

	EARNED 1989	MARKET PRICES					AVG. SAL.	PROFIT OR LOSS
		GOL	HQL	MLB	WEB	SCR		
THURMOND, MARK	4					1	1	3
TIBBS, JAY*	3							
TOLIVER, FRED	-7	1	4	4		1	3	-10
TROUT, STEVE	-5					4	4	-9
TRUJILLO, MIKE*	-5							
VIOLA, FRANK	8	31	40	53	32	30	37	-29
WARD, DUANE	15	17	6	8	8	11	10	5
WAYNE, GARY	5			4			4	1
WEGMAN, BILL	-9	3	9	2	8	7	6	-15
WELCH, BOB	18	20	17	18	15	23	19	-1
WELLS, DAVID	15	1	1		4		2	13
WEST, DAVID*	-5							
WILLIAMS, FRANK	-1			3			3	-4
WILLIAMSON, MARK	19		1		1		1	18
WITT, BOBBY	-8	4	4	4	1	12	5	-13
WITT, MIKE	-1	8	10	6	12	13	10	-11
YETT, RICH	-7	3	1	1		2	2	-9
YOUNG, CURT	0	6	7	5	7	10	7	-7
YOUNG, MATT*	-9							
ZAVARAS, CLINT*	-4							



Did all these leagues have their drafts before the start of the season? Either before, or after the first week.

I'm trying to figure out why anyone would spend \$20 on Dale Sveum.

Probably a frustration bid, someone with too much money at the end. Judging by Dave Winfield, the WEB and SCR leagues held their drafts more than a week early, before his surgery. There are a few other glitches, but not many. Certainly these prices are more valid than, say, the following for Doug Jones in Heath's veteran leagues: \$1, \$5, \$4, \$9, \$4, \$2, \$2 . . .

I agree. Look at the swing on John Kruk, from \$2 to \$22.

And he came out right about in the middle. Which league are you going to be in, anyway?

Both.

Uh-oh, not a *mixed* league?

No, one National and one American.

My, that is ambitious.

You only live once, right?

I just hope you don't live *with* anybody.

Did you say all this stuff was on a spreadsheet?

Yes.

Mind running some sorts for me? I'd sort of like to see the top 10 salaries in each league matched against what they earned.

NL	COST	EARNED	NET	AL	COST	EARNED	NET
STRAWBERRY	43	24	-19	HENDERSON	54	48	-6
DAVIS, E	43	40	-3	CANSECO	44	17	-27
FRANCO	40	27	-13	PUCKETT	43	31	-12
VAN SLYKE	40	15	-25	ECKERSLEY	42	43	1
CLARK, W	40	40	0	CARTER	40	31	-9
GALARRAGA	38	27	-11	MCGWIRE	40	22	-18
MCREYNOLDS	37	29	-8	MATTINGLY	39	31	-8
HERSHISER	35	22	-13	GREENWELL	39	30	-9
COLEMAN	35	29	-6	CLEMENS	38	21	-17
MYERS	34	28	-6	HRBEK	38	23	-15
AVERAGE	39	28	-10	AVERAGE	42	30	-12

Eighteen out of 20 are losers.

Well, they're going to be. What we have is a pretty good sampling of the 1988 all-star teams—not just all-stars, but career years in most cases. Here's where the specific market prices provide useful cautions. For example, you know Kirby Puckett is going to fetch some money, but \$55? That's two owners, or more, getting completely carried away. It's such a shame Canseco was hurt. As it is, he's still the second most expensive player in both drafts. The average market price for him would have been somewhere in the mid-60s, don't you think?

I've heard this career-year business before, but Puckett had just followed a career year with a career year. How do you know he's not going to have a third one?

You don't. I don't see anything wrong with his average market price. He's an excellent place to safekeep \$43—you might get it all back and you shouldn't lose much. The prices on McGwire and Mattingly, on the other hand, are almost certain losses, since they have no speed.

Will Clark has no speed.

True. And I probably would have stopped bidding on him around \$35, and I would have been sorry.

