

The PoopReading.com Baseball Movie Draft

by Joe Mulder

A couple of weeks ago we here at PoopReading.com linked to an old [piece](#) from TiricoSuave.com called "2008 NFL Movie Character Mock Draft." It was a good read and an even better concept, one I knew I would soon rip off and repurpose as a baseball column. And what better time to do that than right now, as the first round of the 2009 First-Year Player Draft gets underway tomorrow evening?

And so it was that, with the help of PoopReading.com's own Brandon Kruse, I took a look at the first round draft order and the needs of each team. Then, Brandon and I considered any and all characters from any and all baseball movies we could remember (or find any mention of). We had to open our draft up to cinematic major leaguers as well (though the real draft is pretty much just for high schoolers and college players), mainly because a large percentage of baseball movies take place in the major leagues (prime example: *Major League*).

And it should go without saying, it but I'm saying it anyway: no real-life players who happen to have been portrayed in movies are eligible. How exciting would it be if one team just took Babe Ruth from *The Babe*, and then another team took Ty Cobb from *Cobb*, and so on? Not very exciting, is what I think.

Also, only theatrical releases were considered. So, sorry to Roy Scheider in *Tiger Town* and all the kids from *Sandlot 3*, among others.

Now then, let's get right to it, shall we? Ladies and gentlemen, the 2009 PoopReading.com Baseball Movie Draft!

Pick 1: Washington Nationals [Steve Nebraska](#), P, *The Scout* (played by Brendan Fraser)

Scouting Report: This pick is even easier than the Nationals' presumptive real-life one (San Diego State pitcher Stephen Strasburg). No one's ever blown batters away like Steve Nebraska, who of course threw an 81-pitch perfect game with 27 strikeouts while hitting two home runs in his big league debut, fanning Cardinals Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith to cap off his historic achievement. Why Ozzie Smith would have been batting ninth, which he must have been if he made the last out of a perfect game, is something you'd be advised no to worry too much about. In fact, "don't worry too much about that" is a rather necessary attitude to have when watching baseball movies in general.

By all accounts Nebraska is a major head case, but his limitless, ridiculously unrealistic ability make him the clear

#1 pick.

Pick 2: Seattle Mariners [Roy Hobbs](#), OF, *The Natural* (played by Robert Redford)

Scouting Report: If Steve Nebraska is the clear #1 pick, then Roy Hobbs is just as obvious at #2. A lights-out hitter who can literally knock the cover off the ball, Hobbs offers the Mariners lineup a steep and immediate upgrade on offense with his boundless talent.

Health concerns persist regarding an old injury about which Hobbs is tight-lipped, but even at his advanced age he should be expected to make it through the year. After all, if any aging Mariners superstar is going to succumb to some sort of season-ending injury, the smart money has to be on Ken Griffey, Jr.

Pick 3: San Diego Padres [Leon Carter](#), C, *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings* (played by James Earl Jones)

Scouting Report: The Padres believe the little-known Carter is far from a reach at pick #3. His power has rarely been witnessed in person by major league scouts, but Negro league crowds have been aware of his legendary skills for years. In fact, thugs even abducted Carter once, attempting to hold him until after a big game so that the opposing team would win. And as you well know, another 20 years would pass before the cinema was graced with another athlete – namely Damon Wayans in *Celtic Pride* – so vital to his team's success.

Pick 4: Pittsburgh Pirates [Joe Hardy](#), OF, *Damn Yankees!* (played by Tab Hunter)

Scouting Report: Luckily they made a movie out of *Damn Yankees!*, because it would be a shame not to have Joe Hardy – a.k.a. Shoeless Joe from Hannibal, MO – on this list.

Hardy offers the moribund Pirates a classic five-tool ballplayer with skills that seem simply too good to be true. Why, athleticism like that seems as though it must have been a gift from God! And while Hardy's out-of-nowhere emergence on the baseball scene precludes any traditional scouting report, sources say that recent, drastic changes in his life have allowed him to hit, run, field and throw like hell.

