

2017 - FORECAST: BARN-BURNER



New venue, new Auctioneer, New Menu, New Format with the drop to 10 Teams. New results??? Let's see.....

While Butch sat embalmed in Calamine lotion, the elder Boccone, erstwhile Thespian, took the stage and turned in a masterfully brisk, energetic performance as auctioneer du jour. Nary a blip. No EZ task with a scant 4 hours notice. Bravo, bud and thanks FROM all.



Let's look under the hood and see where we stand as we PLAY BALL.

Absent injuries which we all know can turn the season on a dime, here's the fearless forecast.....

"NO CLEAR FAVORITE", unlike last season's Sox whom I thought could go wire to wire and did.

Starting with the Champs.... HOLEY SOX



"\$9s were wild". I see a solidly contending team and a repeat is certainly plausible with nucleus going into DDay with likes of Polanco, Blackmon, Gyrko, Carlos Martinez & Familia as well as off-season trades for Molina and Teheran. Got a major piece in Yelich and an aging albeit still productive AGon in LA. Watson appears safe as closer for a contending team. Only question mark I had on draft day was on Smardzija whose value I thought was closer to \$5. Stolen base helped needed but the "Jamison boys" should be right there all season.

BALL FOUR - Surprise team in '16 from where I sit. Big E drafted a near flawless offence although I thought Harper was a roll of the dicey at a steep \$26. That said, DL'd Desmond, if healthy fairly early will be a D-Day steal with even a year's worth of \$10-11 value. Hamilton should still steal 50 even after his annual Achilles and Lat injuries which will likely come. Bump looks a little "iffy" after DeGrom and Velasquez. OH a solid closer in StL and Capps should be the Padres closer by June. If Corbin, Eickhoff & Guerra don't flop completely, Ball Four won't catch anybody by surprise this year - pretty solid right now.

AMAZINS - Masterful job with off-season positioning by snagging the two best \$.50ers on the street in Inciarte and Grichuk. Also grabbed Heyward at a bargain-basement \$3 and should expect at least double that in value from even a modest comeback year. Few teams have a better core on offense in Russell, Bryant, & Arenado.. Pitching-wise will need big numbers from Cueto (thought he came in at about \$5 too high) and a risky Hill at \$12.50. Ottavino will likely grab closer spot in Colorado at some point and they'll need it with Maurer the only other choice with the woeful Padres. Eaton at a great price and a Lynn comeback will help take the edge off an anticipated drop by the 38 year old Lackey. No brainer gamble on Mesoraco. Huge upside. Contender.

BOOMERS - Money team. Mark it. With his usual 40+ points in pitching assured, Lou did even better with this year's scrubeenies that usually fill out his offense - Duvall, Span, Werth (yes, I said Werth), Jankowski, Solarte, Cozart, Bell. If Kang gets outta jail in Korea he can add him to the pack as well. Big leg up on last year's fill-in array. Gordon for a full season should get 60 SBs. Enough upside on offense for 25 points Plus 45 for pitching = 70 = 4th place, maybe 3rd.

SENATORS - Can't seem to solve the annual closer dilemma which will likely cost them again. Not many holes on offense. Solid market prices for Posey and Marte to add to Freeman and Rendon, off season acquisitions.. Nunez an up and comer in SF and the \$.50 Flores could give the guys \$5 stats with 350+ at bats. Blew the last picks with Aybar and Montgomery which tainted a good DDay job overall. Pitching staff barely adequate and season could turn ugly is Straily, Conley and Finnegan crap out. Upside to Nova and perhaps Nola is a must. An over-achieving pitching staff is only hope. A definite contender - FOR 6th.

CARDINALES - "Lay In Wait" approach on Dday paid off well in the accumulation of McCutch, Harrison, Zimmerman, Almora, Santana, Prado and Saunders combined for \$25.50 (and McCutch was 1/2 of it!!!). Enables pop & son to overpay for Hendricks and Wainright. Holland, if healthy and durable will add to Melancon as second closer. Walker high at \$9 but the crux of Seager (can you spell MVP?0, Villar, Cespedes is solid. I thought they got best for the buck of any our 10 teams and I see them with at

least their maiden FBBA money check and perhaps a big one. Nice work on Saturday, guys.

