

Beer League Baseball



2010 Draft Report Card

By Mike Jackson
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Introduction

The third annual Beer League Baseball draft took place on March 6, 2010. After nearly 4 hours of drafting, and many, many beers (hopefully nobody ended the draft looking like this guy), the 20 attending owners (100% participation this year!) finally had teams to call their own. After the last two drafts I did a report card, grading everyone's picks, and I've decided to make it an annual thing, since I enjoy doing it and everyone seems to enjoy reading it.



What I've done is copied each team's draft results (for this year only) into the report card. Then I evaluate each team's draft based on a number of factors: Did this team overpay for anyone? Did they get good value picks? Did they make the right decision with the direction of their draft (ie attempt to contend vs rebuild)? Did they spend all their money? Did they apportion their money smartly (ie if a team with 3 third basemen spent 50 bucks on A-Roid, that wouldn't make much sense). After I've discussed the draft, I came up with the best and worst values on the team. Finally, after all that, I assign a grade and summarize my overall thoughts on the team.

I should say that all these grades and team breakdowns are only my opinions. I didn't set out to do this to ruffle any feathers, or insult any owners, and if I do end up offending anybody with my grades, I apologize. I merely intend this to be a fun read, and something to get everyone psyched up for Opening Day.

After all the teams are complete, I've tried to make a prediction of every team's record this season. Again, this is just my opinion, though I will say that some of my predictions from last year were pretty close to accurate.

With that said, I hope everyone enjoys this document and has a fun time reading it, and I welcome any complaints and arguments about my grades! Bring it on, and Play Ball!

Jackson Park Badgers (PNC Park)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Adrian Gonzalez	34	1/3
Carlos Beltran	13	1/3
Chipper Jones	16	1/3
Freddy Sanchez	8	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Randy Wells	10	1/3
Wandy Rodriguez	17	1/3
Marc Rzepczynski	4	1/3
Todd Coffey	4	1/3

Owner: Nate Feuerer

Total Payroll: \$280, \$14 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: A

2009 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

Nate looks to be making a run for this year, and I think that makes sense. He came into the draft with a good offense and a few good starters, and was probably looking to add an impact bat or two and a some SP depth. Mission accomplished on both fronts, as he added Adrian Gonzalez for the very reasonable price of \$34 (a full \$19 cheaper than Pujols went for!), Beltran for \$13 (no doubt some owners were scared by his oft-injured status), and clutch batter Chipper Jones (coming off a down year but still with a nice card) for \$16. I think Chipper is a slight overpay at this stage but if Nate's going for it this year, then I don't mind the reach for the sweet card. On the subject of Gonzalez, I know 1B is deep this year but I still love him for \$34, especially if/when he gets dealt out of Petco, he could start putting up MONSTER hitting numbers (even moreso than his already monsterific stats!).

On the pitching side, Wandy went for a reasonable price of \$17. I would say that's a bargain, except that he's a lefty (lefties don't often fare as well as righties in these kinds of leagues) and he's actually 30 years old (he got a late start to his career; check out John Sickel's summary of Wandy's career at Minor League Ball, it's a good read).

Rzepczynski is a nice pickup both for this year and the future at \$4. Randy Wells has a discouraging platoon split but Nate can spot him at home against RHB heavy lineups and maximize his value. Coffey has a nice' pen card for only \$4.

The Bad:

Not much not to like about Nate's draft. I mentioned above that I think he reached a bit for Chipper, but that it was defensible if he was going all in for this year. I'm not a believer in Wells long term, and I could see him being a buyout for Nate 10 months from now. I think Freddy Sanchez is pretty overrated, as he's got an "empty" batting average most of the time, and from what I understand he'll be injured to start the season, so even though Nate needed a 2B, I didn't love the \$8 he spent on him. Also Nate left \$14 on the table which could have been used to maybe draft a better 2B or better SP (I know, I know hindsight is 20/20, but still...).

Best Value: Gonzalez at \$34

Worst Value: Sanchez at \$8

The Verdict:

Nate has always done well on these report cards, and this year is no different as I'm giving him an overall grade of **A-** for this draft. Nate really improved his offense by adding the impact bats of Gonzalez, Jones, and Beltran (part time), while he added depth to his already solid-ish rotation by drafting Wandy, Randy Wells (keep him away from lefties!) and Rzepczynski (for 11 starts he'll be solid). He also added a bullpen ace in Todd Coffey to bridge the gap to Soria. His only demerits are the Sanchez pick and the fact he left a lot of money on the table in a year he's trying to contend.

Manhattan 24 Horsemen (Yankee Stadium)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Yadier Molina	23	1/3
Carlos Pena	25	1/3
Manny Ramirez	14	1/3
Josh Willingham	5	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Tim Wakefield	3	1/3
Ronald Belisario	1	1/3

Owner: Ron Erdmann

Total Payroll: \$282, \$0 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B

2009 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

Ron only had 6 picks and made it no secret that his goal is to rebuild this year and try to get his team to .500. Manny was a pretty nice value pickup at \$14; I do think he's in decline but he could be nice trade bait, or he might find himself re-energized playing in his contract season (who the hell knows with Manny being Manny?) in which case the \$14 will be a bargain next year. Pena has some big power numbers even though his batting average tanked this year, so \$25 could be a buy low. Willingham was a nice value pickup at \$5; despite his defense he had a very nice season with the bat. Belisario was a steal at a buck compared to what some relievers went for earlier in the draft.

The Bad:

I don't get Ron's strategy overall. I guess he felt burned by shelling out \$21 for Hughes and getting slammed for it in a previous draft, but for a rebuilding team to take nobody under the age of 27 is confusing to me. I don't like the Yadier pickup at all for that price; sure his offensive numbers have been trending upwards the last few seasons, but he still had an OPS south of .750 last year. Catcher defense is overrated in general but especially in DLB; range means almost nothing, and Yadier's throwing arm rating (usually -2 or -3) dropped to -1 this year. The "A" passed ball and handling ratings are nice, but not worth spending \$23 for a non-elite catcher with the bat. I don't mind Yadi as a player but I think Ron paid too much for him. Pena had a better year in 2009 than most think since his average looks ugly, but that doesn't mean he'll continue to be productive. I think it's possible he's in decline (indeed, his OBP has dropped the last few years and he's on the wrong side of 30 now).

Best Value: Willingham for \$5.

Worst Value: Molina for \$23.

The Verdict:

I give Ron an overall grade of **C+** for this year's draft. He got some nice value veteran pickups, such as Manny and Willingham, but I didn't like his overall strategy of not focusing on drafting a blue chip young player or two (such as maybe opening the vault for Ryan Zimmerman, maybe drafting Jeter's replacement Elvis Andrus, maybe picking up a nice young SP to build around such as Mat Latos, etc). The Yadier pick I didn't like for a rebuilding team, as his throwing arm dropped off this year and he's still not an elite offensive talent (I've always thought he was overrated, but then again I generally feel that the impact of catcher defense is overrated).

