

Beer League Baseball



2013 Draft Report Card

By Mike Jackson
March 22, 2013

INTRODUCTION	3
BRENDAN RYAN VS BRANDON MOSS – A WAR CASE STUDY	13
\$/WAR	14
JACKSON PARK BADGERS.....	16
NEWCASTLE BROWN ALE	17
NEW GLARUS SPOTTED COWS.....	19
PABST BLUE RIBBONS.....	20
EDMONTON TRAPPERS	22
SHINER BOCK.....	25
PHILLY CITYWIDE SPECIALS	26
BRIDGEPORT BLUE HERON	27
TEXAS SNOW MONKEYS	28
CINCINNATI STEEL RESERVES	29
GRANITE CITY CHRONIC.....	32
GUADALAJARA CROWS.....	33
OTTAWA CORONA CONSERVATIVES	34
ST LOUIS BLACK CROWNS.....	35
ROLLING ROCKS OF OLD LATROBE.....	37
DC SCULPIN	39
TORONTO BEAVERS	40
WOODBURY GOVERNERS.....	41
SUDBURY NORTHERN ALES	42
NAPTOWN RACERS.....	43
PREDICTIONS – 2012 REDUX:.....	44
PREDICTIONS – 2013:	46

Introduction

The sixth annual Beer League Baseball draft took place on March 16, 2013 (St Patty's weekend! How fitting for our *BEER* League!). After nearly 4 hours of drafting, and many, many beers (hopefully nobody ended the draft looking like this guy), the 20 attending owners finally had teams to call their own. After the last five 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 (or did they seem to have good reason not to spend)? Did they apportion their money smartly (ie if a team with 3 third basemen spent 50 bucks on Beltre, 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.

This year, I've also added something that I think is cool to the report card: Over the past several months I've been developing a methodology to calculate the Wins Above Replacement (WAR) for each DLB **card**. In the next section I will go into a lot of detail about how I calculated the WAR and the assumptions I had to make, and hopefully the project will spur some discussions and debate!

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 in past years 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!

WAR: What is it good for?

As many of you no doubt know or can tell, I'm a bit of a stats nerd. Ok, remove the phrase "a bit of" from the previous sentence and it'll be more accurate. Anyway, because that's where my interest lies I'm big into reading baseball saber sites such as fangraphs and baseball prospectus, and those sites tout their versions of Wins Above Replacement (WAR). The concept itself isn't difficult to understand: You add up all of the things that a baseball player does on the field that helps his team win games (such as fielding, hitting and baserunning for hitters, and run prevention for pitchers) and compare the number (in runs produced or runs prevented) to a theoretical "replacement" player. There is a lot of literature out there about how to define "replacement level" and I'll go over it in some detail, but in any case that is only a small portion of the challenge of figuring out WAR. Quantifying each of the aspects of the value that a player produces is not an easy task.

In any event, I started thinking a few years ago if it would be possible figure out the runs saved due to each fielder's range/error ratings, and I was able to come up with an estimation for that. As mentioned in the introduction, a few months ago I decided to try to expand upon my work with range/error ratings and take on the challenge of quantifying everything else required to figure out a DLB player's card WAR value. My WAR values take into account the following aspects of a player's card:

Position Players

- Ranges for each on base event on their card
- Lead/steal ratings
- Baserunning (I had to fudge this a bit; more on that below)
- Range/error ratings
- Arm rating (for OF I had to fudge this a bit; more on that below)
- Clutch rating
- Durability rating
- Use rating
- Position played (there is an adjustment factor that is applied in WAR, more on that below)

Pitchers

- Ranges for each on base event on their card
- Hold/lead adjustment ratings
- Pickoff rating
- Jam/on/off ratings
- Endurance
- Durability
- Use rating

Things that I couldn't take into account (yet; a future enhancement may add these features if I can figure out a way to accurately estimate them): Hit and run rating for batters, baserunning using the charts (right now I've estimated it based on MLB data), OF arm rating (same with baserunning, I've estimated it using MLB data), bunt rating, power

rating for batters, types of outs made on the card (ie a high strikeout pitcher is slightly more valueable than a pitcher who allows balls in play due to baserunner advancement opportunities; ditto for high double player pitcher/hitters creating more outs).

For context below are tables outlining some of the average card WARs for each position, based on a sample of fulltime (ie not limited) players. For position players, I included a guy if he's carded at a position and not limited, even if that isn't his "best" position. This sample is meant to measure all of the possibilities for each position. For pitchers, a pitcher is classified as a starting pitcher if he's got an endurance rating of a starter and is not limited by the spot rating; if he has both starting and relief endurance ratings AND the spot rating, he's classified as a reliever.

	Position Players				
	ALL	TOP 30	TOP 10	Top Player	eWAR
C	2	3.5	5.3	Yadier Molina	7.7
1B	0.4	2.6	3.6	Joey Votto	5.8
2B	1.6	3.6	4.7	Robinson Cano	7.4
SS	2.1	3.9	4.8	Jose Reyes	5.5
3B	1.7	3.8	5.1	David Wright	6.3
LF	1.3	4.3	5.5	Mike Trout	7.5
CF	3.1	5.3	6.3	Mike Trout	8.5
RF	1.7	4.4	5.2	G.Stanton/Trout	6.3
DH	-0.2	2.9	3.7	Mike Trout	4.8

PITCHING		
	SP	RP
Top 30	4.0	1.4
Top 100	2.9	1.0
ALL	1.8	0.2

As you can see from the above charts, the league averages vary by position, with CF for some reason having by far the highest WAR. One theory is that there are simply a lot of good CF right now and that coupled with the position adjustment (read more on the positional adjustments that are used below) means they grade out well. I'll be interested to see next year if that trend holds true. All the other positions except 1B (which is hurt by the stiff position adjustment) seem to settle around an average of 1.5-2, and if you read about WAR discussed on Fangraphs I believe they talk about 2.0 WAR being an average player so that seems to jive. As you can also see from the above chart, Mike Trout is so awesome he can play 4 positions on the theoretical "all-WAR Team". Fangraphs recently published an article discussing the differences in WAR at each of the positions and concluded that there are a lot of good CF, 3B and catchers in the league, and they go into detail about why the positional adjustment is used and is important:

<http://www.fangraphs.com/blogs/index.php/the-issue-of-positional-inequality/>

Now I'm going to go into somewhat gory detail to describe my methodology for those of you who are interested in how I tackled this problem. The above info gives you enough background to see where I'm coming from when I discuss WAR later in the report card but the details I'm about to describe will give you more context on how the WAR values

were derived. Warning: This section will be LONG! (for a primer on how the real life WAR is calculated, read the following article on ESPN:

http://espn.go.com/blog/sweetspot/post/_id/33333/war-a-case-study-fielder-vs-ryan. The author does a case study to show how Brendan Ryan had the same WAR last year as Prince Fielder did in 2007. You'll see similar questionable things in the DLB card WARs, i.e. bad fielding/slow 1B are rated lower in some cases than slick fielding but poor hitting SS/2B/CF. That article sums up how that is possible and how it makes sense).

Position Players

Batting Runs – Basically the concept of linear weights is used extensively in calculating runs saved or runs produced for WAR. Linear weights assigns “average” run values to offensive events and were developed based on analysis of many years of past MLB season results. You can find slightly different coefficients depending on where you look but here is the most common one I found and that I used:

1B – 0.47 runs
2B – 0.78
3B – 1.09
HR – 1.40
BB/HBP – 0.33
SB – 0.3
CS – -0.52

As a baseline I assumed a full season's worth of plate appearances is 650 PA. Leadoff guys will get more than that obviously and bottom of the order guys less, but 650 is a round number to start with. I checked some MLB split data as well as some actual DLB online season data to determine an assumption of 26% of PA vs LHP and 74% vs RHP. The only exception to that rule is with limited players; in that case I use their actual limits and adjusted the proportions accordingly. I also didn't give limited players credit for the 650 PA baseline as they can't be fulltime guys; if a player is a percent limited player I just took a percentage of that 650 PA but for AB limited guys I just used their actual PA.

Anyway, so what is done next is multiplying these linear weights by the probability of each event happening on the player's card in any one roll and then multiplying that by the number of PA vs that hand of pitcher (and yes, this means that I entered in all of the card data for each and every player in the set. Data entry alone took me probably in excess of 40 hours!). For example, if a guy has a 50 point HR window vs RHP, the batting runs from HR vs RHP would be 50/1000 (ie odds that the window is rolled) x 1.40 x 0.74 x 650 PA = 33.7 runs.

So you add up all the expected runs from the card events (except for SB/CS for now – we'll come back to that later) and that's the TOTAL batted runs per 650 PA. As an example, Joey Votto is projected to produce 97 runs per 650 PA just with his bat alone.

Baserunning Runs – I had to fudge this one and used MLB data. To do this with the charts would require assumptions on how often, say, a guy is on first base and a single is hit to RF, CF, LF, etc, what the arms of the OF would be on each play, etc. Is it possible? Yes, the information is out there on amount of times a runner is on 1st when a single is hit to the various positions. However, for this version of the WAR I decided not to spend the massive amount of time to wrap my head around that issue and instead used the MLB data. I think the MLB data should be close enough.

