

# Giuseppe's 2015 Tip Sheet

Each year the names change, but the basic principles are the same. The draft is all about three things: supply, demand, and expectations. That is just as true this season as any other, but there are a few additional wrinkles that make the 2015 draft somewhat “weird” in an interesting way. Before we do our team-by-team predictions Giuseppe will address each of these principles.

## Supply

Let's look at number of draftables by position. We have double counted players at all the positions they played, and even one game at that position gets them listed—so take this for what it is, a quick, crude assessment of the supply side of the problem. We know few teams would ecstatically draft Chris Gimenez as a 3B. But, if you HAD to fill games there....

For pitchers we used their TBL assigned grades—starter or reliever—though any pitcher could potentially be a reliever and some “reliever” grades also have a notional start or two. Under the “Closer” column we counted relief grades of 18+, though some peripherals might say otherwise.

<b>Position:</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>1B</b>	<b>2B</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>3B</b>	<b>OF</b>	<b>SP</b>	<b>RP</b>	<b>CI</b>
<b>Draftables:</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>10</b>

But since the Giuseppe Tip Sheet focuses on the top end of the draft, let's dive a bit deeper.

Pitching. Yes, there are 49 starting grades, but if I want a starter with at least a grade 7 and at least a dozen starts that quickly drops by over half to 23. You want a *good* starter for 2015? Say double digit starts and at least a half season's use—say 16 starts—and you are down to eight.

If we downselect relievers to grade 10+ with at least 40 innings, that too falls drastically—to twenty. For closers, imposing the same 40 inning floor, it falls to only five.

For hitters the cut-offs are not so simple, but we assessed OBP for each position (i.e. we will accept a lower OBP and still acknowledge a catcher or shortstop as being “good”, but would insist upon a higher OPS for an outfielder to be “good”). We also limited the “good” category to at least 50 games, less than a third of a season. For OF and 1B we used an OPS of .700 or better. For 2B, SS, and 3B, .650. For catcher, .600. We certainly do not think those cut lines are excessive, but we acknowledge some good prospects will be left out, such as Johanathan Schoup or Rusney Castillo but it also includes some pure cardboard like Chris Young who we do not see as anything near a high draft pick. This screening is *not* to eliminate players from the prediction process, but only to get a decent idea of what the supply curve looks like for 2015.

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<b>Good draftables</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>

## Demand

Compared to a “typical” draft the distribution of “needs” is a bit different than normal, if there is such a thing as “normal”. There are fewer teams in serious need of a catcher, at least compared to their other needs. Conversely, there is a relative spike for second basemen. Other positions are not too far off the norm.

<b>Position:</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>1B</b>	<b>2B</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>3B</b>	<b>OF</b>	<b>SP</b>	<b>RP</b>	<b>CI</b>
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<b>Good draftables</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Needed</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>

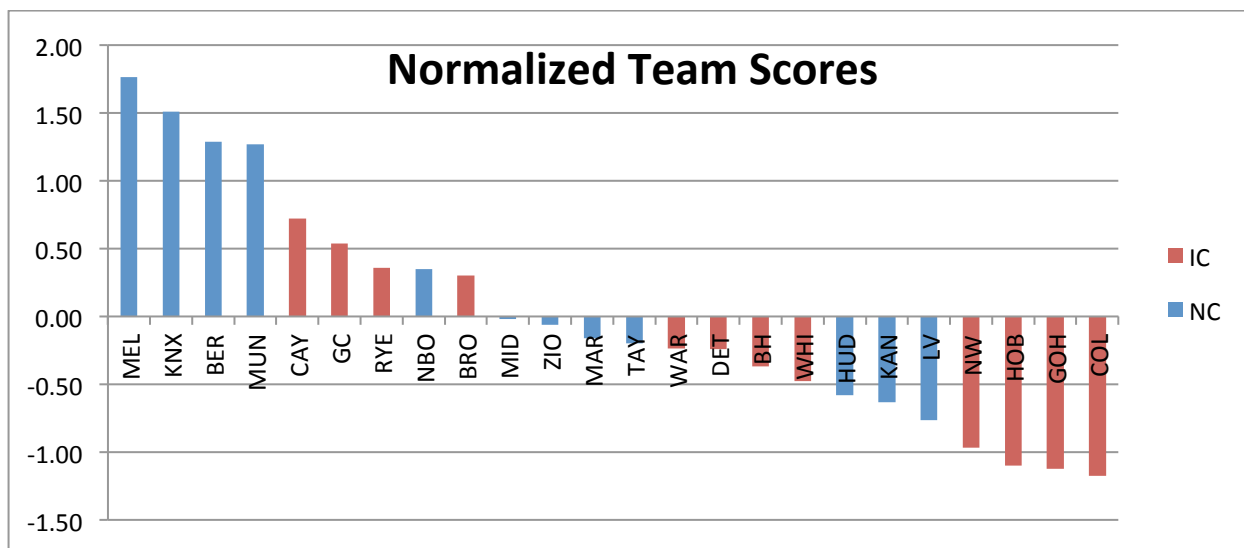
Note: some teams needed two starters and that is reflected in these demand numbers.

What does it mean? Runs. The essence of a run is when several teams need something, and they start to perceive that the supply is about to run out before their need is satisfied. The blue vs green numbers above predict the typical catcher run and a pitcher run (or two)—but also show the right conditions for a second baseman run, something we don’t typically see.

There are always a number of teams needing second basemen, but what is unusual about this draft is the number of second basemen who give pause to let avarice build. If most the second basemen in the draft were low-round quality there would be no run. People rarely panic in a herd mentality to fight for one piece of phlegm over another—but they do for one pretty good option over another. The existence of roughly even numbers of “good” second base options and teams needing them is what sets up the potential this year. We can’t say when it will happen—one or two second basemen being drafted is not a run and typically teams don’t rate their 5<sup>th</sup> best second baseman *that* much higher than their sixth best. But when the cliff starts to come in focus.... We expect that about the time the 8<sup>th</sup> second baseman is taken, the rush will begin. Maybe the Bonus or 3<sup>rd</sup> round? One of our idle thoughts has been: *If a team has a number of picks close together, is there a way they can they ignite a positional run on purpose?* If so, as the herd stampedes one way it would let them harvest players at the other positions by “buying low”. Just an interesting side thought....

