

Vagrant League

Fantasy Baseball

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Let The Season Begin!

Playball

Ed Feldman

League Commissioner

Playball! That was the cry heard around the ballparks this past week as the 2002 baseball regular season began. Despite all the off-fields woes in Major League Baseball the health of baseball in general is, in my opinion, very good as evidenced by the trouble everyone was having getting into the ESPN web-site on opening day due to excess traffic on the ESPN web-site.

Of course opening day in baseball means that the 2002 VLFB auction/draft has occurred and I would like to thank everyone for making it an outstanding draft. Each draft always seems to take on a life of its own and this one was no different as many teams wound up with the max bet of \$1 per player with many players go. The break down per teams of this are as follows:

3 for \$3 = 1 4 for \$4 = 1 5 for \$5 = 3 6 for \$6 = 1

That's 6 teams that had a max bid of \$1 for 3 or more players. What does this all mean? For this season, I

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Waiver Rule

Here's How It Works

Ed Feldman

Rules Committee Chairman

As everyone knows we have had a waiver rule since the formation of the league. What most people don't know is how it works in the VLFB world. So here is how it works.

A player will be placed on waivers when:

- The player is either on the 23 man active roster or the bench (this does not include the DL or farm system).
- The player meeting the above criteria is released from his team to the free agent pool.

Once a player is placed on waivers he can then be claimed off waivers the following week. To do this you claim him off waivers during your regular weekly roster moves and then in turn waive a player to make room on your active roster for the player you are claiming. The player you in turn waive does NOT have to be on the DL, sent down, etc.. This is a way to get rid of a bigger piece of dead wood (also known as crap) than you are claiming.

The player you are claiming off waivers must go into your active roster. He cannot be placed on your bench.

The player that you in turn waive is available to the rest of league as a waiver pickup the following week and the answer is no, you cannot claim your own player off waivers. You can pick him up as a normal free agent pickup the following week only if no other team, whether below or above you in the standings, claims him as a waiver pickup and no one below you claims him as a free agent pickup.

Lastly a player claimed of waivers maintains his current salary and contract.



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Draft Analysis

Thoughts on the 2002 Draft

Ira Mandelbaum

Master Drafter

Hello fellow owners – Saturday's draft was a lot of fun. The draft, like many in the past, had some surprises, some laughs, some things that never change, and some pretty nice bargains.

Surprise! – Doug drafted proven talent. While he spent some money on that talent, he has some of the best players in baseball – Bagwell, Piazza, and Gonzalez, just to name a few. If nothing else, it will make watching Baseball Tonight a lot of fun for Doug because every night at least one of his players will be highlighted.

Some Laughs:

- Barry's brilliant comment, "It's nice to see a hold mature." – a classic.
- The constant "friendly" abuse between Howie and Craig.
- Frank being able to read Craig's mind.... What am I going to eat after the draft, mmmm doughnuts, etc. Very funny.
- Seeing the Monarchs disagree on every player and seeing the Marauders, a Met fan and a Brave fan getting along so well.
- Ron showing up with a SUITCASE of rotisserie information

Some things never change – Lee drafting primarily \$2 - \$3 pitchers. If not for a \$10 Tom Glavine, which was a big surprise, Lee's strategy of not paying more than \$5 for a starting pitcher would have held constant. This strategy is counted on as much as is seeing the Yankees in post season play. I had to throw that in.

Some pretty nice bargains – These are just my opinions and observations – I really think everyone, for the most part, did a nice job – its just that some were nicer than others. In my opinion Ron had a great draft...not much of a surprise after seeing how much information he had. I think every player was bought at value or undervalued (even if only by a dollar). I don't know whether that will translate into a money team but very impressive nonetheless.

