

## Giuseppi's Tip Sheet, 2014

The draft is different every year. Drastically so in some. However no matter the names of the players available nor the names of the GMs drafting, it is governed by the same basic influences:

- The scarcity/abundance by position—who do I have to get early because there is no “next best”?
- The needs of the teams—what player fills their biggest needs, either now or the near future?
- The expectations of the teams—are they contending or consolidating or rebuilding this year?
- The lusts of the GM—what kind of players do they *want*, whether it is what they need or not.

This year we'll address each of those briefly, to set the context of the team by team prognostications.

The clear strength of this draft is the number of young, useable starting pitchers: there are 20 starters with a double digit grade—a total of 336 starts—and they are all 30 years old *or younger*. Over a dozen are deserving of 1<sup>st</sup> round selection, though several will likely fall because of team needs. Other areas that have a good crop to choose from include left-handed relievers: 9 with a closer quality grade (if not the preferred number of innings) and two more grade 13+. These 11 LHPRs have 538 innings among them.

Among position players there is a crop of catchers (3) and second basemen (6) likely to get consideration by teams in their Top-24. For some of these it's the historical scarcity of these positions, but nonetheless these players will influence the development of the 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> rounds, and we expect many of the nine will indeed be selected in the first 36 players, with all gone by the end of the second round.

On the other end of the spectrum are the first-basemen and outfielders with immediate value (though there are a number of young outfielders of keen interest). As far as specific tools, home runs and steals are both noticeably scarce in the 2014 draft. There are only 4 players with even as many as 15 or more homers, only 8 with more than a dozen. The speed side is even worse: only *one* player has as many as a dozen steals.

As we write this, twelve teams have the players needed to contend. Unless they work at deconstructing their rosters, they still will be post draft. They may not all sell all out and take a Marlon Byrd in the first round, but for these dozen they will likely at least include current value as part of the decision calculus.

Another three teams can be contenders depending how much they want to be. These are the unpredictable ones—how they see the current needs vs the future is a very personal one, and in some ways the teams themselves may not yet know for certain. Who is available on their first pick will more likely affect the rest of their drafts than for the other twenty-one teams.

That leaves nine teams that are unlikely to compete for a playoff spot this year. Typically they would have some opportunities to scoop up players of little current value that fell through the cracks of contenders picking up current value. Unusually, this year there are few pieces of “quality cardboard” to distract the contenders.

Finally, there is the issue of shelves. No matter what the needs of a team, no matter whether they are a contender or not, at some point it is difficult—and very unlikely—for a team to reach a shelf (or two) down to select someone with *significantly* less talent when a player of a higher talent shelf is still available. Maybe they will, however we would expect them to try and trade down (or up, if appropriate) first. The two tricks in all that are that everyone’s definition of the shelves is different, and trading only works if there is another compatible team to trade with.



<b>Team: Brobdingnag</b>	
<b>Ave: .294</b>	<b>SP: 11.4</b>
<b>OBB: .365</b>	<b>RP: 13.6</b>
<b>Slg: .492</b>	<b>Contender: Yes</b>
<b>Needs: 2B</b>	
<b>High Draft: #1, #37</b>	

<b>Team: Kansas</b>	
<b>Ave: .256</b>	<b>SP: 8.6</b>
<b>OBB: .315</b>	<b>RP: 10.6</b>
<b>Slg: .389</b>	<b>Contender: Probably not</b>
<b>Needs: 1B, 3B, OF, SP, hitting</b>	
<b>High Draft: #2, #17</b>	

The Barbarians face a very pleasant choice among the top three players, Puig, Meyers, and Profar. The team is loaded for next year, and “need” very little. In relative terms they could use an upgrade in the outfield with Trout and Werth. And—as has been the Barbarian condition for most of a couple decades—they can certainly use an upgrade over Ackley/Getz at second base. Long term Profar makes the obvious sense. A second baseman, 20 years old (sort of like recent Barbarian picks Trout and Machado), and all the makings of a star by the time he is 22. If there is anyone Vlad lusts after it is Profar. But Vlad has another lust—a bigger one. Catching the Sensei. Had the Barbarians made it to the World Series this year it might be easier to take Profar and only be the favorite for 2014. But the team fell far short. We believe that will sting all winter—and all summer—and just being the favorite will not be enough. The team is channeling the spirit of Smikin’ Joe. Can you say “.925 OPS and 22 years old”? I knew you could. All three are young, all three deserve to be the first pick in the draft, but as Walter has pointed out repeatedly this has been building for the last four seasons and the time is now. *Yasiel Puig*.