Anyway what I did is used Fangraphs values for baserunning runs added or lost and loosely tried to correlate them to DLB baserunning ratings and I came up with the following table for assumed runs added or lost due to baserunning rating alone in a full season:

BR	Runs
10	6
9	4.5
8	3
7	1.5
6	0.5
5	0
4	-1.5
3	-3
2	-4.5
1	-6

In the above chart I've assumed replacement level BR to be 5. So in other words, a 10 BR adds 12 runs on the bases above what a 1 BR would over a full season. To me this seems reasonable.

Stolen Base Runs – Ok, this was a challenge (along with runs saved by pitcher holds and catcher arms) because stealing a base in DLB online depends on the following factors:

1. Opportunity – Not as simple as adding up the amount of times on base. You need to remove HR and 3B since there's no opportunity to steal there. You also need to figure out how often you'll get on base but a guy will be on the next base. There's also opportunities from non-on base events such as reaching on an error or fielders choice.
2. Manager's choice – Is the situation right for a SB attempt? What's the adjusted steal?
3. Jump – Will the runner get the jump?
4. Success rate – What's the probability that the attempt is a SB or a CS?

Originally I was using MLB data here too, but as we all know it's much easier to steal in the DLB game than it is in MLB. Part of that is the charts but also we as managers have access to perfect information about the chance of success so the success rates tend to be

higher (most of us don't run if the rate is, say, below 60% but in the MLB managers have no way of knowing the exact success probability).

I tackled the above issues as follows:

- 1) Opportunity – Baseball Reference has data on number of stolen base opportunities league-wide (and for each player), which they define as a runner getting on base with nobody on the next base. Unfortunately they don't break it down between a runner on 1B and a runner on 2B but I assumed that 90% of the attempts would be to 2nd and 10% would be to 3rd. Anyway I used the league wide number and compared it to the number of 1B, 2B, BB, and HBP league wide and found that the number of opportunities was 19% higher than the number of 1B, 2B, BB and HBP. This accounts for reaching on an error/fielders choice. So in calculating the number of opportunities for each batter I used the card data for each hitter for expected number of 1B, 2B, HBP and BB and multiplied it by 1.19 for total opportunities, then took that x 0.9 for opportunities to 2nd base and times 0.1 for opportunities to 3rd base.
- 2) Manager's choice – This one was easy (relatively speaking) in that I assumed that every time the adjusted success rate was 5 or greater, a SB would be attempted. I thought about scaling it down somewhat since we don't always attempt a steal in that situation but on the other hand, some managers will run on a 4 as well plus there are failed hit and runs that I didn't consider too where the adjusted steal might be below 5.

To figure out how often a player with a certain SB rating (unadjusted) would find himself in a favourable SB situation, I used weighted averages to figure out the proportion of catchers of each arm rating (+4 to -4) as well as pitchers of jump adjustment ratings (+4 to -4). For example, based on the 2012 cards (filtering out limited players), 9% of the time (on average) that a runner gets on base the pitcher hold/catcher arm combination is 0/0. From that I simply added up all of the proportions of catcher arm/pitcher hold/batter steal that met or exceeded 5.

For example, a batter with a SB rating of 1 (unadjusted) to second base will attempt a steal when a catcher arm/pitcher hold rating is: +4/0, +4/+1, +4/+2, etc etc. It works out that on the whole, a runner with a SB rating of 1 (unadjusted) will try to get the jump 24% of the time (ie 24% of the time the pitcher/catcher combination meets or exceeds +4 so that the adjusted SB rating is 5 or greater).

- 3) Jump – The jump probability uses the same weighted average methodology in terms of figuring out the percent chance that a pitcher has an A+, A, etc hold rating, and then uses the charts to figure out the odds of getting a jump. For example, the odds of a pitcher having a B+ hold is about 30%, and the odds of a lead of 5 getting the jump with a B+ is 32/100, so the chances of a 5 lead being on base with a B+ hold pitcher AND getting the jump is 9.6%. Add all these up for the other holds (again weighted) and you get a total overall average probability of a 5 lead getting the jump of 44%. Combine that with the 76% probability that a 5

lead will even attempt a steal, and a SB attempt will occur at $.44 * .76 = 33\%$ of the total SB opportunities (calculated in #1).

4) Success Rate – To figure out the average success rate for each UNADJUSTED SB rating, I again took a weighted average starting with the unadjusted ratings (1-10) and figured out how often, say, that rating is adjusted up to an adjusted rating of 8. We know what the % odds are of success for an 8 so we can multiply that by the frequency that an adjusted 8 rating occurs, and add up all the other scenarios for the unadjusted rating of 1 to figure out the average SB success rate. As it turns out, on average an unadjusted SB rating of 1 will be successful on 70% of his attempts; this high success rate is due to the selectivity of DLB managers as I mentioned previously.

One thing I didn't touch on is pickoffs. Pickoffs are counted as CS in the game and should be accounted for. I did this the same way that I did the above: Figured out the probability of a pickoff being rolled in the jump attempt chart for each hold, figured out the distribution of pickoff ratings and the CS odds for each, and add them all up. This typically was adding a few CSs in per batter which lowered the success rate to more reasonable (but still higher than MLB) levels.

Once I have the expected SB/CS for a full season it's simply a matter of multiplying the SBs by 0.3 and subtracting off the CS x 0.52 to figure out the runs added or lost by stealing bases. Because of the linear weights efficient basestealing is actually more valuable than basestealers who get a lot of SBs but get caught a lot too.

Range/Error Runs – To figure out the runs allowed by a fielder based on his range and error ratings, I made assumptions on typical IF range and OF range result frequencies on a pitcher's card, and then used the charts to figure out the odds of a range play occurring at each position, and then the odds of a single (or double or reached by error) being allowed based on that player's rating. I had to make assumptions on the distribution of spray/pull hitters (I based this on card data that I had from the database file that came on the disk of the old Windows game for the year that was available when I first developed this).

For replacement level I assumed a C range and 50 error rating, and runs saved or allowed above/below replacement are calculated in relation to the C/50 player.

Throwing Arm Runs – For OF I cheated in the same way as for baserunning rating in that I looked up MLB data and assumed the following adjustments:

Rating	Runs saved above +1
4	-7.5
3	-5
2	-2.5
1	0
0	2.5
-1	5

-2	7.5
-3	10
-4	12.5

As you can see I've chosen +1 as my replacement level OF.

Clutch Runs – For clutch runs, I figured out the expected frequency of a clutch or jam situation based on MLB data (~15% of the time would be considered a clutch/jam situation) then I added in the appropriate 2B (for the “foul” range), 1B (for the “pop up” range), and DD (for the lineout range). For the DD, I assumed that on average 25% of DD become HR. I checked this assumption for the pitchers on a few cards and if you assume 25% of DD on pitchers cards are HR then you get roughly half the HR allowed for the same number of IP. In other words, half the HR a pitcher gives up are due to his DD range and the other half come from the hitter's cards. This assumption probably isn't perfect but it's in the ballpark anyway.

I did not factor in situations where a clutch cancels out a JAM strikeout. This comes up from time to time but it should be infrequent enough that it shouldn't affect the results too much.

Replacement Level and Position Adjustment – Finally, adding up the batting runs, baserunning/SB runs, and defensive runs, we need to set a level for replacement. Replacement level on offense is defined as being 20 runs below AVERAGE (in other words an average batting WAR should be 2.0). I took an average of all the fulltime players after I did my calculations and the average offensive runs produced was 60, meaning a replacement level player would produce 40 runs, so I subtracted 40 runs from the offensive runs produced. In other words, using Votto from above, he produces $97-40 = 57$ runs above replacement on offense alone.

To go from runs to wins, the rule of thumb of 10 runs = 1 win is used. There's some sites out there that indicate that the rule is adjusted for the run environment and/or park but I didn't want to overcomplicate things so I used 10 runs = 1 win. So with Votto, he provides 5.7 WAR on offense alone (unadjusted).

Now, we must adjust for position. The reason we do this is to neutralize based on how difficult it is to play, say, SS vs 1B (NOTE: I may need to revisit the need for positional adjustment given that I assumed C+/50 for replacement level for all positions. For now though it is in the WAR calculations based on what MLB does). The following factors are widely accepted (these are runs per 600 PA so I scaled them in my calcs to make them per 650 PA):

POS	Adj.
C	12.5
1B	-12.5
2B	2.5
SS	7.5

3B	2.5
LF	-7.5
CF	2.5
RF	-7.5
DH	-17.5

Basically what this means is that a 1B would be worth 2.5 wins LESS than a catcher with the exact same offense. This makes sense; a .270/.320/.400 line from a 1B is shitty but that same line from a catcher makes him practically an all star.

Durability – Having a WAR/650 PA number is great for comparing apples to apples in terms of one player’s card to another, but obviously an F durability player shouldn’t be considered as valuable as an A durability player if they have the same WAR. I accounted for this by figuring out the probability of injuries of different days for each defensive position (as well as a constant frequency of an injury result coming up as a batter) and took a weighted average of expected results to figure out the AVERAGE percentage of a full season each player would be expected to play. For example, a 1B of injury rating of A-F would be expected to play 100% (I set all the A’s to 100% because for all intents and purposes, they worked out to 100%), 99%, 97%, 95% and 83% respectively. A catcher would range from 100% for an A down to 75% for an F. Remember if these seem high that these are AVERAGES; you might have a catcher get lucky and go through the year with an F durability and not have a bizarre rolled, or you might lose the guy early in the year.