Nickel Centre Wolf Pack (Shea Stadium)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Garrett Jones		1/3
Miguel Tejada		1/3
Nick Johnson		1/3
Kelly Shoppach		1/3
Skip Schumaker	5	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Dan Haren		1/3
Roy Oswalt		1/3
Fu-Te Ni		1/3
Brad Bergeson		1/3
Ben Sheets		1/3
Tommy Hunter		1/3

Owner: Nicholas Stock

Total Payroll: \$279, \$17 left on the table

2009 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

Nick seems to be trying to make a run this year, a decision I don't agree with (see below). Haren/Oswalt form a nice 1-2 punch; though Oswalt declined a bit last season, I don't mind betting on a rebound for a decent price of \$18. I'm a big fan of Nick Johnson and I think some of his power will return in Yankee Stadium if he stays healthy (a big IF, I know). I could see him hitting 15-20 homers, and when you combine that with his ridiculous OBP, he could have a .430/.450 OBP/SLG type season which would be well worth the \$10. I've read reports that suggest Bergeson was a bit of a fluke this year, but for \$3 he's got 19 nice starts and could be trade bait if he regresses in MLB this season. Schumaker was a nice pickup at \$5 as he has a nice card vs RHB. Sheets could end up the steal of the draft at a buck if he has a similar rebound year to what Carpenter did in 2009.

The Bad:

As I mentioned I'm not a fan of Nick's decision to go for broke this year; sure he had a nice offensive core heading into the draft (A-roid, Derek Lee, Cuddyer, Drew, McCann, Utley), but he had NO pitching at all. I know he tried to fix that with Haren, Oswalt, Bergeson et al, but it's pretty tough to draft an entire rotation, and he's still about 80 starts short after those 3 guys. As for his picks in general, even though Haren was the best pitcher in the draft (arguably), I probably wouldn't have gone over \$40 for him. Garrett Jones was a fluke in my opinion, though \$7 isn't too earth shattering I suppose. Tejada had a nice season but it was aided largely by his batting average as he has no plate discipline and his power has started to erode; now that he's moving to the tougher league and in the toughest division in baseball, I fully expect him to continue his regression (not to mention that he's moving to 3B, where there's more talent so the offensive bar is set higher).

Best Value: Sheets for \$1.

Worst Value: No really terrible picks, but I'll chose Tejada at \$12 I guess

The Verdict:

I think if Nick had a few good starters in the rotation heading into the draft, I would like his draft better than I do. I just think he'll come up short in his quest for a playoff spot due to his lack of pitching and the tough division he's in, so I didn't like his strategy from the get go. I did like a lot of the players he picked up, as I found it tough to pick a "worst value" pick. So, based on the strategy he gets a C, but based on the players he picked up he gets an A, so I'll split the difference and give him an overall grade of **B**.

Sudbury Northern Ales (Skydome)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Brian Roberts	26	1/3
Bobby Abreu	18	1/3
Nate McLouth	10	1/3
Mike Cameron	6	1/3
Carlos Ruiz	6	1/3
Ryan Theriot	4	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
John Danks	20	1/3
Scott Baker	15	1/3
Bronson Arroyo	15	1/3
Doug Mathis	1	1/3
Angel Guzman	1	1/3

Owner: Mike Stockhaus

Total Payroll: \$287, \$8 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: B

The Good:

Mike seems to be focused on competing this year, and I do agree with that approach as he has a good top 3 in his rotation and some nice impact bats. Getting Danks, Baker and Arroyo to provide rotation depth behind Halladay/Carpenter is something I'm sure Mike is happy about, and I don't have issues with the prices of any of them. I wouldn't say any of them are bargains (maybe Danks is a slight bargain but again he's a lefty so there's that to consider in this league) but they are priced about right. Roberts/Theriot give him a solid offensive double play combo (along with incumbent Maicer Izturis in the mix); I like the Theriot price in particular; he's got a fairly nice card for only 4 bucks. I loved the Cameron pickup; I was right there trying to get Cameron for my 4th OF spot but I couldn't go to \$7 (even though he's worth at least that much I had other needs). McLouth should be solid at \$10 for the next few seasons, and Abreu has a nice card for this year which is what Mike is focused on. Guzman is a steal for this season at a buck, but he'll likely be a buyout next offseason (unless he retires or is released due to his injury).

The Bad:

He got some nice cards for this year, but I have a feeling a few of these guys will be overpriced at this time next year. Roberts is showing signs of a slight decline and I remember reading reports that his back (I think?) is acting up this spring; could be nothing, but for a guy with a lot of his value on speed, it is troubling and \$26 is a decent amount of sunk cost if Roberts gets hurt or falls off a cliff this year. Abreu just keeps on ticking, but for how long? \$18 is a more than I'd want to have tied up in Abreu for the next 3 years that's for sure. Arroyo had a nice year for sure, but there are long term warning flags: His strikeout rate dropped a lot in 2009, he allowed a career high 31 HR, he's a year removed from a 4.77 ERA, he's 33 and he's thrown 200+ innings 5 years in a row (and he plays for Dusty Baker – ugh).

Best Value: Cameron for \$6.

Worst Value: Abreu at \$18.

The Verdict:

I give Mike an overall grade of **A-** for this draft. From the perspective of trying to build a strong team in 2010, he definitely succeeded as he got some nice players that will help him contend. He picked up a few bargains along the way such as Cameron and Theriot, and payed market value (or better) for three starting pitchers to add depth to a strong top of the rotation. His only knocks come based on the fact that some of his deals that look good now might not look so good this time next year (Arroyo, Roberts, Abreu), but again since Mike's going for it this year I don't think he minds.

Titletown Corporate Raiders (Miller Park)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Matt Holliday	35	1/3
Ryan Zimmerman	45	1/3
Jimmy Rollins	25	1/3
Brendan Ryan	10	1/3
Chris Iannetta	7	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Javy Vazquez	39	1/3
Trevor Cahill	10	1/3

Owner: Craig Paprocki

Total Payroll: \$289, \$5 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: C+

The Good:

Ignore for a second the salaries and just look at the names of the guys that Craig drafted: Holliday, Zimmerman, Rollins, and Vazquez are all elite level talent, with Iannetta having that kind of potential as well. Cahill is a good young starter and Ryan had a nice year with the glove. It seems as though Craig is making a run to the playoffs (who isn't making a run? So far everyone except Manhattan is making a run; there's going to be some disappointed owners this October!) which I'm on the fence about; he had a solid深深 offense going into the draft but was in need of some pitching, which he sort of addressed by snagging one of the top arms available in Vazquez. Cahill should be decent this year for his 32 starts as well and is a solid pick for the future.

The Bad:

I know Craig had a TON of money going into the draft (\$176 to spread over 7 players), but I thought he overpaid for a few guys. Zimmerman at \$45 is a reach in my books; 3B is fairly deep and I don't think Zimmerman is the absolute, unquestioned best 3B out there (he's top 3 for sure, with Longoria, A-Roid, and Wright in the mix). I could have lived with maybe the mid-upper 30's for Zimmerman, and he is a young and emerging talent so I could end up being proven wrong if he takes a step forward this year, but my opinion at the moment is that Craig overpaid a bit for him. Rollins is an interesting player; he showed signs of decline last year, but he had a big second half and has a track record of being a top 3 SS. Which Rollins will show up over the next few seasons? If last year was an aberration, then Craig found a slight bargain. If he continues his slide though (he is on the wrong side of 30 now), then Craig will have overpaid.