Kansas has some very desirable pieces fit for a contender: Harvey, Scherzer, Brown, Pedroia, Seguria, Gomes. Just not enough of them. The overall offense lacks pop--Coco Crisp is second in homers. The team will be competitive the 58 games Scherzer or Harvey start but the #3 starter is a grade 5. Position doesn’t matter, talent and youth do. Either Myers or Pedroia fit the description but since they already have a Segura/Pedroia double play combo, and since Andres Torres is neither the short term nor the long term solution in the outfield we think this is an easy call. *Wil Myers*. By the time Harvey is healthy, Myers should be Kansas clean-up hitter.

<b>Team: Munich</b>	
<b>Ave: .259</b>	<b>SP: 8.0</b>
<b>OBB: .329</b>	<b>RP: 11.6</b>
<b>Slg: .396</b>	<b>Contender: Can be—don’t want to be</b>
<b>Needs: SP, Bats</b>	
<b>High Draft: #3, #16, #27, #36</b>	

Munich has a problem. His holes for the future—Paul is still scoffing at the present—are

an outfield bat and a reliable starting pitcher, not as much the middle infield. Jose Altuve is a 23 year old who has shown promise and Andrelton Simmons is already a quality player. Aybar and Callaspo give the team two more who can play up the middle without embarrassment, and they too are in their twenties. Profar just isn't what the team *needs*. Unfortunately they *need* one of the two players already taken. Or Jose Fernandez who would hurt their 2015 draft position by winning too many games this coming season. If they keep the pick I think Paul will pause for a moment—just a short moment—and select *Jurickson Profar*. Other reasonable options would be a starting pitcher with similar future to Fernandez, but not as much immediate “harm”. Someone like Gerrit Cole or Michael Wacha; possibly Christian Yelich. Or he will make a push to move up and get one of the two bats. Barring that, possibly moving down a few spots to get the same Cole/Wacha kind of pitcher and something additional in the 2015 draft.

**Team: Northboro**

**Ave: .244 SP: 5.9**  
**OBB: .314 RP: 7.8**  
**Slg: .386 Contender: No**

**Needs: Best available (who won't help too much)**

**High Draft: #4, #23, #28, #34**

Pity poor Northboro. Regardless what the official standings say they have less talent than any of the three teams that finished below them, and they fall just on the wrong side of the first shelf. On our team-independent big draft board we have Jose Fernandez as the best player available—but as with Munich that would be the wrong pick for this team at this time. Right now they are in a tight competition with the two Ruth

teams—Dallas and New West—for the Xander Bogaerts sweepstakes. Taking Fernandez would rip up their ticket. It isn't a big step down to the others on the second tier: Yelich, Wacha, Arenado, and others. Most are pitchers, and we always believe a complete rebuild as Northboro is in starts with the hitters. Either Yelich or Arenado would find immediate playing time and become the team's poster boy, but we think *Christian Yelich* has a bit more up-side with the bat.

**Team: Blue Hill**

**Ave: .259 SP: 6.5**  
**OBB: .334 RP: 7.7**  
**Slg: .399 Contender: No**

**Needs: SP, RP, OF**

**High Draft: #5, #29**

The good news for Mark is the Mudslides are significantly better than they have been the past couple seasons. The bad news is they are still short of being a contender, especially on the mound. Offensively the roster is middle of the pack, but the pitching comes in as one of the bottom four. We don't see them as being in the Northboro “a few extra wins can seriously hurt us” situation so we see them going for what fits their need *and* is the best player on the board. *Jose Fernandez*.

**Team: Knoxville**

**Ave: .272 SP: 8.9**  
**OBB: .332 RP: 12.4**  
**Slg: .433 Contender: Yes**

**Needs: C, OF, SP**

**High Draft: #6, #30**

We suspect the first thing Pat considers is trying to trade up to Mark's pick. It is the kind of trade that would make good sense for both. Pat most certainly is a contender, and that grade 18 would put him a lot closer to Darrell's Mongrels than the second best starter in the draft (and just who that is is very subjective). But in Giuseppe's world trades don't happen, so we have to look at what the Blue Thunder take if they stay at number six. None of the outfielders remaining or the catchers are better than the large collection of starting pitching, and since wins now do matter for Knoxville, we see a full-season *Shelby Miller* over his Cardinal teammate Wacha.