## Expectations

We have not kept good data for previous seasons on how many teams *can be* contenders at the beginning of February—but our recollection is “typically” about a third *could* contend to get to the World Series *if they decide to*. About another third *could* contend for a playoff spot, and the remaining third are rebuilding. What can we tell about this season’s expectations? A quick look at the distribution of normalized “team scores” shows:

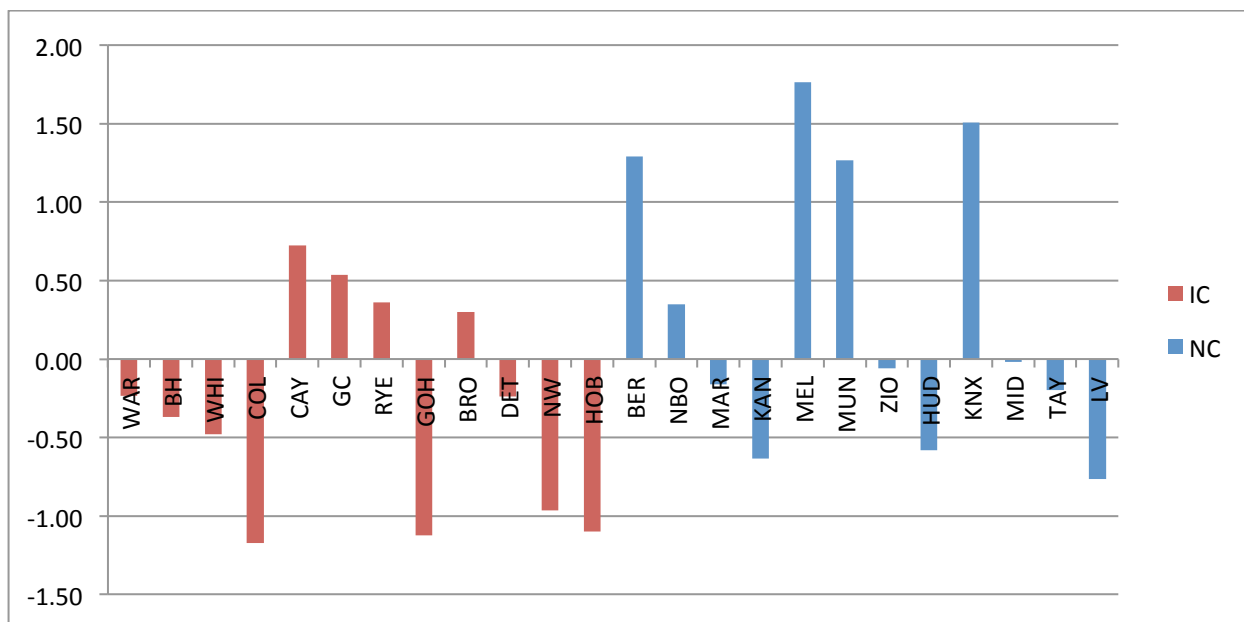


Clearly Melrose, Knoxville, Berkshire, and Munich are World Series contenders. As of today they stand as the best four teams, and the drop to number five—and the first International Conference team—is significant. The next five—Cayman through Brobdingnag—stand out as significantly above the last 15. Before the draft and before subsequent trades. On first glance that is nine of the ten playoff teams. This view would argue that the next six through eight—or ten on the outside—are fighting for the 10<sup>th</sup> playoff position. But that is an erroneous conclusion.

Detroit is an anomaly because of how much “isn’t there”. Their average starting grade is above a 10—but they are 72 starts short of a full season. Similarly their average relief grade is not horrible, but they are multiple relievers short of an adequate quantity. And they don’t have the draft picks to fill that while also providing current-year value.

Hudson and Whitman have very similar scores, and look to be a bridge too far from the last playoff spot, but in reality their situations are very different. To see it, we resort the same data as above in a different way:

In this depiction, focusing by division winners and conference wild cards instead of overall top scores shows a different story. In the National, Berkshire, and Knoxville should get into the playoffs via winning their divisions—and can probably print playoff tickets on the way home from the draft. Melrose and Munich will fight for the Mantle crown, with the “loser” still coasting into the playoffs. That leaves Northboro with a lead, albeit not a comfortable one, over Maricaibo, Zion, Midwest, and Taylorville. In this view Hudson looks more clearly to be on the outside looking in. Zion is at a disadvantage because they play more games head-to-head with the M & M boys in MEL & MUN.



In the IC, Brob has a very sizable lead in the Ruth, and the other three are all in deep-rebuild. Boomer is the front runner in the Mays, but all three—CAY, GC, and RYE—are so far ahead of any wild card teams in the Ruth or Clemente that all three will be in the playoffs. So that leaves the Clemente. Columbus has the lowest score going into the draft, *and* is 200 games short of fielding a team. Thirty eight short even if they play without a DH all season. The other three, however, Warrenton, Blue Hill, and Whitman, are clustered in a relatively tight range. One of them will get in, and because of the division, may eek out a record above .500. Jack has a small lead as of today, and the biggest position in the draft (four picks in the first two rounds) so when the Vegas odds come out we expect him to be the favorite.

