/0.95 to 6.00/1.55. All of these represent normal ranges.

So if a batter hits 31-.250 one year, 36-.280 the next year and 40-.310 the third year, you don't know whether that is growth or normal volatility. In fact, the low-end and/or high-end performances could be isolated outliers. But nearly all analysts will call it growth. Their projection for year #4 will either continue this perceived trend or show some regression. And any one of them could be right. Or wrong.

It actually would be a lot easier if every player performed like Alcides Escobar:

Year	SB	BA	OBP	Slg
2010	10	.235	.288	.326
2011	26	.254	.290	.343
2012	35	.293	.331	.390
2013	22	.234	.259	.300
2014	31	.285	.317	.377
2015	17	.257	.293	.320

I love Alcides. He doesn't hide his volatility. It's all-clothes-off, out there in the Kansas City sun. He trumpets the fact that there's no way to pin him down. But while this data set is impossible to project into 2016, it's perfectly consistent within a normal range. You probably couldn't convince many people, but this is the same player every year.

I'm starting to pull my hair out.

Completely understandable. But there's more.

Research has shown that 150 games, or about the length of a single baseball season, is not enough of a sample size to be a reliable indicator of skill for some statistics. For instance, a stat like batting average doesn't stabilize until about 910 AB, according to Russell Carleton. So we definitely can't draw conclusions after one season. You can't look at a batter who hits .230 one year and .270 the next and call that "growth." What you'd more likely call that is a .250 hitter.

My friend Alcides? He's your basic .260s hitter, even though he's never actually had a batting average in the .260s.

But what does .260 mean anyway? Or .300? Or .250 or .200?

The line we draw in skills benchmarks is incredibly grey.

We'll chase a .300 hitter as being significantly better than a .250 hitter, however, over 550 AB, the difference is fewer than 5 hits per month. The difference between a .272 average and a .249 average – still perceptively different – is two hits per month, or one hit every other week. We'll opt for a pitcher with a 3.95 ERA, passing over one with a 4.05 ERA. But what's the real difference? A pitcher who allows 5 runs in 2 1/3 innings will see a different ERA impact than one who allows 9 runs in 3 innings, even though, for all intents and purposes, both got rocked. That could be your 0.10 variance in ERA right there.

The line we draw between success and failure is also incredibly grey.

A batter whose HR output drops might have had a concurrent increase in doubles and triples (see: Xander Bogaerts). A pitcher whose ERA spikes may have seen no degradation in skills but was backed by a poor defense and a bullpen that allowed

more inherited runners to score (see: Chris Sale). A speedster may have seen his SB total plummet only because he was traded to a team that didn't run (see: Ben Revere). A closer may have been as effective as ever but lost the 9th inning role as a result of a trade or a manager with a quick hook (see: Drew Storen, Joakim Soria).

It's like nothing is real anymore.

Oh, it's real. The issue is how you interpret these realities. I'm trying to make a case that our trusted, comfortable statistics are not the place to find "real." This becomes more problematic when we try to project the future. Garbage in, garbage out.

And honestly, beyond the volatility in the numbers, there is too much uncertainty for many players to pin down a stat line anyway. How do you handle Giancarlo Stanton? Will the wrist injury sap his power? Can you reasonably pro-rate Carlos Correa's 2015 stat line to a full season? Is Jake Arrieta really now in the same class as Clayton Kershaw?

I don't know. You don't know. Nobody knows. But someone is going to have to slap a bunch of numbers on these guys in order for you to draft, right?

Um, right. Well, won't they?

They will, but you don't have to buy into any of it.

Rotisserie Earnings/Fantasy Rankings Volatility

Trying to find some stability within Rotisserie dollar earnings or Average Draft Position rankings (ADPs) is no less frustrating.

There is only a 65% chance that a player projected for a certain dollar value will finish the season within plus-or-minus $5 of that projection. That means, if you project a player will earn $25 and you agonize when bidding hits $27, there is really about a 2-in-3 shot of him finishing anywhere between $20 and $30.

So I shouldn't worry about those extra few bucks?

In most cases, no. But auction pricing is going to be market-driven anyway. So, if you are convinced that Jason Kipnis is worth $25 and land him for $21, you will have *overpaid* if the rest of your league sees him as no more than a $19 player. Even if he is really worth $30.

Arrrgh! I give up. Are you saying I should just pay whatever for whoever and not worry about budgets or bargains or value or anything?!

You still need to follow the market, but in general, yes. Kipnis might go for $25 in your league. He might be a bit inflated in Cleveland. But you don't know whether

he's going to bat .300 again, or .240. You don't know whether he is going to steal 12 bases or 30. At age 29, it's entirely possible that double-digit power is still in his skill set. In fact, *any* of those ranges are within his current skill set. So what will it be?

Prognosticators will give you a stat line that will likely split the difference all around; we have no choice but to hedge. And if all of baseball's top analysts don't know what the heck Kipnis is going to do, clearly the other owners in your league have no clue either. So you need to decide whether his assets offset the risk of owning him and then just follow the market. I'll get more into that much later.

Nice guy. Tease me with all this stuff and then put me off until later.

You're not ready. There's more.

I've said this often: **the two most powerful forces known to man are regression and gravity.** If you're ever faced with the question of whether to project a player to IMPROVE or DECLINE, the better percentage play will *always* be DECLINE.

But that runs counter to what we want to see in our players. That's why so many of us are infatuated with upwardly mobile rookies and anything in a data set that even remotely looks like improvement. But, facts:

FACT: Players who earn $30 in a season are only a 34 percent bet to repeat or improve the following season. *(Matt Cederholm)*

FACT: Pitchers who earn less than $24 in a season retain only 52 percent of their value the following year. More expensive pitchers do retain 80 percent of their value. *(Michael Weddell)*

That 80 percent is nice but it still means your ace pitcher's value is going to decline.

If you are looking for value retention or a reasonable return on your investment in this game, you're playing the wrong game. This is no less evident in snake draft leagues when it comes to the very best players. One would think baseball's elite stars are the most projectable commodities. One would be wrong.

FACT: The success rate of ADP rankings correctly identifying each season's top 15 players (in any order) is only 34 percent. *(Study period: 2004-2015)*

In fact, this meager success rate has been trending downward over time. So here's the takeaway:

When you sit down at the draft table (or your computer, whatever) and start agonizing over who is going to fall to you in the first round, there is a 66 percent chance that whoever you end up drafting will be wrong. Ten of the first 15 players taken in your draft will not earn back their owner's investment.

That's ridiculous. You're lying.

Seems that way, right? But last March's Top 15 included Andrew McCutchen, Giancarlo Stanton, Miguel Cabrera, Jose Abreu, Carlos Gomez… need I go on?

I guess not.

Felix Hernandez, Adam Jones, Troy Tulowitzki…

All right, I get it.

Over the last 12 years, it was all the same thing.

A great exercise to establish some perspective is to look at 2016's ADPs and try to identify which five of the top 15 players *will* earn back their draft slot. Mike Trout's a lock, right? But his earnings ranks over the past four years have been 1, 2, 4 and 10. Clayton Kershaw has finished 5, 6, 3, 2 and 3 but this record-breaking string has to end sometime, doesn't it? Paul Goldschmidt and Bryce Harper are gimmes, right? Well, if you commit to those four, then you get to pick only one more player among the next 11. Who are you going to bet on? Miguel Cabrera or Carlos Correa? Giancarlo Stanton or Kris Bryant? Andrew McCutchen or Nolan Arenado?

It's not easy, but it's just further evidence of the volatility of statistics, even at the top.

Playing Time

You can do all the skills assessment you want, but the bane of our existence is getting a handle on playing time. Back when this game was invented, AB and IP projections were just another unknown element of the forecasting process. Here is a brief history of how far we've come:

Year	**Milestone event**	**Playing time projections were…**
1984	Rotisserie Baseball book published	pretty easy, but we were clueless.
1989	Several analytical books published	getting harder as we got smarter.
1996	Internet goes mainstream	easier to crunch, but still a bitch.
2004	First high stakes leagues	now ridiculously hard with $$ on the line.
2007	Disabled list days spike to 28,000	- Holy crap, this is getting nuts!
2012	DL days lost hits 30,000	marked by anarchy, chaos, ice cream binges.
2014	Daily games take over the planet	done. Screw it, I'll just play for one day.

As I noted in the *2016 Baseball Forecaster*, the number of players making an appearance on each Major League roster has increased significantly over the past 30 years. Each additional body stakes a claim to playing time, but the availability of

plate appearances and innings hasn't increased. There are still just 162 games in a season.

All of that boils down to more challenges projecting at-bats and innings:

In any given year, of the ADP's top 300 players, between 45-50 percent will lose playing time due to the disabled list, demotion, suspension or release. Since playing time is a zero-sum proposition, those lost AB and IP have to go somewhere, and in fact, more than 70 percent of the most profitable players are typically driven by unexpected increases in playing time. The opportunity for those playing time increases is largely dependent on external events, virtually none of which are predictable on Draft Day. And so, more than 70 percent of each season's most profitable players cannot be predicted on Draft Day.

As you would expect, these most profitable players have a disproportionately large impact on who is going to win your league. Research shows that 25 percent of the teams owning one or more of the most profitable players will win their league. More than 50 percent of those teams with the most profitable players will finish no lower than third place. The biggest driving force behind all that – changes in playing time – is unpredictable on Draft Day.

> *I think my head is going to explode.*

I said you weren't ready to hear the truth, and I meant it. But there's one more variable.

Performance Enhancing Drugs

For more than a decade, I have written extensively about the impact of PEDs on the statistics that drive our game. I am not going to rehash the old arguments now. While there remains disagreement among analysts about how real or measurable the impact is, there are certain logical truths that are tough to deny.

- People are generally honest, except if it's a choice between honesty and survival.

- For pro athletes, survival often equates to maintaining an edge to stay gainfully employed.

- If PEDs did not improve or sustain performance in order to give athletes an edge, why would they accept the risk of using them?

- You can't dismiss the possibility that any radical swing in productivity could be caused by a player's use or discontinuance of PEDs.

> *Ugh. I hate talk about PEDs. Are you trying to say that all players are motivated to cheat?*

No, not all of them. But it's yet one more variable that puts the "realness" of all statistics at risk. And unfortunately, it's naïve to think that the lack of daily PED headlines means the problem has been contained. The above truths don't change; only the effort to cover up PED use does.

> *But what about all those minor leaguers in the Mitchell Report? Aren't they proof that PEDs don't work?*

For any alleged PED users who fell short of a real Major League career, it's possible that they never would have made it out of rookie ball without that help. We don't know. The impact of PEDs is relative to each player's actual skill level. That means we need to question the legitimacy of performance stats throughout every level of pro ball. Probably college and high school too.

> *So, all in all, are you telling me that, despite all the massive effort we've been expending to construct elaborate systems to project player performance, none of the numbers can be trusted?*

Well, we can a little, but not enough for it to matter. About five years ago, I asked 12 of the most prolific fantasy champions in high stakes leagues and national experts competitions to rank six variables based on how important they were to winning *consistently*. "More accurate player projections" came in dead last.

> *What did they say were the most important variables to winning consistently?*

Here were the results:

1. Better in-draft strategy/tactics
2. Better sense of value
3. Better luck
4. Better grasp of contextual elements that affect players
5. Better in-season roster management
6. More accurate player projections

There was actually a seventh variable brought up by Larry Schechter – better use and access to TIME. He said that the more time invested in the entire process, the better the results. There is a good deal of truth to that.

But the questions is, can you build a successful team without statistical player projections at all? That is the question this book is going to try to answer. But first, we need to discuss some more obstacles to success.

Chapter 2

How Psychology is Out to Get You

For the sake of argument, let's say that you buy into everything I wrote in the last chapter. (I won't delude myself into thinking that everyone is drinking my Kool-Aid.) Let's say that you agree that player projections are ~~garbage~~… um, flawed. Still, our brain plays its own tricks on us. Even if we could believe the data, there are psychological pitfalls that also do us harm.

We base decisions on small sample sizes.

When Billy Beane signed Rich Hill to a one-year contract, I thought, "$6 million for one year? What is it in his skill set that made him worth that much? Four great starts in September?"

Admittedly, those starts were very, very good. He threw 23 innings, gave up only 10 hits and three runs, and struck out 30 while walking only two. Only one of those starts was at home in Fenway Park, against the Orioles. The other three were at Tampa, Toronto and in the Bronx. He faced some good and bad lineups. Tampa was a pushover; his outings against Toronto and New York were not as good as his line scores would indicate. However, he owned the Orioles. But $6 million?

How much are *you* going to pay for Hill in 2016 auctions? More than $5? More than $10?

In what round will he go? Earlier than the 20th? Earlier than the 15th?

For me, Hill is nothing more than a $1, end-game 23rd round player. Odds are he won't last that deep into a draft except in the shallowest of leagues. (His current ADP in the NFBC is #257, or early 18th round.) But what evidence is there that a 35-year-old with a 4.54 career ERA in 500 innings over 11 seasons, who has not seen even 60 innings in a year since 2009, is really worth more than an end-game flyer?

How do 23 innings against tired batters at the end of September trump his other 477 career innings? He moved to the other side of the rubber and adjusted his arm angle? Where is the proof that he will be able to maintain that advantage and stay healthy over a full season?

But man, he looked so good!

But four starts! Over a 4-game stretch early last year, Corey Kluber posted an ERA of 7.43. Over a 4-game stretch in early May last year, Clayton Kershaw posted an ERA

of 5.00. Would you have considered cutting bait on those pitchers after those four starts?

Of course not. But they had a track record of much better.

Exactly. And Hill has a track record of much worse. It works both ways, and even moreso in Hill's case, because – in the inimitable words of colleague Lawr Michaels – "baseball is hard."

Four starts is a ridiculously small sample size from which to draw conclusions, but even larger sample sizes can be just as suspect.

I always found it odd that major roster decisions were made based on spring training performance. Four weeks of lackadaisical games against an mixture of veterans getting their rust off, marginals working on a new pitch or batting approach, and minor leaguers playing like minor leaguers. Congratulations, you just won a spot in a major league rotation by posting a 2.50 ERA in four games against Crash Davis and Pedro Cerrano. Really?

Better yet, some teams make final roster cuts based on a player's *last outing* in the spring. The difference between success and failure – a major league paycheck or a bus trip back to Reno – comes down to a sample size of four at-bats or six innings pitched? Yet we will chase those players on Draft Day because they "made the cut."

That all said, there are times when a small sample is enough to make an ~~informed decision~~… um, no – an educated speculation – but it's not often. A high-skilled minor leaguer who gets promoted and immediately succeeds is a decent bet to at least have a high floor. (Note: 1st round is not a floor.) A player coming off the disabled list who struggles mightily in his first few outings is a good bet to not be completely healthy.

But if Daniel Murphy goes for even a dollar more than he should based on his post-season heroics, I want to be in that league. If a fellow owner starts shopping Josh Donaldson if he's batting .220 after four weeks, I want to be in that league. And if Rich Hill goes any earlier than Round 20, I want to be in that league.

We try to ferret out patterns within statistical noise.

Humans (including you and I) are hard-wired to try to find patterns. In its grandest sense, we do this to survive. The world is full of chaos – even in non-election years – and it's the way our brains attempt to create order.

Baseball analysis is similarly all about finding patterns in data. We see a batter hitting 8, 10 and 12 home runs in successive years, and we immediately label that as a growth trend. Maybe it is.

But research back in 2010 by Ed DeCaria showed that the odds of the next data point in that series being 14 are small. In fact, the greatest odds are that the next point regresses back to 10, or even 9.

As described in the last chapter, since that we don't even know how real 8, 10 and 12 are, it's difficult to conclude that there is any trend at all. That 8-HR year could have been 13 if five of his doubles had traveled another 5 feet. That 12-HR year might have been 9 if not for those three nights when the wind was blowing out.

We fantasy leaguers *need* to find patterns. That's the starting point for the entire forecasting process. But when the data itself is suspect – obscured in great measure by noise – maybe it's better not to be looking for something that might not exist. Like better sentence structure.

Let's play a little game.

> *Oo, I like games!*

Good! Here is a short series of data points representing one player's Rotisserie earnings during his first three years in the majors: $7, $15, $18. Tell me what you think he earns in year #4.

> *Well… it seems like growth, but you warned me against assuming that. I'll take the bait. I'll say that he earns $16 in year #4.*

That's a very reasonable guess. Any of $14, $15 or $16 would take an appropriate level of regression into account. In year #4, this player actually earned $23.

> *What? You tricked me!*

I didn't trick you. This is an actual player. So, now you're faced with a 4-year trend: $7, $15, $18, $23. What does this player earn in year #5?

> *Okay, now you're screwing with me. Logic dictates that I say $19 or $20, but you've already primed me to expect the unexpected. I'll say $25.*

Another good guess. Most analysts would probably have stuck with some type of regressed value, and I can tell you that the *Forecaster* projected this player to earn $22 in year #5. But he actually earned $28.

> *Of course. Four straight years of increasing earnings – is this a real player? Should I believe you?*

You can choose what to believe. But let's keep going. We're now at $7, $15, $18, $23, $28. What does he do in year #6?

There is no way this can keep going. I'm going to say $24. That's my final answer.

And that is the correct play. Regression is always the correct play. The *Forecaster* projected $26. But he actually earned $32.

You're playing me. You clearly picked an outlier… if he actually exists at all.

Well, that's one thing you got right. A player with this consistent a 5-year trend is clearly an outlier. Do you want to keep going?

Sure, why not? It's only a guessing game at this point.

Okay. $7, $15, $18, $23, $28, $32. What's next?

Regression is always the correct play… even when it isn't. I'll say $29.

Remember that Matt Cederholm said, "Players who earn $30 in a season are only a 34 percent bet to repeat or improve the following season." Given that, it would seem that the odds of him continuing to improve, or even holding steady, are low. In the next section, I'll show you how that skews our expectations, but for now… in year #7, he earned…

Wait for it…

$28.

Hooray! The planets finally align! Does it keep going?

For sure. Give it one more shot. This last data point coming up is 2015.

$7, $15, $18, $23, $28, $32, $28. It's no less tricky now. Was 2014 an outlier? Does he rebound in 2015? Or does the downward trend continue? I'll give you one hint: he was 29 years old in 2015.

That's still young. I'd have to say he rebounds a bit. I'll peg his earnings at $30.

Yeah, but no. He only earned $19 last year. Forecasting is a tough game.

More like a sucker's game. Who was the player? Was he real?

Adam Jones is very real. And as much as this exercise was frustrating, a look at Jones' career provides a pretty slick bell curve: $7, $15, $18, $23, $28, $32, $28, $19. We would be so lucky if every player's career followed as fine a trend as this. They'd be a cinch to project each year (oh, the irony!).

FWIW, the *Forecaster* projects him to earn $27 in 2016. You want to bet the over or under?

> *Forget it. I'm out of this game.*

Me too. I'm getting out of this game as well. That's why I'm writing this book.

Here are two other interesting players:

A 28-year-old: $16, $27, $25, $39, $40, $35, $28. Somewhat similar to Jones, this is a high-end player who seems to be fading prematurely. But most drafters will continue to spend over $30 and a first round pick on Andrew McCutchen with barely a second thought. They're smart.

Another 28-year-old: $2, $13, $23, $10, $25, $14. I have no clue what to project for this guy in 2016. But as I noted in the last chapter, Alcides Escobar's underlying skill set is pretty consistent.

> *Wait a minute, wait a minute. Is any of this data valid? Can we even use Rotisserie earnings to evaluate players? Isn't this the same argument you made against using OPS?*

Nice job. That's why all of these data points are suspect. Adam Jones' bell curve is probably not nearly as consistent as it seems. Escobar's values are probably not as erratic as they seem. Still, there are two areas where Rotisserie dollars can have some value.

1. I wouldn't use past Roto earnings to project next year's dollar value, but they do have an advantage over other metrics. This is because the dollar calculation normalizes statistics to the level of offense and pitching each year. So a 30-HR performance in a high offense season would earn fewer dollars than that same 30-HR performance in a low offense season. The above data sets are fine to evaluate within the limitation of the imprecise inputs.

2. Sharp changes in performance are reflected pretty accurately, even if the precise dollar values are inexact. So we can use roto dollars to suggest the magnitude of a breakout or breakdown performance.

If there's one thing that I've learned about breakouts, it's that they don't typically arise in a straight line out of a trackable growth trend. Most folks perceive a breakout player's dollar values to look something like this: $8, $10, $13, $25. But the reality is, most breakouts look more like this: $8, $13, $10, $38 – a massive, unexpected spike. Here are a few examples:

$-3, $5, $0, $2, $31, $36, $12, $19, $32, $26
Jose Bautista shuttled between full-time and part-time work his first four years in the majors before exploding in 2010. If we had focused on the skill and viewed his playing time as a variable risk, we might have been able to see something coming. His performances since then have fit no discernable pattern.

$23, $20, $10, $40
A rookie tease and then two years of waiting until Bryce Harper finally broke out. The skill was always there, but virtually nobody took the risk to project 2015 as anything more than a growth year.

$14, $13, $30, $25
Similar to Harper, mediocre early returns preceded the breakout for Todd Frazier.

$-7, $-5, $-15, $-5, $19
This data set is through 2014. What would you have projected for this player coming into 2015? The *Forecaster* believed that his improvement was real and projected $18. But Jake Arrieta earned $44. Projecting 2016 will be fun. That's why we need to find a better way.

In the next chapter, we'll start looking at players as entities that possess assets and liabilities. By evaluating each separately, we can sometimes detect the breakouts before they occur.

One last thing. This quest to draw conclusions about performance trends extends to teams as well.

Last spring, I made an out-on-a-limb projection that the Cubs and Astros would meet in the World Series. At the time, it was an outrageous speculation meant only to help everyone keep their eyes open. After all, the Cubs were coming off five consecutive losing seasons and the Astros were just a year removed from three consecutive 100-loss seasons. We all acknowledged that they were teams about to turn the corner, but a World Series appearance? Ridiculous.

Just like breakout players, teams don't always advance or decline in a straight line. With teams, there are so many moving pieces, and so many opportunities over six months to tweak, that it's tough to predict performance from one season to the next. Entertaining the possibility that the Cubs and Astros would even make the play-offs defied our quest for logical patterns.

Every season starts as a blank slate; last year's won-loss record is not the starting point for this season's results. It works the same way for players.

We look at research results based on aggregate data and draw finite conclusions about individual players.

I've done a ton of research over the past 30 years as have the analysts who've written for me at BaseballHQ.com. Most of this stuff is incredibly insightful and the findings really help us understand the components of true skill.

The problem is that these results reflect tendencies on a macro level. None of them produce a percentage play that's good enough to make micro player decisions with any confidence.

A standard fantasy roster with 23 players is way too small a sample size for any of this to matter. (There's that line again.) You are not going to be able to leverage miniscule percentage differences with so few chances to be right or wrong. Those 23 players are just not enough opportunities to cover your risk.

Here are three widely-used variables that are almost always a waste of time to worry about.

Age: Research shows that players' skills peak at a certain age – 26, 27, 28, 23, 31 – pick a number. But those are just rough averages. Not every player is going to peak at a given age. So targeting 28-year-olds in your draft will only pay off if you're in about 30 leagues. And even then, you might end up passing on a 21-year-old Carlos Correa who hits the ground running or an Alex Rodriguez who has a huge rebound season at age 39.

With only 23 chances, the odds of rostering an outlier are not much different from the odds of rostering a player that fits your target.

However… there are a few times when the odds are high enough to pursue. Eventually, players age out of rosterable skills. That age is different for every player, but the older they get, the higher the odds. So, if a player has a career year in his mid-to-late 30s, bet against a repeat. If a player has a crappy year in his late 30s, bet against a rebound. Those are higher percentage plays and are pretty much the only ones worth chasing.

Park effects: I know from experience that most touts go through a painstaking conversion process every time a player switches teams.

> *Umm… switching teams?*

No, not that type of conversion.

I've come to find the exercise of adjusting projections for park effects mostly a waste of time. In recent years, we've seen players like Brian McCann and Evan Gattis move to new parks that should have turned them into 30-plus HR monsters. In both cases,

any change in power skill was far short of expectation. Even extreme ballpark changes are inconclusive. Yes, Michael Cuddyer's batting average tanked in moving from Coors Field to CitiField, but was it park effects or the fact that he was hurt for part of the year? Wasn't Nelson Cruz's power supposed to disappear moving from Baltimore to Seattle?

That brings up a bigger question: how do you know that an increase or decrease in a player's output is really park-related?

If a 30-HR hitter moves to a park that increases power by 20 percent – which is huge – then we could expect him to now be a 33-HR hitter (the percentage only affects home games). But a 3-HR increase is well within the limits of normal statistical variance. How do we know that normal skills growth didn't drive the increase in home runs? Or simple statistical volatility? Or a trio of well-timed gusts of wind?

It's even more fuzzy with the ratio gauges. David Price's move to Fenway Park would be expected to add a chunk of ERA to his projection. But even if there was a 10 percent swing in run-scoring from Detroit/Toronto to Fenway (there's not; it's only around seven percent), Price's ERA would increase about 0.25 of a run over a full season. That's one extra run per month. It's just not a projectable level.

However… if you are going to use it at all, focus on the margins. The noticeable impacts are only going to come from a hitter moving from one of the best hitters parks to one of the worst, or vice versa. The inverse goes for pitchers, obviously. I have given up calculating anything in between. Todd Frazier moving from Cincinnati to Chicago? Over 550 AB, the impact of park effects is going to be nothing more than a rounding error.

Team: If you have two players of comparable skill, but one plays in Kansas City and the other in Milwaukee, you'll almost always opt for the Royal over the Brewer. Team environment matters, right? More runs and RBIs, more wins and saves.

Unless you invested in the Red Sox and Tigers last year. Seattle and Washington were supposed to play in October as well. Instead, last year's fantasy winners were the ones who resigned themselves to drafting a few random Astros and Mets. Or maybe they tacked a few lowly Twins or Cubs onto the tail end of their roster. We failed to correctly predict team environment for those clubs that had a huge impact.

Even picking the right team is no guarantee of success. You could have invested in the most stable of the Cardinals' arms, but you would have gotten only 13 wins out of John Lackey and only 12 out of Lance Lynn. The Dodgers would have been a prime source of stats, but nobody behind Adrian Gonzalez amassed more than 60 RBIs.

In Chapter 4, I am going to compare Dallas Keuchel to Sonny Gray. If I can prove to you that they are essentially the same pitcher, you might still opt for Keuchel

because he's on a better team. Maybe he is; maybe he's not. But the odds of there being a significant difference in their eventual stats are probably not high enough to matter.

As a tie-breaker when everything else is equal? Sure. But I'm willing to bet you can find some other variable that will have more of an impact.

We are largely driven by recency bias.

We live in a world where we're inundated in information. It's far too much to process so we have to rely on smaller chunks that are easier to remember. And the easiest pieces of data to remember are those closest to the surface of our consciousness. Ask me what I had for breakfast this morning but forget about me remembering what I had for dinner two nights ago.

("Fish and chips at that seafood restaurant." – the wife)

The effects of recency bias on managing our fantasy teams have grown over time as the amount of information we've had to process has grown. Part of it is just the endless quest to grab at whatever we can. I've already talked about small sample sizes – that's part of it – but these days, even a full season of aberrant performance often trumps a 10-year career of consistency.

How else can you explain why Miguel Cabrera is not still a Top 10 lock?

Recency bias drives each year's ADPs. The quickest way to earn a first round ranking is to post first-round earnings the previous year. A.J. Pollock, Manny Machado, Nolan Arenado and Anthony Rizzo are pushing down first round stalwarts like Cabrera, Andrew McCutchen and Carlos Gomez after just one season of uncharacteristic production. This class of player that has supplanted the vets could well be the next wave of star talent, but are we passing judgment after just one season? After all, outliers run both ways.

It's like we completely ignore one of the very first tenets of baseball prognosticating: **Don't project a player based on one season's stats.** After 30 years, have we learned nothing?

Is the oft-injured Machado really a better bet to return high first round value than the consistent track record of McCutchen, a player who has racked up a grand total of 15 days on the DL over the past seven years?

Is Jake Arrieta, who posted a second half for the ages and is about a 99.9 percent bet to regress – and significantly – a better bet to return elite value than Felix Hernandez or Chris Sale, long-term members of the Elite?

With the exception of Clayton Kershaw, the historical track record shows that pitchers earning first round value in one season almost never repeat the feat in consecutive years. Volatile pitching stats and the changing composition of the talent pool drive that phenomenon. But Arrieta and Zack Greinke are still likely going to get drafted ahead of Hernandez, and maybe even Sale.

Finally, is it not ludicrous to include Carlos Correa's name among 2016 first-rounders after 427 major league plate appearances? Doesn't anybody remember Eric Hosmer (followed a .293 rookie year with .232) or Danny Salazar (followed a 3.12 ERA mid-season call-up with 4.25)?

Those are not Correa-caliber players. What about Mike Trout?

Is Correa really another once-in-a-generation player? Maybe he is, but are you going to bet on it by committing a core roster spot to a speculation of guaranteed greatness?

Well, maybe I will. I don't want to miss out.

We make decisions based on the fear of missing out.

I get it that you don't want to be the guy who misses out on the next Hall-of-Famer. But are you really, really absolutely certain that this is a can't-miss player? After 427 plate appearances? Enough to risk that all-important first round pick?

Last year was a great example of what happens when you buy into the Fear of Missing Out. Everyone was convinced that Kris Bryant would get an early call and be That Guy, so he was drafted at inflated prices. But the teams that won leagues last year were not those that owned Bryant, because he was purchased at nearly full value. There was no advantage to paying that much; there was only the risk that an unproven player would fail. The winners were the ones that owned Machado, Pollock or Keuchel, or had Correa or Miguel Sano tucked on their reserve lists. Those were the monster profit machines.

When you draft Correa in the first round, there is far more downside than upside. If he is fully productive, you've set a very high bar for him to return par value (forget about profit; that percentage play is minute). Perhaps he has a higher floor than others, so your downside is mitigated. But we simply don't know what that range is. Here is my completely unscientific take on Correa's odds as a first rounder:

Profit	1%
Par value	20%
Some loss	60%
Major loss	19%

You can quibble with the percentages, but the general conclusion has to be the same: what are you chasing? I'd probably attach similar percentages to some of the other first-rounders too.

If you're overpaying for a speculation at the draft, you're also potentially passing up on profit opportunities later on. As much as you think you can find profit in every player, you only get 23 chances, and there are at least a dozen other guys in your league, all thinking the same way.

This is particularly dangerous in the early rounds where we've shown that our overall track record is terrible. Here are a few interesting players of note:

Player	# years drafted in 1st Rd for Fear of Missing Out	# years earned 1st Rd value
Tulowitzki,T	4	0
Longoria,E	3	0
Gonzalez,C	4	1
Fielder,P	4	1

Talk about doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results.

We base decisions on NOW.

There is a subconscious part of us that actually agrees with the fact that you can't predict the future. If our decision-making process was fully conscious and deliberate, we might take an objective look at each situation with an eye towards tomorrow. Instead, we tend to take the easy way out and just view what is happening right now as a fixed reality.

But reality is not fixed. It is fluid. One decision begets uncertain outcomes, which beget other decisions.

English, please. At least give me an example.

Okay. "Once upon a time (early last season), there was a closer for the Seattle Mariners named Fernando Rodney. He had a volatile career – some very good years and some very bad ones – and despite there being some question about his ability to hold down a closer's role, International Expert (and Man of Intrigue) Ron Shandler spent full-price closer dollars for him in Tout Wars ($16). Shandler reasoned that, despite Rodney's erratic track record, he was the closer NOW.

As it would turn out, it didn't take long for Rodney to turn into a pumpkin, wiping out Shandler's investment (and relegating him to last place in saves for the rest of the season). When Carson Smith innocuously slid into the closer's role, he immediately became the NOW guy, and fantasy leaguers around the world

proceeded to exhaust a significant part of their free agent acquisition resources on a pitcher with far better skills than the deposed Rodney. Because, better skills and NOW.

These NOW investments also come with an inherent expectation of longevity – we expect the pitcher will hold the role for the rest of the year. But when it comes to closers, they hold that role until they don't, and sometimes the in-season lifespan for that role is weeks, or days.

Smith's ninth inning lifespan was about two and a half months. He started losing games and blowing saves in late July, and was supplanted by Tom Wilhelmson by mid-August. Wilhelmson's skill set paled in comparison to Smith's (and once Smith lost the role, he did not give up a run for the rest of the season) but that's not what reality is about. Wilhelmson was now the NOW guy drawing whatever meager free agent resources were still left.

After the season was over, the Mariners responded to all this by tossing last year's NOW guys to the curb and starting over with a bunch of new NOW guys.

And they all lived happily ever after.

Except for Shandler."

Some stories don't have happy endings.

But watch... NOW is going to come into play in many of our future conversations.

> *Nice story. I assume you didn't win Tout Wars.*

Um, no. Here are other ways that our decision-making processes are influenced by NOW:

As mentioned earlier, there are some players who lock down roles at the very end of spring training. We treat those NOW guys as fixed realities, bidding them up to full value on Draft Day as if "winning a job" is the only prerequisite to full-season success. (Yay, Dalton Pompey!) This also goes back to the small sample size discussion.

Your #4 starting pitcher gets off to a ridiculously good start. Despite the fact that his skills have not changed substantially and his recent success is against weak competition, you refuse to entertain trade offers, because he is doing well NOW. What if he keeps it up? Are you contracting an acute case of Fear of Missing Out?

Many of these psychological potholes are interrelated. They are all obstacles to success. But enough pain, for now. It's time to begin the construction process.

Chapter 3

The Broad Assessment Balance Sheet

For decades, we have been told that the goal in fantasy baseball is to assemble a group of players whose aggregate statistics exceed those of all the other teams in the league. In fact, that is the actual verbiage in the *Official Rotisserie Baseball League Constitution*.

But we don't know what statistics our players are going to put up until after they've done it. Right? *Right?!*

> *Yeah, yeah, yeah, I remember. Still not sure I buy it completely, but I'm listening.*

Can we at least agree that we don't know the *exact* numbers players are going to put up and the ranges around those projections can be very, very wide?

> *Sure.*

Are you comfortable with the idea that a better approach might be to only plan around the variables that we *do* know?

> *I suppose.*

Good. We do know each player's historical skills profile. We have a general sense of each player's role. And we know the potential risk factors that will ultimately color the numbers.

Our fantasy team is a collection of these skills, roles and risks – each player's assets and liabilities. But for as long as we've been playing this game, we've been going into our drafts just trying to accumulate the most projected stats.

Players are more than just a bunch of projected stats.

Take Johnny Cueto. When you draft him, you are not just getting a frontline starter with a three-ish ERA. You're also getting volatile win totals, the risk of a new ballclub culture in San Francisco and the uncertainty about last season's Kansas City Stumble. When you draft Giancarlo Stanton, you're not just getting the potential for 35-plus HR. You're also getting a wide error bar around those home runs because there is a long history of injury risk.

> *But aren't all those variables built into the projections?*

Most of us touts attempt to do that, but how do you quantify risk? The adjustments we apply to the projections are often just arbitrary – we'll lop off a bunch of AB or IP to account for how long we *think* a hurt player might be out, or we'll make subjective decisions about the qualitatives. How do you account for the Cueto and Stanton risks? There's little science behind it yet we'll be drafting our teams off whatever numbers are on our cheat sheets.

Let's look at Stanton a little closer.

It is acknowledged that he is one of the best pure power hitters in baseball. However, in six major league seasons, he's managed to stay healthy for an entire year just twice – in 2011 and 2014. Last year, he hit the DL with a hand injury in June and never came back.

Stanton amassed 539 AB in his healthy 2014 season, a career high. The *Forecaster* attempts to account for the injury risk by hedging with a 490-AB projection for 2016. There are other sources that take a leap of faith and project a full healthy year, often forecasting even higher AB numbers than he's ever posted. Wishful thinking, perhaps?

But Stanton is not without risk. Despite positive health reports in December, his historical health track record does not instill confidence that he can get through a full season injury-free. You cannot dismiss the possibility that he might miss some time even if he is perfectly healthy on Opening Day. But you also can't arbitrarily decide how much of a playing time discount to project. Even if you buy into a 550-AB projection – or a 490 AB hedge – his stat line doesn't say anything about the risk.