So what I did with these percentages is scaled the full season WAR values down to the “expected” WAR. The eWAR values are what I’ll be using in this report card. As an example, Joey Votto has a WAR/650 of 6.0 but an eWAR of 5.8. It’s not a big drop but 1B is one of the “safest” positions to play a brittle player in the DLB game as there are fewer opportunities for an injury result to be rolled. At the other end of the spectrum, Jayson Werth has a WAR/650 of 5.2 but an eWAR of 4.1; he loses 1.1 WAR due to his likelihood of missing time with injury.

Pitchers

Runs Allowed – This was calculated the same as batting runs generated (ie with linear weights). HR allowed was a tougher nut to crack but I assumed that 25% of deep drives become homers (I checked this % out against a few pitchers against their real life MLB HR/PA data, and ended up with $\frac{1}{2}$ of required HR. In other words, the other half would come from the hitters cards, so I think the 25% assumption is realistic). SB/CS will be discussed in a later section. I needed to assume a number of batters faced per inning and I assumed 4.3 on average (I think I looked this up on baseball reference).

Jam/on/off – For the JAM rating, the runs saved calculation amounted to removing singles from “line 13” of the pitcher card in JAM situations and crediting him with a HR saved 75% of the time a hitter’s HR result came up, as well as the single from the hitter’s card. As mentioned above a JAM situation comes up 15% of the time on average, so the

pitcher's 1B range would be reduced to 85% of what it is on his card, and I figured out the average hitter's card for all 4 combinations (ie LHB vs LHP, LHB vs RHP, etc) and figured out the average runs saved by eliminating singles and HR from the hitter's card. The JAM rating is definitely dependant on the pitcher's card, and it can make a difference of anywhere from 0.3 to 0.6 wins per 220 IP.

The ON rating comes up more often than JAM, about 40% of the time on average, and as such the pitcher with an ON rating simply has his DD window reduced to 60% of what it is on average. This can make the ON rating quite valuable for a pitcher with a big DD window; for example, the ON rating adds 0.8 wins (per 220 IP) alone to Yovanni Gallardo's card!

The OFF rating is the same adjustment (more or less) for each pitcher since it's based on the hitter's cards. The OFF situation comes up roughly 25% of the time (ie 1 out of 4.3 batters faced is the leadoff guy) so the pitcher gets credit with preventing a walk from the hitter's card 25% of the time. The adjustment for the OFF rating is 0.3 wins per 220 IP, making it usually the least valuable of the 3 ratings (except for an ON rating for a pitcher with zero or few deep drives of course)

Stolen Bases – Done the same way as hitter SB/CS.

Durability/Use/Endurance – Basically I defined each pitcher as either a starting pitcher or relief pitcher based on the following rules:

- Carded as a starter, no spot rating = SP
- Carded as a starter and reliever, no spot rating = SP
- Carded as a starter and reliever, spot rating = RP

If a pitcher is a long reliever, I gave him a baseline of 90 IP, and if he is a short reliever his baseline is 70 IP. For starting pitchers, I used the following baseline assumptions for season IP based on endurance:

END	IP
20	170
25	216
30	238
35	255
40	284

So I still quote a WAR/220 IP for starters value to have an apples/apples comparison (similar to the hitter's 650 PA WAR) but there is also an eWAR value that factors in endurance and durability rating (the same way durability was factored in for hitters).

Replacement Level – Replacement level for pitchers is more confusing than for hitters, as there are differing benchmarks for SPs and RPs. The RP replacement bar is set higher since RPs are easier to come by (that's why you'll see some mediocre SP cards getting

positive WARs while some solid looking RP cards have 0 or slightly negative WAR). Basically per fangraphs a replacement level SP staff would win about 38% of games (compared to 50% for league average) while a replacement level RP would win 47%. Using those ratios (ie 50/38 and 50/47) and multiplying them by the average runs allowed for starters and relievers allows a replacement level runs allowed to be set for each category. Then the individual pitcher's RA is simply subtracted from the replacement level pitcher's RA and divided by 10 to determine WAR.

Brendan Ryan vs Brandon Moss – A WAR Case Study

Similar to that ESPN article linked in the introduction, I'm going to go through a case study outlining the WAR calculations for Brendan Ryan's card and Brandon Moss' card (at 1B; he's much more valueable in LF due to positional adjustment and slightly better defensive WAR). I'll be discussing this in terms of WAR/650 PA to compare apples to apples.

Now obviously looking at the stats of Ryan vs Moss, most people would choose Moss even understanding that Ryan adds a lot more defensive value at SS than Moss does at 1B. Would that be the correct choice though? Let's find out:

Offensive WAR

No surprise here, Moss jumps out to a big lead in oWAR/650 PA: Moss adds 86 batting runs per 650 PA while Ryan adds only 35. Moss has an oWAR of 4.5 wins, while Ryan has -0.2 oWAR. Advantage: Moss, by 4.7 wins

Defensive WAR

Here we see Ryan start to chip away at Moss' massive offensive advantage: Ryan's glove saves 2.2 wins above replacement, while Moss costs his team 1.1 wins below replacement. Advantage: Ryan.

If you're keeping score at home, Moss still has a lead over Ryan by 1.4 WAR

Positional Adjustment

If these guys played the same position that would be the end of the discussion, but SS is a lot tougher to play than 1B and so the final adjustment to be made is applying the following positional adjustments per 650 PA (the table above from Fangraphs is per 600 PA):

1B: -13.5 runs (ie -1.4 WAR)
SS: +8.1 runs (ie +0.8 WAR)

Now due to the positional adjustment, Moss' edge has completely evaporated and now Ryan holds the lead by 0.8 WAR.

Summary

Moss's WAR total with all adjustments factored in is 2.0, but Brendan Ryan has him beat by nearly 1 win at 2.9 WAR (I know above I said there was a 0.8 WAR advantage by there must have been a rounding error in there somewhere...)

\$/WAR

Fangraphs quotes a guideline for a rough rule of thumb to determine if a free agent is overpaid, I think it's something like \$5 million per 1 WAR. This got me thinking if there was a way to calculate this for the BLB. I analyzed a couple of teams from last year, entering in their players with actual playing time, splits, and positions into my WAR spreadsheet, and determined what the actual/theoretical (theoretical because I didn't enter in their stats, just PA vs each hand, so it's still based on the cards) WAR earned. I only did a few teams but the results were consistent that a replacement level team would win roughly 47 games.

I've assumed that 95 wins are required to make the playoffs (this varies of course but it's my benchmark for this exercise) and given that each team has \$300 to spend for the salary cap, $\$300/(95-47) = \$ 6.25/\text{WAR}$. In other words if you spend \$20 on a 5 WAR player, you got a good deal, but if you spend \$20 on a 1 WAR player you've overspent (at least for this year; this analysis doesn't work on rebuilding teams of course as there are future considerations to factor in). I'll be quoting the \$/WAR figure in the team reports but I won't necessarily use it as gospel because as mentioned there are other factors besides a simple \$/WAR calculation to consider.

ALE LEAGUE

IPA DIVISION

Jackson Park Badgers

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Todd Frazier (3B)	19	4.5
Ryan Ludwick (LF)	17	2.7
Wilson Ramos (C)	1	0.5
Rickie Weeks (2B)	5	2.4
Chris Young (CF)	1	4.5

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Eric O'Flaherty	1	0.5
George Kontos	3	1.1
Trevor Rosenthal	1	0.6
Anibal Sanchez	15	2.4
Drew Storen	1	0.1
Junichi Tazawa	4	1.0

Owner: Nate Feuerer

Total Payroll: \$288, \$1 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: A

2009 Draft Grade: A-

2010 Draft Grade: A-

2011 Draft Grade: A-

2012 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

Last year was the first time Nate's grade didn't start with an "A", though he had a still very good B+. Can he get back to an A type grade? Well, as I look at the results what strikes me is that there isn't a single overpay per the WAR methodology on here. In fact there are several bargains, particularly in the bullpen. Setting aside WAR I LOVE the Rosenthal pick at a buck, he's got a big arm and should turn out to be a bargain. Anibal is solid at \$15. Young and Ramos are nice bounceback candidates, with Young adding a lot of value due to his defense at a premium position. Weeks is another bounceback candidate for relatively cheap. Frazier's heading into his 2nd full year as the starting 3B for Cincinnati and could be primed to take a step forward.

The Bad:

Not much to say here. I guess Nate could have fully committed to either contending or going for the future, instead he went for a mixture of future considerations and cards for this year. I'm also not crazy about Ludwick, it isn't a bad pick per se but there may have been better LF options out there. I dunno, now I'm nitpicking here.

Best Value: Young at \$1

Worst Value: Ludwick at \$17

The Verdict:

Nate didn't quite do enough this year to get back to an "A", as I'll give him a B+ for this draft. I like most of his picks and love the Rosenthal and Weeks picks in particular.

Ludwick I'm not crazy about and perhaps Nate should have committed to building for 2014 or for trying to contend, but still he has added some talent to the Badgers!