Here are the raw numbers going into the draft (or more accurately, as I am writing this):

Con = Conference

St-Gd = average starting grade for the team's best 162 starts (or less if they don't have 162)

R-Gd = the average relief grade of their best 450 relief innings—or less if they have less

Score = a normalized score based upon offence and pitching, not accounting for fielding or speed

Exp.n = what we believe is a reasonable top-end expectation for 2015 as of the roster today

Needs. These are relative needs compared to the rest of their roster, with adjustments for what we thing their expectations are, and a small peak ahead into future seasons. For example Midwest does not have a current hole at catcher, but since the only rostered, carded catcher is Victor Martinez who played a total of two games there in MLB 2014—well, we thing getting a catcher is a Midwest “need” even if the player will spend all of 2015 in the minors.

Con	Div	Tm	St	St-Gd	RIP	R-Gd	-Gm	AVE	OBP	SLG	OPS	S-T	R-T	O-T	Score	Exp'n	Needs
NC	MAN	MEL	128	14.51	450	16.19	2	.272	.339	.441	.779	2.58	1.87	1.23	1.76	WS	No specific need
NC	WIL	KNX	162	10.83	450	12.79	0	.296	.364	.463	.827	0.78	0.42	2.38	1.51	WS	3B
NC	AAR	BER	162	11.63	450	16.37	22	.264	.337	.437	.774	1.17	1.95	1.10	1.29	WS	OF
NC	MAN	MUN	162	11.59	450	13.39	22	.272	.358	.436	.794	1.15	0.67	1.57	1.27	WS	SS, young C
IC	MAY	CAY	162	8.80	450	13.42	0	.267	.335	.447	.782	-0.21	0.69	1.30	0.72	WS	SP
IC	MAY	GC	162	10.48	450	13.72	0	.265	.334	.411	.744	0.61	0.82	0.38	0.54	WS	OF, SP, DH
IC	MAY	RYE	136	10.75	446	9.52	0	.271	.325	.431	.756	0.74	-0.99	0.67	0.36	WS	SP, CI, 2B
NC	AAR	NBO	129	11.20	165	9.69	45	.260	.324	.425	.749	0.96	-0.91	0.48	0.35	Wild C	2B, RP, SP
IC	RUT	BRO	162	10.08	419	12.39	0	.257	.326	.414	.739	0.42	0.25	0.25	0.30	Div	OF
NC	WIL	MID	162	9.46	450	10.46	157	.267	.323	.411	.734	0.11	-0.58	0.13	-0.02	Wild C	2B, OF, RP
NC	MAN	ZIO	128	8.21	450	15.20	0	.263	.323	.389	.712	-0.50	1.45	-0.40	-0.06	Wild C	SP, Bat, OF, 2B
NC	AAR	MAR	162	7.09	448	13.20	0	.270	.319	.412	.732	-1.04	0.59	0.07	-0.16	Wild C	SP, 2B, OF/DH
NC	WIL	TAY	162	9.83	262	12.63	0	.255	.314	.385	.699	0.30	0.35	-0.71	-0.20	Wild C	RP, SS, OF
IC	CLE	WAR	162	7.37	321	14.22	0	.265	.321	.394	.715	-0.91	1.03	-0.34	-0.24	Div	SP, RP, Bat
IC	RUT	DET	90	10.13	332	11.34	0	.247	.317	.385	.701	0.44	-0.21	-0.66	-0.24	Rebuild	BAP, no 2B
IC	CLE	BH	133	8.06	334	8.96	0	.264	.332	.401	.733	-0.57	-1.23	0.09	-0.37	Div	SP, RP, 2B, 3B
IC	CLE	WHI	135	10.10	325	12.40	0	.255	.310	.365	.675	0.43	0.25	-1.31	-0.48	Div	SP, RP, Bats
NC	MAN	HUD	162	5.86	450	10.51	0	.259	.326	.405	.731	-1.64	-0.56	0.05	-0.58	Rebuild	Mid-INF, SP
NC	AAR	KAN	125	9.36	444	7.81	0	.246	.315	.388	.703	0.07	-1.72	-0.62	-0.63	Rebuild	SP, Bats
NC	WIL	LV	162	7.99	315	10.75	0	.248	.312	.376	.688	-0.60	-0.46	-0.99	-0.77	Rebuild	RP, bats
IC	RUT	NW	121	8.05	343	9.32	158	.250	.314	.367	.681	-0.57	-1.07	-1.16	-0.97	Rebuild	Bap
IC	RUT	HOB	143	5.05	450	8.86	65	.246	.315	.395	.710	-2.04	-1.27	-0.47	-1.10	Rebuild	BAP, no SS
IC	MAY	GOH	162	7.51	401	9.29	0	.255	.310	.365	.675	-0.84	-1.08	-1.31	-1.12	Rebuild	OF, Mid-INF
IC	CLE	COL	137	7.47	439	11.17	200	.236	.302	.355	.658	-0.86	-0.28	-1.72	-1.17	Rebuild	BAP

## The Oddities

Every draft has them. Some just have more and bigger ones. This draft score high on the Weird meter.

First we have the strange case of Jose Abreu. He is by almost every person's opinion the best thing out there. I am not sure I'd call him the "next Frank Thomas" as another predictor has, but he is Frank with a few less walks and that ain't bad at all. But he is going to be 28 on draft day, and it has been a long time since a 28 year old went #1 in a TBL draft. Hamlin was 27 on TBL draft day if I recall, and we all know how that went down in history. But Abreu shows no sign of being Big Bob 2. But Northboro is not a top tier contender in 2015, so should he take him? Trade him? Take someone else? It has a bit of the Puig/Profar discussion a year ago but Puig was 21, not 28, and at that time Northboro was, well, seriously bad as demonstrated by them having the #1 pick again this season. They are *not* that bad in 2015, with or without Abreu.

Next we have one-each unique skill in the person of Billy Hamilton. My, my—what to make of *him*. This is the 90 speed on a scale of 20-80. The player who very really conceivably could steal Ricky kind of stolen base numbers—in an era where half that is considered awesome speed. 56 steals as a rookie, but only a .292 OBP. What will he be when he grows up? The Billy Hamilton of May & June—that speed with a .300+ average in May & June—who looks a lot like Lou Brock. Or the great speed, .254 OPB of the second half, more closely resembling Tony Womack? (Credit to Walter for that comparison.)