By combining disparate variables into a single projected stat line, you lose the ability to distinguish the skill from the risk.

We need a way to keep everything separate. We need to be able to present Stanton's true underlying skills without making assumptions about his risk factors because, well, there is a chance that he does stay healthy all year and we want to see what that might look like. But we also need to present those risk factors so you can draw your own conclusions about how important they are to you, if at all.

As we'll soon see, Stanton's underlying skills put him in the same class of players as Bryce Harper and Nolan Arenado, as they should. But risk is what sets him apart. You simply can't build that into a statistical projection and claim it's more accurate.

Consider… a balance sheet. That's something we've never done – we've never viewed our players and rosters as balance sheets. We may have kept running totals of projections – our assets, sort of – but we rarely kept a record of liabilities. It's the balance of assets and liabilities – on both a player and team level – that provides a truer view into our team's potential for success or failure.

Maximizing assets, minimizing liabilities. That's how we are going to build our rosters. The process is one of planning out your optimal cross-section of skills while deciding up front how much risk you are willing to incur. The players then become just puzzle pieces.

The Broad Assessment Balance Sheet (BABS) is the formal moniker that I've dubbed this process. It's **broad** because we've already determined that "precise" doesn't work. It's an **assessment** – slightly less rigorous than a full-blown analysis because complexity doesn't buy us enough to make a difference. It's a **balance sheet**, because that is what the output of our effort is going to look like. And I want you to become fast friends, so let's just call her **BABS.**

(If nothing else, BABS finally gives us a strong female presence in this hobby, at least one who knows her way around a lightsaber.)

So we start with a balance sheet. What do we put into that balance sheet?

Six years ago, I developed a process called the Mayberry Method. It reduced each player to a 7-character code: three characters for skill (on a scale of 0-5), one character for playing time (0-5) and three characters for risk (A-F grades for health, experience and consistency). As much as that was a huge step in the right direction, now I believe that it doesn't go far enough. It's still too granular.

Here was my introduction to the Mayberry concept in 2010:

"Tonight, the friendly weather forecaster on my local television station has told me that it is going to be partly cloudy tomorrow with a high of 78 degrees. I suspect the meteorologist's advanced modeling system spit out that fancy number – 78. I often think, why not 77? Or 79? The truth is, if I were to walk outside right now, I'd feel no difference if it was 77, or 78, or 79.

In fact, it probably requires a good five degrees for me to feel any noticeable difference, and even then, it would be slight. 79 versus 74? 46 versus 41? 97 versus 92? More important, a five degree difference wouldn't likely make me change my behavior. If I'm not wearing a light jacket at 79, I'm not likely going to do so at 74.

The 10-day forecast is an even more interesting exercise. Besides the fact that I don't believe they can accurately tell me that it is going to rain a week from Sunday, the list of daily high temperatures seems to be an exercise in excessive precision: 80, 82, 81, 82, 80, 77, 77, 77, 74, 76.

What does this tell me? The first half of the week is going to be warm. The second half of the week is going to be marginally cooler.

In fact, they could just say that the temp will be in the low 80s and I would be perfectly okay with that. High 70s, low 80s, high 80s, low 90s... that's all I need. They

wouldn't even have to bother with mid-70s or mid-80s because that won't change what I am going to wear anyway.

What do we gain from the extra precision? We delude ourselves into believing we are gaining accuracy when in fact we are gaining an increased probability of being wrong. We're just not good enough to predict the temperature to the exact degree on a daily basis. And most important... there's no great need to be so perfect."

Now let's take this a step further.

What if we were to say the only thing that is important is the climate's affect on what we wear? It doesn't matter if the temperature is 82 or 95 because in either case, we're heading outside in shorts and sandals. It needs to get cooler than 65 before we consider donning a light jacket, but 64 versus 54 is nearly irrelevant. And we won't consider pulling out the parka until the temps dip into the low 40s.

Now, the range of temperatures that have any actionable consequences becomes quite wide. It's shorts weather, light jacket weather or parka weather. Any number attached to the thermometer just doesn't matter.

(Interestingly enough, when I lived in New Hampshire, I felt quite comfortable in shorts when temps were in the 50s. Now in Florida, a jacket comes out when temps are in the low 60s. I suppose that is the climate equivalent of park effects.)

With BABS, each skill – tied to a standard fantasy stat – is going to have an extreme impact on your roster, a significant impact, a moderate impact, or none at all. Power, speed, strikeouts, et al – these are all building blocks. The distinctions between impact levels are based in real skills analysis but in very broad strokes.

So what we will be putting into our balance sheet are descriptors of each player's skills – and later on, risks – in these broad terms.

> *Wait, no. Sorry, that doesn't work for me. Let's say I have a choice between Charlie Blackmon and Starling Marte – two speedy guys. But Blackmon stole 13 more bases last year. Are you telling me I can't rank Blackmon ahead of Marte for speed potential?*

It's convenient that you picked these two players. Blackmon and Marte both have significant speed skills as compared to the rest of the player pool. Both have batting average skills that are comparable. And both are clean on the Liabilities side. In the eyes of BABS (they are a beautiful shade of blue), both players are essentially interchangeable commodities. Draft one, draft the other. The odds that one will outperform the other are not significant enough to project with any confidence.

> *C'mon, really?*

Really. You cannot tell me with 100 percent certainty that Blackmon is going to steal more bases than Marte in 2016. You can think that Blackmon has better speed skill, but there are too many variables that need to align for you to guarantee a precise variance in stolen base output between those two players. If Blackmon regresses even a little and Marte improves – not unreasonable possibilities – then the difference between the two is inconsequential and certainly not projectable for your roster-building purposes on Draft Day.

Bottom line – your opinion that Blackmon is going to steal more bases than Marte is heavily steeped in recency bias.

You can put money down that Blackmon will steal more bases than David Ortiz (okay, pretty obvious), and it's also a reasonably good bet that Blackmon will steal more bases than Brad Miller… but even that is not a 100 percent slam dunk, no matter what their respective skills sets look like NOW. (See what I did there?)

> *Ha, ha, funny. So how do I decide what to pay for them? If I'm in a draft league and they both fall to me, I still need to decide who to pick. Do I flip a coin?*

You could. If you need a tie-breaker, you can look for some minor variable outside the balance sheet – Blackmon's ballpark, Marte's team, whatever – if you need the comfort of giving one player an edge. But in the end, it won't likely be enough to make a difference to your team's success or failure. The error bars are too wide.

Here is another way to look at it. Let's say you can't get it out of your head that Blackmon is a better player. Let's say that someone ahead of you grabs him in a snake draft or outbids you in an auction. If Marte is still available, feel comfortable knowing that you'll have another shot at landing a Blackmon-esque commodity. And if the cost is lower, you've just gained some profit.

So, we'll be describing each player's skills profile in broad terms on the Assets side of BABS. The risk variables will be handled likewise on the Liabilities side of the ledger. The primary risk categories are health, experience and ratio downside (batting average and ERA/WHIP), plus a few miscellaneous factors.

To show how that works, let's add two more players to the Blackmon/Marte mix. A.J. Pollock and Mookie Betts both have the same skills profiles as Blackmon and Marte. Pollock is risk-clean like our original duo. Betts, on the other hand, has a mark on the Liabilities side – he is still short on Major League experience and thus is at risk for more variability in his output. That would rank him slightly lower.

In the next chapter, we'll start providing some structure to BABS. Although we don't care about figures, you'll see that she's still pretty well built.

Sorry, low-hanging fruit.

Chapter 4
The BABS Player Profiling System

The foundation of BABS is a basic accounting concept – the balance sheet. On the left side are your Assets; on the right are your Liabilities.

For batters, your Assets are Power, Speed and Batting Average. For pitchers, your assets are Pitching Effectiveness (a proxy for ERA and WHIP), Strikeouts and Saves. Both sides have Playing Time as an Asset as well. While these Assets are not direct correlations to all possible fantasy/roto categories, they do represent reasonable proxies for almost all of them.

The major items on the Liabilities side are Health and Experience, or actually "lack of" each. For batters, Batting Average can also be a Liability; for pitchers, Pitching Effectiveness is the comparable negative skills offset. There is also a Miscellaneous category for minor variables like moving to a new team, a significant ballpark change, or advancing age. For these variables, you can neither count on them having an effect nor quantify them, though their impact could be considerable.

Assets

Skill and opportunity have always been the two key elements to every projection, and they form the foundation of our Assets. We look for positive contributions in these categories.

Playing time: It all starts here, an element of the forecasting process with a great amount of variability. As such, players will be rated in BABS based on a broad expectation for their potential for playing time:

		BATTERS	**PITCHERS**
F	Full-time	Approx. 500+ PA	Approx. 180+ IP
M	Mid-time	Approx. 300+ PA	Approx. 100+ IP
P	Part-time	Fewer than 300 PA	Fewer than 100 IP

Most reputable touts go through a meticulous process of fitting plate appearances and innings into the available playing time on each team. That's an admirable effort and vital for accurate fantasy valuations.

But let's be honest here; the only players for whom these projections are even close to being on target are full-timers who stay healthy all season. Of the full-timers in last year's Top 300, there were only 148 who stayed healthy all year, and that included 21 relief pitchers broadly defined as "full-timers." Beyond the Top 300, the

number of full-timers drops sharply. Even if we could deem that there were 200-250 healthy full-timers, that's still less than 20 percent of the entire player pool.

So I opt to project playing time in broad chunks within which we can account for a good measure of volatility. There are full-timers, mid-timers (mostly platoon types and #3/4/5 starters) and part-timers. Beyond that, any quest for precision is mostly a waste of time.

Skill: On the skill side, players are not rated on their potential statistical output. I don't care whether Gerrit Cole will post an ERA of 2.50, 3.00 or 3.50. There are too many variables to know where that number will land. Instead, players are rated against each other, because that's how it all comes out anyway. Cole could repeat his 2.60 mark, but that 2.60 is far less valuable in a season where everyone and his wife's cousin's housekeeper is posting sub-3.00 ERAs. So players are rated against the population mean for each skill:

Extreme Impact	Top 10% of players with that skill
Significant Impact	Top 25% of players with that skill
Moderate Impact	Top 50% of players with that skill
No projectable impact	Bottom 50% of players

Here are the codes we will use for each player:

Impact Level	Power	Speed	BatAvg	PitchEff	Strikeouts
Extreme	P+	S+	**	E+	K+
Significant	PW	SP	AV	ER	KK
Moderate	p	s	a	e	k

** There is no extreme level for batting average because that stat has way too much variability. Truthfully, the only player who I'd be comfortable assigning a rating of A+ would be Miguel Cabrera.

Those in the bottom 50% for each skill are assigned no rating. Their contribution is typically not enough to substantively move a team in that category's standings, or at least not at a level that you can project. In mixed leagues, these players are usually easily replaceable. They might be more important in AL/NL-only leagues, but that does not make them any more projectable. You're still going to want to target players with at least Moderate skill to move the needle.

The skills ratings for each player represent his true, underlying talent regardless of opportunity for playing time, level of experience or injury history. The latter two variables are accounted for on the Liabilities side of the balance sheet.

For the assessment of each of the skills categories, I return to my roots with the *Baseball Forecaster* and BaseballHQ.com metrics. For a fuller explanation of these gauges and complete data for every player, those are the places to go.

Power: I rely mostly on *Expected Linear Weighted Power Index* here. This combines weighted levels of hard-hit line drives and hard hit fly balls as a percentage of all balls put into play.

Speed: Here I rely on *Statistically Scouted Speed*, which looks at run-scoring, triples, infield hits and body mass index. I also look at each runner's track record of how often he's been given a green light along with his stolen base success rate.

Batting Average: I use *Expected Batting Average* here, which looks at a batter's contact rate and odds that a batted ball will fall for a hit, which is a product of the speed of the ball, distance it is hit and speed of the batter.

Pitching Effectiveness: Here I use *Expected Earned Run Average*, which approximates ERA with situation-independent, skills-based metrics, like strikeouts, walks and ground balls. This is similar to xFIP (Fielding Independent Pitching).

Strikeouts: I combine several metrics for this assessment – strikeout rate, swinging strike rate and first pitch strike rate (which correlates more with walks but provides some nice color).

The Assets section of the pitcher balance sheet also has a column for **Saves**. This is an opportunity-driven statistic but can be pared down to two levels, similar to what we do in Mayberry:

Significant	SV	Likely to get 30+ saves
Moderate	sv-	Likely to get 10-29 saves

These seem like wide ranges – okay, they are – but we need to cast a wide net in this category. The Significant saves sources are pretty much guaranteed a frontline shot at 9th inning work. The arms classified as Moderate all have some risk associated with them, from uncertain bullpen depth charts to spotty track records in a closing role. By filtering out anyone projected for fewer than 10 saves, we're essentially saying that those guys are not projectable enough. My advice is always to speculate on relief pitcher skills and be grateful if you back into saves.

Miscellaneous: This is for any positive variables that might have a legitimate impact and are not captured in the other categories. Guess what the key word is in that last sentence?

Legitimate? Positive? The?

Close. It's "**might."** These are variables that need to be on our radar. Most analysts will build them into their statistical projection. I prefer to just identify them and let you know they **might** be a factor. Or not. It's your call how important they are.

There is not much I can think of that fits here:

Pk Positive park effect
As noted in Chapter 2, park dimensions **might** have an impact on output, but changes are neither guaranteed nor can be absolutely attributable to a particular change in venue. The only players who will be noted at all are those moving to one of the more extreme hitter parks from one of the more extreme pitcher parks. The hitter parks, based on 3-year data, are Colorado, Baltimore, Houston, Yankee Stadium, Toronto, Cincy and Milwaukee. The pitcher parks are Seattle, Dodger Stadium, CitiField and San Francisco. Any other movement is ignored. Always remember The Nelson Cruz Experience – his counterintuitive improvement moving from Baltimore to Seattle last year – as evidence that this is not foolproof.

Rg Positive regression
There are a few players who had really bad 2015 performances, sometimes driven by no more than random statistical volatility. Odds are "last year's bums" **might** see some rebound just by virtue of the planets realigning. In any case, it's important to identify them because this is one of our few opportunities to engage in a full frontal assault against recency bias.

Liabilities

It's great to roster a bunch of players who you hope will put up big stats. But what separates the winners from the losers is the ability to build risk into the process. Every player provides certain assets but many also have a unique set of liabilities that influence their potential to provide a fair return on your investment.

Here are the ratings we use on the Dark Side of BABS (no storm troopers allowed).

Negative Skill: The core ratio categories in Rotisserie are batting average and ERA/WHIP, and for these, a bad player can do great damage. So, rather than provide a negative rating on the asset side, we have a column on the Dark Side for players with the red lightsabers.

-AV	Bottom 25% of batting average skill
-ER	Bottom 25% of pitching effectiveness skill

Injuries: Every year, this is the one variable that wreaks havoc with our chance at success. Disabled list stays have ranged between 25,000 and 30,000 days lost in each of the past five years, so this is no small variable.

I've decided to take a different approach to injuries with BABS. We already know up front that about 40 percent of the top-ranked players are going to spend some time on the DL. We cannot project which players are going to pull up lame at any time, so we have to attach some injury risk to pretty much everyone.

As such, I've set a starting point for the health of each player. *Everyone* has a minimum baseline of a 25% chance to spend some time on the DL. To that, I'll add greater odds to those players with an injury history (based on days spent on the DL over the past two years) or current health concerns.

The codes will look like this:

INJ
Players who spent more than 50 days on the DL in 2015, spent more than 30 days on the DL in consecutive seasons, or are currently hurt with uncertain or negative prognosis for 2016. I give them over 50% odds of missing significant time in 2016.

inj-
Players who spent more than 20 days on the DL in 2015 or are currently hurt with a positive prognosis for 2016. I give them 26-50% odds of missing significant time.

I classify "significant time" as enough missed games that it hurts. If Mike Pelfrey goes down for two weeks with a hangnail and you replace him with Brett Oberholtzer, that's *not* significant. And if this is a real move you need to make, you have a lot more problems than worrying about injuries.

Experience: Okay, I'll say it – Mike Trout is a god. He is among a small class of players who hit the ground running upon promotion and never let up. (Though, if truth be told, his roto earnings for his career have been $54, $47, $38, $35. Just saying.) But most players don't follow this path.

Patrick Davitt's research has shown that hitters need at least 800 plate appearances to establish a baseline, or enough experience from which we can legitimately project further growth. Those 800 PAs could mean a big rookie year and a sophomore slump, or a pedestrian first season followed by a growth year, or two consistent years. But the percentage play is to expect some volatility until that baseline is set.

So as much as we're ready to anoint Carlos Correa as the next first-ballot Hall of Famer, there is risk, and we need to account for that. I've decided to err on the side of caution and increase the benchmark slightly.

On the balance sheet, we'll identify the young players as such:

		Bat	**SP**	**RP**
		PA	**IP**	**IP**
EX	< one full season of MLB experience	500	150	75
e	< two full seasons of MLB experience	1,000	300	150

About 1,000 plate appearances in the Majors – two full seasons – is a good point to determine legitimacy on the batting side. In assigning ratings, I exercised some latitude here, often giving a pass to some outwardly established players who have

PAs in the 900s. It's a little more fuzzy with pitchers, but we'll go with 150/300 innings for starters. For relievers, we'll use 75 and 150 innings.

Essentially, anyone who gets an "EX" or an "e" is not yet a fully formed entity.

Finally, given my opinion about age, I don't give a flying whoop whether a player reaches these thresholds at age 24, or 27, or 31. Experience is experience at the Major League level, regardless of age.

Miscellaneous: These are the negative variables that could have an impact, might not, probably won't but can, and are definitely not quantifiable unless they are. That's about as firm a stance as I'm willing to take. But all of these need to be on our radar because, if David Ortiz bats .230 in 2016, we need to be able to come back to BABS and say, "Aha! He's old!"

> *You should really change the heading for this section from Miscellaneous to Rationalizations.*

Okay, I'll give you that.

Any of these could be bad, good or have no effect:

Pk Negative park effect
As on the Asset side, we can neither guarantee or absolutely attribute performance changes to park dimensions. If Jose Bautista was traded to San Francisco, he would qualify for this code, but you'd think someone with his skill would be able to hit reasonably well anywhere. So take it for what it's worth.

Nw New team
This goes beyond park effects. Many players have an adjustment period when going to a new team, and especially a new league. Some analysts tend to give this more weight than others, but it's just another variable that **might** have an impact. Only those players with some baseline of MLB performance are noted.

Ag Advancing age
Once a player hits 36, anything can happen. Some batters manage to hang on for longer; some pitchers face a steep cliff at 38. All are essentially geezers at this point. No matter how many artificial supplements some of them **might** be taking to ward off the fear of premature retirement, I won't be anywhere near the bidding on players like Marlon Byrd or Bartolo Colon.

Rg Negative regression
As much as we want to believe that players like Jake Arrieta and Zack Greinke can sustain last year's performances, the odds are stacked against them. Players noted here are those who posted performances so far above their historical levels in 2015 that it's tough to justify their sustainability.

I also use this code for players whose track record has been historically volatile, at least from the perspective of their surface stats. So Alcides Escobar will get nicked here, but so will Chris Davis. Recency bias is already pushing Davis up the draft boards this winter, but do we really know whether we are going to see the 45-.260 version or the 25-.200 version?

Beyond that, feel free to add any other miscellaneous Liabilities as you see fit. If you're worried that one of the tanking NL teams will trade a key player, then jot a note on the dark side of the ledger. If you're hoping that one of the stars on your opponent's keeper list is suspended for PEDs, feel free to ding him here too. I suppose that also means you can change *any* of the ratings, on either side of BABS. This is your tool and I have no way of knowing what the heck you're doing anyway.

I'll start getting into the balancing of assets and liabilities in the next chapter, but there is basic point to remember: The more a player is lacking on the health and experience scales, and the more of these miscellaneous liabilities he has, the greater the risk of him falling short of realizing his assets. I think that goes without saying, but I said it anyway because… this is my book. But it's your tool.

That's it.

Hmm, I dunno. It seems kinda simplistic and based more on opinion than fact.

Simplistic? Well, it's simple, for sure. That's the goal, to keep it simple but structured. However, the foundation is still based in real data. The Asset and Liability categories are all driven by data; they are just sorted into broad tiers. The secondary categories are more contextual but no less driven by fact.

So how does it work, in practice?

Players with the same asset ratings are pretty much interchangeable. However, not all players will be exactly the same; some will have more risk factors. In your roster-planning process, you'll be making decisions as to how much risk you'd be willing to tolerate.

An example, please?

Okay. In nearly all leagues, Cy Young winner Dallas Keuchel will likely get drafted ahead of Sonny Gray. In the National Fantasy Baseball Championship (NFBC) ADPs, Keuchel is going #45 while Gray was going #65. This is likely driven by their relative 2015 performances (beware recency bias) and respective team environments (which I discounted back in Chapter 2).

But here's the thing… on a broad skills basis, both have essentially the same assets. Both have projected ERAs right around 3.00. Over the past three years, both have

struck out about 7-8 batters and walked about 2-3 batters per 9 IP. If anything, Gray is more consistent than Keuchel.

So, in evaluating their respective assets, BABS gives them identical ratings. Both have significant effectiveness "ER" and moderate strikeout ability "k". We'll begin notating these as (ER,k).

But players cannot be evaluated based on their assets alone. Keuchel also owns a potential Liability – the possibility of significant regression off of 2015's extreme numbers. If you have to choose between the two, you might opt for Gray since his Liability record is clean and his potential acquisition cost will likely be lower. As far as notation, if there are Liabilities, they will be shown as: (ER,k | Rg).

You have full control over those decisions. BABS lays out all the facts in front of you.

> *Hmm. Keuchel/Grey. Blackmon/Marte. What other players are more "interchangeable" than we'd normally perceive?*

Tons of them. Within the wide ranges of skills metrics and wide error bars in projections, players are not all that different. So, while they might not outwardly seem similar, Chris Davis, Lucas Duda and Matt Kemp all have the same asset ratings of (P+, a). Gregory Polanco, Angel Pagan and Francisco Lindor are all (s,a), however, each has his own injury and experience liabilities.

> *Yeah, but I still don't see those groups as equivalent. Lindor is coming off a .313 season. Polanco has never batted over .260. Duda has never hit more than 30 HRs while Davis has hit more than 45 twice. Not the same.*

But from a skills standpoint, the variances are not statistically significant. Duda hit more HRs than Davis in 2014. Lindor has only 390 ABs at the Major League level so you can't consider his .313 average as a real baseline (because batting average does not stabilize until 910 ABs, remember?).

> *Okay, then once again, how am I going to be able to rank the players, especially without numbers?*

BABS assigns each player to tiers based on:

a. Expected playing time
b. Primary assets (power, batting average, pitching effectiveness) with minimal risk
c. Secondary assets (speed, strikeouts) with increasing risk
d. Decreasing assets with increasing risk

I'll handle the details for you once we get to the rankings sections.

But first, let's get into the draft planning process.

Chapter 5
BABS Draft Planning

There is a podcast on Freakonomics Radio called "The Cheeseburger Diet." This is the story of a Louisville, Kentucky housewife who embarked on a year-long project to rate over 100 local burger joints in her city. She decided to devote two days per week to a dinner of cheeseburgers and fries, and then crown a champion at the end of 52 weeks.

However, she recognized that this journey might have an adverse effect on her weight and cholesterol levels, so she paid special attention to her diet and activities during all those non-burger days. At the end of the year, she had gained no weight and saw only a minor change in her cholesterol levels, but found that the extra effort – which she would not have undertaken otherwise – had pushed her towards a healthier lifestyle overall. Win-win.

When we do things that are bad for us, we'll subconsciously try to engage in some compensating behavior to dull the effects of the negative. We all probably do that to some small extent in assembling our fantasy teams. If we draft an injury-prone pitcher, we might make a special effort to stock up on healthier arms, or at least avoid others with health issues. But it's not typically something that we consider a deliberate part of the drafting process.

It needs to be.

Think about the recordkeeping we do during a draft. Most of us probably just add our drafted players to an empty roster sheet. If we are using a laptop, we probably have a spreadsheet or software program that displays our team's projected bottom line stats, maybe compared to targets that we've set. We might even see projected in-process standings for all the teams in our league (a wonderfully pointless exercise).

This is all driven by our inaccurate projections. Given that these projections attempt to incorporate both skill and risk factors into the stats themselves, the end result is one big mess. What's more, it's a one-dimensional view of our players and our team, and that's just not good enough.

BABS provides a two dimensional view of every player, and your team. It offers a visual representation of your roster that shows us how much risk we are incurring alongside our Assets.

Take a look:

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	ca														
	ca														
	1b														
	3b														
	ci														
	2b														
	ss														
	mi														
Stanton	of	MIA	F	P+		AV				INJ					
	of														
	of														
	of														
	of														
	ut														
PITCHER	Pos	Tm	PT	Er	K	Sv	Pk	Rg	Er	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	sp														
	sp														
	sp														
	sp														
	sp														
	p														
	p														
	rp														
	rp														

Your legend:

ASSETS

BATTERS

PT	Playing time
Pw	Power rating
Sp	Speed rating
Av	Batting average rating

PITCHERS

PT	Playing time
Er	Pitching effectiveness rating
K	Strikeouts rating
Sv	Saves rating

Pk	Positive ballpark impact
Rg	Positive regression

LIABILITIES

Av/Er	Batting average/Pitching effectiveness downside risk
Inj	Injury risk
Ex	Experience risk
Pk	Negative ballpark impact
Ag	Age
Rg	Negative regression

This is a balance sheet, but it's also a "pencil game." The object is to fill in as many boxes as possible on the Assets side while filling in as few boxes as possible on the Liabilities Side.

This is starting to sound juvenile.

Simple, but structured. Remember? Obviously, you don't have to use paper and pencil; you can do this all in a spreadsheet. I'll be providing the templates and ranking lists later on.

And it's not just filling boxes. There are also some goals.

Targets?

Exactly. Based on the distribution of playing time and skill within your league's draftable player population, we can determine how many units – or boxes – are needed to assemble a competitive team.

You're losing me again.

Okay, let's take a step back and start from the beginning.

Drafting playing time

The process of planning out your roster starts with **playing time**. The goal in any fantasy draft is to roster players who will give you the most plate appearances and innings in order to maximize the potential for counting stats.

Ideally, you'd love to have a full-time regular, productive player occupy every roster spot for the whole season. Of course, while that's an admirable goal, it's never attainable. Injuries are the biggest obstacle to achieving full productivity out of your draft roster. In 12-team AL/NL-only leagues, it's darn near impossible to fill all 23 spots with full-time players; there are just not enough of them. But that should not stop us from setting some reasonable goals.

*Okay, I get that. But how does this relate to **my** leagues?*

Here are the actual numbers, for batters. **On average:**

In a 12-team mixed league, you should be able to fill every batter spot with a full-timer. In fact, a good 15 percent of your free agent pool will still have full-timers.

In a 15-team mixed league, you should be able to fill 92 percent of your active roster spots with full-timers. That's 13 of your 14 batter spots.

In a 12-team AL/NL-only league, you should be able to fill 57 percent of your active roster spots with full-timers. That's 8 of your 14 batter spots. If you think about it, you're usually able to draft full-timers at 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, 3-4 of your outfielders and maybe a catcher. Everyone else is usually a platoon/part-timer or playing time speculation.

For pitchers, **on average**:

In a 12-team mixed league, there are more than enough starting pitchers (minimum 120 IP) to fill your complete 9-man staff, should you choose. There are enough front-line 180-inning starting pitchers for every team to draft five of them.

You could fill your complete staff with starters in a 15-team mixed league as well. There are enough 180-inning starting pitchers for every team to draft four of them.

In a 12-team AL/NL-only league, there are only enough starting pitchers to fill six spots on each team. If you're targeting 180-inning starters, there are only enough for 2-3 spots per team.

As of this writing, there are around 50 relievers projected to have a piece of the saves puzzle in 2016. In 12-team and 15-team mixed leagues, every team should be able to roster three potential closers. In a 12-team AL/NL-only league, all teams should be able to roster two of them. Needless to say, if you focus only on the surer bets, the availability gets much scarcer.

These are averages, but from a goal-setting perspective, they are also minimums. Ideally, you'd want to exceed as many of these as possible to give yourself an edge, but playing time is a scarce commodity and everyone will be scratching and clawing for as many regulars as possible. So this is one area where just achieving the minimums might need to be enough. Once you have a solid foundation on the playing time side, you can focus your efforts of exceeding the averages on the skills side. You'll find more opportunities there anyway.

Here is a relevant tangent in the form of another short story to show that there are exceptions:

"Once upon a time (in the mid-2000s), there was a fantasy writer named Jason Grey. He was one of the best fantasy players in the land, winning multiple titles and always contending in the Tout Wars-AL national experts league. Jason's edge was simple, but brilliant – he'd constantly draft more playing time than anyone else. The caliber of player drafted almost didn't matter because even mediocre regulars stood to contribute in the Runs and RBI categories. While the minimum we've set in an AL/NL-only league is eight regulars, Jason would routinely grab 10-12 full-time batters and overwhelm the opposition in counting stats.

Of course, everyone else eventually caught on and Omar Infante started getting bid up to double-digits. But for a few short years, Jason was a superstar. Then he got hired by a Major League ballclub so it didn't matter any more and he lived happily ever after. The end."

The moral of the story is, "Even a blind squirrel will find an occasional nut."

No, no, we all like Jason.

The real moral: "If you can grab an edge in playing time, don't pass it up." This is especially true on offense. It's different for pitching. Stockpiling innings is not always a smart tactic. If you dig a hole in ERA or WHIP, those are tougher to dig out of with too many innings on the books.

These are your minimum goals, summarized. I'd shoot for the 180+ IP goals for starting pitchers but be flexible with the rest of your staff, especially if it's the choice between innings and skill.

Minimums	**12-tm mixed**	**15-tm mixed**	**12-team AL/NL**
Full-time batters	14	13	8
All starting pitchers	6	7	6
180+ IP SPs	5	4	2
Closers	3	2	1

Beginning in the next chapter, I will be ranking the players for you such that all the full-timers are at the top, so there will be less for you to keep track of. The bigger incremental advantage you will have is being able to accumulate more skill and less risk than anyone else. That process starts here.

Drafting skill and risk

We already know that any player who is in the upper half of a particular **skill** is going to have a BABS rating. A batter with above average power will get a p, PW or P+, depending upon how much above average he is. Those with "p" are just above the mean; those with "PW" and "P+" are higher on the scale. Got that so far?

> *I think so.*

However, skill is not evenly distributed across the player population, so you have to set different targets for each skill. For instance, there are fewer players who have above average speed, so you have to pay more attention to how you draft stolen bases.

> *Wait. I thought average meant that there would be just as many players above as below.*

Not necessarily. The skills of guys like Dee Gordon and Billy Hamilton are so far above the mean that they drive up the average. That reduces the number of players who actually have "above average" skill.

The size of your league will determine how deeply into the player pool you will have to draft. But in general terms, the following chart details how each of the skills is distributed.

POWER		**SPEED**		**BAT AVG**	
P+	11%	S+	3%	AV	20%
PW	15%	SB	9%	a	35%
p	28%	s	14%		

ERA		**STRIKEOUTS**	
E+	2%	K+	13%
ER	29%	KK	17%
e	32%	k	33%

Some of these skills are very scarce. You should have little problem rostering pitchers with an above average ERA but if your plan is to target one of baseball's elite arms ("E+"), you are probably going to have to jump in early or pay a lot. Only two percent of pitchers own that extreme skill.

But it's good to plan for acquiring at least some extreme skilled players, in any category. The more of them you can grab, the more flexibility you'll have later on if you end up with some holes in your roster. I'll demonstrate that in a minute.

At minimum, you want to roster at least average skill in each category:

BABS Asset Minimum Targets
(Assuming a standard roster with 14 batters and 9 pitchers.)

	NUMBER OF PLAYERS		
Asset Minimums	**12-tm mixed**	**15-tm mixed**	**12-team AL/NL**
Power	14	14	9
Speed	8	7	4
Batting Average	14	14	9
Pitching Eff.	9	9	9
Strikeouts	9	9	9

It is interesting that there is more than enough good pitching for all teams in all leagues to field a solid-skilled staff. But the problem is that many of those players are relievers. So if you were willing to forego innings for skill, you should have no problem maximizing your ERA category.

Of course, that's not how most of us play the game. If we were to restate these minimums for **starting pitchers only**, the chart would look like this:

Asset Minimums	12-tm mixed	15-tm mixed	12-team AL/NL
Pitching Eff.	7	6	4
Strikeouts	7	6	4

Now it becomes a bit more of a challenge. In AL/NL-only leagues, an average team would be expected to roster only four above-average skilled ERA or strikeout starting pitchers. Those numbers are not mutually exclusive so there will be some pitchers who are above average for ERA, some who are above average for strikeouts and some who are above average for both. In fact:

Asset Minimums	12-tm mixed	15-tm mixed	12-team AL/NL
BOTH Pitch Eff. and Ks	5	4	Just under 3

Those are your targets, however… **If you build your team exactly to these averages, you will have… an average team.**

So the goal is always to exceed these targets.

> *I understand that these are my targets. But what if it says I should be able to fill all my batter spots with power and I want to draft a perfectly good player like Ben Revere?*

This is where owning players with extreme skills comes in handy. Every time you roster a player with a P+, SB+, E+ or K+, you buy yourself a free open spot. So, if you roster a player like Edwin Encarnacion (P+, AV), that would effectively offset Revere's BABS void in power.

Now, there are no players rated for extreme skill in batting average. That seems like it would be a problem, but it's more of a cautionary challenge. Given the high variability in BA, you need to stockpile as much potential upside as you can. It's very easy to fall short here, so you want to do everything you can to keep those "AV" and "a" ratings on your radar.

And good lord, stay away from players with "-AV" on the Liabilities side.

> *Okay I get that. But shouldn't Revere's lack of power be considered a Liability?*

Revere's lack of power could be considered a liability, but a lack of counting stats doesn't inherently do damage to your team. There are lost opportunity costs from not being able to roster a better player, but it's different in the ratio categories. A bad batting average or ERA can do real damage. That's why those are considered Liabilities.

You decide how much of a balanced roster you draft. However, at the end of the final round (or when the last of the auction dollars is spent, or when the last beer is gone

– however it is you decide when the draft is over), you should have at least a minimum number of Asset boxes filled on your grid:

NUMBER OF ASSET UNITS		
12-tm mixed	**15-tm mixed**	**12-team AL/NL**
50	47	30

These are what average teams will have. Your goal is to have more.

BABS Liability Averages

(Assuming a standard roster with 14 batters and 9 pitchers and based on each league's draftable player pool. Players outside the pool typically have more elevated risk factors.)

	NUMBER OF PLAYERS		
Liability Averages	**12-tm mixed**	**15-tm mixed**	**12-team AL/NL**
BATTERS			
- Batting Average	0	0	0
Health Risk	3	4	2
Experience Risk	3	4	2
PITCHERS			
- Pitching Eff.	0	0	0
Health Risk	2	2	1
Experience Risk	2	2	1

These Liability Averages represent the number of risky players an average team would have if all rosterable players were divided up equally. In most cases, you are going to want to consider these as *maximums*, your risk budget.

(If you are maximizing your assets on the batting average and pitching effectiveness side, then the negative offsets won't be a concern. That's why there are zeroes across the board above. There are enough rosterable players that you don't need to draft someone who would be a drag on those ratio categories. But if you find yourself getting shut out on the better players, you want to at least avoid those who are Liabilities.)

You decide how much risk you want to take on, but at least you now know what an average team would bear. However, at the end of the final round (or when the last of the auction dollars is spent, or the beer… well, you know), if you've taken on an average amount of risk, you would have no more than these number of Liability boxes filled on your grid:

NUMBER OF LIABILITY UNITS		
12-tm mixed	**15-tm mixed**	**12-team AL/NL**
10	12	6

These are what average teams will have. Your goal is to have fewer.