I guess if Haren went for \$43, Vazquez at \$39 makes sense, but I have long term concerns about Javy since he's returning to the AL East where he flamed out once before. For this year I don't mind Craig ponying up for a true Ace, but I think he'll regret the contract in a year or two.

Best Value: Iannetta for \$7.

Worst Value: Zimmerman at \$45.

The Verdict:

I give Craig an overall grade of **B** for this draft. He picked up a lot of elite talent and has put his team in position to be a playoff contender. However, I feel he overpaid on a few guys and will come to regret those deals in a year or two. The development of Zimmerman and the potential rebound of Rollins will ultimately determine how good this draft looks in the next few seasons.

Arlington Cowboys (Ballpark in Arlington)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Elvis Andrus	21	1/3
Aaron Rowand	3	1/3
Drew Stubbs	3	1/3
Andy Laroche	6	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Neftali Feliz	17	1/3
Josh Outman	3	1/3

Owner: Brad Pike

Total Payroll: \$224, \$9 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: C+

2009 Draft Grade: C-

The Good:

Finally someone else who appears to be building for the future! Totally the right call, as Brad's got a good young nucleus of talent but it just isn't there for this year yet. Certainly some Texas homerism in the selection of Andrus for \$21, but you know what? I don't mind that price. It may be a tad high for this year, but the kid is young and has a lot of upside, and hits in a great hitter's park, and plays at a usually scarce position (not so scarce currently though), so overall I think it was smart of Brad to focus 1/3 of his draft budget on a potential impact talent like Andrus. Rowand and Stubbs are guys with jobs this year in CF, so you can't go wrong at \$3 each. Stubbs in particular has some upside as a steals guy with minimal power and good defense. Andy Laroche has failed to pan out yet but he got an A range and is still young enough that he might put it together; at worst he's trade bait during the year for a team in need of a part time 3B.

The Bad:

I love the Feliz pick but I don't love the price. He's a special talent and IF he moves to the rotation this year and pitches well, \$17 will make sense for next year. For now though, Brad paid for the hype. Hopefully for Brad's sake Feliz delivers this year or else that'll be two years in a row that Feliz is way overpriced.

Best Value: Stubbs for \$3.

Worst Value: Feliz for \$17

The Verdict:

I've been tough on Brad the last few drafts, so I'm happy to say that he gets a solid **B+** from me this time around. He didn't have a lot to spend so he must be happy to have landed Andrus, Rowand and Stubbs for \$27 combined. I have issue with the price paid for Feliz but there's no denying the kid's talent. If all goes well in MLB this year or next year, Arlington could boast a rotation of Josh Johnson, Feliz, Matusz, and Wade Davis. Watch out in 2011 (or 2012)!

Edmonton Trappers (Pro Player Stadium)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Mike Lowell	9	1/3
Gerald Laird	5	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Bobby Howry	2	1/3
Nick Masset	11	1/3
Bud Norris	1	1/3

Owner: Mike Jackson

Total Payroll: \$290, \$0 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: A-

2009 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

I went into this draft with a goal of competing this year, which I think is appropriate; my offense is stacked and my starting pitching should be average. Even though my division is tough I think I have a good chance to make the playoffs this year. With that in mind, I can't complain about getting Lowell to take playing time away from one of my few weak spots in my batting order, Adrian Beltre. Laird and his -2 arm will be an ok backup catcher, though I had to spend more for him than I would have liked. Still he is Detroit's starter and has hit decently in the past so maybe next year he'll be worth the \$5. Masset will battle Guerrier for the closer job and he does have a nice card so he fits in well with my bullpen. Bud Norris is a nice sleeper pick and could be a valuable trade candidate for me this year.

The Bad:

I had a plan for what I wanted to do in this draft, and I did an absolutely terrible job executing it. I wanted a good closer for about 19 bucks, and I now really wish I kept bidding on Wuertz (I stopped at \$15) as his card is head and shoulders above Masset's. \$11 is definitely more than I think Masset is worth and I think there's a good chance he's a buyout next year (see Grant Balfour, Rafael Perez, etc for other middle relievers who've flamed out after putting up an awesome season). Lowell helps me this year but there's no way he's worth \$9 next season. I reached for Laird (as I mentioned above). I also got caught not once but TWICE trying to get others to spend money by bidding on guys; the first time was Bobby Howry who isn't terrible at \$2, but there were better options available. The other was Bud Norris who doesn't help me this year (though he's a nice pick for the future). I was shocked when I nominated Norris that nobody even went to \$2 on him, but I guess guys were out of money and/or didn't value Norris as highly as I do.

Best Value: Norris for \$1.

Worst Value: Laird for \$5 (at least Masset has a nice card)

The Verdict:

I give myself an overall grade of **C** for this draft. I really am not happy with my draft as a whole. Masset has a nice card but isn't really a "closer" type, and is likely to be an albatross next season. Lowell will be nice for this year but like Masset he will certainly be overvalued next year. Laird isn't really even that great for this year (the arm notwithstanding) so I don't know what I was thinking going to \$5 for him. Overall, very disappointed with my draft, but I still like my team's chances this year!

Inland Evil Empires (Minute Maid Park)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
AJ Pierzynski	15	1/3
David Ortiz	8	1/3
Hideki Matsui	7	1/3
Alex Rios	9	1/3
Kurt Suzuki	9	1/3
Marlon Byrd	10	1/3
Yunieski Betancourt	3	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
John Lannan	7	1/3
Dan Wheeler	3	1/3
Ricky Romero	8	1/3
CJ Wilson	7	1/3
Zach Duke	13	1/3
Chad Qualls	4	1/3
Ross Ohlendorf	12	1/3

Owner: Dan Herman

Total Payroll: \$258, \$7 left on the table

2009 Draft Grade: B-

The Good:

Dan appears to be going for the playoffs this year, a decision which I disagree with (more below). Ortiz has the potential to go either way, but for \$8 he's a good medium risk/high reward pick. Lannan for \$7 is a solid pickup as well; he has a nice card for this year (despite being a lefty) and is young enough to have some growth in him. I think Kurt Suzuki is pretty underrated so I like the price on him. Rios has well known makeup issues (his dedication to the game has been questioned), but with him moving to centerfield and in one of the best hitter's parks in the game, I'd say he's a good candidate to rebound (plus I think I read somewhere that he was really unlucky last year with his BABIP). Ohlendorf has a nice card and I think is priced about right for this year at \$12; he's nice trade bait if he shows that his first full season in the rotation was a fluke. CJ Wilson has a nice card for \$7, and Ricky Romero at \$8 seems about right given his potential and clear path to starts this season.

