<div align="center">

2017 MLB Mock Draft: Version 1.0
By John Yarusinsky

</div>

Intro

It's Monday, May 15, 2017 and we are less than one month away from the 2017 MLB First-Year Player Draft that takes place on Monday, June 12, 2017. Given this amazing reality, I give to you my first ever attempt at creating a mock draft. One thing needs to be noted before I continue: 99.9 percent of the time, teams are going to select the best player available. In creating this mock draft; however, I took a plethora of things into consideration. First off, is there an organizational need? Are teams going to pass on a highly touted, but "raw" high school outfield prospect; who might reach the big leagues in five years and instead, select a college pitcher that will be major league ready in two years? Secondly, are signability concerns going to scare teams away? In past drafts, high school prodigies have strongly voiced their decision to attend college, instead of signing with respective clubs. Thirdly, MLB teams that exceed their bonus pools through the first ten rounds will face stiff financial penalties. Time is money and there's no doubt it gravely affects how teams value a player's worth. Lastly, where do the players reside? California and Georgia are hotbeds for prospects, whereas, Idaho; not so much. Putting up big numbers in the latter might not be that impressive to evaluators.

So with all of that in mind, let's discuss the focus of this mock draft. Put simply, I attempt to predict the first 30 picks in round one, given all of the intricacies as described above. For each team I will list the recommended slot value for that given pick, as well as bonus pool money to spend through the first ten rounds. I will also provide a brief explanation of why this team SHOULD select this player over others. Creating this mock draft has been challenging; yet gratifying and I hope it will be informative for everyone who happens to come across it. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to email me at yarusinskyj@gmail.com. With that, let's dive in!

Mock Draft

1. Minnesota Twins
Slot value: $7,770,700
Bonus pool: $14,156,800
Pick: Brendan McKay LHP/1B (University of Louisville)

Analysis: Evaluators alike champion high school prodigy Hunter Greene as the best two-way prospect in the country, but all McKay has done is excell at Louisville. McKay in 11 starts on the mound has pitched to a 1.92 ERA in 75.0 innings pitched while striking out 103 batters. In 47 games overall, McKay is hitting .389 including 15 home runs. He's only struck out 22 times in 201 plate appearances. McKay is going to get a lot of money, but the Twins could sign him for under slot to save money in the later rounds. McKay is the best player available.

2. Cincinnati Reds
Slot value: $7,193,200
Bonus pool: $13,658,400
Pick: Hunter Greene RHP/SS (Notre Dame HS, CA)

Analysis: Greene is the next best available, regardless of organizational need. Recently, Greene stopped pitching in order to save his electric arm. He's going to be drafted as a pitcher, though. His fastball has been clocked between 97-101 MPH and he's hit 102 periodically. Greene has a college commitment to UCLA and there's a good chance he receives slot money. His future is on the mound and lord knows the Twins need pitching which is why he could go number one overall; however, the Reds can certainly benefit from his services if McKay is off the board.

3. San Diego Padres
Slot value: $6,668,100
Bonus pool: $11,839,000
Pick: MacKenzie Gore, LHP (Whiteville HS, NC)

Analysis: Last season as a junior, Gore went 12-1 with a 0.08 ERA in 83.1 innings while fanning an astonishing 174 batters. He's having another incredible season as expected as Whiteville is heading to another state playoff run. Although Gore has an unorthodox leg lick, he repeats his delivery with ease. Gore throws four pitches and although his secondary stuff is considered raw, he reminds a lot of evaluators of Braves pitching prospect Kolby Allard. The Padres have six pitching prospects in their top 10 and Gore could very well be the 7th. He has a strong commitment to attend East Carolina, so the Padres will most likely pay top dollar.

4. Tampa Bay Rays
Slot value: $6,153,600
Bonus pool: $12,528,100
Pick: Royce Lewis, SS/OF (JSerra Catholic HS, CA)

Analysis: The UC Irvine commit should be the next one off the board. Lewis has played the majority of time at shortstop; however, he has the agility and speed to become a center fielder. His hitting approach is considered unorthodox, but Lewis shows excellent follow through which translates to extra base hits. The Rays have whiffed on plenty of first round picks in recent drafts, so Lewis' versatility gives the Rays options. If the Padres pass on Gore, expect the Rays to snatch him up instead of going with Lewis.