ZOMBS - Robbo had his hand full managing both Buff and his roster, both of which he did well. On the light side pop-wise on offense without breakout years from Broxton & Herrera. Bruce and Cargo need to perform to par. Nothing a trade or two can't fix. Some dice-rolls from the bump in Wacha and Ryu, high risk with upsides. Roark should be solid even at a pretty elevated \$9. Matz-Grichuk off-season deal looks sour as of now. Good thing it is a long year. Drury and Adams sleepers. Will need a few things to break right to contend for a check in a tight field starting out. Love Mickal Franco, best thing to happen in Philly since Mike Schmidt.



LOVE MACHINE - Real potential here. when either Neris or Glover or both become closers in Phill and DC. Stolen bases at a premium for an offense which is solid in the other categories. Full season of a heathy Storey, return of Murphy as #1 C in Colorado and emergence of Thames as a true banger threat in Milwaukee will support the solidly priced drafts of Pence (steal at \$7.50) Question Arrieta at a hefty \$18 and fear a regression closer to \$10 in value. Carpenter a sure but Dahl's injury an issue. Surprise contender. Watch 'em.

MUTINY - Screwed at 11th hour and having to go solo, Gary was a blaze of activity early on. Snagged Goldy at market price, Kemp (maybe \$2 too high) and 20 homers from Grandy for \$3 not shabby.. Watching the Schwarb & Trea Turner blossom should be fun. Problem was investing \$21.50 in 2 closers, neither of whom being a sure thing could haunt as it put overall pitching at risk. Strasburg (brittle), Dickey, old and not backed by Toronto offense, Wheeler on a 130 inning pitch count leave him with 5 starters and Rotundo Colon as the "ace. Better than 2016 but not a contender without staff really over-achieving.



AMIGOS - The Buffer did great on DDAY. going solo so Tommy can rest easier and get back to health - we all missed him on Saturday. Over-reached on Cole at a whopping \$14.50, stretched at \$10 on Harvey and risk \$8 on "closer: Iglesias in Cincy. Hefty prices with chance of marginal return. Don't see Urena and McCarthy adding much. Offense is better esp. with fair-priced and comeback-ready Pollock and a nicely

priced Wieters. Few stolen bases other than the only guarantee in SD - Myers. Baez in Chicago should show more promise. Hard to resist Stanton at \$16.50 but can't trust a full season. Sleeper is J. Martinez another typical StL OF stud in the making. Nice grab. Neither a dormat nor a contender at this point but a far cry from the 2016 mess.

Summing up: Vying for money spots with no clear favorite: Holey Sox, Amazins, Ball Four, Cardinales & Love Machine.

Boomers - 4th

Not there yet: Senators, Zombies, Amigos , Mutiny. Too bad one of these 4 will finish right now - all decent teams in a tight field.

Least Bang for the Bucks spent: Gordon, Cueto, Hill, Roark, W. Davis, Cole Smarzija, Hendricks, Harper, N. Walker, Iglesias, N. Feliz, Arrietta, Stanton (?)

Most Bang: Werth, Span, Thames, Glover, Flores, Eaton, Mesoraco, Cargo, Adams, Mercer, Capps, Almora, Zimmerman, Prado, 'Cutch, Rondon, Wieters, J. Martinez, Saunders, Pence, Desmond

Closing Arguments:

1. First round picks went for same prices as 11 team league, methinks.
2. Carlos Martinez - Cy Young sleeper
3. Gyrko can't hit 30 bombs again, can he?
4. Rootin' for Wheeler and Dahl
5. Heyward can't be worthless again, can he?
6. J. Martinez in STL , 4th OF, a stud in the making
7. David Wright undrafted!!! May he emerge as FA of the year
8. Crazy Puig a talented puzzle.
9. K o C halls are like the Vatican,,,,, never change

#10 - Rule change to contemplate - Let's lower the first year price for Minor Leagues from \$5 to \$3. Reward the Swamis who pick winners. Years 2 and 3 stay at \$5.... Just sayin.

Go get 'em guys. CAP

