

2020 President's Pre-season Rankings

Here are the long awaited predictions 3 months overdue. The last two years I have predicted the champion (Angels and Marlins) so take note of my studied thoughts below. The NL is getting the mantle back as the deepest division after a good recent run by the AL (Royals, Royals, White Sox, Angels) with the streak stopped last year. If it wasn't for the Astros move from NL to AL they may have been shut out of the elite teams. Admittedly I have had a chance to see 6 teams play at least a few innings so it may influence my thoughts.

Platinum Level

- **Marlins** – the defending champs have a strong top of the rotation with Mulvey, Miller and Du but lost one of the strongest graduating classes in memory. They had a tough opener and they are going to have to rely on their pitching to offset other weaknesses. They may be average during the regular season but make a playoff run with the M & M twins, much like last year.
- **Phillies** – The deepest team in the League with the deepest pitching staff in memory that goes 6 deep (Raimo, Gallegos, Fichera, Yianni, Benjamin, and Hughes). Always a solid fielding team they still need some bats and hope that O'Brien can provide some production to an average at best hitting lineup

Gold Level:

- **Astros**- Chuck does a good job at maintaining consistent talent from class to class, and is always in the running. His 15 year old class is very solid. The 14 year class one of the best in the League with the powerful Sanphy, scrappy Abreu, new acquisition Learned and Laz Giardina technically a 13 year old playing in his second year. The hitting will be there and Tad Giardina could be League MVP. I like newcomer Sean Green to vie for ROTY.
- **Padres** – Jon Gorski has enough horses to make a run led by Bartalini on the mound and new acquisition Ben Wright everywhere on the field. With the assignment of Wright we can effectively put the Ronayne controversy to bed that's the best news. They will need 13 year old Marino to pitch some serious innings and not save it all for AAU if they are able to thread the needle to the NL title.
- **Cubs** – My opinion was changed after seeing them opening night versus the Marlins, sans Ronayne. Large lineup with Vieira, Benson and Growney for starters. Add 10th grader and all-around player Ronayne to the mix (missed last year due to injury) gives them a lot of firepower. A good 13 year old draft will benefit the team and an older 14 Bryan Beneke should play like a 15. Probably not enough pitching to go through a three game playoff week but will be a team no one wants to face.

Silver Level:

- **Royals**- I am hearing they are getting strong leadership from their 15 year old class and three kids Ventura, Donnelly and Fratto who are "professional hitters". Jack Murray's 9 innings per week will be needed. Rookie Genese has been opening eyes with his size and strength and

will give pitching innings and drive the ball. When the Royals are good the League is good, after come underachieving years they have a chance to reverse the downward trend.

- Pirates- A smaller roster will help them with veterans Quinn and Robinson leading the way and Peledge growing into a man. Will Moore will be the ace and Robinson is a horse but probably not enough pitching to get through an uber competitive NL. Another year with 3 Picano's at the field always good entertainment.

Bronze Level:

- Mariners – The Costa era is over and we can all breathe a sigh of relief as it was exhausting. His teams had his personality for better or worse so it's hard to say what the new dynamic will look like. (Probably less in-game brawls). Rebuilding project with a big class graduated for last year's AL Champ. I like Declan Wilkes he may be one of the new favorites in this space and once you get that moniker it can carry a kid right through their HS years. Could be a breakout year for Fabiano and McGilvary may just single handily win some games for the team.
- Angels – Smaller team in physical size but skilled so I am not sure how it translates in a year with a lot of larger bodied talent in the League. The "Angel way" after 9 years under Roy will be gone that will be missed by me personally. Good arms with former WS hero Champa, tough lefty Divito and crafty Ciccariello could be enough to make me look bad with this prediction. Gamers like Merkle and Tighe add an element that can't be measured.
- Athletics- the former White Sox team is still a year away and the loss of Vieira in the expansion draft last year was a two year setback for the program but with less whining about it by Coach Walsh than heard elsewhere. Tom is my new go-to coach for reasonable thought out opinions and solutions and that is appreciated. That approach will translate well on the field as well and they will probably over achieve. The 13's and 14's will lead the way with a less experienced 15 year old class. I like Strong and Walsh to be the team leaders.

AL FINAL Astros over Royals

NL FINAL Phillies over Marlins

CHAMP Phillies edge Astros with deeper pitching winning out in a sweep