Newcastle Brown Ale

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Gregor Blanco (CF)	7	4.0
Tony Campana (CF)	3	4.1
Pedro Ciriaco (SS)	2	2.0
Brandon Crawford (SS)	1	2.8
Brett Gardner (LF)	1	0.1
Jesus Guzman (2B)	1	0.5
Jon Jay (CF)	29	5.6
Ryan Lavarnway (C)	1	-0.1

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Steve Delebar	1	0.6
Jason Grilli	1	0.5
Edwin Jackson	19	2.4
Ryan Mattheus	1	0.5
David Phelps	13	3.1
Rafael Soriano	18	1.0
Chris Tillman	22	3.2

Owner: Ron Erdmann

Total Payroll: \$268, \$1 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B

2009 Draft Grade: B+

2010 Draft Grade: C+

2011 Draft Grade: B

2012 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

Dammit, as I review Ron's draft I think there's more to like than hate here. WAR loves good defense at premium positions, and Ron added 3 good defense CFs in Blanco, Campana and Jay. Jay was mocked as an overpay but WAR doesn't think so. The other guys on offense are useful bench players (except Crawford who is ok as an all glove SS for a buck) and sleepers (I love Gardner for a buck in particular; no reason why he can't put up a .360 OBP, 40 SB season this year). On the pitching side, Ron built a damn fine middle relief squad by spending only \$3 total on Grilli, Delebar and Matheus, and he added 3 solid starters in Jackson (he paid about value per WAR), Phelps (a bargain) and Tillman (again about market).

The Bad:

Despite the fact that WAR doesn't think Jay at \$29 was an overpay, I do think it is a slight overpay if you factor in Jay's likelihood to repeat next year and the fact that CF is pretty deep this year. I would have been more comfortable in the high teens for Tillman given he's not a lock to repeat next year, and his deep drive tendencies would scare me away if I played in Yankee Stadium. WAR tends to think most relievers are overvalued and Soriano is no exception. I don't follow that blindly but I do think \$18 for a JAM closer is a touch rich; I'd rather find a bargain via trade or by getting an elite non-jam and spend the money elsewhere personally.

Best Value: Phelps for \$13.

Worst Value: Soriano for \$18.

The Verdict:

Ron's grades have been on an upward trend since 2010 and this report card continues that as I have to give him an **A-** for his good draft. I liked a lot of the players he added at premium positions and he mixed in a pick or two for next year as well, and built a bullpen on the cheap. He added some stability to the rotation at market prices, though he could maybe have found a better match for Yankee Stadium than Tillman. Soriano and arguably Jay were his overpays but on the whole, an excellent draft.

New Glarus Spotted Cows

Hitters (assumed POS)		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
Prince Fielder (1B)	32	2.6
Jayson Werth (RF)	11	4.1

Pitchers		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
Yovanni Gallardo	32	3.0
Barry Zito	3	1.8

Owner: Dan Trueden

Total Payroll: \$290, \$9 left on the table

2010 Draft Grade: C+

2011 Draft Grade: B

2012 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

Dan has to be happy to get the 2nd best 1B in the auction in Prince Fielder, and he's a guy I think will be solid for a few more years before he might see a swift decline ala other bad body 1B types. Werth is an injury concern but I like the signing for \$11. Gallardo is as steady as they come, he is coming off of a down season (for him) but he's durable and still relatively young. Zito is a punchline but he has the jam and is a nice pick for \$3.

The Bad:

In addition to relief pitchers, WAR doesn't like bad defensive 1B or DH (due to the high bar set for offense at both of those spots). Fielder's got a great bat but gives a lot of value back with the defense, lack of speed and position adjustment. On that basis WAR would have pegged his value in the low 20's, making him nearly guaranteed to be overpriced as the next best alternative to Votto. Similarly WAR would have pegged Gallardo at around \$20, and I could get behind going a few extra bucks due to Gallardo's stability/consistency but \$32 is just a tad too much in my opinion.

Best Value: Werth for \$11.

Worst Value: Fielder for \$32.

The Verdict:

I give Dan an overall grade of **B+** for this draft. His "bad" picks per WAR are still star level players, and the other two picks netted some nice value for the prices spent.

Pabst Blue Ribbons

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Welington Castillo (C)	6	0.7
Manny Machado (3B)	12	1.5
Juan Segura (SS)	5	0.6
Andrelton Simmons (SS)	15	1.5

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Luke Gregerson	3	0.8
Kelvin Herrera	3	0.7
Tim Lincecum	9	0.8
Shelby Miller	9	0.1
Rick Porcello	1	-0.4

Owner: Craig Paprocki

Total Payroll: \$196, \$82 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: C+

2010 Draft Grade: B

2011 Draft Grade: B-

2012 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

Craig decided to accept another year sleeping on the pullout bed and play for 2014, which is smart given the talent in the IPA Division. Quite frankly, as much as it pains me to say this given he's a division rival, I LOVE the talent that Craig added in the auction. Due to the low bar for catchers Castillo doesn't really need to hit much to be worth 1 WAR or more to justify his salary next year, and he's the Cub's starting catcher with some power upside. Segura/Simmons are two of the top young SS in the game right now and both have starting jobs, with Simmons in particular looking like a lock for B+ range (at worst) for the life of his contract with Craig. Some might say \$15 is too high and of course it is this year (though Simmons is expected to earn about \$10 worth of value based on his WAR in his % stint so it's not that much of an overpay for this year alone) but Andrelton will earn that back and then some in future seasons. Machado is of course a star in the making, and like Andrelton he'll earn about \$10 for this year so even at \$12 Craig paid market value for his card this year, and in future seasons he will be a bargain. On the pitching side, Herrera had the 2nd fastest fastball velocity in the bigs after another Blue Ribbon (Chapman) so I like the upside of the pick there. Lincecum probably won't get back to the glory years but I do think he can recover to post ERAs in the high (heh) 3's/low 4's which will justify his \$9 salary (and I admit he does have a non-zero chance of beating that prediction). Miller is a bigger risk of being overpaid given that he's young and untested, but I love his upside. Porcello is a lotto pick based on his spring training and his youth; could be a wasted dollar or could be a shrewd pickup a year from now.

The Bad:

Someone needs to tell Craig our salary cap is \$300, not \$200 (last year his salaries were in the low \$200's too). I've had discussions with Craig about his draft in the days following the auction, and his retort is that he won't spend for players he doesn't want

(I'm paraphrasing). While obviously that's a good strategy, I'm sure there were SOME guys in the auction that could help him in 2014 that he could have spent his dough on (maybe in place of a guy like Gregerson who doesn't have the same upside as the rest of his picks?). Continually pushing off acquiring talent to the future isn't a great strategy. I'm not advocating that Craig should have spent his dough just for the sake of spending it, but I dunno, as I said I would figure there could have been plenty of guys that could have helped him in 2014.

Anyway, regarding specifics for the players he did draft, as mentioned the Gregerson pick plus all the dough he had left maybe could have been used for a player with higher upside, and I alluded to the fact I thought Miller was a tad overpaid in the "good" section (still love his potential though just more risky than Craig's other young talent for this draft)

Best Value: Machado for \$12.

Worst Value: Miller at \$9

The Verdict:

I was surprised by how much I liked Craig's draft once I got into it. I was prepared to dismiss it based on how much money he left on the table, but I thought Craig did a great job acquiring some young, cheap, high upside talent. There is risk in that strategy and I don't love the philosophy of leaving that much money on the table to build to 2014, but, all that overall I think Craig had a great draft. I'm toying with giving him an A- just because of the salary left on the table, but the strength of the guys he added wins out so I'll give him a straight A.

Edmonton Trappers

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Chris Carter (DH)	3	0.9
Luis Cruz (3B)	1	1.8
Cliff Pennington (SS)	1	2.5
Joey Votto (1B)	40	5.8

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Brett Anderson	1	0.5
Scott Diamond	12	3.3
Jake McGee	8	2.0
Kris Medlen	37	5.5

Owner: Mike Jackson

Total Payroll: \$269, \$0 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: A-

2009 Draft Grade: B+

2010 Draft Grade: C

2011 Draft Grade: B

2012 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

I went into the auction with not necessarily a ton of money to spend (\$103, about middle of the pack) but with the advantage in that I only had 3 holes in my starting lineup: 1B, and 2 SPs. I knew that I HAD to get 2 out of the following 4 guys: Votto, Kershaw, Felix, Medlen. I had budgeted a whopping \$90 for those 2 players, so I was surprised and delighted when Votto only ran me \$40 (I was prepared to go up to \$45). I'm not going to sit here and say he was a bargain but when the next best 1B card for this year by WAR (Prince Fielder) went for only \$8 cheaper and was worth less than half the WAR than Votto I'm pretty comfortable with the price I paid. Incidentally per WAR I only overpaid by a handful of dollars which I can live with. For the rest of my offense, I like Cruz at \$1 (and only \$1) as his card is nice for this year for infield depth and pinch hitting (that 1.8 WAR is in about half a year's playing time since he's limited). Carter I was surprised to see him last that long in the auction and I was happy to get him with my last dollar. His card is not bad (low WAR due to having to DH since his defense at 1B is so bad) and he's got a chance to be just as productive next year making him valueable trade bait if I need to make a move during the season.

