



Top 100 MLB prospects 2025: Keith Law's rankings, with Roman Anthony at No. 1

Keith Law

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Welcome to this year's ranking of the top [100 prospects](#) in [baseball](#). I've been compiling and writing such rankings for 18 years now, and those of you who've read them before will find the format here similar to those from the recent past.

My farm reports covering at least 20 prospects in each team's system, plus notes on prospects who might appear in the majors this year or might be breakout prospects for the 2026 rankings, will appear the week of Feb. 3.

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For the second year in a row, the most recent draft class is well-represented in the top 100; [last year's list](#) had 20 players from the 2023 draft class, and this year's list has 15, with more appearing on the “prospects who just missed” column that will run on Wednesday. The 2024 draft was not very good, but the minors right now ... the minors are not good, my friends. It's just not very deep, and getting to 100 names I felt good about was as hard as it has ever been.

Some of it is the increasing pace with which teams are calling up top prospects, as 12 of my top 20 prospects from last year's list have graduated, but the bigger cause, in my opinion, is the forced contraction of the minor leagues back in 2021, which has rushed more players to Low A before they were ready and generally shrunk the time teams are giving to prospects who need more development.

Even guys who struggle in A-ball tend to move up because players are coming right behind them who need those at-bats or innings, and the result is more guys stalling out or regressing or just never taking the step forward that scouts and/or analysts expected. With continued rumors that [MLB](#) wants to cut yet another entire rung from the minors, this year's top 100 should be a stark warning that the league is trying its best to strangle the goose that lays the golden eggs.

To be eligible for this list, a player must still retain Rookie of the Year eligibility for 2025, and have no experience in NPB/KBO, as those are major leagues and calling, say, [Roki Sasaki](#) a “prospect” is pretty silly (not to mention it takes up the space I'd rather use on an actual prospect).

I also don't include the international free agents who just signed in January, since in nearly all cases those guys haven't been scouted by other teams in a year or more. I know of one such guy who was under a verbal agreement with the team that signed



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I tend to favor upside in prospects more than certainty, but there is value in both. A player who is all ceiling and no floor isn't as valuable, in the trade market now or in considering his expected value in the long term, as one who has a somewhat lower ceiling but a much higher floor. I want players who might be stars. After that, I want players who might be above-average big leaguers — but I also try to keep in mind that many of these prospects won't reach their ceilings, and to consider what other scenarios exist for their futures.

I use "seasonal age" for players, which is their age on July 1, 2025, the midpoint of the calendar. I use the 20-80 scale for tools (or 2-8 — same scale, different dialect), where 50 is average, 60 is plus, 40 is well below average, 80 is [Pete Crow-Armstrong](#)'s defense, and 20 is Yasmani Grandal's foot speed. I try to discuss players' tools, their frames, their level of athleticism and other physical attributes, as well as their skills, their aptitude, and other mental or intellectual attributes as well.

This is comparable to how major-league teams evaluate players, although they will always have the advantage of access to more and better data than those of us on the outside can get. The least I can do is try to reflect how the industry thinks about players, and give you the most accurate possible picture of the prospects in these rankings through both the lens of my own evaluations and those of the people within the industry whom I most trust.



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innings and hit the showers) or twice-through-the-order guys, but I will still talk about league-average starters and sometimes refer to back-end (fourth or fifth starters) or above-average (ace, No. 2, and some No. 3) starters. Bear in mind that there is a range around any projection or prediction for a player — if I say I think someone's a No. 4 starter, he might have a ceiling as a No. 3 or more, and the floor of a middle reliever or a bulk reliever, where the No. 4 starter projection is the most likely or median outcome I see.

And now, on to the rankings ...

Team

Position

Search

1

Roman Anthony

OF

BOSTON RED SOX

Age: 21 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 200 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 22

Anthony has shot through the minors, reaching Triple A in his second full pro season out of high school, thanks to one of the best swings in all of the minors and an extremely advanced approach for a hitter so young. A 2022 second-round pick, Anthony changed his setup that offseason, freeing up his hands to loosen his whole swing through contact while also getting his hips and legs more involved to help him hit the ball harder, and it paid off almost immediately. Since his early 2023 promotion to High A, he's hit .294/.405/.521 across three levels, finishing last season in Triple A with as many walks as strikeouts at that stop. His average exit velocity for Triple-A Worcester was 88 mph, although he did start to hit the ball on the ground more (52 percent) in that brief stint, not a major concern but something to watch as he gets so close to a promotion to the majors. He's very disciplined for his age, chasing just 20 percent of the time in Triple A, with a whiff rate under 9 percent, picking up spin very well even at a level when he was facing guys who'd pitched in the majors. Anthony has mostly played center in the minors, but he's not very rangy and he's maybe an average runner, so he's much more likely to end up in a corner, supplanted in center by someone with plus range. He's got a chance to be a 30-homer, high-average, high-OBP guy in right field, maybe with plus defense there, which is a "best player in the league" profile.

BOSTON RED SOX

OF



2

Sebastian Walcott

SS,3B

TEXAS RANGERS

Age: 19 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 190 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 40

Walcott started the year in High A as an 18-year-old, joining Ethan Salas as the only players that young to start 2024 anywhere above Low A, and he started very slowly, hitting just .196/.326/.315 through the end of May. From then on, he cooked, hitting .296/.351/.511 until a late-season promotion to Double A, so that on the whole he ended the year with an OBP 17 points above the Sally League average and a slugging percentage 78 points above it — all as the



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let him pack on some upper body strength. He's an excellent athlete with above-average speed and gets very high marks for his feel for the game, including his ability to make in-game and in-season adjustments. He's got tremendous bat speed and already produces hard contact at a very high rate, so there's every reason to hope he can be a 30-homer guy with a high average even if his strikeout rate remains in the 24-25 percent range. Walcott is a shortstop now, and not bad there, but he's extremely likely to outgrow the position — he's going to be larger than Carlos Correa or Corey Seager, two bigger guys who defied expectations to remain at short. At worst, you've got a right fielder who hits for average and power. He won't even turn 19 until the first week of March, so he has plenty of time to keep turning these immense physical gifts into baseball skills. I think he's underrated already, and he's my pick to be the No. 1 prospect a year from now.

Photo: Getty Images

TEXAS RANGERS SS 3B



3

Samuel Basallo

C

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Age: 20 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 180 Bats: L Throws: R



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2024 Ranking: 20

Basallo might be hopelessly blocked at the moment by Adley Rutschman, but he's the best catching prospect in baseball right now, having produced at every level up through Double A before his 20th birthday while showing enough tools and athleticism to project as an above-average defender. Signed for a \$1.3 million bonus in January 2021, Basallo has a fantastic swing that's short to the ball but hard enough to produce plus power already, with more to come as he matures. He's shown excellent plate discipline so far, and has hit left-handed pitching extremely well throughout his career, avoiding the platoon concerns that bedevil so many left-handed hitting prospects. Even in a tough debut in Triple A, where he really struggled to adjust to changeups, he still topped 110 mph (off a lefty!) and averaged 91 mph across all balls he put into play. He's got at least a 70 arm and is athletic enough to become a 55 receiver and blocker, although right now he's succeeding more on his pure physical ability and needs more polish on the finer points of catching. Basallo will probably be ready for a big-league role by the end of 2025, which will present a big dilemma for the Orioles, as they're one of the only teams in baseball for whom he wouldn't be a huge upgrade behind the plate — and if Rutschman is "just" a 3-4 WAR player, as he's been the last two years, I'm not so sure that he's the better option.

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

C



4

Walker Jenkins

OF

MINNESOTA TWINS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 210 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 15

Jenkins has earned comparisons to Larry Walker since he was a high school junior, which I always suspected was at least a little bit driven by his first name, but there are more similarities than that. Jenkins is also a tall, athletic, and very strong left-handed-hitting corner outfielder, and he's advanced quickly through the low minors when healthy by showing exceptional swing decisions — he seldom swings and misses (just 17.5 percent last year) and doesn't chase pitches out of



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than on the ground, while he's shown the ability to go the other way when pitchers try to attack him on the outer third. That feel to hit as a 19-year-old who's already reached Double A is part of what makes him so exciting as a prospect; he already can hit, and there's size and strength here for plus power as he continues to grow and develop. He's mostly played center in the minors, but I still think he's heading to right field between his size and just average speed so far. He also missed almost two months to start 2024 with a hamstring injury, so he hasn't played a full season yet. He should return to Double A to start 2025, and if he stays healthy, I wouldn't be surprised at all to see him get a call-up in September given how much hard contact he's already making as a teenager.

Photo: AP Images

MINNESOTA TWINS

OF



5

Colt Emerson

SS

SEATTLE MARINERS

Age: 19 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 195 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 37

If Emerson had stayed healthy all year, he would have been close to the very top of this list, just based on how good he looked and how well he performed when he was able to take the field. The 22nd pick in 2023, Emerson went to Low A to start last year as an 18-year-old — his birthday is in late July — and hit .293/.440/.427 in 40 games, walking more than he struck out. The Mariners bumped him up to High A in early August, and he hit .225/.331/.317 in 29 games there — but still made plenty of contact — and then hit .370/.436/.537 as one of the youngest players in the Arizona Fall League. The bad news is that he played a total of 83 games between the regular season and the AFL, hitting the IL in April with an oblique strain, breaking a bone in his foot by fouling a ball off it in mid-May, and then leaving Arizona in early November after straining a hamstring. He's played about 80 percent of his pro innings at shortstop and has shown the range and instincts to stay there, even though he's just an average runner; if his propensity to get hurt continues as he matures, he may be better served moving to third or second, but he's so much more valuable at short that he'll probably stay there at least through the high minors. He has all of the ingredients to be a hitter for a high average and OBP, with a short path to the ball, excellent bat speed and a strong approach for his age. He might only lack the power to get to the upper

Photo: Getty Images

SEATTLE MARINERS SS ✓

6 ➔

Max Clark

OF

DETROIT TIGERS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 205 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: 14

Clark was the third pick in the loaded 2023 draft, and while I know some Tigers fans gnashed their teeth when Wyatt Langford (taken fourth) reached the majors last spring, Clark is one of the very



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League, then hit .264/.344/.421 after a July promotion to High A, while stealing 29 bases in 33 attempts on the year. His pitch recognition and selection remain very strong — he whiffed just 8.1 percent of the time he swung in Low A, and chased just 22.6 percent of the time, per Statcast data from that level — and he topped out at 106 mph in exit velocity, but he hit the ball on the ground a ton, as he can get too firm on the front side and ends up on top of the ball too often. He's a true center fielder who was a 55 runner last year, down from 70 speed in high school, and showed just an average arm, all of which was also a bit down from high school, possibly just the result of a much longer season and more frequent play than he'd experienced before as an amateur in Indiana. His floor is a regular in center with high on-base percentages and plus defense; his ceiling, if the Tigers help him regain some speed and get him to loosen up his front side to drive the ball more, is a 25-homer/40-steal on-base machine.

Photo: Getty Images

DETROIT TIGERS OF



7

Dylan Crews

OF

WASHINGTON NATIONALS

Age: 23 Ht: 5-11 Wt: 203 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 7

Crews was the second pick in the 2023 draft and made his major-league debut about 13 months after signing, advancing quickly through the minors as expected but without the dominance that most people anticipated. Crews hit .274/.343/.446 in Double A, in a good hitters' park in Harrisburg, and .265/.340/.455 at Triple-A Rochester. It was a solid performance, boosted by above-average defense in center field, but he's not just any prospect — he won the 2023 Golden Spikes award after starring at LSU and beating up on SEC pitching for three years. The good news is that his batted-ball data points to better results going forward, as he ran into some bad luck in the majors despite hitting the ball pretty hard in a small sample; his hard-hit rates in Triple A (43.3 percent) and the majors (44.7 percent) were both above the median, even though he was just 22 and young for both levels. He's closed off some of the trouble he had in 2023 with fastballs up in the zone, and missed just 10 percent of the fastballs he swung at in the majors. He hit lefties fine in his brief sample in the big leagues as well, struggling mostly against breaking stuff from righties, especially down and away. Even with the tepid performance in the high minors, he still shows the underlying characteristics of an above-average hitter in the big leagues, and that coupled with what is probably grade 55 defense in center — or plus if he moves to a corner at any



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Photo: Getty Images

WASHINGTON NATIONALS

OF



8

Carson Williams

SS

TAMPA BAY RAYS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 180 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 38

Williams is the most enigmatic prospect in the minors to me: He does absolutely everything you'd want a position-player prospect to do, except he strikes out way too often — he does all of those



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easy plus arm. He has 70 speed and shows above-average to plus power, hitting 20 homers for the second year in a row. He doesn't chase pitches out of the zone much at all — his chase rate last year was 22 percent according to Synergy Sports, which puts him well below the overall MLB rate, but when he does chase, he nearly always whiffs, and he also misses pitches in the zone more than you'd like. It's a decision issue rather than a mechanical one, but Williams performs so well in spite of the whiffs that changing his approach risks taking away some of the production as well. His 2024 season may also undersell his abilities, as he was hit on the hand by a pitch in June, missed just six days, and wasn't the same hitter afterward. He was hitting .294/.376/.552 with a 27.1 percent strikeout rate at the time of the injury, then hit .220/.324/.382 with a 29.4 percent strikeout rate after his return, which makes me suspect he was more hurt than he let on and just played through it. At worst, he's a shortstop with plus power, defense, and baserunning value who might just hit for a lower average because of the strikeouts. That's a 4-WAR player in a full season because of the value of the position, and I wouldn't rule out him getting beyond that with even tiny adjustments to his swing choices.

Photo: AP Images

TAMPA BAY RAYS

SS



9

Kristian Campbell

2B,OF

BOSTON RED SOX

Age: 23 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 191 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Campbell was my minor league player of the year for 2024 after he posted a .330/.439/.558 line across three levels, from High A through Triple A, in his first full year in pro ball. The Red Sox took him in the fourth round in 2023 as a redshirt freshman at Georgia Tech, betting on the makeup and the athleticism, and that good scouting work paid off as he not only hit at every level but did so while playing four positions — second, short, third, and center. He's a plus runner who's fast enough to play any of those spots, but his fringy arm probably limits him to second or center, with second his best position right now and in the long run as well. His swing has a little funk to it and he can get flat through contact, resulting in a 60 percent groundball rate in his brief time in Triple A, but he has an incredible eye at the plate and gets the bat to the ball consistently enough for hard contact. He does have some holes he'll have to work on, including four-seamers up and anything moving down and in under his hands or at his front hip, some of which may just be a function of his limited experience before getting to Triple A. He's also already gained 10-15 pounds of further muscle this winter, which could help with bat control and getting some more loft through contact. He could easily be a plus defender at second and at worst should post high OBPs with 20-30 steals and 50+ extra-base hits a year.