Once more, your targets. These are the number of boxes you need to have filled in by the end of your draft to have constructed a team of *average* playing time, skill and risk.

	12-tm mixed	**15-tm mixed**	**12-team AL/NL**
Full-time batters	14	13	8
Starting pitchers	6	7	6
180+ IP	5	4	2
Closers	3	2	1
Minimum Assets	50	47	30
Maximum Liabilities	10	12	6

You'll note that we want to have far more Asset units than Liability units. It's the same concept as eating healthy for five days so that we can have our cheeseburgers over the weekend.

Now let's add these targets directly to the BABS worksheet:

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	ca														
	ca														
	1b														
	3b														
	ci														
	2b														
	ss														
	mi														
	of														
	of														
	of														
	of														
	of														
	ut														
12 MIXED			14	14	8	14			0	3	3				
15 MIXED			13	14	7	14			0	4	4				
12 AL/NL			8	9	4	9			0	2	2				
PITCHER	Pos	Tm	PT	Er	K	Sv	Pk	Rg	Er	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	sp														
	sp														
	sp														
	sp														
	sp														
	p														
	p														
	rp														
	rp														
12 MIXED			6/3	7	7	3			0	2	2				
15 MIXED			7/2	6	6	2			0	2	2				
12 AL/NL			6/1	4	4	1			0	1	1				

Your goal is to do better.

You are now almost ready to head out to your draft. There is one missing piece – the players. In the next looooooong chapter, I'll analyze the player pool, position by position. Then we'll come back and I'll run through an actual, live draft to show you how it all comes together.

Chapter 6
Analyzing the Player Pool

Most of us will take a look at the player pool and see a massive collection of hundreds – even thousands – of players. The prospect of having to analyze, project, value and rank these players is incredibly daunting.

It's never made a lot of sense to me. How can you precisely say that Player A is better than Player B who is better than Player C? Sure, Clayton Kershaw is better than Clayton Richard, but at the end of the season, does it really matter whether I owned Kinsler or Kipnis? Probably not. At least not from where we are sitting here before Opening Day.

It's like trying to compare two Oscar-nominated movies – one about a bear-mauled frontiersman out for revenge, versus one about Wall Street insiders trying to bet against the market.

Um, well… maybe not all that different.

But really, how do you decide whether Dee Gordon is more valuable than Giancarlo Stanton? And how do you accomplish that task when you don't really know what either player is going to do this year?

Not easy. But for starters, we can look at each sub-group of players – by position – and get a sense of where value lies, Asset by Asset, and Liability by Liability.

Who makes it onto these lists? All full-timers, all mid-timers and only those part-timers who have at least one item on the Assets side of the ledger. Part-timers need to have at least one measurable above average skill. So if you're jonesing for some Jurickson, you'll have to wait until we can see him accumulate something more than DL days.

One big caveat… If you are looking for rankings that match everyone else's or find yourself dismissing these rankings because they don't meet your own perceptions, well, then just go ahead and use those other rankings. I'm not here to match others; nor is there any value in using other rankings to validate mine. The whole point of this exercise is to look at the players differently. Given that pretty much all pre-season cheat sheets look downright silly when compared to the end-of-season results, isn't it about time to try something different? </rant done>

CATCHERS

Without a doubt, catchers are the most frustrating position players to project, and own. Last year in the FSTA Experts League, I thought I had scored a coup by drafting Jonathan Lucroy and Devin Mesoraco (both ranked among the top five catchers) in rounds 5 and 7. But I should have been smarter. History shows that catchers cannot be counted on to string together many productive seasons. Look at this year's ADP top-10 ranked backstops:

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Buster Posey	$30	$19	$27	$27
*Kyle Schwarber				$9
Salvador Perez	$12	$17	$14	$13
Jonathan Lucroy	$16	$21	$23	$8
Brian McCann	$8	$11	$11	$12
Russell Martin	$6	$9	$16	$14
Travis D'Arnaud		-$6	$7	$7
Stephen Vogt		-$2	$5	$12
Devin Mesoraco	-$1	$4	$18	-$3
Matt Wieters	$14	$11	$4	$4

* Listed in ADPs as OF.

These will be 2016's *best catchers*, according to the NFBC's ADP rankings. Buster Posey is clearly the cream of the crop and perhaps the only one with sights on another $20 season; only Lucroy has even sniffed $20. The rest are a hodgepodge of middling output, unproven goodness and inconsistency. And these are the *best*.

So how should you draft catchers? There are a variety of strategies that most folks use, but I decided to pose the question to some of the best fantasy leaguers in the industry.

As part of this book project, I enlisted the help of the participants in the Tout Wars experts leagues and surveyed them on a variety of issues. You'll see some Tout survey results pop up from time to time. Here is the first one.

What is your preferred strategy for drafting catchers in 2016?

38% Target mid-level backstops, reaching if necessary to avoid getting shut out.
31% Target one solid or mid-level bat, and one end-gamer.
21% Perfectly content with 1-2 end-gamers.
7% Target Posey. If not, just settle for best value.
3% Some other strategy

Interestingly, that second option (one solid/mid, one end-gamer) was not even a choice on the survey; those were all write-in votes. So, it's conceivable that strategy could have rated even higher.

I am part of the 38 percent. I don't like having to reach, but there is one fact that pushes me in that direction: Although we have to draft enough catchers to fill every roster, if we were to rank all players without regard to position, there will be a significant numbers of bad-hitting catchers who don't make the cut. That's what creates positional scarcity. Those below-the-line catchers *do* have draft value just because you have to draft them, but they are clearly not roster-worthy in the grand scale of the productive player pool. So I want to avoid those end-gamers.

But this merits a discussion about position scarcity:

Position scarcity only matters if we could really project the players at the bottom of the player pool. The numbers are so small and variable in those later rounds – the $1 end-game – that it hardly matters. The difference between the last catcher or say, the last outfielder – which is what the positional scarcity reach is all about – is not sufficiently projectable to justify the numbers you give up at the top. If you're so worried about it, draft your last catcher a round two earlier – or spend $3 instead of $1 – but sacrifice the huge productivity available in the early rounds.

To wit… last year in Tout-NL, Welington Castillo (19 HR, .237) went for $2. End-game $1 players included Peter Bourjos, Ichiro Suzuki and John Mayberry. In the mixed league, Nick Hundley (10 HR, .301) went for $1, as did Ike Davis and Matt Joyce.

Anyway, let's take a look at the BABS catcher pool and start figuring out how to use this chart. (Note: All position charts were prepared in late January. The overall chart in Chapter 8 was prepared in late February.))

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Posey,Buster	23	SF	F	p		AV									
Lucroy,Jonathan	2	MIL	F	p		AV				inj-					
Wieters,Matt	2	BAL	F	PW		a				INJ					
Realmuto,Jacob	2	MIA	F	p	s	a					e				
Gomes,Yan	2	CLE	F	p		a				inj-					
Hundley,Nick	2	COL	F	p		a				inj-					
Schwarber,Kyle	o72	CHC	F	P+							EX				
Castillo,Welington	2	ARI	F	PW											
McCann,Brian	2	NYY	F	PW											
Martin,Russell	2	TOR	F	p											
Norris,Derek	2	SD	F	p											
Mesoraco,Devin	2	CIN	F	p						INJ					
Perez,Salvador	2	KC	F			a									
McCann,James	2	DET	F			a					EX				

D Arnaud,Travis	2	NYM	M	p		a				INJ	e					
Molina,Yadier	2	STL	M			AV										
Pierzynski,A.J.	2	ATL	M			AV									Ag	
Chirinos,Robinson	2	TEX	M	PW						inj-	e					
Knapp,Andrew	2	PHI	P	PW	s	a					EX					
Montero,Miguel	2	CHC	M	p												
Vogt,Stephen	23	OAK	M	p						inj-						
Grandal,Yasmani	2	LA	M	p						inj-						
Castro,Jason	2	HOU	M	p					-AV							
Iannetta,Chris	2	SEA	M	p					-AV			Nw				
Avila,Alex	23	CHW	M	p				Rg	-AV	inj-		Nw				
Rupp,Cameron	2	PHI	M	p					-AV		EX					
Casali,Curtis	2	TAM	M	p					-AV	inj-	EX					
Cervelli,Francisco	2	PIT	M			a										
Navarro,Dioner	2	CHW	M			a				inj-		Nw				
Swihart,Blake	2	BOS	M			a					EX					
Sanchez,Gary	2	NYY	P	PW		a					EX					
Arencibia,J.P.	2	PHI	P	P+					-AV			Nw				
Saltalamacchia,Jarrod	2	DET	P	P+					-AV			Nw				
Soto,Geovany	2	LAA	P	P+					-AV			Nw				
Murphy,Tom	2	COL	P	P+					-AV		EX					
Perez,Carlos	2	LAA	M		s						EX					
Blair,Carson	2	OAK	P	PW	s				-AV		EX					
Suzuki,Kurt	2	MIN	M													
Ramos,Wilson	2	WAS	M							inj-						
Flowers,Tyler	2	ATL	M						-AV			Nw				
Zunino,Mike	2	SEA	P	PW					-AV							
McKenry,Michael	2	TEX	P	PW					-AV	inj-						
Alfaro,Jorge	2	PHI	P	PW					-AV		EX					
Susac,Andrew	2	SF	P	PW					-AV	inj-	EX					
Joseph,Caleb	2	BAL	P	p							e					
Phegley,Joshua	2	OAK	P	p							e					
Conger,Hank	2	TAM	P	p					-AV			Nw				
Recker,Anthony	2	CLE	P	p					-AV		e					
Teagarden,Taylor	2	FAN	P	p					-AV		e					
Perez,Roberto	2	CLE	P	p					-AV		EX					

Rivera,Rene	2	TAM	P	p					-AV		EX				
Corporan,Carlos	2	NYY	P	p					-AV	inj-	e				
Kratz,Erik	2	SD	P	p					-AV		e	Nw		Ag	
Ross,David	2	CHC	P	p					-AV	inj-				Ag	
Hernandez,Oscar	2	ARI	P	p					-AV	inj-	EX				
Pena,Brayan	2	STL	P			a						Nw			
Barnes,Austin	2	LA	P			a					EX				
Murphy,John	2	MIN	P			a					EX	Nw			
Brantly,Rob	2	CHW	P			a				inj-	e				
O Conner,Justin	2	TAM	P		s				-AV		EX				

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), Pw (Power), Sp (Speed), Av (Average), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression).
LIABILITIES: Av (Average), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

This is your first peek at what a live balance sheet looks like. This is structured to present the potential full-timers first (F), followed by the mid-timers (M) and part-timers (P). Occasionally, there will be a player who sneaks into another section because his Assets or Liabilities are so notable – positive or negative – that they trump playing time. Players are then grouped with others of similar skill. Within those groups of like skills, players without Liabilities are listed first, following by those with black marks in order of riskiness, least to most. That's basically the entire thing in a nutshell. Not rocket science.

It is important to note that this is not a straight ranking list. Players with identical ratings can be considered interchangeable commodities. So while J.P. Arencibia, Jarrod Saltalamacchia and Geovany Soto are listed in that order, they have identical Asset and Liability profiles so are essentially the same guy. In some cases, these "like" players have never been photographed together so they might really be the same guy.

You can see that there is a fair amount of power up and down the list, though the only potential full-timer with extreme power skills is **Kyle Schwarber**. No surprise that there is virtually no speed at this position. Perhaps a bit more surprising is that there are only four players in the entire pool with the potential to be significant assets in the batting average category. This is a slim pickin's position.

The first thing that pops out is that **Buster Posey** and **Jonathan Lucroy** have identical asset ratings (p,AV), indicating moderate power and significant BA. From a ratings standpoint, the only thing that separates them is Lucroy's injury risk.

> *Wait a minute. How could they have the same skills profile? Posey is a consistent .300 hitter and former MVP. Lucroy is not even close.*

True. However, the underlying skills of both players are well within normal statistical variance. Remember Chapter 1?

I'm not sure I'm going to like this.

Admittedly, this is probably the biggest hurdle we'll all have to get over during this journey – the perceptions we lock onto based on past statistical outputs. Lucroy has actually hit .300 before – twice – and while most all drafters will downgrade him based on last year's injury-marred season, he is very similar to Posey on a skills basis alone.

Does this mean I should draft Lucroy in the same round as Posey?

No. That injury risk still exists. However, the proximity in their skills seems in conflict with their ADPs – Posey is at around #20; Lucroy is outside the top 100. A healthy Lucroy could easily close that gap, providing a profit opportunity here.

You won't find many ranking lists that have **Matt Wieters** and **J.T. Realmuto** this high. We all remember Wieters' unrealized potential, but we can't forget the significant injury risk. Realmuto showed some interesting skills last year; most projections will hedge on growth, but he could be the position's only real across-the-board asset. But he has a Liability too – he still has less that two full seasons of experience under his belt so there could be some additional variability in his output.

Do you draft Wieters or Realmuto this high? Probably not, but the marketplace will determine that. However, there is a bigger question you need to answer first. Is this where you want to take on risk on the Liabilities side of the ledger? BABS gives you a Liabilities budget. In a 15-team mixed league, you are allowed a maximum of four injury risks and four experience risks among your batters, and 12 risks total for your entire roster. Do you want to spend one here? Would you rather conserve them for a player with a higher upside, like a Giancarlo Stanton, or perhaps for more of a fringe player, like a Zack Cozart?

If you don't want to take on risk with a catcher, maybe you scan further down the list and focus on some backstops without any (obvious) Liabilities. **Welington Castillo, Brian McCann, Russell Martin** and **Derek Norris** are perhaps your best mid-level options.

Once you get past the top 20 or so names, you enter a territory with minefields. Over half of the remaining catchers have an (-AV) rating on the Liabilities side, making them batting average sinkholes… um, which is what are left after stepping on the mines. Nope, no mixed metaphors here.

There are a few interesting players to note:

Salvador Perez has been the third catcher off the board in the NFBC, but his only real asset is some moderate batting average help. His recent power performances are not supported by his skills peripherals, so don't be drafting him hoping for another 20-HR season. His ADP is clearly driven by recency bias.

Travis D'Arnaud has the same assets profile as **Yan Gomes** and **Nick Hundley** but is dinged because of more significant injury and experience risk. If you're willing to take that risk on, he would rate higher.

Who the heck is **Andrew Knapp**? He's down the Phillies catching depth chart but his 11 HRs and .360 BA in 214 AB in Double-A may have opened some eyes. Given the dearth of decent offensive numbers at this position, those skills have pushed him up into mid-timer territory. You won't find that phenomenon often; this position really is a wasteland. But don't ignore that big "EX" on the Liabilities side; that should relegate him to an end-game speculation, mostly in deeper leagues.

When it comes to the catcher end-game, the mantra is always "first do no harm." If you can't find someone with any redeeming skill, grab someone who won't get much playing time. Some thoughts:

Kurt Suzuki holds the ignominious distinction of offering not a single asset or liability, yet is projected as at least a mid-timer. Lots and lots of empty at-bats. Won't help you, won't hurt you. Well, that's not entirely accurate. Those at-bats do mean some runs and RBIs, so there's that. Just above him on the list, there are a bunch of part-timers with some assets but also BA downside; it's your call what to choose. Lots of ABs of nothing, or fewer ABs with both good and bad stats.

For other mid-timers, it's probably better to own a part-timer instead. **Tyler Flowers** gives you lots of ABs of bad BA. **Alex Avila** and **Curt Casali** give you a little power but a litany of liabilities. It might be better to own guys like **Caleb Joseph, Josh Phegley** or **Brayan Pena**, who have some moderate skills despite a paucity of playing time.

The bottom line is that this will be a difficult pool to draft out of. I would probably be willing to take on a bit of risk here because there are so few catchers with any assets worth chasing. The recency bias of Wieters' and Realmuto's second half performances, and Hundley's home ballpark, will likely drive up their prices a bit. But they may be some of the few places to find at least a little profit.

FIRSTBASEMEN / DESIGNATED HITTERS

This is a position loaded with power and batting average, top to bottom. There are over a dozen extreme power options, depending upon how long you want to wait and how far down into the pool you want to go. There are 21 full-timers with significant or better power. You'd need to go nearly 20 deep before you hit a below average BA.

In short, there is plenty of power and BA for everyone. Don't skimp here.

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Encarnacion,Edwin	3	TOR	F	P+		AV									
Goldschmidt,Paul	3	ARI	F	P+		AV									
Votto,Joey	3	CIN	F	P+		AV									Rg
Ortiz,David	0	BOS	F	P+		AV								Ag	
Abreu,Jose	30	CHW	F	PW		AV									
Gonzalez,Adrian	3	LA	F	PW		AV									
Rizzo,Anthony	3	CHC	F	PW		AV									
Lind,Adam	3	SEA	F	PW		AV						Nw	Pk		
Cabrera,Miguel	3	DET	F	PW		AV				inj-					
Freeman,Freddie	3	ATL	F	PW		AV				inj-					
Duda,Lucas	3	NYM	F	P+		a									
Davis,Chris	390	BAL	F	P+		a									Rg
Hosmer,Eric	3	KC	F	p		AV									
Martinez,Victor	0	DET	F	p		AV								Ag	
Pujols,Albert	30	LAA	F	p		AV				INJ				Ag	
Trumbo,Mark	903	BAL	F	PW		a	Pk					Nw			
Gattis,Evan	0	HOU	F	PW		a									
Belt,Brandon	3	SF	F	PW		a									
Zimmerman,Ryan	3	WAS	M	P+		AV				INJ					
Butler,Billy	0	OAK	F	p		a									
Morales,Kendrys	0	KC	F	p		a									
Cron,C.J.	30	LAA	F	p		a					e				
Sano,Miguel	0	MIN	F	P+							EX				
Carter,Chris	3	MIL	F	P+					-AV			Nw			
Mauer,Joe	30	MIN	F			AV									
Loney,James	3	TAM	F			AV				inj-					
Teixeira,Mark	3	NYY	M	P+		a				inj-				Ag	
Napoli,Mike	3	CLE	F	PW								Nw			
Rodriguez,Alex	0	NYY	F	PW										Ag	Rg
Park,Byung Ho	3	MIN	F	PW							EX				

Paulsen,Benjamin	3o	COL	F	PW							EX					
Morneau,Justin	3	FAN	M	p		AV				INJ						
Santana,Carlos	30	CLE	F	p												
Bour,Justin	3	MIA	F	p							e					
Myers,Wil	83	SD	F	p						INJ						
Fielder,Prince	0	TEX	F			a										
Moreland,Mitch	3	TEX	M	PW		a										
Shaw,Travis	3	BOS	M	PW		a					EX					
Adams,Matt	3	STL	M	PW		a				INJ						
Montero,Jesus	3	SEA	M	p		a					e					
Colabello,Chris	37	TOR	M	p		a					e					Rg
Smoak,Justin	3	TOR	M	P+												
Howard,Ryan	3	PHI	M	P+											Ag	
Moss,Brandon	93	STL	M	P+					-AV							
Alvarez,Pedro	3	FAA	M	PW												
LaRoche,Adam	3	CHW	M	PW				Rg	-AV						Ag	
Singleton,Jonathan	3	HOU	M	PW					-AV		EX					
Canha,Mark	37	OAK	M	p							e					
Morrison,Logan	3	TAM	M	p						inj-		Nw				
Davis,Ike	3	OAK	M	p						INJ						
Alonso,Yonder	3	OAK	M			a				inj-		Nw				
Jaso,John	0	PIT	M			a				INJ		Nw				
Reed,A.J.	3	HOU	P	PW		a					EX					
Mancini,Trey	3	BAL	P	p		a					EX					
Marte,Jefry	3	LAA	P	p		a					EX					
Robinson,Clint	37	WAS	P	p		a					EX					
Rogers,Jason	3	PIT	P	p		a					EX	Nw				
Muncy,Max	3	OAK	P	P+					-AV		EX					
Paredes,Jimmy	0	BAL	M						-AV		e					
Noel,Rico	0	LA	P		S+				-AV		EX					
Pearce,Steve	73	TAM	P	PW												
Wallace,Brett	3	SD	P	PW												
Ruf,Darin	37	PHI	P	PW							e					
Van Slyke,Scott	73	LA	P	PW							e					
Walker,Christian	30	BAL	P	PW							EX					
Moore,Tyler	37	WAS	P	PW					-AV		e					
Olson,Matt	3	OAK	P	PW					-AV		EX					
Shaffer,Richie	3	TAM	P	PW					-AV		EX					
Ishikawa,Travis	3	SEA	P	PW					-	INJ						

									AV							
Parmelee,Chris	3	FAA	P	p												
Morse,Michael	3	PIT	P	p						inj-						Rg
Rodriguez,Sean	3o	PIT	P	p					-AV							
Terdoslavich,Joseph	3	BAL	P	p						inj-	EX					
Aguilar,Jesus	3	CLE	P	p					-AV		EX					
Wilkins,Andrew	3	MIL	P	p					-AV		EX					
Blanks,Kyle	3	SF	P	p					-AV	INJ		Nw				

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), Pw (Power), Sp (Speed), Av (Average), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression).
LIABILITIES: Av (Average), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

Let's start right at the top. **Edwin Encarnacion** and **Paul Goldschmidt** boast identical (P+,AV) ratings.

Whoa, whoa, wait. You can't tell me that EE and Goldy are the same.

Sigh… okay. I know that seems a little counterintuitive. Goldschmidt has been a consistent .300 hitter while Encarnacion has topped out at only .280 over the past five years. Goldy still has an edge when we look at the underlying skills metrics, but that edge is smaller and not nearly statistically significant. By rights, they should both be hitting in the .290s.

Goldy steals bases. Goldy is younger. You want me to go on?

I know, I know. His bags are more a function of the green light he gets than any edge in baserunning skill. Goldschmidt's speed skill metrics are below average, and his 15 SBs in the first half was a function of opportunity; it dropped to six over the final three months. Who knows how the D-backs will do in 2016, but any improvement might also have an impact on the need for Goldschmidt – a proven run-producer – to also be a run-builder.

For what it's worth, the last time a first baseman stole 20 bases in a season and then followed up with another 20-SB performance was 16 years ago. That was Ryan Klesko. The interesting thing about Klesko was that he never stole more than 6 bases in any season before or after those duel 20-SB campaigns. In fact, there has been only one 20-SB season for a 1Bman since then -- Derek Lee in 2003. Firstbasemen generally are not called on to steal; their bat is too important to risk injury on the basepaths.

As for the age difference, well, I'm not going to make a big deal about five years. Plenty of hitters are plenty productive at 32. Look, if you want to rank Goldschmidt ahead of Encarnacion, please go ahead. The point again here is that, if you miss out

on rostering Goldschmidt and you have a chance to grab Encarnacion at a lower cost, well, you shouldn't feel so bad.

There are three other players with (P+,AV) ratings that further shows how the variability of statistics often obscures underlying skill.

Joey Votto had a terrific rebound season in 2015 with a skills profile statistically indistinguishable from Goldschmidt. However, his recent track record is volatile enough that we should consider the possibility of regression.

There is a point here that bears mentioning. The biggest Votto-Goldy variance was in the team-dependent stats. Arizona was a better offensive club than Cincinnati, leading to more run and RBI opportunities. If you want to extend that expectation into 2016, do so at your own risk. One year ago, we projected that Goldschmidt's team-dependent stats would suffer from being surrounded by a potentially feeble D-back offense. Unexpected performances from players like A.J. Pollock and David Peralta put that expectation to rest. Yes, the Reds look horrible on paper - NOW.

David Ortiz and **Ryan Zimmerman** are the other two (P+,AV) players. Ortiz's liability is age, and he is at a point when each year gets more and more risky. But given that he's announced his alleged retirement at the end of 2016, it's anyone's guess what he might do. Zimmerman gets dinged big-time for health, pushing his projected playing time down to mid-time status. Both are high risk-high reward options.

You don't have to take on that risk, though, as there are a whole slew of options just below them on the list. Yes, you'd have to sacrifice a little power, or a little average, but there are enough low-risk players to choose from that are productive enough.

Some surprises…

BABS likes **Miguel Cabrera, Adam Lind** and **Freddie Freeman** about the same (PW,AV). As mentioned earlier, I'd probably give Cabrera an (A+) for batting average if there was such a rating, as he is about the only player who's a consistently extreme .300-plus producer. That would boost him to the top of the (PW, AV) sub-group (allowing still for the injury risk). Lind's platoon differential is a good news-bad news scenario; it could suppress his ABs, but the more RHPs he sees, the better his skills will translate to stats. He gets dinged here for the move to Seattle, but we all know how horrible a move that was for Nelson Cruz. </sarcasm> And Freeman continues to underperform his skills metrics; he's better than we've been seeing.

Lucas Duda looks to be a poor man's **Chris Davis** (P+,a). Add **Mark Teixeira** and this would be a similarly-skilled trio, but Teix is riddled with marks on the Liability side. There are lots of nice little 2-3 player pockets like this that you can tap into to fill out your roster.

The bottom line is, when it comes to 1B/DH, is there is no reason for you to be foregoing power. **Joe Mauer, James Loney, Yonder Alonso** and **John Jaso** – fuggedaboutit – they should be the last port for the desperate.

Somewhat surprisingly, **Prince Fielder** also falls into this category. Despite posting a decent 23-HR rebound season, his underlying skills were soft as compared to the rest of the pool. He's a reasonable fallback at a corner infield position, but I'd be reluctant to roster him as part of my team's power core.

The loss of Greg Bird takes a (P+ | EX) part-timer out of the player pool. That would be a significant hit if not for the pool being so deep in power anyway. The Yankees will hurt more for the loss than you will.

THIRDBASEMEN

Third base is another position deep in power and batting average, though not quite as deep as 1B/DH. That means you will most likely be filling your corner infield slot with a firstbaseman. One thing does stand out at the hot corner – the full-timers are relatively healthy. Only four of 22 have even minor injury concerns.

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Arenado,Nolan	5	COL	F	P+		AV									
Donaldson,Josh	5	TOR	F	P+		AV									
Carpenter,Matt	5	STL	F	PW		AV									Rg
Frazier,Todd	5	CHW	F	P+		a						Nw			
Machado,Manny	5	BAL	F	p		AV				inj-					
Beltre,Adrian	5	TEX	F	p		AV				inj-				Ag	
Castellanos,Nick	5	DET	F	PW		a									
Longoria,Evan	5	TAM	F	PW		a									
Bryant,Kris	5	CHC	F	P+	s						e				
Seager,Kyle	5	SEA	F	p		a									
Moustakas,Mike	5	KC	F	p		a									Rg
Lamb,Jacob	5	ARI	F	p		a					e				
Franco,Maikel	5	PHI	F	p		a				inj-	EX				
Duffy,Matt	5	SF	F		s	AV					e				
Prado,Martin	5	MIA	F			AV				inj-					
Valencia,Danny	5o7	OAK	M	PW		AV									
Plouffe,Trevor	5	MIN	F	PW											
Drury,Brandon	5	ARI	M	p		AV					EX				
Turner,Justin	5	LA	M	p		AV				inj-					Rg

Sandoval,Pablo	5	BOS	F			a										
Solarte,Yangervis	53	SD	F			a										
Tomas,Yasmany	o95	ARI	F			a					e					
Escobar,Yunel	5	LAA	F			a						Nw			Rg	
Freese,David	5	LAA	M	p		a				INJ						
Wright,David	5	NYM	M	p		a				INJ						
Lowrie,Jed	5	OAK	M	p		a				INJ		Nw				
Saladino,Tyler	5	CHW	F		s				-AV		EX					
Headley,Chase	5	NYY	F													
Valbuena,Luis	53	HOU	M	PW												
Dietrich,Derek	o75	MIA	M	PW							e					
Asche,Cody	o75	PHI	M	p												
Garcia,Adonis	5	ATL	M			a					EX					
Olivera,Hector	5	ATL	M			a					EX					
Urshela,Giovanny	5	CLE	M			a					EX					
Uribe,Juan	5	NYM	P	p		a								Ag		
Chisenhall,Lonnie	o95	CLE	M													
Beckham,Gordon	5	ATL	M						-AV			Nw				
Reynolds,Mark	35	COL	P	PW			Pk					Nw				
Robinson,Drew	5	TEX	P	PW					-AV		EX					
Olt,Mike	5	CHW	P	PW					-AV	inj-	EX					
Guerrero,Alexander	o75	LA	P	p							EX					
Nunez,Renato	5	OAK	P	p							EX					
Middlebrooks,Will	5	MIL	P	p					-AV	inj-		Nw				
Kubitza,Kyle	5	LAA	P	p					-AV		EX					
Cuthbert,Cheslor	5	KC	P			a					EX					
Perez,Hernan	5	MIL	P		s						EX					
Sizemore,Scott	5	WAS	P		s				-AV							

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), Pw (Power), Sp (Speed), Av (Average), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression).
LIABILITIES: Av (Average), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

Nolan Arenado, Josh Donaldson, Todd Frazier and **Kris Bryant** lead the (P+) power brigade, though only the first two are significant batting average contributors.

Of typical first-rounders, **Manny Machado** (p,AV) is conspicuously absent at the very top. He is perceived as a power-speed threat, but his power skills rate out only as moderate, mostly because of his continuing ground-ball tendency and regression off of 2015's spike. His speed does not register at all, as last year's SBs were driven

more by opportunity than skill. Add in the injury history that dogged him prior to 2015 and Machado becomes a more risky pick. According to BABS, he is a younger version of **Adrian Beltre**.

Matt Carpenter (PW,AV) ranks higher here than elsewhere. While we ding him for a likely regression, the underlying skills remain intriguing and compare favorable with fellow cornermen Jose Abreu and Anthony Rizzo.

Evan Longoria and **Nick Castellanos** represent an interesting case study in interchangeable commodities. NFBC drafters are choosing Longoria at pick #116 and Castellanos at pick #259 – 10 rounds later – yet BABS rates them both as (PW,a). I suspect this is driven by Longo's more established track record, but their respective stat lines are well within the margin for statistical variability. Compare:

	Longoria	**Castellanos**
2015 stat line	21-73-.270	15-73-.255
Forecaster projection	24-84-.264	18-79-.267
Baseball HQ update	23-82-.264	19-81-.265

One would think that, at 24, Castellanos is likely to improve. Longoria is 30 but, at worst, would be expected to at least stay the same. With HQ's current projection, the difference between the two players is *four home runs*. Needless to say, there is a limited amount of trust you can place in the precise projections, but it still seems that the two players should be closer than 143 ranking spots apart.

The (p,a) pocket is an interesting group. It's not much of a stretch to consider that **Kyle Seager** and **Mike Moustakas** are interchangeable (even though ADPs put them in the high #60s and #140s, respectively). But for those who want to take a chance on another similar player whose only liability is experience (though not insignificant), then try **Jacob Lamb**. Digging a little deeper, **Maikel Franco** has more Liability nicks. Digging into mid-timer territory, **David Freese, David Wright** and **Jed Lowrie** all share the same skill set but also share significant injury risk.

I still have a lot of friends who are Red Sox fans from when I lived up in New England. Most all of them are writing off 2015 as just an off-year for **Pablo Sandoval** (a) and are holding out hope for a rebound. But his profile comps are all below-average power sources. The last time Sandoval hit 20 HRs was when Mike Trout was still an unproven prospect and Carlos Correa was a high school junior. Panda is still just 29, and "once you display a skill, you own it," so you can't completely dismiss him… damn, there is my latent Sox fandom seeping out. Heed BABS.

Danny Valencia (PW,AV) may be an intriguing profit opportunity. While he is a mid-timer right now – he hasn't posted full-time ABs since 2011 in Minnesota – his skills profile is comparable to that of Carpenter. Any additional playing time could make him very valuable. He's eligible at OF as well.

SECONDBASEMEN

Second base is a fairly shallow position when it comes to counting stats. The full-timers are a haven for batting average with a few nice pockets of steals. There is a smattering of moderate power sources but most come with downside elsewhere. It's best to chase power at other positions and make sure you get solid BA and perhaps some speed here.

There are maybe 10 full-time 2Bmen that are safe bets for low-risk productivity. You should try all you can to grab one of these options because there are Liability land mines outside this group. There are a half dozen (AV) full-timers that all have some injury concerns, plus a few more with lesser skills. Tread carefully.

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Gordon,Dee	4	MIA	F		S+	AV									
Cano,Robinson	4	SEA	F	p		AV									
Altuve,Jose	4	HOU	F		SB	AV									Rg
LeMahieu,DJ	4	COL	F		SB	AV									Rg
Walker,Neil	4	NYM	F	p		a						Nw			
Rendon,Anthony	45	WAS	F	p		a				INJ					
Hernandez,Cesar	4	PHI	F		SB	a					e				
Spangenberg,Cory	4	SD	F		SB	a				inj-	EX				
Kinsler,Ian	4	DET	F			AV									
Murphy,Daniel	45	WAS	F			AV						Nw			
Harrison,Josh	54o	PIT	F			AV				inj-					
Kendrick,Howie	4	LA	F			AV				inj-					
Zobrist,Ben	4o7	CHC	F			AV				inj-		Nw			
Kipnis,Jason	4	CLE	F			AV				inj-					Rg
Panik,Joe	4	SF	F			AV				inj-	e				
Pedroia,Dustin	4	BOS	F			AV				INJ					
Schoop,Jonathan	4	BAL	F	PW						inj-	e				
Travis,Devon	4	TOR	M	p		AV				INJ	EX				
Dozier,Brian	4	MIN	F	p											
Lawrie,Brett	54	CHW	F	p						inj-		Nw			
Phillips,Brandon	4	CIN	F			a									Rg
Odor,Rougned	4	TEX	F			a					e				
Peraza,Jose	4	CIN	M		S+	a					EX				
Hernandez,Enrique	o4	LA	M	p		a					EX				
Turner,Trea	4	WAS	M		SB	a					EX				
Forsythe,Logan	43	TAM	F												Rg
Peterson,Jace	4	ATL	F						-AV		e				

Holt,Brock	4o59	BOS	M		s	a										
Wong,Kolten	4	STL	M		s	a										
Espinosa,Danny	4	WAS	M	p					-AV							
Baez,Javier	4	CHC	M	p					-AV		EX					
Gennett,Scooter	4	MIL	M			a										
Giavotella,Johnny	4	LAA	M			a					e					
Utley,Chase	4	LA	P	p	s	a				inj-				Ag		
La Stella,Tommy	4	CHC	P			AV				inj-	EX					
Infante,Omar	4	KC	M													
Drew,Stephen	4	WAS	M						-AV			Nw				
Franklin,Nick	4	TAM	P	PW					-AV	inj-	e					
Uggla,Dan	4	FAN	P	PW					-AV	inj-				Ag		
Tomlinson,Kelby	4	SF	P		s	a					EX					
Hill,Aaron	45	MIL	P	p												
Herrera,Dilson	4	NYM	P	p							EX					
Flaherty,Ryan	4	BAL	P	p					-AV							
Johnson,Kelly	o743	ATL	P	p					-AV			Nw				
Field,Tommy	4	DET	P	p					-AV		EX					
Walsh,Colin	4	MIL	P	p					-AV		EX					
Blanco,Andres	54	PHI	P			a										
Castro,Daniel	4	ATL	P			a					EX					
Refsnyder,Rob	4	NYY	P			a					EX					
Pirela,Jose	4	SD	P			a					EX	Nw				
Izturis,Maicer	4	TOR	P			a				INJ						
Gosselin,Phil	4	ARI	P			a				INJ	EX					
Difo,Wilmer	4	WAS	P		SB						EX					
Weeks,Jemile	4	SD	P		SB				-AV							
Alberto,Hanser	4	TEX	P		s						EX					
Wendle,Joe	4	OAK	P		s						EX					
Sardinas,Luis	4	SEA	P		s						EX	Nw	Pk			
Bonifacio,Emilio	4	ATL	P		s				-AV	inj-		Nw				
Alcantara,Arismendy	4	CHC	P		s				-AV		EX					

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), Pw (Power), Sp (Speed), Av (Average), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression).
LIABILITIES: Av (Average), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

In most drafts, there are three names that bubble to the top – **Jose Altuve, Dee Gordon** and **Robinson Cano** – usually in that order. BABS agrees on the names but disagrees a bit on the order.