5. Atlanta Braves
Slot value: $5,707,300
Bonus pool: $9,881,200
Pick: Kyle Wright, RHP (Vanderbilt University)

Analysis: In the past two drafts, the Braves have drafted high school pitchers Ian Anderson and Kolby Allard. There's no such thing as enough pitching, especially for the Braves who are in the middle of a rebuild. Wright is having a fine season at Vanderbilt, albeit for a few hiccups here and there; however, he's averaging more than a K per inning. He would be a cost effective sign and can help the Braves as a middle of the rotation option in two years or less. There's also some potential ceiling for Wright and that's right up the Braves' alley.

6. Oakland Athletics
Slot value: $5,303,000
Bonus pool: $11,407,500
Pick: Pavin Smith, 1B (University of Virginia)

Analysis: Next to McKay, scouts herald Smith as the next best college bat available. Although Smith is limited to first base, he provides enough offensive pop to make up for it. Smith is someone who makes contact consistently and in an expansive park like the Coliseum, Smith's overall game would play nicely. The A's also could use a first baseman down the road and since he's a college junior, it would be cost effective as it would most likely be an under slot sign.

7. Arizona Diamondbacks
Slot value: $5,016,300
Bonus pool: $9,905,100
Pick: J.B. Bukauskas, RHP (North Carolina)

Analysis: The D'Backs need some serious help. After trading away Dansby Swanson and Touki Toussaint, the farm system looks famished. Things aren't so great at the big league club, either. In 11 starts with the Tar Heels this season, Bukauskas is 8-0 with a 1.51 ERA in 71.2 innings. He's fanned 96 hitters, good for a 12.06 K per 9 ratio. Scouts know that Bukauskas has the potential to be great; however, will he remain a starter long term? The jury is still out as Bukauskas throws two plus pitches, but his changeup isn't a finished product. If he fails to throw it consistently, we're looking at a future reliever long term. The D'Backs could opt for Florida's Alex Faedo instead.

8. Philadelphia Phillies
Slot value: $4,780,400
Bonus pool: $8,729,100
Pick: Austin Beck, OF (N. Davidson HS, NC)

Analysis: If Beck is still on the board at 8th overall, the Phillies should be all over him. Beck tore his ACL in May of 2016; however, he's led N. Davidson to another state title run. Some scouts have compared him to Wil Myers and even Mike Trout. It's unlikely Beck will ever reach the Trout ceiling; however, the potential for five tools is definitely there. He's committed to UNC, so the Phillies will have to come strong.

9. Milwaukee Brewers
Slot value: $4,570,000
Bonus pool: $10,447,000
Pick: Alex Faedo, RHP (Florida)

Analysis: The Brewers have one of the best farm systems in the business. They are still in rebuilding mode and need near big league ready talent. Faedo is that guy. His fastball sits in the mid 90's and has a sweeping breaking ball that's unfair against left handed hitters. He did have minor knee surgery in the past; however, he's shown no signs of rust. I even see a bit of Max Scherzer in his delivery. His ceiling is a 2-3 in the bigs when all said and done.

10. Los Angeles Angels
Slot value: $4,376,800
Bonus pool: $8,212,800
Pick: Adam Haseley, OF (University of Virginia)

Analysis: The Angels have the worst farm system running. They are playing near .500 baseball for now, but some help is needed. Haseley has skyrocketed through the prospect rankings this season. He's hitting .399 in 46 games and he's walked 32 times. The impressive part? He's only whiffed in 17 trips to the plate and in two seasons he only hit 7 home runs. He currently has 12 long balls. Haseley has the ability to play at any spot in the outfield which gives the Angels options. GM Billy Eppler loves him some toolsy players.