There were a lot of players drafted undervalued. This

was due to the dynamics of the draft and each owner's homework and diligence. Here is a list of what I thought were the top 10 picks:

1. **Edgar Renteria** – I think he is poised for a big year. I think at \$8 he could be a real nice bargain.
2. **Kevin Young** – An end of the draft prize – could get up to \$7 in return of a \$2 investment. To triple an investment is a good return in any market.
3. **Jeffrey Hammonds** – If he stays healthy, always a big if, he could more than double Barry's return. Having enough players like this is a good formula for success.
4. **Preston Wilson** – Of the big name players, I thought he went for a couple of dollars under what he should have gone for. If he hits .300 or above, a big if for too many whiffs, he will be very undervalued giving Ed a very nice return.
5. **J.T. Snow** – When healthy, very steady – he is in a decline and has had injuries and misfortune in the last 2 years but he is not a bad \$2 investment.
6. **Mark Grudzielanek** – A real nice end of the draft buy – health and decline is an issue but for a buck I think it was a great buy... besides he has the longest last name in baseball.
7. **Craig Wilson** - Put up nice power numbers with very few at bats last year. I think he will hit 15+ homers this year. He will see more playing time now that the Pirates went into operation release big mouth know it all asshole jerk Derek Bell.
8. **Brett Tomko** – Not a bad \$1 investment – perhaps this is the year he fulfills some of his talent. If he does, Ed will be pretty happy. I think I owned him in 1992.
9. **Ruben Quevedo** – Subscribes to the David Wells or should I say Orsen Wells diet – but he might be able to put up some decent numbers under the watchful eye and tutelage of Dave Stewart. I know I am counting on it.
10. **Jason Schmidt** – If he proves to be healthy and pitches like he did in the second half of last year he could double Barry's investment. Again, health is a big if.

Well there it is. I hope I have not offended anyone. This is written for your enjoyment and is meant to only entertain. I wish everyone a lot of luck and most of all lets have fun.



The Best Day of the Year

I Just Call it Fun

Barry Greenberg

Happy Owner

I, together with some of my closest friends, have a tradition which goes back almost 20 years. Each year without fail, on the Friday immediately following Thanksgiving, we journey to McSorleys Ale House in NYC, where we consume excessive quantities of their homebrewed ale. For those of you who are unfamiliar with McSorleys, all one needs to know to have a basic understanding of the venue is that they serve only two types of beverage: light ale and dark ale. They have been in business since about 1856, have walls full of artifacts to prove it, and quite relevant for the purposes of this article, only have admitted women in since 1971. We start about noon, and drink without break into the evening. The predictable result is usually massive hangovers the following day. I am sad to say that while several current members of this league were either regular or guest participants in the annual McSorleys run, with Jim Cortazzo's retirement from the Vagrant league, I am the only member of the league who continues with this tradition.

What does any of this have to do with our Fantasy Baseball league you may ask. Well, why I bring it up is a toast that I customarily offer at the beginning of our Mcsorleys day. Once everyone has arrived at our table (and the Mcsorleys staff who recognize us from our annual appearance hold our table open despite crowds that form in the cool November air outside by 1pm and snake around the corner, requiring use of police barricades), I offer the salutation, "To the best day of the year!", thus expressing my strong feelings for this event which is universally anticipated by those of us who participate. While my opinions may or may not be shared by those others present, they lift their ale filled mugs in approbation, whether in actual agreement or just to shut me up, and slug some brew.

While our Roto Draft is not a time to offer toasts, particularly those fueled by alcohol, I believe that the sentiment inherent in the above toast is relevant. While one may be hard pressed to call Draft Day, 'the best day of the year', I think it comes close.

Consider the anticipation. What other yearly event causes us to consider our actions months in advance, particularly with respect to leisure activities? Who here does not start to think about Draft Day in January, if not earlier? Once that e-mail is received in December or January announcing a tentative draft date, the doldrums of winter begin to fade, as it is a sure sign that baseball and Roto will soon return. The anticipation builds in February, when pitchers and catchers first report, and intensifies as full squads begin workouts and spring training games actually commence. By then, we are analyzing our rosters for possible trades and the all important 15 man roster decision in mid to late March.

By this time, my mind is a bubbling cauldron of Roto possibility and anticipation. Who to keep, who to toss. Once these decisions are made, its time to finalize the draft lists. Its then time to focus on nothing else that last week, as the days and then hours peel away until all boils down to just a few hours in that Melville conference room.

