

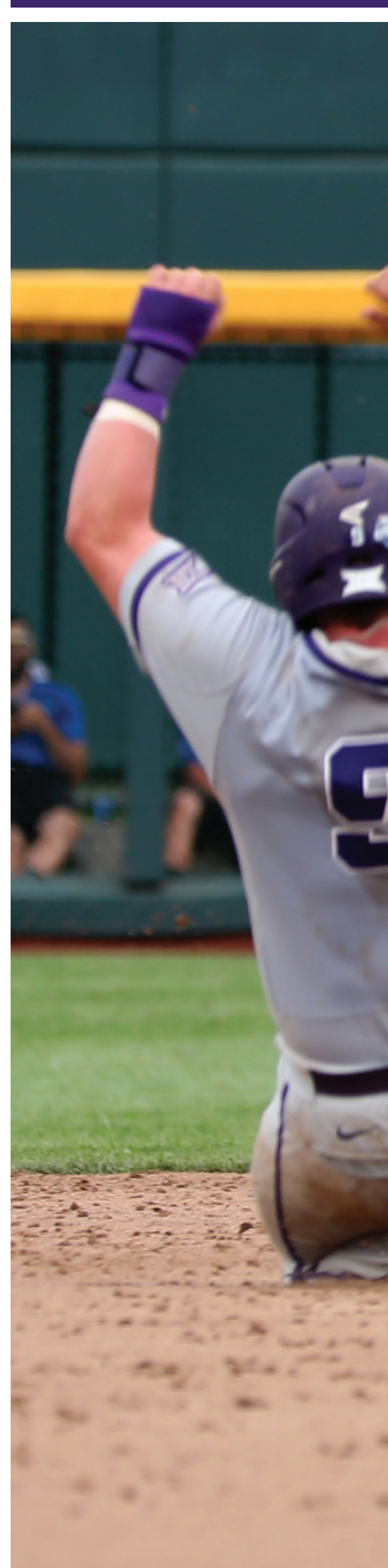
# THE KAISER REPORT

---

WITH THE DRAFT PROCESS COMPLETE FOR 2015,  
WE TAKE A LOOK BACK AT THE NEWEST ADDITIONS  
TO ALL 30 MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAMS AND A  
WIDER VIEW OF THEIR FARM SYSTEMS AS A WHOLE.

---

By: Tim Kaiser









## ATLANTA BRAVES

**Draft Summary:** The Braves used their two first round picks to draft complementing high school pitchers. Kolby Allard was the first high school pitcher to come off the board when Atlanta took him with the 14th overall pick. They then came back 14 picks later to take right-hander Michael Soroka. After taking a high school third baseman and catcher with their next two picks, Atlanta rattled off 10 straight selections of pitchers. The Braves used 15 of their first 20 picks on pitchers.

**Player Spotlight:** *Austin Riley, 3B, DeSoto HS (MS)* – Being drafted as a third baseman in the Braves organization has to be a bit overwhelming because the level you are aspiring to is no-doubt hall of famer Chipper Jones. It is doubly strange for the 41st overall pick because Riley was a possible pitching prospect. Riley has the ability to hit for power and is good defensively. Even though he has the arm with his low-90s fastball to play short-stop like he did in high school, his body type and speed made that unrealistic at the next level.

**Top prospects:** The Braves have used the international market to sign what will hopefully be their future middle infielders. *Second baseman Jose Peraza* will get there first. Peraza was signed out of Venezuela in 2010 and has made it to Triple-A by 21. He is a good defender and can hit for average and steal bases. He could be playing beside Andrelton Simmons as soon as this season. *Shortstop Ozhaino Albies* was signed out of Curacao (Simmons and Andruw Jones were also born in Curacao) in 2013, and now at just 18 is showing more of an offensive game than Simmons ever has. The Braves also got *lefty Max Fried* in the Justin Upton trade. Although he is still recovering from Tommy John surgery, he was the first high school pitcher drafted in 2012 and is still only 21.

## MIAMI MARLINS

**Draft Summary:** The Marlins draft strategy appeared to be to take projectable high school position players and less risky college arms. Miami did not make a pick that deviated from this strategy until the eighth round when they took righty Chris Paddack from Cedar Park HS in Texas-- the only time in the first 10 rounds they broke the pattern.

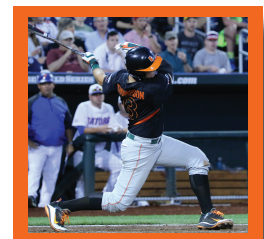
**Player Spotlight:** *Josh Naylor, 1B, St. Joan of Arc Catholic SS (ON)* – Naylor was the first Canadian taken in the draft this year at 12th overall. The Marlins hope they have found a left-handed power-hitting bat to match the towering homers Giancarlo Stanton hits from the right side, and Naylor will probably strike out less. With a body type and swing that resembles Prince Fielder, Naylor was drafted to hit and they will hope he can field his position at a level that they can justify keeping his bat in the lineup.

**Top prospects:** After trading away Andrew Heaney to get Dee Gordon (a move that looked better than expected until Gordon went down with an injury), the second overall pick of the 2014 draft, *Tyler Kolek*, moved into the top prospect spot in the Marlins' system. The righty can throw it 100 mph consistently and has the body at 6'5" 260 pounds to be a flame-throwing work horse. His control and off-speed pitches are behind as is often the case with high school pitchers, let alone ones that probably never had to throw anything else to get outs growing up.

## NEW YORK METS

**Draft Summary:** The Mets were without a first round pick, so their first selection was high school outfielder Desmond Lindsay in the second round, 53rd overall. New York used two of their next three picks on a pair of prep left-handers. Their first 10 selections were pretty balanced overall: 3 left-handed pitchers, 3 right-handed pitchers, 4 position players; 4 high school prospects, 6 college prospects. One slightly odd note, two of their college prospects taken in consecutive rounds were actually fifth-year seniors – Outfielder Kevin Kaczmarek of Evansville (9th round) and RHP Witt Haggard of Delta State (10th round).