11. Chicago White Sox
Slot value: $4,199,200
Bonus pool: $7,921,400
Pick: Jordon Adell, OF (Ballard HS, KY)

Analysis: White Sox GM Kenny Williams selected toolsy high school outfielder Courtney Hawkins in the 2012 draft. It hasn't worked as planned, but don't let that fool you. Adell has been compared to Twins' outfielder Byron Buxton for his overall athleticism and power potential. This season, Adell slugged three home runs in one game. He does have a commitment to attend the University of Louisville, but that shouldn't matter too much. The White Sox have plenty of pitching for the time being and due to the lack of top outfield talent in their system, Adell would fit nicely.

12. Pittsburgh Pirates
Slot value: $4,032,000
Bonus pool: $10,135,900
Pick: Nick Pratto, 1B (Huntington Beach HS, CA)

Analysis: Pratto is among the best high school bats in America. He has a free and easy swing which allows for a direct swing path to the baseball. Scouts believe he can move to a corner outfield spot down the road. Pratto has dabbled with pitching, although his bat is his calling card. Pratto hits absolute ropes that can translate to more homers down the road. In the first round of the previous four drafts, the Pirates have selected a position player. Expect that trend to continue with Pratto. They have the money to get a deal done and he can be a nice project in the making.

13. Miami Marlins
Slot value: $3,875,800
Bonus pool: $9,375,500
Pick: Jake Burger, 3B (Missouri State)

Analysis: Did Derek Jeter buy the Marlins? Okay...who knows. What we do know is that Burger can rake. In 47 games, the hulky third baseman has 19 home runs and has only struck out 27 times in 232 plate appearances. Burger hit 21 long balls in 56 games last year, so he's on pace to break his career high. Burger isn't confused for an athletic specimen, but he can play the position well. Rumor has it that he will move to first, only increasing his versatility. After selecting high school arms in the previous two drafts, the Marlins could use an offensive mastermind like Burger.

14. Kansas City Royals
Slot value: $3,727,600
Bonus pool: $8,076,900
Pick: Shane Baz, RHP (Concordia Lutheran HS, TX)

Analysis: The Royals are going to select a pitcher. The question is, which one? In the first round of previous drafts since 2012, six pitchers have been taken. In the last two drafts, four of those pitchers were high school arms. Expect that trend to continue with Shane Baz. Albeit his bouts of wild control, Baz looks like Jacob deGrom out there and it's not just his wavy hair. Scouts have also thrown the name Greinke around. His fastball sits in the upper 90's and he throws four more pitches. The changeup is still lacking and Baz isn't the biggest kid, but he knows how to pitch. The upside is tremendous. Baz does have a commitment to TCU, so it might be a tough sign for Kansas City.

15. Houston Astros
Slot value: $3,588,200
Bonus pool: $9,039,600
Pick: Sam Carlson, RHP (Burnsville HS, MN)

Analysis: **This was by far the most difficult pick for me to predict.** I went back and forth for a good hour, deciding on who to go with. In the past five drafts (2012-16), the Astros have selected three position players and three pitchers in the first round. In the last two drafts;

however, they've selected two high school prep bats (Tucker and Cameron), one college bat (Bregman) and one high school pitcher (Whitley). So, I arrived at Sam Carlson over the likes of high school lefty D.J. Hall and LSU's. Alex Lange Why? Because Carlson is explosive. His fastball sits in the mid 90's and he hasn't reached his ceiling by a long shot. His secondary stuff was good enough to warrant a college commitment to the Florida Gators and when you see how many Florida pitchers have been selected over the years (Puk, Shore, Anderson, Dunning), you know Carlson is legit.

16. New York Yankees
Slot value: $3,458,600
Bonus pool: $6,912,800
Pick: Griffin Canning, RHP (UCLA)

Analysis: Since the 2013 draft, every Yankees first round pick has been from California, whether it's at the high school or collegiate level. Granted in 2014 the Yankees didn't have a first round pick, but this fact is indicative on how the Yankees go about their business. The Yankees selected UCLA righty James Kaprielian in 2015 and it's likely they'll go the same route and sign Canning. Both pitchers have similar profiles. Advanced changeup, mid 90's heater and above average breaking ball. Canning, put simply, knows how to pitch. The Yankees will most likely go the collegiate route to save money; however, if some of the better high school arms and bats fall to them, circa Blake Rutherford last year, the Yanks will change strategy in a hurry.