The Bad:

I think Dan should have been more focused on rebuilding; his existing roster just doesn't stack up to some of the other rosters in the league (especially his pitching). Instead he went after mostly veteran players; some of those vets (whom I mentioned above) he's hoping will rebound and provide value next year, but others I think he should have avoided. I don't mind the Matsui pickup at \$7, but where's he going to play (he already drafted Ortiz)? Unless Dan drafted Hideki solely with the intention of dealing him it's an odd choice. I'm not a fan of Pierzynski at \$15, I think he's in decline (as I check the numbers I see he rebounded a bit this year but that was batting average driven as his walk and power rates remained mediocre) and I could see him even losing some at bats this year if they want to try Flowers behind the plate a bit. I've never been a fan of Zack Duke, I think he's way to hittable to be successful in our game. Betancourt is horrible, even at a buck I wouldn't want him on my roster, so I can't understand going to \$3 for him. Byrd has a nice card for \$10 for this year but will be an overpay in a year or two.

Best Value: Suzuki for \$9.

Worst Value: Pierzynski for \$15.

The Verdict:

I give Dan an overall grade of **C** for this draft. He got some decent values on some potentially rebounding veterans (Ortiz, Rios, etc) and drafted some decent young players (Suzuki, Romero, Ohlendorf). However, I feel he would have been better served to go into full rebuild mode, and thus I think he overpaid for some guys in the hopes of contending this season.

San Antonio Tejanos (Dodger Stadium)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Albert Pujols	53	1/3
Stephen Drew	14	1/3
Chris Coghlan	16	1/3
Vladmir Guerrero	3	1/3
Colby Rasmus	12	1/3
Kyle Blanks	5	1/3
Buster Posey	7	1/3
Emilio Bonifacio	3	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Francisco Cordero	16	1/3
David Aardsma	15	1/3
Bobby Jenks	9	1/3
Jonathan Sanchez	12	1/3
Francisco Liriano	5	1/3
Andy Pettitte	6	1/3
Daniel Bard	2	1/3
Diasuke Matsuzaka	1	1/3

Owner: Christian Sumner/Steve Fiorindino

Total Payroll: \$266, \$32 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: C+

2009 Draft Grade: A

The Good:

This was Fi's first draft so I'll try to be gentle! Fi had a ton of money to spend and a lot of roster spots to fill, so he could have went either way in terms of trying to contend or rebuilding. Unfortunately, it looks like he tried to go both ways (there's a joke in there somewhere, but I'm not touching it) during the draft, before settling on the future. Future or present, Fi can't feel too bad for drafting Pujols. \$53 is a LOT of dough for one player, but Pujols is a difference maker and about as safe as it gets. I seriously doubt he'll be an albatross contract for the next 2 MLB (ie 3 BLB) seasons, though there's always the chance he gets hurt (as with any player). Cordero and Aardsma are nice JAM closers for relatively cheap (I sure wish I spent the few extra bucks instead of Masset for \$11). Coghlan has a very nice card for this year and he's got some upside, so he's a nice pick at \$16. Vlad could be a major steal if he can stay healthy in Texas. I love the Rasmus pick; \$12 for a future stud CF is very nice. Jon Sanchez is a great pick for the future as he seemed to make strides last season. Blanks and Posey are two highly regarded prospects at good prices. Fi's fliers on two slumping veterans (Liriano and Dice-K) are nice low risk/high reward picks. Bard throws gas and is a nice speculative pickup at 2 bucks.

The Bad:

A consistent strategy would have been nice, as Fi seemed to switch gears during the auction to move into build for the future mode. I don't know why Fi felt compelled to draft 3 closers; I guess he can trade them for prospects, but still there were other guys Fi could have picked instead. I mentioned the Pujols salary/injury concerns above.

Bonafacio is terrible in my opinion and a waste of a roster spot at \$3. Drew has long been a favourite of mine, but he's coming off a bit of a down year so \$14 might be a bit steep. Fi also made the rookie mistake of leaving a ton of money on the table (\$32), though it helps for next season if they want to make a run.

Best Value: Guerrero for \$3

Worst Value: Drew for \$14.

The Verdict:

I give Fi an overall grade of **B+** for this draft. I think he did a good job for a first time auction drafter, all things considered. This being Fi he had no trouble when drafting prospect types as he picked up some truly elite young talent (Rasmus, Blanks, Posey, Coghlan, etc). Fi loses points for not coming to the draft with a clear strategy in mind, for drafting 3 closers when the money could have been better spent elsewhere, and for leaving a lot of dough on the table (though I admit this will help for San Antonio's 2011 budget).

Texas Snow Monkeys (Jacobs Field)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Matt Weiters	22	1/3
Ryan Doumit	6	1/3
Ty Wigginton	1	1/3
Luis Valbuena	2	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
LaTroy Hawkins	1	1/3

Owner: Jon Barnes

Total Payroll: \$278, \$0 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B-

2009 Draft Grade: B

The Good:

Seems like Jon is going for the future (hard to tell exactly as he only had 5 picks) which is smart as he has some bad contracts on his team that cripple him for this season (though he's in a weak division so I could see him trying to go for broke this year). I absolutely love the Weiters pick; \$22 might be a bit high for this season since he is a part timer, but I honestly thought with all the hype he'd go for more than \$22 in the draft. I guess I'm buying into the hype because I think he'll be a monster offensive presence, starting this MLB season. Jon spent \$6 on Doumit (more on that below), then filled out the rest of his team with some savvy cheap pickups. Hawkins has a nice card for a buck, good value there; Wigginton had a bit of a down year and sucks defensively but he's hit well in the recent past so for a dollar there's a bit of rebound upside there. I don't know a ton about Valbuena, but according to the ESPN depth chart he's the starter at 2nd for the Indians, and he's a 24 year old who showed some decent pop last year in his rookie season so he's got a starting job and a bit of upside; not bad for a \$2 pick.

The Bad:

I guess the only "bad" thing I could say about Jon's draft is the Doumit pick. I understand why Jon picked Doumit, and \$6 isn't bad if you think Doumit will rebound (he has had some nice offensive years recently). However, if you think Weiters will play 130+ games this year (and I think he will), then Doumit becomes a backup anyway, so why not spend that \$6 somewhere else (maybe take a chance on a young pitcher or a young position player somewhere else on the diamond that you have a long term hole)? Kind of quibbling at this point, but I need to write something.

Best Value: Weiters for \$22.

Worst Value: Doumit for \$6.

The Verdict:

I give Jon an overall grade of **A-** for this draft. The Doumit pick kept him from an A grade but I do like his draft based on some smart cheap additions and the prize of Weiters at \$22.