BABS does not see Altuve's 2015 power surge as sustainable; his support metrics hardly budged from previous years. His stolen base output already regressed from 2014 and those speed skills continue to rate out behind that of Gordon. BABS sees Altuve as third best of the trio.

Meanwhile, Gordon's speed skill and stolen base output are extreme. He single-handedly allows you to wait on late speed in the draft. There are not many players who offer this level of roster flexibility; a few closers, perhaps the bangers at the top of the ADPs. For that reason, his ranking at the top of this list is justifiable.

BABS offers up a fourth option at the top: **DJ LeMahieu**. His (SB,AV | Rg) rating is identical to that of Altuve. In fact, his raw speed grades out higher; the difference being in the brightness of their respective green lights. There are going to be limited opportunities to grab one of the top three 2Bmen, but LeMahieu's #141 ADP sure looks like a potential profit opportunity.

From **Ian Kinsler** down to **Dustin Pedroia** on this list are eight 2Bmen who are, for all intents and purposes, similarly skilled (AV). Below average power and speed, moderately helpful batting average. What that means is that you are not likely going to get more than 15 HRs or 15 SBs from any of them, and any attempt to separate them with more precision will run afoul of the random winds of statistical variability. Six of the eight names also have some injury risk attached to them, which further muddies the waters.

With such minimal skill in that bucket, why take on excess risk? My approach with such a thin position is to play it safe. I'll shoot for one of the four names at the top, but if I fail at rostering one of them, I'll target a lesser name in a later round/lesser cost with a minimal Liability profile. Kinsler, **Daniel Murphy, Brian Dozier, Brandon Phillips** and maybe **Rougned Odor** would be my prime targets.

If those slip by, I would look at some of the high-skilled mid-timers as a fallback. If you're willing to take on the added Experience risk, **Jose Peraza, Enrique Hernandez** and **Trea Turner** are the best profit opportunities.

SHORTSTOPS

Shortstop is a position with some good upside potential but also a ton of uncertainty. It contains some decent power contributors at the top, though the bigger names are risky. After that, there is a large group of low-risk speedsters; this is a good spot to stock up on SBs. The talent thins out quickly after that.

One thing about the shortstop pool, however, is that it is an extremely healthy group.

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Seager,Corey	6	LA	F	PW		AV					EX				
Tulowitzki,Troy	6	TOR	F	PW		AV				inj-					Rg
Correa,Carlos	6	HOU	F	p		AV					EX				Rg
Crawford,Brandon	6	SF	F	PW		a									Rg
Miller,Bradley	6o8	TAM	F	p	s	a						Nw			
Escobar,Eduardo	6o7	MIN	F	p		a									
Peralta,Jhonny	6	STL	F	p		a									
Reyes,Jose	6	COL	F		s	AV				inj-					Rg
Segura,Jean	6	ARI	F		SB	a									
Escobar,Alcides	6	KC	F		SB	a									Rg
Marte,Ketel	6	SEA	F		SB	a					EX				
Simmons,Andrelton	6	LAA	F			AV						Nw			
Desmond,Ian	6	FAN	F	p	s										
Andrus,Elvis	6	TEX	F		s	a									
Hechavarria,Adeiny	6	MIA	F		s	a									
Lindor,Francisco	6	CLE	F		s	a					EX				
Kang,Jung-ho	56	PIT	M	p		AV				INJ	e				
Cabrera,Asdrubal	6	NYM	F	p								Nw			
Russell,Addison	46	CHC	F	p							e				
Gregorius,Didi	6	NYY	F			a									
Mercer,Jordy	6	PIT	F			a									
Ramirez,Alexei	6	SD	F			a									
Aybar,Erick	6	ATL	F			a						Nw			
Castro,Starlin	64	NYY	F			a						Nw			
Bogaerts,Xander	6	BOS	F			a									Rg
Iglesias,Jose	6	DET	F			a					e				
Cozart,Zack	6	CIN	F			a				INJ					
Semien,Marcus	6	OAK	F		s						e				
Galvis,Freddy	6	PHI	F		s				-AV						
Arcia,Orlando	6	MIL	M		SB	a					e				

Suarez,Eugenio	6	CIN	F								e					
Ramirez,Jose	64	CLE	M		s	a					e					
Gyorko,Jedd	46	STL	M	p								Nw				
Gonzalez,Marwin	365	HOU	M			a										
Flores,Wilmer	64	NYM	M			a					e					
Story,Trevor	6	COL	P	P+	s				-AV		EX					
Santana,Daniel	6	MIN	M		SB						e					
Villar,Jonathan	6	MIL	M		SB				-AV		e	Nw				
Owings,Christopher	46	ARI	M		s						e					
Rollins,Jimmy	6	FAN	M		s									Ag		
Ahmed,Nick	6	ARI	M								e					
Goins,Ryan	46	TOR	M								e					
Anderson,Tim	6	CHW	P		S+						EX					
Hardy,J.J.	6	BAL	M						-AV	inj-						
Hanson,Alen	6	PIT	P		S+				-AV		EX					
Taylor,Chris	6	SEA	P	p	s				-AV		EX					
Nunez,Eduardo	6	MIN	P		s	a										
Adames,Cristhian	6	COL	P			a					EX					
Colon,Christian	6	KC	P			a					EX					
Rojas,Miguel	6	MIA	P			a					EX					
Tejada,Ruben	6	NYM	P			a				INJ						
Lee,Hak-Ju	6	SF	P		SB				-AV		EX					
Mondesi,Raul	6	KC	P		SB				-AV		EX					
Crawford,J.P.	6	PHI	P		s						EX					
Amarista,Alexi	6	SD	P		s				-AV							
Beckham,Tim	46	TAM	P		s					inj-	EX					
Florimon Jr.,Pedro	6	PIT	P		s				-AV		e					
Romine,Andrew	56	DET	P		s				-AV		e					
Adrianza,Ehire	46	SF	P		s				-AV		EX					
Kazmar,Sean	6	FAN	P		s				-AV		EX					
Nunez,Gustavo	6	DET	P		s				-AV		EX					

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), Pw (Power), Sp (Speed), Av (Average), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression).
LIABILITIES: Av (Average), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

As of this writing, **Carlos Correa's** ADP in the NFBC is #6, and he has been drafted as high as #4. This is a player with a grand total of 427 plate appearances of MLB experience. Yes, there is some solid skill here, but his comps for (p,AV) look more

like Robinson Cano and Hunter Pence than Josh Donaldson and Nolan Arenado. Admittedly, Manny Machado also grades out as (p,AV), but that's based on an expected regression.

Why does Correa rate out so "low"? His strong ground ball tendency puts his power output at risk and his early SB output was driven more by opportunity than skill. The fact is, **Corey Seager's** skill set actually rates out higher. But there is one key indicator that puts all of this in perspective: that big "EX" on the Liabilities side. All the fascination and skepticism with these young players could disappear with more playing time to validate (or invalidate) their tremendous potential. But until then, "EX" has to be taken seriously; it says: "the variability around their projections is going to be HUGE."

But Correa's consistently high ADP persists. I thought, maybe it's *me* that's crazy. So I turned it over to the Tout Wars experts for their input. I polled them with this question:

If you could draft Carlos Correa at the spot where you think he will earn PAR VALUE (not necessarily where you'd need to draft him to get him), where would that be?

23%	Top 10
35%	11-15
23%	16-20
19%	21-30
0%	Outside top 30

Mean ADP = #14

But Correa is not going at #14. That's because those convinced that he's the real deal know that he won't be coming back to them if they pass him up.

I ranked him in the 21-30 group, and frankly, it would not surprise me a bit if he finished outside the top 30. It's not that I fight against Trout Inflation (the tendency for rookies to go for exorbitant draft prices following a year when there was a very good rookie crop) with the same vigor that I fight against small sample sizes and recency bias.

Well, um… okay, that is *exactly* what I am doing. Because Trout Inflation is actually driven by small sample sizes and recency bias.

But mark my word: one day I will be right.

As for the rest of the shortstop pool, there are many nice multi-player pockets.

Most all of the power sources at the top have some risk associated with them, but **Brandon Crawford** (PW,a | Rg) is interesting so long as you accept the regression risk. A healthy **Jung-Ho Kang** (p,AV | INJ,e) would have lots of upside.

Brad Miller (ADP #277)**, Eduardo Escobar** (#367) and **Jhonny Peralta** (#237) are all similarly skilled, low risk options. Miller adds a little speed. Miller and Escobar add outfield eligibility. **Jean Segura** (#196), **Alcides Escobar** (#278) and **Ketel Marte** (#222) all provide more speed. The ADPs of these two trios show how similar skills profiles are being drafted so differently. The two Escobars look like the profit opportunities in these groups.

There is a large 8-man pocket of moderate batting average help (a) – and no other Asset – at the bottom of the full-timers list. Similar to 2B, if you have to reach this point, it's best to stay with the low-risk options. Thankfully, most are pretty safe.

OUTFIELDERS

In the outfield, you can pretty much have your pick of whatever mix of Assets you'd like. There are plenty of skills, whether you need power, speed or batting average. However, be careful because there is also a good smattering of Liabilities. About 40 percent of the top 40 names have some injury risk. About 20 percent don't have enough experience to be fully trusted. But this is still the place to bulk up on big numbers.

				ASSETS					LIABILITIES						
BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Trout,Mike	8o	LAA	F	P+	s	AV									
McCutchen,Andrew	8o	PIT	F	P+		AV									
Harper,Bryce	o9	WAS	F	P+		AV				inj-					
Stanton,Giancarlo	o9	MIA	F	P+		AV				inj-					
Marte,Starling	o7	PIT	F	p	SB	AV									
Blackmon,Charlie	o8	COL	F	p	SB	AV									
Pollock,A.J.	8o	ARI	F	p	SB	AV									
Betts,Mookie	o8	BOS	F	p	SB	AV					e				
Upton,Justin	o7	DET	F	P+	s	a									
Springer,George	o9	HOU	F	PW	SB	a				INJ	e				
Revere,Ben	o78	WAS	F		S+	AV						Nw			
Jones,Adam	8o	BAL	F	PW		AV									
Cespedes,Yoenis	o78	NYM	F	PW		AV									Rg
Conforto,Michael	o7	NYM	F	PW		AV					EX				
Dickerson,Corey	o7	TAM	F	PW		AV				inj-	e				
Braun,Ryan	o9	MIL	F	PW		AV				INJ					

Bautista,Jose	o90	TOR	F	P+		a										
Kemp,Matt	o9	SD	F	P+		a										
Martinez,J.D.	o9	DET	F	P+		a										
Davis,Khristopher	o7	MIL	F	P+		a				inj-						
Cruz,Nelson	o90	SEA	F	P+		a								Ag	Rg	
Gonzalez,Carlos	9o	COL	F	P+		a				inj-					Rg	
Gomez,Carlos	8o	HOU	F	PW	s	a		Rg								
Peralta,David	o7	ARI	F	p		AV					e					
Pence,Hunter	o9	SF	F	p		AV				INJ						
Burns,Billy	8o	OAK	F		S+	a					e					
Ozuna,Marcell	o8	MIA	F	PW		a										
Soler,Jorge	o9	CHC	F	PW		a				inj-	e					
Beltran,Carlos	o9	NYY	F	PW		a				inj-				Ag		
Byrd,Marlon	o79	FAN	F	PW		a				inj-				Ag		
Cain,Lorenzo	o8	KC	F		SB	AV										
Inciarte,Ender	o978	ATL	F		SB	AV						Nw				
Span,Denard	8o	SF	F		SB	AV				INJ		Nw				
Calhoun,Kole	9o	LAA	F	p		a										
Choo,Shin-Soo	o9	TEX	F	p		a										
Gordon,Alex	o7	KC	F	p		a				inj-						
Piscotty,Stephen	o7	STL	F	p		a					EX					
Ramirez,Hanley	o7	BOS	F	p		a				inj-					Rg	
Puig,Yasiel	9o	LA	F	p		a				INJ					Rg	
Holliday,Matt	o7	STL	F	p		a				INJ				Ag		
Parra,Gerardo	o978	COL	F		s	AV	Pk					Nw				
Eaton,Adam	8o	CHW	F		s	AV										
Heyward,Jason	o9	CHC	F		s	AV						Nw				
Yelich,Christian	o78	MIA	F		s	AV				inj-						
Aoki,Norichika	o7	SEA	F		s	AV				inj-		Nw				
Bruce,Jay	o9	CIN	F	P+												
Granderson,Curtis	o9	NYM	F	P+												
Grichuk,Randal	o78	STL	F	P+						inj-	e					
Fowler,Dexter	8o	FAN	F	p	SB											
Herrera,Odubel	8o	PHI	F		SB	a					e					
Kiermaier,Kevin	o8	TAM	F		SB	a					e					
Ellsbury,Jacoby	8o	NYY	F		SB	a		0		inj-					Rg	
Cabrera,Melky	o7	CHW	F			AV										
Markakis,Nick	o9	ATL	F			AV										
Hamilton,Billy	8o	CIN	F		S+				- AV							
Rosario,Eddie	o79	MIN	F	p	s						e					
Altherr,Aaron	o7	PHI	F	p	s						EX					

Jackson,Austin	o89	FAN	F		s	a										
Pillar,Kevin	o8	TOR	F		s	a					e					
Polanco,Gregory	o9	PIT	F		s	a					e					
Pagan,Angel	8o	SF	F		s	a				inj-						
Ethier,Andre	o97	LA	M	p		AV										
Bradley,Jackie	o98	BOS	F	p							e					Rg
Garcia,Avisail	o9	CHW	F			a				inj-						
Jay,Jon	o8	SD	F			a				inj-		Nw				
Castillo,Rusney	o97	BOS	F			a					EX					
Kim,Hyun-Soo	7	BAL	F			a					EX					
Smith,Seth	o790	SEA	M	PW		a										
Hamilton,Josh	o7	TEX	M	PW		a				INJ						
Werth,Jayson	o7	WAS	M	PW		a		Rg		INJ				Ag		
Coghlan,Chris	o79	CHC	M	p	s	a										
Reddick,Josh	o9	OAK	M	p	s	a										
Mahtook,Mikie	o	TAM	M	P+	s						EX					
Gardner,Brett	o78	NYY	F		SB											
Deshields Jr.,Delino	o87	TEX	F		SB				-AV		e					
Ackley,Dustin	o78	NYY	M	p		a										
Rasmus,Colby	o798	HOU	M	P+												
Duvall,Adam	o7	CIN	M	P+							EX					
Pederson,Joc	8o	LA	M	P+					-AV		e					
Kepler,Max	9o	MIN	P	p	SB	AV					EX					
Nieuwenhuis,Kirk	o7	MIL	P	P+	s	a					e	Nw				
Upton,Melvin	8o	SD	M	p	SB				-AV	inj-						
Davis,Rajai	o87	CLE	M		SB	a						Nw				
Maybin,Cameron	8o	DET	M		SB	a						Nw				
Brantley,Michael	o78	CLE	M			AV				INJ						
Buxton,Byron	8o	MIN	M		S+					inj-	EX					
Young,Chris	o97	BOS	M	PW								Nw				
Santana,Domingo	o98	MIL	M	PW					-AV		EX					
Orlando,Paulo	o97	KC	M	p	s						EX					
Taylor,Michael	o87	WAS	M	p	s				-AV		e					
Rios,Alex	9o	KC	M		s	a										
Guyer,Brandon	o798	TAM	M		s	a				inj-	e					
Phillips,Brett	8	MIL	P	p	SB	a					EX					
Sweeney,Darnell	o	PHI	M	p					-AV		EX					
Souza,Steven	o9	TAM	M	p						INJ	EX					
Reimold,Nolan	o7	BAL	M	p					-AV	INJ						

Dyson,Jarrod	o87	KC	P		S+	a										
Murphy,David	o70	FAA	M			a										
Jankowski,Travis	o8	SD	P		S+	a					EX					
Raburn,Ryan	0o	FAA	P	PW		a										
Lambo,Andrew	o	OAK	P	PW		a				INJ	EX					
Brinson,Lewis	8	TEX	P	p	s	a					EX					
Gallo,Joey	o7	TEX	P	P+	s				-AV		EX					
Venable,Will	o879	FAA	M		SB											
Bourn,Michael	o87	ATL	M		SB					inj-						
Pompey,Dalton	o8	TOR	M		SB						EX					
De Aza,Alejandro	o79	NYM	P	p		a										
Gutierrez,Franklin	o7	SEA	P	P+												
Ruggiano,Justin	o7	TEX	P	P+								Nw				
O Brien,Peter	o7	ARI	P	P+							EX					
Blash,Jabari	7	SD	P	P+					-AV		EX					
Parker,Jarrett	o	SF	P	P+					-AV		EX					
Walker,Adam	7	MIN	P	P+					-AV		EX					
Lagares,Juan	o8	NYM	M		s											
Martin,Leonys	8o	SEA	M		s			Rg	-AV			Nw				
Bourjos,Peter	8o	PHI	M		s				-AV			Nw				
Hicks,Aaron	o8	NYY	M		s					inj-	e	Nw				
Jennings,Desmond	o7	TAM	M		s					INJ						
Stubbs,Drew	o87	FAA	P	p	SB				-AV							
Pham,Thomas	o8	STL	P	p	SB					inj-	EX					
Broxton,Keon	o	MIL	P	p	SB				-AV		EX					
Zimmer,Bradley	8	CLE	P	p	SB				-AV		EX					
Blanco,Gregor	o879	SF	P		SB	a										
Brito,Socrates	o	ARI	P		SB	a					EX					
Margot,Manuel	8	SD	P		SB	a					EX					
Almonte,Abraham	o8	CLE	M								e					
Quinn,Roman	8	PHI	P		S+						EX					
Jones,James	o8	TEX	P		S+				-AV			Nw				
Nava,Daniel	o9	LAA	M						-AV	inj-						
Gore,Terrance	o7	KC	P		S+				-AV		EX					
Saunders,Michael	o	TOR	M						-AV	INJ						
Crisp,Coco	o7	OAK	M						-AV	INJ				Ag		
Jensen,Kyle	9	ARI	P	PW					-AV		EX					

Judge,Aaron	9	NYY	P	PW					-AV		EX					
Adams,Lane	8	NYY	P	p	s				-AV		EX					
Shuck,J.B.	o9	CHW	P		s	a					e					
Perez,Eury	o7	HOU	P		s	a					EX					
Crawford,Carl	o7	LA	P		s	a				INJ						
Sizemore,Grady	o97	FAA	P	p												
Snider,Travis	o79	KC	P	p												
Arcia,Oswaldo	o	MIN	P	p						inj-						
Joyce,Matt	o7	FAA	P	p				Rg	-AV							
Garcia,Anthony	7	STL	P	p							EX					
Parker,Kyle	o7	FAN	P	p							EX					
Sands,Jerry	o9	CHW	P	p							EX					
Smolinski,Jacob	o7	OAK	P	p							EX					
Thompson,Trayce	o	LA	P	p							EX					
Tucker,Preston	o7	HOU	P	p							EX					
Lake,Junior	o	TOR	P	p					-AV		e	Nw				
Allen,Brandon	7	CIN	P	p					-AV		EX					
Brentz,Bryce	9	BOS	P	p					-AV		EX					
Choice,Michael	9o	CLE	P	p					-AV		EX					
Den Dekker,Matthew	o7	WAS	P	p					-AV		EX					
Maxwell,Justin	o9	MIA	P	p					-AV		EX					
Moya,Steven	o	DET	P	p					-AV		EX					
Renfroe,Hunter	9	SD	P	p					-AV		EX					
Walters,Zachary	o	CLE	P	p					-AV		EX					
Swisher,Nick	0o7	ATL	P	p					-AV	INJ						
Urrutia,Henry	o7	BAL	P			a					EX					
Winker,Jesse	7	CIN	P			a					EX					
Butler,Joey	0o7	CLE	P			a					EX	Nw				
Cowgill,Collin	o7	CLE	P			a				INJ	e					
Williams,Mason	8o	NYY	P			a				INJ	EX					
Suzuki,Ichiro	o97	MIA	P		SB									Ag		
Fuentes,Reymond	8	KC	P		SB						EX					
Smith,Mallex	8	ATL	P		SB						EX					
Tilson,Charlie	8	STL	P		SB						EX					
Gose,Anthony	8o	DET	P		SB				-AV							
Marisnick,Jake	o8	HOU	P		SB				-AV		e					
Goeddel,Tyler	7	PHI	P		SB				-AV		EX					

Schebler,Scott	o	CIN	P		SB				-AV		EX					
Schafer,Jordan	o8	LA	P		SB				-AV	INJ						
Richardson,Antoan	8	PIT	P		SB				-AV	INJ	EX					
Fuld,Sam	o78	OAK	P		s											
Carrera,Ezequiel	o79	TOR	P		s						e					
Garcia,Leury	o	CHW	P		s						EX					
Mazara,Nomar	9	TEX	P		s						EX					
Ortega,Rafael	8	LAA	P		s						EX					
Young Jr.,Eric	o	MIL	P		s				-AV							
Gentry,Craig	o	LAA	P		s				-AV			Nw				
Berry,Quintin	o	LAA	P		s				-AV		EX					
Cave,Jake	8	CIN	P		s				-AV		EX					
Decker,Jaff	o	TAM	P		s				-AV		EX					
Dickerson,Alex	o7	SD	P		s				-AV		EX					
Holt,Tyler	o	CIN	P		s				-AV		EX					
Morban,Julio	9	LA	P		s				-AV		EX					
O Malley,Shawn	o	SEA	P		s				-AV		EX					
Perez,Juan	o	CHC	P		s				-AV		EX					
Rodriguez,Yorman	9	CIN	P		s				-AV		EX					
Strausborger,Ryan	o	TEX	P		s				-AV		EX					
Ynoa,Rafael	o7	COL	P		s				-AV		EX					

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), Pw (Power), Sp (Speed), Av (Average), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression).
LIABILITIES: Av (Average), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

At the upper levels of the list appear most of the names we would expect. Yes, you might perceive the order differently but all the good players are up there somewhere.

There are two outfielders who look most out of place at those upper levels.

Ben Revere (S+,AV | Nw) is the 11th outfielder here but is ranked 30th best in the ADPs (and #104 overall). As with Dee Gordon at 2B, his extreme speed elevates him in a scarce category and allows his owners more draft flexibility later on. You have more than enough roster spots to make up for his deficiencies in the other counting stats.

However, steals are the product of both skill and opportunity. Revere maintained extreme speed skill all of last year despite the decline in his SB total. But he was on pace for another 40-SB year at mid-season; his green light dropped from 28 percent to 15 percent after his trade to Toronto. Now atop the order in Washington, there should be no reason that he can't steal 40-plus bases again. Only Gordon and Billy Hamilton are near-locks for more.

At least Revere has a pedigree. I promise that **Michael Conforto's** (PW,AV | EX) high rating has nothing to do with me being a Mets fan. His power potential is intriguing – it was [this close] to being a (P+) – but it's all speculative until he gets more ABs.

The depth of the outfield pool gives us a preview of how pockets of interchangeable talent can be leveraged at the draft table. Where the other positions might have 2-3 players in a pocket, here we find 6-8. Once we reveal the overall ranking list, those pockets will get even deeper. Let me pick one of the more interesting examples:

The (P+,a) block of extreme power and moderate batting average is composed of **Jose Bautista, Matt Kemp, J.D. Martinez, Khris Davis, Nelson Cruz** and **Carlos Gonzalez**. You might quibble that the block as a whole should be ranked a bit higher but the spread of talent here is what is most interesting.

	2015 Stats	**Liabilities**	**ADP**	**R$**
Bautista,Jose	40-114-8-.250	none	27	$26
Kemp,Matt	23-100-12-.265	none	81	$15
Martinez,JD	38-102-3-.282	none	38	$22
Davis,Kris	27-66-6-.247	inj-	121	$11
Cruz,Nelson	44-93-3-.302	Ag, Rg	45	$20
Gonzalez,Carlos	40-97-2-.271	inj-, Rg	56	$18

(The Rotisserie dollars listed are estimated off the ADPs using a formula described in the *Baseball Forecaster*. It is based on a 15-team mixed league.)

In a perfect world, the ADPs and Roto values above would all be in roughly the same vicinity, and listed in descending order, more or less. Let's look at some of the outlying data to determine why some of these players are being drafted so far from one another.

At first glance, you might wonder how players with a batting average range from .247 (Davis) to .302 (Cruz) could be considered equivalent. But I've already discussed the ridiculously wide variability of that stat. The difference between .247 and .302 over 550 AB is five hits per month. That's five pieces of contact out of the approximately 70 fair balls hit each month (100 AB, 70 percent contact rate). That 55 point difference in BA is a product of a different result in just seven percent of those batted balls. If we expect the two BAs to naturally regress towards each other, the difference is far less; it's perhaps 2-3 fewer hits per month for Cruz, 2-3 more hits for Davis. In the world of "Things That Matter," this is "Pretty Darn Close to Nothing."

The range using *expected* batting average – based purely on skills-based metrics – is .258 (Kemp) to .285 (Bautista) and even that doesn't tell the whole story. Given that Cruz's .302 BA is an outlier compared to his history of high .260s BAs and Davis' expected BA was .260, you can start to see how all these batting averages start converging.

The range of power output goes from 23 HRs (Kemp) to 44 (Cruz). Playing time accounts for Davis' low HR count (436 plate appearances) but all the rest saw between 600 and 653 PAs in 2015. Pro-rating Davis to 600 PAs gets him up to 37 HRs, which is a fun but mostly meaningless exercise.

That leaves Kemp as the power outlier here, but we know he can do better. He hit 17 of his 23 HRs in the second half last year, and similarly 17 of his 25 in the second half of 2014. The swing both seasons was, in part, the function of random home-run to flyball rates – 8%-19% in 2015, 16%-23% in 2014. Other than that, his power metrics are comparable to the other players in this group. Yes, Kemp has not hit 30 HRs in a season since 2011, but barring injury or premature aging, it is still in his skill set.

Kemp's dozen bags are also the outlier in that category. His speed skills are not any different from the past few seasons when injuries cut into his SB totals, and these recent skills metrics have not been much over league average, also since 2011. While power can be easily maintained at age 31, speed is a skill of the young and won't likely return.

Kemp may be at the outlying fringe of this group, but given that he is a very different player than he was in 2011, perhaps we need to adjust our expectations.

You'll note that I am making these comparisons using 2015 data. Obviously, we wouldn't project 2016 based on that alone, but you can clearly see the effects of recency bias on the ADPs. That's the stake most folks plant in the ground when evaluating subsequent seasons. We don't see the upcoming year as a blank canvas but as an extension of last year. Of course, that's a faulty line of reasoning but it explains much of the ADP variances.

In the end, this sextet is largely the same player. Their Assets describe them all as .260ish hitters with possibly 35-40 HR power and a sprinkling of random stolen bases. Roster any one of them and expect nearly the same results.

If you need to separate them, start with their Liabilities. Davis' and Gonzalez's injury histories elevate their risk profiles a bit. Cruz, at 36, could start seeing some skills erosion (which, frankly, would just serve to regress his already inflated HR total).

If that's not good enough, I know the natural inclination will be to consider the supporting cast on their respective ballclubs. Sure, fine, but that is not a reliable

measure. Yes, odds are the Blue Jays will be a better team than the Padres, but last year, odds were the Red Sox were supposed to be a better team than the Mets.

Not this year. This year, the Mets will be the better team, led by Michael Conforto. And that bold statement is 100 percent driven by my life-long Flushing, Queens fandom.

STARTING PITCHERS

In most fantasy formats, pitchers vary from hitters in one key way. With fewer relevant counting stats, their measurable value rests in ratio gauges – primarly ERA – that have wider error bars than just about any other metric.

Look at the 2015 performance of a pitcher like Felix Hernandez. It is commonly concluded that 2015 was an off-year, particularly as compared to 2014. And yes, there were indicators of some skills erosion. However, the stats from two starts (out of 31) were the killers – 2.2 IP, 18 ER. Sure, you cannot arbitrarily remove those starts, but Seattle manager Lloyd McClendon could have pulled Hernandez earlier and avoided the extent of the statistical damage. That was a managerial call. Still, the difference in perception came down to those two ridiculously bad starts. Look:

	ERA
2014	2.14
2015	3.53
Minus the deadly starts	2.75

Now we're talking 0.61 of a run difference from 2014. Over 200 innings, that's two runs per month.

ERAs will always be volatile so the best we can do is focus on the skills. When you put those skills into buckets, you'll find that most pitchers are not much different from one another. What's more, once you get below a certain skills threshold, it hardly matters at all who you put on your roster. You can try to find factors that set individual pitchers apart, but virtually none of it will be projectable in the end.

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
PITCHER	Pos	Tm	PT	ER	K	Sv	Pk	Rg	ER	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Kershaw,Clayton	SP	LA	F	E+	K+										
Sale,Chris	SP	CHW	F	ER	K+										
Scherzer,Max	SP	WAS	F	ER	K+										
Archer,Chris	SP	TAM	F	ER	KK										
Bumgarner,Madison	SP	SF	F	ER	KK										
Carrasco,Carlos	SP	CLE	F	ER	KK										
deGrom,Jacob	SP	NYM	F	ER	KK										
Hamels,Cole	SP	TEX	F	ER	KK										
Harvey,Matt	SP	NYM	F	ER	KK										
Hernandez,Felix	SP	SEA	F	ER	KK										
Kluber,Corey	SP	CLE	F	ER	KK										
Ross,Tyson	SP	SD	F	ER	KK										
Arrieta,Jake	SP	CHC	F	ER	KK										Rg
Syndergaard,Noah	SP	NYM	F	ER	KK						e				
Strasburg,Stephen	SP	WAS	F	ER	KK					inj-					
Cueto,Johnny	SP	SF	F	ER	k		Pk					Nw			
Cole,Gerrit	SP	PIT	F	ER	k										
Gray,Sonny	SP	OAK	F	ER	k										
Lester,Jon	SP	CHC	F	ER	k										
Price,David	SP	BOS	F	ER	k							Nw			
Keuchel,Dallas	SP	HOU	F	ER	k										Rg
Greinke,Zack	SP	ARI	F	ER	k							Nw			Rg
Salazar,Danny	SP	CLE	F	e	KK										
Iglesias,Raisel	SP	CIN	F	e	KK					inj-	EX				
Samardzija,Jeff	SP	SF	F	e	k		Pk	Rg				Nw			
Gonzalez,Gio	SP	WAS	F	e	k										
Hammel,Jason	SP	CHC	F	e	k										
Nelson,Jimmy	SP	MIL	F	e	k										
Shields,James	SP	SD	F	e	k										
Teheran,Julio	SP	ATL	F	e	k										
Wacha,Michael	SP	STL	F	e	k										
Wood,Alex	SP	LA	F	e	k										
DeSclafani,Anthony	SP	CIN	F	e	k						e				
Walker,Taijuan	SP	SEA	F	e	k						e				
Richards,Garrett	SP	LAA	F	e	k					inj-					
Ventura,Yordano	SP	KC	F	e	k					inj-					
Darvish,Yu	SP	TEX	M	ER	K+					INJ					
Fernandez,Jose	SP	MIA	M	ER	K+					INJ					
Wainwright,Adam	SP	STL	F	ER						INJ					

Martinez,Carlos	SP	STL	M	ER	KK											
Liriano,Francisco	SP	PIT	M	ER	KK					inj-						
McCullers,Lance	SP	HOU	M	ER	KK						EX					
Smyly,Drew	SP	TAM	M	ER	KK					INJ						
Hendricks,Kyle	SP	CHC	F	e												
Quintana,Jose	SP	CHW	F	e												
Chen,Wei-Yin	SP	MIA	F	e								Nw				
Miley,Wade	SP	SEA	F	e								Nw				
Zimmermann,Jordan	SP	DET	F	e								Nw				
Cashner,Andrew	SP	SD	F	e						inj-						
Lackey,John	SP	CHC	F	e								Nw		Ag	Rg	
Iwakuma,Hisashi	SP	SEA	F	e						INJ						
Severino,Luis	SP	NYY	M	ER	k						EX					
Ryu,Hyun-Jin	SP	LA	M	ER	k					INJ						
Tanaka,Masahiro	SP	NYY	M	ER	k					INJ						
Velasquez,Vincent	SP	PHI	M	e	KK						EX					
Jimenez,Ubaldo	SP	BAL	F		k											
Verlander,Justin	SP	DET	F		k					inj-						
Fiers,Mike	SP	HOU	M	e	k											
McHugh,Collin	SP	HOU	M	e	k											
Kazmir,Scott	SP	LA	M	e	k							Nw				
Rodon,Carlos	SP	CHW	M	e	k						e					
Maeda,Kenta	SP	LA	M	e	k						EX					
Ross,Joe	SP	WAS	M	e	k						EX					
Bailey,Homer	SP	CIN	M	e	k					INJ						
Pineda,Michael	SP	NYY	M	e	k					INJ						
Stroman,Marcus	SP	TOR	M	ER						inj-	e					
Garcia,Jaime	SP	STL	M	ER						INJ						
Matz,Steven	SP	NYM	M	ER						INJ	EX					
Gallardo,Yovani	SP	FAA	F													
Gibson,Kyle	SP	MIN	F													
Santana,Ervin	SP	MIN	F													
Volquez,Edinson	SP	KC	F													
Leake,Mike	SP	STL	F									Nw				
Miller,Shelby	SP	ARI	F									Nw				
Dickey,R.A.	SP	TOR	F											Ag		
Heaney,Andrew	SP	LAA	F								EX					
Jungmann,Taylor	SP	MIL	F						-ER		e					
Lewis,Colby	SP	TEX	F						-ER					Ag		
Anderson,Brett	SP	LA	M	e						inj-						
Porcello,Rick	SP	BOS	M	e						inj-						

Davies,Zachary	SP	MIL	M	e							EX					
Duffey,Tyler	SP	MIN	M	e							EX					
Nola,Aaron	SP	PHI	M	e							EX					
Buchholz,Clay	SP	BOS	M	e						INJ						
Corbin,Patrick	SP	ARI	M	e						INJ						
Latos,Mat	SP	FAA	M	e						INJ						
Hahn,Jesse	SP	OAK	M	e						INJ	e					
Bauer,Trevor	SP	CLE	M		k											
Hutchison,Drew	SP	TOR	M		k											
Kennedy,Ian	SP	KC	M		k											
Chavez,Jesse	SP	TOR	M		k							Nw				
Happ,J.A.	SP	TOR	M		k							Nw				
Norris,Bud	SP	ATL	M		k							Nw				
Karns,Nathan	SP	SEA	M		k						e	Nw				
Odorizzi,Jake	SP	TAM	M		k					inj-						
Hellickson,Jeremy	SP	PHI	M		k					inj-		Nw				
Eickhoff,Jerad	SP	PHI	M		k						EX					
Finnegan,Brandon	SP	CIN	M		k						EX					
Gray,Jonathan	SP	COL	M		k						EX					
Lamb,John	SP	CIN	M		k						EX					
Sanchez,Anibal	SP	DET	M		k			Rg		INJ						
Tropeano,Nicholas	SP	LAA	M		k						EX					
Gausman,Kevin	SP	BAL	M		k					inj-	e					
Santiago,Hector	SP	LAA	M		k				- ER							
de la Rosa,Jorge	SP	COL	M		k					INJ						
Moore,Matt	SP	TAM	M		k					INJ						
Sabathia,CC	SP	NYY	M		k					INJ						
Stephenson,Robert	SP	CIN	M		k				- ER		EX					
Norris,Daniel	SP	DET	M		k				- ER	INJ	EX					
Reyes,Alexander	SP	STL	-	ER	K+						EX					
De La Rosa,Rubby	SP	ARI	M													
Eovaldi,Nathan	SP	NYY	M													
Kelly,Joe	SP	BOS	M													
Locke,Jeff	SP	PIT	M													
Milone,Tommy	SP	MIN	M													
Niese,Jon	SP	PIT	M													
Ramirez,Erasmo	SP	TAM	M													
Roark,Tanner	SP	WAS	M													
Estrada,Marco	SP	TOR	M													Rg
Bolsinger,Michael	SP	LA	M								e					

