

2016 Giuseppi's Tip Sheet

If you didn't read it here, don't believe it!

I was not planning to put out a 2016 version of the Tip Sheet because of time pressures, however over the past few days I have received a few requests. The first couple were nice and polite from long standing members of the league. But after those—as I still declined—the requests got more creative.

One was written on a piece of paper, ballasted with a rock, and deposited in the front seat of my car—right through the windshield. It said, “We think you need to reconsider. The bookies in Vegas need to know how to set their lines. You don't want to cost the goodfellas part of their vig, do you?”

Two days later, note was left attached to my front door—with an ice pick. Nothing subtle here, it said “We get Giuseppi's Tip Sheet in 10 days, or your uncle Bruno sleeps with da fishes.”

The last one—just yesterday—showed how determined these “fans” can be. I returned home after work and there was a bag of quick drying concrete in front of my door with a note, “I dropped this off for tomorrow's appointment. I will return 11 PM tomorrow night and you will hand me the first copy of the Tip Sheet or we will fit you for a pair of new shoes. Capiche? Your friend, Luca Brazzi”

So, after such motivational appeals, I decided I will find time to put out a version of the Tip Sheet, albeit abbreviated this year.

First, let us briefly consider the peculiarities of this draft. There are always peculiarities. In 2016 there are three oddities worth noting:

1. The top end of this draft—the “A” level players—is ridiculously deep. Consider Byron Buxton this year vs. Mike Trout the year he was drafted. Trout was a top 3 pick with even less current value. We project Buxton will go in the 12-15 range in this draft. This is not a slight on Buxton, a fine, hyped prospect. But he just pales in comparison to some of the monsters in this draft.
2. The lack of high level picks owned by the most serious contenders. The three favorites to reach the World Series—Munich, Melrose, and Whitman—have a total of ONE pick in the two rounds we will consider. That means that some of the “47 y/o grade 24* relievers I need for the 4th inning”, or the “Already signed in Japan guy with 60 PA but 5 power numbers who becomes my prime pinch hitter” will be called less often in the early rounds. Alex Rodriguez (151 games with 33 HRs and a .842 OPS) will still go early to a contender who needs a bat, but Franklin Gutierrez (OPS .974 for 59 games) may wait longer in the green room.

3. The corollary of #2 above is that there are more high draft picks in the hands of non-contenders this year, thus more unpredictable picks because “Best Available Player” is a very subjective thing.

With those caveats and stage setters out of the way, let’s get started.

#1. Las Vegas. Might be able to contend if he pushes for it, but more likely seeks respectability while building the core. Las Vegas needs hitters. Badly. He has 5 hitters with an OPS above .700, and the five of them play catcher, short, and third. Unfortunately for Paul, arguably the bulk of the A-list players available at catcher, short, and third. He could go with Noah Syndergaard but we think he will ignore positional need and take the best player: *Kyle Bryant*.

#2. Hoboken. Not contending this year. Steve has a huge, sucking chest wound in the middle infield. Starling Castro can cover second *or* short, not both. With the glut of shortstops in the draft that part is obvious—what is not obvious is “which one?” Correa and Segar have the better bats, but may not be shortstops in a few seasons. Lindor and Russel have “enough” bat, and should be shortstops for their careers. Hmmm..... Hard to go wrong with either choice, but (and we admit we are biased) bats win. Correa has more games, so is the pick. *Carlo Correa*.

#3. Brobdingnag. The leader in the Ruth, and will provide some opposition for Whitman for the conference title. When Hanley Ramirez is your only shortstop, you don’t really have a shortstop. And Vlad is nothing if not a lover of big bats. The choice is easy: *Cory Seager*. (As Vlad walks to the podium he takes a short glance at Big Papi Junior otherwise known as Miguel Sano, and sighs).

#4. Hudson. Clay has good enough pitching to be a playoff contender, but is short on offence. He might make it interesting if he sells out the draft to contend, but we think he, like Paul, seeks a respectable season. Unlike the previous two teams picking, Hudson does not have a dire need at shortstop. Lindor or Russel would be upgrades over Gregorios, but not hugely so. A more effective use of this pick would be to take an outfielder with a big bat. Pederson and Conforto are the best two, and while we like Joc’s future, his second half raises some questions about risk. Clay goes with the safer pick—and a Met—*Michael Conforto*.

#5. Zion. The Elders are not contending this year. After a sort Conforto interruption, the shortstop run continues. If Johnathan Herrera (he of the .242 OBP) hadn’t eked out a single game at shortstop, Rich would have no carded shortstops. We suspect he does not like that situation. He quickly says *Francisco Lindor*, and signs Barry Larkin to a special coaching contract.