On the pitching side, I did reach for Medlen a bit (WAR has him worth \$34 if he throws 211 IP; I'll likely get more IP out of him than that meaning he should earn his salary) but I'm happy to snag Diamond's fluke JAM card for \$12 and McGee's killer card vs RHB (they hit .098/.157/.134 vs him!!!! Yes that's a .281 OPS! Not a typo!) for \$8. In fact McGee was the top RP in terms of WAR in the draft, even better than the JAM closers and the long relievers that can go more innings (McGee's 2.0 is in only 69 IP). Brett Anderson I'm happy with for a buck, he'll fill in if/when Vogelsong gets hurt and could be trade bait if he can frickin' finally stay healthy in 2013.

The Bad:

Well I've written a lot about the good in my auction, now the bad. I don't think there's much but in reviewing my roster construction, I probably didn't need Cliff Pennington (the defense at SS was why I went after him). Not a bad pick per se but there might have been a better \$1 guy there. Votto carries risk as he has been dealing with a knee injury so long term there could be an issue there as the \$40 might become an albatross for me. Of greater concern is Medlen and Diamond's salaries being an issue. I'm more confident in Medlen earning his keep, as the projections I've read having him being a low 3's ERA pitcher. Diamond is almost 90% certain to be a buyout for me next year.

Best Value: Carter for \$3.

Worst Value: Medlen for \$37 (no doubt I need his card this year but I did overpay for it)

The Verdict:

I am very happy with my auction. I had a game plan and executed it just like I wanted, with cash left over to snag Carter and McGee (which was a nice surprise). I even had a few picks for the future in Anderson and Carter which will give me trade bait if I need it. The Medlen and Diamond picks will likely hurt me next year, but in a year that I'm going for broke in an effort to bring a Boot to Edmonton I really don't care. Originally I did give myself an A grade but in doing my final review of the card, and objectively looking at my team, I can't bring myself to hand out a straight A as there were a few issues with my draft. I'm still very happy with it though and I will take a still excellent A-.

ALL LEAGUE

SECOND DIVISION

Shiner Bock

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Carl Crawford (LF)	3	3.5
Michael Cuddyer (RF)	10	2.4
Jarrod Dyson (CF)	3	4.6

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Matt Garza	14	2.0
Matt Harvey	33	3.2
Wade Miley	17	3.4
Koji Uehara	4	1.3

Owner: Brad Pike

Total Payroll: \$235, \$39 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: C+

2009 Draft Grade: C-

2010 Draft Grade: B+

2011 Draft Grade: B

2012 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

Brad picked up 3 F durability guys, and all 3 offer upside for the price he paid but a lot of risk. Crawford doesn't have to play much to justify his \$3 salary this year, and if he can stay healthy in LA he has long term upside too as a bounce back play. Garza's eWAR quoted above is for 153 IP, the amount an F durability starter would be expected to throw on average. If Brad can get Garza to exceed that total the \$14 will be about market value per WAR. Uehara has a nice card and is a reasonable buy at \$4. Miley has a good card for this year and at \$17 is reasonably priced. Dyson's defense at a premium position fuels his WAR number but I was hoping to snag him and I think he's solid value at \$3.

The Bad:

I'm actually a Matt Harvey fan, but I had him pegged on my board for the low 20's, maybe \$25 if I stretched, but not \$33. I think it's an overpay both based on his card this year (which is good but not elite) and based on the risk going forward. Brad needs 2 near ace-level seasons out of Harvey for this not to look like a bad contract, and would anyone bet on that outcome from a young starting pitcher? Miley isn't paid as much as Harvey but there are doubts about his ability to repeat his 2012 season long term. Cuddyer I'm kinda "meh" on. \$10 isn't breaking the bank and on a \$/WAR point of view Brad did fine, but I'm still not excited about the pick. Brad also left a lot of cash on the table.

Best Value: Crawford for \$3.

Worst Value: Harvey for \$33

The Verdict:

Brad had an ok draft overall. He added some good players for value but mixed in a few overpays and has some risky F durability types to deal with. I'll give him a **B-**.

Philly Citywide Specials

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Andy Dirks (LF)	3	3.3
Josh Harrison (3B)	4	2.0
Michael Saunders (CF)	3	3.0
Nate Schierholtz (RF)	2	2.1
Ian Stewart (3B)	1	0.5

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Roy Halladay	9	2.0
Ian Kennedy	16	1.5
Carlos Villanueva	5	2.3

Owner: Dan Herman

Total Payroll: \$274, \$10 left on the table

2009 Draft Grade: B-

2010 Draft Grade: C

2011 Draft Grade: C+

2012 Draft Grade: C+

The Good:

Dirks is pretty good value as a good OBP, solid defense option in LF for only a few bucks. I also like the Saunders pick as he's got some pop and can run, and given that he's only 26 he still has some upside. Schierholtz is a platoon OF but a good one vs RHP and he'll look to fill a similar role for the Cubs this year. I didn't expect to (considering the mediocre WAR) but I actually do like the Kennedy pick, as he's only 28 and seemed to suffer some bad luck last year which caused his ERA to spike. His BB and K rates seem to be in line with his more successful seasons so this pick could return value next year.

The Bad:

I don't really get the Harrison pick. It's only \$4 and his WAR is decent, but he doesn't have a job or much upside in Pittsburgh. Halladay I would have been happy to take a shot on at maybe \$5 or less, but reports of his diminished velocity this spring coupled with his arm issues last year are concerning. High risk pick, with potential for high reward. Villanueva and Stewart were admitted mistake picks by Dan.

Best Value: Dirks for \$3

Worst Value: Harrison for \$4.

The Verdict:

I give Dan an overall grade of C+ for this draft. He picked up some sleeper type OFs with some decent cards, and a good bounce back candidate in Kennedy (though he didn't come cheap), but he wasted picks on Harrison, Stewart, and perhaps Villanueva (who is useful but Dan admitted in the auction room it was a wasted pick).

Bridgeport Blue Heron

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Josh Donaldson (3B)	7	3.0
Raul Ibanez (LF)	2	1.0
Howard Kendrick (2B)	16	3.1
Brian McCann (C)	18	2.8

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Luis Avilan	9	0.9
Santiago Casilla	15	0.7
Ryan Cook	12	1.6
Sean Marshall	4	0.7
Jonathan Papelbon	9	0.8
Clayton Richard	3	2.7

Owner: Chris Schenk

Total Payroll: \$265, \$0 left on the table

The Good:

This is Chris' first auction and although it was a bit of a mixed bag, he did have some nice picks. Donaldson and his defense and catcher eligibility went for about as much as I thought he should have, and he should play in Oakland this year given their infield situation. Kendrick is also priced about right, maybe even a slight bargain, and he's a guy I always feel should have a breakout season one of these years (he's still only 29!). Papelbon and Cook are nice values given their cards and relative likelihood they will retain their value for next year (Papelbon in particular has been one of the steadiest closers in the game the last 5-6 years). Richard was a steal for only \$3; deeps will be an issue but the price is right and Safeco will help.

The Bad:

Casilla is a JAM but WAR isn't a fan due to his poor splits vs LHB, so on that basis I agree and wouldn't have gone to \$15. Avilan was also overpriced based on the fact he's a LH reliever who came out of nowhere. His card is solid but nothing special. McCann is also a reach for Chris, even though catchers are hard to come by this will likely look bad next year as McCann will start the year on the DL as he works back from shoulder issues.

Best Value: Richard for \$3

Worst Value: Avilan for \$9.

The Verdict:

I think for his first auction in the BLB, Chris did reasonably well. He added some nice pitching talent mixing in some bargains and overpays, and I do like the Kendrick/Donaldson adds on offense (Ibanez I didn't mention because he's Raul Ibanez. Meh.). I'll give Chris a solid if boring grade of **B** for this auction.

Texas Snow Monkeys

Hitters (assumed POS)		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
Shin-Soo Choo (RF)	11	3.2
Josh Rutledge (2B)	6	3.2

Pitchers		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
Johnny Cueto	25	4.0
Casey Janssen	19	1.5
JJ Putz	10	1.0

Owner: Jon Barnes

Total Payroll: \$290, \$8 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B-

2009 Draft Grade: B

2010 Draft Grade: A-

2011 Draft Grade: A-

2012 Draft Grade: N/A (computer draft)

The Good:

Jon only had 5 spots to fill, but I think he added a lot of talent for those 5 spots. Choo at \$11 and Rutledge at \$6 are nice bargains for a couple of above average bat glove players at their positions. I think Rutledge can put up similar numbers for Jon next year, and while Choo is basically a platoon player at this point, he's elite vs RHP and has been for a while. On the pitching side, Cueto is priced about right at a reasonable \$25 for 4 WAR, and I like him going forward as well. Janssen is a touch overpriced by WAR and maybe also by conventional thinking too, but he is one of the top JAM closers in the draft for this year. Putz adds another great arm to the Texas 'pen as well (even though he's not a JAM WAR like him thanks to his even splits and ability to prevent steals).

The Bad:

As mentioned WAR doesn't think too highly of spending a lot of dollars on RPs, which is why it believes Janssen and Putz are both overpaid. I personally think the Putz deal is ok but that's a few dollars more than I would have gone on Janssen especially considering his shoulder issues this spring.

Best Value: Choo for \$11

Worst Value: Janssen for \$19.

The Verdict:

After a rough first couple of years in the report card, Jon bounced back to post scores of A- in 2010 and 2011 before the computer drafted for him last year. In his return to auctioning for his BLB team, I see no reason he didn't earn his way back to a 3rd A- grade in a row. I like every pick except perhaps the Janssen one, and that one is only a minor overpay.