**Player Spotlight:** *David Thompson, 3B, Miami* – Thompson was selected by the Mets in the fourth round and is another example of a player taken for his bat, and they will figure out the position later. Thompson displayed power to all fields at Miami and finished second in the country this season with 19 home runs. He also had his best season hitting for average finishing at .328 – a 50 point jump from his sophomore season. However, his arm strength makes him a question mark defensively at third base where he spent most of his time in college and could end up at first where he also spent some time.



**Top prospects:** The Mets have the best young rotation (the immortal Bartolo Colon notwithstanding) in recent memory and still have more arms in the pipeline. *Left-handed pitcher Steven Matz* got more notoriety from his work at the plate than he did on the mound in his major league debut when he went 3-3 with 4 RBIs, but he only gave up 2 runs in 15 innings over two starts before he was sidelined with a lat strain. *Outfielder Brandon Nimmo* has struggled a bit this season but his discipline at the plate and versatility in the field make him the Mets' top position prospect.





Andrew Stephenson OF/LSU  
2nd round, 58th overall-Washington Nationals



Rhett Wiseman OF/Vanderbilt  
3rd round, 103rd overall-Washington Nationals

## Philadelphia Phillies

**Draft Summary:** The Phillies spent their first four picks of the draft attempting to build their infield of the future. Philadelphia took the fourth shortstop of the first 10 overall picks when they took Georgia high schooler Cornelius Randolph. They followed it up with Arizona second baseman Scott Kingery, high school shortstop Lucas Williams, and South Carolina first baseman Kyle Martin with successive picks. In their first 11 selections they drafted at least one prospect for each infield position including catcher, a pitcher of each handedness, a center fielder, and a corner outfielder.

**Player Spotlight:** *Scott Kingery, 2B, Arizona* – Kingery was the first second baseman taken in the draft as the Phillies second round pick, although one or more of the eight shortstops taken ahead of him could end up there. Kingery finished his junior year with a batting average of .392 which put him at 11th in the nation with no player from a major conference ahead of him. He hit .354 the previous season and .313 in the Cape Cod League between the two. With his line drive swing, crazy on base numbers, and good speed, Kingery has the potential to be a terror at the top of the Phillies lineup for years.

**Top prospects:** When the Phillies drafted *JP Crawford* with the 16th overall pick in the 2013 draft, they thought they were getting their next Jimmy Rollins, and he has done little to dissuade them off that notion. Crawford demolished the pitching he faced until he reached Double-A this year where he is at a respectable .266. He has the fielding chops to stick at short and another year of Double and Triple-A and Crawford will be ready for the call. The Phillies **2014 first round pick, righty Aaron Nola**, has already made his MLB debut this season.

## Washington Nationals

**Draft Summary:** The early draft priorities of the Nationals seemed to fall into two camps: outfield and pitching. The Nationals lost their first round pick for signing Max Scherzer in the offseason, so their first pick came in the second round where they took the defensively excellent LSU outfielder Andrew Stevenson. They then took high school outfielder Blake Perkins with their second second-round pick and Vandy outfielder Rhett Wiseman in the third round. Washington used their next five picks on pitchers, including Mariano Rivera's son Mariano Rivera Jr., a senior at Iona, in the fourth round. He sits in the mid-90s with his fastball and projects as a reliever like his dad.

**Player Spotlight:** *Rhett Wiseman, OF, Vanderbilt* – The third outfielder taken by the Nats is a fitting place for Wiseman because he is often overlooked due to the star power on Vanderbilt. He was the fifth Vandy player taken in this year's draft. While not overwhelming in any one facet of the game Wiseman is a solid all-around player. He hit .316 this year and actually had a better OBP than Stevenson who hit .350. Wiseman has decent power and has seen his home run total climb each season at Vanderbilt, peaking at 14 home runs this season.

**Top prospects:** *Lucas Giolito* fell in the 2012 draft to the middle of the first round due to concerns over his elbow, and did not pitch in his first professional game until 2014 when the decision was made to undergo Tommy John surgery after the draft. He was well worth the wait. His fastball is back to the high-90s and touching triple digits and his curveball is tremendous. In High-A ball, he is striking out more than 11 batters per nine innings. **Triple-A Shortstop Trea Turner** could be the opening day starter next year when Ian Desmond leaves like is expected. Turner hits for average and has excellent speed shown off in his range and base stealing.



## Chicago Cubs

**Draft Summary:** In their last two drafts, the Cubs took college position players Kris Bryant and Kyle Schwarber with their top picks and decided not to mess with a winning formula. This year they took Ian Happ, a switch-hitting outfielder with some pop from Cincinnati, with the ninth overall selection. The Cubs might not have as much faith Happ can become a contributing member of the big league team in less than two years like his predecessors because the Cubs spent three of their first four picks on outfielders.

**Player Spotlight:** *Bryan Hudson, LHP, Alton HS (IL)* – The Cubs have not had much luck with homegrown pitchers in the last decade, but Hudson might buck the trend. Hudson was drafted in the third round, but he is as projectable as any prospect in the draft. The 6'8" lefty throws in the low-90s now, but that will certainly rise to the mid-90s at the low end as he adds muscle to his 220-lb frame. His best pitch is a big sweeping curveball that conjures faint thoughts of Kershaw. Hudson's changeup is on the list of things the Cubs will focus on improving in the minors to give him a true third pitch.

**Top prospects:** Theo Epstein has built the Cubs into one of the best young teams in baseball and much of that young talent is right on the cusp. Kris Bryant was held off the opening day roster for pure financial reasons and has since been called up. *Addison Russell* is now playing second base for the big league team with Starlin Castro staying at short for now. *Power hitting Kyle Schwarber* has bounced up and down as the Cubs try to get his bat in the lineup at DH in AL parks as well as catcher. *Defensive wonder outfielder Albert Almora* could take over center field as soon as next year if they don't resign Dexter Fowler.