Contract negotiations could be difficult, as Hardy has indicated that he wants to be allowed an "escape clause" in his deal. The Pirates remain hopeful that they can come to terms with him, although agreeing to his unusual contract provision seems unlikely. "If we gave Joe Hardy an escape clause," Pirates general manager Neal Huntington said recently, "then it's a pretty good bet that every other player under contract with the Pirates would want one too."

Pick 5: Baltimore Orioles ["Nuke" LaLoosh](#), P, *Bull*

Durham (played by Tim Robbins)

Scouting Report: When Ebby Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh was a baby, the gods reached down and turned his right arm into a thunderbolt. His raw talent is in desperate need of a seasoned mentor (or two), but should he receive the proper instruction he could blow right through the minors and be breathing through his eyelids and spouting cliches in the big leagues by season's end.

Pick 6: San Francisco Giants Clu Haywood, 1B, *Major League* (played by Pete Vukovich)

Scouting Report: He leads the league in most offensive categories, including nose hair. When this guy sneezes, he looks like a party favor. Still, Clu Haywood won the Triple Crown last year, which no one had done since Muttonchop Yaz back in '67.

With Haywood's particular swing he may have a bit of trouble catching up to one or two of the league's fastest pitchers, but as long as he doesn't face any of them in the late innings of a crucial game the Giants should be just fine.

Pick 7: Atlanta Braves Walter "The Whammer" Whambold, OF, *The Natural* (played by Joe Don Baker)

Scouting Report: The Whammer's game is strikingly similar to that of Babe Ruth, widely considered the greatest baseball player of all time. In fact, it's as if The Whammer's playing style was modeled after Ruth's exactly, the only obvious difference being that The Whammer bats right-handed.

The Whammer should help the Braves in the long-term, but he could get off to a rough start as he tends to fare poorly against pitchers he hasn't seen before.

Pick 8: Cincinnati Reds Henry Rowengartner, P, *Rookie of the Year* (played by Thomas Ian Nicholas)

Scouting Report: A freak injury caused Rowengartner's arm to heal in a bizarre fashion, leaving him with the ability to throw a baseball in excess of 100 miles per hour. Somehow, it seems to have also given him the sort of control necessary to pitch at the major league level (remember when we talked about Ozzie Smith batting ninth? Well, this is another one of those things you probably just shouldn't worry about).

The Reds need pitching but would be advised to exercise caution with Rowengartner. Cincinnati manager Dusty Baker has a penchant for overworking young arms (see Prior, Mark and Wood, Kerry), and at 12 years old, Rowengartner's arm would in fact be the youngest in major league history (for a few more draft picks, at least).

Also, Rowengartner's presence in the National League could mean he could eventually have to bat, a circumstance that would inevitably produce hilariously wacky results. There's

nothing that can be done about this, unfortunately; I mean, it's not like Cincinnati also has an American League team that just as easily could have signed Rowengartner as its National League counterpart, thus eliminating the obvious danger of having a 12-year-old face big league pitching. Again: probably best not to worry about it.

Pick 9: Detroit Tigers Kelly Leak, OF, *The Bad News Bears* (played by Jackie Earle Haley)

Scouting Report: Very young and very raw, Kelly Leak nonetheless ranks as one of the best schoolboy prospects ever. Off-the-field character issues could be a bit of a problem, although once he signs his first contract the Tigers expect that Leak will stop hustling recreational air hockey players for cigarette money. Expect him to have a bit of trouble with the standard "no motorcycles" rule, though. Bottom line: with their current lead in the AL Central, and with all of Leak's potential, the Tigers have little to lose by taking him here.

Pick 10: Washington Nationals Rick Vaughn, P, *Major League* (played by Charlie Sheen)

Scouting Report: Forget the curveball, Ricky! Give 'em the heater!