Cincinnati Steel Reserves

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Jose Altuve (2B)	12	3.5
Erick Aybar (SS)	16	4.9
Curtis Granderson (CF)	18	3.4
Juan Pierre (LF)	9	3.8
Justin Ruggiano (CF)	17	5.3
Pablo Sandoval (3B)	19	3.3

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Homer Bailey	33	4.0
Jared Burton	3	0.9
David Hernandez	8	1.0
Felix Hernandez	42	4.8
Paul Maholm	15	3.1
Chris Perez	16	1.4
Jake Westbrook	8	2.1

Owner: Jon Buneta

Total Payroll: \$270, \$7 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade (for Buneta): A- (was computer drafted)

2012 Draft Grade: A (Adrian drafted for Buneta)

The Good:

I haven't added up all the other team's WAR results, but I'd venture to guess that Jon added the most WAR in the league in the draft (granted, he had a lot of open spots to fill). Not a single position player below 3 WAR, not a single RP below 0.9 WAR, and 2 SP at 4 WAR or better. So, he added a lot of talent, but do the dollars make sense? I won't go through all his picks here but I will say that I like every pick on offense (particularly Aybar and Sandoval, especially now that he's another year removed from his wrist issues) except Granderson (who's declining on defense and masking his offensive decline by selling out AVG/OBP for power) and Ruggiano (for next year only; Jon has to be happy with his card for this year at \$17). On the pitching side, Jon added 4 JAMs in the rotation and one in the 'pen. Burton is good value at \$3, and Perez has a nice card for an ok price. Felix went for a few bucks more than I was comfortable spending given his reported elbow woes, but he was the (close) third best starter in the auction per WAR (after Medlen at 5.5 and Kershaw at 5.4).

The Bad:

I mentioned my concerns about Granderson above. Maholm and Westbrook, while JAMs, have issues on their card (Maholm the whole lefty thing who doesn't dominate RHB; Westbrook has issues vs LHB) even if they came at reasonable prices.

Best Value: Aybar for \$16.

Worst Value: Granderson for \$18

The Verdict:

Overall Jon added a lot of talent to his roster. He went into the auction with a lot of dough and a lot of spots to fill, and that is NOT easy in an auction setting as you need to have Plan A, Plan B, Plan C.... Plan Z with so many possibilities. I think Jon did really well and for the most part avoided grossly overpaying for anyone, so I'll give him a grade of **B+**.

LAGER LEAGUE

BOCK DIVISION

Granite City Chronic

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Ackley, Dustin (2B)	8	2.3
Cespedes, Yoenis (RF)	33	4.9
Davis, Chris (RF)	26	2.8
Morales, Kendrys (1B)	15	1.8

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Cobb, Alex	16	2.4
Johnson, Steve	4	1.4
Kelly, Joe	1	0.8
Milone, Tommy	15	1.6

Owner: Ron Wright

Total Payroll: \$275, \$12 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: A-

2010 Draft Grade: A

2011 Draft Grade: B+

2012 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

I am a big Alex Cobb fan long term, and his card is solid for this season as well (WAR thinks he was worth roughly what Ron paid for him). Steve Johnson is a sneaky good bullpen option who might even make some starts for Baltimore this year. Ackley has youth and upside on his side though he really needs to start hitting. Cespedes has a nice card in RF and Ron paid about what he was worth per WAR.

The Bad:

Regarding Cespedes, I like the acquisition on a contending team but I worry that the league might start figuring him out this year. Davis strikes me as a fluke given his strikeout rate and no prior history of hitting for even a decent average (and even in his “good” season, he’s only about a WAR above average in RF) so there’s no way I would have went to \$26 on him. Milone is an averageish, slightly below average type lefty starter who I wouldn’t want any part of at more than a few bucks (his WAR is low due to troubles getting RHB out). I think Kendrys could have a solid 2013 in the majors but I would have wanted him at no more than \$10.

Best Value: Johnson for \$4.

Worst Value: Davis for \$26.

The Verdict:

I give Ron an overall grade of **B-** for this draft. Disappointing since he usually grades out well in my report card, but as mentioned above I questioned some of his picks both from a long term point of view and also based on the salary paid for the cards this year.

Guadalajara Crows

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Willie Bloomquist (SS)	2	3.2
Matt Joyce (LF)	1	1.9
Justin Maxwell (CF)	3	3.6
Brandon Moss (LF)	23	4.0
Chris Nelson (2B)	2	2.9
Geovany Soto (C)	1	0.7
Ben Zobrist (SS)	26	4.5

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Jonathan Broxton	20	0.5
Casey Fien	2	1.7
Mike Fiers	18	1.9
Gavin Floyd	6	1.7
Hisashi Iwakuma	9	1.9
Bobby Parnell	3	0.7
Troy Patton	3	1.5

Owner: Domingo Cruz

Total Payroll: \$268, \$4 left on the table

2012 Draft Grade: B

The Good:

Domingo assembled a pretty good middle relief core on the cheap, as Fien (who had one of the best RP cards in the draft per WAR), Parnell and Patton will cost \$8 and are estimated to put up nearly 4 WAR. He's also added 3 league average starter types, two of them at reasonable prices (I like Iwakuma in particular to have a good 2013 season in the majors). On offense, I love Moss' card and Domingo paid slightly less than it was worth per WAR. Ditto for Zobrist, who I WISH I could have made room for on my roster given his position flexibility and solid bat. Maxwell at \$3 is nice as well as he provides good defense and pop in CF.

The Bad:

WAR does not love the Broxton signing; in reviewing his card I suspect it's due to RHB getting lots of hits off him and LHB getting lots of walks. Even for elite closers \$20 is a lot and I don't think Domingo needed to go that high for Broxton given the other RP he added. Aside from that, the starters he added are kind of "meh" for this year and \$18 for Fiers strikes me as an overpay.

Best Value: Fien for \$2.

Worst Value: Broxton for \$20.

The Verdict:

I think the good outweighed the bad on this draft for Domingo, and he should be happy with what he's done on the offensive side of things. On the pitching side it's more of a mixed bag, as perhaps he should have passed on Broxton and added those funds to what he paid for Fiers to get a better card for this year, but regardless he's added some steady arms to the rotation and some great middle relievers on the cheap. I'll give him a grade of **B+** for a good auction.

Ottawa Corona Conservatives

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Alexi Amarista (CF)	6	2.2
Melky Cabrera (LF)	23	4.9
Adeiny Hechavarria (3B)	1	0.8
Jeff Keppinger (3B)	8	3.1
Erik Kratz (C)	6	1.2
Dustin Pedroia (2B)	21	5.3
Hunter Pence (RF)	3	2.2

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Rafael Betancourt	3	0.3
Dan Haren	6	1.6

Owner: Glen Donald

Total Payroll: \$253, \$37 left on the table

The Good:

This was Glen's first auction with us and I think he did a really good job. Pedroia at \$21 was a steal, given his track record as a top 3-5 2B in the game (and his card is pretty good for this year too if you can keep him healthy). \$23 for Melky's card is solid, even if he takes a step back thanks to being off PEDs he still shouldn't be a massive overpay in years to come. Keppinger has the hit and run rating and solid AVG/OBP combo so he's a great add at \$8. Kratz adds over a win in around 150 PA (due to his limits) but his impact could be more than that if Glen uses him as a late inning defensive sub to take advantage of his -2 arm. Hechavarria won't do much for Glen this year but all glove, no hit SS have value so Adeiny should be a good deal next year at a buck. Haren is a bounce back candidate, though his card is adequate for this year as well.

The Bad:

There were better 'pen arms out there than Betancourt, as his inability to control the running game cuts into his WAR. As mentioned, Melky could crater and be an overpay though I personally think he can hit .290ish w/20 HR making him have some value. Pence is kind of an overrated player in my mind (WAR thinks he's about average), though I can't argue with the price paid here.

Best Value: Pedroia for \$21.

Worst Value: Betancourt for \$3

The Verdict:

As you can tell from the comments above, there is very little I don't like about Glen's first draft. He added a lot of talent for this year as well as acquiring some considerations for the future. Pedroia in particular will look smart a year from now (kinda like the David Wright pick for \$22 after his down year, now he's the top 3B per WAR). I keep toggling between an A- and an A for a grade but I'll go ahead and give an A to Glen!

St Louis Black Crowns

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Quintin Berry (CF)	1	4.3
Ezequiel Carrera (CF)	1	1.1
Tyler Flowers (C)	3	0.8
Jeff Mathis (C)	10	2.9
Wil Nieves (C)	1	0.7
Jordan Pacheco (3B)	7	2.6
Johnny Peralta (SS)	2	2.8

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
JJ Hoover	6	1.3
Clayton Kershaw	43	5.4
Justin Masterson	1	1.1
Fernando Rodney	21	1.5
Robbie Ross	2	0.9
Eric Stults	1	2.9
Raul Valdes	1	1.6

Owner: Brian Feig (auction performed by Adrian Paredes)

Total Payroll: \$296, \$1 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: A-

2010 Draft Grade: B

2011 Draft Grade: A

2012 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

First of all, thanks to Adrian for helping out again this year! He got an A grade for drafting for Buneta's team last year, so let's see if he can repeat this year. Berry and Carrera are nice \$1 defensive/speedy CF options (I was hoping Berry would fall to me in the minors round). Flowers is the starter in Chicago this year and while I'm not sure he'll hit, he's got power potential and a job so you can't go wrong at catcher for \$3. I was ready to dump on the Mathis signing and while I think he's a likely buyout next year, per WAR it's not an overpay thanks to the position adjustment and the -2 arm. On the pitching side, I was right there for Kershaw but didn't feel comfortable going to \$44 due to the lefty thing and the lingering hip concerns. Still he's one of the most consistent starters in the league over the past few years and is still only in his mid-20's. Stults was a steal at \$1 given his solid card if he can stay healthy, and Valdes, Ross and Hoover form a great middle relief squad.