## Cincinnati Reds

**Draft Summary:** Possibly no team has gone from contender to pretender faster than the Reds other than the next team on this list and the Boston Red Sox. The Reds front office's long-term plan to prevent this precipitous drop in the future appears to be to stockpile right-handed arms of all shapes and sizes. Five of their first eight selections were of the kind and ranged from high school prospects to college seniors.

**Player Spotlight:** *Tyler Stephenson, C, Kennesaw Mountain HS (GA)* – If the Reds have learned anything from annually trailing the Cardinals it has to be that a sturdy backstop that can hit is a key to success. Stephenson could be their Molina. The 6'4" catcher has a strong arm and good receiving skills behind the plate. With the bat he shows power, but his bit of an uppercut that produces some of the home runs could limit his contact against better pitchers.

**Top prospects:** With rumors flying the Reds are trying to unload Johnny Cueto, they have his heir apparent at the top of the rotation waiting in the wings at Triple-A. *Robert Stephenson* was drafted late in the first round in 2011 and was promoted to Triple-A this season at age 22. Stephenson throws in the upper-90s and has a great curveball to match.

## Milwaukee Brewers

**Draft Summary:** The Brewers continued to show their affinity for prep players in the 2015 draft. After taking four of their first five selections from the high school ranks the previous year, three of their first five picks this year will be coming straight from high school. This includes two Texas natives: their top pick outfielder Trent Clark and right-handed pitcher Nash Walters.

**Player Spotlight:** *Nathan Kirby, LHP, Virginia* – Kirby and his low-to-mid 90s fastball and plus slider fell to the Brewers at 40th overall with their Competitive Balance pick. Kirby was considered the top college lefty entering the season after a brilliant sophomore year in which he held opposing batters to a .175 batting average and struck out 112 in 113 innings with a 2.06 ERA. A nearly doubled walk rate and a lat injury this season hurt his stock, but there is little reason to think he won't return to his previous form.

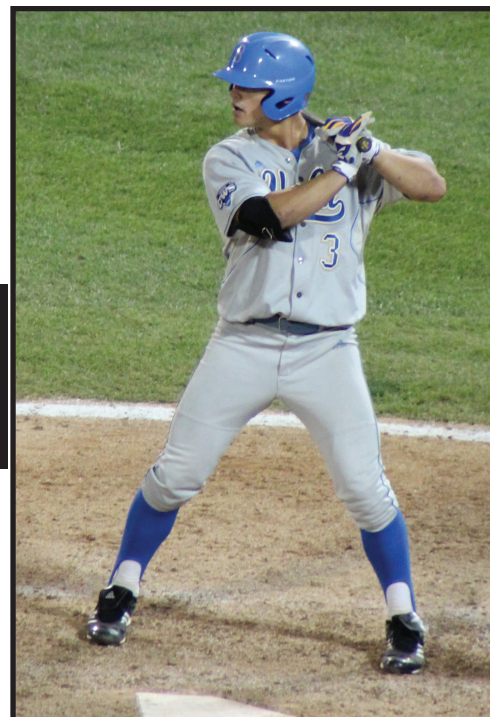
**Top prospects:** A pair of Biloxi Shuckers, the Brewers Double-A affiliate, are giving fans hope during another disappointing season. *Shortstop Orlando Arcia* has always been a great defensive shortstop, but this year he has taken a major step forward at the plate. He is having his best year by batting average as a pro and his best OBP year since rookie ball. *Center fielder Tyrone Taylor* was drafted in the second round of 2012 and has the potential to continue to progress into a complete five tool player because of his elite athleticism.



## Pittsburgh Pirates

**Draft Summary:** The Pirates attacked the top of the draft with the looks of a team trying to set up its infield for years to come. Pittsburgh took Kevin Newman of Arizona as the fifth shortstop of the first round with the 19th pick, then used their second pick of the first round on high school third baseman Ke'Bryan Hayes.

**Player Spotlight: Kevin Kramer, SS, UCLA** – With their third pick of the draft, the Pirates took Kramer. While it seems like an odd move because they spent their top pick on a shortstop just a round prior it makes a bit more sense because Kramer is one year removed from missing all of 2014 with shoulder reconstruction surgery, and his arm could move him to second base. It might be worth moving him there even if his arm doesn't force the move just to get his bat in the lineup. Kramer hits to all fields and hit .323 and led the team in walks and home runs this season.



**Top prospects:** The Pirates most promising minor league pitcher is the 6'8" *Tyler Glasnow*. Since being drafted in the fifth round, Glasnow has bulked up to 225 pounds and is throwing in the upper 90s and will continue to get better as he gains consistency with his good curveball and average changeup and maybe puts on even a bit more weight. He has not blinked with the transition to Double-A this year, still striking out 11 batters per nine innings. Fellow *righty Jameson Taillon* was supposed to make his return from Tommy John surgery this season, but had to have hernia surgery before he made his first start since 2013 and will be lost for all of 2015 too.

## St. Louis Cardinals

**Draft Summary:** The Cardinals appear to have changed their draft strategy as they look to reload the farm system that was once the envy of the league after it was depleted from the graduation and trading of prospects. St. Louis took a high school player with their first pick for the first time since Shelby Miller in 2009 and a high school position player for the first time since Pete Kozma in 2007. Nick Plummer looks like what current second baseman Kolten Wong would be if he was a center fielder. Their compact, left-handed swings are eerily similar. The Cards also spent three of their next four picks on high school players – two right-handed arms and a third baseman.

**Player Spotlight: Harrison Bader, OF, Florida** – The Cards took the junior outfielder with their third round pick (their fourth pick of the draft) as a righty to counter Plummer's lefty bat and arm. Bader led the Gators in batting average his first two seasons at Florida with averages well over .300. This season he took a step back in average as it fell below .300 for the first time, but it came with a step up in power and run production with 15 home runs and 63 RBIs – both good enough for second on the team. Bader has the arm, skill and athleticism to play anywhere in the outfield at the next level.