**Team: Cayman**  
**Ave: .259 SP: 8.4**  
**OBB: .338 RP: 8.2**  
**Slg: .424 Contender: No**

**Needs: C, SS, OF, SP, RP**  
**High Draft: #7, #20, #31, #44**

Boomer is in a similar position to Munich in some ways. They aren't one of the top teams, but with four draft picks in the top two rounds, they could improve a lot in the space of a few hours. With Adams, Holliday, Encarnacion, and Butler they have a significantly above average offense, and the pitching—while below average—is salvageable if the picks were used to fill the holes. But there is no Fernandez to tempt them, and no Profar who is the clear best talent on the board. That means the Havens are the first wild card selector. Depending upon how they value the catchers they may go that way, but we doubt it Avila is good enough to not overreach, and none of the catchers seem top-10 material. Given the shift in league thinking about relievers, even a Trevor Rosenthal is a contemplative possibility, though we think that

temptation will pass. That leaves the focus on starting pitching. And beyond Smyly and Hunter there is lots of room for a few more quality pitchers. At this point there really are well over a half dozen options, but we believe a combination of age, poise, and stuff points to *Michael Wacha*.

**Team: Hudson**  
**Ave: .268 SP: 8.3**  
**OBB: .330 RP: 10.6**  
**Slg: .436 Contender: Yes**

**Needs: 2B, Closer, Bat**  
**High Draft: #8, #32**

This is an odd contender but a contender nonetheless. They have as good—or better—an offense than anyone in the conference not residing in Portland. They're 9 deep with double digit home run hitters, but none have more than Jose Bautista's 28. They have 5 useable starting pitchers, but no ace. They have a deep bullpen, but no closer. They are a deep team filled with complementary players—they just missing the stars. Not too far off last season's Red Sox, and whether they want to be or not the “no name” roster leads for the first wild card in the National Conference. Both these picks will probably be used with an eye towards both the present and the future, possibly having to compromise over a pure “best talent” perspective. There really are no big bats available, other than Marlon Byrd, and shudder the thought of someone half way in the rocking chair as the eighth pick. He may not have as high a ceiling as some of the starting pitchers, and it could be argued Nick Franklin or Anthony Rendon might eventually have a better career, but among the second basemen *Jedd Gyorko* has the most current value and young enough to have a long future, wither at 2B or 3B.

**Team: Melrose**  
**Ave: .251 SP: 8.7**  
**OBB: .324 RP: 9.3**  
**Slg: .396 Contender: Can be—don't want to be**  
**Needs: 2B, SS, Bat, Closer**  
**High Draft: #9, #19, #33**

Mark is in exactly the same boat as Munich and Cayman—with a 14/14/10 rotation that is good enough to fight for the playoffs, and a line-up with some fine star power. But they are not deep enough to make much noise past the early rounds. And unlike Pat's Knoxville team, Melrose is coming off recent back-to-back titles. It's amazing how that can make you more accepting during rebuilding. The Avengers started to reload in 2013, and we don't think they will change that tact in 2014. Adding a pitcher is possible, but like many teams, when in doubt they go with the bat. Looking two or three years downstream Dan Uggla and Kevin Youklis are the two key manes who are aging. Getting the replacement in the middle infield seems the right move. Either Jose Iglasias to fill the complete void at short after trading Rollins, or one of the young second basemen to tutor under Uggla makes the most sense. Melrose likes bats, so we'll guess *Anthony Rendon*.

**Team: Gotham City**  
**Ave: .265 SP: 10.9**  
**OBB: .335 RP: 12.2**  
**Slg: .438 Contender: Yes**  
**Needs: SS, SP, Closer**  
**High Draft: #10**

No questioning the intent in Gotham. No wondering how hard they plan on trying to win

now. This is a top five offense. A solid rotation that doesn't dip below a pretty decent grade 9 in Jorge DeLaRosa, and overall one of the best half-dozen teams in the league. Iglasias would be a very good pick, upgrading the offense at shortstop over Alcedes Escobar, and Anton may go that way. If Trevor Rosenthal had the kind of grade he will likely earn next season, that could fit. But for this draft and this year's expectations of a long run in the playoffs We think Anton looks elsewhere. The rotation is fine for the regular season, but come the playoffs Verlander's "off" year means is loks like 12/12/10. Drafting *Chris Archer* improves that significantly to 13/12/12 when it matters most.