The big-ticket items are going to lose money on the whole; all you want to do is break even.

Not avoid them altogether?

No, not if you think you'll break even or come close, because you've got to spend your money somewhere. It's just that the more you spend, the less risk you like to assume. That's why I could have easily paid the average market price for Galarraga but not for Hershiser, even though Hershiser had a better year than Galarraga and they lost basically the same.

If he had a better year, why isn't he worth more?

I meant in real baseball.

Hershiser would be worth more than a buck more than Clemens in the AL, I take it?

If he had the same stats he would. The way players are listed in the appendix shows this more clearly. Jose DeLeon and Nolan Ryan, for instance, both won 16 games. DeLeon had a better ERA and ratio. But Ryan's ERA and ratio are worth more in his league context, and he outearns DeLeon.

That's why you don't like mixed leagues?

That and the fact that, unless you have a league the size of the NFL, you end up with all-star teams.

So your prices don't work for them?

Good Lord, no. Oh, I suppose the order of players (another feature of the appendix) is useful, but that's about it. You sure you're not in a mixed league?

Just wondering. The way you have them listed in the first chapter, though, and this chart here—it makes me wonder about all the money that hitters are losing.

In the alphabetical listing, what catches my eye is that there are just as many losses for hitters in the right-hand column but not nearly as many in the left.

What I see in the chart above is that people spend money first of all on players who have power and speed; second, on relievers; third, on power hitters; fourth, on starters.

Let's do a sort by what players earned.

NL	EARNED	COST	NET	AL	EARNED	COST	NET
JOHNSON, H	51	22	29	HENDERSON	48	54	-6
DAVIS, M	48	25	23	RUSSELL	45	12	33
MITCHELL	45	25	20	SABERHAGEN	45	18	27
CLARK, W	40	40	0	ECKERSLEY	43	42	1
DAVIS, E	40	43	-3	JONES, D	39	30	9
GWYNN	37	34	3	JACKSON, B	38	28	10
SMITH, L	37	5	32	YOUNT	38	25	13
HOWELL	35	11	24	SAX	37	23	14
BURKE	35	12	23	SIERRA	37	30	7
SANDBERG	35	28	7	PLESAC	36	35	1
AVERAGE	40	25	15	AVERAGE	41	30	11

Now we're seeing some profits.

Naturally. These are last year's all-stars. The repeats from the previous chart are Eckersley, Rickey, Eric Davis, and Will Clark. Saberhagen is the only starter among new arrivals, while there are six relievers joining up, some of them pretty obscure.

And the speedy Kevin Mitchell.

The rather well-paid Kevin Mitchell. He hit .251 the year before, with 19 home runs; \$25 was about right for him. Hojo, meanwhile, had 24 home runs and 23 stolen bases; \$22 was low, although there was trade talk hanging over Hojo.

Eleven dollars for Jay Howell?

I don't get that, either. One league, PEW, didn't pick him up at all.

So the thing to look for is obscure relievers?

In start-up leagues, definitely. They'll be famous about 15 minutes into the season.

If you find they're going cheap, by the way, keep buying them. Too much is never enough.

What's that mean?

Don't stop just because you think you've got the saves category taken care of. Build a surplus of scarcity.

What's that mean?

Scarce items like saves and steals are the hardest to trade for when you don't have them, and so the easiest to trade when you do. As long as you're in a league that *will* trade, it doesn't matter if you're out of balance coming out of the draft. Having a surplus as the trade deadline approaches is kind of fun. Surplus at the end of the season, though, is excess. You really don't want to finish first in any category.

Unless it's all of them?

Oh, then it's all right.

Would you keep Rickey at \$54?

I'd give him a lifetime contract at \$54. Just because you see that minus sign next to his name and Eric Davis's doesn't mean they didn't get the job done. They may not have won you the pennant, but they didn't lose it either. Remember, you go into the draft with \$260 and you want to come out with \$300. You've got to make some profits somewhere, and you try like hell not to take big losses anywhere. Little losses on big investments are no big deal; they mean you got big earnings.