St Pauli Shooting Stars (Metrodome)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Jose Reyes	11	1/3
Andrew McCutchen	22	1/3
Gordan Beckham	23	1/3
Hunter Pence	21	1/3
James Loney	12	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Brett Anderson	25	1/3
Kevin Correia	15	1/3

Owner: Tim Chase

Total Payroll: \$287, \$6 left on the table
2009 Draft Grade: B

The Good:

Seems as though Tim is building for the future, which is the right call I think. I'll just come right out and say it: I thought Tim had a fantastic draft! There's only one pick I hated (more on that below), but what's not to like about getting the likes of Reyes, McCutchen, Beckham, Pence, Loney, and Anderson? I don't think he overpaid for any of them (Reyes is an overpay based on this year's card but even if the steals don't come back due to his leg injuries his batting average, OBP, defense, and modest pop will make him worth the \$11 alone) and he managed to snag some high upside talent for the future. McCutchen finally broke through last year and looks like a future 20/20 talent in CF; Pence had a nice recovery season in 2009 and is still only 26 years old; Beckham looks like a future star and is now moving to 2nd base where the talent pool is thinner than at 3rd; Loney struggled with his power last year but I'm a believer in the bat so I think he could end up a bargain at \$12 (he's still only 25 and his walk rate has increased in each of the last 2 seasons. I think the power will come); and lastly, Brett Anderson has "future ace" written all over him. I would say he didn't really get "bargains" on any of those players, but did well not to overpay for anyone and he spread his money around to fill holes long term at 1B, 2B, SS, CF, LF or RF, and SP.

The Bad:

The only "head-scratcher" of a pick was Kevin Correia at \$15. His 2009 season screams "Petco Park Fluke", and he only makes some kind of sense at that price if Tim was making a playoff run for this season (his card is solid this year).

Best Value: I'll take a chance and say **Reyes** for \$11.

Worst Value: **Correia** for \$15.

The Verdict:

I give Tim an overall grade of **A-** for this draft. Only the Correia pick keeps Tim from an A, but I love his draft overall and I think he took a big step forward in terms of making his team stronger in the long term. He did a great job spreading his money around and picked up some high upside talent such as Reyes, McCutchen, Anderson, Beckham, Pence, and possibly Loney.

Granite City Gangsters (Camden Yards)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Lance Berkman	21	1/3
Jayson Werth	27	1/3
Pedro Feliz	5	1/3
Dioner Navarro	1	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Andrew Bailey	24	1/3
Michael Wuertz	15	1/3
Randy Choate	1	1/3

Owner: Ron Wright

Total Payroll: \$264, \$0 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

Ron seems to be making a run this year, which I kind of agree with. He's got a good looking pitching staff but his offense was in need of an impact bat or two heading into the draft. I think Ron delivered on that by adding Berkman and Werth to the mix. I thought Berkman was a good pickup at \$21; for all the talk of his "down" season, he still put up very good on base and power numbers. He struggled some vs LHP, but then Ron has Cantu (forced to a part time role with the additions of Berkman and Feliz) who can hit lefties some, so he's set there. Werth was a nice pickup (maybe a tad overpriced but in the ballpark I think) since he's carded at all 3 OF spots with good defense and is a big power bat to augment Ron's batting order. Navarro had a terrible year but he's actually decent against LHP so there's value there as a \$1 catcher at bat filler type. On the pitching side, Bailey/Wuertz will join Ryan Franklin and Huston Street to give Ron a terrific back end of the bullpen. I particularly loved the Bailey pick; I wish I had about 5 more bucks heading into the draft, because I think \$24 for Bailey's wicked card is a steal.

The Bad:

I think Ron should have used the money he spent on Wuertz to get himself another starter; his bullpen (as mentioned above) was looking set already, but his rotation would have been wicked if he added another starter to Felix/Lincecum/Pineiro/Feldman/ De la Rosa). I guess Ron thought he was set with De la Rosa as his 5th starter, and I can see that point of view, but his rotation would have been unstoppable if he added another quality RHP to the mix (or alternatively he could have used the money to add another bat I guess). Wuertz has a killer card but I guess what I'm saying is that the money paid to Wuertz could have been better spent elsewhere since Ron's bullpen was already a strength. Aside from that minor quibble, I don't really have an issue with Ron's draft. Choate is kind of an "eh?" pick, but Ron must have felt he needed a LOOGY in the 'pen. Feliz's clutch rating masks the fact that he had a horrible season, but \$5 isn't too terrible for him as his defense is good and he has a chance to rebound, power wise.

Best Value: Could go Bailey here but I'll say **Berkman** for \$21.

Worst Value: A stretch, since I think his card is worth the dough, but I'll say **Wuertz** for \$15.

The Verdict:

I give Ron an overall grade of **A** for this draft. He came in with a plan of attack, got himself a jam closer (the best relief card in the deck) for a reasonable price, and got himself two impact bats to turn his lineup from average-ish to decidedly above average. I didn't agree with the Wuertz pick but there's no denying that Ron will enjoy his card for this year. I think Ron did a great job filling his weak spots and making his team a strong contender for a playoff spot.

Guadalajara Grand Sportsmen (US Cellular Field)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Kelly Johnson	10	1/3
Mike Napoli	10	1/3
Adam Laroche	10	1/3
Casey McGehee	12	1/3
Jake Fox	1	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Brian Fuentes	16	1/3
Luke Gregorson	7	1/3
John Garland	5	1/3

Owner: Steve Bay

Total Payroll: \$284, \$6 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: C

2009 Draft Grade: B-

The Good:

So it looks like Steve has made the decision to try to build for next year, which I think is smart. Napoli should be a solid signing at \$10 for next year if he can stay healthy and in the lineup (Scioscia loves good defensive catchers which Napoli...isn't). Laroche has been a pretty steady producer each of the past few seasons and is a solid 1B for \$10 (plus he's moving into a hitter's park now which will only help his production). I think Kelly Johnson is a good rebound candidate (his numbers suffered by a drop in his batting average, as his walk rate actually slightly increased and his Isolated Power (SLG-AVG) stayed steady). He too is moving to a hitter's park and seems to have a line on the starting 2B job which will help his numbers. McGehee was a 26 year old rookie last year so his numbers could be a bit flukey, but still \$12 isn't bad for a guy with his offensive stats. At worst Steve could deal him to a contender since his salary isn't crippling. Gregorson was a nice pickup for \$7. Garland is pretty mediocre, but for \$5 it isn't a bad choice. Plus he's signed with San Diego so you know Petco Park will help his numbers out in 2010. Lastly, Jake Fox for a buck is a sweet pick, he's got a lot of power potential if Oakland gives him a chance this year (I read he started at catcher yesterday which would be sweet if he can get a few games in behind the plate this year).

The Bad:

Well the only guy I don't mention above is Brian Fuentes, because I think \$16 for a lefty closer coming off a so-so year is an overpay for a non-contending team. I did mention that McGehee's 2009 season could be a fluke which would hurt his value, but as I said Steve always has the option of dealing his sweet card for prospects during the season if he regresses. An argument could be made that Johnson at \$10 is an overpay, but as I said I think he'll rebound and be worth the dough this time next year.

Best Value: Fox for \$1.

Worst Value: Fuentes for \$16.

The Verdict:

I give Steve an overall grade of **B** for this draft. He drafted some solid rebound candidates and really only made one pick I didn't like (Fuentes). There is some risk with his draft, in that if Johnson doesn't rebound and Napoli doesn't play there could be some dead money on his books next year, but I personally feel that both those contracts will be ok this time next year.