The Bad:

Pacheco and Peralta are kinda "meh". Not bad signings by any stretch, just filler guys for this year on the cheap. I suppose Peralta could bounce back and Pacheco could find time in Colorado's infield this year, but neither pick excites me. Rodney was one of the top closers in the draft but don't let the shiny ERA fool you, there were other cards just as good as his so I think at \$21 it was a bit of an overpay.

Best Value: Stults for \$1.

Worst Value: Rodney for \$21.

The Verdict:

I think Adrian did a good job drafting for Feig, though he had a few picks I didn't necessarily agree with he got some nice talent particularly on the pitching side of things. I'll give him a good grade of **B+**.

Rolling Rocks of Old Latrobe

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Adam Eaton (CF)	3	0.7
Ryan Howard (1B)	2	-0.4
Adam LaRoche (1B)	18	3.1
Martin Prado (3B)	25	4.9

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Erasmo Ramirez	8	1.3

Owner: Aaron Peck

Total Payroll: \$288, \$9 left on the table.

2011 Draft Grade: B

2012 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

I love me some Adam Eaton, ESPECIALLY at only \$3. I drafted him in the EJMA and can't wait until this time next year when he (hopefully) has a card with something like a .280 AVG, .350+ OBP, 20-30 SBs and average or better defense in CF. Ryan Howard has been arguably the most overrated player in the game for some time now, but I can't quibble when Aaron got him for only \$2 as there is a lot of power upside here, at least vs RHB. Adam LaRoche is a nice consolation prize after Votto/Fielder; I don't think he'll replicate his 2012 season but at \$18 he doesn't really have to (Aaron got a slight bargain on him per WAR in fact). I was surprised by how much I liked Prado's card when I started looking into it; in fact I had him on my radar for 1B (which would have been a waste of his versatility to be honest but he has a 2.4 WAR even at 1B, a testament to how good his card is). Erasmo Ramirez puts up his 1.3 WAR out of the bullpen which makes him a pretty good RP card, and he's young and in a favourable ballpark to have upside for this MLB season.

The Bad:

As you can tell, I've run out of players to analyze here so, uh, "nothing" would be my answer.

Best Value: Eaton for \$3.

Worst Value: Ramirez for \$8. (by default)

The Verdict:

I've only ever given out one "A+" grade, and it was a grade that makes me cringe when I look back at it (and I was hammered for it at the time, rightfully so). This time though, I don't think anyone can argue with Aaron's draft. He got some nice upside plays for next year and a trade chip in LaRoche and maybe Prado (if either or both of them step back in 2013) for reasonable prices. I feel more comfortable in giving Aaron an A+ than I did that guy who shall not be named last year.

LAGER LEAGUE

PILSNER DIVISION

DC Sculpin

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Alexi Casilla (2B)	3	2.9
Stephen Lombardozzi (2B)	4	3.2
James Loney (1B)	1	0.4
Mike Olt (3B)	4	0.0
Donavan Solano (2B)	4	1.7
Dan Uggla (2B)	9	3.0
Dewayne Wise (CF)	2	3.8

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Steve Chisek	3	0.5
Joel Hanrahan	8	0.3
Phil Hughes	6	2.1
Jon Lester	3	1.2
Pedro Strop	1	0.4

Owner: Kevin Rhoads

Total Payroll: \$246, \$29 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+ (with original franchise)

The Good:

Mike Olt at \$4 should be a nice pick if he can find a path to playing time via an injury or a trade. Uggla looked to be on the decline but then turned it up in the 2nd half last year; which Uggla is going to show up this year? For \$9, I'd be fine with betting on a repeat of 2012 but there is risk here as 2B have been known to decline quite rapidly. Lombardozzi has versatility working for him and isn't a bad pick at \$4. Chisek for \$3 is good value as I believe he is Miami's closer this year (for the ~15 or so save opportunities that sorry franchise will have this year anyway). I like Hughes and Lester for a combined \$9, as I do believe Lester will bounce back somewhat and Hughes has upside left as well.

The Bad:

The rest of Kevin's picks on offense are kinda "meh". No overpays or anything but nothing to get excited about (though Loney is an overpay even at a buck since he is replacement level and probably would have made it to the minors phase). Hanrahan despite the JAM doesn't grade out well in WAR in part due to his poor hold.

Best Value: Lester for \$3.

Worst Value: Hanrahan for \$8.

The Verdict:

Kevin's return to the league was a mixed bag, as I do like his picks of Olt, Lester and Hughes but wasn't a fan of the rest of the draft, so I'll give him a grade of C+.

Toronto Beavers

Hitters (assumed POS)		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
Jerry Hairston (3B)	5	2.5
Placido Polanco (3B)	1	2.4

Pitchers		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
Ryan Dempster	13	2.9
Andy Pettitte	8	2.6

Owner: Norm Larrett

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

2009 Draft Grade: C+

2010 Draft Grade: A-

2011 Draft Grade: B+

2012 Draft Grade: C+

The Good:

Norm picked up two light hitting infielders with the hit and run rating in Hairston and Polanco for a combined \$6. I don't mind either pickup as I think he got value there (Hairston I might have preferred a few bucks cheaper but his versatility helps). I also think Norm got nice value in the Dempster and Pettitte picks.

The Bad:

3 of Norms selections have poor injury ratings. Pettitte in particular is a big risk (my methodology for predicting injuries, which forms part of the expected WAR calculation, found that F rated catchers and starting pitchers are the biggest risks by far of missing significant time). I was ready with my finger on the button to go to \$9 on Pettitte (which still would have been good value given how good his card is) but I just couldn't stomach the risk.

Best Value: Pettitte for \$8.

Worst Value: Hairston for \$5.

The Verdict:

I'll give Norm an overall grade of **A-**. I have no significant issues with any of his picks except for the fact he took on a lot of injury risk targeting F (or D in Polanco's case) durability guys.

Woodbury Governors

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Adrian Beltre (3B)	28	6.0
Jay Bruce (RF)	23	3.1
Everth Cabrera (SS)	9	3.6
Eric Chavez (3B)	13	3.2
Adam Jones (CF)	31	5.4
Martin Maldonado (C)	5	1.4
Gerardo Parra (CF)	12	4.2
Alexei Ramirez (SS)	10	4.4
Hector Sanchez (C)	1	1.7

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Bronson Arroyo	7	1.9
Ronald Belisario	3	1.0
Jesse Crain	1	0.9
Lucas Harrell	10	3.0
Kyle Kendrick	1	1.8
Darren O'Day	5	1.0
Sergio Romo	11	1.4
Drew Smyly	14	2.2
Craig Stammen	5	0.9
CJ Wilson	14	2.9

Owner: Bryan Richert

Total Payroll: \$264, \$8 left on the table

The Good:

I have to say, there's a lot to like about Bryan's first BLB auction. He paid market value or lower on three offensive studs in Beltre, Bruce (who WAR thinks is overpriced but I think is about right due to future potential) and Jones. Alexei, even in a down year, put up over 4 WAR due to his defense and I think he's a good bounceback guy. Bryan built a fantastic bullpen on the cheap, adding approximately 5 WAR for only \$25 for an area where some will spend \$15-\$20 on a closer that adds 1.5-2.0 WAR. Harrell for only \$10 is a steal for this year, though I do think his season screams "fluke!".

The Bad:

Not a huge fan of the Everth or Chavez picks long term. I listed Chavez at 3rd but since Beltre will play there I assume he'll play 1st which would lower his WAR to 0.6. It's hard to get excited about Bryan's rotation choices beyond Harrell, as they all grade out as around average (except for CJ Wilson who has the lefty thing working against him).

Best Value: Ramirez for \$10

Worst Value: Chavez at \$13

The Verdict:

Bryan has to be happy with his first BLB auction, as there's more good than bad here (though moreso on the offensive side). He added some nice hitting talent and built a strong bullpen, but his rotation choices could have been better. I liked more than I disliked in this auction so I'll give him a grade of **B+**.

Sudbury Northern Ales

Hitters (assumed POS)		
Name	\$	eWAR
Lance Berkman (DH)	1	1.4
Andre Ethier (RF)	15	4.1
Chase Headley (3B)	32	5.7
Marco Scutaro (SS)	21	4.1

Pitchers		
Name	\$	eWAR
Chris Archer	3	0.1
Travis Blackley	3	3.7
Miguel Gonzalez	17	3.2
AJ Griffin	28	3.2
Jason Motte	21	1.0
Darren Oliver	3	1.1
Nick Vincent	3	1.2

Owner: Mike Stockhaus

Total Payroll: \$296, \$4 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: B

2010 Draft Grade: A-

2011 Draft Grade: B-

2012 Draft Grade: B+

The Good:

Headley's deal would have looked better before he broke his thumb (this happened after the auction so I won't ding Mike for drafting an injured player!). Ethier is basically a platoon player at this point, but I don't mind the price of \$15 as he absolutely rakes vs RHP and plays solid defense. Berkman actually has a solid DH card for this year and could be a sleeper for next year as the Texas DH. Blackley has a sneaky good starting pitching card and came cheaply for only \$3, and Chris Archer is a nice pick for the future. Mike picked up a pair of solid middle relievers in Oliver and Vincent for reasonable salaries.

