



Vagrant League

Fantasy Baseball



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Top Dollar Keepers

How The Borderline Keepers Compare

Barry Greenberg

Team Owner

To a large extent, the success of each of our roto seasons is determined at the auction by which players we draft, the prices we pay, and those we choose not to draft. But also very important are those players we each choose to protect from the previous year. Some of these choices are obvious; bargains are protected while overpriced players are discarded.

The difficult issue is what to do with the borderline players, particularly the pricey ones. While it may seem simple enough to just go by a set price list that you obtain from a publication or calculate yourself, the difficulty arises out of an inability to properly calculate the inflation factor, which cannot be done until after the protected lists are in. So we are left to just make our best guess as to what a player may be worth. Also, the fact that the individual owner may have a well founded belief that the 'conventional wisdom' of a player's worth is significantly off may cause that owner to keep a seemingly

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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:

- Ø The player is either on the **23 man active roster** or the **bench** (this does not include the DL or farm system).
- Ø 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 off waivers maintains his current salary and contract.

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Borderline Keepers

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Overpriced player, or jettison a potential bargain.

Here is my analysis of the most expensive players protected going into our draft this year. Each analysis consists of two parts. The first looks at the decision as of the time the protected list was submitted; the second compares the player to how much was paid for similar players at the draft.

Bobby Abreu, \$38, Ira. Before: Bargain. Abreu is one of the top five players in the NL. Based on his monster year in 2004, well worth the money.

After: Bargain. Pujols went for \$45, Helton for \$39. There were no other comparables drafted. Carlos Beltran was protected at \$20 and Barry Bonds is a huge injured, cheating, question mark.

Scott Rolen, \$34, Ed. Before: slightly overpriced. Based on his great year in 2004, it would have been very difficult to throw him back. Still, though, was that his career year?

After: slightly overpriced. Chipper Jones, eligible at 3B, went for \$31. Troy Glaus went for \$29 and Mike Lowell for \$28. I would rather have either of the two latter at the \$5 or \$6 savings. Carlos Delgado, another corner man, went for \$34 at the auction, mitigating this somewhat.

Roy Oswalt, \$31, Frank. Before: fair value. The top pitcher protected. It seems to be more difficult to rate starting pitchers than position players. Going in to the draft with a top five type starter locked up is never a bad idea.

After: fair value/slight bargain. Hudson went for \$36, Schmidt for \$35, Pedro for \$31, Peavy and Mulder each for \$29. Oswalt fits in nicely with that group.

Shawn Green, \$28, Ron. Before: slightly overpriced. The first of a group of top fifteen type outfielders protected for \$25-28. The pricetag seems high given Green's consecutive down seasons. Roto is, however, more art than science. Had Green been on my roster, I would have protected him also, for two reasons: 1) He is a Jew, like myself. And he has served my team well over the years. 2) More importantly, he moves from a pitchers park to a hitters park, and is two years removed from a shoulder injury that slowed him down. Expect a big year.

After: Fair value. Carlos Lee went for \$35, Chipper Jones

for \$31, Andrew Jones for \$30, Brian Giles for \$29, Preston Wilson for \$27. Derrek Lee, perhaps a comparable player at 1B, went for \$30. Green, with his 1B eligibility, fits in well with this group.

Jim Edmonds, \$27, Ed. Before: Fair value. Another Cardinal coming off a career year. Ed was keeping Rolen so he may as well have kept this duo together. He just has to hope these two can continue to perform at that level.

After: Fair value/slight bargain, see comparables above. Also note that after the above group, no outfielder went for more than the \$22 that Austin Kearns fetched, or the \$21 that Moises Alou and Matt Lawton went for at the auction. Bonds went for \$19 and Berkman for \$20, each with their huge question marks. Jose Guillen may end up as a huge bargain at \$20, as will Luis Gonzalez at \$18 if he can remain healthy.

Corey Patterson, \$27, Doug. Before: Fair value. This guy does not get much respect (Patterson, not Doug), nor will he until his on base skills improve. Still though, name another player other than Beltran or Abreu who has a shot at 30/30.