The actual draft experience can aptly be described as holy. Perhaps its the temporal proximity to Easter and Passover, or more likely its humbling effects. Does not every major religion ask for humility? Well, is that what one feels after overpaying for players and missing bargains after so much time considering and anticipating the draft? Is there not tradition and ritual? Pizza from last years winner. Is there not fellowship and camaraderie, if not (mostly) friendly rivalry.

And importantly, we can all appreciate this day as one where, for a few hours at least, we wont be hassled by our spouses, significant others, children, whatever. Sociologists and annoyed spouses may call this classic 'male bonding', but I just call it fun. So let me offer this comment about the draft: 'To the [second] best day of the year.....'



WEBSITE LINKS

[Vagrant League Fantasy Baseball](#) (Our home page)

[USAStats](#)

[Major League Baseball](#)

[ESPN MLB](#)

[Rotoworld](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEEKLY ROSTER MOVES

PLACE: CALL IN OR BY EMAIL

TIME: EVERY TUESDAY BY NOON

Starting April 16th, roster moves for the week must be received by noon. "Dibs" is based on who is lower in the standings the week before.

TRADING DEADLINE

TIME: AUGUST 13TH, NOON

There is no trading after this deadline until the season is over

SEPTEMBER EXPANSION

TIME: SEPTEMBER 3RD ROSTER MOVES OR LATER

Beginning with the September 3rd moves you can expand your roster from 23 players to 24. The extra player can be either a hitter or pitcher.



Roster Moves

The First Moves

Ed Feldman

League Commissioner

The first roster moves are on Tuesday, April 16th by noon. The order of selection will be based on the April 9th standings with the team lowest in the standings having first choice, 2nd lowest going next and so on. Roster moves are each week after that based on the previous weeks standings. **Reminder:** when activating a player from the DL you can waive/bench any active player on your roster as long as position eligibility is maintained. This is a result of getting rid of links last year. Also remember that you do NOT have to activate a player from your bench before picking up a player from the free agent pool. Email me the moves at edwardfeldman@kpmg.com. I prefer email over voicemail as much as possible. Lastly, the stat period is based on a Tuesday – Monday week for those of you that don't remember.



Playball

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am not too sure but the 2003 season may be chock full of bargain players creating an all-time high in terms of auction inflation when taking a hard look at this years draft.

Below is a table that shows the total number of \$1 - \$3 players drafted by each team. Double D & Shu's Crew lead the way with 12 & 10 respectively, but as it is plain to see everyone but the BarBarryans has plenty as well. While not all these players will be worth more than their current contracts, indeed some will not even be worth their current contracts, with a total of 87 players (and 47 of them being \$1) falling into these categories, if only 25% turn into bargains that translates into 22 players from this years draft alone that will be undervalued with some very undervalued too. Thank heavens for the "\$2" trading rule for players \$6 or less, or curse it, depending on your point of view and where you are in the standings at the All-Star break and the trading deadline in August.

<u>Team</u>	<u>\$1</u>	<u>\$2</u>	<u>\$3</u>	<u>Totals:</u>
Double D	7	4	1	12
Shu's Crew	7	3	0	10
Eight Men Out	5	0	4	9
Mutts	5	4	0	9
Futurians	3	4	1	8
Krackerjacks	2	2	3	7
Marauders	2	2	3	7
Monarchs	4	1	1	6
Master Blaster	5	0	1	6
Red Storm	5	0	1	6
Arms& Hammers	2	3	0	5
BarBarryans	0	0	2	2
Totals:	47	23	17	87

Is all this really different than last season you ask? Well the 2001 draft produced 34 \$1, 13 \$2 & 14 \$3 players for a total of 61 players. This years 26 player increase to a total of 87 represents a 43% increase over last season. OK, so is that really a big deal? The answer to that is a definite maybe. Just because players have low salaries does mean that they will definitely be bargains next year. Of the 61 players in the \$1-\$3 range drafted in 2001, 19 were protected, or 31% of the 61 players. At the same 31% protection rate the 87 \$1-\$3 players draft in 2002 will result in 27 players being protected. At these numbers I think it is safe to say that there will be a few big bargain contracts resulting from this draft. It could also mean a big dumping year even with the \$2 tax on all these salaries if the percentage of keepers is at 31% or better. So let the trading begin!