**Team: Taylorsville**  
**Ave: .266 SP: 9.6**  
**OBB: .323 RP: 10.2**  
**Slg: .391 Contender: No**  
**Needs: OF, RP, Bat**  
**High Draft: #11, #14, #35, #40**

Josh Hamilton is gone. Albert is on the down side. The starting pitching is decent enough—and they have a solid closer in Aroldis Chapman—that they will win some games. But instead of Brian McCann and Howie Kendrick being support players, they are meat of the order. This is a team in the "middle third". Not good enough to contend, but with too much core talent to totally blow it up. With four top picks, this is an excellent draft to restock some key building blocks, preferably on the offensive side. Current value won't be shunned, but it is clearly secondary to future up-side. The fact that several of the teams right above them need different positions will noticeably benefit the Taylor Bros here as they fine a player who slipped a bit past where he ranked in a team-agnostic player

ranking. Yes, they have Wil Middlebrooks, but we don't see that stopping them from taking *Nolan Arenado*.

**Team: Dallas**  
**Ave: .235 SP: 5.5**  
**OBB: .295 RP: 6.0**  
**Slg: .374 Contender: No**

**Needs: Best available**  
**High Draft: #12, #41, #43**

The Eagles are free to select whichever young player they believe has the brightest future. No position on the current roster that is "blocked", except third base with Ryan Zimmerman—and with Arenado already gone there is no other thirdbaseman Steve is likely to even give a fleeting thought to. There are catchers worth taking here, Nick Franklin, and a slew of good young arms. Which way Dallas will go is near impossible to say. This pick even more that Taylorville is the first true "wild card" selection in the draft. We will guess—and it's little more than that—Steve will take a shot at filling the hardest to fill position on a roster and take *Travis dArnaud*. An interesting variation would be if Arenado is still available. Not needing him, but with Arenado likely in high demand, we can see Steve trading down a half dozen spots to get a comparable talent and a second item in return.

**Team: Rye**  
**Ave: .269 SP: 9.7**  
**OBB: .320 RP: 12.6**  
**Slg: .414 Contender: Probably**

**Needs: C, 1B, SS, OF**  
**High Draft: #13**

Damn the torpedoes (and the cliff), full speed ahead! This is the TBL version of the Yankees. Big names, lots of gray hair, and dead set at making the playoffs in 2014. In November it was unclear if they were going to rebuild or attack—but adding Jake Peavy tipped their hand. Craig wants another go at the post season. The line-up goes seven deep—and that's not counting Matt Kemp's mediocre half season. Catcher and shortstop are the areas of concern, though first base could be improved as well. The rotation goes four deep headed by Zack Greinke, and Joe Nathan is there to shut down the 9<sup>th</sup> inning. This is a team that will be in the playoff hunt all season, but if they do get in, is well suited to be better in the playoffs than the regular season because of the top-end pitching. The C/1B/SS remaining in the draft who provides the most immediate help in Jose Iglecias, and we suspect Rye is very happy to grab him.

**Team: Taylorville**  
**Already selected: Nolan Arenado**  
**High Draft: #11, #14, #35, #40**

At this point some of the scarcer position players have gone. There are still a couple catchers, but the Red Raiders already have Brian McCann. Nick Franklin is a possibility, but we believe a number of the young starting pitchers are ahead of him on the position-independent list. Given their regrouping status, we suspect Taylorsvill takes from the best value pile. Someone like young *Julio Teheran*.



**Team: Greater Ohio**

**Ave: .271 SP: 10.1**

**OBB: .337 RP: 9.9**

**Slg: .440 Contender: Yes**

**Needs: 2B, RP, Closer**

**High Draft: #15, #39**

Devlin is enjoying a playoff run this season, and should be looking for the same thing next year. The top six of their line-up is championship quality with Saltalamachia's .804 OPS likely hitting 6<sup>th</sup> much of the year. Zack Cozart is alright at short, and the third outfield spot is a patchwork quilt. But second base is the noticeable problem: when Jordany Valdespin (.188 ave and .316 slugging) has to play every game you can squeeze out of him and that still leaves you 57 games short of being legal, then you know it's something to be addressed. Fortunately for the Chia Pets, Nick Franklin is available, and very much fits the need. Next year he may be traded and stay a second baseman, or become the shortstop in Seattle, or move to the outfield. His bat should find a home in Greater Ohio for a long while.