Ray,Robbie	SP	ARI	M								e					
Shoemaker,Matthew	SP	LAA	M								e					
Colon,Bartolo	SP	NYM	M												Ag	
Rodriguez,Wandy	SP	HOU	M												Ag	
Duffy,Danny	SP	KC	M							inj-						
Hughes,Phil	SP	MIN	M							inj-						
Andriese,Matt	SP	TAM	M								EX					
Bassitt,Chris	SP	OAK	M								EX					
Conley,Adam	SP	MIA	M								EX					
Rodriguez,Eduardo	SP	BOS	M								EX					
Bettis,Chad	SP	COL	M							inj-	e					
Danks,John	SP	CHW	M						-ER							
Koehler,Tom	SP	MIA	M						-ER							
Simon,Alfredo	SP	FAA	M						-ER							
Tillman,Chris	SP	BAL	M						-ER							
Feldman,Scott	SP	HOU	M							INJ						
Fister,Doug	SP	WAS	M							INJ						
Holland,Derek	SP	TEX	M							INJ						
Medlen,Kris	SP	KC	M							INJ						
Nova,Ivan	SP	NYY	M							INJ						
Peralta,Wily	SP	MIL	M							INJ						
Perez,Martin	SP	TEX	M							INJ						
Tomlin,Josh	SP	CLE	M							INJ						
Wilson,C.J.	SP	LAA	M							INJ						
Lohse,Kyle	SP	FAN	M					Rg	-ER						Ag	
Morton,Charlie	SP	PHI	M							INJ		Nw				
Perez,Williams	SP	ATL	M							inj-	EX					
Elias,Roenis	SP	BOS	M						-ER		e	Nw				
Paxton,James	SP	SEA	M							INJ	e					
Skaggs,Tyler	SP	LAA	M							INJ	e					
Young,Chris	SP	KC	M						-ER						Ag	
Pelfrey,Mike	SP	DET	M						-ER	inj-		Nw				
Anderson,Cody	SP	CLE	M						-ER		EX					
Garza,Matt	SP	MIL	M					Rg	-ER	INJ						
Lorenzen,Michael	SP	CIN	M						-ER		EX					
Morgan,Adam	SP	PHI	M						-ER		EX					
Nicolino,Justin	SP	MIA	M						-ER		EX					
Wisler,Matthew	SP	ATL	M						-		EX					

									ER							
Cain,Matt	SP	SF	M						-ER	INJ						
Cosart,Jarred	SP	MIA	M						-ER	INJ						
Gonzalez,Miguel	SP	BAL	M						-ER	INJ						
Harang,Aaron	SP	FAN	M						-ER	inj-				Ag		
Lyles,Jordan	SP	COL	M						-ER	INJ						
Nolasco,Ricky	SP	MIN	M						-ER	INJ						
Peavy,Jake	SP	SF	M						-ER	INJ						
Weaver,Jered	SP	LAA	M						-ER	INJ						
Cotton,Jharel	SP	LA	P	ER	k						EX					
Manaea,Sean	SP	OAK	P	ER	k						EX					
Lee,Cliff	SP	FAN	P	ER	k					INJ				Ag		
Hill,Rich	SP	OAK	P	e	KK							Nw		Ag	Rg	
Lyons,Tyler	SP	STL	P	e	k						e					
Berrios,Jose	SP	MIN	P	e	k						EX					
Glasnow,Tyler	SP	PIT	P	e	k						EX					
Lopez,Jorge	SP	MIL	P	e	k						EX					
Montas,Frankie	SP	LA	P	e	k						EX					
Reed,Cody	SP	CIN	P	e	k						EX					
Snell,Blake	SP	TAM	P	e	k						EX					
Urias,Julio	SP	LA	P	e	k						EX					
Cobb,Alex	SP	TAM	P	e	k					INJ						
Wheeler,Zack	SP	NYM	P	e	k					INJ	e					
Bundy,Dylan	SP	BAL	P	e	k					INJ	EX					
De Leon,Jose	SP	LA	P		K+						EX					
Sims,Lucas	SP	ATL	P		K+						EX					
Blackburn,Clayton	SP	SF	P	ER							EX					
Newcomb,Sean	SP	ATL	P		KK						EX					
Below,Duane	SP	NYM	P	e							e					
Blair,Aaron	SP	ATL	P	e							EX					
Cooney,Tim	SP	STL	P	e							EX					
Fulmer,Michael	SP	DET	P	e							EX					
Lee,Zach	SP	LA	P	e							EX					
Wagner,Tyler	SP	MIL	P	e							EX					
McCarthy,Brandon	SP	LA	P	e						INJ						
Richard,Clayton	SP	CHC	P	e						INJ						
Whitley,Chase	SP	TAM	P	e						INJ	e	Nw				
Flores,Kendry	SP	MIA	P	e						INJ	EX					
Giolito,Lucas	SP	WAS	P		k						EX					

Hultzen,Danny	SP	SEA	P		k						EX					
Lincecum,Tim	SP	FAN	P		k					INJ						
Morrow,Brandon	SP	SD	P		k					INJ						
Owens,Henry	SP	BOS	P		k				-ER		EX					
Montero,Rafael	SP	NYM	P		k					INJ	EX					

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), ER (ERA Potential), K (Strikeouts), Sv (Saves), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression). **LIABILITIES:** ER (ERA), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

Clayton Kershaw is a god. **Chris Sale** and **Max Scherzer** are nearly as holy. In fact, their individual profiles are close enough that any one of the three could be ranked ahead of the others. That does not necessarily mean one of them will be the top earner come October – that honor is often reserved for an outlier who has his one shining (*cough* Keuchel *cough*) season – but among the three, I would not be surprised to see Sale or Scherzer finish ahead of Kershaw.

Behind that trio is a huge block of a dozen (ER,KK) pitchers who are essentially interchangeable. You will recognize them as the group that will typically be gone by the end of the fourth round. These are the $20-plus anchor arms. Most drafters will work hard to differentiate, but really, "as long as I get one of them, I'll be fine" is the typical refrain. Sound familiar?

A few of those pitchers will probably slip to the 5th or 6th rounds – which is still essentially the same bucket – but one stands out as more of an outlier: **Tyson Ross**. Ross' peripherals stack up well with the rest of the group, the one exception being his elevated walk rate. That has inflated his WHIP over the years, though he has posted extended stretches with a sub-1.20 level. Add in the sub-par support of his Padres teammates and you can see how his ADP gets pushed towards triple-digits. But I have no trouble ranking him near the bottom of the (ER,KK) group.

As you can surmise, the whole concept of interchangeability fascinates me. We spend so much time obsessing over finding *differences* among players that we overlook the power of *sameness* when it comes to leveraging the marketplace. I decided to ask the Tout Wars experts if they really could distinguish among the pitchers in this group:

	BABS	**ADP**	**R$**
Max Scherzer	ER,K+	13	$33
Chris Sale	ER,K+	26	$26
Madison Bumgarner	ER,KK	28	$25
Jose Fernandez	ER,K+ | INJ	29	$25
Stephen Strasburg	ER,KK | inj-	41	$21

I asked:

Evaluate the following pitchers in terms of skill and risk, and rank them based on how you think they will do in 2017. (NOT 2016). Number them 1 to 5 with 1 being best and 5 being worst.

The 2017 twist was intended to help them focus away from the immediate future and provide a more overall, long-term assessment. I scored their results as 5 points for a "1" vote, 4 points for a "2" vote, down to 1 point for a "5" vote. The results from the 32 respondents:

	Points	**1st place votes**
Jose Fernandez	114	12
Chris Sale	108	7
Max Scherzer	107	7
Madison Bumgarner	107	6
Stephen Strasburg	43	0

In the world of statistical significance, these are four indistinguishable pitchers… and Stephen Strasburg. The impact on the marketplace is what is important. This says that there is no need to pay the premium of 1-2 rounds, or $7-$8 to draft Max Scherzer.

The Assets of **Jose Fernandez** (and **Yu Darvish**) grade out at the same level as Sale and Scherzer (ER,K+) but they are ranked much further back because of questions about innings and injury risk. They are the epitome of high risk, high reward commodities. Similarly, only innings are holding back pitchers like **Carlos Martinez** and **Lance McCullers** (ER,KK) from ranking among the elite.

When projected innings are the only thing holding back a skilled pitcher from ranking higher, consider that the odds of an injury to a pitcher blocking him is incredibly high. *If the skills are truly there, the innings will come.* So if you have the choice between a mid-timer like Martinez or McCullers versus a full-timer with lesser skills or more Liabilities, go with the better-skilled mid-timer (who will probably cost less).

It's not quite the same with the part-timers. These are mostly fringe starter candidates. While all the arms listed here have some measurable Asset, every one also has some risk, either health or experience. At best, you can tuck a few on a reserve list, but most of these are longshot speculations.

There are 10 full-timers (180-plus innings) and more than 50 mid-timers who have nothing on the Assets side of the ledger at all. These huge buckets of asset-less pitchers are begging for differentiation, but it's mostly a waste of time. The skills are all below average so your focus has to be on the Liabilities. If you're drafting this far into the talent pool, any upside is going to be speculative and unprojectable; it's all about damage control.

So, flip a coin between **Ervin Santana** and **Edinson Volquez**. Weigh the risk between **Shelby Miller** in his new D-back digs versus **Andrew Heaney's** lack of experience. You can hedge the innings and take a chance that Pirates pitching coach Ray Searage can work magic with **Jon Niese,** or that **Nathan Eovaldi** will find some better movement to his fastball. By October, we will be able to rank them all, but right now, there are too many variables and too little skill to make them projectable.

With these guys, just protect your backside. And certainly stay away from any arm with (-ER) on the liabilities side. They will be ERA/WHIP killers.

RELIEF PITCHERS

In the eternal quest for the elusive SAVE, it's all about Skill and Opportunity, right? If you have enough Skill, the Opportunity will come. Well, it's not that simple.

Opportunity can come from a variety of sources, from skill, to depth chart attrition, to outwardly random managerial whim. That's the case with every role. But the fickle nature of Opportunity is perhaps most notable when it comes to closers. And since the only real value that closers have is in generating saves, a lost Opportunity can be fatal.

So fantasy leaguers don't typically invest a lot here. That's smart.

This following list includes all the prime candidates to see saves plus other relievers who have, at minimum, a dual-asset skill set. The non-save pitchers higher on the list are the better options for "roster filler that won't hurt you" and could potentially help your ratios. Often, when a starter goes down, it's better to replace him with a high-skilled reliever than a Brett Oberholtzer.

			ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
PITCHER	Pos	Tm	PT	ER	K	Sv	Pk	Rg	ER	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
Davis,Wade	rp	KC	-	E+	K+	SV									
Kimbrel,Craig	rp	BOS	-	E+	K+	SV						Nw			
Chapman,Aroldis	rp	NYY	-	E+	K+	SV						Nw			Rg
Jansen,Kenley	rp	LA	-	E+	K+	SV				inj-					
Britton,Zach	rp	BAL	-	E+	KK	SV									
Allen,Cody	rp	CLE	-	ER	K+	SV									
Robertson,David	rp	CHW	-	ER	K+	SV									
Rosenthal,Trevor	rp	STL	-	ER	K+	SV									

Familia,Jeurys	rp	NYM	-	ER	K+	SV										Rg
Giles,Kenneth	rp	HOU	-	ER	K+	SV					e	Nw				
Osuna,Roberto	rp	TOR	-	ER	K+	SV					EX					
Melancon,Mark	rp	PIT	-	E+	k	SV										
Papelbon,Jonathan	rp	WAS	-	ER	KK	SV										
Tolleson,Shawn	rp	TEX	-	ER	KK	SV										
Rodriguez,Francisco	rp	DET	-	ER	KK	SV						Nw				
Rondon,Hector	rp	CHC	-	ER	KK	SV										Rg
Miller,Andrew	rp	NYY	-	E+	K+	sv-										
Street,Huston	rp	LAA	-	e	KK	SV										
Boxberger,Brad	rp	TAM	-	ER	K+	sv-										
Ramos,A.J.	rp	MIA	-	ER	K+	sv-										
Smith,Will	rp	MIL	-	ER	K+	sv-										
Doolittle,Sean	rp	OAK	-	ER	K+	sv-				INJ						
Capps,Carter	rp	MIA	-	ER	K+	sv-				INJ	e					
Grilli,Jason	rp	ATL	-	ER	K+	sv-				INJ				Ag		
Mcgee,Jake	rp	COL	-	ER	K+	sv-				INJ		Nw	Pk			
Storen,Drew	rp	TOR	-	ER	KK	sv-						Nw				
Benoit,Joaquin	rp	SEA	-	ER	KK	sv-						Nw		Ag		
Knebel,Corey	rp	MIL	-	ER	KK	sv-					EX					
Strickland,Hunter	rp	SF	-	ER	KK	sv-					EX					
Vizcaino,Arodys	rp	ATL	-	ER	KK	sv-					EX					
Pomeranz,Drew	rp	SD	-	ER	KK	sv-				INJ		Nw				
Hernandez,David	rp	PHI	-	e	K+	sv-				INJ		Nw				
Ziegler,Brad	rp	ARI	-	ER		SV								Ag		Rg
Casilla,Santiago	rp	SF	-	ER	k	sv-										
Jeffress,Jeremy	rp	MIL	-	ER	k	sv-										
Perkins,Glen	rp	MIN	-	e	KK	sv-										
Diaz,Jumbo	rp	CIN	-	e	KK	sv-					e					
Jepsen,Kevin	rp	MIN	-	e	k	sv-										
Cishek,Steve	rp	SEA	-	e	k	sv-						Nw				
Quackenbush,Kevin	rp	SD	-	e	k	sv-					e					
Contreras,Carlos	rp	CIN	-		K+	sv-					EX					
Betances,Dellin	rp	NYY	-	ER	K+											
Cecil,Brett	rp	TOR	-	ER	K+											
O Day,Darren	rp	BAL	-	ER	K+											
Romo,Sergio	rp	SF	-	ER	K+											
Sipp,Tony	rp	HOU	-	ER	K+											
Strop,Pedro	rp	CHC	-	ER	K+											
Grimm,Justin	rp	CHC	-	ER	K+					inj-						
Holland,Greg	rp	KC	-	ER	K+					inj-						

Kelley,Shawn	rp	WAS	-	ER	K+					inj-		Nw				
Alvarez,Dario	rp	NYM	-	ER	K+						EX					
Armstrong,Shawn	rp	CLE	-	ER	K+						EX					
Drake,Oliver	rp	BAL	-	ER	K+						EX					
Givens,Mychal	rp	BAL	-	ER	K+						EX					
Goody,Nicholas	rp	NYY	-	ER	K+						EX					
Kela,Keone	rp	TEX	-	ER	K+						EX					
Weiss,Zack	rp	CIN	-	ER	K+						EX					
Baez,Pedro	rp	LA	-	ER	K+					inj-	e					
Jones,Nate	rp	CHW	-	ER	K+					INJ						
Walden,Jordan	rp	STL	-	ER	K+					INJ						
Uehara,Koji	rp	BOS	-	ER	K+					INJ					Ag	
Qualls,Chad	rp	COL	-	e		sv-						Nw	Pk	Ag		
Duke,Zach	rp	CHW	-	ER	KK											
Gregerson,Luke	rp	HOU	-	ER	KK											
Herrera,Kelvin	rp	KC	-	ER	KK											
Watson,Tony	rp	PIT	-	ER	KK											
Madson,Ryan	rp	OAK	-	ER	KK							Nw				
Cedeno,Xavier	rp	TAM	-	ER	KK						e					
Krol,Ian	rp	ATL	-	ER	KK						e	Nw				
Smith,Carson	rp	BOS	-	ER	KK						e	Nw				
Bracho,Silvino	rp	ARI	-	ER	KK						EX					
Broadway,Michael	rp	SF	-	ER	KK						EX					
Edwards,Jonathan	rp	SD	-	ER	KK						EX					
Garcia,Yimi	rp	LA	-	ER	KK						EX					
Patton,Spencer	rp	CHC	-	ER	KK						EX					
Furbush,Charlie	rp	SEA	-	ER	KK					INJ						
Simmons,Shae	rp	ATL	-	ER	KK					inj-	EX					
Hatcher,Chris	rp	LA	-	ER	KK					INJ	e					
Hoover,J.J.	rp	CIN	-		k	sv-										
Alburquerque,Al	rp	LAA	-	e	K+											
Bastardo,Antonio	rp	NYM	-	e	K+											
Diekman,Jake	rp	TEX	-	e	K+											
Fields,Joshua	rp	HOU	-	e	K+											
Perez,Oliver	rp	WAS	-	e	K+							Nw				
Rutckyj,Evan	rp	ATL	-	e	K+						EX					
Lindgren,Jacob	rp	NYY	-	e	K+					inj-	EX					
Harris,Will	rp	HOU	-	ER	k											
Howell,J.P.	rp	LA	-	ER	k											
Loup,Aaron	rp	TOR	-	ER	k											
Shaw,Bryan	rp	CLE	-	ER	k											

Vincent,Nick	rp	SD	-	ER	k											
Hendriks,Liam	rp	OAK	-	ER	k							Nw				
Warren,Adam	rp	CHC	-	ER	k							Nw				
Dyson,Sam	rp	TEX	-	ER	k						e					
Soria,Joakim	rp	KC	-	ER	k					inj-		Nw				
Dull,Ryan	rp	OAK	-	ER	k						EX					
Mariot,Michael	rp	PHI	-	ER	k						EX					
Oh,Seung-Hwan	rp	STL	-	ER	k						EX					
Osich,Josh	rp	SF	-	ER	k						EX					
Pazos,James	rp	NYY	-	ER	k						EX					
Tonkin,Michael	rp	MIN	-	ER	k						EX					
Zych,Tony	rp	SEA	-	ER	k						EX					
Brach,Brad	rp	BAL	-	e	KK											
Matusz,Brian	rp	BAL	-	e	KK											
Salas,Fernando	rp	LAA	-	e	KK											
Siegrist,Kevin	rp	STL	-	e	KK											
Thatcher,Joe	rp	CLE	-	e	KK											
Wood,Travis	rp	CHC	-	e	KK											
Clippard,Tyler	rp	ARI	-	e	KK							Nw				
Axford,John	rp	OAK	-	e	KK							Nw				
Scribner,Evan	rp	SEA	-	e	KK							Nw				
Caminero,Arquimedes	rp	PIT	-	e	KK						e					
Shreve,Chasen	rp	NYY	-	e	KK						e					
Johnson,Stephen	rp	CIN	-	e	KK						EX					
Morris,Akeel	rp	NYM	-	e	KK						EX					
Putnam,Zach	rp	CHW	-	e	KK					inj-	e					
Blevins,Jerry	rp	NYM	-	e	KK					INJ						
Beliveau,Jeff	rp	BAL	-	e	KK					INJ	EX					
Ramirez,Neil	rp	CHC	-	e	KK					INJ	EX					
Rodney,Fernando	rp	SD	-			sv-						Nw				
Motte,Jason	rp	COL	-			sv-			- ER	INJ		Nw	Pk			
Abad,Fernando	rp	MIN	-	e	k											
Avilan,Luis	rp	LA	-	e	k											
Blanton,Joe	rp	LA	-	e	k											
McAllister,Zach	rp	CLE	-	e	k											
Neshek,Pat	rp	HOU	-	e	k											
Reed,Addison	rp	NYM	-	e	k											
Stammen,Craig	rp	WAS	-	e	k											
Tazawa,Junichi	rp	BOS	-	e	k											
Torres,Carlos	rp	NYM	-	e	k											
Cahill,Trevor	rp	CHC	-	e	k							Nw				

Petit,Yusmeiro	rp	WAS	-	e	k							Nw				
Rzepczynski,Marc	rp	OAK	-	e	k							Nw				
Wilson,Justin	rp	DET	-	e	k							Nw				
Colome,Alexander	rp	TAM	-	e	k						e					
Freeman,Sam	rp	TEX	-	e	k						e					
Garcia,Luis	rp	PHI	-	e	k						e					
Hardy,Blaine	rp	DET	-	e	k						e					
Lowe,Mark	rp	DET	-	e	k							Nw				Rg
May,Trevor	rp	MIN	-	e	k						e					
Choate,Randy	rp	STL	-	e	k										Ag	
Broxton,Jonathan	rp	STL	-	e	k					inj-						
Hochevar,Luke	rp	KC	-	e	k					inj-						
Cotham,Caleb	rp	CIN	-	e	k						EX					
Ellington,Brian	rp	MIA	-	e	k						EX					
Gilmartin,Sean	rp	NYM	-	e	k						EX					
Hessler,Keith	rp	ARI	-	e	k						EX					
Murray,Colton	rp	PHI	-	e	k						EX					
O Grady,Chris	rp	CIN	-	e	k						EX					
Vargas,Cesar	rp	SD	-	e	k						EX					
Zimmer,Kyle	rp	KC	-	e	k						EX					
Carpenter,David	rp	ATL	-	e	k					INJ						
Hudson,Daniel	rp	ARI	-	e	k					INJ						
Maurer,Brandon	rp	SD	-	e	k					INJ						
Mejia,Jenrry	rp	NYM	-	e	k					INJ						
Ogando,Alexi	rp	ATL	-	e	k					INJ						
Santos,Sergio	rp	NYY	-	e	k					INJ						
Bailey,Andrew	rp	PHI	-	e	k					INJ		Nw				
Rasmus,Cory	rp	LAA	-	e	k					INJ	e					
Dunn,Mike	rp	MIA	-		K+											
Edwards,Carl	rp	CHC	-		K+						EX					
Frieri,Ernesto	rp	PHI	-		K+				-ER							
Brothers,Rex	rp	CHC	-		K+				-ER			Nw				
Burgos,Enrique	rp	ARI	-		K+					inj-	EX					
Barraclough,Kyle	rp	MIA	-		K+				-ER		EX					
O Flaherty,Eric	rp	FAN	-	ER												
Smith,Joe	rp	LAA	-	ER												
Guilmet,Preston	rp	DET	-	ER							EX					
Logan,Boone	rp	COL	-		KK					inj-						
Robles,Hansel	rp	NYM	-		KK						EX					
Morin,Michael	rp	LAA	-		KK					inj-	e					

Delgado,Randall	rp	ARI	-		KK					INJ						
Kahnle,Thomas	rp	CHW	-		KK				-ER		e					
Cingrani,Tony	rp	CIN	-		KK					INJ	e					
Adams,Austin	rp	CLE	-		KK				-ER		EX					
O Rourke,Ryan	rp	MIN	-		KK				-ER		EX					
Rondon,Bruce	rp	DET	-		KK					INJ	EX					
Rosscup,Zachary	rp	CHC	-		KK					INJ	EX					
Withrow,Chris	rp	ATL	-		KK					INJ	EX					

ASSETS: PT (Playing time), ER (ERA Potential), K (Strikeouts), Sv (Saves), Pk (Ballpark), Rg (Regression). **LIABILITIES:** ER (ERA), Inj (Injury), Ex (Experience), Nw (New team), Pk (Ballpark), Ag (Age), Rg (Regression)

Here is an insightful chart. These are the pitchers who were ranked as the Top 5 closers coming into each of the last four years, the pitchers who actually finished Top 5 in saves, and their ADP coming into that season:

2015	**2014**	**2013**	**2012**
ADP TOP 5			
Chapman	Kimbrel	Kimbrel	Kimbrel
Kimbrel	Jansen	Papelbon	Storen
Holland	Holland	Rodney	Axford
Robertson	Rosenthal	Motte	Rivera
Melancon	Chapman	Nathan	Papelbon
ACTUAL (ADP)			
Melancon (80)	Rodney (169)	Johnson (124)	Johnson (**)
Rosenthal (107)	Kimbrel (46)	Kimbrel (29)	Rodney (**)
Familia (465)	Holland (67)	Holland (125)	Kimbrel (56)
Boxberger (214)	Rosenthal (75)	Rivera (102)	Motte (182)
Street (121)	Jansen (62)	Nathan (100)	Soriano (221)

(**) Not in top 300

Every projected Top 5 pitcher had an ADP less than 100. But the only season where top 100-ranked closers dominated the final ranking was 2014… if you allow for the 169th ranked **Fernando Rodney** leading the pack.

The takeaway is that chasing saves leaders at the draft table is a fool's quest. The best you can do is pay for current opportunity and skills. Then leave yourself flexibility to dart and weave during the season as the expected 40 percent turnover in closers takes its toll on your roster.

Here are the top 10 ranked closers in this year's ADPs:

62. Wade Davis
64. Aroldis Chapman
66. Craig Kimbrel
71. Kenley Jansen
83. Jeurys Familia
84. Trevor Rosenthal
88. Mark Melancon
91. Kenneth Giles
93. Zach Britton
98. Cody Allen

This spread of 36 ranking spots equates to about $5 in Rotisserie value ($13-$18) and nearly matches the top 10 names on the BABS list. Buy any one; the risk of going belly-up will be the same. Just ask **Greg Holland**, and **Joe Nathan** before him.

And remember that, despite owning the skills and the role NOW, top-ranked **Wade Davis** has never saved even 20 games in a season. Ditto for 8th-ranked **Ken Giles**.

Since a closer's value is in his saves, the only way you can get a real edge is if you can get into the head of the managers and know whether it's going to be Antonio Osuna or Drew Storen, A.J. Ramos or Carter Capps, or Jeremy Jeffress or Will Smith. And you need to find that out before anyone else in your league.

A common question is whether to roster a lower-skilled pitcher who could get saves versus a higher-skilled pitcher who is not currently in line for saves. Do you roster Dellin Betances or Brad Ziegler? Darren O'Day or Fernando Rodney?

Given the fickle nature of saves, you need to cover your risk as much as possible. That means, if roster space and cost permit, you draft both. Never overpay, but both should come at a discount compared to a full-time, high-skilled closer. So if you can get one-and-one for around $15 or less, or 20th round or later, then it's good to cover some of your risk.

Chapter 7: BABS MARKETPLACE ANALYSIS

Whew! That last one was a loooong chapter.

> *Yeah, notice how quiet I was. That was a lot of data and I'm not so sure I agree with all of it.*

New ideas take time.

> *Sure, but why should I dismiss the collective wisdom of the masses?*

Actually, the collective "wisdom" (those are air quotes) of the masses is very important. That "wisdom" (air quotes again) represents the mindset of the marketplace. But even if that "wisdom" (you know) is completely off base – and it usually is – it provides an important marker for your draft prep.

You see, all this BABS intelligence is just half the story. If you use the Chapter 6 ranking sheets alone – and even the upcoming one in Chapter 8 – you will likely overdraft/overpay or underdraft/underpay for most of your players, and randomly.

We need the marketplace. We need ADPs and AAVs (average auction values). Otherwise we're just drafting in a vacuum. The marketplace tells us what our competitors may be thinking, which also tells us what we are going to have to pay (in auction dollars or draft slots) to get our players. You should never draft exclusively off an ADP list or off of BABS alone (she gets a little cranky).

It's the marriage of the two that makes the magic. Or rather, the players with the most conflict provide the best opportunities for profit.

> *Hardly a marriage at all. Sounds more like we should be looking for irreconcilable differences.*

Agreed. We need to know the players where the marketplace and BABS disagree the most. We're looking for the biggest conflicts. When BABS is higher on a player than the marketplace, that's a profit opportunity. When the marketplace is higher on a player than BABS, that's a player you pass on.

> *So, what is the marketplace saying these days?*

The ADPs and early drafts are saying that the first round is a challenge. How do you integrate veteran first round earners (Trout, Goldschmidt, Kershaw) with new first round earners (Donaldson, Machado, Arenado), potential 2016 risers (Rizzo, Correa,

Bryant) and probable 2016 rebounds (Miggy, Stanton, McCutchen)? Any of these players could finish in the Top 5, let alone Top 15.

Then, once you decide where to slot these players, how do you square those decisions when you know that 10 of 15 are not going to earn back that value?

I don't know. So I asked the Touts.

Back in January, I polled them with this question:

Research over the past 12 years has shown that, on average, 10 of the players in the ADP Top 15 will not earn back first round value. Below are the current NFBC Top 15. Mark an "X" in FIVE who are the most likely NOT to earn back this first round draft slot.

I figured that picking all 10 would be a nearly impossible task, so I only asked for five. And even with only five, the results were all over the board:

1.	Mike Trout	0%
2.	Paul Goldschmidt	0%
3.	Bryce Harper	10%
4.	Clayton Kershaw	10%
5.	Josh Donaldson	13%
6.	Carlos Correa	42%
7.	Nolan Arenado	35%
8.	Manny Machado	39%
9.	Kris Bryant	61%
10.	Giancarlo Stanton	48%
11.	Anthony Rizzo	26%
12.	Jose Altuve	39%
13.	Max Scherzer	77%
14.	Miguel Cabrera	65%
15.	Andrew McCutchen	32%

My votes were Correa, Machado, Bryant, Stanton and Scherzer.

This is a fascinating poll. It's not too surprising that the top five names garnered the fewest votes, but the players with the 6th and 7th most votes had ADPs of #11 and #15! Why aren't Rizzo and McCutchen ranked higher in the ADPs? Bryant, Scherzer and Cabrera were voted off the island by well over half the Touts. If that's what top experts believe, why are those players being drafted so high?

If we re-rank these players based on the Touts' expectation, our ADPs look a little different:

1.	Mike Trout	0%
2.	Paul Goldschmidt	0%
3.	Bryce Harper	10%
4.	Clayton Kershaw	10%
5.	Josh Donaldson	13%
6.	Anthony Rizzo	26%
7.	Andrew McCutchen	32%
8.	Nolan Arenado	35%
9.	Manny Machado	39%
10.	Jose Altuve	39%
11.	Carlos Correa	42%
12.	Giancarlo Stanton	48%
13.	Kris Bryant	61%
14.	Miguel Cabrera	65%
15.	Max Scherzer	77%

I find this ranking more palatable. Far from perfect, but better.

This exercise begins to show the process of comparing our expectations to the marketplace. The marketplace may be drafting Correa 6th, but the Tout expectations see him as perhaps the 11th best player. I suspect he gets pushed up five spots because of the Fear of Missing Out, but that decision comes with extreme risk.

Once this process expands out beyond the first round, then the real profit and loss opportunities come into play. A player with a 7th round ADP who BABS sees as a potential 5th round talent becomes a prime 6th round target. A player with a $27 AAV who BABS sees as $30-plus talent becomes a prime buy candidate at anything under $30 and a potentially still-prudent buy once bidding hits the $30s.

Before we start digging into the BABS overall rankings, let's take a look at how the top of the marketplace shakes out, in BABS terms. Here is the NFBC Top 40:

				ASSETS							LIABILITIES						
	BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg		Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	PITCHER	Pos	Tm	PT	Er	K	Sv	Pk	Rg		Er	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
1	Trout,Mike	8o	LAA	F	P+	s	AV										
2	Goldschmidt,Paul	3	ARI	F	P+		AV										
3	Harper,Bryce	o9	WAS	F	P+		AV					inj-					
4	**Kershaw,Clayton**	**SP**	**LA**	**F**	**E+**	**K+**											
5	Donaldson,Josh	5	TOR	F	P+		AV										
6	Correa,Carlos	6	HOU	F	PW		AV						EX				Rg
7	Arenado,Nolan	5	COL	F	P+		AV										
8	Machado,Manny	5	BAL	F	p		AV					inj-					
9	Bryant,Kris	5	CHC	F	P+	s							e				
10	Stanton,Giancarlo	o9	MIA	F	P+		AV					inj-					
11	Rizzo,Anthony	3	CHC	F	PW		AV										
12	Altuve,Jose	4	HOU	F		SB	AV										Rg

13	**Scherzer,Max**	**SP**	**WAS**	**F**	**ER**	**K+**											
14	McCutchen,Andrew	8o	PIT	F	P+		AV										
15	Pollock,A.J.	8o	ARI	F	p	SB	AV										
16	Cabrera,Miguel	3	DET	F	PW		AV				inj-						
17	Betts,Mookie	o8	BOS	F	p	SB	AV					e					
18	Gordon,Dee	4	MIA	F		S+	AV										
19	**Arrieta,Jake**	**SP**	**CHC**	**F**	**ER**	**KK**											**Rg**
20	Posey,Buster	23	SF	F	p		AV										
21	Encarnacion,Edwin	3	TOR	F	P+		AV										
22	Abreu,Jose	30	CHW	F	PW		AV										
23	Marte,Starling	o7	PIT	F	p	SB	AV										
24	Springer,George	o9	HOU	F	PW	SB	a				INJ	e					
25	Davis,Chris	3o90	BAL	F	P+		a										Rg
26	**Sale,Chris**	**SP**	**CHW**	**F**	**ER**	**K+**											
27	Bautista,Jose	o90	TOR	F	P+		a										
28	**Bumgarner,Madison**	**SP**	**SF**	**F**	**ER**	**KK**											
29	**Fernandez,Jose**	**SP**	**MIA**	**M**	**ER**	**K+**					**INJ**						
30	**Greinke,Zack**	**SP**	**ARI**	**F**	**ER**	**k**							**Nw**				**Rg**
31	Schwarber,Kyle	o72	CHC	F	P+							EX					
32	**Cole,Gerrit**	**SP**	**PIT**	**F**	**ER**	**k**					**inj-**						
33	**Harvey,Matt**	**SP**	**NYM**	**F**	**ER**	**KK**											
34	**Price,David**	**SP**	**BOS**	**F**	**ER**	**k**							**Nw**				
35	Votto,Joey	3	CIN	F	P+		AV										Rg
36	Blackmon,Charlie	o8	COL	F	p	SB	AV										
36	**deGrom,Jacob**	**SP**	**NYM**	**F**	**ER**	**KK**											
38	Martinez,J.D.	o9	DET	F	P+		a										
39	**Kluber,Corey**	**SP**	**CLE**	**F**	**ER**	**KK**											
40	Cespedes,Yoenis	o78	NYM	F	PW		AV										Rg

These are supposed to be the best players in 2016, in rank order. But you can see disconnects in the skills from the very top.

After the Triple-Asset threat of **Mike Trout**, you have a nice grouping of players with "P+" power and "AV" batting average. But **Carlos Correa** jumps out right away, with less power than the others at that level. Even if he had more of a track record and you could justify drafting him that high, his skills profile doesn't measure up for the #6 pick. And if you play the "position scarcity card," that's just not something you do in the first round when there are players with significantly better skills.

Manny Machado stands out even moreso at #8. As much as I love him for $16 on my keeper league team, he probably does not belong here as well.

The #9 player – **Kris Bryant** – is the only one among the top 23 batters who is below the mean for batting average. Despite his (P+,s) profile otherwise, this seems like a reach.

Who *does* belong up there? **Andrew McCutchen**, for sure. His #14 ADP is depressed by the recency bias of last year's "relative" disappointment. He was a top 3 pick last year; nothing has changed significantly, and he's healthy now.

Edwin Encarnacion (#21) and **Joey Votto** (#35) are also in the same skills class and are probably going too low.

As noted in earlier chapters, **Dee Gordon** should probably go ahead of **Jose Altuve. A.J. Pollock, Mookie Betts, Starling Marte** and **Charlie Blackmon** should be drafted much closer together; they are essentially the same guy. And when talking about Triple-Asset threats, the only other one on this list is **George Springer**. If healthy, he could way outplay his #24 ADP.

On the pitching side, it is one part "recency bias" and one part "team expectation" that has **Jake Arrieta** going ahead of **Chris Sale**. I can almost buy that, but I'd still draft Sale first. I can't imagine Arrieta not regressing significantly off last year's performance spike.

Similarly, it has to be recency bias that is pushing the lesser-skilled **Zack Greinke** and **Gerrit Cole** ahead of **Matt Harvey, Jacob deGrom** and **Corey Kluber**.

Note that every player in this Top 40 owns at least two Assets, except for one. What is **Kyle Schwarber** doing here? If you look at any set of player projections, his numbers look a lot like those of **Jay Bruce**, who is currently going outside the ADP 150. Yes, the catcher position is thin, but you are giving up so much so early by drafting him so high. And this is a player who could easily find himself back at Triple-A if he starts 2016 with the defensive prowess he displayed in the post-season. Is this the 31st best player in baseball?

Chapter 8 will include the complete player list, in BABS rank order. Alongside it will be the marketplace rankings. Potential profit opportunities will be highlighted.