Teams



BOSTON RED SOX

2B

OF



10

Jordan Lawlar

SS

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 190 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 4

The 2024 season was a lost year for Lawlar, who tore a ligament in his right thumb in March, then hurt his left hamstring twice while on rehab assignments, limiting him to just 104 regular-season PA and keeping him out of the majors entirely after he debuted in 2023. He did go play for Licey in the Dominican Winter League and doubled his playing time for the calendar year, although he didn't hit as well there, leaving him probably no further along than he was this time last year. He's



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played in the hitters' havens of Amarillo and Reno in 2023. His swing is pretty short to the ball, with good follow-through that's on a lower plane for line drives, and his wrists are so strong that he's going to at least get to a high doubles total and probably still hit 15-20 homers at his peak. He didn't run much last year but has plus speed and good instincts on the bases, all of which could also help him if he ends up moving to center field in deference to a plus defender at shortstop. If left at the position, he could be a 50/55 defender, thanks to some strong work by Arizona's player development crew. I did note some concerns about him lunging out of his swing in 2023, but that's all on the back burner now as we wait to see the healthy version of him return this spring training. He's got a strong floor as an everyday guy, at short or center or maybe even second, but if he can stay healthy and push that power to more like 20 homers or 60+ extra-base hits, he'd be more of an All-Star.

Photo: Getty Images

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

SS



11

Jackson Jobe

RHP

DETROIT TIGERS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 190 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 29

Jobe is the best pitching prospect in the minors right now, although every candidate for that list has missed some time with injuries in the past two years, Jobe included, so buyer beware. He's got a four-pitch mix highlighted by a high-spin four-seamer that sits 94-98 when he's starting and an elite changeup, one of the best in the minors, that has tremendous late tumble, and that he can throw to both sides of the plate and uses against left- and right-handed batters. He's also got a sweeper-slider and a hard slider, both of which are more weapons against righties, although the sweeper is probably going to be the fourth pitch in his arsenal in the majors. He has cleaned up his delivery somewhat since 2023, so he should be better positioned to repeat it and throw both more strikes and better strikes going forward, as high walk rates have been one of the only negatives on his report to date — he walked 12.6 percent of batters he faced in Double A and Triple A last year, which is a giant gift to batters given how hard his stuff is to hit. He's also had a lot of non-arm injuries, missing the first half of 2023 with a lower back injury and two months of 2024 with a hamstring strain, so he's thrown just 252 2/3 total innings in three full pro seasons, including time in the AFL in 2023. That may point to a limited workload in 2025, especially since he's likely to spend most or all of it in the majors. It's No. 1 starter upside if he can go from 45 control to 55, which he certainly should given his athleticism and where the delivery stands now.

DETROIT TIGERS

RHP



12

Andrew Painter

RHP

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Age: 22 Ht: 6-7 Wt: 215 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 34

Painter was supposedly on the bubble to make the Phillies out of spring training in 2023, when he was still 19, but ended up with a UCL tear that required Tommy John surgery and wiped out that season and all of 2024 as well. He returned during the Arizona Fall League this offseason and threw 15 2/3 innings over six outings, still pumping 96-98 with good carry, showing a plus curveball and slider, with only the changeup lagging behind. He's built like a workhorse starter at



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back a bit. He's probably going to demolish Triple-A hitters this year and end up in the majors in some kind of relief or swing role as the Phillies manage his innings and try to develop his changeup and his command, especially coming off a layoff where he's likely to still have some rust. The healthy version of Painter should be a 200-inning, No. 1 starter.

Photo: Getty Images

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

RHP



13

Aidan Miller

SS

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Age: 21 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 205 Bats: R Throws: R





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Miller was the Phillies' 2023 first-round pick, coming off a senior season at J.W. Mitchell High School north of Clearwater that ended for him in early March when he broke a hamate bone. Between the injury and the fact that he was 19 at the draft, he slid down some teams' draft boards, which was the Phillies' windfall when they selected him with the 27th pick, as he's quickly become their best position-player prospect. Last season, he ripped through Low-A Clearwater with a .275/.401/.483 line in 39 games where he topped out at 108 mph, then started slow in High A before taking off in his last month and a half there, ending up with a .258/.353/.444 line before a final-week promotion to Double A, all very impressive for a player in his first full year in the minors. He has exclusively played shortstop since he signed, and contrary to predraft reports, he's played it really well, to the point where no one seems to question whether he can stay at the position. He's got very good instincts and shows above-average range in both directions, with a plus arm, playing defense like he wants to make every play. I saw him right after the promotion to High A and noted an overly aggressive approach and tendency to get on top of the ball; within about two weeks, he'd already adjusted and was seeing more pitches and driving the ball again. He's even a plus runner now who stole 23 bases in 28 attempts last year, likely adding even more value to his game. Miller has played just 122 games in pro ball, and won't turn 21 until June, so he's still got time on his side and I think more power to come. With Trea Turner's defense slipping — his Runs Above Average on defense hasn't been positive since 2021 — Miller might be the Phillies' future at shortstop, and sooner than you think.

Photo: Getty Images

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

SS



14

Matt Shaw

IF

CHICAGO CUBS

Age: 23 Ht: 5-9 Wt: 185 Bats: R Throws: R

2024 Ranking: 26

Shaw might be the Cubs' starting third baseman this April, and he's earned the shot after reaching Triple A in his first full pro season and hitting better as the season progressed. Shaw started 2024 in Double A, where he overcame some bad luck on balls in play to hit .279/.373/.468 with just a 17.5 percent strikeout rate, and then bumped up to Triple A and hit .298/.395/.534 with a 19.7 percent strikeout rate. He makes very consistent hard contact, averaging 89.3 mph in Triple A with a 90th percentile exit velocity of 106. He utilizes a very rotational and clean swing that tends to put the ball in the air. He's a shortstop by trade but has played second and third as well in the minors, a reflection of the Cubs' needs, with second base probably his best position and his third-base defense playable if not quite average yet. He's a 55 runner with excellent instincts and could probably handle center or left if needed. Shaw is one of the best bets to hit for a high average of any prospect in the minors, and should add another half-grade of power to get last year's 21 homers up into the 25-30 homer range in his best years. Depending on his position and how much he can improve his defense, he could be a 5-WAR player at his peak.

Photo: Imagin Images

15

Jeferson Quero

C

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

Age: 22 Ht: 5-11 Wt: 215 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 12

Quero was No. 12 on last winter's top 100, but had just one regular-season plate appearance in 2024 before he tore the labrum in his throwing shoulder, eventually undergoing surgery to repair it that ended his season. He's supposedly on track to be ready for spring training, so in theory he's still just as good of a prospect as he was a year ago, with his throwing probably the biggest question, although the loss of a year of at-bats also hurts just about any prospect this side of Chipper Jones. It was particularly a shame for Quero after he worked to improve his conditioning the prior year so he could hold up under a full year of catching duties. As a hitter, he shows a short



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mitigating it so far because he has strong hands and wrists to control the bat through the zone. He'll have to shake off the rust from the layoff, and then can resume working on recognizing changeups from lefties and spin from righties, both of which were vulnerabilities for him in 2023. Assuming his arm is OK — it was probably a 70 on pure arm strength, so he has some wiggle room — and the surgery hasn't adversely affected his swing, he still projects as a star who's a plus defender and a very strong hitter for the position.

Photo: AP Images

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

C



16

Dalton Rushing

C

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Age: 24 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 220 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 86

Rushing bounced back from a concussion he suffered in 2023 that impacted his performance, putting together a superb 2024 season that has him banging on the door of Chavez Ravine, hitting .271/.385/.512 between Double A and Triple A with solid defense and improved performance against velocity. Rushing has shown excellent zone awareness since his debut, with a chase rate of just 21 percent across both levels last year, and his hard-hit rate in Triple A was 44 percent, comparable to Alec Bohm and Kyle Tucker in the big leagues. He can overstride a little and get off balance, especially given how hard he swings, but when it's all synced up his swing is geared to produce hard contact in that ideal zone of angles off the bat for power. He's a solid receiver who threw out 30 percent of runners last year, and might be underrated as a defender because he's such a good hitter (something baseball fans who were online in the 1990s might know as Nichols' Law of Catcher Defense — a catcher's defensive reputation is inversely proportional to their offensive abilities). The Dodgers just gave Will Smith a mammoth contract, but he's also been banged up quite a bit the last two years, so Rushing's imminent arrival in the majors might be right on time. If he's even a .340 OBP, 20-homer guy, which seems reasonable given his production and underlying data from 2024, that would make him one of the most valuable catchers in baseball.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

C



17

Ethan Salas

C

SAN DIEGO PADRES

Age: 19 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 185 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 3

Salas was one of two 18-year-olds to start 2024 above Low A, along with Walcott. Salas' season was very good in context, but didn't quite live up to the hype or the scouting reports coming into the year. He hit .208/.288/.311 for High-A Fort Wayne, with just a 21 percent strikeout rate; his .256 BABIP does point to some bad luck, but his contact quality went backwards as well, and the easy power he showed in 2023 — or can show in BP — was absent in games most of the regular



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and earns praise for his work with pitchers and coaches, giving him a very high floor as a catcher who has shown great contact skills and at least shown plus power in BP. He won't turn 19 until June 1, so he has a ton of time to bring all of this together. However, at the very least there's a lot more skepticism about his probability to become a star among other scouts and execs than there was a year ago.

Photo: Getty Images

SAN DIEGO PADRES

C



18

Coby Mayo

3B

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Age: 23 Ht: 6-5 Wt: 230 Bats: R Throws: R





Teams •••



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2024 Ranking: 27

The Orioles went under-slot with their top pick in the abbreviated 2020 draft so they could go over slot for two players in the fourth and fifth rounds, and Mayo, the fourth-rounder, has more than justified their approach, as he's already reached the majors at age 22 after hitting well at every stop in the minors. Mayo spent most of 2024 in Triple A, hitting .287/.364/.562 there with 22 homers in just 89 games around an IL stint (he broke a rib trying to catch a foul ball). His batted-ball data from that level was just as impressive — his exit velocity topped out at 114.9 mph, his 90th percentile EV was 107.2 mph, and his hard-hit rate was 41 percent, all of which would be above the major-league medians for those figures. His Barrel rate was over 12 percent, which would have ranked in the top 50 had he done it in the big leagues. He's 6-5 and does have long levers so his swing can get big, some of which is the natural tradeoff for the kind of power he displays, but may also point to a longer adjustment period in the majors as pitchers exploit that length. He hasn't swung and missed excessively in the minors, however, and he has made small adjustments to his approach and his mechanics as he's moved up, so there's every reason to think he'll do so in the majors. He's played third and first in pro ball and has made himself into a capable defender at the hot corner, but first base will always be the easiest option — or possibly right field, as he has plenty of arm and moves well enough for a corner outfield spot. His bat looks like it'll play anywhere, with 30-35 homer upside and a good enough plan at the plate to eventually get to league-average or better OBPs.

Photo: Getty Images

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

3B



19

Bubba Chandler

RHP

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

Age: 22 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 200 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 48

Chandler was part of the Pirates' 2021 draft class, where they took Henry Davis with the first pick and went well under slot so they could sign several other first-round talents to over-slot deals — with Chandler by far the best of the group to date. The former quarterback-shortstop-pitcher is now exclusively on the mound, and 2024 was a big step forward for him, as he moved through Double A to Triple A and cut his walk rate from 10.9 percent in 2023 to 8.6 percent across all of last year. Chandler has one of the best four-seamers in the minors, 94-99 with exceptional shape and life, giving it the illusion of rise, and hitters just can't do anything with it: Triple-A batters whiffed on it 27 percent of the time they swung, and when they did hit it they were more likely to go the other way because they couldn't pull it. He's mostly fastball-slider-changeup now, barely using the curveball, so he can focus on improving just one breaking ball. It'll probably always be his third-best pitch, but it was effective against righties last year, and his changeup is still a plus pitch for him that he can use against both sides. The Pirates let him work a little deeper into games in 2024 and he showed no loss of stuff, while this was the second year in a row that he pitched a full season, so he should be ready to step into the big-league rotation by midyear. He only became a full-time pitcher in 2023, so he may still have more growth ahead of him on the mound than the typical 22-year-old, and he's every bit the athlete you'd expect from someone who was committed to Clemson for two sports. Even if the slider is never more than a fringe-



Teams

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Photo: AP Images

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

RHP



20

Noah Schultz

LHP

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Age: 21 Ht: 6-9 Wt: 220 Bats: L Throws: L

**2024 Ranking:** 79

Schultz has gone from barely pitching as a senior at Oswego East High School outside Chicago as he was dealing with mono to becoming the best left-handed pitching prospect in baseball just two



Teams •••



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striking out 32 percent of batters he faced and posting a 1.48 ERA. He's 6-9 and really uses the height to his advantage, coming at hitters from a low slot with good extension so that hitters make weak contact on his fastball even though it doesn't miss many bats. He'll sit 93-96 as a starter, with high spin rates but not a ton of life to it, a plus-plus slider as his out pitch, along with a high-spin curveball and perhaps too-firm changeup, although so far he's had no issues with platoon splits. He's going to earn comparisons to Chris Sale as another lanky low-slot lefty, but he's a different animal; he might never miss bats at the same rate, but will generate a lot of weak contact and keep the ball in the park instead. As long as he stays healthy — and that's not guaranteed, as the history of 6-9 or taller pitchers is pretty grim — he's going to have a long run of giving hitters nightmares as a top-end starter.

Photo: AP Images

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

LHP



21

Emmanuel Rodriguez

OF

MINNESOTA TWINS

Age: 22 Ht: 5-11 Wt: 210 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: 47

Rodriguez had a typical year for himself — he walked and struck out a lot, made very hard contact, and got hurt. In 47 games total across four levels, he hit .280/.459/.567 with a 24.4 percent walk rate and 29.7 percent strikeout rate, hitting nine homers in that span, or roughly a 31-homer pace. He injured his right thumb while stealing a base in April, tried to come back and play through it, but reinjured it in September and ended up having a “cleanup procedure” on it after the season. He makes extremely hard contact when he’s healthy, though. Even in his brief time in Triple A, he put 13 balls in play, peaking at 114.6 mph and averaging 90.1. And his knowledge of the strike zone is real; he even brought his chase rate down from about 14 percent last year to 11 percent this year and just 8 percent in his brief time in Triple A. Rodriguez calmed down his leg kick a little bit last year, although it doesn’t seem to have made much difference in his results, and he still probably needs to swing more often at pitches in the zone. If he stays in centerfield, with this power and patience he could be a better Mike Cameron (46.7 career WAR, so don’t scoff). It’s more likely Rodriguez ends up in right field, where his unusual profile as a hitter will still make him an above-average regular, and there’s the potential for more if he gets a little more aggressive at the plate — and can stay on the field for a full season.

MINNESOTA TWINS

OF



22

Jasson Domínguez

OF

NEW YORK YANKEES

Age: 22 Ht: 5-9 Wt: 190 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 21

Domínguez may never quite be the Mickey Mantle-esque star that the earliest hype around him indicated, but he's going to be a very good player — more so if the Yankees just leave him in center field and let him hit. Signed for a \$5 million bonus as a 16-year-old in 2019, Domínguez was very physically mature for his age then, and showed plus power early on in his career as a result. He's also a 70 runner and has 30/30 upside if he hits enough to get to it, and so far, he has



Teams



sides of the plate, but has always been better from the left side and has struck out 29.3 percent of the time when batting right-handed over the last two years, one thing that bears watching as he moves to the majors. He's a natural center fielder and a good one, with range from that plus speed along with solid instincts to read balls off the bat. There's some hit tool risk, especially against southpaws, and he doesn't have the same room for physical projection that most prospects his age still do. I see enough present strength and power — his EV50 in Triple A was 101.6 mph, which would have ranked fourth on the Yankees last year — to project him as a 25-30 homer guy as is, and with the speed and defense that still makes him a well above-average regular and occasional All-Star.