**Team: Munich**

**Already selected: Jurickson Profar**

**High Draft: #3, #16, #27, #36**

Munich continues its stockpile talent approach to the draft. Over the past few seasons he has shown absolutely no hesitation about taking many, many young power arms and that continues. He takes the highest up-side left, *Gerrit Cole*.

**Team: Kansas**

**Already selected: Wil Myers**

**High Draft: #2, #17**

Myers helps the offense significantly, now it's time to address the rotation. Not counting five starts by relievers, there are only five real starting pitchers on the roster. That puts the team a full starter short of being legal, and even with that, that's a back end of grades 5/3/1. Since the strength on the board are starting pitchers, it is an easy focus. The hard part is which one since there is no single obvious option. The best volume for a young pitcher with talent and a decent grade is *Hyun-jin Ryu*, though the name mentioned could be Locke or Straily, or any of several others.

**Team: New West**

**Ave: .240 SP: 6.5**

**OBB: .312 RP: 10.0**

**Slg: .374 Contender: No**

**Needs: Best Available**

**High Draft: #18, #42, #47**

The selection of Ryu ends the second shelf in the draft. There are still many legitimate first-rounders left, but from here on they become a bit more speculative. So where does Jim and the rebuilding Whiskeyjacks head? See the commentary under "Dallas", it applies here with the exception there is *no* position blocked by incumbents. Best available talent on the board, neither position nor current card matters. Tie breakers are bat over pitcher, scarce position over easier to fill. It could be a catcher, or it could be Matt Davidson. Catcher is the harder position to fill, so Gattis or Zunio is a very real possibility—as is the next best middle infielder,

Scooter Gennette. But we will take a little bit if a crystal ball prediction (since we have no hard logic to choose among them) and pencil in *Matt Davidson* as headed off top the far north.

**Team: Melrose**  
**Already selected: Anthony Rendon**  
**High Draft: #9, #19, #33**

We commented in the draft summary at the beginning of this article that immediate power is scarce in this draft. Well, projectable power isn't a lot more abundant. And no one likes power more than Mark. On intriguing name is still out there with power potential in a class with Puig and Myers—i.e. an Avengers kind of guy. Outfielder *Khris Davis*.

**Team: Cayman**  
**Already selected: Michael Wacha**  
**High Draft: #7, #20, #31, #44**

We suspect Boomer would very much like to take a shortstop here, and he might. Didi Gregorius and Jordy Mercer are probably the two best SS options remaining, but we don't think either of them is as good as the two catchers left on the board. Cayman grabs *Mike Zunio*.

**Team: Zion**  
**Ave: .265 SP: 9.5**  
**OBB: .340 RP: 16.1**  
**Slg: .417 Contender: Yes**  
  
**Needs: OF, Bat, SS**  
**High Draft: #21, #45**

The Elders posted a discourse on their expectations for 2014. In it they highlighted a number of shortcomings—which are real. But the shortcomings don't diminish the fact that they will fight Hudson the whole way for the Mantle title, and if Hudson manages to beat them out Rich will likely still make the playoffs. And if he does, the 14/14/10 rotation and the 29/19/15 top of the bull pen will make them formidable. What is not up to Zion peak levels of formidability is the offense. It isn't a very Zion-like offense. Only two players have over 4 steals, and while Beltre/Craig/Hill/Choo is a fine half line-up, though lacking a lot of pop—only Choo and Beltre have more than 15 homers. The other half has a lot of games of Garrett Jones, Yunel Escobar, a weak Travis Hafner, and even the uninspiring Roger Bernadina's .181/.250/.295 line. What Rich would love to find would be a young Bernie Williams. He might settle for a young Marlon Byrd. Neither exists in this draft. In fact, there may be players at this point that Rich *likes*, but probably none that are what he *needs*. It's always difficult predicting what the Sensei will do—that is why he is the Sensei—but we think *Evan Gattis* make sense. A power outfield bat to contend in 2014, and a potential part time catcher in the out years,

**Team: Whitman**  
**Ave: .273 SP: 10.6**  
**OBB: .340 RP: 15.8**  
**Slg: .421 Contender: Yes**  
**Needs: SS, Bat, Relief depth**  
**High Draft: #22**