**Top prospects:** The Cardinals have graduated much of the talent in their farm system the last few years and others have been up and down. *Lefty Marco Gonzales* was thought to be the replacement for the oft-injured Jaime Garcia, but he has struggled with his own shoulder troubles this season. The long-awaited debut of *outfielder Stephen Piscotty* came in July. *20-year-old right-hander Alex Reyes* is now the best prospect yet to see any major league time. In High-A this season Reyes has struck out 96 batters in just 63.2 innings (13.6 K/9). He sports a mid-90s fastball he can run up to triple digits and a good, hard-breaking curveball.





## Arizona Diamondbacks

**Draft Summary:** The Diamondbacks got the top pick in the draft for the first time since 2005, when they took Justin Upton, and broke the Astros streak of three consecutive years at the top of the board. After their top pick, Dansby Swanson, Arizona used their next five picks to take college pitchers. They did not take a high

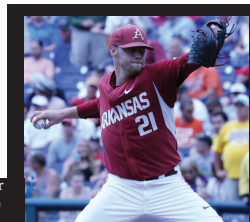
school player until the 12th round when they selected a hard-throwing righty with good command named Wesley Rodriguez from George Washington HS in New York -- the same high school that Manny Ramirez attended.

**Player Spotlight: Dansby Swanson, SS, Vanderbilt-** It couldn't really be anyone else could it? Shortstops ruled the top of the draft and Swanson was the best among them. He made the move to shortstop seamlessly this season after playing second base for Vanderbilt and winning MOP at the CWS in 2014. With his athleticism and ability to hit for average with a little bit of pop, the Dbacks no doubt hope Swanson will be a fixture at the top of their lineup for years. Throwing Jeter out there as a comparison seems clichéd and puts undue pressure on a player before they take their first professional swing, but: Jeter.

**Top prospects:** The Diamondbacks have a plethora of young right-handed arms at the top of their farm system. **Archie Bradley** started the year with the big league club and pitched well in April, but less so since taking a line drive to the face. He was sidelined again with shoulder tendinitis. **Braden Shipley and Aaron Blair**, both drafted in 2013, could join Bradley in making their major league debuts this season. The Dbacks also have Vladimir Guerrero's nephew **Gabriel Guerrero** from the Mark Trumbo deal. He is yet to show the consistency but has the athleticism and tools to be a big league right fielder.

## Colorado Rockies

**Draft Summary:** The Rockies had five picks in the first three rounds and used them all on high school prospects. They got their heir to Troy Tulowitzki in Brendan Rodgers, a shortstop that can hit for power and average much like Tulo did in his prime. Colorado also potentially solidified the future of the left side of their infield with third baseman Tyler Nevin as the 38th overall pick.



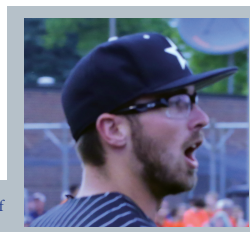
The Rockies drafted former Arkansas pitcher Trey Killian in the 9th round (257th overall) of this year's draft.

**Player Spotlight: Jack Wynkoop, LHP, South Carolina-** Drafted in the sixth round, Wynkoop is not a high risk prospect and his low 90s fastball, despite his 6'5, 210-pound frame, does not project much, but the Rockies got a guy who knows how to pitch, can eat innings, and avoids walks. Wynkoop threw twice as many innings as the next closest pitcher on the South Carolina staff this year. He could be helping the major league team long before the high schoolers taken ahead of him.

**Top prospects:** The Rockies have been starved of good pitching for most of their history. Part of it is that ballpark inflates numbers and the other is what pitcher in his right mind wants to sign up to play there. So homegrown talent is key. They think they have it in **Jon Gray**. Gray is in the mid-90s with his fastball with good movement and has a nice slider and average changeup. He has struggled a bit at Triple-A this season, but could still see his debut this year. Their future center fielder **David Dahl** was thought to be lost for the season due to a lacerated spleen suffered in a collision, but he elected to have it removed and is already back at Double-A New Britain.

## Los Angeles Dodgers

**Draft Summary:** The Dodgers drafted two of the five Vanderbilt players taken in the first three rounds. Los Angeles picked Mitch Hansen, a well-rounded high school outfielder, in the second round after he fell to them due to signability concerns. They used four of their first five picks on college arms.



The Dodgers took Vanderbilt's Phillip Pfeifer with the 101st overall pick in the third round of June's MLB Draft.

**Player Spotlight: Walker Buehler, RHP, Vanderbilt -** Often overshadowed by his teammate Carson Fulmer, Buehler is a solid pitcher in his own right with a better walk rate and K/BB than Fulmer. His good mechanics and repeatable delivery help him throw all four of his pitches for strikes. Despite his size he throws in the mid-90s consistently.



Josh Sborz, RHP, Virginia  
CB B, 74th overall, Los Angeles Dodgers

Photo by: Corey Chavous, DraftNasty

**Top prospects:** With the way the Dodgers can buy almost any player they want, the fact their farm system is as good as it is almost unfair. Outfielder Joc Pederson made the jump to the majors when they traded away Matt Kemp, and anyone who watched the home run derby saw the power he has. **Shortstop Kyle Seager** is regarded by many as the best prospect in baseball. He is probably the most offensively talented of the great shortstop class entering the league now. Although, his lack of speed will probably push him to third base.

## San Diego Padres

**Draft Summary:** The Padres lost their first round pick, so their first selection was high school pitcher Austin Smith of Park Vista Community High School in Florida. Proving that Florida really is the hotbed of baseball talent, the Padres selected Jacob Nix, Austin Allen and Jordan Guerrero with three of their next four picks. They also are all at least 6'4" and 225 pounds – Guerrero is 6'5" 260.

**Player Spotlight:** **Trevor McGill, RHP, Loyola Marymount** – Further proving their love of big pitchers from sunny places, the Padres took the 6'8" 235 lb. McGill in the seventh round. McGill was taken in the third round by the Cardinals in last year's draft despite missing the entire season due to Tommy John surgery. This season he was back to striking out a batter an inning. For the relatively low risk it is worth seeing if McGill can recapture some of the dominance he showed as a sophomore.