Photo: Getty Images

NEW YORK YANKEES

OF



23

Kevin McGonigle

2B

DETROIT TIGERS

Age: 20 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 187 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

McGonigle was the Tigers' second pick in 2023, but took home a first-round bonus to buy him away from a scholarship to Auburn, and his pro debut made that look like a screaming bargain for Detroit. (It helps that the current draft bonus system wildly undervalues the best players.) His 2024 was bookended by injuries, but after recovering from a hamstring strain, he hit .326/.407/.470 in his 60-game stint in Low A, then got off to a solid start in High A before he broke the hamate bone in his right hand, ending his season. The middle infielder from a small private school outside of Philadelphia has a very clean, simple swing with good hip rotation to drive the ball to the gaps, and the excellent ball-strike recognition he showed as an amateur has certainly carried over — he walked more than he struck out at Low A and at High A, with 11 walks and just four strikeouts in 14 games at the latter stop. He's played short and second in pro ball but doesn't have the range or quickness for shortstop, profiling much better at second and perhaps ending up a 55 defender there. If there's a knock on his game, it's that he's not as projectable physically as most of the guys ahead of him on this list; he makes plenty of hard contact now, but there's not much room on his 5-10-ish frame to get stronger, so any further power gains (he had five homers in 74 games, although the Florida State League is bad for power hitters) will have to come from swing tweaks. He's probably going to have a very long career as an above-average regular who ranks among the league leaders in OBP with just average or fringy power and solid

Photo: Imagin Images

DETROIT TIGERS

2B



24

Felnin Celesten

SS

SEATTLE MARINERS

Age: 19 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 175 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Celesten might be a superstar, if he can stay on the field and make the most of his prodigious



Teams



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(skipping the DSL) to start 2024 and hit .352/.431/.568, which put him in the top 10 in the league in average and slugging among all players with at least 100 PA. He missed a month with wrist pain, returned for one game in late July, and then shut it down, eventually undergoing surgery to repair a broken hamate bone. The team said it was an old injury, so he did all that at the plate while playing through an injury that typically saps a ton of power from a hitter. He's a true switch-hitter with plus speed, an above-average to plus arm, and good actions at shortstop, lagging behind in some of the less tangible aspects like his internal clock and getting better reads off the bat. If he has the work ethic to match his tools, he's going to be a superstar.

Photo: AP Images

SEATTLE MARINERS SS



25

Travis Bazzana

2B

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 199 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Bazzana was the first pick in the 2024 draft out of Oregon State, where the Australian infielder had starred for three seasons as the Beavers' second baseman, finishing with a .407/.568/.911 line as a junior. Cleveland sent him right to High A, where he struggled a little out of the gate, enduring a five-game hitless stretch in his second week there before warming up for his last month-plus at the level and ending with a .238/.369/.396 line in his pro debut. He's a very polished WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) player, offering little in the way of physical projection but also earning plaudits everywhere for his acumen for the game, leading evaluators to believe he will be able to make adjustments as he faces better pitching. He has an odd start to his swing with the bat back behind his rear shoulder and pointing down, but he's ready when it matters and has a short path to the ball once his hands get started. He showed incredible plate discipline in college and most of that carried over into the minors, as he still didn't chase much (22 percent) and only struggled against sliders in that brief stint, particularly left on left. Bazzana is limited to second base or possibly left field. Cleveland's trade of Andrés Giménez clears the keystone for him, and there's every reason to expect him to see the majors some time this year given his advanced approach and present power/strength. Even if he's just average on defense,

Photo: AP Images

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS 2B



26

Josue De Paula

OF,1B

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 185 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: 25

De Paula is one of the best pure offensive prospects in the minors right now, with an incredible approach at the plate that resulted in a .268/.404/.405 line between Low A and High A with 84



Teams

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doubles, three triples), as he doesn't get the ball in the air as often as you'd like just yet. He's a 40 runner and isn't a great defender anywhere, so the hope is he ends up a 45 defender in an outfield corner, while the fear is he ends up at first base or at DH. The bat will play anywhere, especially if his power emerges with age and more muscle on his 6-3 frame, particularly in his wrists and forearms, allowing him to control the bat head better through contact to hit the ball on a line. I'm betting on that happening given his age, physique, and exceptional command of the strike zone.

Photo: AP Images

LOS ANGELES DODGERS OF 1B



27

Drake Baldwin

C ATLANTA

Age: 24 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 210 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Baldwin is such a good defender behind the plate that he's almost certainly going to be someone's everyday catcher, and if his raw power keeps showing up in games as it did after a midseason promotion to Triple A, he's going to make some All-Star teams. He was Atlanta's third-round pick in 2022 out of Missouri State, where he wasn't a full-time player until his draft year, and he's improved substantially as a hitter since entering pro ball, loosening up at the plate to try to get to more of that plus power. He had a slow start in Double A but Atlanta promoted him to Gwinnett in early June, after which he took off, hitting .298/.407/.484 at the higher level with 12 homers in 72 games. He hits the ball extremely hard — his average exit velocity in Triple A was 92 mph, his EV50 was 103, and his 90th percentile EV was 107 — so there's every reason to think the power is real. He whistles the bat through the zone with excellent bat speed, and even with a pretty high starting position he hasn't had trouble getting to pitches at the bottom of the strike zone so far. He's an outstanding blocker and receiver with plus arm strength but just fringy accuracy so far, leading to a career 20 percent caught stealing rate in the minors. A 20-homer catcher with plus defense will rank among the best backstops in the majors, and Baldwin looks like he can be at least that, and probably will debut this year.

ATLANTA

C



28

Marcelo Mayer

SS

BOSTON RED SOX

Age: 22 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 188 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 8

Mayer looked like he was on track to be the top prospect in baseball around midyear, but he got hurt yet again, with his last game in 2024 coming on July 30, further underscoring his history of missing time with injuries. He was in the midst of a bounce-back season at the plate, returning to Double A and hitting .307/.370/.480 there while cutting his strikeout rate from 26 percent to just under 20 percent, when the injury struck, although he was promoted on paper to Triple A after he



Teams



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arm and hands to be a plus defender, flashing that range at times but needing to be more consistent on routine plays. He murders fastballs, with the bat speed to catch up to top-end velocity, while offspeed stuff gave him more trouble than ever in 2024. It may be mechanical, as he's locking his front knee very early and trying to hit with a completely firm front side, leaving him vulnerable to stuff down at or below his knees; if that's the issue, it's also fixable, and he hasn't always hit this way. More concerning is that Mayer has yet to play in 100 games in a pro season, topping out at 91 in 2022, missing time due to a lumbar strain (2024), shoulder inflammation (2023), a sprained wrist (2022), and "back issues" (2022). He's 22 now and still has superstar potential — a 30-homer shortstop with plus defense and what should be above-average OBPs is going to be the best player on his team in most cases. He has to show he can play 140 games in a year and get back to hitting offspeed stuff to be that kind of prospect again.

Photo: Getty Images

BOSTON RED SOX SS



29

Bryce Eldridge

1B

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-7 Wt: 223 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 85

Eldridge played as much as any prospect in 2024, with 565 total plate appearances across four levels of the minors and a stint in the Arizona Fall League, where he was understandably gassed. He performed well at the first three stops as a 19-year-old in his first full pro season. He was a two-way player in high school who had arm strength as a pitcher but no breaking ball to speak of, so while the Giants sort of said he'd continue to pitch when they drafted him, everyone wised up and told him to go hit. He's 6-7 but has a short swing for someone that size, one that's far more geared towards contact than the kind of big-fly, loft-oriented swing you might expect from such a tall hitter, and he kept his strikeout rate to just 25 percent until he got to Triple A, which is always the biggest concern with any hitter his height (or taller). He looks like he'll be a huge power hitter, but while he makes hard contact, I'm expecting higher averages and doubles totals but a more modest home run output in the 20-25 homer range. He has played some right field but it's apparently an Eldridge horror show out there, so first base it will be. He still has work to do there, but there's really nothing stopping him from becoming at least a 55 defender at the position, and he does give fielders a big target for their throws. The Giants pushed him very hard last year, so 2025 should be a consolidation year for him, where perhaps he starts in Double A and gets a long run there before moving up to the hitter-friendly PCL. He's their next franchise player, but needs

Photo: Getty Images

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

1B



30

Brandon Sproat

RHP

NEW YORK METS

Age: 24 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 215 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

The Mets wanted Sproat so badly, they drafted him twice. He decided not to sign in 2022, choosing instead to return to Florida to try to improve his draft stock, and he did, going a round



Teams



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ERA on the season and 110 Ks with 31 walks in 87 2/3 innings when he was promoted to Triple-A Syracuse. He struggled in seven starts there, allowing 36 hits, including seven homers, in just 28 innings, as his fringy command came back to bite him, with too many fastballs left about belt-high and more experienced hitters better able to pick up some of his offspeed stuff. He works heavily off a four-seamer that's been up to 99-100 and sits 96-97, while his best pitch is a slider that's above-average to plus depending on the day; he'll throw a decent change, a curve, and a two-seamer as well. It'll always be control over command, as he's so aggressive that it's hard to foresee him ever toning it down enough to be precise with his locations. He'll have to do a little bit of refinement to make the last leap to the majors, as hitters will hit your stuff, no matter how good it is, if you put it on a tee for them. He has some similarities to Edwin Jackson, a huge stuff guy who was more of a No. 4 starter for most of his career, although I think Sproat has better control than Jackson did at the same age.

Photo: Imagin Images

NEW YORK METS RHP



31

Leodalis De Vries

SS

SAN DIEGO PADRES

Age: 18 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 183 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

De Vries signed last January for \$4.2 million, the second-biggest bonus in the 2024 international free agent class, and the Padres were unusually aggressive with him — who am I kidding, they always do this — in sending him not to the DSL, not to the Arizona League, but to Low A, making him the only 17-year-old regular anywhere in full-season ball last year. He more than held his own, hitting .237/.361/.441 with a very respectable 23.3 percent strikeout rate that was slightly better than the Cal League average. He has a real knack for centering the ball and as he gets stronger his batting average is going to climb very quickly, since he already has the contact skills. He knows the strike zone extremely well for someone so young, and he rarely misses fastballs; he had more trouble with other pitch types, unsurprising given his complete lack of prior experience anywhere in pro ball, but didn't panic with two strikes and only swung and missed slightly more often in those spots. His regular season ended in mid-August when he strained his right shoulder on a diving play, but in a sign that the injury wasn't too serious, the Padres sent him to the Arizona Fall League, where he was, of course, the youngest player. He turned 18 in October, so he's younger than some high school players who'll be drafted on Day 1 this upcoming July. De Vries was already showing signs of adjustments when he got hurt, cutting his whiff and chase rates on various pitch types in the second half, and he has barely begun to grow into his 6-2 (actual height) frame. He's got a chance to stick at shortstop, he's a plus runner, and he might end up with 20+

Photo: AP Images

SAN DIEGO PADRES SS



32

JJ Wetherholt

SS

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

Age: 22 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 190 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Wetherholt might have gone No. 1 in last year's draft had he had a full, healthy spring for West Virginia, but a hamstring injury limited him to 36 games for the Mountaineers, just 27 of them in



Teams

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average and high contact rates, hitting .449/.517/.787 as a sophomore and then .331/.472/.589 despite clearly playing hurt for some of his junior year. He's not very physical, but makes plenty of hard contact — his hard-hit rate in Low A after the draft was 55 percent, exactly the same as his hard-hit rate from the spring, and he topped out at 109 mph in Palm Beach — thanks to a short, efficient swing that gets the most from his lower half (when his lower half is intact). He moved to shortstop from second and third as a junior, but of course never played it at full strength after the first weekend, so while the safe bet is that he ends up at second base, he hasn't had a chance to show much at shortstop yet. Regardless of his position, his swing mechanics and his approach at the plate point to high averages and a lot of doubles power, enough to make him a long-time regular who might challenge for some batting titles.

Photo: Getty Images

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

SS



33

Kevin Alcantara

OF

CHICAGO CUBS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-6 Wt: 188 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 28

“The Jaguar” made his big-league debut in September, just over three years after the Cubs acquired him from the Yankees for Anthony Rizzo in a trade that worked out well for both clubs. Alcántara started slowly in 2024 and hit the injured list in early June with an injury to his left shoulder, but after he returned, he took off at the plate, hitting .292/.388/.459 between Double A and Triple A in 63 games before the callup. He’s 6-6 and lanky, with a ton of room to keep filling out and adding power beyond what he already shows — nearly half of his balls in play in Triple A were hard-hit (95 mph or better exit velocities) — while he’s still developing the wrist and forearm strength to stay on plane through contact and get the ball in the air more, with a 51.7 percent groundball rate in the minors last year. Alcántara has worked his way up to become a plus defender in center as he’s improved his focus and his reads on balls off the bat. He’s not ready for the majors yet, between the tendency to get on top of the ball and some real trouble with sliders once he reached Triple A (he whiffed at just over half of the ones he swung at there), but with his plus defense and speed and the 30-40 homer potential, he has the most upside of anyone in the Cubs system.

Photo: Getty Images

34

Charlie Condon

OF

COLORADO ROCKIES

Age: 22 Ht: 6-6 Wt: 216 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Condon was the No. 1 player on my predraft rankings last year and went to Colorado with the third pick, but his post-draft performance couldn't have differed more from what he did in the spring for Georgia. Condon won the Golden Spikes Award with a .433/.556/1.009 line for the Dawgs, hitting 37 homers in 60 games, setting the school's career home run record and the NCAA's single-season record since they switched to BBCOR bats. In 109 PA for High-A Spokane, however, Condon hit .180/.248/.270, struck out 34 times (31.1 percent), and walked just four times. Pitchers saw a 6-6 hitter with long levers in the box and went after him hard in with fastballs and



Teams

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111.8 mph, and he did adjust in the spring when pitchers went after him with breaking stuff, forcing them to come back to the fastballs on which he feasted. He's played third base and all over the outfield, playing passably at the hot corner and in center, but the broad consensus is that he's going to end up in right given his frame and likely eventual size. He did have a lingering hand injury when he first signed that may have affected him at the plate, but that can't explain away all of the struggles. Perhaps he was pressing; perhaps he just hadn't seen breaking stuff of that quality before; perhaps it's just a tiny sample. I don't think his ceiling has changed at all — he's a 30-homer bat with the kind of contact quality that leads to high BABIPs and averages, and he should be a plus defender in an outfield corner — but there's more uncertainty here than there was on draft day.