If Vaughn can reign in his famous wildness and find the strike zone, he could team up with Steve Nebraska to give the Nationals an unprecedented one-two punch that would make them instant contenders. Vaughn has even shown a willingness to pitch in relief if the need arises, although let's not forget that he's actually a starter.

Why, with his prodigious pitching talent, one could even say that Vaughn, all by himself, possesses the athleticism of two-and-a-half men!

(Sorry.)

Pick 11: Colorado Rockies Willie Mays Hayes, OF, *Major League* (played by Wesley Snipes)

Scouting Report: Hayes is one of the fastest players ever to lace up a pair of cleats, and if he can work on his tendency to hit pop flies and try to drive the ball instead, he could use his legendary speed to exploit the cavernous outfield gaps at Coors Field (while covering that same cavernous outfield on defense). An ideal match for the Rockies.

Pick 12: Kansas City Royals Bingo Long, P, *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings* (played by Billy Dee Williams)

The young Royals may only be a year or two away from greatness, and a seasoned veteran like Bingo Long is just what this team needs.

It would also be nice to see Long, whose style and showmanship are eerily reminiscent of the great Satchel Paige, finally get a chance to prove himself in the majors after toiling away in the Negro leagues for so many years. And what better place to do that than in Kansas City, a town with a rich Negro league heritage?

Pick 13: Oakland Athletics Jack Parkman, C, *Major League II* (played by David Keith)

Scouting Report: The A's need help everywhere, and power-hitting catchers are few and far between, making Parkman their obvious choice. He should anchor the Oakland lineup for years to come. It only remains to be seen whether his trademark batting stance "shimmy" will drive the women in Oakland crazy or make them sick.

Pick 14: Texas Rangers Henry Wiggen, P, *Bang the Drum Slowly* (played by Michael Moriarty)

Scouting Report: Wiggen is a workhorse, a dependable ace who promises to be the reliable Number 1 starter that the Rangers haven't had since... well, since Nolan Ryan retired.

Pick 15: Cleveland Indians Amanda Whurlitzer, P, *The Bad News Bears* (played by Tatum O'Neal)

Scouting Report: Though some scouts have trouble believing it, Whurlitzer reportedly has her curve breaking two-and-a-half feet. This is an unconventional pick for the Tribe, to be sure (especially with hometown favorites like Pedro Cerrano, Roger Dorn and Jake Taylor still available), and might generate some controversy. The Indians, however, figure that the city of Cleveland has been using grown men on its sports teams for going on 50 years now with no championships to show for it, so they may as well take a flyer on an 11-year-old girl.

Pick 16: Arizona Diamondbacks Bobby Rayburn, OF, *The Fan* (played by Wesley Snipes)

Scouting Report: Rayburn is a speedster with a reliable bat and excellent glove, a bona fide star who bears many, many similarities to the previously drafted Willie Mays Hayes.

Playing time may be an issue for Rayburn in the crowded Diamondbacks outfield, and he has been known to inspire passion in fans almost to a fault. One fan in particular has a history of taking things too far; just to be safe, Arizona outfielders Chris Young, Justin Upton and Eric Byrnes should be on the lookout for a short Italian-American knife salesman who used to be in way, way better movies when he was younger.

Pick 17: Arizona Diamondbacks Mike McGrevey, P, *Little Big League* (played by Scott Patterson)

Scouting Report: McGrevey is a solid if unspectacular pick,

the best starting pitcher on a team that finished in a tie for the American League wild card. In a draft that's getting thin on starting pitchers, the Diamondbacks should be happy to have him here.

Pick 18: Florida Marlins Benny "The Jet" Rodriguez, 3B, *The Sandlot* (played by Mike Vitar)

Scouting Report: The Jet may be getting a little long in the tooth (don't be fooled by his youthful appearance), but he's still capable of stealing home on you if you're not careful

And don't look now, but with Benny "The Jet" Rodriguez, Hanley Ramirez, Dan Uggla and Jorge Cantu the Marlins suddenly have one of the best infields in the majors.