And let us not forget the pitching—and the player who is probably the biggest dice roll in the draft. Masahiro Tanaka. When healthy he was Jose Fernandez or Fernando with a lot more track record. But could he be Mark Fydrich, gone into history after just one season? Are you drafting him knowing you will miss a season—or fearing you will miss a whole career?

But oddities are not limited to the draftable players. Depending on how many of the "may be contenders" view themselves, there could be as few as eleven or twelve teams drafting for current value, and up to 14 drafting only for future. A flood of 34 year olds with good cards hitting the trade market with few bidders. A buyer's market for current value, a seller's market for youth. It could cause players like Chris Coghlan, Casey McGehee, and Chris Young to fall a round or more while the Jose Ramirez and Luis Sardinas types to drift into the second round instead of the Bonus. Youth becomes addictive to those deep in rebuilding. This demographic of contenders/non-contenders can also lead to a larger number of draft day trades than normal, as a contender picks up a new weapon in the draft, and the other contenders look to acquire the counter via trade. With many sellers, those impromptu reactionary trades become far more likely.

## Pick by Pick Predictions

### Round 1

**#1: Northboro. Contender? Top third offence, Top quarter starting pitching, Bottom third relief. Needs 2B, SP, and a lot of relief.** And the anticipation builds. Abreu or ????. The arguments can be lined up for one or the other, and if not Abreu, then whom? If they want to contend for a wild card spot (which they currently are the favorites to get—the “obvious” answer is Abreu to move their offence from “Good”, to, “Deep & Scary”. But Ventura fleshes out the rotation nicely, and Betances may be the most valuable immediate need they could fill. Ninety innings of a “good” grade 26 is a great way to start filling 300 needed relief innings. But in the end, if contending, it is Abreu. A reliever at #1 seems too much of a gamble to take. Abreu makes this arguably be the best offence short of Knoxville. Or should they be patient, maybe miss out on the playoffs by falling behind Midwest and Maricaibo, and take whichever Wonder Child they like best, be it Bogaerts, Baez, or Castellanos. No one on the roster currently will impede any of those three from a long career in the heart of the Phoenix line-up. Ultimately it comes down to timing. The time of the Phoenix ascending is not really 2015, but 2016 through 2019 seems the likely high water mark, and Abreu will be in his prime production years. Hard to choose, and we expect there will be many suitors for the pick between now and draft day, but in the end they keep the pick and take *Jose Abreu*.

**#2: Midwest. Contender? Middle third offence, middle third starting pitching, and bottom third relief. Needs 2B, OF, RP** As much as Darrell protests that he is a

laid back hick from the north woods, there is a significant competitive streak in him. Smelling that wild card has to be alluring, and looking at key parts of the team—especially the lineup—has to make it pretty obvious the window of opportunity for this version of the Dawgs is closing, not opening. Martinez, Cuddyer, and Rollins could be the 2-3-4 hitters in this line-up. In the next two years catcher and shortstop—maybe the two toughest positions to fill—will become smoking holes. When you have the 2<sup>nd</sup> pick you really should do something that addresses those kinds of situations. There is no catcher remotely worth the 2<sup>nd</sup> pick, but there is a perfect storm at shortstop. Value now (100 useful games to fill an outfield hole), projected starting shortstop in the future (when Rollins drifts off into the sunset), AND a Twin to boot. Easy choice: *Danny Santana*.

**#2: Midwest. Already selected: Danny Santana.** What the Mongrels do with their next pick is a bit more confusing. The Guru is letting missives out that they will be taking Rounned Odor. It would be a reasonable pick given the incumbent second baseman is Darwin Barney. But can one believe such “leaks” from the brain trust? Or is he pulling a Princess Bride Sicilian Gambit and assuming that we would assume that he assumed that we would mistrust him? Never play a game of change with a Minnesotan when death is on the line! Well, maybe nothing quite that dramatic. But if the Dawgs be false, then whom? Whitey says another Twin, in Pinto. But Pinto has bigger question marks than you like to see at #3, the biggest of which is his eventual position. Every scouting repost says he is a catcher like Jesus Montero is a catcher. We think Betances gets serious consideration,



and he has shown a willingness to take relievers far earlier than other people do if he believes in them. 28 may be borderline old for a hitter like Abreu, but it is not for a reliever. But in the end, while any of those names are plausible, we think Darrell goes back to his roots and takes a stud arm in [Yordano Ventura](#). The wild card chase suffered a little, but the future moved forward.

**#4: Blue Hill. Contender. Middle third offence, middle third starting pitching, and bottom third in relief pitching. Needs SP, RP, 2B, 3B.** At first glance the “obvious” choice is Betances. It strengthens the weakest aspect of the roster, and it does so in a huge way, potentially making them the best team in the division. But there are at least two other legitimate decisions Mark could make. While Nick Castellanos is not a huge up-grade at third base for this season, we believe he is a significant long term upgrade. Additionally one of them can switch over to DH for 2015 and replace the multi-headed monster there now. The third reasonable sounding option is to get a true ace to head the rotation and fill in most the missing 33 starts. Yes, there are other starters besides Collin McHugh who could be drafted later, but no other grade 15 starters for 25 starts. And if they make the playoffs, two starts of a grade 15 give them at least a puncher’s chance of putting a scare in whoever is their first round opponent. A tough decision, but in the end we think pick #4 is just too early to call out a reliever, and a good one can be acquired in the second round. A grade 15 starter cannot be. [Collin McHugh](#). We won’t be surprised if he says any of these three names.