Whitman was a team that could have gone either way in this off season. It is aging in some key positions, but they also have a Kershaw and Goldschmidt combination that is difficult to give up on for 2014. With their off-season trades it



became clear they want to win now—rebuilding can wait. And Brian did a nice job filling most his critical holes, but at the cost of the top end of his draft. The River Rats have a few mid-level picks to get useful cardboard and part timers, but they only have one top-end draft pick. They have options to address all three of their most pressing needs, and it is hard to tell which way Brian will go. He needs a bat, and for a contender the biggest, baddest bat available is Marlon Byrd—but that’s not Brian’s kind of pick. For two thirds of the season he is looking at Cesar Izturis and Brendan Ryan as his starting shortstop—they of the non-existent offense (.529 OPS between them) so either Gregorious or Jordy Mercer would be a significant instant improvement. But in the end we think Brian sticks to his fundamental principles and takes a long term building block in the first round over the immediate fix. *Sonny Gray*.

**Team: Northboro**  
**Already selected: Christian Yelich**  
**High Draft: #4, #23, #28, #34**

The good news at second base for the Phoenix is that they have the *good hitting* Izturis. The bad news is Macier still only hit .236/.288/.310, and his future looks to be more of the same. Even with that, and with some Kevin Frandsen (who would see most his games at third if the season started now), they still have to suppress gagging when they write Andy Parrino’s name in the starting line-up at times. He of the 8 on 33 card. Oh joy! It isn’t their only option, but somehow we think saying *Scooter Gennette* will sound like a major step in the right direction about this time.

**Team: Portland**

**Ave: .268 SP: 9.9**  
**OBB: .343 RP: 15.1**  
**Slg: .460 Contender: Yes**

**Needs: OF, SP**  
**High Draft: #24, #48**

The Possum have been the class of the league on opening day the past few years. They may have dropped a notch below Brobdingnag, and maybe even Detroit, but they are still the odds on best team in the National Conference. They have weaknesses, but those are only relative to the rest of their roster. They have no gushing chest wound that must be addressed on draft day. They can afford to be patient, they can afford to take the player with limited use now but the tools to be a star in a few seasons. Remember Carlos Gonzalez? It could easily be a starting pitcher for there are still an abundance of good ones available. But there is also a hitter who seems to fit the Portland “invest and wait” approach, *Oswaldo Arcia*.

*And thus ends Round One*  
*On to Round Two*

**Team: Las Vegas**

**Ave: .263 SP: 7.4**  
**OBB: .323 RP: 11.1**  
**Slg: .397 Contender: No**

**Needs: C, 2B, OF, SP**  
**High Draft: #25, #38**

Las Vegas has taken a noticeable step forward in its talent base since a year ago, but they are not ready to contend. They have three regulars any team would find a home for, and several young

pitchers of promise. The relief staff if anything is a little too good. But there are stop-gaps at too many positions still, and depth is needed across the board. The player Paul likes best is likely the name they pick. They pick again in the middle of the round and can probably still get a young arm of interest; any bats remaining will be scarcer. Thus we project then taking a hitter here, hoping one of the pitchers falls to #38. The hitter we like at this stage is *Avisail Garcia*.

**Team: Maracaibo**

**Ave: .265 SP: 7.9**

**OBB: .324 RP: 12.8**

**Slg: .410 Contender: Yes**

**Needs: SP, Closer**

**High Draft: #26, #46**

Walter faced the same choice as Brian: compete now or regroup. As with Whitman, Maracaibo made off season moves to compete. The Rumrunners won't catch Portland, but they should finish second in the Aaron and vie for a wildcard spot. The offense is average, but has lots of speed as Walter prefers. It is tolerable for a contender. The relief staff will need a closer, but Mark Melancon's 16/+44/+61 will be a good enough imitation most days. What won't suffice is a rotation that quickly drops off from 100 games of 13/10/9/8 to 60 games of 4/4/3. This is an easy choice—a pitcher. Now which one may be more clouded? *Danny Salazar*.

**Team: Munich**

**Already selected: Jurickson Profar, Gerrit Cole**

**High Draft: #3, #16, #27, #36**

Paul keeps pursuing the best young arms he can find—sort of like the Cracker Barrel menu slogan. It could be Zack Wheeler of Jared Cosart, but instead we think he cracks open the reliever bucket and takes the one who doesn't have a closer grade today, but will have a lot of them in the near future, *Trevor Rosenthal*.