Motown Temptations (Comerica Park)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Brandon Phillips	14	1/3
Everth Cabrera	5	1/3
Carlos Quentin	5	1/3
Mark Ellis	2	1/3
Christian Guzman	6	1/3
Ryan Sweeney	11	1/3
Ramon Hernandez	3	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Jose Valverde	16	1/3
Brandon Webb	5	1/3
Ian Snell	3	1/3

Owner: Doug Becker

Total Payroll: \$295, \$4 left on the table

2009 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

Hard to tell if Doug is rebuilding or going for it this year, but since more of his picks seem to be for the future, I'll assume he's retooling for next season but maybe with an eye on possibly making a run this year. Based on that, I like Quentin at \$5 as I think he'll be a stud if he can stay healthy. Ellis at \$2 is a solid pick (clutch 2nd baseman with a solid bat and usually good defense, though he was average this year). Sweeney got the A range in the OF and is still young and starting in Oakland, so I don't mind the \$11 Doug paid for him. Phillips has gone 20/20 3 years in a row, so I think he's a bit of a bargain at \$14. Webb is a smart pick at \$5; the upside is probably 25 starts with a 3.50ish ERA, but there doesn't seem to be much downside. He's a free agent at the end of the year, so if he isn't healthy he likely won't sign (or if he does sign it could be late in the year), meaning Doug gets a free drop anyway. Snell gives Doug starts for this year and \$3 isn't too much to see if Seattle's great defense will help Snell return to his 2007 form.

The Bad:

I personally am not a believer in Everth Cabrera, since he came out of nowhere and wasn't really a prospect. I'm not a fan of Guzman either and wouldn't have paid \$6 for him. Ramon Hernandez seems to be a catcher in decline, though I guess he gives Doug AB for this year and maybe next year too since he's starting in Cincy. I don't get the Valverde pick; his card isn't THAT great for 2010 (check out the big platoon split), and closers are pretty volatile. If Doug was going for next year (again this pick is one of the reasons I'm a bit confused), then I think he'd have been better served spending the \$16 elsewhere

Best Value: Quentin for \$5.

Worst Value: Valverde for \$16.

The Verdict:

I give Doug an overall grade of **B** for this draft. I like a lot of his picks (such as Quentin, Phillips, Ellis, and Webb) but am not a huge fan of some others (such as Guzman and Valverde). I think he has a chance to contend this year but might have an even better chance next year if some of his rebound picks pan out.

St Louis Arch Rivals (Busch Stadium)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Aaron Hill	32	1/3
Michael Bourn	27	1/3
Ryan Ludwick	8	1/3
Mark DeRosa	5	1/3
Angel Pagan	1	1/3
Brandon Inge	4	1/3
Matt LaPorta	1	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Rafael Soriano	20	1/3
Brandon League	1	1/3
John Maine	2	1/3
Mike Pelfrey	3	1/3
Chris Tillman	2	1/3
Danys Baez	1	1/3
Tim Hudson	1	1/3

Owner: Brian Feig

Total Payroll: \$280, \$0 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

Looks like Brian was building for a run this year but also with an eye to the future; he's got a good nucleus of talent so I agree with the decision to at least try to compete this year but not totally sell the future short. In terms of trying to compete this year I like the Hill signing, since he's got a wicked card (offense and defense) for this year. Pagan has a sweet card and also looks like he might be the CF while Beltran is out this year, so I like him as a \$1 guy. Inge should be healthy this year and should be an ok sign at \$4 for the next few years. LaPorta has big power potential and is a smart \$1 guy. League actually had a better year than his ERA would have you believe, and he's moving to a pitcher's park in front of a great defense so I love the price on him that Brian paid. Maine, Pelfrey and Hudson are all low cost/mid-high reward type signings. Tillman is another young arm that could pay dividends on the cheap. Soriano is a great closer and will be an asset if Brian is in the hunt this season.

The Bad:

I'm not really a fan of the Bourn signing; I think Brian overpaid for what may end up being a career year. He's not exactly young (27 – not old but not a kid anymore either), has no power (3 HR last year), and is a year removed from posting a .588 OPS. Is his 2009 season a fluke or is his growth (he increased his batting average and walk rate) sustainable? I'm not sure, but I wouldn't want to pay \$27 to find out. Even as a CF for this year, while his card is nice I don't know that it's worth \$27. I'm also not a DeRosa fan, though \$5 isn't a huge number. Ludwick declined a lot last year and \$8 seems like a slight overpay. I also don't think Hill will hit over 30 HR again; I think 25 or so is his upside, which is still good but might make him a few bucks overpriced next year.

Best Value: Tie between **Pagan** and **League** for \$1.

Worst Value: **Bourn** for \$27.

The Verdict:

I give Brian an overall grade of **B** for this draft. He made some good picks while straddling the fence between contending this year and looking to the future as well. He made some cheap pitching additions that will look smart a year from now if even half of them pan out. I'm not a fan of a few of his picks (Bourn, Ludwick, DeRosa) but on the whole he had a pretty solid draft.

Clearwater Hooting Owls (Petco Park)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Nyjer Morgan	17	1/3
Carlos Lee	17	1/3
Rajai Davis	12	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Heath Bell	19	1/3
Jake Peavy	24	1/3
Mat Latos	9	1/3
Billy Wagner	2	1/3

Owner: Howard Cake

Total Payroll: \$288, \$0 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B

2009 Draft Grade: B

The Good:

Howard seems to have decided to build to the future, which is the right call since his pitching isn't strong enough to win this year despite the makings of a decent offense (though he is in a weak division, so if he is trying to go for it this year I can understand that rationale). With that in mind I love the Latos pick; \$9 will look like a bargain in a year or two. Wagner was a smart low cost addition. Carlos Lee is as steady as they come and reasonably priced at \$17. Davis had a nice year and should start in Oakland this year; I don't think \$12 is a bargain but I think the price is about right and Rajai should be a productive player next year.

The Bad:

There are a few picks I don't understand here if Howard is building to the future. Bell had a great year at closer, but I wouldn't have paid \$19 for him if I was building to the future. Peavy is a bit of a risk, moving away from Petco to the AL's best hitter's park and coming off an injury plagued year. I think he's a high risk/high reward type that will either make Howard look like a genius, or come back to burn him in a year. I think Nyjer is in for some serious regression, as most of his value is tied to his batting average; he won't hit .350+ for the whole season in Washington.

Best Value: Latos for \$9.

Worst Value: Peavy for \$24

The Verdict:

I give Howard an overall grade of **B** for this draft (3rd year in a row, he's consistent!). He made some solid picks with an eye to the future (Latos, Lee, Wagner) but also a few picks that seemed more appropriate for a 2010 BLB contender (Bell, Peavy, Nyjer). All in all it was a solid draft though.