After: Fair value. Tough to compare this type of player with his great power/speed combo, but with less run scoring/RBI potential, to the above outfielders. Better to view him as either a very poor version of Abreu/Beltran, or a significantly superior version of either Mike Cameron(\$17), Reggie Sanders (\$16), Milton Bradley (protected at \$20) or Matt Lawton (\$21). Being that his price falls almost at the midpoint, all seems fair.

Brad Wilkerson, \$25, Doug. Before: Slightly overpriced. Similar to Patterson, but more power and less speed. He may be jerked around in the batting order again this year, and it is unclear how good the Nats will be. Perhaps Doug figured going in to the draft with an outfield of Cabrera/Patterson/Wilkerson for a combined \$62 didn't exactly suck.

After: Fair value. He falls in that netherworld between the elite outfielders and the pack a few dollars below.

Juan Pierre, \$25, Ed. Before: Fair Value. He can't really be compared to the outfielders above because his strength is speed. Speed is a valuable commodity and these days is hard to find. He will probably lead the league in steals.

After: Fair value. Speed, speed, speed.

Continued on Page 6 – Keepers

Where Did The Time Go?

The Longest Auction On Record

Ed Feldman
Commissioner

It was one of the smoothest, if not shortest auctions we ever had. I thank everyone for arriving on time and not having any crisis' come up to throw a wrench in the works. Thanks go out to Barry as well for buying us all pizza and soda. To spread the burden, I hope to be buying the pizza next year.

The 2005 auction took a record 6 hours to complete which is way to long. I don't think there would be any debate on that. There has been some talk that holds during bidding are the cause and I believe there is some merit in that but I don't think it is the main problem.

The main problem as I see it is that in 2001 we protected 132 players and needed to obtain at auction 144 while in 2005 we protected 103 players and needed to obtain at 173 players at auction. That's 29 more players needed than 2001 and the trend has been getting worse every season since 2001 as shown below.

| Season | Players Kept | Players Needed | Avg. Players Kept Per Team | % of Players Needed |
|--------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 2001 | 132 | 144 | 11.0 | 52% |
| 2002 | 118 | 158 | 9.8 | 57% |
| 2003 | 110 | 166 | 9.2 | 60% |
| 2004 | 104 | 172 | 8.7 | 62% |
| 2005 | 103 | 173 | 8.6 | 63% |

It should be noted that we instituted the \$4 trade tax at the start of the 2001 season to reduce the amount dump trades effect the following season as well as the current season and as the above shows, it seems to have had an impact.

If you consider it takes 2 minutes for each player to be auctioned (173 players x 2 minutes = 346 minutes. 346 minutes ÷ 60 = 5 hours 46 minutes) then the 29 more players we needed to auction this season over 2001 cost use an hour in time. We needed 14.5 rounds to draft our players in 2005. To help shorten the draft, starting at next

seasons auction, there will be no holds for the first half of the needed rounds and just one 30 second hold per player for the second half of the draft.

For example, at this season's auction we needed 173 players total. Divide 173 by 12 (the number of teams in the league) and you 14.4 rounds needed to draft our rosters. Therefore, there would have been no player holds for the first 7 rounds of the auction.

Using a formula such as this means that if next season our protected list shoots back up to 132 translating into 144 needed at auction then 144 divided by 12 equals 12 resulting in only the first 6 rounds having no holds.

While the number of protected players has the greatest impact on how long the auction is, if we used the above method we would have shortened the auction by 45 minutes, which is significant.

It should be noted that it is commonplace in many leagues to have no holds for the entire auction forcing owners to be prepared to make decisions and not look up every player during the auction.

This should help shorten the draft by almost an hour. A five hour draft is still a little too long but is better than a 6 hour or more draft.

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End of Season Ties

A Reminder

Ed Feldman
Commissioner

From the VLFB Rules:

1.8 End of season ties:

1.8.1 Should two or more VLFB teams be tied at the end of the regular season then the first tie breaker is a head-to-head comparison to see if one team finished higher than the other(s) in more categories.