#6. Calusa. Calusa is not contending this year. They have the luxury of taking BAP throughout the draft—certainly in the early rounds. But even better if the BAP is a starting pitcher or an outfielder, their biggest needs. Joc Pederson or Noah Syndergaard? Either is a fine option. Both

have risks of different types, but a front line ace pitcher is a rarer commodity. **Noah Syndergaard.**

#7. Columbus. The pitching is adequate but the offence is not. The bats, especially in the OF and at DH, need an upgrade. Addison Russel might be the best player on the board, but since Calusa cooperated by taking the pitcher that leaves Pederson also available. And Pederson is a significantly better upgrade over Descalso, Rosales, and Rodriguez than Russel is over Elvis Andrus. But the best bat available—possibly the best bat in the whole draft—is **Miguel Sano.**

#8. New West. New West is not contending this season. The pitching staff is actually fairly solid, especially the starters. The hitting can use an upgrade at most spots. Time to take the best available bat, and that—long term—is Pederson. But the positional scarcity of shortstop over outfielder (at least most years) makes the pick **Addison Russel.** Four shortstops in the first eight picks? That doesn't happen every year.

#9. Taylorville. The Taylor boys have themselves a definite contender. It's not obvious that they will finish ahead of or behind Knoxville, but even if they finish second in the Williams a playoff spot is very possible. They have no huge hole, but could use a third starter and a couple bats—preferably one in the outfield. Both things are available at this point, but while they can likely get a starter with their next pick, the outfield bats may be a lot scarcer. If they focus on an OF we think the choice is obvious, **Joc Pederson.**

#10. Brobdingnag. Vlad filled one big hole, now to the next one: 56 missing games at catcher, and two quality options. Kyle Schwarber who dresses up as a catcher for Halloween, but has a monster bat. And Blake Swihart, a better athlete who might remain a catcher if Vazquez never learns to hit—but whose bat will never be mistaken for Schwarber's thunder stick. For some it would be a choice, but Vlad sees dreams of Mike Piazza and takes **Kyle Schwarber.**

#11. Northboro. Northboro is not a contender this year. They have four quality bats, but SS, 3B, and catcher are black holes. The pitching is actually better than a non-contender typically has. Sometimes you really hate picking right behind someone who has the same need as you. The “offensive” half of Northboro's catching platoon hit .188. Yes, the other guy *is* worse. So since November they have likely been drooling over the same two catchers Brob chose between—and you always want to be the one with the option. Fortunately for Steve and Bob, they probably actually value defense, so they like get their guy anyway. First option or only one left, either way it's **Blake Swihart.**

#12. Blue Hill. Mark is likely not a contender, but might push to get closer. Whether for this year or longer term, the emphasis needs to be the pitching staff. More specifically two starters and a closer. With only one pitcher taken so far Mark has choices, and no single one stands out head and shoulders above the rest, but **Lance McCullers** has a high grade, 22 starts, and good genes.

#13 Statesmen. This is a team that made a conscious choice to step back, get younger, and reshape the squad into the image and likeness of the new management. Once you decide to do that, you do *not* spend your first round pick on filling a particular hole. You fill holes later if you need to, but an early pick like this is all about B.A.P. with up-side, regardless of current value. We mentioned Buxton in the pre-amble, and that is exactly the kind of blue-chip “can’t miss” guy that Eric can select and be patient with. ***Byron Buxton.***

#14..Rye. Rye is the oldest team in the league. If you focus on the key contributors, most of them can play in the Old Timer’s Games already. Their biggest bat, Nelson Cruz, turns 36. Juan Uribe, 37. Tori Hunter, 40. And so it goes. But despite the age they are in serious playoff contention. If they were planning to rebuild, several of these guys would likely be gone months ago. So the plan seems simple: get a catcher, a bat, and a starting pitcher that can help right away and who are not yet collecting social security. We are sure three picks earlier when both catchers were on the board they felt they might have a chance, but Brob and the Phoenix crushed that thought. It could still be Realmuto, but there are other options. Any of numerous starters would fit. But we will toss the oracle bones and guess it’s second base stud ***Devon Travis.***

#15 Kansas. In the driver’s seat to win the Aaron Division, and with a starting staff that will be even tougher come the playoffs. This is a team structured to win now. The offence is good, but not on a par with Munich and Melrose. They need bats. Unfortunately, the biggest bats are off the board. Jung Ho Kang may be the “best fit”, but we give a slight nod to upgrading the power output. ***Maikel Franco..***

