

## **“What we look for” Recruiting Guidelines**

A parent / player general guide to evaluation standards for professional baseball draft candidates, and college baseball standards.

### **MIDDLE INFELDERS**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Arm strength
  2. Defensive skills (agility, charge, quick feet)
  3. Soft responsive hands
  4. Speed 6.7- 6.8 60yd; 4.1- 4.2 home to first
  5. Hitting ability
- Shortstops must exhibit a combination of “plus” defensive skills and “plus” speed. Hitting ability and power do not outweigh the desirable combination of exceptional defensive talents. “Catch and throw” shortstops make it to the big leagues. However, top prospects (rounds 1-3) will show at least average MLB hitting ability and power.
- Second Basemen are rarely considered draft candidates, especially in high school. Most professional, second baseman was once drafted as shortstops whose skill combinations eventually fall short of their counterparts.

### **THIRD BASEMEN / FIRST BASEMEN**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Hitting ability
  2. Hitting for power
  3. Arm strength
  4. Speed 6.8 -7.0 yd 60; 4.3 - 4.4 home to first
- Corner infielders are candidates who have “failed” the test for the key defensive positions. They remain attractive because they can hit with power and so do frequently.
- All infielders
  - Throw on line to base no arch on ball, from deepest part of position
  - 85 mph or better: Accuracy of throw very important Division 1 Pro
  - 80 + mph: Small arch, accuracy improvement Division 2 & 3 JC
  - Middle infielders range to right and left
  - Ability to turn double plays under 4.3 sec.
  - Make the routine play
  - Range to right and left
  - Field the slow hit ball
  - Field through the ball (not a dead stop fielder)

## **CATCHERS**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Arm strength (glove to glove times to second base 1.7 – 1.9)
  2. Defensive skills (quick hands, soft hands, quick feet, blocking)
  3. Hitting ability
  4. Leadership / Instincts
  5. Speed 7.0 -7.2 yd 60; 4.3 - 4.4 home to first
- MLB (draft) is always in need of catchers with solid athleticism, particularly left handed hitting catchers. Behind shortstops and centerfielders, catching is considered to demand the most athletic skills combination. In fact it is not unusual to recommend the conversion of lesser shortstops and third basemen to catching. Size, physical strength and flexibility are definite considerations. The average MLB catcher is 6'1" 180lbs.
  - Catchers glove to second base times 2.0 or under on bag "foot speed" quickness D-1
  - Catchers glove to second base times 2.2 Division 2 & 3 JC
  - Blocking balls in dirt
  - Pop-ups, fielding bunts, throws to all bases
  - Target
  - Framing pitches

## **CENTERFIELDERS**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Defensive skills (range, routes)
  2. Speed 6.7 - 6.8 or better yd 60; 4.0 - 4.2 home to first
  3. Instincts / anticipation
  4. Hitting ability
  5. Arm strength
- Centerfielders are the second best athletes on the field. It is not uncommon to find converted shortstops developing as competitive MLB centerfielder. Surprisingly arm strength is seldom a question if the general instincts play and athleticism are exceptional. Below average arms are playable. "Plodders" with little anticipation and inefficient routes to the baseball are not attractive no matter the arm strength or batting average.

## **LEFTFIELDERS**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Hitting ability
  2. Hitting for power
  3. Speed 6.8 – 7.0 yd 60; 4.2 – 4.4 home to first
  4. Defensive skills
  5. Arm strength
- Anyone playing baseball should be able to play left field, the question becomes, “Can these players hit and hit with enough frequency power to justify keeping him in the lineup?” If there is any doubt, a player who declares his only position as leftfield, will be dropped from consideration.

## **RIGHTFIELDERS**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Hitting ability
  2. Hitting for power
  3. Arm Strength
  4. Defensive skills
  5. Speed 6.8 – 7.0 yd. 60; 4.2 – 4.4 home to first
- Hitting for average and power are the overriding concerns. However, arm strength is high priority than for the other outfield positions. The longest throws in baseball are made from right field. It would not be surprising to find the arm strength of a right fielder to be the equivalent of an 85 to 90 MPH if he were throwing from the pitchers mound.
  - Throw on line to base with no arch on ball, hit the baseman on one hop “carry”
  - 85 mph or better: Accuracy of throw very important Division 1 Pro
  - 80 + mph: Small arch and more than one hop, accuracy improvement Division 2 & 3 JC
  - Strong power hitter, or some other strength (hit for high average), (speed)
  - Catching fly balls and fielding with movement through ground balls
  - Ability to track down ball over head and to right and left
  - Ability to track down line drives

## **PITCHING – RIGHTHANDERS**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Arm strength
  2. Velocity (89-91 +++)
  3. Movement
  4. Effortless arm action
  5. Clean delivery and mechanics
  6. Aggressiveness, poise, instincts
- Right-handed pitchers with average MLB (89 –91) are available in a majority of sorted areas at the high school and college level.

## **PITCHING – LEFTHANDERS**

- Ranked skill order:
  1. Arm strength
  2. Velocity (86-88 +++)
  3. Movement
  4. Effortless arm action
  5. Clean delivery and mechanics
  6. Aggressiveness, poise, instincts
- Lefthanded pitching is always at a premium. Only 25% of MLB pitchers are lefthanded. Therefore, velocity standards are more flexible. However, a lefthander without an effective, professional level breaking ball that sharply changes planes is considered less attractive even at average MLB velocity (86-88). Physical size requirements are also compromised. There have been draft choices under six feet tall.
  - Jugs Gun 87 – 90 + mph (RH) 85 – 90 + mph (LH) Division 1 Pro
  - Ray Gun 83 – 87 + mph (RH) 81 – 90 + mph (LH) Division 1 Pro
  - Jugs Gun 84 – 86 mph (RH) 82 – 84 mph (LH) Division 2 & 3
  - Ray Gun 81 – 84 + mph (RH) 80 – 83 mph (LH) Division 2 & 3
  - Fastballs: late sharp movement, running, sinking
  - Curveballs: sharp break on an 12-6 rotation
  - Sliders: sharp break, late crisp movement
  - Change-up: late sharp downward movement, 12 mph slower than fastball
  - Quickness off mound and field bunts
  - Covering first base
  - Throws to all bases with accuracy
  - Make the routine play
  - Range to right and left
  - Field the slow hit ball
  - Field through the ball (not a dead stop fielder)

## **BODY TYPE/BODY ACTION**

- Type of body; height to weight ratio, Muscular frame, body fat index level
- Quickness, smooth, ability to glide to ball
- Quick hands, soft hands
- Quick feet, strong legs
- Strong upper and lower body, balance

## **TYPE OF PERSON**

- Know the game and how to play
- Attitude: Both on and off the field
- Student 3.0 + GPA, 24 + ACT, 1000 SAT
- What type of personality