Pick 19: St. Louis Cardinals Marla Hooch, 2B, *A League of Their Own* (played by Megan Cavanagh)

Scouting Report: The Cardinals are ready to contend this season but could use some help up the middle; adding cornfed slugger Marla Hooch to the lineup should make the Cards one of the most fearsome teams in the National League. And as far as looks go, well... she sure is some hitter, ain't she, boys?

Pick 20: Toronto Blue Jays Billy Chapel, P, *For Love of the Game* (played by Kevin Costner)

Scouting Report: Chapel is a seasoned veteran in the twilight of his career and could be a huge short-term asset for the Blue Jays, whose starting rotation consists of Roy Halladay and then four other guys who aren't Roy Halladay.

The deck is kind of stacked against Toronto in the hyper-competitive, big-market American League East, but Chapel may be the difference if he can pitch against the future, against age, against ending, and push the sun back into the sky and give them one more day of summer.

(that's from the movie... imagine Vin Scully saying it, and it might not seem so fruity)

Chapel's biggest strength at this point in his career is his experience; his main weakness is trying to speak with any kind of accent.

Pick 21: Houston Astros Tanner Boyle, SS, *The Bad News Bears in Breaking Training* (played by Chris Barnes)

Scouting Report: Tanner impressed the team with his tenacity and competitive fire during a Little League exhibition at the old Houston Astrodome when he refused to leave the field at the end of the game, prompting the entire building (including a handful of Astros themselves) to chant "Let Them Play! Let Them Play!" Look for him to be a scrappy, David Eckstein-type, only with quite a bit more swearing.

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Pick 22: Minnesota Twins Ed the Baseball Playing Chimp, 3B, *Ed* (played by an animatronic chimp)

Scouting Report: Chimpanzees possess up to five times as much upper body strength as the average human, so Ed should certainly give the Twins the middle-of-the-lineup power they've been seeking.

When angered, though, Ed has been known to attack physically, tearing away the jawbone and genitals of those he perceives as a potential threat. Commissioner Bud Selig has made it clear that such conduct will not be tolerated at a major league level, so the Twins hope that Ed will be on his best behavior.

Pick 23: Chicago White Sox Roger Dorn, 3B, *Major League* (played by Corbin Bernsen)

Scouting Report: The Sox would have loved a proven starting pitcher, and in the absence of any of those they had their eye on Ed the Baseball Playing Chimp. As it happens they'll settle for Roger Dorn, a former All-Star who could represent an upgrade for them if he's willing to get over his habit of dogging it on hard ground balls and refusing to do any calisthenics that he deems unnecessary.

Dorn's act has been known to wear particularly thin with hilariously profane managers, though, so sparks could fly between him and Sox skipper Ozzie Guillen.

Pick 24: Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim Jack Elliot, 1B, *Mr. Baseball* (played by Tom Selleck)

Scouting Report: The Angels could use a big bat at first base, and for the right amount of money Elliot could probably be dissuaded from going over to play for Japan's Chunichi Dragons, as he has said he intends to do. Although he probably won't learn quite as much about tolerance, cultural sensitivity and the universal language of sportsmanship in Anaheim as he would have in Nagoya.

Pick 25: Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim Dave Spiewak, P, *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad* (played by Dale Mohoric)

Scouting Report: Who better for the Angels to choose with their second consecutive pick than Spiewak, the big right-hander who started what was, prior to the team's Cinderella run to the 2002 World Series title, undoubtedly one of the most crucial games in Angels history?

The Halos still hope to contend for a playoff spot this season and could find themselves in some tense, unpredictable situations that call for a cool head and a steady hand. And after seeing him pitch in a game where the home plate umpire was replaced by a wacky police investigator in order to stop Reggie Jackson from murdering the visiting Queen of England, the Angels must figure that nothing can faze

Spiewak now.