> ***Finally****. Y'know, I'm the type who likes to jump in first and read the instructions later. You've made that impossible for me.*

I know. But the instructions are important. And "jumping in first" is not something you can do with BABS. She's not that type of draft process.

But yes, it's finally time for the reveal.

Chapter 8: The BABS DRAFT

If you think the BABS process is a little uncomfortable, just wait. Here in Chapter 8, we jump off the cliff. This is another long chapter, but unlike Chapter 6, it's coming at you all at once. Have a seat; grab a beer and a parachute.

We think we know where players should be ranked. There is no question that my top 3 pick is going to be one of Trout, Goldschmidt or Harper. There is no question that Jose Altuve should go before Dee Gordon. There is no question that the Mets starters should go in the order of Harvey, DeGrom and then Syndegaard. Why?

> *That's where all the spring magazines and online cheat sheets are ranking them. That's how they are going in mock drafts.*

True. But what really happened was that the first published lists and mock drafts this past winter ranked players a certain way. Then the next lists and mocks fed off the first ones. The more of these that were published, the more we drafted a certain way. Before we knew it, we reached a critical mass of opinion. The rankings became less about reality and more about group-think. Once spring training camps open, our expectations are all pretty much locked in.

> *That's not true. I draft whoever I want. I'm not swayed by the ADPs.*

Maybe. But I'd wager a guess that you're more locked in than you think. Let's say that I made a very convincing argument that Carlos Gomez should be drafted ahead of Manny Machado (that's actually very doable). You might consider my analysis, and even if you agree, you will be reluctant to change your expectations much. Why? Because all the published analyses list Machado as a 1st-rounder and Gomez outside the top 50. Shandler is just one voice in a crowd no matter how right I might be. And frankly, you don't want to risk public scorn by drafting Gomez in the first round.

> *But Gomez is not a first-rounder.*

Why not? How do you know? He earned first-round value in 2013 and 2014. He was hurt last year. Why can't he be a first-rounder again?

I can't stress enough about the realities of our group-think expectations. Here was last year's first round ADP ranking list along with where each player finished at the end of the season:

	ADP	Actual
Mike Trout	1	10
Andrew McCutchen	2	32
Clayton Kershaw	3	3
Giancarlo Stanton	4	156
Paul Goldschmidt	5	4
Miguel Cabrera	6	53
Jose Abreu	7	33
Carlos Gomez	8	148
Jose Bautista	9	27
Edwin Encarnacion	10	26
Felix Hernandez	11	104
Jose Altuve	12	9
Anthony Rizzo	13	19
Adam Jones	14	80
Troy Tulowtizki	15	115

So when I present the BABS spreadsheet below, you cannot look at it and think, "These rankings are all wrong. There is no way Player X should be ranked that low/high." BABS *might* be wrong, but no less wrong than the list you've been using so far this off-season. And BABS just might be a little more right.

In fact, the players on the following list are not ranked at all. They are slotted into large groups; those with similar profiles are presented together. It is these larger groups that are ranked, and even those ranks are just rough approximations. But it will still be enough for you to draft from.

Okay, okay. Can I see it already??

Yes. It's time. The list appears at the end of this chapter. Print out the first few pages so you can follow along.

What's on this Spreadsheet?

At the top of the spreadsheet is a **blank roster grid**. You'll keep track of your team during the draft by entering their information in the grid. (Membership to RonShandler.com gets you this spreadsheet as a downloadable file which will allow you to cut and paste your players into the appropriate position on the grid.)

The grey Target bar is where you should input your Asset goals and Liability limits, based on the data in Chapter 5. Then as the draft progresses, you'll be able to keep up with where you are and where you need to be.

Beneath the roster is your player list in all its glory. The first two columns (A and B) represent the marketplace. The rest is all BABS. Ain't she great?

Column A: Each player's **ADP** from the NFBC, as of February 23.

Column B: The ADPs converted to **dollar values** for a 15-team mixed league.

We start the process of marrying BABS to the marketplace with some color-coding.

Snake Drafts: In Column A, I've divided up the talent pool into tiers of roughly 50-60 players (in alternating **orange** and white bands). If you're in a 15-team league, that's a span of about three rounds. If you're in a 12-team league, that's a span of about four rounds.

Why 50-60? Research has shown that about 80 percent of the players who earn first round value in a given year will have come from the pre-season ADP's top 60 players. That number seems to capture most of the variability within a tier of talent and is not too large to relegate the drafting process to random dart-throws.

So for most of the draft, you'll be trying to select your players within a tier before moving on to the next tier.

Auctions: In Column B, all players who could earn $30 or more – based on BABS – are listed together (**in dark green**). Similarly, those who could earn $20-$29 are listed together (**in medium green**), as are those who could earn $10-$19 (**in light green**). Below that, the numbers are too small and variable to attach a realistic value. The difference between a $3 player and an $8 player is not remotely projectable. (I write that a lot. It's important.)

While the actual dollar values are driven by the 15-team mixed format, the broader $30, $20 and $10 tiers are helpful for those who play in different depth leagues. Again, there is nothing precise about dollar values.

Column C: Players whose BABS positioning is significantly higher than the marketplace are noted with a **"+"** – meaning a potential profit opportunity.

Looking at the first player with profit potential, Joey Votto is valued as a $30+ player (dark green). That's higher than the $23 that the marketplace is paying for him. So if you can get him at market price, or even anything under $30, you might be able to pocket some profit. Similarly in a snake draft, his ADP is #36 yet he's listed in the top 10. Nabbing him at his ADP or even a little earlier will provide profit.

For some players, the marketplace is far too bullish. For those, you'll find a big red "**X**". If you draft according to these rankings, you'll likely never get down far enough to consider them because they will have already been drafted by someone else. In the event that players like Carlos Correa, Manny Machado and Buster Posey actually drop out of the top 50, you can certainly snap 'em up then.

Assets

Within each tier, the players are assembled by like Assets, their respective skills profiles. So all the (P+,AV) players are listed together, all the (ER,KK) pitchers, and so on. Within those skills groups, players are ranked by ADP. I do this so we can easily see how the marketplace values each set of skills. This also helps us uncover the profit and loss opportunities. For instance, it is important to know that, while there are nine players with an identical (P+,AV) profile, the marketplace ranks them from #2 overall down to #111!

Liabilities

On the positional charts in Chapter 6, I sorted the players so that those with risk factors appeared at the end of each Asset grouping. For the overall list, it makes more sense to sort by the ADPs so the skills groupings follow a more familiar flow and you can identify profit opportunities easier.

The trade-off is that you have to pay more attention when it comes to the Liabilities. For each player you consider, you will have to make sure you check out the risk factors, which are now scattered randomly throughout each Asset group.

Using the Spreadsheet

When a player is nominated for bidding, or selected by another team, find him on the spreadsheet. If another team acquires him, cross him out. If you acquire him, enter his information into the appropriate row on your blank roster.

As you continue to cross out rows of players, the pockets of talent and tiers will thin out. It will become more and more obvious when you need to jump in on a particular skill or type of player.

Your profit opportunities will bubble to the top as other owners will likely have those players ranked lower on their lists. BABS keeps them on your radar constantly, so you can pick which ones best fit the needs of your roster, and at the appropriate time.

If you see a run on a stat or role, especially if it occurs on players further down the list, you may need to jump ahead, but you should be able to stick to the list for nearly all your picks.

The Top 300

I provide marketplace rankings for about 300 players. These 300 will cover an entire 12-team mixed draft. In a 15-team mixed league, they'll cover the first 20 rounds. In a 12-team AL/NL league, they will get you slightly more than halfway into the talent pool. You'll still need the skills you've cultivated in identifying talent for the rest of the draft, but the BABS ratings will help you.

You can use the marketplace rankings as a guide for when you can pick a player or how much to bid. But do not get married to these rankings. The marketplace is worthless without tying in BABS.

I stop the marketplace rankings after about 300. At that point, the draft is dominated by below average and highly speculative talent. The only full-timers left are Asset-less or Liability-laden, or both. There are still a good number of skilled mid-timers left, but their questionable playing time adds to the risk. Once you hit the end-game, the error bars get too wide to worry about.

But that's okay. This part of the draft is all about finding pockets of hidden skill that fit your roster's particular needs. Rankings are virtually useless at that point. If you need a second catcher, or a speedy guy to shore up a SB deficiency, or an insurance policy for an injury-prone front-liner, you don't care whether there is a higher ranked player who doesn't meet your needs. Yes, in leagues with trading, you can always deal away your excess, but the higher variability of these lower-level picks makes it tough to assess whether any player's potential is really higher than any other player. Besides, the other owners will have their own end-game favorites so you'll rarely be competing for the same talent anyway.

Since there are no marketplace rankings at this point, how do you know where to pick players, or how much to bid? In a snake draft, just go after skills. It doesn't matter where you draft players because the ADPs are mostly useless much after the 10th round anyway. In auctions, just follow the market. It doesn't matter whether you end up paying $8 for a $3 player. Why? Because nobody can project performance precise enough to tell you what a $3 player really is. (I know; I keep writing this.)

So once you get past the top 300, focus entirely on each player's Assets and Liabilities. Fill your holes with skilled players who have upside. Spend your Liabilities budget on some young, rising talent.

The Positional Scarcity Bugaboo

The rankings that will diverge the most from your expectations are the players whose value rides on positional scarcity. Remember that positional scarcity only matters if we were able to predict what players are going to do with any precision. If we just profile players based on their actual skills, many of them are just not as good as we think.

Needless to say, catchers don't fare well. Middle infielders like Ian Kinsler, Jason Kipnis and Brian Dozier rate poorly in BABS. You could make the conscious effort to just draft them higher, or pay more, and that's certainly your prerogative. Or you could decide to draft the best players regardless of position, ferret out some end-game skills for the roster spots you miss out on, and plan to use the free agent pool to shore up any other holes during the season.

Still, I decided to make a slight concession here. I've moved a block of catchers to just after the Top 300. Just so you can find them.

Tactical Considerations: Auctions

Early on, nominate and pay attention to the top players with a particular skills set or role. Once pricing is established for the best starting pitcher, closer, top power hitter and speedster, you'll get a general sense of where the values should fall for the lesser players.

It works the same way when the first player within a certain skills group gets drafted. The price where the first (P+,a) hitter goes, for instance, sets a rough benchmark for where some of the others in that group might go, adjusted for the impact of any Liabilities.

Once that benchmark is set, you can scan the list of players with comparable profiles and decide where the most profitable targets might be. For instance, if Jose Bautista (P+,a) goes for $29 – $3 higher than his AAV – you might conclude that players of that type will be overpriced. In that case, you could opt to go after a comparable player at the lower end of the AAVs, like Khris Davis, rather than potentially overpaying for a J.D. Martinez or Nelson Cruz.

Tactical Considerations: Snake Drafts

Playing off the marketplace in a snake draft is an inexact science. Unlike auctions where you can bid on whoever you want, here you are at the mercy of the other owners. The best you can do is use BABS as a guide for good spots to grab players. Nobody wants to "reach" further than is necessary, but BABS can help minimize the damage. Two examples:

David Ortiz (P+, AV) is going at #111 but has a skills set comparable to some of the top hitters. This huge discount is likely because of his age and possibly the fact that he only qualifies as a DH. Grabbing him anywhere between picks #90 and #100 is not too much of a reach and still could return tons of profit as compared to similarly skilled players at #36 and earlier.

Seven (ER,k) starting pitchers trail the better arms in strikeout potential yet four of them are being drafted with the higher group. **Zack Greinke, Gerrit Cole, David Price** and **Dallas Keuchel** will likely be gone by time you get to that part of the list, but that still leaves three pitchers who have the same basic skills profile. Pushing **Jon Lester, Sonny Grey** and **Johnny Cueto** – who are going #60, #63 and #74, respectively – into the high #50s/low #60s should be enough to grab one of them.

Playing Time

The most volatile variable in this process is going to be playing time. The rankings for mid-timers are depressed even if their skills are elite. That pushes a player like Jose Fernandez lower in the rankings than you'll find elsewhere. But you can't put 160 innings of (ER,K+) skills alongside the 200-plus innings of Scherzer and Sale. And you can't arbitrarily slot it ahead of other 200-inning arms whose skills profile might be a tick thinner.

But the nice thing about BABS is you can see exactly where a player is going to slot if their playing time expectation changes. If mid-timer Danny Valencia starts seeing full-time ABs, his (PW,AV) rating would lift him into the group with the other (PW,AV) full-timers, such as Corey Seager and Troy Tulowitzki. If Carter Capps wins the closer's job outright, his (ER,K+) rating would lift him into the same group as Cody Allen and David Robertson. And if Lance McCullers or Carlos Martinez step up into a higher spot in the rotation, their (ER,KK) rating would lift them into the same group as Madison Bumgarner, Matt Harvey and all the rest of those 4th round arms.

For drafting purposes, you have to pick 'em where they lie. But keep an eye on those players with solid skills who are stuck behind the front-liners on their teams. *Fully 70 percent of the surprises in any given season come from players backing into unexpected plate appearances or innings.*

Scan BABS; look for the mid-timers and part-timers with big skills. I'll be doing that in some separate articles next month.

A Real Life Actual BABS Draft

I took BABS out for a spin in January at the SiriusXM/Fantasy Sports Trade Association experts league. This was a 13-team mixed league.

The spreadsheet I used was different from the one here, mostly because there was little marketplace data available in mid-January. But you can still see the effect that BABS had on my drafting process. Here is the team I came away with:

	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg		Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg	Rd
J.T. Realmuto	2	MIA	F	p	s	a						e					12
Nick Hundley	2	COL	F	p		a					inj-						16
Edwin Encarnacion	3	TOR	F	P+		AV											1
Matt Carpenter	5	STL	F	PW		AV										Rg	5
Lucas Duda	3	NYM	F	P+		a											10
Dee Gordon	4	MIA	F		S+	AV											2
Brad Miller	6o8	TAM	F	p	s	a							Nw				15
DJ LeMahieu	4	COL	F		SB	AV										Rg	11
Charlie Blackmon	o8	COL	F	p	SB	AV											3
Matt Kemp	o9	SD	F	P+		a											6
Khris Davis	o7	MIL	F	P+		a					inj-						9
Danny Valencia	5o7	OAK	M	PW		AV											21
Dalton Pompey	o8	TOR	M		SB							EX					23
Evan Gattis	0	HOU	F	PW		a											17
	Target			14	8	14				0	3	3					
	Pos	Tm	PT	Er	K	Sv	Pk	Rg		Er	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg	
Matt Harvey	SP	NYM	F	ER	KK												4
Tyson Ross	SP	SD	F	ER	KK												8
Jeff Samardzija	SP	SF	F	e	k		Pk	Rg					Nw				13
Lance McCullers	SP	HOU	M	ER	KK							EX					14
Joe Ross	SP	WAS	M	e	k							EX					18
Kyle Hendricks	SP	CHC	F	e													19
Jason Hammel	SP	CHC	F	e	k												22
David Hernandez	rp	PHI	-	e	K+	sv-					INJ		Nw				20
Zach Britton	rp	BAL	-	E+	KK	SV											7
	Target			7	7					0	2	2					
Will Smith	Res	MIL	-	ER	K+	sv-											24
Tyler Duffey	Res	MIN	M	e								EX					25
Vince Velasquez	Res	PHI	M	e	KK							EX					26
Mikie Mahtook	Res	TAM	M	P+	s							EX					27
Andrelton Simmons	Res	LAA	F			AV							Nw				28
Jon Niese	Res	PIT	M														29

I know that there is nothing more boring than someone else's fantasy team, but I think that a walk-through of the BABS thought process could be helpful. Feel free to skip ahead (but I'll warn you… there is nothing else after this so you might as well read it.)

I drafted at the 13/14 wheel.

Round 1/2: I opened with **Edwin Encarnacion** (P+,AV) and **Dee Gordon** (S+,AV), players with extreme skills that gave me an immediate foundation in power and speed. Who did I pass up at that point? Giancarlo Stanton for one, but I'd rather spend my Liabilities budget on lower-ranked players who could provide profit rather than a higher ranked player whose best case is returning not much more than par value. Jose Altuve was also surprisingly still available, but Gordon gives me more of a SB cushion; what little power Altuve might provide can be easily made up later.

Round 3/4: A.J. Pollock, Mookie Betts and Starling Marte all went off the board in the second round, but like-skilled **Charlie Blackmon** (p,SB,AV) was still there 17 picks later... Six starting pitchers were already drafted at this point, and since I typically pick a starter in Rd 4, there was no reason to wait; I grabbed **Matt Harvey** (ER,KK). It was interesting that the lesser-skilled David Price, Zack Greinke and Gerrit Cole were the three pitchers who followed my pick.

Round 5/6: The depth at 3B drops off significantly after the early rounds, but there was a plum still out there once Rd 5 got to me. **Matt Carpenter's** (PW,AV) profile compares favorably with much higher valued players; I'm willing to take some regression risk at this point... Getting a player with extreme power potential like **Matt Kemp** (P+,a) in Rd 6 seemed tough to pass up.

Round 7/8: The biggest downside of drafting at the wheel is the risk of missing out on a run of like players. So sometimes you have to make a defensive pick. The owner seeded #1 snapped up the top two closers at his Rd 6/7 turn, and one more went off the board by the time my pick rolled around. Fearing a run over the next two rounds, I grabbed **Zach Britton** (E+,KK)... All the (ER,KK) arms were gone by now, except for one. I happily took **Tyson Ross**.

Round 9/10: It was interesting that, at this point of the draft there were still some extreme power hitters available. It's always good to stock up on power, so I took **Khris Davis** (this was before his trade to Oakland) and **Lucas Duda** (both P+,a). I had gotten through eight rounds without taking on any players with injury or experience Liabilities, so I was okay with taking on Davis' slight risk given the skills upside.

Round 11/12: Talent at some scarce positions was thinning out. I was hoping to grab a mid-level catcher at this point and was targeting Matt Wieters, but he went in Rd 10. I took **DJ LeMahieu** (SB,AV), who I see as Altuve-Lite, and **J.T. Realmuto**

(p,s,a), who I was hoping to grab as my #2 backstop. Drafting a catcher with SB potential helps meet those speed goals, but Realmuto carries some experience risk.

Round 13/14: Turning my attention back to pitchers, I took **Jeff Samardzija** (e,k), a somewhat lesser skilled arm but with some ballpark and regression upside, and **Lance McCullers** (ER,KK), a mid-timer with the same skills profile as Harvey and Ross. In a 13-team league, I should have been able to roster all front-line 180-IP starters, but McCullers has the best skills profile in the Houston rotation and could move up; I thought it was a chance worth taking, even with McCullers' experience risk. At worst, it would mean 30-50 fewer innings of elite skill.

Round 15/16: The last of the decent mid-level shortstops went earlier in Rd 15 (Brandon Crawford and Starlin Castro), and with the painfully thin SS pool, I took **Brad Miller** (p,s,a)… I was committed to staying out of the catcher end-game so I reached a bit and took **Nick Hundley** (p,a) here, incurring my second injury Liability.

Round 17/18: I am the type who doesn't like to tie up my DH spot early, and hate DH-only players even more. But when **Evan Gattis** (PW,a) was still available, I was willing to overlook the roster clog… Took on some more experience risk with mid-timer **Joe Ross** (e,k) but I had some risk to spare. I like his upside on a Nationals staff that always seems to have someone on the DL. Besides, I was collecting Rosses.

Round 19/20: Filling out my pitching staff, I first took **Kyle Hendricks** (e). Not my best pick, but I thought I should draft someone projected for a decent number of innings over another mid-timer… With the 2nd closer pool about depleted, I took probable Phillie closer **David Hernandez** (e,K+).

Round 21/22/23: With the Gattis clog, I was happy to get the multi-position Danny Valencia (PW,AV) and be able to put him in my OF for now. Here's hoping he becomes more than a mid-timer… Not a big fan of **Jason Hammel** (e,k), but in Rd 22, he gives me a pair of starters on the 2016 World Champs… My last pick was an outfielder, and I had clearly fallen behind in accumulating speed guys, so I took on some more experience risk with **Dalton Pompey** (SB).

Reserves: Looking to beef up some possible weaknesses, I took a speculative closer (Will Smith), two young starters with upside (Tyler Duffey and Vince Velasquez), a backup outfielder in case Pompey fails (Mikie Mahtook, before the Corey Dickerson trade), a backup shortstop (Andrelton Simmons) and Ray Searage's latest project (Jon Niese).

So, how do you think you did?

I'll let you know in October. As for BABS, she did pretty well.

I needed to draft the equivalent of all 14 batters with power. I drafted 11, but with the four (P+) hitters, I'm covered.

I needed to draft the equivalent of eight batters with speed. I drafted six, but with Gordon's (P+), I fell only one short. Given the Pompey risk, I could be very short here.

I needed to draft the equivalent of all 14 batters contributing to batting average. Pompey left me one short.

I needed to draft the equivalent of seven pitchers contributing to ERA. I'm more than covered here.

I needed to draft the equivalent of seven pitchers contributing to strikeouts. Kendricks is the one empty spot, but I might still be facing a shortfall given that the two mid-timer starters could leave me soft on innings.

As for closers, the trio I drafted will be sufficient for now. There will be plenty of churn during the season and opportunities to bulk up if needed.

On the Liabilities side, I stayed within the set limits. I'm a little heavy in experience risk, especially when including my reserves, but I think I avoided any major potholes. We'll see. As I wrote in Chapter 4, every player starts out with 25 percent odds of getting hurt, so it's not like I can count on avoiding injuries completely.

And that's it.

I suggest taking BABS out for a run by doing some mock drafts. That will give you a feel for the process and the flow, and allow you to amp up your comfort level. Then you can go LIVE!

Broad Assessment Balance Sheet

YOUR TEAM ROSTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg		Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	ca															
	ca															
	1b															
	3b															
	co															
	2b															
	ss															
	mi															
	of															
	of															
	of															
	of															
	of															
	ut															
	Target															
	Pos	Tm	PT	Er	K	Sv	Pk	Rg		Er	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	sp															
	sp															
	sp															
	sp															
	sp															
	sp															
	p															
	rp															
	rp															
	Target															
	resv															
	resv															
	resv															
	resv															
	resv															
	resv															

								ASSETS						LIABILITIES						
Marketplace			BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg		Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
ADP	$$		PITCHER	Pos	Tm	PT	Er	K	Sv	Pk	Rg		Er	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
1	$48		Trout,Mike	8o	LAA	F	P+	s	AV										
4	$41		**Kershaw,Clayton**	**SP**	**LA**	**F**	**E+**	**K+**											
2	$46		Goldschmidt,Paul	3	ARI	F	P+		AV										
3	$43		Harper,Bryce	o9	WAS	F	P+		AV					inj-					
5	$39		Donaldson,Josh	5	TOR	F	P+		AV										
7	$38		Arenado,Nolan	5	COL	F	P+		AV										
9	$36		Stanton,Giancarlo	o9	MIA	F	P+		AV					inj-					
13	$33		McCutchen,Andrew	8o	PIT	F	P+		AV										
21	$28		Encarnacion,Edwin	3	TOR	F	P+		AV										
36	$23	+	Votto,Joey	3	CIN	F	P+		AV										Rg
111	$12	+	Ortiz,David	0	BOS	F	P+		AV									Ag	
16	$31		Pollock,A.J.	8o	ARI	F	p	SB	AV										
17	$30		Betts,Mookie	o8	BOS	F	p	SB	AV						e				
23	$27		Marte,Starling	o7	PIT	F	p	SB	AV										
35	$23		Blackmon,Charlie	o8	COL	F	p	SB	AV										
48	$20	+	Upton,Justin	o7	DET	F	P+	s	a										
14	$32		**Scherzer,Max**	**SP**	**WAS**	**F**	**ER**	**K+**											
26	$26		**Sale,Chris**	**SP**	**CHW**	**F**	**ER**	**K+**											
25	$26		Springer,George	o9	HOU	F	PW	SB	a					INJ	e				
18	$29		Gordon,Dee	4	MIA	F		S+	AV										
103	$12	+	Revere,Ben	o78	WAS	F		S+	AV							Nw			
10	$35		Rizzo,Anthony	3	CHC	F	PW		AV										
15	$31		Cabrera,Miguel	3	DET	F	PW		AV					inj-					
22	$28		Abreu,Jose	30	CHW	F	PW		AV										
39	$22		Cespedes,Yoenis	o78	NYM	F	PW		AV										Rg
43	$21		Braun,Ryan	o9	MIL	F	PW		AV					INJ					
47	$20		Tulowitzki,Troy	6	TOR	F	PW		AV					inj-					Rg
55	$19		Seager,Corey	6	LA	F	PW		AV						EX				
57	$18	+	Jones,Adam	8o	BAL	F	PW		AV										
66	$17	+	Gonzalez,Adrian	3	LA	F	PW		AV										
70	$16	+	Carpenter,Matt	5	STL	F	PW		AV										Rg
81	$15	+	Freeman,Freddie	3	ATL	F	PW		AV					inj-					
107	$12	+	Dickerson,Corey	o7	TAM	F	PW		AV					inj-	e	Nw			
187	$7	+	Conforto,Michael	o7	NYM	F	PW		AV						EX				
256	$3	+	Lind,Adam	3	SEA	F	PW		AV							Nw	Pk		

20	$28		Arrieta,Jake	SP	CHC	F	ER	KK										Rg
28	$25		Bumgarner,Madison	SP	SF	F	ER	KK										
33	$24		Harvey,Matt	SP	NYM	F	ER	KK										
38	$22		deGrom,Jacob	SP	NYM	F	ER	KK										
40	$22		Kluber,Corey	SP	CLE	F	ER	KK										
41	$21		Strasburg,Stephen	SP	WAS	F	ER	KK						inj-				
46	$20		Syndergaard,Noah	SP	NYM	F	ER	KK							e			
49	$20		Archer,Chris	SP	TAM	F	ER	KK										
50	$19		Carrasco,Carlos	SP	CLE	F	ER	KK										
51	$19		Hernandez,Felix	SP	SEA	F	ER	KK										
76	$15	+	Hamels,Cole	SP	TEX	F	ER	KK										
89	$14	+	Ross,Tyson	SP	SD	F	ER	KK										
24	$27		Davis,Chris	3o90	BAL	F	P+		a									Rg
27	$26		Bautista,Jose	o90	TOR	F	P+		a									
37	$22		Martinez,J.D.	o9	DET	F	P+		a									
42	$21		Frazier,Todd	5	CHW	F	P+		a							Nw		
44	$21		Cruz,Nelson	o90	SEA	F	P+		a								Ag	Rg
56	$18		Gonzalez,Carlos	9o	COL	F	P+		a					inj-				Rg
80	$15	+	Kemp,Matt	o9	SD	F	P+		a									
126	$10	+	Davis,Khristopher	o7	OAK	F	P+		a					inj-		Nw	Pk	
141	$9	+	Duda,Lucas	3	NYM	F	P+		a									
178	$7	+	Teixeira,Mark	3	NYY	F	P+		a					inj-			Ag	
54	$19		Gomez,Carlos	8o	HOU	F	PW	s	a		Rg							
6	$38	X	Correa,Carlos	6	HOU	F	p		AV						EX			Rg
8	$37	X	Machado,Manny	5	BAL	F	p		AV					inj-				
19	$29	X	Posey,Buster	23	SF	F	p		AV									
53	$19		Cano,Robinson	4	SEA	F	p		AV									
67	$17		Hosmer,Eric	3	KC	F	p		AV									
87	$14		Pujols,Albert	30	LAA	F	p		AV					INJ			Ag	
95	$13		Beltre,Adrian	5	TEX	F	p		AV					inj-			Ag	
97	$13		Lucroy,Jonathan	2	MIL	F	p		AV					inj-				
106	$12	+	Pence,Hunter	o9	SF	F	p		AV					INJ				
116	$11	+	Peralta,David	o7	ARI	F	p		AV						e			
269	$3	+	Martinez,Victor	0	DET	F	p		AV								Ag	
62	$17		Davis,Wade	rp	KC	-	E+	K+	SV									
64	$17		Chapman,Aroldis	rp	NYY	-	E+	K+	SV							Nw		Rg
68	$16		Kimbrel,Craig	rp	BOS	-	E+	K+	SV							Nw		
69	$16		Jansen,Kenley	rp	LA	-	E+	K+	SV					inj-				

31	$24	X	Greinke,Zack	SP	ARI	F	ER	k								Nw		Rg
32	$24	X	Cole,Gerrit	SP	PIT	F	ER	k						inj-				
34	$23	X	Price,David	SP	BOS	F	ER	k								Nw		
45	$20	X	Keuchel,Dallas	SP	HOU	F	ER	k										Rg
60	$18		Lester,Jon	SP	CHC	F	ER	k										
63	$17		Gray,Sonny	SP	OAK	F	ER	k										
74	$16		Cueto,Johnny	SP	SF	F	ER	k		Pk						Nw		
144	$9	+	Burns,Billy	8o	OAK	F		S+	a						e			
78	$15		Salazar,Danny	SP	CLE	F	e	KK										
143	$9	+	Iglesias,Raisel	SP	CIN	F	e	KK						inj-	EX			
12	$33	X	Altuve,Jose	4	HOU	F		SB	AV									Rg
52	$19		Cain,Lorenzo	o8	KC	F		SB	AV									
142	$9	+	LeMahieu,DJ	4	COL	F		SB	AV									Rg
184	$7	+	Inciarte,Ender	o978	ATL	F		SB	AV							Nw		
253	$4	+	Span,Denard	8o	SF	F		SB	AV					INJ		Nw		
117	$11		Longoria,Evan	5	TAM	F	PW		a									
147	$9	+	Belt,Brandon	3	SF	F	PW		a									
156	$8	+	Wieters,Matt	2	BAL	F	PW		a					INJ				
174	$7	+	Crawford,Brandon	6	SF	F	PW		a									Rg
177	$7	+	Trumbo,Mark	o903	BAL	F	PW		a	Pk						Nw		
179	$7	+	Soler,Jorge	o9	CHC	F	PW		a					inj-	e			
230	$5	+	Ozuna,Marcell	o8	MIA	F	PW		a									
252	$4	+	Castellanos,Nick	5	DET	F	PW		a									
320	$1	+	Beltran,Carlos	o9	NYY	F	PW		a					inj-			Ag	
166	$8	+	Realmuto,Jacob	2	MIA	F	p	s	a						e			
271	$3	+	Miller,Bradley	6o8	TAM	F	p	s	a							Nw		
11	$34	X	Bryant,Kris	5	CHC	F	P+	s							e			
91	$14		Britton,Zach	rp	BAL	-	E+	KK	SV									
30	$24	X	Fernandez,Jose	SP	MIA	M	ER	K+						INJ				
122	$11		Darvish,Yu	SP	TEX	M	ER	K+						INJ				
84	$14		Familia,Jeurys	rp	NYM	-	ER	K+	SV									Rg
85	$14		Rosenthal,Trevor	rp	STL	-	ER	K+	SV									
92	$13		Giles,Kenneth	rp	HOU	-	ER	K+	SV						e	Nw		
102	$12		Allen,Cody	rp	CLE	-	ER	K+	SV									
110	$12		Robertson,David	rp	CHW	-	ER	K+	SV									

148	$9		**Boxberger,Brad**	**rp**	**TAM**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**	**SV**									
224	$5	+	Zimmerman,Ryan	3	WAS	M	P+		AV					INJ				
71	$16		Seager,Kyle	5	SEA	F	p		a									
73	$16		Rendon,Anthony	45	WAS	F	p		a					INJ				
83	$14	X	Puig,Yasiel	9o	LA	F	p		a					INJ				Rg
105	$12		Franco,Maikel	5	PHI	F	p		a					inj-	EX			
115	$11		Calhoun,Kole	9o	LAA	F	p		a									
123	$11		Ramirez,Hanley	o7	BOS	F	p		a					inj-				Rg
130	$10		Choo,Shin-Soo	o9	TEX	F	p		a									
138	$10		Moustakas,Mike	5	KC	F	p		a									Rg
160	$8		Morales,Kendrys	0	KC	F	p		a									
177	$7		Gomes,Yan	2	CLE	F	p		a					inj-				
185	$7	+	Gordon,Alex	o7	KC	F	p		a					inj-				
203	$6	+	Piscotty,Stephen	o7	STL	F	p		a						EX			
226	$5	+	Hundley,Nick	2	COL	F	p		a					inj-				
228	$5	+	Walker,Neil	4	NYM	F	p		a							Nw		
234	$4	+	Peralta,Jhonny	6	STL	F	p		a									
248	$4	+	Holliday,Matt	o7	STL	F	p		a					INJ				Ag
282	$3	+	Cron,C.J.	30	LAA	F	p		a						e			
356	$0		Lamb,Jacob	5	ARI	F	p		a						e			
369	$(0)		Escobar,Eduardo	6o7	MIN	F	p		a									
442	$(2)		Butler,Billy	0	OAK	F	p		a									
613	$(5)		Uribe,Juan	5	CLE	F	p		a							Nw		Ag
96	$13		**Wacha,Michael**	**SP**	**STL**	**F**	**e**	**k**										
112	$12		**Richards,Garrett**	**SP**	**LAA**	**F**	**e**	**k**						**inj-**				
127	$10		**Shields,James**	**SP**	**SD**	**F**	**e**	**k**										
150	$9		**Samardzija,Jeff**	**SP**	**SF**	**F**	**e**	**k**		**Pk**	**Rg**					**Nw**		
172	$7		**Walker,Taijuan**	**SP**	**SEA**	**F**	**e**	**k**							**e**			
175	$7	+	**Ventura,Yordano**	**SP**	**KC**	**F**	**e**	**k**						**inj-**				
176	$7	+	**Teheran,Julio**	**SP**	**ATL**	**F**	**e**	**k**										
183	$7	+	**McHugh,Collin**	**SP**	**HOU**	**F**	**e**	**k**										
193	$6	+	**Gonzalez,Gio**	**SP**	**WAS**	**F**	**e**	**k**										
236	$4	+	**Hammel,Jason**	**SP**	**CHC**	**F**	**e**	**k**										
262	$3	+	**DeSclafani,Anthony**	**SP**	**CIN**	**F**	**e**	**k**							**e**			
275	$3	+	**Wood,Alex**	**SP**	**LA**	**F**	**e**	**k**										
279	$3	+	**Nelson,Jimmy**	**SP**	**MIL**	**F**	**e**	**k**										

65	$17	X	Heyward,Jason	o9	CHC	F		s	AV							Nw			
99	$13		Eaton,Adam	8o	CHW	F		s	AV										
104	$12		Yelich,Christian	o78	MIA	F		s	AV					inj-					
133	$10		Duffy,Matt	5	SF	F		s	AV						e				
137	$10		Reyes,Jose	6	COL	F		s	AV					inj-					Rg
204	$6	+	Parra,Gerardo	o978	COL	F		s	AV	Pk						Nw			
319	$1	+	Aoki,Norichika	o7	SEA	F		s	AV					inj-		Nw			
29	$25	X	Schwarber,Kyle	o72	CHC	F	P+								EX				
59	$18	X	Sano,Miguel	0	MIN	F	P+								EX				
168	$8		Granderson,Curtis	o9	NYM	F	P+												
181	$7		Grichuk,Randal	o78	STL	F	P+							inj-	e				
182	$7		Bruce,Jay	o9	CIN	F	P+												
337	$1	+	Carter,Chris	3	MIL	F	P+						- AV			Nw			
88	$14	X	**Melancon,Mark**	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**	**E+**	**k**	**SV**										
108	$12		**Martinez,Carlos**	**SP**	**STL**	**M**	**ER**	**KK**						**inj-**					
121	$11		**Liriano,Francisco**	**SP**	**PIT**	**M**	**ER**	**KK**						**inj-**					
125	$10		**McCullers,Lance**	**SP**	**HOU**	**M**	**ER**	**KK**							**EX**				
168	$8		**Smyly,Drew**	**SP**	**TAM**	**M**	**ER**	**KK**						**INJ**					
124	$11		**Rondon,Hector**	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**	**SV**										**Rg**
128	$10		**Rodriguez,Francisco**	**rp**	**DET**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**	**SV**							**Nw**			
153	$9		**Papelbon,Jonathan**	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**	**SV**										
159	$8		**Tolleson,Shawn**	**rp**	**TEX**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**	**SV**										
215	$5	+	**Storen,Drew**	**rp**	**TOR**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**	**SV**							**Nw**			
77	$15	X	**Wainwright,Adam**	**SP**	**STL**	**F**	**ER**							**INJ**					
188	$6		Fowler,Dexter	8o	CHC	F	p	SB											
98	$13	X	Ellsbury,Jacoby	8o	NYY	F		SB	a					inj-					Rg
196	$6		Segura,Jean	6	ARI	F		SB	a										
221	$5	+	Marte,Ketel	6	SEA	F		SB	a						EX				
249	$4	+	Herrera,Odubel	8o	PHI	F		SB	a						e				
266	$3	+	Kiermaier,Kevin	o8	TAM	F		SB	a						e				
276	$3	+	Escobar,Alcides	6	KC	F		SB	a										Rg
344	$1	+	Hernandez,Cesar	4	PHI	F		SB	a						e				
365	$(0)		Spangenberg,Cory	4	SD	F		SB	a					inj-	EX				
82	$15	X	Kipnis,Jason	4	CLE	F			AV					inj-					Rg
86	$14	X	Kinsler,Ian	4	DET	F			AV										
161	$8		Murphy,Daniel	45	WAS	F			AV							Nw			