Photo: AP Images

COLORADO ROCKIES OF



35

Nick Kurtz

1B

ATHLETICS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-5 Wt: 240 Bats: L Throws: L

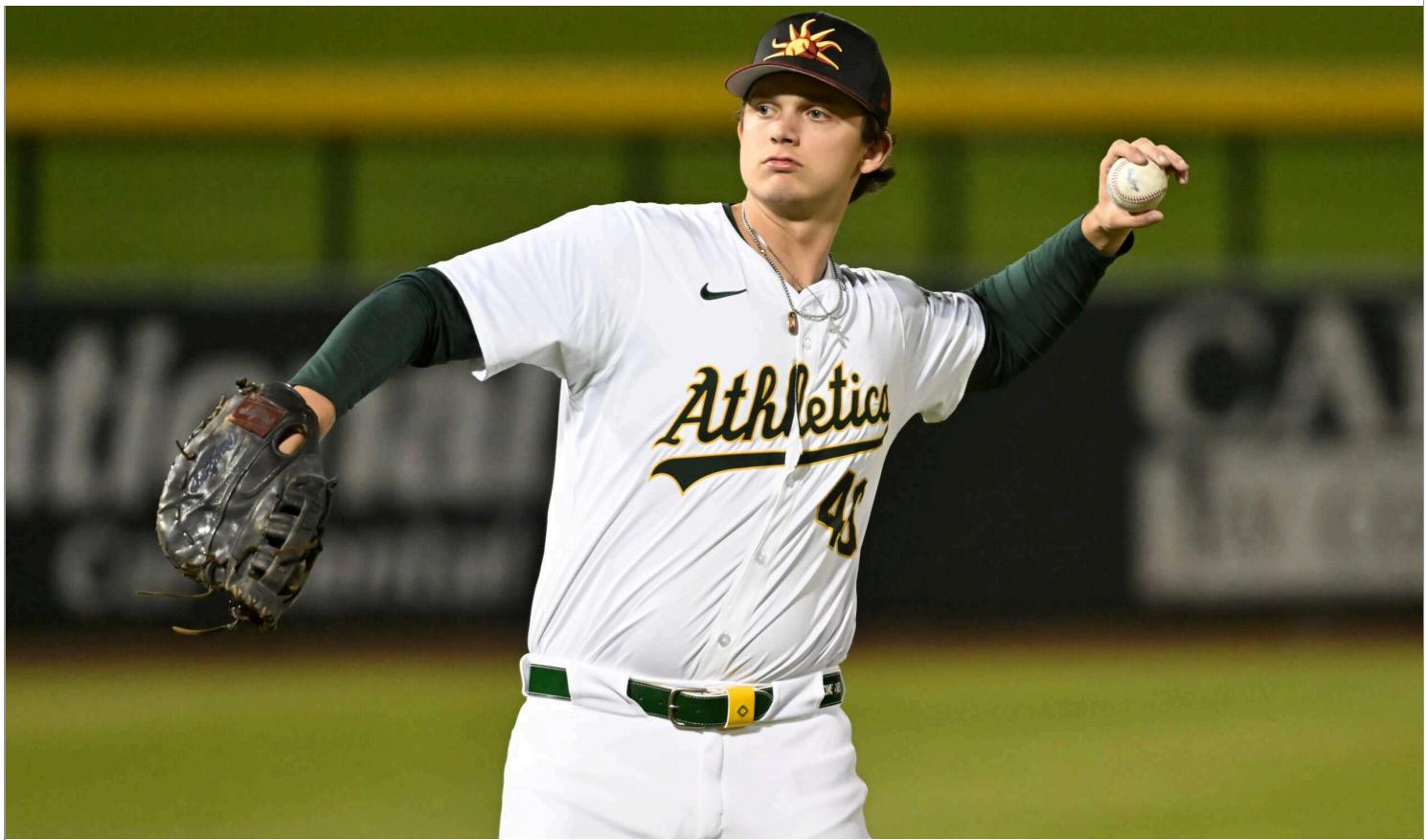


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2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Kurtz was the best hitter in a loaded Wake Forest lineup last spring, leading the team formerly known as the Oakland A's to take him with the No. 4 pick, after which he continued to rake in his pro debut. He hit .368/.520/.763 in 50 PA between High A and Double A, hurt his hamstring, then hit .353/.450/.608 in 60 more PA in the Arizona Fall League. He's limited to first base — the horror — so he needs to hit, but so far he's hit everywhere, and it's especially promising that he's been swinging the bat more since he signed, as he walked a ton in college (78 times last spring) and could look passive at the plate. He's up from swinging 33 percent of the time in college to 38 percent in the minors, and that'll probably increase a little more as pitchers realize just how good his ball/strike recognition is. When he does swing, he makes extremely hard contact; his 90th percentile exit velocity at Wake Forest was over 111 mph, and he continued to hit the ball hard in his brief time in the minors. There's a good chance for 30-homer power with 70-80 walks or more per season, and that's going to make him a star and possibly the best player in the Sacra ... er, the Athletics lineup.

Photo: Getty Images

36

Demetrio Crisantes

2B,1B

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 178 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Arizona took Crisantes in the seventh round in 2022 out of Nogales (Ariz.) High School, just a few minutes from the U.S.-Mexico border, but the infielder didn't debut until 2023 or play a game in the field until 2024 after he underwent two Tommy John surgeries — the second to repair the first — as a high schooler. Through 121 games in the minors, however, he's hit .342/.427/.486 with a really mature approach and enough hard contact to project him to a 60 or better hit tool in the majors. It's a really simple, clean swing with a little loft in its finish, producing a 27.4 percent line-drive rate in 2024, and he's strong enough already for well above-average contact quality for a



Teams

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second base, as he's athletic enough for the position and it doesn't require a ton from his arm, while he lacks the range for short or the twitchiness for third. There's always a lot of risk in prospects whose value is primarily tied up in their hit tool — not to be too obvious, but if they don't hit for high averages, they have nothing to fall back on — which is why Crisantes isn't even higher on this list. Everything about Crisantes, from the swing to the batted-ball data to the performance, says he's going to hit a ton.

Photo: AP Images

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

2B 1B



37

Kyle Teel

C

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Age: 23 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 190 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 54

Teel was part of the four-player package that Boston sent to the White Sox for lefty Garrett Crochet, and right now he seems like the best bet to be Chicago's primary catcher this year after he finished 2024 in Triple A. The Red Sox 2023 first-round pick out of Virginia, Teel started his first full pro season in Double A, hit .299/.390/.462, then moved up to Triple A with Kristian Campbell and hit .255/.374/.343 in 28 games at that last stop. He's an excellent athlete who moves very well behind the plate and has a plus arm, with solid-average speed that's more evident underway than out of the box. He's got quick hands at the plate and a short path to the ball with a little loft in his finish, way more likely to hit for average than for power given his good-not-great contact quality and the way his swing works. He has had some trouble with lefties in pro ball, striking out 31 percent of the time he's faced them in only about 130 PA, and he'll need more reps against southpaws to avoid becoming a platoon player. His glove is ready, and his bat is at least ready enough to make contact against righties. The White Sox have the luxury of time to let him continue to develop in the majors and hope he reaches his upside of a solid-average or better regular behind the plate.

Photo: AP Images

38

Braden Montgomery

OF

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Age: 22 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 220 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Montgomery was No. 4 on my predraft board last year, but slipped to the No. 12 pick after he broke his ankle in Texas A&M's Super Regional series in June. The Red Sox drafted him, although that will become a point of trivia since he never played a single game for Boston before they traded him this offseason to the White Sox in the Garrett Crochet deal, giving Chicago two of the top six players from my 2024 draft board along with their own first-round pick, lefty Hagen Smith. Montgomery is a switch-hitter with power both ways, hitting much, much better from the left side, making consistently hard contact — his hard-hit rate last spring for Texas A&M was a nice 69



Teams ...



3

plus-plus arm and is at least a 55 defender in right. The two big questions around Montgomery are whether the ankle injury will affect him at all going forward and whether he should give up hitting right-handed, as he struck out 29 percent of the time that way last spring with just a .227/.395/.485 line (versus .355/.465/.819 left-handed). It's 30-homer upside with strong defense and the hard contact to keep his batting average above the median as long as he comes back at 100 percent.

Photo: Imagin Images

CHICAGO WHITE SOX OF

39 Tink Hence

RHP ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 195 Bats: R Throws: R

**2024 Ranking:** 73

Hence would be one of the absolute best pitching prospects in baseball if he showed he could stay on the mound for a full season of work, but the 2020 draftee has yet to reach 100 innings in any one season — just pitching extremely well when he is on the mound. He's small, listed at 6-1, 195, but very, very athletic, and his arm is electric. He'll touch 98 and sit 94-95 as a starter with a 70 changeup and a slider that's at least average and plays up because it's a different look and shape than the other two pitches. He's never had a serious arm injury, missing most of 2021 with shoulder discomfort that never required surgery, losing about a month of 2024 with some kind of strain or pull in his side. He did go 90+ pitches in several starts for the first time last year, and posted his best strikeout rate (34.1 percent) and ERA (2.71) of any stint he's had in full-season ball. He might be a guy who pitches like a No. 1 or a No. 2 but only does so on the workload of a swingman or a back-end starter, although I never like to underestimate a player who's this athletic.

Photo: Getty Images

40

Chase Burns

RHP

CINCINNATI REDS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 210 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Burns was the No. 2 pick in the 2024 draft and the first pitcher taken, coming off a dominant spring at Wake Forest that saw him strike out more than 40 percent of opposing batters. His fastball has been up to 100 and sits 96-98 with big induced vertical break, and his slider is a 70 with late, tight break along both axes. College hitters couldn't touch the slider, whiffing two-thirds of the time they tried (so the lesson is never try). He has a 55 curveball and a straight changeup with some tumble to it that is his weakest pitch, probably his main area for work going forward now that he's in pro ball. He has some effort to his delivery, including a slight head-snap, but so



Teams

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pitcher, Rhett Lowder, in reaching the majors inside of 15 months of his draft day.

Photo: Imagn Images

CINCINNATI REDS

RHP



41

Justin Crawford

OF

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Age: 21 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 188 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 43

Crawford held serve last year, continuing to hit the ball hard and get on base at a high clip (.360



Teams



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defender in centerfield and an 80 runner who swiped 42 bags in 51 attempts last year and probably could steal 60 without breaking a sweat. He overstrides at the plate, so he's frequently off-balance, and doesn't load his hands at all from a high setup, resulting in a bat path that often has him coming down towards the zone. Some of this is a matter of strength, as Crawford was all projection when the Phillies drafted him in the first round in 2022, and he still has a lot of physical growth ahead of him, but some is mechanical and it's time for him to make some real adjustments to get in better position to drive the ball. He's going to have plus raw power, and that combined with elite defense and speed will make him an impact player for a long time if he can change his swing to get that raw power into games.

Photo: Getty Images

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

OF



42

Franklin Arias

SS

BOSTON RED SOX

Age: 19 Ht: 5-11 Wt: 170 Bats: R Throws: R



Teams



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2024 Ranking: Unranked

Arias destroyed the Florida Complex League last season as an 18-year-old, hitting .355/.471/.584 to win MVP honors and earn a bump up to Low A, where he more than held his own with a .257/.331/.378 line and just a 17.4 percent strikeout rate. He's got tools and athleticism to spare, showing excellent bat speed and wrist strength already, along with a fantastic swing that has great rhythm to it and lets him get his lower half involved for more power. He's a true shortstop with soft hands and solid instincts already, showing a plus arm and above-average speed on both sides of the ball. Arias just turned 19 in November and probably gets to High A at some point this year, given how good his contact skills are already. He has the upside of a plus defender at short with above-average OBP and 20 homers a year, with the only major risk just his age and the distance he has to travel to get to the majors.

Photo: Getty Images

BOSTON RED SOX SS



3B

HOUSTON ASTROS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 224 Bats: R Throws: R

**2024 Ranking:** Ineligible

Smith was a draft-eligible sophomore last year who reworked his swing and his body to surge to a .387/.488/.654 line in his sophomore year at Florida State, raising his average by over 100 points, and landing with the Cubs at the No. 13 pick. He then had the best pro debut of any prospect in the draft, hitting .313/.396/.609 across three levels and finishing up in Double A. That ended his Cubs career, as they traded him to Houston in the Kyle Tucker deal this offseason, immediately making him the Astros' No. 1 prospect. Smith's swing gets the bat to the zone quickly, and he makes a lot of very hard contact, topping out over 115 mph in the spring for Florida State, and the Cubs already managed to get him to lift the ball more often to turn that loud contact into more power. He's only played third base since signing and that's his best long-term outcome; that seemed like wishful thinking as recently as 2023, but his improved conditioning gives him a chance to stay there, with first base or right field also possibilities. He looks like he can flat-out

Photo: AP Images

HOUSTON ASTROS 3B



44

Cooper Pratt

SS

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 195 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

The Brewers went over slot in the sixth round in 2023 to sign Pratt, who was 40th on my draft board (so an early second round talent), and his first full season was a rousing success. Pratt



Teams



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remember. He hit .295/.394/.395 in Low A last year, with a 12.2 percent walk rate and just an 18.3 percent strikeout rate in a league where the overall strikeout rate was 25.3 percent. He moved up to High-A Wisconsin for the playoff run and had a harder time ... except that he launched five homers in 23 games there, more than he had hit in 73 games in Low A. There's power in there, maybe 15-20 homers a year, although even if he's more in the 10-12 category, plus defense and really strong on-base skills will make him a solid or better regular at shortstop. If his power output does keep improving as he gets a little older and stronger, he's got a chance to be a 4-5 win player.

Photo: Imagn Images

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

SS



45

Cole Young

SS

SEATTLE MARINERS

Age: 21 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 180 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 46

Young had another very solid year at the plate while being young for his level, hitting .271/.369/.390 as a 20-year-old in Double A, all comfortably above the averages for the Texas League (.240/.327/.374), even though he was the fourth-youngest regular at the level. He's always been an advanced hitter for his age with exceptional feel for contact; data from Synergy Sports show him with a whiff rate of just 19 percent last year, and nothing over 22 percent on any of the big four pitch types. His swing is handsy and doesn't generate much power, although he does make hard enough contact to keep his average up, and gets the ball in the air enough to maybe see him as a 40-doubles, 10-homer guy in the majors. He can play shortstop but probably will end up superseded by a plus defender, while he's played extremely well at second and might be a plus defender himself at that spot. He's a no-doubt big leaguer, with the floor of a very good platoon infielder who can play multiple spots but maybe sits against good lefties, and a strong probability that he's at least a solid-average regular at one of the two middle infield positions.

Photo: Modesto Nuts

46 ➤

Moises Ballesteros

C

CHICAGO CUBS

Age: 21 Ht: 5-8 Wt: 195 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Ballesteros is one of the best pure hitters in the minors, and if you really believe he can catch, he's a top 20ish prospect — but his body is less than ideal for the position and he's probably going to end up somewhere else. Ballesteros played all of 2024 at age 20 and hit well at three stops, .299/.372/.495 in Double A, .281/.340/.454 in Triple A, and then .317/.376/.557 in 19 games in the Arizona Fall League. He doesn't miss pitches in the zone, although to be fair, his strike zone isn't very big, but does get overly aggressive with two strikes and expands the zone significantly. He may always just be a "swing first, ask questions later" hitter, since he can make contact with so



Teams

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catching duties, as he's not very agile behind the plate, and his just-average arm doesn't help matters. He could be an occasional backstop who mostly handles first base and/or DH, gaining a lot of value from the games he does catch and from what should be consistently high batting averages with 15-20 homers a year.