So you'd keep ED at \$43?

In a second.

Would you keep Strawberry at \$43?

I might. Hard call. He can earn it, and I certainly would if I thought he was going to.

Van Slyke at \$40?

Easy call. No. He can earn \$40, but I know no one's going to bid him that high, so I drop him. If the market price is sure to be under your expected Patton \$ worth, go with the market price, clearly.

McGwire at \$40?

Drop him. I don't care what the market thinks, he's not going to earn it.

Mattingly at \$39?

I would probably drop him. He might come in close to \$39 next year, but I have this sense that something's just a little off with him, and I think others share that sense. I either shave a couple of dollars off his salary by buying him back, or I watch a bidding war between two Yankee fans, if there are any left.

There's another sort we should do. How about the true bargains, the people who really made money—the highest nets?

NL	EARNED	COST	NET	AL	EARNED	COST	NET
SMITH, L	37	5	32	RUSSELL	45	12	33
LANDRUM	31	1	30	MONTGOMERY	33	2	31
JOHNSON, H	51	22	29	OLSON	34	4	30
THOMPSON, M	26	2	24	SABERHAGEN	45	18	27
DAVIS, M	48	25	23	EISENREICH	27	3	24
BURKE	35	12	23	KELLY	30	7	23
HOWELL	35	14	21	SCHOOLER	31	10	21
MITCHELL	45	25	20	GUETTERMAN	21	0	21
DARWIN	23	4	19	BLYLEVEN	28	8	20
BIGGIO	22	3	19	FINLEY, C	21	1	20
AVERAGE	35	11	24	AVERAGE	32	7	25

Bill Landrum, Jeff Montgomery . . . Lee Guetterman? Son of a bitch. Was Landrum even up in April?

He made the team, and Gott was hurting, as I recall.

You saying you would have picked him?

No, no, I'm saying he was there to be picked, and out of the five start-up leagues, one did. Nobody took Guetterman. Out of the 25 older leagues that Jerry Heath gave me the prices for, only eight took Guetterman. Four didn't take Montgomery. There are simply too many pitchers to choose from, which is another reason you shouldn't spend too much on them.

An average of \$7 spent in the American League for the 10 best profits? It makes it seem like the whole thing's a crapshoot.

It is. Sorry. You fight like hell not to lose money on the expensive players, then pray you hit it big with the scrubs.

At least in the National League there are three people on the list who cost more than \$20. The average is \$11.

So it would seem the NL was more "rational" or "fair" last year, wouldn't it? Well, there's one more sort that we have to do—the biggest losers.

NL	COST	EARNED	NET	AL	COST	EARNED	NET
JACKSON, D	28	-12	-40	VIOLA	37	8	-29
DANIELS	32	7	-25	LEIBRANDT	17	-11	-28
VAN SLYKE	40	15	-25	MORRIS	21	-7	-28
KNEPPER	7	-16	-23	CANSECO	44	17	-27
GOODEN	34	11	-23	LAPOINT	7	-12	-19
PERRY	29	8	-21	AUGUST	10	-8	-18
MCGEE	27	6	-21	MCGWIRE	40	22	-18
STRAWBERRY	43	24	-19	TRAMMELL	27	9	-18
CARMAN	2	-16	-18	RAWLEY	7	-10	-17
DARLING	24	6	-18	NIEDENFUER	10	-7	-17
AVERAGE	27	3	-23	AVERAGE	22	0	-22

An average of \$27 spent on the bombs in the NL last year, substantially more than the AL. Five of the bombs are hitters, where your money is supposed to be safe.

How do you account for that?

It was an incredibly chaotic year in the National League last year. Too bad we're only looking at the top 10, because number 11 was Mike Schmidt, number 12 Ron Gant, number 14 Kirk Gibson. It was so bad that people like McReynolds and Galarraga were good.

It's amazing that Carman's on the list, since nobody believed in him to begin with.