**Top prospects:** The Padres minor league system is in an interesting spot because they built the 2015 team to win this year at the cost of their future, but that has been a disaster. As of writing (7/23), they are 9.5 games back of the division leader, 7.5 games back of the second wild card, and 7 games under .500. They traded away their two best prospects Matt Wisler and Trea Turner and their best remaining prospects are outfielders trapped behind the under-achieving, overpaid players for who they traded. However, by the time you read this they could have sold off the Uptons, Craig Kimbrel and Matt Kemp to contenders and have a fully restocked farm.

## San Francisco Giants

**Draft Summary:** Good teams tend to think differently and the Giants draft strategy certainly was different. Two of the first five players they drafted were from JUCOs including the 18th overall pick Phil Bickford. Bickford, who transferred specifically to enter the draft, has showed his best stuff out of the bullpen and will need to prove he can be an effective starter.

**Player Spotlight:** **Chris Shaw, 1B/OE, Boston College** – Although he didn't play at a traditional baseball power, Shaw played in probably the second best conference in college baseball. The Giants' second pick in Round 1 (31st overall) slashed .319/.411/.611 this season and has displayed power to all fields.

**Top prospects:** The Giants prospects are led by three hard-throwing right-handed pitchers. **Kyle Crick** was taken in the first round of the 2011 supplemental draft and is still more of a thrower than a pitcher. He throws in the mid-90s with movement and has an upper-80s slider/cutter, a curveball and changeup, but is still too inconsistent. He has 50 strikeouts in 49 innings this year, but he also has 54 walks. **Keury Mella** has shown promise in High-A ball with his mid-90s fastball and power curve. **Tyler Beede** was drafted 14th overall in last year's draft and is currently in Double-A like Crick. He doesn't have the K/9 of the other guys, but his stuff could still make him a frontend starter because of his high ground ball rate.



## Baltimore Orioles

**Draft Summary:** After taking outfielder DJ Stewart with the 25th overall pick, the Orioles came back with the final pick of the first round and took Ryan Mountcastle of Hagerty HS in Florida, the eighth shortstop taken in the draft. Baltimore followed that up with a high school righty in Johnathon Hughes and a college lefty in Garrett Cleavinger. They continued in that pattern of two position players then two pitchers until the 12th round.

**Player Spotlight:** *DJ Stewart, OF, Florida State* – Stewart was the ACC Player of the Year in 2014 for his sophomore campaign during which he slashed .351/.472/.557. Somehow he had an even better season this year (.318/.500/.593).

Stewart led the nation in walks and more than doubled his home run total from the previous year to 15. Stewart's arm will limit him to left field. He is more athletic than his 6'0" 230 lb frame indicates, and actually stole the second most bases on FSU this season.

**Top prospects:** The Orioles top two pitching prospects have been plagued by injuries. After being drafted out of high school in 2011, *Dylan Bundy* the hard-throwing righty made his big league debut in 2012 at just 19, but has been sidelined with Tommy John surgery and shoulder inflammation for long stretches since then. *Hunter Harvey*, the Orioles first round pick in 2013, has shown great promise with a low-to-mid 90s fastball and good curveball, but has only thrown 113 innings in pro ball and is yet to pitch this season due to a fibula fracture and a recurring elbow injury. The top hitting prospect in the organization is *Christian Walker*, but he is stuck at Triple-A because he is limited to first base.

## Boston Red Sox

**Draft Summary:** One would think that a team that has Dustin Pedroia would not be scared off by a prospect's size and that certainly appears true with the Red Sox 2015 draft class. Boston did not draft a player over 6'0" until the sixth round and one over 200 pounds until the seventh. The Red Sox drafted Tate Matheny, a center fielder from Missouri State and son of Cardinals Manager Mike Matheny, in the fourth round.

**Player Spotlight:** *Andrew Benintendi, OF, Arkansas* – The draft-eligible sophomore made a huge leap in his game from his first season to his second at Arkansas and was rewarded with the seventh overall pick. Benintendi hit .376 this season, a 100 point jump from his .276 average the year prior, and stole 24 bases. The more surprising leap was in the 5'10" 170 lb center fielder's power. Benintendi led the nation with 20 home runs and slugged .717. This was good enough to win him SEC Player of the Year over players like top pick Dansby Swanson, and to lead his underdog Razorbacks to the College World Series.

**Top prospects:** The Red Sox spent the most ever on a Cuban player last offseason when they won the bidding war for infielder *Yoan Moncada*. With all the hype surrounding the more than \$30 million contract, Moncada has failed to live up to expectations early at Single-A Greenville, but he is believed to project as a guy who will hit for some power and steal bases. Their top pitching prospect *Henry Owens* is your prototypical crafty lefty with a low-90s fastball with significant movement that is aided by a great changeup and developing curveball.



## New York Yankees

**Draft Summary:** Experience and low risk is given precedence over projection and high reward in the Yankees' draft strategy. The Yankees took 2 high school players in their first 12 picks – righty Drew Finley in the third round and third baseman Donny Sands in the eighth. Last year, the Yankees took another high school righty in the third round and did not take another until the 17th round.

**Player Spotlight:** *James Kaprielian, RHP, UCLA* – Kaprielian was drafted 16th overall as the first of two Yankees first round picks. Kaprielian never had an ERA at UCLA over 2.30 and finished this year with a 2.03 ERA over 106.2 innings. He led the Pac-12 in strikeouts with 114. Kaprielian is 6'4" and his low-90s fastball could pick up with more strength. His slider, curve and changeup give further reason to believe he can be a big league starter.

**Top prospects:** *Luis Servino* is the Yankees top pitching prospect rising quickly up the ranks. Servino signed out of the Dominican Republic in 2012 was promoted to and thrived in Triple-A this season. Servino is only 6'0", but has a mid-90s fastball that has some sink, a good changeup and an average slider. On the other end of the spectrum, *Aaron Judge* is a 6'7" 275 pound outfielder also in Scranton. He doesn't hit for as much power as his size would indicate due to his approach, but still projects as a 25-HR guy.