1.8.2 Should teams remain tied after the above then the second tie breaker is a comparison of the involved teams, each in their best category and the winner is the team that has the highest finish. If they remain tied then the comparison is made with their next best categories and so on until a winner is determined.

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The Suspended Player Rule

Here It Is In Writing

Ed Feldman
Commissioner

The following has been added to the VLFB rules in section 9 and posted on our website. This rule is currently in effect. Here are the details:

9. Suspended Players

- 9.1. Players serving suspensions by MLB (not the players team) for less than 10 days for any reason cannot be replaced.
- 9.2. Players serving suspensions by MLB for 10 games or more can be replaced the same as any DL'd player.
- 9.3. The suspended player is not eligible to be DL'd within the VLFB until the Tuesday after player begins serving the suspension unless they start serving the suspension on a Tuesday.
- 9.4. If a player is suspended for 10 or more games, appeals the suspension and has the number of games suspended reduced to less than 10 then the VLFB owner **cannot** DL the player.
- 9.5. Once the suspension has been served the VLFB owner may activate the player as he would any DL'd player.

Please note the distinction above of serving the suspension. Many times players appeal the suspension and then wait until the schedule brings them to NY to place the appeal in person. As such, the suspended player continues to play until the appeal hearing and a decision about the appeal is announced.

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Some Baseball Trivia

1. Who was the only player to hit two home runs in the 1986 World Series?
2. Who won the 1986 World Series MVP?
3. Who won the 1998 NL rookie of the year award?
4. Who was the 1996 National League MVP?
5. Who was the 1991 National League MVP?

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Answers on Page 5

The First NL No-No

Almost Had One

Frank Cottone
Owner

After purchasing Odalis Perez for \$24 at the auction, I said that he would pitch the first NL no-hitter this year. A complete long shot I said, but... what if it happened, I would be the first person to say so! What do you think the odds would be? You can make some unique bets on the Super Bowl. There has to be a web site that could offer the odds on the first NL no hitter. I got Odalis Perez at 1000 to 1.

Anyway, I was watching Odalis pitch his gem on MLB Extra Innings, the best \$150 I have ever spent. Perez was lights out through 6. With the no-no intact he walks Brady Clark to open the 7th. Junior Spivey, on a 3 & 2 count, rips a double off the wall scoring Clark. There goes the no hitter, and the shout-out! At least it was my player... Odalis gets pulled after 6 1/3. Duaner Sanchez takes over and gets Carlos Lee to ground out. He then walks Damin Miller. Next is Chris Macguger, a .200 hitter, and he rips a double scoring Spivey and Miller. Damn, 2 Earned runs for Odalis!

Sanchez works the game to a 4-3 lead for the Dodgers. Odalis still has the shot for the win. A Milton Bradley bomb in the top of the 9th gives the Dodgers a 3 run lead. Brazoban takes over in the bottom half of the 9th and mows down the Brewers 1, 2, 3.

Odalis ends up with 1 W; 6 1/3 IP; 2 ER; **1 H**; 2 BB; 3 Ks. It was fun watching a 1 in a 1,000 miracle *almost* happen!! By the way, what do you think the odds were for Heilman to be the first 1 hitter in the NL?? A million, a billion, a trillion to 1...

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A Bit Of A Draught

Time To Make A Move

Ed Feldman

There are 8 different teams that have come in the money the last two years. They are: BarBarryans, Eight Men Out, KrackerJacks, Futurians, Master Blasters, Monarchs (Comfortably Numb), Shu's Crew & Red Storm.

The teams on the outside looking in: Arms & Hammers, Double D, Marauders & Mutts.

Time to make a move fellas.

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WEBSITE LINKS

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

[USAStats](#)

[Major League Baseball](#)

[ESPN MLB](#)

[Rotoworld](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEEKLY ROSTER MOVES

PLACE: EMAIL TO ED AT **WORK**

TIME: EVERY TUESDAY BY NOON

“Dibs” (not Rob Dibble) on players is based on who is lower in the standings on the Tuesday of reported moves.