**Team: Northboro**

**Already selected: Christian Yelich, Scooter Gennette**

**High Draft: #4, #23, #28, #34**

At some point even the Bogaerts contenders have to fill out their rotation. Flip a coin among Cozart and Wheeler—and if it lands on its side take Gausman. It landed “tails”, so the Phoenix select *Zack Wheeler*.

**Team: Blue Hill**

**Already selected: Jose Fernandez**

**Needs: SP, RP, OF**

**High Draft: #5, #29**

Too early for a non-contender to take a reliever, and Mark has already addressed his starting pitching need. Now he turns to the outfield. One option is to go with the highly regarded but quite unproven Jackie Bradley. The other is the more proven but maybe not as complete a player in Darin Ruf. As steroids shrink, power seems to be more and more scarce, so we would value the power bat among these two. *Darin Ruf*.

**Team: Knoxville**

**Already selected: Shelby Miller**

**High Draft: #6, #30**

Starting around pick 24 or so we suspect Pat and his staff started to have some serious conversations about the option. From #25 through #29 only Maracaibo was a contender, so assuming no one moved up—or no one made a surprising pick—they may have the big question to face: To Cardboard Or Not To Cardboard. Adding Miller their starting pitching is close to the Mongrels. Adding a Cozart or Cingrani, or Strailey would put them about even. The bullpen is OK, but will be behind Midwest no matter what they do. The offenses are very comparable, with an edge to Darrell's squad: Midwest has six big bats, Knoxville currently five. There is only one player that can change that balance left on the board, and he won't be there next Blue Thunder pick. We think the adrenalin of the chase wins out over the pitching in this case. *Marlon Byrd*. And let the Williams Feud resume!

**Team: Cayman**

**Already selected: Michael Wacha, Mike Zunio**

**High Draft: #7, #20, #31, #44**

The Havens skipped over the young shortstops because there were better value picks on the board at the time, but the draft is nearing the brackish waters between the end of the third shelf and the wide, amorphous “4<sup>th</sup> tier” of payers who are likely to have reasonable careers, but not likely to be stars. The best prospects remaining are still starting pitchers, but at some point the squeaking wheel does need to be oiled. Mercer has the better bat, but the one remaining player who is an actual shortstop—not a ‘tweener 2B/SS—is *Didi Gregorius*.

**Team: Hudson**

**Already selected: Jedd Gyorko**

**High Draft: #8, #32**

Clay is still in need of top-end contributors, preferably ones with a job and a future in the majors. You can't get much more of those things that a grade 18 starter now who also has a clear job in real life. *Jared Cozart*.

**Team: Northboro**

**Already selected: Christian Yelich,  
Scooter Gennette  
Zack Wheeler**

**High Draft: #4, #23, #28, #33**

The first round has to get you guys who are safe—at least as safe as any athlete can be. In the second and bonus rounds there is always the temptation to take the high risk/high reward type of player. There are a couple of those kind of arms remaining and the Steve & Bob Consortium takes one. We'll guess *Tyler Skaggs* (though it could just as easily be Kevin Gausman).

**Team: Melrose**

**Already selected: Anthony Rendon, Chris Davis**

**High Draft: #9, #19, #34**

Still a gaping cavernous hole at shortstop. As with Boomer it's take 'em now or risk getting none. Since Cayman took the one, the other goes here. *Jordy Mercer*.



**Team: Taylorsville**  
**Already selected: Nolan Arenado, Julio Teheran**  
**High Draft: #11, #14, #35, #40**

Another piece of depth, another player who is young, has some talent, and a reasonable chance to display it. The specific position still doesn't matter much. *Jackie Bradley*.

**Team: Munich**  
**Already selected: Jurickson Profar, Gerrit Cole**  
**Trevor Rosenthal**  
**High Draft: #3, #16, #27, #36**

None of the remaining position players have the same up-side as the arms, and Munich is all about arms. The second round pitching run is on. *Kevin Gausman*.