Photo: AP Images

CHICAGO CUBS

C



47

Thayron Liranzo

C

DETROIT TIGERS

Age: 21 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 195 Bats: S Throws: R





Teams

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Detroit picked up Liranzo along with Trey Sweeney in the trade that sent Jack Flaherty to the Dodgers, only to go on an improbable run to the playoffs after the deadline, which seems like a win-win to me. Liranzo started the year slowly for High-A Great Lakes, and was hitting .220/.344/.356 at the time of the deal, but then somewhat inexplicably took off with the change of scenery — he hit .315/.470/.562 in 26 games for the Tigers' affiliate in West Michigan, then went to the AFL and hit .375/.492/.667 in 15 more games, walking more than he struck out at both spots. He's pretty mobile behind the plate and has a 70 arm, needing to work more on receiving to remain a full-time catcher. His bat is special — he's got a quiet, easy swing that still produces plus raw power because he's so strong to begin with, and his ball/strike recognition is excellent already. He had no trouble adjusting to offspeed stuff in the AFL, in contrast to much of the regular season where he ran into some difficulty with sliders and changeups. He was on the younger side for High A at age 20 and probably should spend all of this year in Double A to work on his catching and keep tightening up that pitch recognition. It's 25-homer, .350+ OBP upside in a switch-hitter, and if he's even a 45 catcher, he'll be a 4-5 win player in his peak years.

Photo: Getty Images

DETROIT TIGERS

C



48

Rhett Lowder

RHP

CINCINNATI REDS

Age: 23 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 200 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 60

Lowder reached the majors just over a year after the Reds took him with the No. 7 pick out of Wake Forest, showing three pitches with a ton of movement albeit a little less velocity than he had shown in college. His best pitch as an amateur was his changeup, which is hard to pick up out of his hand and has both fading and tumbling action to it, but it was actually less effective at generating whiffs than his 92-95 mph four-seamer or his high-spin slider in his six big-league starts, even just against lefties. All three of his pitches should be above-average, with the run helping the fastball play up and sharp downward break to the slider, so it was surprising that he gave up so much contact, with a 41 percent hard-hit rate, in his debut. Even with that high contact rate, Lowder was very lucky in the majors, with a 1.17 ERA but a 3.10 FIP, and even that latter figure doesn't adjust for the improbability of allowing 0 homers in 30 innings. He's major-league ready and probably a league-average starter given his current velocity and what looks like 55 control and maybe 45 command, with of course the chance to get beyond that if he starts working less in the heart of the zone with his fastballs. (You may not give a damn, but he's the first player named Rhett in big-league history.)

Photo: Imagin Images

49

Hagen Smith

LHP

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Age: 21 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 225 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

The top lefty in the 2024 draft class, Smith got better every year at Arkansas, culminating in a year where he struck out 17 batters in his second outing against an Oregon State lineup that featured eventual No. 1 pick Travis Bazzana. Smith worked at 92-97 with a plus slider and gets some added deception from a funky delivery and a starting position on the extreme first-base side of the rubber, although that latter point makes it harder for him to locate his fastball or changeup to his glove side (which would be inside to righties). He takes a huge stride towards the plate and generates a ton of arm speed, coming from a slot below three-quarters which, given who drafted



Teams •••



He's a potential No. 2 starter, although I'd like to see him move a little more towards the middle of the rubber so he can work more effectively to both sides of the zone.

Photo: Imagin Images

CHICAGO WHITE SOX LHP



50

Nick Yorke

2B

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

Age: 23 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 200 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked



Teams •••



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appeared to vindicate them when he hit .325/.412/.516 at both A-ball levels. His follow-up in 2022 was marred by multiple injuries, including a nagging left wrist issue that interrupted his stint in the Arizona Fall League, and his 2023 fell somewhere in between, so it seemed like he'd settled in as a future regular but one without much upside. He did nothing after returning to Double A to start 2024, but from the moment Boston promoted him to Triple A, he turned into Rogers Hornsby, hitting .333/.420/.498 even through a trade to the Pirates for Quinn Priester. Those numbers came with tons of hard contact: He peaked at 111 mph, half his balls in play were hard hit (95 mph+), and the average velocity of that upper half (his EV50) was 101.9 mph, all of which were comfortably above the MLB medians. His swing is very simple and direct; it doesn't have a ton of loft, so he's probably not going to be a big power guy (barring a swing change), and instead should run high BABIPs and averages, maybe challenging for the league lead in doubles. He's a solid-average defender at second and his throwing has improved enough that he's not going to have any trouble staying there, although the left side of the infield is probably out of the question. My evaluations of Yorke have been all over the place since he was drafted, so take this with even more grains of salt than usual, but I'm buying Yorke now as a future 55, an above-average regular who'll have some years when he's an All-Star because he hits for such a high batting average.

Photo: AP Images

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

2B



51

Kumar Rocker

RHP

TEXAS RANGERS

Age: 25 Ht: 6-5 Wt: 245 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Rocker's road to the majors was ... uh, rocky? Sorry, I'll work on that. He was the No. 10 pick in 2021, but the Mets didn't like something in his post-draft physical, so he went to indy ball and pitched well enough to go No. 3 to Texas in 2022, but blew out his elbow six starts into his pro debut the next year. He returned in 2024 and the Rangers kept moving him up as he kept posting, eventually getting him three starts in the majors in September where he looked as good as he had since his freshman year at Vanderbilt. He had lowered his arm slot back in 2022, but it's back to its original position, which allows him to get more depth on his slider. The slider is easily plus and might be a 70 once again, and keeps him on top of his 94-97 mph four-seamer. His path from here is largely about him — he has succeeded in the past by out-stuffing guys, and being very aggressive with those two main pitches (he has a curve and changeup, but uses them less), but in the big leagues he's going to have to show better command to get ahead of hitters and to avoid a lot of four-inning, 85-pitch starts. This is a bet that he'll make those adjustments and end up at least a mid-rotation starter, perhaps someone who pitches at a higher level than that but needs to skip some starts here and there to keep him healthy.

Photo: Getty Images

52 ➤

River Ryan

RHP

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Age: 26 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 195 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 33

Ryan's 2024 season featured his big-league debut, so yay, but it was bookended by two injuries, the latter of which probably will keep him out until 2026 as he underwent Tommy John surgery in August. He started the year on the shelf with a sore shoulder, but did reach the majors for four starts where he showed electric stuff, sitting 96-98 with ride on the four-seamer and both the slider and cutter flashing 55 or better. The cutter was new for him in 2024 and gives him another weapon for lefties, as it looks just like his four-seamer but has a little last-second break downward to fool hitters, although in the majors he leaned on the changeup more than the cutter. He's a



Teams

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The injury and the lost time do hurt his overall outlook. He's a No. 2 starter if he comes back at 100 percent and can hold up for a full season.

Photo: Getty Images

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

RHP



53

Edgar Quero

C

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Age: 22 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 210 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 67



Teams •••



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very strong OBPs. He's an advanced hitter for his age, which balances out some of the lack of projection in his body, as he's not likely to get that much stronger and further improvements will have to come from tweaks to his mechanics or swing decisions. He's a switch hitter who's definitely better from the right side, with large platoon splits the last two years — in that span, he hit .342/.440/.510 against lefties, and .242/.351/.370 against righties. His biggest area of improvement last year was using his strong ball/strike recognition to swing more — he swung at 39 percent of pitches he saw in 2023, then upped that to 47 percent last year, and, lo and behold, he hit better across the board, including boosting his slugging percentage against right-handed pitchers by 111 points. He hit 16 homers last year, but doesn't project to produce much if any more power than that; he's more likely to be a high-doubles guy with strong on-base skills. Quero remains a solid-average defender with an average arm, still working on some of the finer points of the position but also a no-doubt catcher whose bat looks like it'll make him a regular there. He may be better off in some kind of soft platoon role, depending on how much of the improvement against righties was real, but there's still everyday ceiling here.

Photo: AP Images

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

C



54

Angel Genao

SS

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

Age: 21 Ht: 5-9 Wt: 150 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Genao had a disappointing year in 2023 in Low A, hitting .263/.345/.385 in 72 games after missing the first two months with a torn meniscus, but he went back to Low A to start 2024 and hit all year long — .341/.383/.553 repeating Low A, then .322/.377/.463 after a June promotion to High A. He's grown substantially since he was first measured at his "official" height and weight of 5-9, 150, gaining significant strength but also getting to the point where he might end up outgrowing shortstop. He's a switch-hitter who's better from the left side but capable enough from the right side to keep it up, actually hitting with more power right-handed in each of the last two years. He's an average runner and not terribly twitchy, with second or third base more likely than shortstop, but his bat should still make him an above-average regular at either spot.

Photo: Getty Images

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

SS





Teams

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LHP

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

Age: 24 Ht: 6-5 Wt: 188 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Mathews was a senior sign out of Stanford in 2023 who succeeded with a plus changeup and above-average command but worked at 90-92 when going once a week. He gained a ton of velocity last offseason, however, working 92-97 on the four-seamer, with a slider that's more effective now in the mid-80s despite low spin rates and soft break. The result was that he raced from A-ball through four levels and led all minor-league pitchers with 202 strikeouts, only running into some trouble when he got to Triple A. His arm speed on the changeup is just like it is on the fastball, but the pitch comes out 10 mph or more slower and has some tumble as well, flummoxing hitters who think it's coming in at 94, and the funk in his delivery further adds to the deception of the pitch. That said, I don't love the delivery; there's a lot of effort behind the funkiness, and he takes a modest stride with some head-snap at release. He was badly overworked as a college senior, especially in the postseason, and then saw his velocity jump up very rapidly inside of a year, which seems in my experience to often precede elbow injuries (this is based on anecdotal evidence, to be clear). He's clearly passed most of the Cardinals' other



Teams

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Photo: Getty Images

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS LHP



56

Tyler Black

1B

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

Age: 24 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 204 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 44

I wish the Brewers would just give Black the first-base job and call it a day; he should outperform Rhys Hoskins' 2024 line quite handily after hitting .258/.375/429 in Triple A last year. Black is



Teams



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some way more half of the time, either fouling them off or putting them in play. He rarely whiffs and has shown he can hit lefties up through the top levels of the minors. He doesn't throw well enough for the left side of the infield after shoulder surgery, although he runs well enough to maybe play center and certainly could play second if the Brewers didn't already have Brice Turang there. He's a very capable first baseman, if an untraditional one, with average power and his real strength in getting on base. Black would be more valuable at another spot, which is why he's in this place in the rankings, but for his current team he's also their best internal option at a less-valuable position he can play.

Photo: Imagin Images

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

1B



57

Thomas White

LHP

MIAMI MARLINS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-5 Wt: 210 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: Unranked

White was the Marlins' second pick in the 2023 draft, a huge high school lefty out of Massachusetts who had big stuff but questions around his long arm swing and present command. He turned a lot of that on its head in spring training last year, showing up in incredible shape and with a clear determination to get better any way he could, and ended up pitching better after a midyear promotion to High A. White topped out at 97.6 mph in the Florida State League last year and sat 94-96 with his high-spin four-seamer, getting good ride at the top of the zone, along with an easily plus changeup and a slider that looked about average but played exceptionally well even at a relatively low velocity for the pitch (mostly 78-82). His delivery is pretty easy, perhaps still lacking deception — a concern scouts raised when he was an amateur — but it didn't affect him anywhere in A-ball and I wouldn't change anything right now. If he gets more power to the slider, which at least has above-average spin rates to work with, he could easily have three plus pitches, with a 200-inning starter's build and what now looks like at least average command. White did a great job preparing himself for the season last winter and the Marlins might have a future ace.

Photo: Getty Images

58

Zahir Hope

OF

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Age: 20 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 193 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Hope was part of the four-player trade that sent Michael Busch and Yency Almonte to the Cubs, bringing Hope and Jackson Ferris to the Dodgers, a deal that got the Cubs their best season from a first baseman since 2019, but that has also given the Dodgers two of their top six prospects. Hope seemed like a longshot when the Cubs took him in the 11th round in 2023 out of a small high school in central Virginia; he was a tremendous athlete with plus speed but no history of hitting even decent pitching and poor instincts in the outfield. Fast forward a year and he's become a much, much better hitter in every way, improving his pitch selection and recognition, getting stronger (to the point where he probably doesn't have a lot of physical projection left), and



Teams

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to velocity up and/or away and pitchers are going to try to attack him there or down with offspeed stuff, but he's made so many adjustments already it seems reasonable to bet he'll adjust again as needed. He's every bit of a 70 runner and shows plus power already, and you can project 30/30 on him pretty easily if he continues to hit and control the zone as he moves up the ladder. He did have some more trouble with better pitching in the AFL, and the move up to High A and a worse hitter's environment this year will tell us more about just how advanced he is and how much time he might need to get to the majors. Hope's upside is enormous, with a wide variance in potential outcomes.

Photo: Getty Images

LOS ANGELES DODGERS OF



59

Josue Briceno

C,1B

DETROIT TIGERS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 200 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Briceño signed with the Tigers in January 2022 for \$800,000 as a catcher with some offensive potential, but at this point it looks like he's just going to be a first baseman who mashes. He had played only 11 games above the complex leagues coming into 2024, then got hurt 28 games into the Florida State League season, missing three months with a strained PCL in his right knee. To make up for some of that lost time, he went to the Arizona Fall League, where he was one of the youngest players at 19 and one of a very small number of players there who hadn't played above Low A yet. In 25 games, he hit absolutely everything. It's a hitter's environment out in the desert, sure, but his .433/.509/.867 line was good enough to lead the league in average and slugging. He's a big guy, listed at 6-4, 200, and probably stronger than that, but his swing is very easy and quiet, and he's reached 109 mph in each of his two stints in Low A already, with an EV50 just over 100 mph. He also showed strong pitch recognition in the Florida State League and in Arizona, and rarely swung and missed; if there's a knock on his offense, it's that he's a little too pull-heavy now, although he's also hardly had the need to try to do anything else. He only played first base in Arizona with Thayron Liranzo there, and Briceño was already iffy as a catcher even before the knee injury. I think his future is at first, and it might behoove the Tigers to just put him there now



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Photo: Getty Images

DETROIT TIGERS C 1B



60

Jac Caglianone

1B

KANSAS CITY ROYALS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-5 Wt: 250 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Caglianone was a two-way star at Florida, hitting 35 homers as a junior while also making 16 starts, although his future is much brighter as a hitter than on the mound. He has 80 raw power



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way too often, doing so nearly 40 percent of the time last spring, and needs to develop more of a two-strike approach and work on going the other way on pitches outside, as he's very pull-heavy. As a pitcher, has been up to 99 and shows at least an average changeup, but it's a cross-body delivery with a lot of effort to it, resulting in well below average control (15.4 percent walk rate in two years for the Gators), and he's already had one Tommy John surgery in high school. The Royals have said so far that they intend to let him hit and pitch, which probably means he's going to stay at first base to protect his arm; I'd love to see him just focus on hitting, given the 40-homer upside and the need for some big adjustments, which might also let him handle right field.