17. Seattle Mariners
Slot value: $3,333,200
Bonus pool: $6,737,300
Pick: Jeren Kendall, OF (Vanderbilt University)

Analysis: Since selecting college left hander Danny Hultzen in 2011, the Mariners have drafted a college player every year except 2014 (Jackson) and 2015 (None). Kendall has been impressive for the Commodores through 48 games. He's hit 13 home runs which is a career high. The problem with Kendall is that he swings and misses a ton. Scouts have an incredibly difficult time forecasting what kind of a player he will be down the road. Regardless, his athleticism and running ability provides room for growth. If Kendall shortens up his swing and develops better pitch recognition, the Mariners could use a table setter at the top of the lineup.

18. Detroit Tigers
Slot value: $3,214,600
Bonus pool: $6,520,100
Pick: D.L. Hall, LHP (Valdosta HS, GA)

Analysis: In round one the previous two drafts, the Tigers have selected a college bat (Stewart) and two high school pitchers (Burrows and Manning). Hall fits right in with the latter. He's not the

biggest kid in the world; however, Hall has a good feel for pitching. His fastball has excellent movement and his curveball is a tick above average. At times, his delivery looks fluid and other times it's a struggle. There's a lot of upside with Hall. He does have a college commitment to Florida State, so it's something for the Tigers to keep in mind.

19. San Francisco Giants
Slot value: $3,101,700
Bonus pool: $6,363,600
Pick: Keston Hiura, 2B/OF/DH (UC Irvine)

Analysis: The Giants did not have a first round pick in 2016, so they're out for redemption. In previous drafts, the Giants love their college players. Keston Hiura fits that bill. Hiura is currently hitting .405 with UC Irvine, including 27 extra base hits in 46 games. He has more walks (44) than strikeouts (30). Injuries have limited Hiura to a bona fide DH which has clouded what kind of defensive player he will be in the future. Regardless, he makes solid contact and .405 is nothing to sneeze at. Hiura should sign for slightly under slot.

20. New York Mets
Slot value: $2,994,500
Bonus value: $6,212,500
Pick: Alex Lange, RHP (LSU)

Analysis: After the Matt Harvey squabble, the Mets need help. Other starters have also gone down to injures lately and free agency will be looming over the head of the front office when it comes to their young pitchers. Lange is someone who can answer the bell in a hurry. He has two plus pitches that are major league ready. The problem for Lange is his bouts of wild control. If he can learn to pace himself, we are looking at a mid rotation starter for years to come. The Mets have also taken two college pitchers in the first round of last year's draft, so Lange could follow suit.

21. Baltimore Orioles
Slot value: $2,892,400
Bonus pool: $6,846,700
Pick: Bubba Thompson, OF (M. Thoolen Catholic HS, AL)

Analysis: After whiffing on Josh Hart in 2013, the Orioles might try their luck with the toolsy Thompson. The Alabama commit is incredibly fast and his defensive capabilities are off the charts. The only question, is can he hit? Thompson makes solid contact at times, but there's concern for his long swing which can offset power potential. He does have explosive bat speed which can force the Orioles' hand. Thompson has incredibly high ceiling and although it might cost above slot to get a deal done, we could be looking at the next Adam Jones.

22. Toronto Blue Jays
Slot Value: $2,795,200
Bonus pool: $8,231,000
Pick: Clarke Schmidt, RHP (South Carolina)

Analysis: Schmidt will miss all of this season and part of next season due to the dreaded Tommy John surgery. Before the injury, Schmidt was an easy top 10 pick across draft boards everywhere. In 9 starts with the Game Cocks in 2017, Schmidt was 4-2 with a 1.34 ERA in 60.1 innings while punching out 70 before going down. The Blue Jays have two first round picks in this year's draft (28th overall as well), so they can afford to take a gamble and sign Schmidt for cheap. When healthy, Schmidt throws three plus pitches. His delivery is easy and repeatable. He's what they look like. Coming back from Tommy John isn't a sure thing; however, the Blue Jays have nothing to lose.