Garson Ehs (Oakland Alameda)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Mark Reynolds	42	1/3
Jesus Flores	1	1/3
Juan Uribe	1	1/3
Chris Young	1	1/3
Jeff Francouer	2	1/3
Lastings Milledge	1	1/3
Ryan Church	1	1/3
Jose Bautista	2	1/3
Francisco Cervelli	1	1/3
Tony Gwynn	1	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Ryan Dempster	22	1/3
Tommy Hanson	28	1/3
Randy Wolf	18	1/3
Phil Coke	1	1/3
Edward Mujica	1	1/3

Owner: Doug Anness

Total Payroll: \$257, \$4 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: A-

2009 Draft Grade: B-

The Good:

Seems like Doug is going for it this year, which will make for a tough division as most of us are trying to make a run. He's added Dempster, Hanson, and Wolf to an already solid rotation of Billingsley, Sabathia, and Nolasco so pitching will be his strength this season. He went with a "stars and scrubs" strategy, as his first 4 picks used up \$110 of his \$127 draft day budget. I think the Hanson pick is a solid one; \$28 might be a bit much for this season since he doesn't have a full season's worth of starts, but he's money if Doug makes the playoffs and he's also a pick for the future. Doug made a slew of shrewd \$1 signings, such as Uribe, Yougn, Milledge, Church, Gwynn (I was hoping he'd slip to the minors phase), and Mujica. Bautista was a solid pick too since he'll play this year in Toronto and has a solid platoon card for this BLB season.

The Bad:

I'm not a believer in Reynold's breakout season (I don't think he'll run as much or hit .260 again with that abysmal contact rate) and I think he's overpriced at \$42; hell I'd have rather Doug went to \$46 for Zimmerman (even though I hammered Craig for that pick a bit) since at least Zimmerman has room for growth AND he's a good pick for this BLB season. Alternatively he could have spread the money around a bit more. Coke was kind of an odd \$1 sign since I think he'd have been available in the minors phase. Francouer does nothing for me but the price isn't bad so it isn't that terrible a pick I suppose.

Best Value: Uribe for \$1.

Worst Value: Reynolds for \$42.

The Verdict:

I give Doug an overall grade of **B+** for the draft. He added an impact bat to his offense for this season (even though I don't like the price) and augmented his rotation (which was already a strength). He made some really smart cheap draft picks after he blew his wad early. He earns demerits for the salary that he paid for Reynolds and I thought he might have been better served spreading his money around better than he did.

Frisco Silver Bullets (Pac Bell Park)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Jason Kendall	2	1/3
Scott Podsednik	7	1/3
Will Venable	2	1/3
Geoff Blum	1	1/3
Garrett Atkins	1	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Cliff Lee	34	1/3
Francisco Rodriguez	23	1/3
Brandon Lyon	8	1/3
Jeremy Guthrie	1	1/3
Brian Moehler	1	1/3

Owner: Dan Trueden

Total Payroll: \$298, \$2 left on the table

The Good:

Seems like Dan's going for it this year as he's picked up some guys who are better this season than they should be in the future. Podsednik has a nice card and is starting in KC this year, so despite the fact that I think he'll regress I don't mind the \$7 salary. Venable will probably get at bats in San Diego and I think he's got some decent power potential; not bad for \$2. Atkins isn't that exciting but getting a \$1 guy with a starting job has a chance to pay dividends if Atkins can get hot for a few months. I think Dan paid market value for Lee based on the past few seasons, and with Lee moving to Seattle in front of that great defense and in a pitcher's park, I expect Lee will continue to excel. Guthrie had a rough year but at \$1 he could be a nice sleeper candidate for a rebound (just has to keep the ball in the park!).

The Bad:

I totally disagree with the decision to make a playoff run this year. I think Dan would have been better served retooling for 2011, when Santana's salary comes off the books (along with Figgins and Cain for that matter, freeing up \$141!). I think he has too many holes in his rotation and his lineup to contend this year. With that in mind I think he overpaid for a declining closer (F-ROD) as well as a current closer coming off a fluke season (Lyon).

Best Value: Venable for \$2.

Worst Value: Rodriguez for \$23.

The Verdict:

I give Dan an overall grade of **C+** for this draft. He gets points for some smart \$1 signings and for getting Lee at a decent price, but loses points for overpaying for F-ROD and Lyon, as well as not rebuilding for 2011 when he has a ton of money coming off the books.

Chicago Black Sox (Wrigley Field)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Adam Dunn	17	1/3
Miguel Olivo	5	1/3
Rick Ankiel	3	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Mark Buehrle	22	1/3
Doug Davis	2	1/3
Dallas Braden	1	1/3

Owner: Scott Reinke

Total Payroll: \$300, \$0 left on the table.

The Good:

It's hard to tell since he only had 6 picks, but it looks like Scott drafted players that both help this year and have potential to help next year. I really don't have an issue with anyone he drafted. Dunn, despite his defensive struggles, is a nice pick at \$17; he's as consistent as they come and while I worry he'll have an early decline phase, he's a few years away from that yet. Ankiel is a nice pickup as I think he'll bounce back this year (I think he was hurt all of last year which hurt his numbers). Buehrle is a rock solid starter and is reasonably priced at \$22. Davis is just some cheap starts but there's value in that, while Braden is a nice \$1 pick for this year and the future.

The Bad:

If I'm nitpicking I'd say that \$5 is a few bucks too many for Olivo, who despite his power is not a good offensive or defensive catcher (sub .300 OBP, poor PB/handling ratings).

Best Value: Ankiel for \$3.

Worst Value: Olivo for \$5.

The Verdict:

I give Scott an overall grade of **A-** for this draft. He had a really solid draft and made some smart choices that should make his team stronger for next season. He picked up some consistent veterans showing no signs of slowing down (Dunn, Buehrle) and took chances on a few rebound candidates (Ankiel, Davis).

Toronto Beavers (Kauffman Stadium)

Hitters		
Name	\$	Year
Adam Everett	1	1/3
Ivan Rodriguez	6	1/3
Johnny Peralta	1	1/3
David Ross	2	1/3
Brett Gardner	1	1/3
Lou Marson	1	1/3
Alex Gonzalez	1	1/3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	Year
Joe Saunders	14	1/3
Takashi Saito	1	1/3
Carl Pavano	1	1/3
Tim Byrdak	1	1/3
Brandon Morrow	1	1/3

Owner: Norm Larrett

Total Payroll: \$272, \$1 left on the table

2009 Draft Grade: C+

The Good:

Norm seems to be building for the future which is smart as he's in a tough division and had a fair number of holes (but almost no money) heading into the draft. I couldn't believe he got Peralta for a buck, then I check Peralta's numbers, and I now understand. Still, Peralta was pretty good the previous 2 years and is just 27, so I think he'll rebound and make this pick look good a year from now. Gardner had a solid rookie season and should play this year in NY a fair amount so I like this \$1 pick as well. Marson is keeping the seat warm for Carlos Santana but he'll probably end up with ~300 AB and post a respectable OBP, so for a buck that's pretty good. Pavano is cheap starts this year and has the potential to be underpaid next year, since his 2009 ERA looked worse than he actually pitched (check out his K/BB ratio). Morrow could end up being the steal of the draft if the Jays just leave him alone in the rotation for a few years.