#16. Maricaibo. There are a few truths about Walter’s teams. They are almost never the pre-season favorite, but they are also almost never out of contention. The same is true this year. The starting staff is light at the top end, and they need a closer, but we suspect the ‘Caibo brain trust believes the offence is “good enough”. Fortunately for them there are many nice arms to choose from. The pitching run doesn’t start quite yet, but you can hear the heard starting to rumble. ***Carlos Rondon.***

#17. Hoboken. Steve likely continues focusing on the BAP approach, filling in holes as possible but that is a secondary priority. Fortunately for Hoboken, the batters have dominated so far and he has his choice of many quality young arms. No arm is better than Taijuan Walker’s, he is 23, and he covers all the missing starts. It seems a likely pick. ***Taijuan Walker***

#18. Taylorville. This is the only one of the top contenders with two 1st round picks, and both of the picks need to help this year—while future growth is also desirable but likely secondary. Pederson fit both roles, improving the offence in the outfield and DH for essentially a full season. Now it is time to acquire a #3 starter for the playoffs behind Arrieta and Santiago. The best two-start pitcher on the board? ***Taylor Jungmann.*** Make it so.

#19. Cayman. Not a contender this year. The pitching staff just isn’t there—Only 133 starts, but worse only 45 above a grade 7. Though starting pitching is the biggest cavern, there is

pitching to be had in the draft through another couple rounds. What is drying up quickly are catchers you really want to acknowledge are on your roster. The few left are not likely to last long. Catching runs are like summer thunderstorms: quick, and potentially devastating, and by the time Cayman picks next there won't be one on the board. *J. T. Realmuto.*

#20. Hudson. Sometimes the stars do actually align. Clay's two biggest holes are outfield and third. The earlier first round pick filled the OF slot, and now the best talent available happens to match the second need. This one seems almost too easy. *Matt Duffy.*

#21. Hoboken. Hoboken took Walker last time because he was too good to pass up, but in general teams build the line-up first, so a second starting pitcher would be unlikely here. Outfield needs some help, and the top options are either Rosario or Piscotty—either slots well here. Rosario has more pop, Piscotty a higher ave and OBP. Almost flip a coin. We did and it came up *Stephen Piscotty.*

#22. Calusa. First the pitcher, so now the bat. Whichever outfielder passes through Steve's hands likely is caught here since Alexi Amarista (.202/.277/.256) will otherwise start about 100 games, and that is not a pleasant thought. *Eddie Rosario.*

#23. Gotham City. The Batmen are getting a little long in the tooth, but are still legitimate contenders this year. But the window is starting to slide down the rails. The weak spots are at shortstop and another bat to fill the DH slot, as well as a 5th starter to make a legal rotation. The only remaining playoff caliber SS is a bit old for a "typical" 1st round pick, but this is the *end* of the 1st round—and more importantly that window *is* sliding down. The future is now for Gotham. *Jung Ho Kang.*

#24. Midwest. Not a contender in 2016. If you only look at the team slash line of .247/.372/.297 you would be concerned enough. But couple that with an awesome starting rotation that comes in with an average starting grade in the 3s and you have the makings of an epicly bad team. The rights side of the infield is safe (Hosmer-Odor), and probably Plouffe at third, but the other 32 players should be worried about their longevity. Clearly in the BAP selection strategy. Freed of any positional focus we hone in on names like Matz, Severino, DeShields, and Ed. Rodriguez. You can make an argument for each of them, but Darryll has always been a pitching-first guy. All three are young, all talented, and all with jobs. The tie-breaker is starts this year. *Eduadro Rodriguez.*

And thus ends Round 1.

#25. Las Vegas. One bat added, Paul searches for the next one. Speed in the outfield with DeShields, or power at first base with Bird? The outfield is in worse shape, and there is more of it to fix. ***Delino DeShields Jr.***

#26. Hoboken. On the one hand Steve wants to take the best players. On the other hand he really does need to find 100 catching games to be legal. There is only one catcher left that gives him that—otherwise he will have to use multiple picks and roster spots to patch that need. Not the *best player* at this point, but likely the best pick considering the situation as a whole. ***James McCann.***

#27. Calusa. They would probably prefer a bat, but most the best options on the board are pitchers. The best bat (Bird) plays the same position as their best current player (Freeman). The name might change, but we expect this will be another starter, someone like ***Luis Severino.***

#28. Hudson. The pitching run has started. It seems to start the same way each yer—though the timing varies. The stud hitters go, and at some point the pitchers are just vastly better—in quantity and quality—that the hitters. A couple pitchers get interspersed with batters, but then a sense of fear crawls into the synapses of the teams: *If I don't get one now they will not last to my next pick!* And it has been ignited. You never have enough quality arms, and in Clay's case you never have enough quality Mets arms. He takes a step to fix that. ***Steven Matz.***

#29. Detroit. When you are in the midst of a deep rebuild you have the luxury to occasionally take a lottery ticket. Some work, some don't, but you have the option. But if you do, it should be on someone whose up-side is worth the odds. In our opinion there is one of those players in this year's draft. The Stars are in a position to take the gamble. We don't know if they will, but it seems to be a reasonable option. ***Joey Gallo.***

#30..Zion. Shortstop should be settled for a decade now, but the Elders are still 24 starts short. Time to get a starter is when there are still some left. ***Joe Ross*** has the traits Rich usually desires.