## Tampa Bay Rays

**Draft Summary:** The Rays have lost their wunderkind GM Andrew Friedman and mad scientist manager Joe Maddon to the bigger markets and bigger salaries, but they continue to win (as of writing the Rays held first place in the AL East). However, they are still doing it primarily with Friedman's

players, so this draft was a big step moving forward in the next era of Rays baseball. The Rays took high school outfielder Garrett Whitley and high school catcher Chris Betts with their first and second round picks and then did not draft another high school prospect until the 16th round and did not draft a high school pitcher until the 22nd round. For comparison, they took four high school prospects in the first 11 rounds last year, all pitchers. This might speak to just a dearth of high school pitching in this year's draft, but it seems too glaring not to be part of their draft plan headed into the week.

**Player Spotlight:** *Joe McCarthy, OF, UVA* – McCarthy was drafted in the fifth round after he missed much of the season due to back surgery this winter. Without the setback, he would have almost definitely gone in the top few rounds. He was Freshman of the Year in the ACC after he hit .336 with a .469 OBP and followed that up with another season over .300 and .400. However, in 100 at bats this season he has hit just .210. Although McCarthy can hit for average and that should come back with a normal schedule, he should have always hit for more power than he did, and that doesn't generally get better after back surgery.

**Top prospects:** *Justin O'Conner* is a great defensive catcher currently in Double-A. He has a great arm which helped him throw out 55 percent of attempted base stealers last season. Drafted out of high school in 2010, O'Conner is now 23 and will need to continue to improve as a hitter to make up some ground between the two skills. The Rays also acquired shortstop *Daniel Robertson* before this season from the A's.



## Toronto Blue Jays

**Draft Summary:** The Blue Jays spent their first three picks and four of their first five on right-handed pitchers. The lone college pitcher of the group was Jon Harris – a prospect they liked so much they took him in the 33rd round out of high school and came back and got him with their first round selection this go around. Carl Wise, a power hitting third baseman out of the College of Charleston, was the only position player taken in the first five rounds.

**Player Spotlight:** *Jon Harris, RHP, Missouri State* – Although he was outpitched by his left-handed counterpart in the rotation and outshined by his center fielder with a famous father, Harris was the first player drafted off a Missouri State Bears team that received a national seed entering the post-season. This happened because he has room to continue to progress. His low-90s fastball with good movement could improve once he adds more weight, and he will learn to better control his already effective curveball and changeup.

**Top prospects:** The Blue Jays' top pitching prospect is probably best known for living out of a van, but lefty *Daniel Norris* is more than just a quirky player to profile. Norris sports a mid-90s fastball buffered by three good off-speed pitches. He actually started the year with the big league club – hence the many articles about his life choices – but was sent back to the minors after five starts and has struggled since returning to Triple-A. *Outfielder Dalton Pompey* started last year in High-A ball and advanced all the way to the majors by Opening Day this year, but like Norris he was sent back to the minors after less than a month and is currently at Triple-A Buffalo.





## Chicago White Sox

**Draft Summary:** For the second consecutive year, the White Sox drafted the consensus best pitcher in college baseball. Carlos Rodon is already starting for the big league club and Carson Fulmer could follow suit quickly. Chicago lost their second and third round picks for signing free agents David

Robertson and Melky Cabrera in the offseason. They resumed their draft in the fourth, picking two more college pitchers, one of each handedness, in the next two rounds. The White Sox didn't take a high school arm until the 15th round.

**Player Spotlight:** *Carson Fulmer, RHP, Vanderbilt* – Fulmer was the best pitcher coming into this season and did little to disprove that. Fulmer threw 127.2 innings in his first full season as a starter and struck out 167 batters, good enough for second in Division I. The biggest knock on Fulmer is his size at just 6'0", but his three pitch repertoire including a consistently mid-90s fastball could put him in the starting rotation. I would count on Fulmer to be successful in any role the White Sox decide to put him. He pitched his best on the biggest stage in college and wanted the ball when the season hung in the balance.

**Top prospects:** Shortstop prospect *Tim Anderson* is the definition of an athlete. He has great speed which makes him a base-stealing threat whenever he reaches base and his ability to hit for average aids in that pursuit. To be the top of the lineup guy you really want, he could improve his walk-rate and therefore OBP. There were some concerns over his defense last year when he made 34 errors in 82 games, but in 86 games at Double-A this year he has cut that number in half. *Carlos Rodon* has graduated to the majors, and *Spencer Adams* has moved in as the most promising young pitcher thanks to his ridiculous K/BB ratio since he was drafted in 2014.

## Cleveland Indians

**Draft Summary:** The Indians used their first three picks on high school pitchers, most notably last year's first overall selection Brady Aiken. They followed that up with addressing the center of the defense by taking a college second baseman, shortstop and centerfielder. Their first college pitcher was Justin Garza of Cal-State Fullerton in the eighth round.

**Player Spotlight:** *Brady Aiken, LHP, IMG Academy* – Last year at this time Aiken was getting ready to sign a contract with the Astros as the top overall pick, but a physical revealed a torn UCL and Aiken refused the Astros reduced offer. His plans were then in flux for months when it appeared he would enroll at UCLA, but instead he opted for the IMG Academy, a post-graduate baseball academy in Florida, so he could reenter the draft this year. Aiken is coming off Tommy John, but before the surgery he had a low-90s fastball made all the better with one of the best changeups on a high school arm in recent memory and a big breaking curveball.

**Top prospects:** Shortstop *Francisco Lindor* was hands down the top prospect in the organization entering the season and his elite defense put him right there with Carlos Correa of the Astros for top shortstop. Lindor was promoted in June and has stuck with the big club so far. A pair of young outfielders now highlight the system. *Clint Frazier* is younger of the two and has less command of the strike zone but has shown more power. *Bradley Zimmer* hits for average, draws walks, and can steal bases, but will develop more power if he adds some more strength to his 6'4" 185-pound frame.

## Detroit Tigers

**Draft Summary:** With their first pick, Detroit took hard-throwing college prospect Beau Burrows and with their second first-round pick selected Tennessee's Christin Stewart, a corner outfielder with some pop. Their next five picks were college players, 3 pitchers and 2 position players. The Tigers did not take a second high school pitcher until the 17th round.