23. Los Angeles Dodgers
Slot value: $2,702,700
Bonus pool: $5,794,200
Pick: Blayne Enlow, RHP (St. Amant HS, LA)

Analysis: The Dodgers have selected only two high school pitchers in the first round since 2010 (Lee and Holmes).There's a good chance that Enlow will be the third. The right hander has excellent movement on his fastball and it sits in the mid 90's. He has an above average 12-6 curve and although his changeup isn't a finished product, it's improved slightly. Enlow has a repeatable delivery and he throws strikes like it's going out of style. He has an incredibly high ceiling. Enlow is committed to attend LSU, so the Dodgers will pay over slot to sign him.

24. Boston Red Sox
Slot value: $2,614,500
Bonus pool: $5,667,100
Pick: Heliot Ramos, OF (Leadership Christian Academy, P.R.)

Analysis: You have to go all the way back to 2009 in order to see the last Puerto Rican-born draft pick that Boston selected (Fuentes). Boston has a pretty good track record of making the right decision on draft day and they might score big with Ramos. The 17 year old is an imposing figure at 6'1" 188. Ramos is still growing and scouts believe the power potential is there. He has a ton of moving parts to his swing and there's some doubts on whether or not he will make consistent contact going forward. Ramos has a commitment to attend Florida International and it shouldn't cost too much over slot to pry him away.

25. Washington Nationals
Slot value: $2,530,400
Bonus pool: $5,503,500
Pick: Luke Heimlich, LHP (Oregon State)

Analysis: If Clarke Schmidt is still available, you might see the Nats pull a Lucas Giolito (2012) and select him. Assuming the Nationals don't feel like waiting, they need players to help them get to the World Series before Bryce Harper skips town. Enter Heimlich. In 12 starts, the left hander is 7-1 with a 0.71 ERA in 88.1 innings. Opponents are only hitting .162 against him and he's averaging more than a K per inning. Heimlich has a very low ceiling, but that shouldn't stop them from taking a polished left hander who can easily become a back-end of the rotation option. Heimlich isn't flashy by any means, but that's okay too as he throws three plus pitches. He would also be cost effective.

26. Texas Rangers
Slot value: $2,450,100
Bonus pool: $7,626,600
Pick: Trevor Rogers, LHP (Carlsbad HS, NM)

Analysis: For some reason, Rogers has the Rangers written all over him. He's a tall; projectable lefty with two near above average pitches. His changeup or lack thereof is still developing and the Rangers are masterminds at developing young arms. The knock against Rogers is that he's tall and lanky. Some scouts believe this will lead to control issues down the road. Regardless, he has a commitment to attend Texas Tech. With two picks in the first round, the Rangers should be able to get a deal done.

27. Chicago Cubs
Slot value: $2,373,300
Bonus pool: $7,454,900
Pick: Brendon Little, LHP (State College of Florida)

Analysis: Last year the World Series champion Cubbies didn't have a first round pick. From 2013-15; however, they've selected Bryant, Schwarber and Happ. In a draft short on elite college bats, it's unlikely the Cubs will continue the trend. So, it's time for Theo Epstein to get creative. This selection will go against the grain. Assuming every pick in this mock draft is off the board, give me Brendon Little. The knock against Little is that he pitches for a junior college. My response, is so what. In 14 games, Little is currently 4-3 with a 2.39 ERA in 79.0 innings pitched. The impressive part, you ask? He's punched out 124 in those frames. Little possesses a major league ready fastball and slightly above average curve. His changeup is a work in progress, but there's a lot to like about his mechanics. He's a project, there's no doubting that.