Photo: Getty Images

KANSAS CITY ROYALS

1B



61

Jett Williams

SS

NEW YORK METS

Age: 21 Ht: 5-6 Wt: 175 Bats: R Throws: R



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2024 Ranking: 30

Williams had a breakout year in 2023, but he started to feel pain in his right wrist during an awful start in April last season and eventually had surgery that kept him out for exactly four months, limiting him to 30 total games including his rehab assignment. He didn't hit well anywhere except for the one six-game series he spent in Triple A, still drawing plenty of walks but without any impact when he did make contact — which could easily be a result of the wrist injury. He went to the Fall League to pick up some more at-bats, and was a 45 defender at short there and running closer to average than plus, and might be better suited to second base regardless of the presence of Francisco Lindor at shortstop in Queens. It's a compact swing combined with very good ball/strike awareness, and he could be a high-average/high-OBP second baseman with 55-60 defense, which would make him a solid or better regular. His 2024 season was just a lost year, and while he can't get those at-bats back, it's also possible that we'll have to just disregard what he did do when he played because he wasn't 100 percent.

Photo: AP Images

62

Luke Keaschall

2B,OF

MINNESOTA TWINS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 190 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Keaschall was the Twins' second-round pick in 2023 out of Arizona State and finished his first full pro season in Double A, hitting well at two levels with very high contact rates and some surprising power. Keaschall has always shown good awareness of the strike zone and that carried over into pro ball, with a chase rate under 20 percent on the season, and excellent pitch recognition to go along with it. He'd had issues with fastballs up in college, but he's looser at the plate now and gets to those pitches more often. He's also staying back longer before transferring his weight to his front side, allowing him to get more power from his lower half and helping him swat 15 homers in



Teams

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of handling centerfield. He played with a torn UCL last year and ended up undergoing Tommy John surgery in August, so we'll have to see what his arm strength looks like on his return. He's a very likely regular as long as he can still handle the throws from second base, and his bat might even profile if he has to move to left in the worst case scenario.

Photo: Getty Images

MINNESOTA TWINS

2B

OF



63

Caden Dana

RHP

LOS ANGELES ANGELS

Age: 21 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 215 Bats: L Throws: R





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Dana did not belong in the big leagues last season, and his 9.58 ERA in three starts shouldn't be held against him. He had a wildly successful year as a 20-year-old in Double A with just 76 innings of previous pro experience. He posted a 2.52 ERA in the minors, striking out 27.2 percent of batters and walking just 7.2 percent, making 23 starts for Rocket City and then the three more for the Angels to make for about as full a season of work as you'll find for a 20-year-old pitching prospect. Dana mostly works with a 92-95 mph fastball and an above-average slider, with an occasional changeup that has good deception and a little tumble, and a curveball that's not bad but that he barely uses. He'll have to use the changeup more to continue to keep lefties in check, as he did in Double A, but otherwise he has a good pitch mix and his delivery should get him to at least above-average command. He's got a solid floor as a No. 4 starter and is young enough to keep refining his pitches and his overall pitching plan and get to a No. 2.

Photo: Imagin Images

LOS ANGELES ANGELS

RHP



64

Alejandro Rosario

RHP

TEXAS RANGERS

Age: 23 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 182 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Rosario posted a 7.11 ERA in his draft year for the University of Miami, and a 7.05 ERA as a sophomore, despite a good arm and a potential out pitch in his splitter that he barely used, as Miami had him working more sinker/changeup. The Rangers took him in the fifth round for the quality of his stuff — obviously not for the quality of his results — and told him to throw the splitter and go with a four-seamer up, and voila!, instant prospect! He works from the extreme third-base side of the rubber, getting some more deception against righties, as he has the splitter for lefties and can still be effective against them even without throwing offspeed stuff on the inner third to them. He has elite control already, pounding the strike zone with his fastball and walking just 3.7 percent of batters he faced at both levels of A-ball last year, although that's likely to go up as older hitters lay off the splitter when it's out of the zone. He repeats his delivery to keep up the control, and while he's not very tall he looks strong enough to handle a starter's workload. Even as is, sitting 92-95 with the plus splitter and a maybe-average slider, he should be a mid-rotation starter and get to the majors this year.

Photo: AP Images

65

Ryan Waldschmidt

OF

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 205 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Waldschmidt got first-round buzz for much of the spring of 2024 but ended up sliding to the No. 31 pick, possibly because teams had concerns about the ACL tear he suffered a year prior. Right now that looks like a boon for the Diamondbacks, who took him with their second selection of the draft. He had one of the best pure hit tools in the draft, rarely missing a fastball and generally not chasing much on any pitches. He hit .370/.500/.653 for Kentucky despite a wide setup and no stride, which limited how much he could generate power from his lower half and resulted in a swing that could get too steep as he tried to loft the ball. He does have room to add 20-25



Teams •••



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at third base, where he last played as a freshman at Charleston Southern before he transferred to Kentucky, but the results weren't good and he should just go to an outfield corner and stay there. He has .300 average/25-homer upside if he can loosen up those hips.

Photo: Imagn Images

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

OF



66

Lazaro Montes

OF

SEATTLE MARINERS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 210 Bats: L Throws: R





Teams

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Montes is a huge, lumbering prospect from Cuba who hits the ball exceptionally hard, so the natural comparison is to a young Yordan Alvarez, who was older than Montes when he first played in full-season ball but reached the majors days before his 22nd birthday. Montes is extremely strong and has produced exit velocities well north of 110 mph, with clear 40 homer upside as long as he hits enough to get to it. He's not as natural of a hitter as Alvarez, although the Mariners worked with him on pitch selection and a two-strike approach last year and he did see better swing decisions overall. He raked in Low A as a 19-year-old, hitting .309/.411/.527 with just a 19.1 percent strikeout rate, then moved up to High A around the midpoint and hit .260/.378/.427 there with a 29.6 percent strikeout rate, still making hard contact but a lot more whiffs on stuff in the zone. He's going to end up at first base, as he's already really big for an outfield corner and doesn't have much range, but there's a pretty good chance he hits for enough power and takes enough walks to be an above-average regular there. I don't think Montes is really the next Yordan; he doesn't have the same kind of hit tool, but he also doesn't have Yordan's knees, which both required surgery when he was 23 and made him even less mobile than he was before.

Photo: AP Images

SEATTLE MARINERS OF



67

Cooper Ingle

C

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

Age: 23 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 190 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Ingle was a part-time catcher at Clemson when Cleveland took him in the fourth round in 2023 and announced him as a catcher, a project that of course would make his high-contact, low-power bat a lot more viable. A year and a half later, the project looks like a resounding success, as Ingle reached Double A last year, has walked more than he's struck out as a pro, and has improved his defense to the point where he's clearly going to stay at catcher. Ingle knows the strike zone extremely well, and he whiffed just 14 percent of the time he swung last year, with a short, quick swing that has a little more lift in its finish than it did in college, bringing his groundball rate down from 55 percent as a college junior to 45 percent last year. His defense isn't pretty but he can catch and block, and a quick transfer helps his fringy arm play up to the point where he's adequate against the running game. He hit 11 homers last year between High A and Double A, all off right-handed pitchers, and he'll have to show he can make better quality contact against lefties, whereas now he just walks against them. He's small but well put together, and with his contact and on-base skills he could be a .375 OBP/.400 SLG guy, which is a heck of a regular behind the plate even if he's just fringy defensively.

Photo: Imagin Images

68

Alex Freeland

SS

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Age: 23 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 200 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Freeland broke his hamate bone in his draft year in 2022, then struggled in his full-season debut in 2023, hitting .240/.345/.362 in High A while dealing with some minor injuries. His production took off last year after getting fully healthy and making some small adjustments to his swing. He ripped through High A and hit .245/.370/.422 in half a season in Double A before a promotion to Triple A to finish the season, where he hit .243/.335/.396 but had some excellent underlying data. Born with a clubfoot that required several surgeries, Freeland runs close to average and plays an average-ish shortstop now with a plus arm. He's dabbled a little at second and third,



Teams

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lot of low ones either, averaging over 91 mph in his brief Triple-A time despite never hitting anything above 107. He's also a very disciplined hitter who doesn't chase or whiff very often, and has shown above-average power already, with 53 extra-base hits last year, including 18 homers. There isn't really any projection here beyond further developing the hit tool against better pitching. He doesn't really need to do anything more to be a solid regular at second or third, or an above-average one if he does manage to stick at shortstop.

Photo: AP Images

LOS ANGELES DODGERS SS



69

Jaison Chourio

OF

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 162 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Just missed

Chourio spent all of 2024 in Low A as a 19-year-old and ended up ranking 10th in all of the minors with 86 walks, the most drawn by any teenager in minor league baseball last year. Jackson's younger brother is also a centerfielder and an excellent athlete, a switch-hitter and centerfielder right now who could end up in a corner as he continues to fill out and who may end up just hitting left-handed. He's a strong defender right now up the middle with above-average speed, so if he can maintain that even with the physical projection he has left, he could remain in center in the long term. His plate discipline and hand-eye are outstanding, leading to chase and whiff rates well above (better than) average, although he needs to add some hand strength to get some more consistent loft in his finish. His groundball rate in 2024 was 49.3 percent, which was actually his lowest rate at any stop in pro ball. He's been much better from the left side; batting right-handed last year, he hit just .245/.409/.283, with more walks (16) than total bases (15). It might be a bat speed question, as his right-handed bat path looks fine and he actually gets a little more loft than he does left-handed. He doesn't have Jackson's ceiling, but there's a scenario here where Jaison stays in center and figures out hitting against lefties enough to be a grade 60 player, with 20ish homers and very high OBPs, and the floor is really solid given his very real patience and likelihood

Photo: Getty Images

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS OF ✓

70

Bryce Rainer

SS

DETROIT TIGERS

Age: 19 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 195 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Rainer was the second high school player taken in the 2024 draft and the top high schooler on my draft board, ranking highly as a true shortstop with a plus arm and sneaky power that gives him



Teams

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and a plus arm that's been up to 95 on the mound. He's power-over-hit right now, with a lot of leverage in his swing and good loft to drive the ball to all fields, but his bat speed is just fair and when he saw good velocity as an amateur he struggled. He's still pretty raw, especially for a California high school kid, with a lot of room for physical and skills improvements, and the Tigers will probably be able to help him tighten up the swing to be shorter to the ball. It's 20-homer upside in a plus defensive shortstop as long as he hits enough to get to it.

Photo: AP Images

DETROIT TIGERS SS



71

Arjun Nimmala

SS

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

Age: 19 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 170 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 59

Nimmala was one of the youngest draftees in 2023, turning 18 four months after he was picked, and as such should have started 2024 in the complex league rather than Low A, but after a torrid spring training the Jays sent him to the Florida State League ... and he struggled, hitting .167/.280/.306 with a 34 percent strikeout rate before the Jays sent him back to the complex to reset. After three weeks there, he went to the complex league for a few games, then returned to Low A and hit .265/.331/.564 the rest of the way. He ended up leading the Florida State League in slugging (.476) and finished fifth in the league with 15 homers, all as the league's youngest qualifying hitter. He's a true shortstop with good actions and a plus arm, and the power he showed on the field is legit, as he's got very strong hands and wrists, with a swing that's very rotational and puts the ball in the air a ton — his groundball rate in Low A last year was just 31.4 percent. He's still only 19 and remains projectable enough to end up a 30-homer bat in a few years; right now it's more consistently hard contact (his 90th percentile EV in Low A was 102.3 mph, and his EV50 was 99.0 mph on the dot) than huge top-end EV (peak was 107). He's still a high-risk, high-reward player, as he continued to strike out 29.7 percent of the time in his second go-round in Low A, and generally needs to tighten up his pitch recognition and bring his chase rate (31 percent) down at least a little. I keep coming back to his results for his age, though — he was younger than Dante Nori, the Phillies' first-round pick in 2024, for one example — and the

Photo: Getty Images

TORONTO BLUE JAYS SS



72

Starlyn Caba

SS

MIAMI MARLINS

Age: 19 Ht: 5-9 Wt: 160 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Caba was the centerpiece of the trade that sent Jesús Luzardo to the Phillies, as the Marlins went for some ceiling by adding the young shortstop, who is one of the best defensive infielders in the



Teams



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Complex League, walking 51 times and striking out just 34, before a late-season promotion to Low A, where he still made contact but only hit .179/.304/.190. His approach is real — rather than that of someone who is up there to walk — and now he needs to get stronger to be able to do more when he does put the ball in play. His swings are good from both sides of the plate; he can open his hips too early from either side, robbing him of some of the power he might get from his lower half. He only turned 19 in November, so he's going to get stronger from here. He doesn't need plus or even average power to be a quality regular given his defense and his on-base skills.

Photo: Getty Images

MIAMI MARLINS SS



73

Ralphy Velazquez

1B,OF

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 215 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Cleveland drafted Velazquez in the first round in 2023 and immediately moved him out from behind the plate to allow him to develop his bat and perhaps reach the majors more quickly than he otherwise would have. His first full pro season was a promising sign in that direction. He got off to a great start as a 19-year-old in Low A, hitting .261/.371/.441 in the first half, before wearing down in the second half. He's a big, strong kid, but a better hitter than you might expect at first glance, striking out just 20.1 percent of the time in Low A even as one of the youngest players in full-season ball, and he does make hard enough contact to project to 25 homers at his peak. He hits with a wide stance and no stride, just a toe-tap for timing, so he doesn't get all the power he could out of his lower half and his swing can flatten out because he doesn't fully rotate his hips. The Guardians tried him in left field last year as well as at first base, and he was capable enough that they'll probably keep that alive as a possibility for him going forward. His future is in his bat, with contact skills and zone awareness that set him up very well for future success, and cleanup-hitter upside if he loosens up a little to drive the ball more easily.

Photo: Imagin Images

74 ➤

Cade Horton

RHP

CHICAGO CUBS

Age: 23 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 211 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 49

Horton was getting close to a big-league callup last year when he suffered what was first called a lat strain in his start on May 29. It turned out to be a Grade 2 strain of the subscap muscle in his rotator cuff, and his season was over. He's still rehabbing and should be good to go for spring training, although the Cubs may choose to keep him on a pitch or innings limit as he builds back up. Horton has two plus pitches in his wipeout slider, which he added near the end of his last year at Oklahoma, and a changeup that's improved substantially since the Cubs got their hands on him. His fastball is 92-96 but plays down from it because he doesn't have a lot of deception. It has



Teams

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with it, as it's not a high-ride pitch for the top of the zone and definitely not one he can use in the heart to get whiffs, but he has the two real weapons to get guys out and has shown above-average control up through Double A. He's a starter as long as he's healthy, maybe a No. 3 who takes a little while to figure out his optimal pitching plan. We'll know a lot more once he gets into a game in Arizona.