**Player Spotlight:** *Matt Hall, LHP, Missouri State* – The Tigers' sixth-round pick is not going to blow you away with his fastball like the Tigers' top selection, but Matt Hall knows how to pitch. Hall led college baseball in strikeouts with 171 in 125 innings and was named a First-team All-American. Hall threw the most impressive game I saw on the Road to Omaha when he one-hit the Razorbacks in front of a



hostile crowd in Fayetteville. Hall struck out eight Razorbacks while cracking a continuous smile. His upper-80s fastball is helped by a good curveball and decent slider and changeup.

**Top prospects:** The Tigers top two outfield prospects are polar opposites. **Steven Moya**, a 23-year-old 2008 signee from Puerto Rico, measures in at 6'7" 260 pounds. He is everything you want from your corner outfielder with his power from the left side and strong arm. **Derek Hill** was the Tigers first-round pick in 2014. He is a very speedy center fielder who will need to improve his average and on-base numbers to maximize his potential as a leadoff hitter, but at 19 years old there is definitely still time. Moya could also benefit from a more disciplined approach.

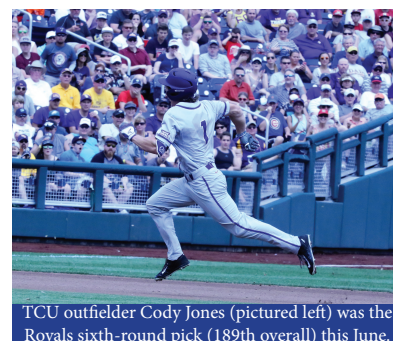


Detroit selected former LSU catcher Kade Scivicque in the fourth round of June's draft.

## Kansas City Royals

**Draft Summary:** While their fans were busy stuffing the All-Star ballot box, the Royals were replenishing their crop of young arms. Kansas City used both of their first round picks on right-handed high school pitchers from Indiana. They took Ashe Russell of Cathedral HS with the 21st overall pick and Nolan Watson of Lawrence North HS 33rd overall. The scouting of the Ohio River Valley must have been strong because they also took Western Kentucky center fielder Anderson Miller in the third round.

**Player Spotlight:** **Josh Staumont, RHP, Azusa Pacific University** – Teams are willing to overlook a lot for a guy who can touch 100 mph on the radar gun. Staumont was taken in the second round by the Royals, but he will have plenty to work on in the minors. The Division II pitcher throws in the mid-90s with an effortless delivery, but has control issues. He walked 54 hitters in just 68 innings this season.



TCU outfielder Cody Jones (pictured left) was the Royals sixth-round pick (189th overall) this June.

**Top prospects:** The Royals pitching prospects are headlined by a pair of 23-year-olds currently in Double-A. The lefty, **Sean Manaea**, was drafted 34th overall in 2013 and has been striking out hitters ever since. He remarkably does this with mainly a fastball and no truly great second pitch. It sits in the low to mid-90s and is deceiving. **Kyle Zimmer** was drafted fifth overall a year prior to Manaea, but has struggled with injuries as a pro. Zimmer lives in the mid-90s with his fastball and has a great 12-6 curve. The two are also teammates with shortstop **Raul Adalberto Mondesi**, the son of former major leaguer Raul Mondesi. Mondesi Jr. has all the defensive tools and is a developing line-drive-hitting switch hitter.

## Minnesota Twins

**Draft Summary:** The Twins took the first left-handed pitcher in the draft when they picked Illinois closer Tyler Jay with the sixth overall selection. They followed it up with another college arm in Kentucky righty Kyle Cody with their competitive balance pick. They then went all in trying to get their third baseman of the future using both their third and fourth round pick on high school third basemen who hit from the left side.

**Player Spotlight:** **Tyler Jay, LHP, Illinois** – Jay has surprising velocity for his 6'1", 180-lb frame. Jay tops out at 98, but throws consistently in the mid-90s. Despite serving as the Illinois closer, Jay could definitely be a starter at the next level. He boasts a big-league slider as his number two pitch and also has a good curveball and a developing changeup. The Twins have had a resurgence this season and have already called up their top prospect Byron Buxton, so if they are in contention late and feel the need, they could choose to fast-track Jay to the big league team as a reliever.

**Top prospects:** The **Twins' Byron Buxton** is the most well-rounded prospect in the minors. Period. Full-Stop. You name it and the second overall pick in the 2012 draft does it well. Unsurprisingly then, Buxton made his major league debut this June but sprained his thumb after just 11 games and was sent back down to Double-A Chattanooga. The injury bug he has been afflicted with in his young pro career is the only real worry. **Power-hitting third baseman Miguel Sano** was also promoted from Double-A to Minnesota this season, but he has had much more success thus far in his short time against major league pitching.



## Houston Astros

Jeff Luhnow's head is far from crazy. After building the Cardinals farm system into the best in baseball, he did the same for the Astros, and they are now reaping the rewards as a first-place team. Last year, Luhnow and company drafted Brady Aiken with the first overall pick but failed to sign him, so they entered this year's draft with two picks in the Top 5 and four in the Top 50. Houston took LSU shortstop Alex Bregman with the second overall pick and then drafted a pair of high school outfielders at 5 and 37. They picked up polished college pitcher Thomas Eshelman from Cal-State Fullerton in the second round.



Thomas Eshelman

**Player Spotlight:** *Alex Bregman, SS, LSU* – Bregman was drafted in the same shadow of top pick Dansby Swanson that he played much of the season. Bregman is smaller and a worse defensive shortstop but has about the same ability at the plate and stole more than double the bases this year. Carlos Correa, the Astros top prospect who was drafted number one overall in 2012 and is actually younger than Bregman, was called up this season and is currently setting the world on fire, so a move to second base is likely for Bregman.