162	$8		Pedroia,Dustin	4	BOS	F			AV					INJ					
198	$6		Zobrist,Ben	4o7	CHC	F			AV					inj-		Nw			
206	$6	+	Harrison,Josh	54o	PIT	F			AV					inj-					
254	$4	+	Kendrick,Howie	4	LA	F			AV					inj-					
261	$3	+	Cabrera,Melky	o7	CHW	F			AV										
263	$3	+	Panik,Joe	4	SF	F			AV					inj-	e				
347	$0		Mauer,Joe	30	MIN	F			AV										
351	$0		Prado,Martin	5	MIA	F			AV					inj-					
361	$0		Simmons,Andrelton	6	LAA	F			AV							Nw			
372	$(0)		Markakis,Nick	o9	ATL	F			AV										
572	$(4)		Loney,James	3	TAM	F			AV					inj-					
75	$15	X	Hamilton,Billy	8o	CIN	F		S+					- AV	inj-					
242	$4	+	Valencia,Danny	5o7	OAK	M	PW		AV										
109	$12	X	McCann,Brian	2	NYY	F	PW												
118	$11	X	**Tanaka,Masahiro**	**SP**	**NYY**	**M**	**ER**	**k**						**INJ**					
157	$8		**Severino,Luis**	**SP**	**NYY**	**M**	**ER**	**k**							**EX**				
273	$3		**Ryu,Hyun-Jin**	**SP**	**LA**	**M**	**ER**	**k**						**INJ**					
192	$6		Park,Byung Ho	3	MIN	F	PW								EX				
213	$5		Castillo,Welington	2	ARI	F	PW												
231	$4		Schoop,Jonathan	4	BAL	F	PW							inj-	e				
267	$3	+	Rodriguez,Alex	0	NYY	F	PW											Ag	Rg
280	$3	+	Plouffe,Trevor	5	MIN	F	PW												
311	$2	+	Santana,Domingo	o98	MIL	F	PW						- AV		EX				
314	$1	+	Paulsen,Benjamin	3o	COL	F	PW								EX				
403	$(1)	+	Napoli,Mike	3	CLE	F	PW									Nw			
114	$11	X	Desmond,Ian	6	FAN	F	p	s											
277	$3		Rosario,Eddie	o79	MIN	F	p	s							e				
330	$1		Altherr,Aaron	o7	PHI	F	p	s							EX				
61	$18	X	Lindor,Francisco	6	CLE	F		s	a						EX				
90	$14	X	Polanco,Gregory	o9	PIT	F		s	a						e				
145	$9		Andrus,Elvis	6	TEX	F		s	a										
155	$8		Pillar,Kevin	o8	TOR	F		s	a						e				
373	$(0)		Jackson,Austin	o89	FAN	F		s	a										
424	$(1)		Hechavarria,Adeiny	6	MIA	F		s	a										
427	$(2)		Pagan,Angel	8o	SF	F		s	a					inj-					
136	$10	X	**Ramos,A.J.**	**rp**	**MIA**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**	**sv-**										

199	$6		Doolittle,Sean	rp	OAK	-	ER	K+	sv-					INJ					
243	$4		Mcgee,Jake	rp	COL	-	ER	K+	sv-					INJ		Nw	Pk		
258	$3	+	Smith,Will	rp	MIL	-	ER	K+	sv-										
295	$2	+	Capps,Carter	rp	MIA	-	ER	K+	sv-					INJ	e				
336	$1	+	Grilli,Jason	rp	ATL	-	ER	K+	sv-					INJ				Ag	
146	$9		Street,Huston	rp	LAA	-	e	KK	SV										
189	$6		Perkins,Glen	rp	MIN	-	e	KK	SV										
345	$1	+	Velasquez,Vincent	SP	PHI	M	e	KK							EX				
120	$11	X	Zimmermann,Jordan	SP	DET	F	e									Nw			
134	$10	X	Iwakuma,Hisashi	SP	SEA	F	e							INJ					
163	$8		Quintana,Jose	SP	CHW	F	e												
186	$7		Lackey,John	SP	CHC	F	e									Nw		Ag	Rg
218	$5		Chen,Wei-Yin	SP	MIA	F	e									Nw			
219	$5		Hendricks,Kyle	SP	CHC	F	e												
274	$3		Cashner,Andrew	SP	SD	F	e							inj-					
371	$(0)		Miley,Wade	SP	SEA	F	e									Nw			
140	$9		Verlander,Justin	SP	DET	F		k						inj-					
415	$(1)		Jimenez,Ubaldo	SP	BAL	F		k											
229	$5		Vizcaino,Arodys	rp	ATL	-	ER	KK	sv-						EX				
364	$0		Strickland,Hunter	rp	SF	-	ER	KK	sv-						EX				
448	$(2)		Knebel,Corey	rp	MIL	-	ER	KK	sv-						EX				
169	$8		Kang,Jung-ho	56	PIT	M	p		AV					INJ	e				
265	$3		Turner,Justin	5	LA	M	p		AV					inj-					Rg
288	$2		Travis,Devon	4	TOR	M	p		AV					INJ	EX				
405	$(1)		Ethier,Andre	o97	LA	M	p		AV										
547	$(4)		Morneau,Justin	3	FAN	M	p		AV					INJ					
580	$(5)		Drury,Brandon	5	ARI	M	p		AV						EX				
72	$16	X	Dozier,Brian	4	MIN	F	p												
119	$11	X	Martin,Russell	2	TOR	F	p												
129	$10	X	Russell,Addison	46	CHC	F	p								e				
151	$9		Mesoraco,Devin	2	CIN	F	p							INJ					
191	$6		Santana,Carlos	30	CLE	F	p												
201	$6		Myers,Wil	o83	SD	F	p							INJ					
217	$5		Lawrie,Brett	54	CHW	F	p							inj-		Nw			
225	$5		Norris,Derek	2	SD	F	p												
245	$4		Bour,Justin	3	MIA	F	p								e				
292	$2		Cabrera,Asdrubal	6	NYM	F	p									Nw			
312	$2		Bradley,Jackie	o98	BOS	F	p								e				Rg
58	$18		Bogaerts,Xander	6	BOS	F			a										Rg

		X																
79	$15	X	Fielder,Prince	0	TEX	F			a									
93	$13	X	Perez,Salvador	2	KC	F			a									
100	$13	X	Odor,Rougned	4	TEX	F			a						e			
194	$6		Castro,Starlin	64	NYY	F			a							Nw		
205	$6		Tomas,Yasmany	o95	ARI	F			a						e			
207	$6		Phillips,Brandon	4	CIN	F			a									Rg
247	$4		Castillo,Rusney	o97	BOS	F			a						EX			
259	$3		Ramirez,Alexei	6	SD	F			a									
264	$3		McCann,James	2	DET	F			a						EX			
286	$2		Sandoval,Pablo	5	BOS	F			a									
287	$2		Garcia,Avisail	o9	CHW	F			a					inj-				
291	$2		Solarte,Yangervis	53	SD	F			a									
294	$2		Kim,Hyun-Soo	7	BAL	F			a						EX			
335	$1		Aybar,Erick	6	ATL	F			a							Nw		
340	$1		Headley,Chase	5	NYY	F			a									
367	$(0)		Gregorius,Didi	6	NYY	F			a									
381	$(0)		Escobar,Yunel	5	LAA	F			a							Nw		Rg
388	$(1)		Iglesias,Jose	6	DET	F			a						e			
408	$(1)		Cozart,Zack	6	CIN	F			a					INJ				
542	$(4)		Mercer,Jordy	6	PIT	F			a									
605	$(5)		Jay,Jon	o8	SD	F			a					inj-		Nw		
220	$5		Gattis,Evan	0	HOU	M	PW		a					inj-				
227	$5		Moreland,Mitch	3	TEX	M	PW		a									
297	$2		Werth,Jayson	o7	WAS	M	PW		a		Rg			INJ			Ag	
323	$1		Adams,Matt	3	STL	M	PW		a					INJ				
354	$0		Hamilton,Josh	o7	TEX	M	PW		a					INJ				
462	$(2)		Shaw,Travis	3	BOS	M	PW		a						EX			
537	$(4)		Smith,Seth	o790	SEA	M	PW		a									
309	$2		Peraza,Jose	4	CIN	M		S+	a						EX			
212	$5		Reddick,Josh	o9	OAK	M	p	s	a									
501	$(3)		Coghlan,Chris	o79	OAK	M	p	s	a							Nw		
139	$9	X	**Rodon,Carlos**	**SP**	**CHW**	**M**	**e**	**k**							**e**			
164	$8	X	**Pineda,Michael**	**SP**	**NYY**	**M**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**				
202	$6	X	**Maeda,Kenta**	**SP**	**LA**	**M**	**e**	**k**							**EX**			
208	$5		**Kazmir,Scott**	**SP**	**LA**	**M**	**e**	**k**								**Nw**		
209	$5		**Fiers,Mike**	**SP**	**HOU**	**M**	**e**	**k**										
214	$5		**Ross,Joe**	**SP**	**WAS**	**M**	**e**	**k**							**EX**			
307	$2		**Karns,Nathan**	**SP**	**SEA**	**M**	**e**	**k**							**e**	**Nw**		
399	$(1)		**Maurer,Brandon**	**rp**	**SD**	**M**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**				

411	$(1)		**Latos,Mat**	**SP**	**CHW**	**M**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**		**Nw**			
494	$(3)		**Bailey,Homer**	**SP**	**CIN**	**M**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**					
241	$4		**Cishek,Steve**	**rp**	**SEA**	**-**	**e**	**k**	**SV**							**Nw**			
490	$(3)		Mahtook,Mikie	o	TAM	M	P+	s							EX				
300	$2		**Hernandez,David**	**rp**	**PHI**	**-**	**e**	**K+**	**sv-**					**INJ**		**Nw**			
131	$10	X	Gardner,Brett	o78	NYY	F		SB											
180	$7	X	Deshields Jr.,Delino	o87	TEX	F		SB					- AV		e				
94	$13	X	**Stroman,Marcus**	**SP**	**TOR**	**M**	**ER**							**inj-**	**e**				
113	$11	X	**Matz,Steven**	**SP**	**NYM**	**M**	**ER**							**INJ**	**EX**				
222	$5	X	**Garcia,Jaime**	**SP**	**STL**	**M**	**ER**							**INJ**					
173	$7	X	**Casilla,Santiago**	**rp**	**SF**	**-**	**ER**	**k**	**sv-**										
313	$1		**Jeffress,Jeremy**	**rp**	**MIL**	**-**	**ER**	**k**	**sv-**										
216	$5	X	**Ziegler,Brad**	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**	**ER**		**SV**									**Ag**	**Rg**
426	$(2)		**Diaz,Jose**	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**	**e**	**KK**	**sv-**						**e**				
132	$10	X	D Arnaud,Travis	2	NYM	M	p		a					INJ	e				
223	$5	X	Wright,David	5	NYM	M	p		a					INJ					
326	$1		Colabello,Chris	o37	TOR	M	p		a						e				Rg
401	$(1)		Lowrie,Jed	5	OAK	M	p		a					INJ		Nw			
459	$(2)		Hernandez,Enrique	o4	LA	M	p		a						EX				
499	$(3)		Freese,David	5	FAA	M	p		a					INJ					
610	$(5)		Ackley,Dustin	o78	NYY	M	p		a										
			Montero,Miguel	2	CHC	M	p												
			Vogt,Stephen	23	OAK	M	p												
			Grandal,Yasmani	2	LA	M	p							inj-					
			Castro,Jason	2	HOU	M	p						- AV						
			Iannetta,Chris	2	SEA	M	p						- AV			Nw			
			Avila,Alex	23	CHW	M	p				Rg		- AV	inj-		Nw			
			Rupp,Cameron	2	PHI	M	p						- AV		EX				
			Casali,Curtis	2	TAM	M	p						- AV	inj-	EX				
			Pierzynski,A.J.	2	ATL	M			AV									Ag	
			Molina,Yadier	2	STL	M			AV					inj-					
			Chirinos,Robinson	2	TEX	M	PW							inj-	e				
			Cervelli,Francisco	2	PIT	M			a										
			Navarro,Dioner	2	CHW	M			a					inj-		Nw			
			Swihart,Blake	2	BOS	M			a						EX				
			Smoak,Justin	3	TOR	M	P+												
			Howard,Ryan	3	PHI	M	P+											Ag	

Moss,Brandon	o93	STL	M	P+						-AV						
Rasmus,Colby	o798	HOU	M	P+												
Duvall,Adam	o7	CIN	M	P+								EX				
Pederson,Joc	8o	LA	M	P+						-AV		e				
Saladino,Tyler	5	CHW	F		s					-AV		EX				
Semien,Marcus	6	OAK	F		s							e				
Galvis,Freddy	6	PHI	F		s					-AV						
Gibson,Kyle	**SP**	**MIN**	**F**													
Santana,Ervin	**SP**	**MIN**	**F**													
Volquez,Edinson	**SP**	**KC**	**F**													
Leake,Mike	**SP**	**STL**	**F**										**Nw**			
Miller,Shelby	**SP**	**ARI**	**F**										**Nw**			
Dickey,R.A.	**SP**	**TOR**	**F**												**Ag**	
Gallardo,Yovani	**SP**	**BAL**	**F**								**inj-**		**Nw**			
Heaney,Andrew	**SP**	**LAA**	**F**									**EX**				
Lewis,Colby	**SP**	**TEX**	**F**							**-ER**					**Ag**	
Kepler,Max	9o	MIN	P	p	SB	AV						EX				
Nieuwenhuis,Kirk	o7	MIL	P	P+	s	a						e	Nw			
Miller,Andrew	**rp**	**NYY**	**-**	**E+**	**K+**											
Upton,Melvin	8o	SD	M	p	SB					-AV	inj-					
Turner,Trea	4	WAS	M		SB	a						EX				
Arcia,Orlando	6	MIL	M		SB	a						e				
Santana,Daniel	6	MIN	M		SB	a						e				
Davis,Rajai	o87	CLE	M		SB	a							Nw			
Maybin,Cameron	8o	DET	M		SB	a							Nw			
Anderson,Brett	**SP**	**LA**	**M**	**e**							**inj-**					
Porcello,Rick	**SP**	**BOS**	**M**	**e**							**inj-**					
Davies,Zachary	**SP**	**MIL**	**M**	**e**								**EX**				
Duffey,Tyler	**SP**	**MIN**	**M**	**e**								**EX**				
Nola,Aaron	**SP**	**PHI**	**M**	**e**								**EX**				
Buchholz,Clay	**SP**	**BOS**	**M**	**e**							**INJ**					
Corbin,Patrick	**SP**	**ARI**	**M**	**e**							**INJ**					
Hahn,Jesse	**SP**	**OAK**	**M**	**e**							**INJ**	**e**				
Brantley,Michael	o78	CLE	M			AV					INJ					
Forsythe,Logan	43	TAM	F													Rg
Peterson,Jace	4	ATL	F							-AV		e				
Suarez,Eugenio	6	CIN	F									e				
Buxton,Byron	8o	MIN	M		S+						inj-	EX				
Bauer,Trevor	**SP**	**CLE**	**M**		**k**											

Hutchison,Drew	**SP**	**TOR**	**M**		**k**											
Kennedy,Ian	**SP**	**KC**	**M**		**k**											
Villanueva,Carlos	**rp**	**SD**	**M**		**k**											
Chavez,Jesse	**SP**	**TOR**	**M**		**k**								**Nw**			
Happ,J.A.	**SP**	**TOR**	**M**		**k**								**Nw**			
Norris,Bud	**SP**	**ATL**	**M**		**k**								**Nw**			
Odorizzi,Jake	**SP**	**TAM**	**M**		**k**						**inj-**					
Hellickson,Jeremy	**SP**	**PHI**	**M**		**k**						**inj-**		**Nw**			
Finnegan,Brandon	**SP**	**CIN**	**M**		**k**							**EX**				
Gray,Jonathan	**SP**	**COL**	**M**		**k**							**EX**				
Lamb,John	**SP**	**CIN**	**M**		**k**							**EX**				
Sanchez,Anibal	**SP**	**DET**	**M**		**k**			**Rg**			**INJ**					
Gausman,Kevin	**SP**	**BAL**	**M**		**k**						**inj-**	**e**				
Santiago,Hector	**SP**	**LAA**	**M**		**k**					**-ER**						
de la Rosa,Jorge	**SP**	**COL**	**M**		**k**						**INJ**					
Moore,Matt	**SP**	**TAM**	**M**		**k**						**INJ**					
Sabathia,CC	**SP**	**NYY**	**M**		**k**						**INJ**					
Eickhoff,Jerad	**SP**	**PHI**	**M**		**k**						**inj-**	**EX**				
Norris,Daniel	**SP**	**DET**	**M**		**k**					**-ER**	**INJ**	**EX**				
Alvarez,Pedro	3	FAA	M	PW												
LaRoche,Adam	3	CHW	M	PW				Rg		-AV					Ag	
Singleton,Jonathan	3	HOU	M	PW						-AV		EX				
Valbuena,Luis	53	HOU	M	PW												
Dietrich,Derek	o75	MIA	M	PW								e				
Young,Chris	o97	BOS	M	PW									Nw			
Orlando,Paulo	o97	KC	M	p	s							EX				
Taylor,Michael	o87	WAS	M	p	s					-AV		e				
Holt,Brock	4o59	BOS	M		s	a										
Wong,Kolten	4	STL	M		s	a										
Ramirez,Jose	64	CLE	M		s	a						e				
Rios,Alex	9o	KC	M		s	a										
Guyer,Brandon	o798	TAM	M		s	a					inj-	e				
Betances,Dellin	**rp**	**NYY**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**											
Cecil,Brett	**rp**	**TOR**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**											
O Day,Darren	**rp**	**BAL**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**											
Romo,Sergio	**rp**	**SF**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**											
Sipp,Tony	**rp**	**HOU**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**											
Strop,Pedro	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**											
Grimm,Justin	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**						**inj-**					
Holland,Greg	**rp**	**KC**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**						**inj-**					

Kelley,Shawn	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**						**inj-**		**Nw**			
Alvarez,Dario	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Armstrong,Shawn	**rp**	**CLE**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Drake,Oliver	**rp**	**BAL**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Edwards,Jonathan	**rp**	**SD**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Givens,Mychal	**rp**	**BAL**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Goody,Nicholas	**rp**	**NYY**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Kela,Keone	**rp**	**TEX**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Osuna,Roberto	**rp**	**TOR**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Reyes,Alexander	**SP**	**STL**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Weiss,Zack	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**							**EX**				
Baez,Pedro	**rp**	**LA**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**						**inj-**	**e**				
Jones,Nate	**rp**	**CHW**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**						**INJ**					
Walden,Jordan	**rp**	**STL**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**						**INJ**					
Uehara,Koji	**rp**	**BOS**	**-**	**ER**	**K+**						**INJ**				**Ag**	
Knapp,Andrew	2	PHI	P	PW	s	a						EX				
Phillips,Brett	8	MIL	P	p	SB	a						EX				
Duke,Zach	**rp**	**CHW**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**											
Gregerson,Luke	**rp**	**HOU**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**											
Herrera,Kelvin	**rp**	**KC**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**											
Watson,Tony	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**											
Madson,Ryan	**rp**	**OAK**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**								**Nw**			
Cedeno,Xavier	**rp**	**TAM**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**							**e**				
Krol,Ian	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**							**e**	**Nw**			
Smith,Carson	**rp**	**BOS**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**							**e**	**Nw**			
Benoit,Joaquin	**rp**	**SEA**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**								**Nw**		**Ag**	
Bracho,Silvino	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**							**EX**				
Broadway,Michael	**rp**	**SF**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**							**EX**				
Garcia,Yimi	**rp**	**LA**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**							**EX**				
Furbush,Charlie	**rp**	**SEA**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**						**INJ**					
Pomeranz,Drew	**rp**	**SD**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**						**INJ**		**Nw**			
Simmons,Shae	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**						**inj-**	**EX**				
Hatcher,Chris	**rp**	**LA**	**-**	**ER**	**KK**						**INJ**	**e**				
Canha,Mark	3o7	OAK	M	p								e				
Morrison,Logan	3	TAM	M	p							inj-		Nw			
Hill,Aaron	45	MIL	M	p												
Espinosa,Danny	4	WAS	M	p						- AV						
Baez,Javier	4	CHC	M	p						- AV		EX				
Asche,Cody	o75	PHI	M	p												
Gyorko,Jedd	46	STL	M	p									Nw			
Tucker,Preston	o7	HOU	M	p								EX				

Sweeney,Darnell	o	PHI	M	p						-AV		EX				
Souza,Steven	o9	TAM	M	p							INJ	EX				
Reimold,Nolan	o7	BAL	M	p						-AV	INJ					
Jaso,John	0	PIT	M			a					INJ		Nw			
Alonso,Yonder	3	OAK	M			a					inj-		Nw			
Gennett,Scooter	4	MIL	M			a										
Giavotella,Johnny	4	LAA	M			a						e				
Olivera,Hector	5	ATL	M			a						EX				
Gonzalez,Marwin	365	HOU	M			a										
Flores,Wilmer	64	NYM	M			a						e				
Murphy,David	o70	FAA	M			a										
Dyson,Jarrod	o87	KC	P		S+	a										
Jankowski,Travis	o8	SD	P		S+	a						EX				
Sanchez,Gary	2	NYY	P	PW		a						EX				
Reed,A.J.	3	HOU	P	PW		a						EX				
Raburn,Ryan	0o	FAA	P	PW		a										
Lambo,Andrew	o	OAK	P	PW		a					INJ	EX				
Utley,Chase	4	LA	P	p	s	a					inj-				Ag	
Brinson,Lewis	8	TEX	P	p	s	a						EX				
Story,Trevor	6	COL	P	P+	s					-AV		EX				
Gallo,Joey	o7	TEX	P	P+	s					-AV		EX				
Alburquerque,Al	**rp**	**LAA**	**-**	**e**	**K+**											
Bastardo,Antonio	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**	**e**	**K+**											
Diekman,Jake	**rp**	**TEX**	**-**	**e**	**K+**											
Fields,Joshua	**rp**	**HOU**	**-**	**e**	**K+**											
Perez,Oliver	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**e**	**K+**								**Nw**			
Rutckyj,Evan	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**e**	**K+**							**EX**				
Lindgren,Jacob	**rp**	**NYY**	**-**	**e**	**K+**						**inj-**	**EX**				
Villar,Jonathan	6	MIL	M		SB					-AV		e	Nw			
Venable,Will	o879	FAA	M		SB											
Bourn,Michael	o87	ATL	M		SB						inj-					
Hoover,J.J.	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**		**k**	**sv-**										
Rodney,Fernando	**rp**	**SD**	**-**		**k**	**sv-**									**Ag**	
De La Rosa,Rubby	**SP**	**ARI**	**M**													
Eovaldi,Nathan	**SP**	**NYY**	**M**													
Kelly,Joe	**SP**	**BOS**	**M**													
Locke,Jeff	**SP**	**PIT**	**M**													
Milone,Tommy	**SP**	**MIN**	**M**													
Niese,Jon	**SP**	**PIT**	**M**													
Ramirez,Erasmo	**SP**	**TAM**	**M**													

Roark,Tanner	SP	WAS	M													
Estrada,Marco	SP	TOR	M													Rg
Anderson,Chase	SP	MIL	M									e				
Ray,Robbie	SP	ARI	M									e				
Shoemaker,Matt	SP	LAA	M									e				
Colon,Bartolo	SP	NYM	M												Ag	
Duffy,Danny	SP	KC	M								inj-					
Hughes,Phil	SP	MIN	M								inj-					
Andriese,Matt	SP	TAM	M									EX				
Bassitt,Chris	SP	OAK	M									EX				
Conley,Adam	SP	MIA	M									EX				
Erlin,Robert	rp	SD	M									EX				
Rodriguez,Eduardo	SP	BOS	M									EX				
Bettis,Chad	SP	COL	M								inj-	e				
Danks,John	SP	CHW	M							- ER						
Koehler,Tom	SP	MIA	M							- ER						
Simon,Alfredo	SP	FAA	M							- ER						
Tillman,Chris	SP	BAL	M							- ER						
Feldman,Scott	SP	HOU	M								INJ					
Fister,Doug	SP	HOU	M								INJ					
Holland,Derek	SP	TEX	M								INJ					
Medlen,Kris	SP	KC	M								INJ					
Nova,Ivan	SP	NYY	M								INJ					
Peralta,Wily	SP	MIL	M								INJ					
Perez,Martin	SP	TEX	M								INJ					
Tomlin,Josh	SP	CLE	M								INJ					
Wilson,C.J.	SP	LAA	M								INJ					
Lohse,Kyle	SP	FAN	M					Rg		- ER					Ag	
Morton,Charlie	SP	PHI	M								INJ		Nw			
Jungmann,Taylor	SP	MIL	M							- ER		e				
Perez,Williams	SP	ATL	M								inj-	EX				
Paxton,James	SP	SEA	M								INJ	e				
Skaggs,Tyler	SP	LAA	M								INJ	e				
Young,Chris	SP	KC	M							- ER					Ag	
Pelfrey,Mike	SP	DET	M							- ER	inj-		Nw			
Anderson,Cody	SP	CLE	M							- ER		EX				
Garza,Matt	SP	MIL	M					Rg		- ER	INJ					
Lorenzen,Michael	SP	CIN	M							- ER		EX				

Morgan,Adam	SP	PHI	M							- ER		EX				
Nicolino,Justin	SP	MIA	M							- ER		EX				
Wisler,Matthew	SP	ATL	M							- ER		EX				
Cain,Matt	SP	SF	M							- ER	INJ					
Cosart,Jarred	SP	MIA	M							- ER	INJ					
Gonzalez,Miguel	SP	BAL	M							- ER	INJ					
Harang,Aaron	SP	FAN	M							- ER	inj-				Ag	
Lyles,Jordan	SP	COL	M							- ER	INJ					
Nolasco,Ricky	SP	MIN	M							- ER	INJ					
Peavy,Jake	SP	SF	M							- ER	INJ					
Weaver,Jered	SP	LAA	M							- ER	INJ					
Harris,Will	rp	HOU	-	ER	k											
Howell,J.P.	rp	LA	-	ER	k											
Loup,Aaron	rp	TOR	-	ER	k											
Shaw,Bryan	rp	CLE	-	ER	k											
Vincent,Nick	rp	SD	-	ER	k											
Hendriks,Liam	rp	OAK	-	ER	k								Nw			
Warren,Adam	rp	CHC	-	ER	k								Nw			
Dyson,Sam	rp	TEX	-	ER	k							e				
Soria,Joakim	rp	KC	-	ER	k						inj-		Nw			
Cotton,Jharel	SP	LA	-	ER	k							EX				
Dull,Ryan	rp	OAK	-	ER	k							EX				
Manaea,Sean	SP	OAK	-	ER	k							EX				
Mariot,Michael	rp	PHI	-	ER	k							EX				
Martin,Josh	rp	SD	-	ER	k						0	EX				
Oh,Seung-Hwan	rp	STL	-	ER	k							EX				
Osich,Josh	rp	SF	-	ER	k							EX				
Pazos,James	rp	NYY	-	ER	k							EX				
Tonkin,Michael	rp	MIN	-	ER	k							EX				
Zych,Tony	rp	SEA	-	ER	k							EX				
Lee,Cliff	SP	FAN	-	ER	k						INJ				Ag	
Brach,Brad	rp	BAL	-	e	KK											
Matusz,Brian	rp	BAL	-	e	KK											
Salas,Fernando	rp	LAA	-	e	KK											
Siegrist,Kevin	rp	STL	-	e	KK											
Thatcher,Joe	rp	CLE	-	e	KK											
Wood,Travis	rp	CHC	-	e	KK											
Axford,John	rp	OAK	-	e	KK								Nw			

Scribner,Evan	**rp**	**SEA**	**-**	**e**	**KK**								**Nw**			
Caminero,Arqui	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**	**e**	**KK**							**e**				
Shreve,Chasen	**rp**	**NYY**	**-**	**e**	**KK**							**e**				
Johnson,Stephen	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**	**e**	**KK**							**EX**				
Morris,Akeel	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**	**e**	**KK**							**EX**				
Patton,Spencer	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**	**e**	**KK**							**EX**				
Hill,Rich	**SP**	**OAK**	**-**	**e**	**KK**								**Nw**		**Ag**	**Rg**
Putnam,Zach	**rp**	**CHW**	**-**	**e**	**KK**						**inj-**	**e**				
Blevins,Jerry	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**	**e**	**KK**						**INJ**					
Mazzoni,Cory	**rp**	**SD**	**-**	**e**	**KK**						**inj-**	**EX**				
Beliveau,Jeff	**rp**	**BAL**	**-**	**e**	**KK**						**INJ**	**EX**				
Ramirez,Neil	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**	**e**	**KK**						**INJ**	**EX**				
Montero,Jesus	3	SEA	P	p		a						e				
Lee,Dae-ho	3	SEA	P	p		a						EX				
Mancini,Trey	3	BAL	P	p		a						EX				
Robinson,Clint	3o7	WAS	P	p		a						EX				
Rogers,Jason	3	PIT	P	p		a						EX	Nw			
Campbell,Eric	5	NYM	P	p		a						EX				
De Aza,Alejandro	o79	NYM	P	p		a										
Arencibia,J.P.	2	PHI	P	P+						- AV			Nw			
Saltalamacchia,J	2	DET	P	P+						- AV			Nw			
Soto,Geovany	2	LAA	P	P+						- AV			Nw			
Murphy,Tom	2	COL	P	P+						- AV		EX				
Muncy,Max	3	OAK	P	P+						- AV		EX				
Gutierrez,Franklin	o7	SEA	P	P+												
Ruggiano,Justin	o7	TEX	P	P+									Nw			
O Brien,Peter	o7	ARI	P	P+								EX				
Blash,Jabari	7	SD	P	P+						- AV		EX				
Parker,Jarrett	o	SF	P	P+						- AV		EX				
Walker,Adam	7	MIN	P	P+						- AV		EX				
Perez,Carlos	2	LAA	M		s							EX				
Owings,Chris	46	ARI	M		s							e				
Rollins,Jimmy	6	CHW	M		s								Nw		Ag	
Lagares,Juan	o8	NYM	M		s											
Martin,Leonys	8o	SEA	M		s			Rg		- AV			Nw			
Bourjos,Peter	8o	PHI	M		s					- AV			Nw			
Hicks,Aaron	o8	NYY	M		s						inj-	e	Nw			
Jennings,Desmond	o7	TAM	M		s						INJ					

Blair,Carson	2	OAK	P	PW	s					-AV		EX				
Pham,Thomas	o8	STL	P	p	SB						inj-	EX				
Stubbs,Drew	o87	FAA	P	p	SB					-AV						
Broxton,Keon	o	MIL	P	p	SB					-AV		EX				
Zimmer,Bradley	8	CLE	P	p	SB					-AV		EX				
Blanco,Gregor	o879	SF	P		SB	a										
Brito,Socrates	o	ARI	P		SB	a						EX				
Margot,Manuel	8	SD	P		SB	a						EX				
Abad,Fernando	**rp**	**MIN**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Avilan,Luis	**rp**	**LA**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Blanton,Joe	**rp**	**LA**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Jepsen,Kevin	**rp**	**MIN**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
McAllister,Zach	**rp**	**CLE**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Neshek,Pat	**rp**	**HOU**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Reed,Addison	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Tazawa,Junichi	**rp**	**BOS**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Torres,Carlos	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**e**	**k**											
Cahill,Trevor	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**	**e**	**k**								**Nw**			
Petit,Yusmeiro	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**e**	**k**								**Nw**			
Rzepczynski,Marc	**rp**	**OAK**	**-**	**e**	**k**								**Nw**			
Wilson,Justin	**rp**	**DET**	**-**	**e**	**k**								**Nw**			
Colome,Alexander	**rp**	**TAM**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**e**				
Freeman,Sam	**rp**	**TEX**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**e**				
Garcia,Luis	**rp**	**PHI**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**e**				
Hardy,Blaine	**rp**	**DET**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**e**				
Lowe,Mark	**rp**	**DET**	**-**	**e**	**k**								**Nw**			**Rg**
Lyons,Tyler	**SP**	**STL**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**e**				
May,Trevor	**rp**	**MIN**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**e**				
Quackenbush,K	**rp**	**SD**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**e**				
Choate,Randy	**rp**	**STL**	**-**	**e**	**k**										**Ag**	
Broxton,Jonathan	**rp**	**STL**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**inj-**					
Hochevar,Luke	**rp**	**KC**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**inj-**					
Berrios,Jose	**SP**	**MIN**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Cotham,Caleb	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Ellington,Brian	**rp**	**MIA**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Gilmartin,Sean	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Glasnow,Tyler	**SP**	**PIT**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Hessler,Keith	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Lopez,Jorge	**SP**	**MIL**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Murray,Colton	**rp**	**PHI**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				

O Grady,Chris	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Reed,Cody	**SP**	**CIN**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Snell,Blake	**SP**	**TAM**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Urias,Julio	**SP**	**LA**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Vargas,Cesar	**rp**	**SD**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Zimmer,Kyle	**rp**	**KC**	**-**	**e**	**k**							**EX**				
Carpenter,David	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**					
Cobb,Alex	**SP**	**TAM**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**					
Hudson,Daniel	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**					
Ogando,Alexi	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**					
Ottavino,Adam	**rp**	**COL**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**					
Santos,Sergio	**rp**	**FAA**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**					
Bailey,Andrew	**rp**	**PHI**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**		**Nw**			
Riefenhauser,C	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**inj-**	**EX**				
Rasmus,Cory	**rp**	**LAA**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**	**e**				
Wheeler,Zack	**SP**	**NYM**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**	**e**				
Bundy,Dylan	**SP**	**BAL**	**-**	**e**	**k**						**INJ**	**EX**				
La Stella,Tommy	4	CHC	P			AV					inj-	EX				
Noel,Rico	0	LA	P		S+					-AV		EX				
Hanson,Alen	6	PIT	P		S+					-AV		EX				
Quinn,Roman	8	PHI	P		S+							EX				
Jones,James	o8	TEX	P		S+					-AV			Nw			
Gore,Terrance	o7	KC	P		S+					-AV		EX				
Paredes,Jimmy	0	BAL	M							-AV		e				
Suzuki,Kurt	2	MIN	M													
Ramos,Wilson	2	WAS	M								inj-					
Flowers,Tyler	2	ATL	M							-AV			Nw			
Infante,Omar	4	KC	M													
Drew,Stephen	4	WAS	M							-AV			Nw			
Chisenhall,Lonnie	o95	CLE	M													
Goins,Ryan	46	TOR	M									e				
Hardy,J.J.	6	BAL	M							-AV	inj-					
Almonte,Abraham	o8	CLE	M									e				
Nava,Daniel	o9	LAA	M							-AV	inj-					
Saunders,Michael	o	TOR	M							-AV	INJ					
Crisp,Coco	o7	OAK	M							-AV	INJ				Ag	
Dunn,Mike	**rp**	**MIA**	**-**		**K+**											
Contreras,Carlos	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**		**K+**							**EX**				