The Bad:

I'm not a fan of the Rodriguez signing for \$6; his offense has long been in decline and now Mike C didn't even give him a minus 2 or 3 arm. I think Norm overpaid for Joe Saunders as well, as I'm not a fan of Saunders (I think his 2008 was a bit of a fluke and his 2009 numbers are what should be expected going forward).

Best Value: Morrow for \$1.

Worst Value: Rodriguez for \$6

The Verdict:

I give Norm an overall grade of **A-** for this draft. He acquired some nice \$1 bargains which was essential since he didn't have much money heading into the draft. Only the Saunders and Rodriguez picks keep this from being an A.

Predictions – 2009 redux:

Below are my predictions of records and playoff seeds from last year's report card, as well as a write up I did:

Ale League			Lager League		
IPA	W	L	Bock	W	L
Jackson Park*	96	66	St Louis*	97	65
Nickel Centre*	87	75	Motown*	95	67
Titletown*	82	80	Granite City*	84	78
Sudbury	78	84	St Pauli	79	83
Manhattan	78	84	Guadalajara	78	84
Stout	W	L	Pilsner	W	L
San Antonio*	87	75	Toronto*	88	74
Edmonton	79	83	Chicago	82	80
Inland	76	86	Garson	82	80
Arlington	75	87	Los Anaheim (ie Frisco)	72	90
Texas	70	92	Clearwater	55	107

This was A LOT harder to do this year. The teams all seem to be more balanced and it made it tough to differentiate between some of the teams bunched up in the middle. The IPA division is definitely the stronger of the Ale divisions, as the formerly strong Stout division has taken some hits in the offseason. I see San Antonio running away with the division on the strength of their starting pitching and some solid platoons, while I see Jackson Park winning the IPA with their strong pitching and average offense. Nickel Centre is much improved this year and should capture the first wild card spot, while the second wild card spot will likely be a dog fight between several teams. I have Titletown capturing that playoff spot at the moment.

The Bock division might rival the IPA division for the title of best division in the BLB. I have Feig and Becker finishing 1-2, and though the order may change I see those guys both making the playoffs. Granite City is in a tough division and should take the first wildcard spot by posting a win total in the mid 80s. St Pauli and Guadalajara have vastly improved their teams but they are in the wrong division and seem destined to finish below .500. The Pilsner division is Toronto's for the taking, as I think Norm has enough pitching and thunder in his lineup to win a somewhat weak division. I could see Chicago or Garson challenge Toronto depending on in season moves as these teams both have some talent, just some holes that would need to be filled via trades. Clearwater's abysmal rotation has me predicting they will be the only team with 100 losses (sorry Howard!)

Now here are the final standings from last season.:

Ale League			Lager League		
IPA	W	L	Bock	W	L
Sudbury*	101	61	Motown*	113	49
Nickel Center*	85	77	St Louis*	113	49
Jackson Park*	81	81	Guadalajara	75	87
Titletown	77	85	St Pauli	70	92
Manhattan	75	87	Granite City	60	102
Stout	W	L	Pilsner	W	L
Arlington*	96	66	Garson*	100	62
Edmonton	80	82	Toronto*	98	64
Inland	71	91	Chicago	77	85
San Antonio	70	92	Frisco	70	92
Texas	61	101	Clearwater	66	96

I've highlighted teams that I pegged exactly right in terms of place in the divisional standings. I predicted 2 of the 4 playoff teams in the Ale League (I underestimated eventual champion Sudbury as well as Arlington) and 3 out of 4 playoff teams in the Lager League (I way overestimated Granite City and sold Garson short). So, 5/8 isn't bad, though I did better the year before (7/8). I predicted my own team's record to within one game, and I was within 2 games on Nickel Center and Frisco. Still I didn't do a great job overall, as I missed a lot on quite a few teams. I'll have to step up my game this year!

Predictions – 2010:

Now, I present for debate, my 2010 predictions:

Ale League			Lager League		
IPA	W	L	Bock	W	L
Jackson Park*	92	70	Granite City*	96	66
Titletown*	89	73	St Louis*	89	73
Frisco	81	81	Motown	86	76
Chicago	75	87	Guadalajara	79	83
Manhattan	69	93	St Pauli	60	102
Stout	W	L	Pilsner	W	L
Texas*	86	76	Sudbury*	95	67
Clearwater*	84	78	Edmonton*	93	69
San Antonio	82	80	Garson	80	82
Arlington	74	88	Nickel Centre	73	89
Inland	68	94	Toronto	69	93

I think the IPA division will come down to Jackson Park or Titletown, but right now I give JP the edge because I feel the have a deeper team than Titletown. It could go either way though depending on in-season moves. I think Frisco will be around .500, with Chicago and Manhattan bringing up the rear. I know Ron wanted to touch .500 this year, but I don't see it man, not with your rotation. Sorry.

Looking at the Stout division, no team really jumps out as a strong contender (makes me wish I stayed there). I put Texas out front because they have a decent rotation and solid lineup, but I could see San Antonio or Clearwater winning as well. Arlington should come in 4th just ahead of Inland and their almost all lefty rotation (Lilly, Moyer, Lannan, Romero, Duke) and bullpen (Miller, Sherrill, CJ Wilson). Dan must have a southpaw fetish...

I see a changing of the guard atop the Bock division, as I think Granite City's wicked pitching should allow them to win the division with Motown and St Louis considerably weaker this year than last year. After GC, it's a tossup for who finishes second; I like Brian's lineup better than Doug's, but Doug has a slightly deeper rotation. In the end I'll give the edge to Brian, but moves could be made during the year that flip flops these two. Guadalajara has an improved team from years past, but he'll come up short since he plays in a tough division/league. St Pauli could lose 100 games, again because he's in a tough division and league.

Now the Pilsner division is a tough one, both to predict and to play in. All the teams except Toronto have designs on making the playoffs, but obviously at most only 3 of us can (and won't because we'll get strong competition for the wild card from Doug/Brian). This is easier to work out backwards in my head, so that's how I'll describe it here. Toronto should finish last as I think Norm will rebuild this year, seeing that he's in a tough division and his team has a lot of holes. Nick has a good offense but not enough pitching, so he'll finish 4th, leaving the rest of the division up to a 3 team race. I have to have Garson finishing 3rd, I think he's got some nice offensive guys and a good top of the rotation but he doesn't have enough depth to finish higher. That leaves Edmonton and Sudbury battling for top spot. Sudbury's rotation is much stronger than mine in terms of depth, no question, but I do feel like I have a better offense (and deeper too). I think our bullpens are about even. Right now, I'll give the slight edge to Sudbury to win the division, but I think it'll be a tight race.

So right now I have Jackson Park, Titletown, Texas, and Clearwater making the playoffs in the Ale League. I'm not at all confident about the last wildcard spot, as there's several teams that could make a play for it (Frisco, San Antonio come to mind).

In the Lager, I have Granite City, St Louis, Sudbury, and Edmonton making the playoffs, with Motown in the race all season long. As you can see, I feel pretty confident that the Lager League is much better than the Ale League, as I've given them 20 more wins as a whole.