Photo: AP Images

CHICAGO CUBS RHP



75

Chase Dollander

RHP

COLORADO ROCKIES

Age: 23 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 200 Bats: R Throws: R





Teams

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2024 Ranking: /5

Dollander's 2024 season was sort of a consolidation year for him, as he got some of his slider back but doesn't have it as a consistent plus pitch as it was back in 2022. As a sophomore at Tennessee, he had a wipeout slider, easily a grade 70, and may have been the best college pitcher in the country that spring, but that offseason he went to some sort of self-styled expert and switched to a sweeper that was ineffective — although it helped the Rockies get him at the ninth pick in the 2023 draft. His changeup has improved significantly in the last two years to be a solid-average pitch, with a little wiggle at the end to help but mostly deceiving hitters from how he throws it. The slider is the key; when it's on, it's 85-87 with hard tilt and a big move away from right-handers. It can end up more cutter-like at 89-90, still effective but with a different shape that makes it look more like the fastball, and could even be his best approach to lefties rather than the changeup. The Rockies have already helped him get part of the way back to his 2022 form, and if they can get that slider to be more consistent, it'll be a real out-pitch, and the weapon he'll need given his just average command and control. He has a fourth starter floor, but more upside as the slider develops or recovers.

Photo: Getty Images

COLORADO ROCKIES RHP



76

Blake Mitchell

C

KANSAS CITY ROYALS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 202 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Just missed

Mitchell's first year in a full-season league was a mixed bag, a net positive at the end that didn't answer some of the concerns that dated back to when the Royals first drafted him at No. 8 in 2023. He's got power, nearly getting to 20 homers as a teenager in Low A, and the Royals have helped loosen him up a little by reducing the very wide stance he used in high school to a more typical one that has him back in the box to start, giving him lots of room to stride forward and get his hips rotating. He showed excellent ball-strike recognition last year as well, and while he had some difficulty with offspeed stuff, he's laying off more of those pitches when they're not strikes than he did before. He seemed to wear down by the summer; he hit .257/.391/.468 in the first half, striking out too often (31.2 percent), then hit .195/.338/.372 from the All-Star break until a promotion to High A for the last two weeks of the season. Mitchell isn't much of a runner, at least not by the stopwatch, but he's improved his baserunning significantly and stole 25 bags in 32 attempts. He has a cannon of an arm, with average to above-average receiving and blocking skills now that could end up plus. Mitchell has already made some big adjustments since he signed, which is the best harbinger of a player's ability to make further adjustments. I'm encouraged by the progress in his swing decisions; if he continues that trend, he's going to end up an above-average regular, even if it takes him another three or so years to get to the majors.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS

C



77

Edwin Arroyo

SS

CINCINNATI REDS

Age: 21 Ht: 5-11 Wt: 175 Bats: S Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 78

Arroyo missed all of the 2024 regular season after tearing the labrum in his left shoulder in March, undergoing surgery that kept him out until the Arizona Fall League, where he played 18 games but looked understandably rusty. He has the tools to be a plus defender at short, with excellent range and a strong arm, but remains very inconsistent in the field, lacking great timing, dropping his arm on a lot of throws, and otherwise making scouts question whether he'll have the



Teams •••



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to plus runner who should add value on the bases. He's still just 21 and has time to add that strength and work on the pitch recognition, although he's lost probably 400 or so at-bats that he can't easily recover due to the injury. Arroyo has everyday ceiling as a shortstop if he can bear down and get more consistent on defense, or he could be a solid regular at second base if he fills out some more and starts hitting the ball harder.

Photo: AP Images

CINCINNATI REDS SS



78

Jesus Made

SS MILWAUKEE BREWERS

Age: 18 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 187 Bats: S Throws: R

MILWAUKEE BREWERS SS



2024 Ranking: Pending

I very rarely put international free agents on my top 100 before they've played a game in the U.S. complex leagues, but two things worked in Made's favor this year: the minors are as thin as ever in elite prospects, and he's really *^ing good. Made signed for just \$950,000 in January 2024 and had a reputation as a power-over-hit guy, but instead he showed up in the DSL and showed a way more mature approach at the plate than expected, walking more than he struck out — that's not that hard to do in the DSL, just don't ever swing — and making very good swing decisions. He's barely begun to fill out but already makes hard, loud contact from both sides of the plate, getting compared to Jackson Chourio at the same age, but with better batted-ball data. He's a shortstop now with a plus arm that will help him with a likely move to third base once he's a little older, and the Brewers have already given him time at third and second, so they may be thinking along the same lines. He could easily be a top 20 prospect at this time next year if the approach and the loud contact carry over to the ACL or even Low A.

79

Harry Ford

C SEATTLE MARINERS



Teams •••



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2024 Ranking: 61

Ford had a mixed year in 2024, moving up to Double A and continuing to get on base, albeit with slightly worse results across the board at the plate, while his defense behind the plate was worse and there's more chance now that he ends up at DH than there was a year ago. He still has very strong plate discipline, chasing pitches out of the zone just 19 percent of the time, about one-third of those were pitches just one ball's width outside of the zone. He has shown he can lay off many right-handers' sliders down and away. He has more raw power than his .367 slugging percentage would imply, but last year he just didn't square the ball up anywhere near as consistently as he had before, and his tendency to pop up pitches a little above the belt got worse. He's a plus runner and great athlete who moves well behind the dish, but he's a 45 receiver right now and his plus arm hasn't translated into even average caught-stealing rates. The Mariners did try him a few games in left field this year, but the early returns weren't promising. He's 21, knows the strike zone, has untapped power, and is very athletic, all reasons to still

Photo: Imagin Images

SEATTLE MARINERS C ✓

80 ➤

Seaver King

SS

WASHINGTON NATIONALS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 195 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

King spent two years at Division II Wingate University, then transferred to Wake Forest for his junior year and excelled for the Deacons despite the huge jump in competition, hitting



Teams

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but the Nats took King with the No. 10 pick and only played him at short in his pro debut. He's a 55 defender there now and could still improve given his lack of experience and limited instruction there. He's got a quick bat and is very aggressive at the plate, especially early in counts, because he can put so many pitches in play, even ones out of the zone — for now, at least, as that doesn't always work as you get further up the ladder. He's got sneaky pop, maybe good for 15 homers a year, but his game is going to be much more about hitting for contact and average, since his current swing doesn't get a ton of lift on the ball. His 55/60 speed makes him a solid defender in center if shortstop doesn't work out, but he's most valuable at short and I think he's going to hit more than enough to be a very good regular there.

Photo: Getty Images

WASHINGTON NATIONALS

SS



81

Michael Arroyo

2B

SEATTLE MARINERS

Age: 20 Ht: 5-8 Wt: 160 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Arroyo needed to get to more power, and he did in 2024, repeating Low A and boosting his slugging percentage by 127 points, then heading up to High A and hitting .290/.397/.519 — all before his 20th birthday. He signed in January 2022 with the reputation of being an advanced hitter, and that's been true, as he has a great approach that has him aggressive within the strike zone without expanding outside of it too often. He's short with a stockier build, with really no chance to stay at shortstop, so there was more pressure on him to hit the ball harder, and he did so, with big improvements in his batted-ball data and his power output. He hit five homers total in 61 games in 2023, then hit 23 in 120 games last year. He barrels the ball very consistently and puts it in the air over 60 percent of the time. In the field, he has a plus arm and good enough hands to stay on the dirt somewhere, playing almost all of his reps at second base last year but with third base also a possibility as long as he doesn't get much bigger from here. We've seen plenty of undersized infielders become All-Stars in recent years because they could square the ball up for frequent hard contact, including José Ramírez and Alex Bregman. That's Arroyo's absolute best-case scenario, of course, but as long as he stays on the dirt he should be at least an everyday player.

SEATTLE MARINERS

2B



82

Enrique Bradfield, Jr.

OF

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

Age: 23 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 170 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: 64

Bradfield's full-season debut went pretty much as expected, as he continued to play elite defense in center and show 80 speed, but he hasn't made any changes at the plate to try to drive the ball more consistently. He's one of the best defensive centerfielders in the minors, with huge range thanks to his speed and good reads off the bat, and that and his speed give him a pretty clear floor as a fourth outfielder. That's buttressed by his high-contact approach; he whiffed only 15



Teams



results in a lot of groundballs, although the Orioles are working with him to try to get him to hit more line drives to the outfield, even just over the infielders' heads, and let his legs do their thing. He's slight and not likely to ever hit for more than below-average power, but he's strong enough to ambush the occasional pitch and pull it out to right. He started 2024 slowly but improved as the season went on, finishing with a month in Double A where he hit .287/.395/.396, which I think is probably his best-case scenario in the majors. Add defense that could be +15 runs in a full season in center and you've got a 5-WAR player. He just has to keep progressing at the plate, mechanically and in production, to get there.

Photo: AP Images

BALTIMORE ORIOLES OF

83 Cam Collier

3B CINCINNATI REDS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 210 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 50

Collier's 2024 season was a mixture of some very good stuff and some bad as well, as he mashed as a 19-year-old in High A but also showed up way bigger than he had the year before and he needs to get his conditioning under control. He was one of only nine teenagers to play all of 2024 at High A or above, only turning 20 in November, and hit .248/.355/.443 with 20 homers, tying for second in homers in the Midwest League behind a 23-year-old. He continued to improve his swing decisions, cutting way down on his chase rate from 2023 and picking up pitch types better, even as he was very young for his level. The bad is that Collier has let his body get away from him, as he's gotten so heavy that he might end up at first base, which is a waste of his athleticism and raises concerns about his makeup and work ethic. There's just no reason for a 19-year-old with his frame to get this heavy — he's listed at 210, but I'd guess he's closer to 240 — this soon. His 30-homer upside would still make him a regular at first or DH, and he's probably to end up with 60+ walks a year. He's more valuable at third base, of course, with a strong enough arm for it, and he's also going to put himself at risk of back and knee problems if he doesn't manage his size.

Photo: Getty Images

84

Konnor Griffin

OF, SS

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

Age: 19 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 215 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Griffin was the best tools prospect in the 2024 draft class — meaning he had the best overall combination of physical tools, with potential 60 or 70 grades in power, speed, arm, and fielding in centerfield, but no one seems to know if he's going to hit. The Pirates took a shot with the No. 9 pick in the draft and will have to be patient, as the history of high school hitters from Mississippi is pretty dismal because of the caliber of competition those hitters face as amateurs. He's played short and center but looks much better in the outfield, with pro reports on his shortstop defense from instructs not especially glowing, and he's got a 70 arm that produced low-90s velocity when



Teams

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hands and should be able to adjust to a shorter swing without sacrificing much power if any, assuming the Pirates decide to go that route. There's a ton of risk here — multiple scouts have seen him, raved about the tools, and told me "I just don't know if he can hit" — but Griffin offers 30/30 upside with plus defense in center.

Photo: Getty Images

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

OF

SS



85

Travis Sykora

RHP

WASHINGTON NATIONALS

Age: 21 Ht: 6-6 Wt: 232 Bats: R Throws: R





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Sykora was the first pick on Day 2 of the 2023 draft, and signed with Washington for a first-round bonus. All he did in 2024 was pitch like a first-rounder, as he struck out 39.2 percent of Low-A hitters he faced and walked just 8.2 percent in 85 innings across 20 starts, posting a 2.33 ERA. He's a giant already, and his delivery has arms and legs flying everywhere, so it must be terrifying for hitters to see all of that mass coming towards them, followed by a small projectile that might be moving at 99 mph. He sits more 93-96, with a slider that ranged from the upper 70s to the mid-80s with short but abrupt downward break, and a heavy split-change around 83-85, with both of the offspeed pitches missing a ton of bats this year. The arm is still kind of late relative to his front leg, and all the moving parts in the delivery make me suspect it'll always be more control than command for him. He also doesn't seem to pitch down with his four-seamer at all, which might not be an issue but just strikes me as unusual. Sykora pitched like a future ace last year, and he has two pitches that could get him there. He may have simply out-stuffed Low-A hitters, however, and I would like to see him do it against more advanced hitters before buying in completely.

Photo: Team USA Baseball

WASHINGTON NATIONALS RHP



86

Slade Caldwell

OF

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Age: 19 Ht: 5-9 Wt: 182 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

Caldwell would have been a top-10 pick in the 2024 draft if he were 6-1 rather than his actual height, which is definitely less than his listed 5-9 and might be as little as 5-6. No one doubts that he can play, though — it's potentially three plus tools in his hit, run, and field grades, with an average-ish arm and below-average power. He's got a compact swing and excellent plate discipline, approaching at-bats like a leadoff hitter whose job is to get on base any way he can. There's definite bat speed here, enough to turn on good velocity, but there isn't average power now and he doesn't have the projection to get there. His best route to becoming a regular — or even an above-average one — is to be a high-OBP, high-contact hitter who steals bases and plays plus defense in center, even with six-to-eight homers a year. He's not the next Corbin Carroll, another undersized outfielder who the Dbacks selected and developed into a superstar, but he could move quickly through A-ball if his plate discipline is really as good as advertised.

Photo: Getty Images

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

OF

RHP

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

Age: 23 Ht: 6-7 Wt: 190 Bats: R Throws: R

**2024 Ranking:** 90

I still believe Misiorowski is 100 percent a reliever, but I also think he's going to be one of the best relievers in baseball once he gets accustomed to the role. His stuff is so good that he punched out 30 percent of batters he faced in Double A and then again in a brief stint in Triple A, even though he's got maybe 40 command if you're kind. He averaged 98 on his four-seamer in Nashville, topping out at 100.7 mph, and his slider sits 90-93, with both pitches easily grading out at 70 and possibly 80. His low- to mid-80s curveball gives him a different look, with some sharp downward break, although his command of that pitch is the worst of the three. He routinely gets more than 7 1/4 feet of extension, so hitters really have no chance, and given how wild he is anyway, who can blame them for standing there and not swinging? He walked 14.3 percent of batters he faced last year, with maybe the best two-pitch combo in the minors, where he could send hitters a telegram to tell them what's coming and they still couldn't hit it. It's a very high-effort delivery and he hasn't toned it down at all since he signed, which further points to a relief role. If he moves to the



Teams

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command could work in a rotation.

Photo: Imagin Images

MILWAUKEE BREWERS

RHP



88

Adrian del Castillo

C

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Age: 25 Ht: 5-10 Wt: 208 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

No player on this list surprised me more by making the cut than del Castillo, who didn't make my



Teams

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in Triple-A Reno, one of the minors' best hitters' parks, in 2023, but returned there in 2024 and hit .311/.392/.597 with a career-high 26 homers, hitting well on the road as well. He was originally drafted in 2021 as a below-average defensive catcher who could hit but didn't show much power. He's worked to improve his receiving and blocking to the point that he's an average defender with a 45 arm who can really hit and probably has 20-homer power. He barreled up 10 percent of balls he hit while in Triple A, and his EV50 there was 101 mph, with a swing geared to produce hard line drives. He's best suited to a hybrid role where he catches some of the time and plays first or DHs the rest of the time to get him into the lineup as much as possible. I don't think he's a star, but I do think he's an everyday player right now.