TRADING DEADLINE

TIME: AUGUST 9TH, NOON

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

SEPTEMBER EXPANSION

TIME: SEPTEMBER 6TH ROSTER MOVES OR LATER

Beginning with the September 6th moves you can expand your roster from 23 players to 24. The extra player can be either a hitter or pitcher.



Draft Busts & Bargains

A Look Back & Ahead

Doug Drotman

Team Owner

OK, I finally figured it out. I now know what I am good at. I can certainly spot the draft day bargains that other players get. As for my picks, that's another column.

Last year, right after the draft I rated the top bargains and busts. I did pretty well. Check it out.

Bargains – Chad Cordero, Tony Womack, Brady Clark, Russ Ortiz, Eric Milton, Ryan Freel, Roger Clemens. I was correct on 5 of 7 and struck gold with Freel, Cordero and Clark – not obvious bargains. In fact, 4 of 5 were protected and it would have been 5 if Womack had stayed in the NL. Although Milton and Ortiz had high ERA's and WIP's, they did win 15 and 14 games respectively.

Continued next Column

Busts – I did very well here too. Chad Fox, Brandon Larson, Edwin Jackson and Luis Castillo were all thrown back this year and Termel Sledge certainly did not earn \$10 last year. With apologies to Craig I was wrong on Sheets and Mesa. Unfortunately those were Craig's only two good picks of '04.

So let's try it again. This article was written on April 8 but it does reflect my opinions leaving the draft. Also, since prices were so crazy this year, it was tough to equate price with value. And of course, my players are not being mentioned since it is obvious that I am not too good at rating the player I draft.

BARGAINS

- ü Omar Vizquel - \$10 (especially compared to the other SS)
- ü Luke Scott - \$5 (maybe not this year but in 2006)
- ü Mark Mulder \$29 (better than Hudson, Prior, Wood)
- ü Eric Young \$1 (more steals than Lofton) Xavier Nady \$5 – (a bargain for years to come)
- ü Darryl Ward \$1 – (a perfect \$1 gamble)
- ü Antonio Alfonseca \$1 (cheap saves)
- ü Salomon Torres \$1 (Mesa insurance)
- ü Russ Ortiz \$9 (fool me twice?)

BUSTS

- ü Kenny Lofton - \$14 (\$1 per SB...too much)
- ü Brian Giles \$29 (he's 34 ... not getting better)
- ü Willy Tavares \$9 (yes for \$5 no at \$9)
- ü Craig Wilson \$17 (I refuse to believe he's more than a platoon player)
- ü Yhency Brozoban \$7 (I better hope this was too much)
- ü Chris Burke \$10 (no value in '05 but will earn \$10 in '06)



Baseball Trivia Answers

From Page 4

1. Gary Carter (Game 4)
2. Ray Knight
3. Kerry Wood (The Monarchs traded Wood to the X-Men (a.k.a. Comfortably Numb) on 7/9/98)
4. Ken Caminiti
5. Terry Pendleton



RULES REFRESHER

TRADING

- Unrestricted trading 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 \$12 or less will have \$4 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”.

END OF SEASON TIES

- Should two or more VLFB teams be tied at the end of the regular season then the first tie breaker is a head-to-head comparison to see if one team finished higher than the other(s) in more categories.
- Should teams remain tied after the above then the second tie breaker is a comparison of the involved teams, each in their best category and the winner is the team that has the highest finish. If they remain tied then the comparison is made with their next best categories and so on until a winner is determined.
- For example, teams A & B are tied for third at the end of the season and the head-to-head comparison results in a 5-5 tie. Under the 2nd tie breaker, team A’s best category is HR’s where he was second and Team B’s best category was K’s where he was third so team A would finish third and team B would finish fourth.

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.

FREE MOVE

- 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”.



Roster Moves

Changing Your Active Roster

Ed Feldman

League Commissioner

Roster moves are due on Tuesdays as usual by noon.