**#5: Taylorville. Rebuilding. Bottom quarter offence, middle third starting**

**pitching, and middle third relief. Needs OF, SS, RP.** It is near impossible to identify *who* the Taylors will take, but it is very easy to describe the player: young, potential middle of the line-up hitter. Immediate value not so important. That describes Bogaerts, Baez, Polanco, and Soler—and any of the four would do nicely. With really nothing else to go on we will say the Boston factor breaks the tie. [Xander Bogaerts](#). Plus, how often do you have the opportunity to have a “Xander” on your roster?

**#6: New Westminster. Rebuilding. Bottom quarter offence, bottom third starting pitching, and bottom quarter relief pitching. Needs Best Available Player.** There is little difference between this description/prediction, and the one for Taylorville. We have no idea about the precise name, but Jim will likely be happy with any of the three the Taylors leave on the board. Only because Nate McLouth is even more objectionable long term than martin Prado, we will focus on an outfielder. Flip a coin and say [Gregory Polanco](#).

**#7: Las Vegas. Rebuilding. Bottom quarter offence, middle third starting pitching, and bottom third relief pitching. Needs Best Available Player.** Same song, third refrain. The choices are down to Baez and Soler, and it is still too hard to make a strong case either way. Both are Cubs, so that’s not even a tie breaker. The second base and third outfield spots are both quite uninspiring so no prognosticating help there. This time we really did flip a coin to make the decision and it came up tails, [Jorge Soler](#). Though if Paul is thinking about position in the 2016 draft, maybe Baez.



**#8: Brobdignag. Contender. Middle third offence, middle third starting pitching, and middle third relief pitching. Needs Outfield, relief.** It doesn't sound exciting, but in essence *this* is why Joe moved up from #14 to #8—to get whichever of these four players—or Castellanos—would fall here. He would probably prefer Polanco or Soler, but one does not sniff at Javier Baez. Others might prefer Odor, but Baez is a Barbarian kind of guy (with a sad, longing look at George Springer before making the pick). *Javier Baez.*

**#9: Cayman. Contender. Top quarter offence, middle third starting pitching, top quarter relief pitching. Needs Starting Pitching..** Here the thinking changes. This is the first team drafting that has a real expectation of making it to the World Series, and playing in the much weaker conference they may well get home field for it. The starting pitching is not weak, but it is still the weakest aspect of the team. Once in the playoffs they will have to use Tyler Skaggs in the rotation, and they were probably hoping to replace his grade 8 with McHugh's grade 15. The best starting pitcher option is one start per playoff series from Pomeranz, or two from DeGrom. But then out of the corner of his eye, Boomer keeps looking at Betances. And salivating. *Imagine 90 innings of Betances added to 70 innings of Davis. Imagine. We get a lead in the 7<sup>th</sup> and it's OVER!* That kind of pen can cover a lot of starter sins. But in the end Boomer seems a "balance" guy, and the "balance" move is the starter. *Jacob DeGrom.*

**#10: Kansas. Rebuilding. Bottom third offence, middle third starting pitching, last in relief pitching. Needs: SP, Bats.** Even though Kansas needs relief pitching

we didn't enter that on the "Needs" list, because the timing is wrong. Relief will come when the cornerstones have been put in place. Yes, the heart might want to say "Betances", but we expect Bill will take a guy who can anchor the field somewhere. Mike Moustakas has been a disappointment with a .212 average and a career going in the wrong direction. Nick Castellanos is a quality young hitter who may well have a batting title or two in his future. It seems an obvious fit. *Nick Castellanos.*

**#11: Columbus. Rebuilding. Last in offence, bottom quarter starting pitching, middle third in relief pitching. Needs: BAP.** In our book, Castellanos was the last of the first shelf draftables. So Vic has his choice of the next tier. Not a lot to point us in the right direction since there is playing time available all across the diamond. That caused us to lay out the next best half dozen or so players, focus in on the younger ones, and then look for the ones with the highest likelihood of becoming stars. Maybe not superstars, but at least quality, consistent, significantly above average players. There are actually a fair number who fit that description: Betts, Odor, Owings, Herrera, Lamb, and Flores among the hitters, and a number of pitchers as well. At this stage of rebuild, getting someone of low risk is critical here. Lottery tickets can come later. So we looked at the hitters. As with several earlier picks there is hardly a shadow of difference to select any of these over the others for this roster—so take the youngest. *Rouged Odor.*

**#12: Hoboken. Rebuilding. Middle third in offence, last in starting pitching, bottom quarter in relief pitching. Needs: BAP, other than shortstop.** Steve traded down to get an extra 1<sup>st</sup> rounder, and in this

draft that looks to have worked out well for him. Any of the names mentioned for Columbus look equally good on a Hoboken roster, and another good player should be available with the MID #1 this year. The team is a couple years away from contention so youth is the emphasis. His team and position may be unclear, and he may be a year away, but Steve can be patient. *Mookie Betts*.

**#13: Northboro. Already selected: Jose Abreu.** The first pick was fairly simple. But this one? They have put a toe into the water and passed over a young 20-ish guy for someone who put them clearly in the favorite's role for the second wild card slot. But they still have that uncomfortable reality called a bull pen. There will be a great tug on the hearts to tell themselves, *In for a penny, in for a pound!* And put an industrial sized band-aid on the pen by taking Betances. That isn't really a *bad* move, but it is potentially a move that deviates from "The Plan". Abreu seems a safe bet to be around for years, but is Betances truly the second coming of Dick Radatz? If you think he is—*Grab Him!!!* But if you think he will be "just a quality reliever" after this season, better look at filling one of those holes at 2B or 3B. With Baez and Odor off the board there are several nice picks at second base, and none stand head and shoulders above the others, but after Castellanos we see only two more—Harrison and Lamb--before a significant drop off. This time we think the attraction of youth wins out. *Jake Lamb*.