Photo: Imagin Images

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

C



89

Brayden Taylor

3B

TAMPA BAY RAYS

Age: 23 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 180 Bats: L Throws: R



Teams

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2024 Ranking: 56

Taylor had a weird first full year in pro ball in two ways — he ended up hitting for more power with less contact than I think anyone reasonably expected, and the way he got to all those strikeouts (24.8 percent in High A, 36.8 percent in Double A) was kind of unusual as well. Taylor hits the ball hard and ended up with a great line in High A beyond the strikeouts, hitting .269/.389/.513 with 44 extra-base hits in 84 games, before struggling in 30 games in Double A, where he hit .194/.290/.435 — still showing power, but of course with way too many Ks. He did raise his bat path a little, making it steeper to manufacture some more lift, which might explain the increase in strikeouts — he actually doesn't chase much at all, and he doesn't miss a ton in-zone, but when he does expand, it's kind of disastrous for him.

Photo: Getty Images

TAMPA BAY RAYS

3B



90



Teams

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OF

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

Age: 23 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 235 Bats: L Throws: L



2024 Ranking: 81

Regular readers of mine know I don't like DeLauter's swing — at all, really. It's the worst-looking swing on this list. I'm not even sure who's second. But DeLauter has also had success everywhere he's played so far in the minors, and the biggest knock on him right now isn't the fact that looking directly at his swing will turn you to stone, but that he hasn't been able to stay on the field for a full season. Since the Guardians took him with the No. 16 pick in 2022, at which point he was already out with a broken bone in his left foot, DeLauter has played in just 96 regular-season games, plus two stints in the AFL. The original fracture cost him the remainder of 2022. He required surgery in that winter after he re-fractured it, then suffered another fracture in that foot in April 2024, then developed turf toe in his first game back from that injury. He strained his hamstring in late August and missed another month. On the plus side, he's hit very well when he's been able to play. He destroyed A-ball pitching, hit .271/.353/.436 in 36 games in Double A across two years, and went 7-for-23 with two homers in Triple A this year, followed by his second straight year of excellent production in the AFL. As for the swing, he opens his hips very early and



Teams



all, and in a small sample so far lefties have really crushed him, especially with breaking stuff. He's going to have to make some adjustments to get him on time to the zone more consistently, and I think major-league pitchers are going to attack that front hip with velocity up and in, which he can only hit on the ground, and then go soft away to exploit the swing. Nobody has really done that effectively so far in his career, however, so maybe he's just good enough to work around them and use his high contact skills to force pitchers to pitch to his strengths — Dustin Pedroia did something similar, and he had a very unorthodox swing as well. DeLauter's also a 55 runner and might be a plus defender in a corner, although I think his propensity to get hurt probably makes centerfield a non-starter.

Photo: Getty Images

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS

OF

91

Ronny Mauricio

2B,3B

NEW YORK METS

Age: 24 Ht: 6-3 Wt: 166 Bats: S Throws: R

**2024 Ranking:** 94

Mauricio missed all of 2024 after tearing his ACL while playing winter ball, then had a minor setback in his rehab that might delay his return further, although right now he's expected to be ready for the start of the regular season. Prior to the injury, he was the Mets' top prospect, with lightning in his wrists that produces grade-70 power, peaking at 117 mph in his brief major-league debut. He's just way too aggressive at the plate, chasing offspeed stuff out of the zone at a rate that's not going to be sustainable for a major-league regular — which is why the loss of a year-plus of plate appearances was so damaging for him, as he needs to work on ball/strike and pitch recognition, and the best way to do that is by playing. I've said before he reminds me a ton of Alfonso Soriano, who had similarly electric wrists, never figured out shortstop, and wasn't anything close to "patient" at the plate, but improved his approach enough to hit 412 homers and play 16 years in the majors. That's a best-case scenario for Mauricio, and probably more unlikely after the injury. We'll have to see where he is on his return, what he's swinging (or not swinging) at, and how he moves in the field.

Photo: Imagin Images

92 ➤

Termarr Johnson

2B

PITTSBURGH PIRATES

Age: 21 Ht: 5-7 Wt: 175 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 24

This is the, uh, get off the pot year for Johnson, as it is for several of his classmates from the 2022 draft (Druw Jones, Cam Collier). He's entering his age-21 season and still hasn't shown the plus hit tool everyone seemed to think he had as an amateur. Johnson failed to post a .250 batting



Teams •••



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excellent bat speed and clearly knows the strike zone, and he showed real progress during the season as the Pirates worked with him on his swing decisions to get him to do more damage on pitches on the inner half. He also moved further back in the box, and as a result of those adjustments, he cut down on his whiff and chase rates after the All-Star break and pulled the ball more often. Unfortunately, none of it translated into more hits or more power. A .237/.367/.386 season line isn't going to make him more than an extra guy in the majors. He has too good of a swing and too much plate discipline to not hit at least in the high .200s.

Photo: Getty Images

PITTSBURGH PIRATES 2B



93

Noble Meyer

RHP

MIAMI MARLINS

Age: 20 Ht: 6-5 Wt: 185 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 92

Meyer was the No. 10 pick in the 2023 draft, far and away the best high school pitching prospect in that draft class, but he showed up for his first spring training behind his peers, with his fastball velocity down several ticks after his personal offseason program. While his velocity did eventually improve, it was a harbinger of a first year that was a mixed bag, to put it mildly. He'd touched triple digits in high school with high spin rates on his fastball and two breaking balls, but in his first outing in the regular season last year he was just 90-93, building up to 93-97 in his final outing in Low A on May 25. He's got a very long arm swing and his arm can be a little late, despite which he still shows a plus slider that generated a 41 percent whiff rate in Low A. His changeup continued to improve and it's plus when he lands it, with too many finishing out of the strike zone right now, while his curveball backed up and wasn't the same plus weapon it was for him in high school. His control overall was nowhere near where it should be, as he walked 16.3 percent of batters he faced in Low A and 17.9 percent in High A, approaching a level where it's fair to question if he'll ever have the control to be a major-league starter. Meyer showed No. 1 starter stuff in high school and he flashed some of it last year, but this wasn't the same guy the Marlins drafted. I'm not giving up on him as a future above-average starter, to be clear, as the stuff is too good, but am

Photo: Getty Images

MIAMI MARLINS RHP

94 ➤
Jaden Hamm

RHP DETROIT TIGERS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 190 Bats: R Throws: R

**2024 Ranking:** Unranked

Hamm was Detroit's fifth-round pick in 2023 after his first full year as a starter for Middle Tennessee State. He had an unusually high arm slot — nearly over the top — for a starting pitcher but a real weapon in his curveball. He went to High A last year and cut his walk rate from 10.4 percent in 2023 before the draft to 7.8 percent in the minors this past season, striking out 30.6 percent of batters with a full assortment of pitches. His curveball is still plus, his slider is at



Teams



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working much more to his glove side now than he did in college, using the fastball and slider that way, since the slider is his only pitch with much horizontal movement, and he had no platoon split at all in High A last year. The knock on Hamm is that he didn't hold his velocity all season, and he got hit a little more as the fastball velo declined over the course of the summer. It was his first full pro season, and he only spent one spring as a full-time starter in college, so this was the most he'd ever pitched without some kind of break or layoff, which is the only reason I'm willing to cut him some slack on the velo dip. If that happens again, he's probably a reliever, and has the weapons to be a good one. His spot on the top 100 is a bet that he'll stay a starter with more experience and perhaps a little work with the Tigers' strength and conditioning team, ending up a solid No. 3 or more. If that doesn't work, he could be a bulk reliever given how many effective offspeed pitches he has, just working less than a starter to try to keep his velocity up.

Photo: AP Images

DETROIT TIGERS RHP



95

Druw Jones

OF

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS

Age: 21 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 180 Bats: R Throws: R

**2024 Ranking:** 41

Jones' second full year in the minors went a lot better than his first. For one thing, he stayed healthy all year, playing 109 games after playing just 41 (including rehab games) the year before. For another, he started to produce for the first time in pro ball, hitting .275/.409/.405, tying for 12th in all of the minors with 85 walks — same as his draft classmate Termarr Johnson. It's not all good news, as he still hit the ball on the ground way too often (57.2 percent of the time) for a guy with plus raw power, and his defense in center was more often grade 60 than 70 — or grade 80, like his father's. He's shown more in-game power the other way than to his pull side, and doesn't really try to turn on stuff on the inner third yet. His ball/strike recognition turned out to be much more advanced than expected, and the fact that he came back as well as he did from a 2023 season that was ruined by multiple injuries and some visible uncertainty at the plate is a positive sign. He could still end up just an extra outfielder but I think it's too soon to assume that, given the power and plus defense he showed as an amateur.

Photo: Getty Images

96 ➤

Trey Yesavage

RHP

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

Age: 21 Ht: 6-4 Wt: 225 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Ineligible

The Jays' 2024 first-round pick at the No. 20 pick was ranked 13th on my own board, and the No. 3 starter in the class (again, my rankings), coming off a dominant year for East Carolina where he struck out 145 in 93 innings (40.3 percent) and posted a 2.03 ERA — and didn't turn 21 until two weeks after the draft. He has one of the shortest arm actions I've ever seen on a prospect of his caliber, but the stuff that comes out is undeniable, as he has a 91-96 mph four-seamer and a plus splitter with huge bottom and even some lateral movement, along with a decent slider in the mid-80s he uses mostly versus right-handers. His short arm stroke and the shape of his stuff make



Teams •••



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because it's unusual, and short arm actions like this generally end up in the bullpen. He's been healthy the last two years as a starter for ECU, however, and I wouldn't change anything given how good the stuff is. I'd move him as quickly as possible, as you're not waiting for any projection on the current pitches, and see a potential No. 3 starter in the near future.

Photo: Getty Images

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

RHP



97

Yoeilin Cespedes

SS/2B

BOSTON RED SOX

Age: 19 Ht: 5-8 Wt: 181 Bats: R Throws: R





Teams

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Cespedes' stateside debut was limited to 25 games and 105 PA before he broke a hamate bone, but he flashed some of why he earned a \$1.4 million bonus in January 2023. He's small but strong, with a powerful swing for someone his size that backs up the numbers he's produced so far, with 11 homers in 71 career games between the DSL and Florida Complex League. He hit .319/.400/.615 in that brief stint in Florida last year, striking out just 19 times in the 105 PA, showing strong command of the strike zone already. He's not going to stick at shortstop, however, and might end up at third base rather than second given his frame and how his body looks now at age 19. He'll move to Low A this year and may take some time to get all his hand strength back; beyond that, he looks like a hitter who could move quickly through the low minors because he's stronger and more polished than the typical teenaged hitter, with the upside of an above-average regular at third with fringy defense but a strong all-around offensive game.

Photo: Getty Images

BOSTON RED SOX SS/2B



98

George Lombard

SS

NEW YORK YANKEES

Age: 20 Ht: 6-2 Wt: 190 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Lombard was the Yankees' first-round pick in 2023 out of a South Florida high school, and he spent all of 2024 in full-season ball when he would previously have spent it at the now-defunct short-season level — yet another example of a player hurt by the contraction of the minors. His overall line of .231/.338/.334 is unimpressive, but under the hood there's quite a bit to like. Lombard injured his hamstring in April, spending two weeks on the injured list but apparently battling it on and off throughout the year even after he returned. He did make some hard contact that didn't show up in his stat line, topping out at 110 mph, and there is still a ton of projection on his 6-2 (or taller) frame to come into more bat speed and eventually in-game power. He just wasn't ready for full-season ball; he could pick up offspeed stuff pretty well but had a hard time catching up to plus fastballs and ended up behind in the count too often. When healthy, he's a plus runner, which might slide down towards 55 speed as he gets bigger. He's also likely to move off shortstop but end up a plus defender at third or second, probably third given his above-average arm and eventual size. There's a lot of maybes here, and the surface numbers aren't impressive; just bear in mind that, like a lot of teenagers, he didn't belong in whatever the heck Low A is at this point, and that he got on base as well as he did, flashing some very hard contact for a teenager, is actually very promising.

NEW YORK YANKEES

SS



99

Joe Mack

C

MIAMI MARLINS

Age: 22 Ht: 6-0 Wt: 210 Bats: L Throws: R



2024 Ranking: Unranked

Mack was the No. 31 pick in the 2021 draft, then missed most of 2022 with injuries and had a disappointing 2023 in High A, hitting .218/.295/.287, although he did stay healthy enough to get 503 plate appearances. He returned to High-A Beloit to start 2024 and took off, hitting so well in 13 games that the Marlins very wisely bumped him up to Double A, where he hit .241/.322/.456 with 22 homers in 112 games and a 25.7 percent strikeout rate as a 21-year-old. Only four minor-



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season were to left or centerfield. He's improved behind the plate to become an above-average receiver and maybe even a plus framer, while he's always had a plus arm and threw out 34 percent of runners last year. He still has to work on some pitch recognition, as he was way better against fastballs and his inexperience against pitchers who could really spot a slider or drop a changeup away showed. The bar to be an everyday catcher in the majors is so low, however, that even if Mack ends up a .290 OBP guy with 20 homers and 55 defense, he'd be a very good regular, and that's well within his reach.

Photo: AP Images

MIAMI MARLINS

C



100

Sal Stewart

3B,2B

CINCINNATI REDS

Age: 21 Ht: 6-1 Wt: 215 Bats: R Throws: R



2024 Ranking: 93

Stewart moved up to High A last year and hit .279/.391/454 in 80 games for Dayton as a 20-year-old before suffering an “off-field” injury, tearing a tendon in his wrist. It required surgery and ended his season. He continues to show a very advanced approach, recognizing all pitch types and commanding the strike zone, and has tweaked his swing since he first signed to hit far more line drives and fewer groundballs. He had a 27.8 percent line-drive rate in 2024, which would have ranked third in the Midwest League if he’d qualified, and he makes hard contact, just without enough loft or huge exit velocities to put the ball in the seats. It’s a short path to the ball with some lift to it, but with more doubles power that puts a lot of line drives into the gaps. I don’t think he’s got the projection left to end up a 20-homer guy, but he has a reputation as both a hard worker and a guy who likes to work out, so I wouldn’t say it’s impossible. He’s a fringy defender at third and played some second as well in 2024, probably a 45 defender at either spot, with first base the default option if he can’t stay elsewhere on the dirt. The worst-case scenario is he’s a 10-homer first baseman with above-average OBPs, a regular on some teams but not all; the best-case one is where he sticks at third, gets stronger for 20+ homers, and has OBPs close to .400 ... which would probably make him an MVP candidate, now that I spell it out.



Teams



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CINCINNATI REDS

3B

2B



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2006 and prior to that was a special assistant to the general manager for the Toronto Blue Jays. He's the author of "Smart Baseball" (2017) and "The Inside Game: Bad Calls, Strange Moves, and What Baseball Behavior Teaches Us About Ourselves" (2020), both from William Morrow. He's on Bluesky at @keithlaw.blsky.social. Follow Keith on Twitter [@keithlaw](#)

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