RULES REFRESHER

TRADING

- Unrestricted trading with other teams until noon on the second Tuesday in August. No trading after this date.
- After the start of the auction until the trading deadline, any players traded with a salary of \$6 or less will have \$2 added to his contract each time he is traded.
- After every trade, both teams must have eligible players at all 23 positions. You cannot leave a position “empty”.

FARM SYSTEM CONTRACTS

- Farm system players called up will have a contract of \$1 his call up year, \$3 his second year and \$5 his third year.

MINIMUM INNINGS PITCHED AND AT BATS

- *Minimum Innings Pitched:* 900 - Needed to earn your ERA & Ratio points. Otherwise you get moved to the bottom in each category (1 point for each)
- *Minimum At Bats:* 4250 - Needed to earn your Batting Average points. Otherwise you get moved to the bottom of BA and get only 1 point.

PLAYER POSTION ELIGIBILITY

- At least 20 games for the protected list & auction.
- If a player did not play 20 or more games at one position then he is only eligible at the position he played the most at.
- Only 1 game once the regular season starts

ROSTER MOVES

- The first roster moves will be on April 16th. The pick-up order will be based on the April 9th standings.
- All roster moves are due to Ed by noon on Tuesday every week starting on April 16th.
- Either call in moves at 631.425.6067 or email them to edwardfeldman@kpmg.com.
- Once per season each team can make a move on an active player that has not been placed on the DL, sent down, etc.. This is called the “Free Move”



How You See It

Survey Results

Ed Feldman

League Pollster

Here are your responses to the questions.

Futurians

Value: Smoltz at \$3

Strength: Speed

Weakness: Possibly power or saves

KrackerJacks

Value: Miller at \$5

Strength: Starting Pitching

Weakness: Relief Pitching

Monarchs

Value: Oswalt at \$4

Strength: Runs\Hr's

Weakness: K's

Marauders

Value: Danny Bautista at \$2

Strength: Hitting

Weakness: Relievers

BarBarryans

Value: Schmidt at \$4

Strength: Player potential & no true dead spots

Weakness: Injury prone players & too many “potential” players

Master Balsters

Value: Berkman at \$5

Strength: Offense

Weakness: Possibly saves

Red Storm

Value: Mantei at \$1

Strength: Steals

Weakness: Starting pitching

Double D

Value: Beckett at \$1,3,5

Strength: Starting pitching

Weakness: At bats

Eight Men Out

Value: Lo Duca at \$2

Strength: Power

Weakness: Outfield & Closer



Speaking BarBarryan

A Team Self Appraisal

Barry Greenberg

Team Owner

Owners may not want to give a full accounting as to their true feelings about their players due to possible trades, but I promise I will be completely candid!

My best value is Jason Schmidt. I am hoping that he will be about as effective as Russ Ortiz at less than 1/2 the price. So far, Derrick Lee is my best value, but he was a holdover from last year. Eric Gagne as a probable closer at \$6 is also nice.

My biggest regret was holding off on purchases too long. I saved all my money to corner the market in later rounds but stuck to this strategy too long. Also, I should have taken someone else other than J. Bell for \$4 and G. Norton for \$3.

As for my strength, it is potential (read this as an admission that my team is no favorite). Lots of potentially good players for low contracts. Also, there are no glaring holes on my team or any empty roster spots. Every player has the potential to play well and contribute, and there are no obvious 'do-nothing' backups. As far as category strength, saves with Wagner, Dejean & Gagne.

The weakness is the flip side of potential, too many players can suck, get hurt, or both. Ishii could be great or a disaster. What about the young guys, Helms and Wilkerson, do they step up and claim full time jobs as productive major leaguers, or end up as platoon guys or worse?

Injuries will likely determine the fate of my team. Larry Walker and Barry Larkin are great players, but how much will they really play? Hammonds and Payton are also held together with duct tape. Between these 4 players, I will be thrilled with 1800 at bats. There are just too many 'ifs' on my team. Statistically, a percentage of them just wont work out well. That is why my team cannot be considered a favorite. However, if the Rotisserie Gods shine in my favor and keep my boys healthy and a few key guys meet their potential, I believe the talent is there to win.

Thus is early April. If I can't be optimistic now, when can I be?

