

# MASTERSBALL

## Tiered Drafting

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It can be demonstrated--by graphing a draft using value of player per round--that once you get past the 3rd or 4th round, assuming the players are picked anywhere close to their order of projected value, the next 10 or so players are fundamentally the same value. This means that you can fill in your roster with positional or categorical needs, as opposed to taking the best player available.

But anyone who has done extensive snake-drafting surely knows that players do not come off the board in the order of your projected value. Owners have varying opinions on expected player performance and use different systems to rank them. Some draft more according to position scarcity principles, taking a middle infielder ahead of a more valuable corner infielder or outfielder. And everyone treats pitching differently. The key to a draft, is the ability to capture as much of this sliding value without costing you value later. Essentially, you do not want to lock yourself out of a position for which the pool is still plush, or overload a category early, when solid contributions can be found late.

One way to help facilitate this process is to use the tiered drafting approach. The idea is to identify pockets of value, either positional or categorical. If you feel very secure that at certain points of the draft you will be able to pick up a player at a specific position, or one that provides a specific need, you have some valuable information which you can utilize to help guide your early selections. This ensures that you have a spot for a player from that plush tier.

Another advantage of setting up a cheat sheet in the form of tiers is it helps hammer home the point that a player's value should be considered to be a range, rather than a static value, so you are more comfortable scooting down a few players on your cheat sheet to fill in a position in such a way to help another position later.

Most focus on tiers in terms of positions, but it also helps to look at categorical tiers, especially speed. As will be explained in another essay, drafting is a matter of balance, with speed being an integral element for that balance. If you have an idea of what stages in the draft you can anticipate getting speed, you can safely bypass a "more valuable" speed option earlier, focusing on the other counting stats which will be a bit scarce later.

Using tiers as your checklist sometimes helps you gain a feel for the draft, as opposed to simply crossing players off of an all-encompassing cheat sheet. By crossing off via position, you can readily observe what positions are flying off the board, which helps determine how you want to approach that position. Sometimes you can even alter the relative placement of the positions. For instance, if second basemen are being drafted at a premium, you can effectively move them all up a value tier to get an idea where the remaining second basemen might be drafted relative to the other positions.

In summary, for those that do not like a cluttered draft table, tiers set up by position and categorical contributions can help organize your information and facilitate tracking your draft so you are more acutely aware of trends, permitting you to react in a more efficient manner. They can double as your overall cheat sheet as well.