**Team: Brobdingnag**  
**Already selected: Yasiel Puig**  
**High Draft: #1, #37**

A 2Bman would have been the preference, and there was probably a growl heard when Mercer went off the board, but the reality is none of the other second basemen are worth this pick. The other area of least strength on Brobdingnag at this point is left handed relief. Anyway, grade 30\* relievers are like crack—once you sample one, you want another. *Kevin Siegrist*.

**Team: Las Vegas**  
**Already selected: Avisail Garcia**  
**High Draft: #25, #38**

They have added a batter, now some help for the starting rotation. They are some 50 games short and that's using a grade 4 and a grade 3. A full season of *Martin Perez* helps that appreciably.

**Team: Greater Ohio**  
**Already selected: Nick Franklin**  
**High Draft: #15, #39**

Devlin would like to add both a closer and a better starter, but there's only room for one on this pick. Tony Cingrani would be a good addition provides one start in a playoff series as a 16, but the closer is more critical. There won't be a similar starter in the bonus round, but there is a decent chance to get the closer—although the selection will be less. It's a gamble, but the odds seem reasonable. *Tony Cingrani*.

**Team: Taylorsville**  
**Already selected: Nolan Arenado, Julio Teheran, Jackie Bradley**  
**High Draft: #11, #14, #35, #40**

Two position players and a starting pitcher inject some youth, but they still only have four relievers on the roster. There are a lot higher grades, but the live arm—and having taken Chapman the Taylors like live arms—is right handed reliever *Bruce Rondon*. Between he and Chapman they can reach 200 mph on the radar gun!

**Team: Dallas**  
**Already selected: Travis d'Arnaud**  
**High Draft: #12, #41, #43**

In the past, Steve has rebuilt the line-up first and the pitching staff second. He may do that again this time, but the reality is the better values still reside on the mound. Rather than the next best hitter—maybe someone like Junior Lake or Johnathan Villar, a 98 mph pitcher like Carlos Martinez is the selection, regardless of his current grade.

**Team: New West**  
**Already selected: Matt Davidson**  
**High Draft: #18, #42, #47**

Sandwiched between two Dallas picks, the Whiskeyjacks could again go in any of numerous directions. The only “real” shortstop on the roster is 40 year old Derek Jeter, so young *Johnathan Villar* seems to be a piece that fits very nicely.

**Team: Dallas**  
**Already selected: Travis d’Arnaud**  
**Carlos Martinez**  
**High Draft: #12, #41, #43**

Villar is gone, but if the Eagles want another young position player, *Junior Lake* is one with a little speed, some power, and the opportunity to play regularly in Chicago.

**Team: Cayman**  
**Already selected: Michael Wacha,**  
**Mike Zunio,**  
**Didi Gregorius**  
**High Draft: #7, #20, #31, #44**

The Havens still need a closer, and with only 160 innings above a grade 7 it will take a number of

picks to improve to “poor” in the bullpen. Might as well start now. There are a lot of closer quality relievers, but unusually they are predominantly left handed this year. The best of the right handed relievers is pretty good. *David Carpenter*. Lefties can be added later.

**Team: Zion**  
**Already selected: Evin Gattis**  
**High Draft: #21, #45**

The Elders have no safe choice that also fills the shortstop hole. They can go with a player like Brad Miller who helps now but may be squeezed out of a future job in Seattle, or he can select a player he likes better that provides less help now. As we mentioned above, trying to predict the thoughts of Zion is very hard indeed, but *Paco Rodriguez* is the kind of arm Rich likes to salt away for later use.

**Team: Maracaibo**  
**Already selected: Danny Salazar**  
**High Draft: #26, #46**

With eight of the last ten selections pitchers, the pitching run is fast turning into a stampede. The Rumrunners still need a closer, and Walter wants his choice, nit the left-overs. *Luis Avilan* is 65 innings of LH closer to pair with Melancon.

**Team: New West**  
**Already selected: Matt Davidson,**  
**Johnathan Villar**  
**High Draft: #18, #42, #47**

Jim is legal in the field, but a long way from it on the mound. Dan Straily provides a young

starter and just as importantly 27 starts for 2014.  
That still leaves them 20 short, but it's closer.

**Team: Portland**

**Already selected: Oswaldo Arcia**

**High Draft: #24, #48**

As with Arcia in the first round, there is very little that Ray and Jon *need*. It's all about selecting for the future, though another top end reliever would be helpful. Alex Torres certainly helps now with 58 innings of grade 24/-16/+56, and he has some of the traits Ray seems to like in his pitchers.