Reminder: when activating a player from the DL you can waive or bench any active player on your roster as long as position eligibility is maintained. 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 so that I can keep move history more easily. Lastly, the stat period with respect to roster moves is based on a Tuesday – Monday week for those of you that don’t remember.



Trade Evaluator

New Stat Service Feature

Ed Feldman

League Commissioner

No I am not offering my services in this department although you can feel free to bounce trades off me before you pull them off, maybe I will beat the offer. This is actually a new feature of our stat service. Here’s how to use it. From our USA Stats home page:

1. Click **Team Information**
2. Click **Trade Evaluator**
3. Select your team and the team you want to trade with from the drop down menus
4. Click the **Continue** button
5. Select your players
 - 5.1. To select more than one player hold the ctrl key down while clicking on each players name you want to include
6. Select the players you want to trade for on the other team
 - 6.1. See 5.1
7. Click **Submit**

Unfortunately it does not total the numbers for you by team (I have requested the stat service to do this) but it is still a nice feature otherwise.



Keepers

Adam Dunn, \$25, Lee. Before: bargain. He may lead the league in HRs. The runs and RBIs will also be there. Ignore the lousy BA.

After: Significant bargain. The only real comparable player is Big Jim Thome, who went for \$35. There is even talk that Dunn will run more this year. Just add 15+ steals to the projected 45-50 Hrs he may hit, and Lee may have a monster.

Pat Burrell, \$25, Barry. Overpriced. Looking at Pat's past two years, its hard to imagine him going for more than \$20-22 at the auction. But this is my version of art over science. He looked great this spring, is over an injury, seemed to adjust very favorably to a new hitting coach, and now has another year hitting between or after Abreu/Thome in a hitters park. All it takes is one other owner to think the same thing at the draft, and his price would shoot up over the \$25 it cost me to keep him.

After: Slightly overpriced/fair value. Given the large gap in auction prices between the elite outfielders and those below, he probably would have gone closer to the \$22 that Kearns went for than the \$27 Preston Wilson went for. Still, I have to point out that my theory is correct, at least through mid-April: Pat leads the NL in RBIs and is batting over .400. While I would be a fool to expect this to continue, I will cautiously hope for a 35HR, 120 RBI season.



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MLB's Top Rookie Picks

A Not To Impressive List

Ed Feldman
Team Owner

I thought it would be interesting to take a look at MLB's past first overall picks (not VLFB first picks) in the June draft and see who is currently playing in the NL these days as well as a look at players that have graced the VLFB league over the years. Here's a look at the names:

| Year | Name | Team |
|------|-----------------|----------|
| 1998 | Pat Burrell | Phillies |
| 1996 | Kris Benson | Pirates |
| 1994 | Paul Wilson | Mets |
| 1992 | Phil Nevin | Astros |
| 1990 | Chipper Jones | Braves |
| 1987 | Ken Griffey Jr. | Mariners |

Quite the list of names but not as long as I thought it would be. We all know that Griffey is old but seeing 1987 really strikes home just how old he is in baseball terms. I think it is the suffix 'Jr.' at the end of his name that always makes me think he is not that old. I think overall I was expecting a better class of names. Surprising. As early results show, Burrell may be just coming into his own if he can stay healthy. Also, I also think of Nevin as a young guy but at 34, although he is at his peak, the down years may be just around the corner.

Past first overall picks that made it into our league and are no longer in baseball:

| Year | Name | Team |
|------|-------------------|---------|
| 1988 | Andy Benes | Padres |
| 1986 | Jeff King | Pirates |
| 1985 | B.J. Surhoff | Brewers |
| 1983 | Tim Belcher | Twins |
| 1982 | Shawn Dunston | Cubs |
| 1980 | Darryl Strawberry | Mets |

Some interesting names from a reminiscing point of view. I know I've had Tim Belcher, B.J. Surhoff (that was a mistake) and Andy Benes. Unfortunately it was not when they were all in their prime. Seeing Daryl Strawberry's name makes me pine for the days when a drug problem in MLB typically meant cocaine and not steroids.

All in all the names are not too impressive. Just goes to show, first pick does not always mean best pick.