28.Toronto Blue Jays
Slot Value: $2,302,900
Bonus pool: $8,231,000
Pick: Brady McConnell, SS (Merritt Island HS, FL)

Analysis: The Blue Jays haven't selected a shortstop since 2007. That is going to change with McConnell, a Florida commit. Defensively, one can argue that he is the best shortstop in this class. He has instincts that you cannot teach. He has smooth hands and slightly above average range. McConnell is never going to hit for much power, although he has a balanced approach and makes decent contact. There's room for him to grow into his 6'3" 175 frame. Put simply, McConnell is raw, but he plays the game with passion. It might be a tough sign for Toronto due to his college commitment.

29. Texas Rangers
Slot value: $2,238,900
Bonus pool: $7,626,600
Pick: Evan White, 1B/OF (Kentucky)

Analysis: Plenty of evaluators argue that White is one of the best pure hitters in this draft. The wonky part about White is that he throws lefty, but bats righty. Regardless, White is a base hit machine. His swing doesn't have many moving parts and his bat to ball instincts are enough to warrant a first round selection. The jury is still out on his overall power potential. In 36 games with the Wild Cats, he is hitting .394. In the field, White is a monster. His speed allows him to cut down on balls in the gap and he has a fairly decent arm. White should sign for under slot and due to his overall baseball instincts, he should move quickly through the system.

30. Chicago Cubs
Slot value: $2,184,300
Bonus pool: $7,454,900
Pick: Brent Rooker, 1B/OF (Mississippi State)

Analysis: If Rooker is still available at 30, the Cubs should be all over him. They might even take him at 27th overall because they would be anxious of him getting away. Rooker can simply rake. He's currently hitting .404 with 19 long balls and 65 RBI's in 49 games. There's not much else to Rooker's game defensively, but it's his bat that matters. Rooker has an easy and balanced swing and home runs simply come natural for him. He has excellent bat speed and plate discipline. There's a lot to like.

Picks 1-30 Summarized:

1. Twins- Brendan McKay LHP/1B (University of Louisville)
2. Reds- Hunter Greene RHP/SS (Notre Dame HS, CA)
3. Padres- MacKenzie Gore, LHP (Whiteville HS, NC)
4. Rays- Royce Lewis, SS/OF (JSerra Catholic HS, CA)
5. Braves- Kyle Wright, RHP (Vanderiblt)
6. A's- Pavin Smith, 1B (University of Virginia)
7. D'Backs- J.B. Bukauskas, RHP (North Carolina)
8. Phillies- Austin Beck, OF (N. Davidson HS, NC)
9. Brewers- Alex Faedo, RHP (Florida)
10. Angels- Adam Haseley, OF (University of Virginia)
11. White Sox- Jordon Adell, OF (Ballard HS, KY)
12. Pirates- Nick Pratto, 1B/OF (Huntington Beach HS, CA)
13. Marlins- Jake Burger, 3B (Missouri State)
14. Royals- Shane Baz, RHP (Concordia Lutheran HS, TX)
15. Astros- Sam Carlson, RHP (Burnsville HS, MN)
16. Yankees- Griffin Canning, RHP (UCLA)
17. Mariners- Jeren Kendall, OF (Vanderiblt)
18. Tigers- DL Hall, LHP (Valdosta HS, GA)
19. Giants- Keston Hiura, 2B/OF/DH (UC Irvine)
20. Mets- Alex Lange, RHP (LSU)
21. Orioles- Bubba Thompson, OF (M. Thoolen Catholic HS, AL)
22. Blue Jays- Clarke Schmidt, RHP (South Carolina)
23. Dodgers- Blayne Enlow, RHP (St. Amant HS, LA)
24. Red Sox- Heliot Ramos, OF (Leadership Christian Academy, P.R.)
25. Nationals- Luke Heimlich, LHP (Oregon State)
26. Rangers- Trevor Rogers, LHP (Carlsbad HS, NM)
27. Cubs- Brendon Little, LHP (State College of Florida)
28. Blue Jays- Brady McConnell, SS (Merritt Island HS, FL)
29. Rangers- Evan White, 1B/OF (Kentucky)
30. Cubs- Brent Rooker, 1B/OF (Mississippi State)