Pick 26: Milwaukee Brewers Rex "T-Rex" Pennebaker, OF, *Mr. 3000* (played by Brian J. White)

Scouting Report: Pennebaker will serve as extra outfielder for a Brewers team that made the playoffs last season for the first time since 1982 and currently sits atop the NL Central. Plus Pennebaker played for Milwaukee in *Mr. 3000*, so they won't have to get him new uniforms and what-not; he's already got all the Brewers stuff he needs.

Pick 27: Seattle Mariners Charlie Snow, OF, *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings* (played by Richard Pryor)

Scouting Report: The scrappy, speedy Snow is nothing if not versatile on the field and off. The Mariners will need him to play a variety of roles, much like he did back in his Negro league days when he often tried to pass himself off as either Native American ("Chief Takahoma") or Cuban ("Carlos Nevada") in an attempt to be allowed to play in the majors.

That sort of passion for the game – not to mention that sort of appreciation for ethnic variety – make Snow an ideal fit for such a culturally diverse city as Seattle.

Pick 28: New York Yankees "All the Way Mae" Mordabito, OF, *A League of Their Own* (played by Madonna)

Scouting Report: With a roster full of high-priced talent and egos to match, chemistry is a must in the Yankees clubhouse. The team also needs to draft somebody who will be able to handle the intense media pressure that comes with playing in New York.

Spunky outfielder Mae Mordabito is an ideal fit; the harsh glow of the media spotlight is unlikely to bother her, and she ought to get along quite famously with Yankee stars such as Alex Rodriguez, just to name one.

Pick 29: Boston Red Sox Jake Taylor, C, *Major League* (played by Tom Berenger)

Scouting Report: This is an insurance pick for the Red Sox; Jason Varitek is playing well so far this season, but if he goes down with an injury Boston can just swap one washed-up catcher trying to wring another year out of his creaky knees for another.

Pick 30: Tampa Bay Rays Professor Vernon Simpson, P, *It Happens Every Spring* (played by Ray Milland)

Scouting Report: Professor Simpson discovered a compound that, when applied to a baseball, makes the ball resistant to wood. He then inexplicably decided to become a pitcher himself rather than give the compound to a pitcher on his

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favorite team. It's unclear as to how the substance would help a layman throw strikes consistently from a major league mound, but if the Rays aren't worrying about that then I won't either.

Tampa Bay needs bullpen help, and as long as no umpire inspects his glove (or any ball he uses), then Professor Simpson could be a major asset to the Rays as they try to defend their unlikely 2008 American League championship.

Plus, the character was played by Ray Milland. Ray... the Rays... he kind of has to go here, right?

Pick 31: Chicago Cubs Pedro Cerrano, OF, *Major League* (played by Dennis Haysbert)

Scouting Report: Cerrano has all kinds of power, but his susceptibility to the curveball probably accounts for his slide all the way the the end of the first round.

He could end up being the perfect fit for Chicago, though. In the 101 years since their last World Series title the Cubs have undoubtedly tried almost everything to lift the curse that clearly surrounds the team; perhaps Cerrano and his clubhouse voodoo rituals will be the answer.

Pick 32: Colorado Rockies Eddie Harris, P, *Major League* (played by Chelcie Ross)

Scouting Report: With the last-place Rockies unlikely to repeat their improbable run to the 2007 World Series anytime soon, the team has decided to return to its core philosophy of seeking out devoutly religious Christian players. The veteran Harris, who frequently leads his team in prayer before games, fits right in with that plan. He could also be a great resource for young Rockies pitchers, with whom he'll gladly share some of the tricks he's picked up throughout his career (such as putting everything from Crisco to snot on the ball).

And there you have it; the entire first round. Who made out best? Well, we'll just have to wait a few years before we know for sure.