There you have it. If you're in one of those excruciating leagues that don't allow you to drop players, Carman has killed you. People in those leagues tell me they have to pay big money for pitchers, so my prices don't help them, but I'm not convinced. If you were in one of those leagues, why would you spend \$7 on Rawley? Whereas if you can ditch him, \$7 is a reasonable gamble, considering the up side.

Pitchers are your venture capital. The average price for Leibrandt last year was \$17, for Saberhagen \$18.

That's ridiculous.

No it's not. Check them out in the Player Profiles. Leibrandt had a much better ERA the year before and earned more. Now he's in disgrace; Saberhagen's a one-man pitching staff that someone will pay \$50 for this year. We have short memories.

Van Slyke was kind of a total disaster when you think about it, and he still earned \$15.

Precisely. Kirk Gibson was very similar to Danny Jackson in real baseball, and Gibson earned \$9. If you've invested \$28 in Jackson, you don't drop him even if you're allowed to. You sit there and take the full beating. You leave the draft, if everyone else breaks even, a \$220 team. It's over.

Jack Morris and Alan Trammell—two more big-name players who had equally poor years.

With more invested on Trammell, and less lost.

So what you're saying is, you never spend this kind of money on a starting pitcher?

On starting pitchers, I don't. I'd never spend \$62 on Jackson and Gooden. If the average pitcher earns \$8.67, then nine average pitchers earn \$78. That's my budget. I sure don't want to have to find my relief pitching with \$16.

Are you serious? You stick to budgets for pitching and hitting?

No, not really. Actually, \$78 is kind of high for me. Last year I spent \$69.

And you bought a decent pitching staff with that?

Yes, I did, in my terms. The \$69 turned out to earn \$70, so I broke even. In fact, in Heath's hypothetical final standings, I got 26 points in pitching; the average team in an American League Rotisserie earns 52 points, so that's really breaking even. I hoped to be a little luckier, but at least I hung in there.

I don't like all this talk about luck.

Then play chess instead. Look, I know I'm not going to luck into a good offense. I know that finding good pitchers is to a great extent just throwing darts, so I'm going to throw a few.

Let's group pitchers in—oh—the National League by salary ranges and see what we get.

	#	COST	AVERAGE EARNED	+/-	TOTAL +/-
above \$30	4	36	22	-14	-56
\$20-29	8	25	18	-7	-56
\$10-19	24	11	13	2	48
\$5-9	25	6	6	0	0
\$1-4	36	2	2	0	0
under \$1	16	0.6	5	4	64

Four pitchers (Franco, Hershiser, Myers, and Gooden) were in the over-\$30 bracket last year. They earned an average of \$22 for a \$14 loss. Eight pitchers cost between \$20 and \$30, and they lost money. The much larger range between \$10 and \$19 made money. The \$5-\$9 range broke even. The \$1-\$4 range, which is the crapshoot (and also the biggest group), broke even. And the Sixteen Bill Landrums, pitchers who as often as not weren't even selected, turned a huge profit.

Four dollars is huge?

When you spend 60 cents it is. Sixteen times \$4 is \$64; the \$10-\$19 range only had a total profit of \$48. This chart tells me to pursue a starting pitcher that I like into the teens, then wave good-bye and wait for the next one. It tells me to leave at least a couple of slots open for the crapshoot. It tells me to pick pitchers like crazy in the reserve phase.

What about relievers?

More than half your pitching budget should go to them, either in one big bundle for Eckersley or Mark Davis, or spread among several.

The appendix shows the top 90 pitchers in the NL last year, the top 108 in the AL—the pitchers that "perfect" Rotisserie Leagues would carry. You'll notice the average of these ideal populations (\$13.22 and \$12.79) is worth considerably more than the average pitcher (\$8.67); we pretend no roster was ever graced by Bob Knepper or Dave LaPoint. But let's separate these populations into relievers and starters and see who's doing what. For simplicity, let's call anyone who got a save last year a reliever, the rest starters.