**Top prospects:** Astros prospects *Carlos Correa* and *Mark Appel* have been linked since 2012 when the Astros chose to take Correa with the first overall pick instead of many evaluators' choice Appel. Appel was drafted seven picks later by the Pirates, but went back to Stanford for his senior season and was rewarded by being taken by the Astros with the top pick in 2013. Correa cruised through the minors and made his major league debut this year in June at 20 years old. Appel meanwhile has struggled in the minors this season. At Triple-A, opposing batters are hitting .325 against him. Fellow 2012 draft prospect *Lance McCullers Jr.* also made his big league debut this year and is still with the club.



## Los Angeles Angels

**Draft Summary:** The Angels placed a premium on position players in this year's draft taking only one pitcher in the first five rounds and two in the first 10. Los Angeles went local with their top pick by taking Fresno State catcher Taylor Ward with the 26th overall pick. Georgia high school outfielder Jahmai Jones followed in the second round, and their first pitcher was Texas A&M righty Grayson Long in the third round. The Angels did not take their next pitcher until the 10th round and did not take a high school arm until the 17th round.

**Player Spotlight:** *Taylor Ward, C, Fresno State* – Ward was the second catcher and first from college taken in this year's draft. Ward has a great arm – he caught 13-of-23 base stealers – but is not as good in the other aspects as you would hope. As pitch framing has become more important in the eyes of talent evaluators, it is something he will have to improve. His hitting was a question mark entering the season, but his over .300 average and .400 on base this year helped calm some of those concerns.

**Top prospects:** The Angels have had a terrible farm system in recent history as they have sacrificed the future and upside of prospects for short-term trades. Before the season they made a move counter to that when they traded Howie Kendrick to the Dodgers for young lefty Andrew Heaney who was sent there by the Marlins that same day. Heaney has already gotten the call to the majors and has been dominant in his month-long stint. *Sean Newcomb* is the next promising lefty in the system. Their first round pick in 2014 is currently pitching in High-A ball with a mid-90s fastball and a complementary curve and change.



## Oakland A's

**Draft Summary:** Oakland fully embraced the “year of the short-stop” that seemed to consume this year’s draft. The A’s took the sixth shortstop of the first round when they picked Florida’s Richie Martin with the 20th overall pick, and then came right back and took fellow SEC shortstop Mikey White from Alabama in the second round. Dakota Chalmers, a high school right-hander, was their next pick and only high school pitcher Oakland selected in the entire draft.

They only drafted five total prospects from the high school ranks.

**Player Spotlight: Richie Martin, SS, Florida** – Martin was the third SEC shortstop to be taken in the 2015 draft. He is definitely talented, but well behind both Danby Swanson and Alex Bregman. Martin is a line drive hitter and his speed and on base ability make him a top-of-the-order guy. His speed translates to the field as great range and his arm will almost certainly allow him to stay at short.

**Top prospects:** The A’s traded two of the best shortstop prospects in baseball in **Addison Russell** and **Daniel Robertson**, but have another future big leaguer in the pipeline. The Russell deal was especially short-sighted and did not seem to be worth giving up his future for a few months of Samardzija and no World Series. They have to hope **Franklin Barreto** can fill that hole, although he is much farther from the majors. Barreto was signed by the Jays in 2012 from Venezuela and dealt to the A’s for Josh Donaldson. He is more of a hitter than a shortstop at this point and has surprising power for his 5’9” 175-pound frame. At only 19, he will get more polished on the infield.

## Seattle Mariners

**Draft Summary:** The Mariners gave up their first round pick to sign Nelson Cruz in free agency, so Seattle’s first came at pick 60. Nick Neidert a high school righty from Georgia was the first prospect to put on a Mariners hat. Andrew Moore, another righty from Oregon State, was the next to do so 12 picks later. Four of the Mariners’ first six picks were right-handed pitchers.

**Player Spotlight: Braden Bishop, CF, Washington** – Bishop was picked in the third round and projects to be a defense-first center fielder at the next level. Ideally, his good speed and base stealing ability (15-of-20 this season) would make him a top of the order player, but that is predicated on being able to hit big league pitching. He hit .295 and had an OBP just under .400 this season playing in the Pac 12.

**Top prospects: Outfielder Alex Jackson** is considered the top prospect in the Mariners’ system, although he certainly hasn’t looked like it thus far. Jackson is hitting just .201 this season, including a dreadful .157 in his first stop with the Single-A Clinton LumberKings. He projects as a power-hitting right fielder, but has only 2 home runs in 189 at bats. He has looked overmatched since turning pro as he is striking out about 30 percent of the time. All that being said he is only 19 years old, so he does have time to find it.

## Texas Rangers

**Draft Summary:** The Rangers became the first team in the draft not to take a shortstop when they took right-handed power arm Dillon Tate from UCSB with the fourth overall pick. Four of their first six picks were college right-handers. The other two were left-handed hitting high school outfielders from the South – Eric Jenkins from North Carolina in the second round and Chad Smith from Georgia in the fifth.

**Player Spotlight: Dillon Tate, RHP, UC-Santa Barbara** – While it was hard to find Dillon Tate on TV unlike some of the pitchers taken after him, Tate has had scouts salivating with his mid-90s fastball and hard slider. Tate spent much of his time at UCSB as a reliever, but started this season and finished with 111 strikeouts in 103 innings more than doubling his total in both from his sophomore season. He has a high leg kick but is able to repeat his delivery. His curveball and changeup are bonuses and complements to his two primary pitches at this point.

**Top prospects: Joey Gallo** had the major league debut Rangers fans were dreaming of when he went 3-for-4 with a towering home run and followed that up with another the next day, but he struggled during most of the rest of his month-long tour filling in for the injured Adrian Beltre and Josh Hamilton. Gallo struck out at a 44 percent clip. The impressive power and frequent strikeouts are going to be Gallo for his whole career, but more at bats at the Triple-A level will make him a more experienced and, hopefully, less strikeout prone hitter the next time he gets the call.



Tim Kaiser is a sports writer based out of St. Louis who has covered nearly every level of baseball from high school to the majors. He previously interned with DraftNasty from 2011-2012. You can follow his work on Twitter @TimJKaiser.