**#14: Melrose. Contender. Top quarter in offence, top quarter in starting pitching, top quarter in relief pitching.** Needs: None. No looking long term here, this team is built to win now. There are only

two places to look: the best bat on the board, J.D. Martinez to push David Murphy and Alejandro De Aza to the bench for a truly scary line-up, or the best impact pitcher. Michael Fiers' grade 18 for one playoff start instead of Scott Kazmir's grade 10? The regular season isn't the issue—the Avengers are all about the playoffs. Martinez is probably the "smart" pick, but we think Mark goes a little counter intuitive and takes *Dellin Betances*. That is a Rochester kind of smothering bullpen. 440 innings of grade 16+ relief in the regular season, and more importantly 30+ innings in each seven game series. Life gets real tough if you don't have the lead against this bunch by the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.

**#15: Hudson. Rebuilding? Middle third in offence, bottom quarter in starting pitching, middle third in relief pitching.** Needs: SP, middle infield. Clay has some nice names on the roster. The problem is, too many of them didn't perform like the mental image you get when you hear the names. Trevor Cahil & Edwin Jackson have had some good times—but this season they are a grade 2 and a grade 1. OOPS! Kevin Siegrist set the record for the biggest one-season grade drop, from a 30\* to a 1\*. Really big OOPS! Lowrie and Lemahieu are *still* "just one season away from being stars". So which does Clay set out to fill? Hard to say which one Clay has lost the most patience with. There are good choices for all three positions. We will in truly subjective fashion break the tie but taking a Met. Or should we break it by taking the youngest guy? I know, we'll predict a really young Met with a future. *Dilson Herrera*.

**#16: Warrenton. Contenders. Middle third in offence, bottom quarter in starting pitching, top quarter in relief**

**pitching. Needs: SP, RP, bats.** There is a question to be answered before delving into this pick: Does Jack believe he is a contender? We certainly think so, but as with Blue Hill, this team shows that contenders can still have flaws. The two big needs to stay ahead of Mark and Brian are a starting pitcher (Roenis Elias, a full season grade 10 would be a nice upgrade to Kendrick & petit), or a substantial bat like J.D. Martinez to shove “hitters” like Moises Sierra (.230), Marc Krauss (.194) and Matt Dominguez (.215) to the bench or the minors for more seasoning. Either makes sense, but we lean towards predicting the pitcher (younger) if they see themselves as not a contender, and the hitter (a bit more current value and a rarer commodity) if they are. Right now they *are* the best team in the Clemente, so we predict “Contender”. *J. D. Martinez.*

**#17: Gotham City. Contender. Top third in offence, top third in starting pitching, top quarter in relief pitching. Needs: OF, DH.** The Batman only have one high draft pick to keep pace in the CAY/GC/RYE arms race this year. As with Rye later—but not to quite the same extent—this team is built for “now”. Key pieces, especially the starting rotation, are still fine, but starting to show some age. Stanton, Carpenter, and Lucroy are in their primes, but some of the supporting bats are either on their down side (Howard, Swisher) or have not developed as intended yet (Viciديو). A young one for the future would be nice, an added bat seems a must. With Martinez snapped up just before him, the best current value bat on the board is *Josh Harrison.*

**#18: Gotham City. Rebuilding. Bottom quarter in offence, bottom quarter in**

**starting pitching, bottom quarter in relief pitching. Needs: OF, Middle infield.** The top-end talent of the Pets is still as good as most. Still contender quality. But the depth is not there. Expecting Tyler Flowers, Jose Tabata, and Andre Ethier to have better future years is reasonable, but this year they do not—and after Cabrera and Longoria there is no sure power source. The rotation is better positioned for the future with young, live arms in Cashner and Archer showing the talent to step in for aging Cliff Lee and Bartolo Colon. As we see it, power is the likely focus, and what we believe is the best power bat in the whole draft is still available—and this is about where he should go anyway. A natural fit. *George Springer.*

**#19: Berkshire. The World Series goes through Berkshire. Top quarter, best starting pitching, best relief pitching. Needs: OF, SS insurance for Tulo.** One indication of the Enigma’s depth is the realization that Matt Wieters, Carlos Gonzalez, and David Wright are part times and bench players. They don’t *need* anything, though a better outfield bat than B.J. Upton would help. Yes, Chris Coghlan would make them better—but really? Would *you* be willing to say that name in the first round? We don’t think they will either. They could add another grade 20\* like Ken Giles to pitch the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> innings, but that sounds a bit overkill—and too early—for us. Though if Melrose grabs betances, they might. We think the more likely focus of the new administration will be the longer term replacement/insurance for Troy T. *Chris Owings* is the best real shortstop on the board, and not a stretch at this point.

**#20: Maricao. Contender? Middle third, bottom quarter starting pitching,**

**top third relief pitching. Needs: SP, 2B, Bat.** Looking at just the numbers, Walter seems to be a step behind Northboro for the last NC playoff spot—maybe a step and a half after the Abreu pick. But this is Walter we are talking about, and we are sure he rephrases that to, *I'm ONLY a step behind Steve & Bob!* Mindset is a really big thing, and he will be convinced his managerial acumen—plus threats involving walking the plank into shark filled waters—will get the Rumrunners to overachieve again. I'm not sure Maracaibo has ever entered a draft where current value and closing the immediate gap was not part of the equation. But neither have the Rumrunners spent many 1<sup>st</sup> round picks on cardboard. This team has speed—a lot of it—and though the offence would be better if Ichiro became more of a spot starter, it is workable. It is the kind of offense Walter likes. But 51 starts of grade 1 through grade 5 starters is decidedly not. Billy Hamilton will tug at the back of his mind but in the end it will be pitching. We are comfortable saying this pick will be a young starter with some current value, but the exact name is impossible to tell. We like *Marcus Stroman*'s future the best of those remaining, so we will guess he does too.