#31. Columbus. While others need pitchers, Vic can afford the luxury of picking and choosing among the remaining hitter morsels. Sano helps the offense a lot, but a second quality bat will help even more. ***Trayce Thompson.***

#32. New West. Morneau is adding years, and limited to 49 games this coming season. Lots of opportunity to groom a young first baseman with power potential. ***Greg Bird.***

#33. Taylorville. One more bat would be good, and the best one available certainly has experience—A-Rod. Nice full season with power but he *is* 40. I suspect the Taylors look, maybe look a second time, and then aver their eyes for something younger. Best choices are still in the pitching pile. And ***Daniel Norris*** is still an upgrade to the 162 start total.

#34. Brobdingnag. They can't let the pitching run pass them by because they only have limited picks left and still a lot of holes. It has to be a SP, RP, or catcher. No catcher is worth it here, and the starters are disappearing quicker than the relievers. It pretty much *has to be* someone with 18 starts. *Andrew Heaney.*

#35. Northboro. This is the kind of pick that shows how deep this year's draft really is. Half way through the second round they can take a 22 year old real prospect at a key position. They may have missed on the five 1st round shortstops, but *Ketel Marte* is a pretty decent consolation prize. Last draft that had 6 shortstops in the first round and a half?

#36. Brobdingnag. Shortstop—check. Catcher—check. Starter—check. On to the relief staff. Youth first, current help second. Answer? *Roberto Osuna.*

#38. Rye. 86 games of the .211 hitting 37 year old Carlos Ruiz is the *only* catcher Craig has. *That* is scary for 2016 and for the future. The best remaining catcher is probably *Kevin Plawecki.*

#39. Kansas. More bats! Here is the quandary: how much to value cardboard for now (Alex Rodriguez, 151 games of very fine .842 OPS) vs a younger hitter (147 games of 24 year old Odubel Herrera's .762 OPS)? When it is your first serious contender, and you know that your playoff starting rotation is as good as anyone's we cannot fault going for it *now.* *Alex Rodriguez.*

#40. Maracaibo. The pitching run is still alive and well, with the relievers reinforcing the starters. Walter needs a closer, and someone young, hard throwing, and valuable right now will be hard to pass up. Someone like *Carson Smith.*

#41. Midwest. Still missing half the outfield games, it is time. No more fooling around with pitching toys. 159 games of *Kevin Pillar* takes the Mongrels two giant steps closer to being legal.

#42. Statesmen. Iglesias helped. Now add *Aaron Nola* and the rotation has some substance.

#43. New West. BAP and more BAP. Since Kansas went for current value, the aforementioned *Odubel Herrera* fits nicely here. Games, some current value, and looks like he will hit long term.

#44. Statesmen. An old saying about the 1980s Soviet Union military was "Quantity has a quality all its own." When you don't want to spend the entire rest of your draft getting legal, that applies to TBL as well. Eric is probably anxious to add talent in other areas, and the only starter worth taking that fills the rotation and lets him focus elsewhere is 31 starts of *Chris Heston.*

#45. New West. See the comments about Detroit drafting Joey Gallo. The same applies here to another lottery pick here. Not quite the 50 HR ceiling Gallo has, but a high ceiling and more past history to say he might reach it. *Yasmani Tomas.*

#46. Hudson. The only hole still remaining is some added depth in the pen. That isn't critical this year but it does make the season more pleasant. And if it is a young flame thrower, why not? *Keone Kela.*

#47. Gotham City. The draft's second round ends with two contenders looking for best current value. Anton gets his shot first. Andres Blanco would definitely help, but so would a set-up reliever to pair with Betances. Yes, Blanco would help, but 71 innings of *Will Harris* and his grade 22* will help more. In Melrose, the Avengers collectively groan.

#48. Melrose. Mark's lineup is fine. He already has 200+ innings of grade 17-20. Harris would still have been a nice add, but with him gone, *Andres Blanco* does provide significant upgrade to the bench as well as versatility to make some moves come playoff time.