De Leon,Jose	**SP**	**LA**	**-**		**K+**							**EX**				
Edwards,Carl	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**		**K+**							**EX**				
Sims,Lucas	**SP**	**ATL**	**-**		**K+**							**EX**				
Frieri,Ernesto	**rp**	**PHI**	**-**		**K+**					**-ER**						
Brothers,Rex	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**		**K+**					**-ER**			**Nw**			
Burgos,Enrique	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**		**K+**						**inj-**	**EX**				
Barraclough,Kyle	**rp**	**MIA**	**-**		**K+**					**-ER**		**EX**				
Zunino,Mike	2	SEA	P	PW						-AV						
McKenry,Michael	2	TEX	P	PW						-AV	inj-					
Alfaro,Jorge	2	PHI	P	PW						-AV		EX				
Susac,Andrew	2	SF	P	PW						-AV	inj-	EX				
Pearce,Steve	o73	TAM	P	PW												
Wallace,Brett	3	SD	P	PW												
Ruf,Darin	3o7	PHI	P	PW								e				
Van Slyke,Scott	o793	LA	P	PW								e				
Walker,Christian	30	BAL	P	PW								EX				
Moore,Tyler	3o7	WAS	P	PW						-AV		e				
Olson,Matt	3	OAK	P	PW						-AV		EX				
Shaffer,Richie	3	TAM	P	PW						-AV		EX				
Ishikawa,Travis	3	CHW	P	PW						-AV	INJ					
Franklin,Nick	4	TAM	P	PW						-AV	inj-	e				
Uggla,Dan	4	FAN	P	PW						-AV	inj-				Ag	
Reynolds,Mark	35	COL	P	PW			Pk						Nw			
Robinson,Drew	5	TEX	P	PW						-AV		EX				
Olt,Mike	5	CHW	P	PW						-AV	inj-	EX				
Jensen,Kyle	9	ARI	P	PW						-AV		EX				
Judge,Aaron	9	NYY	P	PW						-AV		EX				
Smith,Joe	**rp**	**LAA**	**-**	**ER**												
Blackburn,Clayton	**SP**	**SF**	**-**	**ER**								**EX**				
Guilmet,Preston	**rp**	**DET**	**-**	**ER**								**EX**				
Kelly,Ryan	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**ER**								**EX**				
Taylor,Chris	6	SEA	P	p	s					-AV		EX				
Adams,Lane	8	NYY	P	p	s					-AV		EX				
Tomlinson,Kelby	4	SF	P		s	a						EX				
Nunez,Eduardo	6	MIN	P		s	a										
Shuck,J.B.	o9	CHW	P		s	a						e				

Perez,Eury	o7	HOU	P		s	a						EX				
Crawford,Carl	o7	LA	P		s	a					INJ					
Clippard,Tyler	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**		**KK**								**Nw**			
Logan,Boone	**rp**	**COL**	**-**		**KK**						**inj-**					
Newcomb,Sean	**SP**	**ATL**	**-**		**KK**							**EX**				
Robles,Hansel	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**		**KK**							**EX**				
Morin,Michael	**rp**	**LAA**	**-**		**KK**						**inj-**	**e**				
Delgado,Randall	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**		**KK**						**INJ**					
Kahnle,Thomas	**rp**	**CHW**	**-**		**KK**					**-ER**		**e**				
Cingrani,Tony	**rp**	**CIN**	**-**		**KK**						**INJ**	**e**				
Adams,Austin	**rp**	**CLE**	**-**		**KK**					**-ER**		**EX**				
O Rourke,Ryan	**rp**	**MIN**	**-**		**KK**					**-ER**		**EX**				
Rondon,Bruce	**rp**	**DET**	**-**		**KK**						**INJ**	**EX**				
Rosscup,Zachary	**rp**	**CHC**	**-**		**KK**						**INJ**	**EX**				
Withrow,Chris	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**		**KK**						**INJ**	**EX**				
Joseph,Caleb	2	BAL	P	p								e				
Phegley,Joshua	2	OAK	P	p								e				
Conger,Hank	2	TAM	P	p						-AV			Nw			
Recker,Anthony	2	CLE	P	p						-AV		e				
Teagarden,Taylor	2	FAN	P	p						-AV		e				
Perez,Roberto	2	CLE	P	p						-AV		EX				
Rivera,Rene	2	TAM	P	p						-AV		EX				
Corporan,Carlos	2	NYY	P	p						-AV	inj-	e				
Kratz,Erik	2	SD	P	p						-AV		e	Nw		Ag	
Ross,David	2	CHC	P	p						-AV	inj-				Ag	
Hernandez,Oscar	2	ARI	P	p						-AV	inj-	EX				
Parmelee,Chris	3	NYY	P	p												
Marte,Jefry	3	LAA	P	p								EX				
Morse,Michael	3	PIT	P	p							inj-					Rg
Rodriguez,Sean	3o	PIT	P	p						-AV						
Davis,Ike	3	TEX	P	p							INJ		Nw			
Terdoslavich,Joe	3	BAL	P	p							inj-	EX				
Aguilar,Jesus	3	CLE	P	p						-AV		EX				
Wilkins,Andrew	3	MIL	P	p						-AV		EX				
Blanks,Kyle	3	SF	P	p						-AV	INJ		Nw			
Herrera,Dilson	4	NYM	P	p								EX				
Flaherty,Ryan	4	BAL	P	p						-						

										AV						
Johnson,Kelly	o743	ATL	P	p						-AV			Nw			
Field,Tommy	4	DET	P	p						-AV		EX				
Walsh,Colin	4	MIL	P	p						-AV		EX				
Guerrero,Alex	o75	LA	P	p								EX				
Nunez,Renato	5	OAK	P	p								EX				
Middlebrooks,Will	5	MIL	P	p						-AV	inj-		Nw			
Kubitza,Kyle	5	LAA	P	p						-AV		EX				
Quentin,Carlos	7	MIN	P	p							INJ					
Sizemore,Grady	o97	FAA	P	p												
Snider,Travis	o79	KC	P	p												
Arcia,Oswaldo	o	MIN	P	p							inj-					
Joyce,Matt	o7	PIT	P	p				Rg		-AV						
Garcia,Anthony	7	STL	P	p								EX				
Parker,Kyle	o7	FAN	P	p								EX				
Sands,Jerry	o9	CHW	P	p								EX				
Smolinski,Jacob	o7	OAK	P	p								EX				
Thompson,Trayce	o	LA	P	p								EX				
Lake,Junior	o	TOR	P	p						-AV		e	Nw			
Brentz,Bryce	9	BOS	P	p						-AV		EX				
Choice,Michael	9o	CLE	P	p						-AV		EX				
Den Dekker,Matt	o7	WAS	P	p						-AV		EX				
Maxwell,Justin	o9	MIA	P	p						-AV		EX				
Moya,Steven	o	DET	P	p						-AV		EX				
Renfroe,Hunter	9	SD	P	p						-AV		EX				
Walters,Zachary	o	CLE	P	p						-AV		EX				
Swisher,Nick	0o7	ATL	P	p						-AV	INJ					
Pena,Brayan	2	STL	P			a							Nw			
Barnes,Austin	2	LA	P			a						EX				
Murphy,John	2	MIN	P			a						EX	Nw			
Brantly,Rob	2	CHW	P			a					inj-	e				
Blanco,Andres	54	PHI	P			a										
Castro,Daniel	4	ATL	P			a						EX				
Refsnyder,Rob	4	NYY	P			a						EX				
Pirela,Jose	4	SD	P			a						EX	Nw			
Izturis,Maicer	4	TOR	P			a					INJ					
Gosselin,Phil	4	ARI	P			a					INJ	EX				

Cuthbert,Cheslor	5	KC	P			a						EX				
Garcia,Adonis	5	ATL	P			a						EX				
Urshela,Giovanny	5	CLE	P			a						EX				
Adames,Cristhian	6	COL	P			a						EX				
Colon,Christian	6	KC	P			a						EX				
Rojas,Miguel	6	MIA	P			a						EX				
Tejada,Ruben	6	NYM	P			a					INJ					
Urrutia,Henry	o7	BAL	P			a						EX				
Winker,Jesse	7	CIN	P			a						EX				
Butler,Joey	0o7	CLE	P			a						EX	Nw			
Cowgill,Collin	o7	CLE	P			a					INJ	e				
Williams,Mason	8o	NYY	P			a					INJ	EX				
Huff,David	**rp**	**KC**	**-**	**e**												
Hughes,Jared	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**	**e**												
Kontos,George	**rp**	**SF**	**-**	**e**												
Maness,Seth	**rp**	**STL**	**-**	**e**												
Morris,Bryan	**rp**	**MIA**	**-**	**e**												
O Flaherty,Eric	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**	**e**												
Otero,Dan	**rp**	**CLE**	**-**	**e**												
Webb,Ryan	**rp**	**TAM**	**-**	**e**												
Below,Duane	**SP**	**NYM**	**-**	**e**								**e**				
Treinen,Blake	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**e**								**e**				
Thornton,Matt	**rp**	**FAN**	**-**	**e**											**Ag**	
Aro,Jonathan	**rp**	**SEA**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Blair,Aaron	**SP**	**ATL**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Chafin,Andrew	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Cooney,Tim	**SP**	**STL**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Fulmer,Michael	**SP**	**DET**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Gott,Trevor	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Guaipe,Mayckol	**rp**	**SEA**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Kiekhefer,Dean	**rp**	**STL**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Knudson,Guido	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Lazo,Raudel	**rp**	**MIA**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Lee,Zach	**SP**	**LA**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Marinez,Jhan	**rp**	**TAM**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Miller,Justin	**rp**	**COL**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Qualls,Chad	**rp**	**COL**	**-**	**e**									**Nw**	**Pk**	**Ag**	
Rivero,Felipe	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Rondon,Jorge	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Wagner,Tyler	**SP**	**ARI**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Weber,Ryan	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				

Wittgren,Nick	**rp**	**MIA**	**-**	**e**								**EX**				
Burnett,Sean	**rp**	**WAS**	**-**	**e**							**INJ**					
McCarthy,Brandon	**SP**	**LA**	**-**	**e**							**INJ**					
Richard,Clayton	**SP**	**CHC**	**-**	**e**							**INJ**					
Varvaro,Anthony	**rp**	**BOS**	**-**	**e**							**INJ**					
Hembree,Heath	**rp**	**BOS**	**-**	**e**							**inj-**	**EX**				
Sanchez,Aaron	**rp**	**TOR**	**-**	**e**							**inj-**	**EX**				
Whitley,Chase	**SP**	**TAM**	**-**	**e**							**INJ**	**e**	**Nw**			
Flores,Kendry	**SP**	**MIA**	**-**	**e**							**INJ**	**EX**				
Difo,Wilmer	4	WAS	P		SB							EX				
Weeks,Jemile	4	SD	P		SB					- AV						
Anderson,Tim	6	CHW	P		SB							EX				
Lee,Hak-Ju	6	SF	P		SB					- AV		EX				
Mondesi,Raul	6	KC	P		SB					- AV		EX				
Suzuki,Ichiro	o97	MIA	P		SB										Ag	
Fuentes,Reymond	8	KC	P		SB							EX				
Pompey,Dalton	o8	TOR	P		SB							EX				
Smith,Mallex	8	ATL	P		SB							EX				
Tilson,Charlie	8	STL	P		SB							EX				
Gose,Anthony	8o	DET	P		SB					- AV						
Marisnick,Jake	o8	HOU	P		SB					- AV		e				
Goeddel,Tyler	7	PHI	P		SB					- AV		EX				
Schebler,Scott	o	CIN	P		SB					- AV		EX				
Schafer,Jordan	o8	LA	P		SB		0	0		- AV	INJ	0	0	0		0
Richardson,Antoan	8	PIT	P		SB					- AV	INJ	EX				
Chamberlain,Joba	**rp**	**CLE**	**-**		**k**											
Delabar,Steve	**rp**	**TOR**	**-**		**k**											
Torres,Alexander	**rp**	**ATL**	**-**		**k**											
Farquhar,Daniel	**rp**	**TAM**	**-**		**k**								**Nw**			
Nicasio,Juan	**rp**	**PIT**	**-**		**k**								**Nw**			
Wilhelmsen,Tom	**rp**	**TEX**	**-**		**k**								**Nw**			
Alvarez,Jose	**rp**	**LAA**	**-**		**k**							**e**				
Geltz,Steve	**rp**	**TAM**	**-**		**k**							**e**				
Loewen,Adam	**rp**	**ARI**	**-**		**k**							**e**				
Cotts,Neal	**rp**	**MIN**	**-**		**k**										**Ag**	
Baumann,Buddy	**rp**	**SD**	**-**		**k**							**EX**				
Bedrosian,Cam	**rp**	**LAA**	**-**		**k**							**EX**				
Cleto,Maikel	**rp**	**CHW**	**-**		**k**							**EX**				
Cordero,Jimmy	**rp**	**PHI**	**-**		**k**							**EX**				

Ferrell,Jeff	rp	DET	-		k							EX				
Giolito,Lucas	SP	WAS	-		k							EX				
Hall,Kris	rp	OAK	-		k							EX				
Healy,Tucker	rp	OAK	-		k							EX				
Hultzen,Danny	SP	SEA	-		k							EX				
Ramirez,Jose	rp	ATL	-		k							EX				
Smith,Blake	rp	SD	-		k							EX				
Smoker,Josh	rp	NYM	-		k							EX				
Stumpf,Daniel	rp	PHI	-		k							EX				
Tropeano,Nicholas	SP	LAA	-		k							EX				
Gomes,Brandon	rp	CHC	-		k					- ER						
Rodriguez,Fernando	rp	OAK	-		k					- ER						
Carpenter,David	rp	ATL	-		k						INJ					
Floyd,Gavin	SP	TOR	-		k						INJ					
Lincecum,Tim	SP	FAN	-		k						INJ					
Morrow,Brandon	SP	SD	-		k						INJ					
Feliz,Neftali	rp	PIT	-		k						INJ		Nw			
Araujo,Elvis	rp	PHI	-		k						inj-	EX				
Blazek,Michael	rp	MIL	-		k						INJ	e				
Alvarez,R.J.	rp	OAK	-		k					- ER		EX				
Crick,Kyle	rp	SF	-		k					- ER		EX				
Faulkner,Andrew	rp	TEX	-		k					- ER		EX				
Godley,Zachary	rp	ARI	-		k					- ER		EX				
Guerra,Junior	rp	MIL	-		k					- ER		EX				
Ibarra,Edgar	rp	PHI	-		k					- ER		EX				
Jackson,Luke	rp	TEX	-		k					- ER		EX				
Jones,Zach	rp	MIL	-		k					- ER		EX				
Kurcz,Aaron	rp	OAK	-		k					- ER		EX				
Law,Derek Robert	rp	SF	-		k					- ER		EX				
Martin,Rafael	rp	WAS	-		k					- ER		EX				
Neris,Hector	rp	PHI	-		k					- ER		EX				
Owens,Henry	SP	BOS	-		k					- ER		EX				
Rumbelow,Nick	rp	NYY	-		k					- ER		EX				
Stephenson,Robert	SP	CIN	-		k					- ER		EX				
Wood,Blake	rp	CIN	-		k					- ER		EX				
Montas,Frankie	SP	LA	-		k						INJ	EX				

Montero,Rafael	**SP**	**NYM**	**-**		**k**						**INJ**	**EX**				
Edgin,Josh	**rp**	**NYM**	**-**		**k**					**-ER**	**INJ**	**e**				
Nathan,Joe	**rp**	**FAA**	**-**		**k**					**-ER**	**INJ**				**Ag**	
Cordier,Erik	**rp**	**FAN**	**-**		**k**					**-ER**	**INJ**	**EX**				
Smith,Burch	**SP**	**TAM**	**-**		**k**					**-ER**	**INJ**	**EX**				
Yates,Kirby	**rp**	**NYY**	**-**		**k**					**-ER**	**INJ**	**EX**				
O Conner,Justin	2	TAM	P		s					-AV		EX				
Cecchini,Garin	30	MIL	P		s					-AV		EX	Nw			
Alberto,Hanser	4	TEX	P		s							EX				
Wendle,Joe	4	OAK	P		s							EX				
Sardinas,Luis	4	SEA	P		s							EX	Nw	Pk		
Bonifacio,Emilio	4	ATL	P		s					-AV	inj-		Nw			
Alcantara,Arismendy	4	CHC	P		s					-AV		EX				
Perez,Hernan	5	MIL	P		s							EX				
Sizemore,Scott	5	WAS	P		s					-AV						
Crawford,J.P.	6	PHI	P		s							EX				
Amarista,Alexi	6	SD	P		s					-AV						
Beckham,Tim	46	TAM	P		s						inj-	EX				
Florimon Jr.,Pedro	6	PIT	P		s					-AV		e				
Romine,Andrew	56	DET	P		s					-AV		e				
Adrianza,Ehire	46	SF	P		s					-AV		EX				
Nunez,Gustavo	6	DET	P		s					-AV		EX				
Fuld,Sam	o78	OAK	P		s											
Carrera,Ezequiel	o79	TOR	P		s							e				
Garcia,Leury	o	CHW	P		s							EX				
Mazara,Nomar	9	TEX	P		s							EX				
Ortega,Rafael	8	LAA	P		s							EX				
Young Jr.,Eric	o	MIL	P		s					-AV						
Gentry,Craig	o	LAA	P		s					-AV			Nw			
Berry,Quintin	o	LAA	P		s					-AV		EX				
Cave,Jake	8	CIN	P		s					-AV		EX				
Decker,Jaff	o	TAM	P		s					-AV		EX				
Dickerson,Alex	o7	SD	P		s					-AV		EX				
Holt,Tyler	o	CIN	P		s					-AV		EX				
Morban,Julio	9	LA	P		s					-AV		EX				

O Malley,Shawn	o	SEA	P		s					-AV		EX				
Perez,Juan	o	CHC	P		s					-AV		EX				
Rodriguez,Yorman	9	CIN	P		s					-AV		EX				
Strausborger,Ryan	o	TEX	P		s					-AV		EX				
Ynoa,Rafael	o7	COL	P		s					-AV		EX				

Chapter 9: TYING UP LOOSE ENDS

Back in December, I thought this "Write a Book in Two Months" project would be a piece of cake. What else did I have to do in the dead of winter? I set myself a March 1 deadline to get it all written, edited and distributed. But the more I wrote, the more I realized there was more left to write. As I'm sitting here now, I estimate that BABS is only about 38 percent cooked.

Okay, maybe 43 percent. (Precision is so silly.)

But, I have to stop somewhere – at least for the "book" part of BABS – and this seems as good a spot as any.

So, what did you think?

> *A lot of words. Uncharacteristically few numbers, especially for you.*

Okay… but are you buying into any of this? Do you finally understand life, the universe and everything?

> *Um… I think so. It all comes down to this (in order of ascending importance):*
>
> *- Stats are our enemy. Precision is futile. We can't predict the future.*
>
> *- Players are more alike than they are different. The more the marketplace tries to differentiate between like-skilled players, the more opportunity there is for Draft Day profit.*
>
> *- BABS can help us see all this. BABS is our friend. Maybe one day, if I can work up enough nerve, BABS could become more than just a friend.*
>
> *- 42.*

Wow. Nice. I sure could have saved a lot of typing.

But this is not the end of the process; it is actually the beginning. Now that we have BABS, we are going to need more. She is more than just a pretty face; she is an ever-evolving entity.

> *So, what's next?*

While the "book" ends here, the discussion continues online. I'll be taking different cuts of the BABS data to uncover other interesting ways to see the players. Many of you have written about your own league's unique formats and have asked how BABS could help you; I'll address some of those. I'll write about keeper leagues. At least once in March, I'll post updated BABS files. Just before Opening Day, we'll let BABS predict the pennant races, which is a totally pointless exercise but I just can't help myself.

If you bought this PDF and are not a member of the RonShandler.com site, you can have access to all those extra goodies. Scroll down to the last page for details.

And we have to talk about where we can go with the BABS spreadsheet. I cut the following conversation out of Chapter 8 because it was running too long, but it's important to share:

> *Whoa, whoa, wait a minute. Are you saying that I have to run my draft with a spreadsheet? Seriously? What is this, the 1990s?*

Okay, I should address this. For those who use software programs to run their drafts, you are going to miss the bells-and-whistles that calculate inflation on the fly, provide in-draft projections, and do everything except clean the oven. I have great respect for the folks who have created such programs, but they lull us into a comfortable place with faux precision. All their calculations and fancy charts are driven by projections… and by now you know what I think about anything powered by projections.

The evidence that the results are far less valuable than you think rests in the pro-forma standings that these programs spit out at the end of your draft. How much validity do you put into those?

> *Um, pretty much none.*

I thought so. But shouldn't you? You've spent all that effort to build a team that generates the best set of projections. Shouldn't you take the results more seriously?

> *It's a long season.*

Sure is. But BABS thinks you should start with a foundation that's not so locked into a fixed set of numbers. We simply don't know what those numbers are going to look like by October.

So yes, this spreadsheet will be a step back, a journey into retro-drafting of the 1990s. Yes, it will require a little more hands-on work. But deep down you know

that a turnkey tool is never quite as valuable as one where you have to roll up your sleeves a bit.

And who knows? Once everyone falls in love with BABS, maybe she'll agree to be automated too. Sorta like Ex Machina.

But seriously, a more automated solution does need to be in the future. I don't know whether it will be a more robust spreadsheet application or some interactive online system. But there will be a BABS 2.0 at some point. I'm no tech guy, but if you are and have ideas, I'd love to hear from you.

I'd also love to hear from everyone else. BABS is just an embryo (which puts all those earlier naughty thoughts into a completely different light) so there is much more development and evolution yet to come. If you have ideas how to improve it, drop me a note at baseball@ronshandler.com.

A few quick thank yous…

I'd like to thank Alex Patton, one of the industry's earliest pioneers whose work pre-dates mine. I always enjoyed his writing style of having a conversation with his reader and this was my first chance to write in that form.

> *So, it was all **his** fault? You stole it?*

Shhh… be quiet. I'd like to thank Jonathan Schoop. His two-year non-trend was one of my first epiphanies. He spoke to me and said, "Hey idiot, you're doing it all wrong."

I'd especially like to thank Time. Its passage has helped me see things more clearly than back in the *1994 Baseball Forecaster* when I wrote "Numbers are everything."

As always, thanks to Sue, Darielle, Justina (and Michele!).

Thanks to all of you who are still reading this and those of you who've sent me comments.

Oh, one last fun thank you...

Way back at the beginning of Chapter 6, I noted that I had enlisted the help of the participants in the Tout Wars experts leagues for their unique insights. While I suppose that my 30 years of experience qualifies me to have an opinion on some issues, it's always helpful to get input from a broad cross-section of experts. Besides, these are my friends and colleagues, and I respect what they think.

You've already seen the results of the player surveys I conducted. But there were two more questions I asked them:

Who was the player who helped you win your first fantasy baseball title?

What is your favorite ballpark food (and the park)?

By means of acknowledging their input on this book project, here are their bios and responses:

Grey Albright (Razzball.com)
I've never been a suspect in Teresa Halbach's murder. Whew!
Player: This was more like nine players, the nine people that were in the league with me that weren't good.
Food: The short-lived Kevin Maas Hard-Boiled Eggs with, of course, mustard

Doug Anderson (SoCalledFantasyExperts.com)
With a few extra rolls of the dice, Doug Anderson guided the 1981 Cubs to the World Series in Strat-O-Matic Baseball. He's now the co-founder of SoCalledFantasyExperts.com and contributes to the Fantasy Sports Network.
Player: That's a long time ago, but it was probably Fred McGriff when he got traded to the Braves and went ballistic.
Food: Any ballpark hot dog. They just taste like baseball.

Andy Behrens (Yahoo Sports)
Andy has been a fantasy sports analyst for Yahoo since 2007. He is a former Tout Wars winner (mixed, 2010) and the current president of the Fantasy Sports Writers Association. He has also written three novels for young readers.
Player: Raul Mondesi
Food: Big fan of "The Dave Kingman," which of course can be found at Wrigley Field.

Michael Beller (SI.com and 120 Sports)
Michael is the lead fantasy sports writer for Sports Illustrated and hosts the Fantasy Lunch Hour on 120 Sports, an all-digital sports network based in Chicago.
Player: The duo of Miguel Cabrera and Hideki Matsui in 2004.
Food: The real hot dogs at Wrigley Field. Not the ones from the vendors, the ones charred to perfection on the grill.

Jake Ciely (RotoExperts.com and FantasySportsNetwork.com)
Jake (@allinkid) is an award-nominated fantasy writer with nearly 20 years of experience. Jake uses his sought after, self-created metrics - including DAFP (Defense Adjusted Fantasy Points), SOBB (StrikeOut% minus BaseonBall%) and PAVE (Predictive AVErage) - to be one of the industry's most accurate experts in rankings and predictions.
Player: Barry Larkin, 1996. Was a fan of his speed and double-digit home run potential at shortstop and fortunately owned him in his career year, as I never paid up for him after that season.
Food: Crab Dip Fries from Camden Yards. This really isn't even debatable, as it's the best ballpark food in the nation!

Glenn Colton (Fantasyalarm.com)
Glenn has played fantasy baseball for 28 years and has 4 LABR/Tout Wars championships under his belt. In addition to writing for fantasyalarm.com, he co-hosts the SiriusXM Fantasy Sports Radio show "Colton and the Wolfman."
Player: Rickey Henderson
Food: Simple beer and a hot dog at Yankee Stadium.

Patrick Davitt (Baseball HQ Radio, BaseballHQ.com)
Patrick is a long-time roto player in home leagues and Tout Wars, married with two daughters (both baseball fans!).
Player: Roberto Alomar, $42, was the last piece of a carefully built keeper league title.
Food: The brat at old Milwaukee County Stadium

Nando Di Fino (FNTSY.com)
Nando has won awards and blah blah blah. His farts quietly whisper "Jedd Gyorko.'
Player: Vladimir Guerrero, in 1998.
Food: Anything that comes in a collectible plastic helmet

Rudy Gamble (Razzball.com)
Rudy is the co-founder of Razzball and is responsible for their fantasy baseball tools/projections.
Player: Alfonso Soriano
Food: Southside BBQ brisket sandwich at Dell Diamond (Round Rock Express AAA)

Mike Gianella (Baseball Prospectus)
Mike has been writing about fantasy baseball since 2007. He is the defending champion of *Tout Wars – NL* and the co-defending champion of *LABR, Mixed*. In his other job, he works in the Data Sciences department of a Fortune 100 healthcare corporation.
Player: Albert Belle in 1998
Food: Crab fries at Citizens Bank Park

Peter Kreutzer (Askrotoman.com, PattonandCo.com, *The Fantasy Baseball Guide*)
Peter is the editor-in-chief of the *The Fantasy Baseball Guide 2016*, the 17th big edition, since 2000. His online advice column, Ask Rotoman, originated at ESPN in 1996. His first player projections were for Peter Golenbock's *How to Win at Rotisserie Baseball* and have since won awards and been published by ESPN, MLB.com and PattonandCo.com.
Player: Cecil Fielder, with help from Howard Johnson
Food: Brats at the old Comiskey Park

Andrea LaMont (RotoExperts, LennyMelnickFantasySports.com)
Player: Matt Holliday in 2008
Food: The Keith Hernandez Mexi Burger at Citi Field. I know it has Jalepeno Peppers, lots of creamy cheese and a Tootsie Roll lollipop on the side.

Robert Leibowitz (Mastersball.com and Rotoheaven.com)
Rob is celebrating his 25th year of playing fantasy baseball this season! He is a 15-year member of Tout Wars. He is bringing back Rotoheaven.com for the first time since 2000 to blog on fantasy baseball, and other musings from out of left field.
Player: Barry Bonds (1993)
Food: Knish at Shea Stadium (on a childhood memory, but the food at Citifield is fantastic)

Tim McCullough (RotoExperts.com)
Tim has been playing fantasy baseball since the days when stats were pulled from the newspapers on Wednesdays and compiled by hand. He's the Managing Editor for RotoExperts.com.
Player: Pedro Martinez
Food: Sausage and pepper sub at Fenway Park

Tim McLeod (Patton and Co/Prospect361)
Tim is the proud winner of the 2015 Tout Mixed Draft League and spent the off-season scouring Asia for the next Ichiro.
Player: Mo Vaughn - 1993 was a great year to invest in Vaughn.
Food: A hot dog in early November in any park in Arizona. A dog is a dog is a dog, but the company we keep while enjoying that dog... priceless!

Lenny Melnick (lennymelnickfantasysports.com and SiriusXM Fantasy Sports Radio)
Lenny hosted the industry's first first Rotisserie Radio Show in 1993. He has appeared on TV on This Week in Baseball and Pennant Chase, and MLB Radio, Sirius Radio and RotoExperts.com.
Player: Luis Sojo
Food: Chili in Cincinnati

Lawr Michaels (Mastersball.com and USA Today)
Lawr has been a core member of the fantasy analysis community since he wrote for John Benson in 1993. He has won two Tout AL titles and is known within the industry as the Zen Master for his singular style of play.
Player: Bret Saberhagen
Food: Calamari and sushi at ATT!

Steve Moyer (inside-edge.com)
Steve has over 25 years of baseball industry experience. He is now with scouting and data analytics pioneer Inside Edge.
Player: Julio Franco
Food: Hot dog at Veterans Stadium in Philly.

Ray Murphy (BaseballHQ.com)
Ray is co-General Manager at BaseballHQ.com, and perhaps the industry's last remaining Clay Buchholz apologist.
Player: Bobby Bonilla
Food: Italian Sausage at Fenway!

Adam Ronis (rotoexperts.com)
Adam currently co-hosts the RotoExperts morning drive show with Scott Engel on Sirius XM Fantasy Sports Radio. The program airs weekdays from 6-9 AM EDT and is simulcast on the Fantasy Sports Network. He has also written for Newsday.
Player: Mo Vaughn
Food: Keith Hernandez burger at CitiField

Bret Sayre (Baseball Prospectus)
Bret is currently the Managing Editor of Baseball Prospectus and has been leading the fantasy content for nearly three years. He is also a two-time expert league champion (Tout X in 2015, LABR Mixed in 2015 with Mike Gianella), a soothing voice on two podcasts (Flags Fly Forever, There Is No Offseason), a compulsive ranker and a staunch opponent of serial commas everywhere.
Player: Nomar Garciaparra
Food: The Citi Field CF combo: double shack burger from Shake Shack and fries from Box Frites (with the smokey bacon sauce)

Larry Schechter (winningfantasybaseballthebook.com)
Larry is a six-time winner of Tout Wars, a winner of LABR and two-time winner of the CDM Sports national salary-cap challenge. He is also the author of the Amazon bestseller *Winning Fantasy Baseball*.
Player: Pedro Martinez
Food: Fenway Frank

Cory Schwartz (MLB.com, @schwartzstops)
Cory is the VP of Stats for MLB.com, overseeing year-round data capture of all MLB, minor league and winter league games. He is also a long-time co-host of the Fantasy 411.
Player: Gary Sheffield, who hit .276-27-78-12-61 in 1994 to help win my strike-shortened NL-only keeper league. Not outstanding, but my best 5-category player in a deeeeep offense.
Food: Whatever beer is cold and local to that ballpark.

Ron Shandler (What? Can't I contribute too?)
Player: Billy Swift and his 21-wins in 1993. Admittedly, Barry Bonds helped too.
Food: It's a tie. CitiField's grilled hot dog with brown mustard and ketchup-braised onions rates an 8 out of 10 in my highly critical dog book. Its equal is a split, fire-grilled dog on a toasted egg bun with mustard and cole slaw at Hunnicutt Field (Princeton, WV Rays) in the Appalachian League, and just $2! The Princeton edition would be the runaway wiener… um, winner, if the dog was bigger and they offered brown deli mustard. Hey, this is important!

Zach Steinhorn (mastersball.com, fantasy411.mlblogs.com)
Zach authors a weekly column at mastersball.com while serving as the Editor-in-Chief of the free site content. He also produces and writes for the MLB.com Fantasy 411 blog.
Player: Bartolo Colon in his 2005 AL Cy Young campaign.
Food: Ice cream at Fenway.

Scott Swanay (FantasyBaseballSherpa.com, @fantasy_sherpa)
Scott is an actuary by training, and a big proponent of position scarcity.
Player: Can't remember, probably Minnie Minoso
Food: I avoid ballpark food like the plague.

Perry Van Hook (Mastersball)
Perry is a 30-year veteran of auction AL/NL only leagues who has branched out to mixed draft leagues and written about strategy and minor league prospects for several years. He is an Official Scorer for Arizona Fall League and Arizona Rookie League. He also works as a stringer for MLB.com in spring training in retirement home of Arizona.
Player: Roger Clemens, 1987
Food: Grilled Dodger Dogs at Dodger Stadium

Brian Walton (Mastersball.com)
Brian is one of three managing principals of Mastersball.com and is a former National League Tout Wars champion. He also writes about the St. Louis Cardinals system at TheCardinalNation.com.
Player: Pedro Martinez, Montreal, 1997.
Food: Shake Shack Burger, CitiField.

Charlie Wiegert (godfatheroffantasysports.com)
The godfather of fantasy sports has been playing and winning fantasy baseball leagues since the mid 80s.
Player: Rickey Henderson
Food: Turkey leg, Busch Stadium

Fred Zinkie (MLB.com)
Fred is the lead fantasy writer for MLB.com and also proud participant in the Tout Wars Mixed Auction League.
Player: Randy Johnson in 2000
Food: I honestly can't think of one. I'm not a big eater at the ballpark.

Todd Zola (Mastersball, ESPN, Rotowire and Baseball HQ Radio)
Todd pretended writing about all things fantasy baseball wasn't his real job starting in 1997, leaving biotech in 2010 to finally make it official. He's a multi-time NFBC league winner and an FSWA award-winning writer but is obsessed with winning his first Tout Wars or LABR title.
Player: Jimmy Key
Food: Fenway Frank at Fenway Park - it's a state law

The final accounting…

Of the winning players, 69 percent were hitters and 31 percent were pitchers. Pedro Martinez, Mo Vaughn and Rickey Henderson each received multiple votes.

Of the favorite foods, 45 percent chose some hot dog–related tubed meat concoction. We are traditionalists! Fenway Park and CitiField led the pack with five mentions apiece. Ain't no East Coast bias here.

Nice of you to wrap up with some numbers.

That's it. I'm done. Go draft.

About the Author

RON SHANDLER has been writing about fantasy baseball and baseball analysis since 1986, and was the first to develop sabermetric applications for fantasy league play. He is the author of the *Baseball Forecaster*, now in its 30th edition, and the founder of BaseballHQ.com and the First Pitch Forum national conference series.

Ron spearheaded the creation of the Tout Wars national experts competition, which was the focus of the 2006 *Fantasyland* book and 2010 documentary film. He has finished Top 3 in national experts play 21 times, including six titles.

Ron has been a regular columnist for USA Today and currently writes for ESPN.com. He spent the 2004 season as an advisor to the St. Louis Cardinals. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Fantasy Sports Trade Association in 2005 and was inducted into the Fantasy Sports Writers Association Hall of Fame in 2012.

His complete bio appears here.

Enjoyed this book?

You can upgrade to a full membership at RonShandler.com. Members to Ron's website have access to downloadable spreadsheets, in-season updates and additional articles related to using BABS, including:

BABS in Auctions
BABS in Keeper Leagues
BABS in Leagues With Alternative Rules
If Every Player Was Healthy
High-Skilled Mid-Timers and Part-Timers
BABS Visits Tout Wars
BABS in the XFL Dynasty League
BABS Predicts the Pennant Races
BABS In-Season

…and much more.

To upgrade your membership, go to http://ronshandler.com/register-2/. Complete the form and in the Discount Code area, enter BABSFOREVER. Your cost to purchase this PDF will be applied to the annual membership fee.