**#21: Whitman. Contender. Bottom quarter, middle third starting pitching, middle third relief pitching. Needs: Some of everything.** In some ways very similar to Greater Ohio, in that they have the stars (can't argue with Kershaw or Goldschmidt) but not the depth. A quality player at essentially any position will find a home, and it will not be a player with a one-year expiration date. The offense needs the most help, but the best bats remaining either are already long in the tooth, or play a position that is already in decent shape. Shortstop or third base would be ideal, but

Casey McGhehee and Brock Holt are the best there is at those positions with at least 50 games. Nope. So, as with Walter, over to the pitching. Again, numerous possible names, but *Roenis Elias* sounds about right. The pitching run has started.

**#22: Hoboken. Already selected:**

**Mookie Betts.** Sometimes the best thing to do when the pitching run starts is to be the contrarian, to seek the under valued hitters that all the pitching crazed GMs are overlooking. But when you need 20 starts to be legal—and would like to replace up to 60 more, it is time to adopt the Borg mentality, *resistance is futile!* Early in the run Steve has choices. If we identify the two key issues as: most of a full season and future over present we get several names: Hutchison, Odorizzi, Nuno, Bauer, and a couple more. There is a lot to like about *Drew Hutchison* this season, and he has the most starts, so that is where we'll go with this pick.

**#23: Zion. Regrouping?. Middle third offence, middle third starting pitching, top quarter relief pitching. Needs: 2B, SP, OF/DH.** This one is very hard to predict. But then the Sensei is *always* hard to predict because he is usually three steps ahead of anyone in the subtleties of what his team can truly be expected to do. And that is typically five to ten games better than mere mortals could do with the same talent. *We* think this roster falls short of catching Northboro, but the question is, does Rich see it that way? He has an excellent relief staff, a building block of Zion contenders. Not as much speed as he would like, and not the back end of the rotation. This season we assume the Elders will look towards the future—but if they happen to be in the playoff chase come August, I doubt anyone

will be shocked. The most immediate help would be a starting pitcher (Odorizzi, Bauer) or a second baseman (Panik). But we will look at some “Zion past history” and predict a counter intuitive pick: *Aaron Sanchez*. Rich will turn the 33 relief innings into 30 saves, and gets a quality starting prospect for the out years. It wouldn’t shock us to see him take Tanaka either.

**#24: Brobdingnag. Already selected: Javier Baez.** At this point, unless something cataclysmal happens, the Barbarians should win their third Ruth divisional title, and then get summarily squashed by some unspecified team in the Mays. So there is little reason to worry about this season—time to look at the future. With the Evil Bostonian Kingdom making an ex-shortstop out of Hanley Ramirez, the biggest long term worry is shortstop. If they don’t address it with this pick, it will likely be too late to get a quality prospect. Two names rise up the list: Flores (more bat), and Taylor (more glove). That has never been a quandry for the Barbarians. *Wilmer Flores*.

## **Round 2**

Going into the second round we take a slightly different perspective. Rarely do we project a 1<sup>st</sup> round selection that is mostly cardboard with little regard for the age and future. Current needs may shape the selection among several close choices, but there is always an eye looking forward. Transitioning to the second round, not as much. Contenders will now take cardboard if it fills the key need, counters an adversary’s move, or keeps a key player from going to someone else to close *their* gap. At this stage prospects become more Maybe and less Sure Thing.

**#25: Warrenton. Already selected: J. D. Martinez.** Martinez confirms their place as the Clemente favorites, now they need to plug the next biggest hole—they have no closer. *Ken Giles*.

**#26: Rye. Contending. Top quarter offence, top quarter starting pitching, bottom quarter relief. Needs: Closer, SP, 2B.** This one is easy to focus in on the need: the bottom of the rotation starter can be acquired later, as can an upgrade at 2B. But if Craig is going to get a closer, this is the time. Ramirez has better peripherals. Boxberger has more innings. They both have big arms and are essentially the same age. With Pat Neshek as a *good* grade 17\* we think he leans very slightly to *Neil Ramirez*.

**#27: Hoboken. Already selected: Mookie Betts, Drew Hutchison.** Steve looks at his list from pick 22. He still needs starting pitching, and his next three choices are all there. *Trevor Bauer*. Seven arms out of the last eight selections. Those needing pitching are getting concerned, and trade-up discussions are likely happening in several corners.

**#28: Blue Hill. Already selected: McHugh.** 2B, 3B, and relief are all still needed. This could easily be Dominic Leone, but the pitching run has let some of the hitters slip past where they should probably be slotted. *Joe Panik* provides a noticeable upgrade to Beckham at second base.

**#29: Taylorville. Already selected: Xander Bogaerts.** The first round is for solid prospects. When you pick in the top



ten you can't afford many busts. But in the second round, especially if you are in a deep rebuild, you can roll the dice on a high risk/high reward guy. There are two *HUGE* dice rolls available, Tanaka and Hamilton. Hamilton doesn't have the injury cloud looming big. *Billy Hamilton*.

**#30: New Westminster. Already selected: Gregory Polanco.** Read what we said about the Taylor boys—it applies here too. While Tanaka wouldn't be a bad pick, we think Jim goes for a different HR/HR guy, one who has the same kind of physical power as former Whiskey Jack Prince Fielder. *Jon Singleton*.

**#31 Las Vegas. Already selected: Jorge Solar.** For balance this would be a pitcher, but we think the pitching run uncovered some position players who are now where the bargains are. Paul can be patient and with former picks like Grandal and Soto, he has shown he is willing to be. *Rusney Castillo* may not be superstar material but he looks to be a safe bet to become a steady regular.

**#32: New Westminster. Already selected: Gregory Polanco, Jon Singleton.** Position doesn't really matter in New West right now. Can you play? Do you have potential? Then we have room for you. When you have one carded catcher (Carlos Corporan) and he played 17 games, you kind of need to get a catcher—or two, or three. Waiting past the second round will almost certainly mean you are in the same position the following draft. Either of the Christians will do, but we'll predict *Christian Vazquez* since he seems more entrenched in the job in Boston.