The Bad:

I personally wonder if Mike should have retooled for 2014, as I'm not sure his pitching will be good enough to compete (admittedly, I have not done my predicted standings as I write this). Anyway, I was not a fan of the Griffin or Motte picks as I feel both are overpriced. Gonzalez is priced about right for his card this year but I think (similar to my pick of Diamond) there's a good chance he's a buyout next year. Scutaro has the hit and run and a solid card but again, he'll be an albatross this offseason most likely.

Best Value: Blackley for \$3.

Worst Value: Griffin at \$28.

The Verdict:

I give Mike an overall grade of **B** for this draft. He had some nice picks (Berkman, Headley, Blackley) mixed in with a few overpays (Griffin, Motte), and I question his strategy of not retooling for a 2014 run.

Naptown Racers

Hitters (assumed POS)		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
Logan Forsythe (SS)	1	1.8

Pitchers		
<u>Name</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>eWAR</u>
David Robertson	3	0.7

Owner: Chris Minton

Total Payroll: \$284, \$1 left on the table

2008 Draft Grade: B+

2009 Draft Grade: C+

2012 Draft Grade: A-

The Good:

Saved the easiest review for last as Minton only had 2 picks to make in the auction! I can say that I didn't hate either pick so I'll discuss them both here. Forsythe is battling for playing time in SD's infield with top prospect Jedd Gyorko, and due to Headley's injury (which hadn't happened at the time of the draft) he should see some time there. His card this year is a bit below average at SS due to his defense but for only a buck it's a solid pick. Robertson has had better years in the past and brings huge K potential to the bullpen and is also a solid pick at \$3.

The Bad:

Not much to say here. Tough when you only have \$5 for 2 spots!

Best Value: Forsythe for \$1.

Worst Value: Robertson for \$3 by default I guess

The Verdict:

Tough to get excited by this draft one way or another, but I think Chris did well with his 2 picks and deserves a solid **B**.

Predictions – 2012 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*	100	62	Philadelphia*	102	60
Newcastle*	84	78	Hollywood*	100	62
Frisco	69	93	Granite City*	97	65
Titletown	61	101	St Louis	93	69
Kukagami	52	110	Guadalajara	57	105
Stout	W	L	Pilsner	W	L
Cincinnati*	105	57	Garson*	93	69
Inland*	82	80	Edmonton	86	76
Shiner	75	87	Sudbury	86	76
San Antonio	70	92	Toronto	84	78
Texas	68	94	Nickel Center	56	106

* = Playoff team

Holy fuck, I wish I was still in the Ale League!!! Jackson Park and Cincy should cruise to easy division titles in the Ale League (I don't think Cincy has the best team in the BLB, but I think Jon will finish with the most wins because he's in the worst division in the BLB). After that, Newcastle has a solid team and should win the top wildcard spot. The 4th wildcard was tough for me to decide, and could well be decided by one team getting hot and making some trades, but for now I think Inland could sneak into the playoffs. Really Shiner, San Antonio, and Frisco should be keeping an eye on the Lager standings to snap up some upgrades from the tough luck losers in the playoff races there.

*The Lager League will be brutal this year, and I have zero confidence in any of the predictions for the Bock/Pilsner. The Bock... holy shit! What a division! I feel sorry for Domingo, because man you will lose a ton of games and your team isn't *that* bad. Anyway, any of Philly, Hollywood, St Louis, and Granite City could argue that their team will win the division, and I wouldn't disagree strongly. As I have it, I like Peck's pitching staff and he's got a strong offense to boot. I have Becker right behind him but I docked him a bit due to the health issues on his staff. St Louis and Granite City is a toss up as they are both evenly matched. The Pilsner is just as deep as the Bock, but a notch below in quality. I have Garson winning the division on the strength of his offense, with Edmonton, Sudbury and Toronto bunched up in the middle and looking up at the Bock runner ups in the wildcard (As an aside: I fucking wish I had done this analysis before the draft, because if I had I'd have been in sell sell sell and rebuild mode! There's no way, despite my personal bias, that I can justify having my team in the playoffs after having looked at the Lager League as a whole. Not to say that I'm selling now but unless I get lucky to start the year, it won't be long before I start tearing it down...)*

Now here are the final standings from last season.:

Ale League			Lager League		
IPA	W	L	Bock	W	L
Newcastle*	105	57	Philadelphia*	102	60
Jackson Park*	101	61	Granite City*	94	68
Frisco	66	96	Guadalajara	88	74
Kukagami	63	99	Hollywood	88	74
Titletown	43	119	St Louis	79	83
Stout	W	L	Pilsner	W	L
Cincinnati*	92	70	Garson*	112	50
Portland (ie SA)*	88	74	Toronto*	96	66
Inland	71	91	Nickel Center	91	71
Texas	65	97	Sudbury	65	97
Shiner	53	109	Edmonton	58	104

I've highlighted teams that I pegged exactly right in terms of place in the divisional standings. I predicted 3 of the 4 playoff teams in the Ale League and 3 out of 4 playoff teams in the Lager League. So, 6/8 is pretty good (and it's better than I've done the last two seasons).

Predictions – 2013:

Now, I present for debate, my 2013 predictions:

Ale League			Lager League		
IPA	W	L	Bock	W	L
Edmonton *	96	66	St Louis *	98	64
Jackson Park *	91	71	Ottawa *	85	77
New Glarus *	88	74	Guadalajara	82	80
Newcastle	83	79	Rolling Rocks	74	88
Pabst	55	107	Granite City	71	91
Stout	W	L	Pilsner	W	L
Philly *	87	75	Woodbury *	93	69
Cincinnati	85	77	Sudbury *	85	77
Shiner	80	82	Naptown	82	80
Bridgeport	75	87	Toronto	74	88
Texas	71	91	DC	65	97

* = Playoff team

I am predicting myself to win the division, but I will get stiff competition from Nate and Dan as both have good teams albeit with some holes they will no doubt try to fill during the year via trades. I have Nate a bit above Dan at the moment due to but I have both teams locking down wildcard spots. Newcastle could sneak their way into contention too as they have a great top 3 of the rotation but it falls off after that and their offense has some holes beyond the big thumpers Cano, Hart and Willingham. Pabst... well let's just say Craig's reserved the pullout couch for next year's auction!

In the Stout, Philly has a good offense but their pitching rotation will hold them back. Shiner has a good rotation but an offense with a lot of holes in it. Cincy has a solid top 2-3 of the rotation but a spotty offense and depth issues in the rotation. Bridgeport's offense is headed by Trout and he has some talent there but again there are holes, and as of this writing (round 5 of the minors draft) he only has 3 fulltime starters. Texas has an ok rotation but the offense isn't great beyond Pujols. I guess what I'm saying by breaking the teams down this way is that I have ZERO confidence in predicting this division winner (though I do have confidence that 3 IPA teams will make the playoffs after reviewing the Stout division rosters...). I do think Philly's offense will make up for their so-so pitching and I have them first, but if I know Buneta Cincy will be there all year making moves to try to close the gap. Brad will be right there as well followed by Bridgeport and then Texas, but again the order of these teams is very likely to be different from what I've predicted so don't hold me to it (at least until next year's card!)

Over in the Bock I see Granite City in a transition year as they have a bunch of guys with bright futures on their roster, though they won't be terrible unless they go into a massive sell off. Guadalajara has built a solid/good offense but their rotation will be an area to

upgrade during the season. Ottawa has some talent on offense and a great top 3 of the rotation (Price, Weaver, Greinke). Rolling Rocks has a solid rotation but questions on offense and I wouldn't be surprised if Aaron was building to 2014 given some of his draft picks. Finally, St Louis looks to be the class of this division with a killer offense and Gio/Dickey/Kershaw at the front of the rotation. After St Louis I've lined them up Ottawa (due to their rotation), Guadalajara right behind (I think Domingo will be active and acquire a pitcher or two to go with his offense), Rolling Rocks and Granite City.

Finally in the Pilsner division, DC wasn't left with much as Garson made a title run last year, as I'll expect him to finish last based on his brutal pitching staff beyond Verlander. Naptown's offense should be ok (and speedy) and their rotation is solid too but without a true ace. Sudbury, who I hammered earlier in the report card for not looking towards 2014, might be a contender in this division but they are still a team with some holes. Toronto has a pretty punchless offense (though their pitching should keep them in games, at least their top 3 of the rotation anyway until Pettitte gets hurt!). That brings me to Woodbury, who I like to win the division on the strength of their offense, though they will probably be seeking a rotation upgrade during the season. After Woodbury I do think Sudbury will be there all season long, followed by Naptown and Toronto with DC bringing up the rear.

The wildcards in the Lager League are tougher to pin down so I'll pick the #2 team from each division.

I suspect these predictions will generate a fair amount of debate/discussion, so let me have it!!