**#33 Grand Cayman. Already selected: Jacob DeGrom.** Chris Coghlan looks tempting. 125 games of a significantly better bat to move DeJesus and Lough to the bench. But the set-up man in the bullpen is an equally big concern, and can be filled with someone of more long term expectations. There are a number of relievers in the grade 15-16 range, but why settle for that when you can get a 20+ The name might be different, but *Neil Ramirez* sounds about right.

**#34 Kansas. Already selected: Nick Castellanos.** Castellanos is a safe pick. Bill may make another safe pick here—there are some good possibilities among the second basemen and the pitchers. But at some point someone has to make the big dice roll on the one player with top-10 talent. Young enough. A team that can afford to wait. And a Yankee to boot. *Masahiro Tanaka*. Odorizzi is safer, but Tanaka has the higher ceiling.

**#35 Columbus. Already selected: Rowned Odor.** Position still doesn't matter. Too early in the Columbus rebuild schedule to take much relief. Want it to be someone with a likely job, and with up-side. Liriano, Odorizzi, Cron, .... None are flawless. Personally (and it may be our own preferences showing), we like BDWPs (Big Dudes With Power). Kennys Vargas.

**#36 Munich. Contender. Top quarter offense, top quarter starting pitching, top third relief. Needs: SS and a young catcher.** Paul has to be quite content with Carlos Santana as his catcher this year, and far less content with Steve Vogt as the likely

only catcher going into 2016. Take the only other catcher available, or worry all season? *Christian Bethancourt*.

**#37: Brobdingnag. Already selected: Javier Baez, Wilmer Flores.** At this stage Vlad doesn't need a lot more, though he could use another reliever. *Zack Putnam* is this year's Tanner Roark.

**#38: Brobdingnag. Already selected: Javier Baez, Wilmer Flores, Zack Putnam.** This one could be anything. Putting aside what a team needs, there are three players we see remaining on the board who should not still be there. Odoizzi, Cron, and Liriano. Bron has 20 pitchers already with Putnam, so we scratch off Odoizzi. The Barbarians have both Davis and Mauer at first, so that leaves *Rymer Liriano* as the pick by the slimest of margins. If he is over the injuries it could be a big profit pick.

**#39: Hudson. Already selected: Dilson Herrera.** Either Cron or Odoizzi, but Clay too has a logjam at first. *Jake Odoizzi*.

**#40: Warrenton. Already selected: J. D. Martinez, Ken Giles.** Odoizzi would have fit here very nicely, and we suspect there was at least a small grimace when he is taken the pick before. Someone like Pomeranz is a real possibility, and may well be the name here. But we will guess it will be *C. J. Cron*.

**#41: Munich. Already selected: Christian Bethancourt.** After the young catcher, shortstop is the next biggest itch. There is no real immediate improvement—

and no can't miss prospect. But *Jose Ramirez* is fast, a good glove, has a job (though there may be a long term question about position, and only 22.

**#42: Greater Ohio. Already selected: George Springer.** Devlin already took an outfielder, but when your whole current outfield has one hitter with over a .700 OPS—you are allowed to take a second one. *Enrique Hernandez*.

**#43: Berkshire. Already selected: Chris Owings.** There is no real track record on what the mantra of this team is, so out of complete ignorance we looked at where they can use help in their four-way fight for home field. The best we could find is to replace 60 games of B. J. Upton with *Kirk Nieuwenhuis*. Do we believe that is the pick? No, we don't.

**#44 Las Vegas. Already selected: Jorge Solar, Rusney Castillo.** Time for the next pitching run to start. Lots of names worth saying. House, Pomeranz among the starters. Leone, Familia among the relievers. Relievers are far flakier, so we go for a starter. In a coin flip, *T. J. House*.

**#45 Whitman. Already selected: Jorge Solar, Roenis Elias.** If you're not sure you can contend—but you think you might be able to—the best of both worlds is obviously a player you can use now & like for the future. The value picks are the pitchers, Brian needs pitching (relief more than starts), so one of the names mentioned above fits nicely. *Dominic Leone*



**#46: Warrenton.** Already selected: **J. D. Martinez, Ken Giles, C. J. Cron.** So far this draft, Warrenton and Blue Hill separated themselves a little from Whitman—but not comfortably. And not from each other. Both traded away their bonus picks, so this is the last draft pick that has a high likelihood of affecting the pennant race in a significant way. Upgrading Infante at second base is a reasonable option—(La Stella?), but the biggest difference maker is to be found among the pitchers. **Michael Fiers** is 10 games of a grade 18—likely all against Blue Hill and Whitman, and a start in the playoffs.

**#47: New Westminster.** Already selected: **Gregory Polanco, Jon Singleton, Christian Vazquez.** Three potential position players already selected. Still needs a half season of catcher along with 41 starts and about 100 relief innings. The next several picks need to focus in on these lest in the late rounds Jim is stuck drafting a lot of phlegm strictly to be legal. It is early for any of the three catchers with above 60 starts. Only seven starters remain with 20+ starts. Sometimes the right answer is the least wrong answer. **Tyler Matzek.**

Nineteen starts of someone you might care about in two years.

**#48 Detroit. Rebuilding. Bottom third in offence, top third in starting pitching, middle third relief. Needs: BAP, and LOTS of starts.** The “top third” assessment of the starting pitching is seriously misleading. The Stars need seventy two starts to full out their rotation. Seventy two. That is a big number at any time, but even more when you don’t have a pick until the 48<sup>th</sup> pick, and you only have 10 picks total—only four through the first five rounds. All the positions are covered, and this almost has to be a starter with a lot of starts. The right move might well be someone like **Jimmy Nelson.** As an innocuous starter he can provide 20+ starts, he’s young enough to still be a prospect, and has a decent arm with positive control.

And with that the 2<sup>nd</sup> round moves on into history!

Enjoy.

**Giuseppe**