NL	IP	W	S	ERA	RTO	\$
STARTERS (49)	160	11	0	3.08	10.59	11.20
RELIEVERS (41)	88	5	11	2.73	10.64	16.00
AL	IP	W	S	ERA	RTO	\$
STARTERS (59)	152	10	0	3.35	11.30	11.17
RELIEVERS (49)	82	5	11	3.06	11.17	16.17

You just made Doc Gooden a reliever, you realize that?

To tell you the truth, I didn't, but he's one among 41; we can live with it.

And you made Norm Charlton a starter.

I can live with that also—and then again, we can just stop this. Most of this stuff I already know.

No, go ahead; tell me what the chart shows.

You tell me.

It shows the average relief pitcher was worth a hell of a lot more than the average starter.

Why?

He got some wins and all the saves, and had a better ERA and ratio. Except the National League starter had a better ratio. I wonder if that was all Mitch Williams.

What else?

You're doing just fine.

Let me see . . . We could multiply the number of starting pitchers, 49, times the average earning. That's \$549 . . . The number of relievers, 41, times their average earning. That's \$656 . . . So the relievers earn well over half the money, even though there aren't as many of them.

You just do that in your head?

Same thing in the American League.

Well, I guess it's going to come as no surprise to you, is it, that the NL relief pitcher not only has a better ERA than the starter, but it's worth more in the ERA standings?

Eighty-eight innings at 2.73 help your team more than 160 innings at 3.08? Sure, I can see that. I'm all set to buy relief pitchers. I'm thinking of having a whole team of them.

You don't have the thousand-innings rule?

Not in one of the leagues.

Maybe I should warn them.

But at least I can just zip through this stuff, since it's so obvious. The biggest mistakes people starting out make are (1) spending too much on starting pitching—they should be spending much more on relief pitching; (2) overspending on the great hitters who happen to be lead-legs; and (3) overspending on what I call "position scarcity."

In 1988, Julio Franco earned \$28, Wade Boggs \$25. You can see that the average salary for Franco last year was \$25, for Boggs \$35.

In 1988, Brett Butler earned \$28 and Benito Santiago \$15, yet the average salary last year for Santiago was \$24, for Butler \$18. And the funny thing is, a lot of people are going to keep Santiago, who earned \$17, and are ticked off at Butler for only earning \$21.

Their reasoning seems to be that Santiago hits pretty darn good for a catcher, while Butler is kind of a wimp in the outfield.

No stat service that I know of pays attention to who's hitting the homers or getting the steals. The only one who even pictures what your team "looks" like is you. In real baseball Santiago and Tom Pagnozzi would still be the best catching corps around, because only one of them catches at a time. In Rotisserie baseball, you play Tony Pena and Mike Scioscia—who you bought for \$13—side by side, and they earn you \$19.

So you want depth on offense, a 14-man lineup every day, piling up the at-bats.

Still, don't you tend to get better production from certain positions? The outfield? The corners?

Do you? The way the game is set up, you actually go deeper into outfielders than middle infielders. There are 12 teams in the National League, so 36 outfielders can start on a given day. We're carrying 50; 14, or 28 percent, don't start. Twenty-four middle infielders start. We're carrying 30—

So only 20 percent don't start. Interesting.

The appendix has pretty much sized up for you the depth and strength at each position. Here it is in condensed form:

	NL			AL	
	AVG	WORST		AVG	WORST
OF	\$17.39	\$6	OF	\$18.53	\$6
1B	21.55	3	1B	18.01	7
3B	12.70	4	3B	13.55	3
2B	12.53	3	2B	13.19	3
SS	14.61	6	SS	11.27	3
C	6.64	2	C	8.27	2
			DH	5.77	-1

The average shows the dollar value of the average of the top 50 NL outfielders or top 18 NL first basemen, etc. That's the strength of the position. "Worst" is what the 50th outfielder or 18th first baseman

earned. That's the depth. You can see how weak third base was last year in both leagues.

Where'd you put Hojo?

At shortstop, of course. Also Matt Williams. That's where most leagues will put them, until they find out there are no other sticks at third. So they'll move Darrell Evans over there, if he's still playing, which is what I've done.

It basically shows me what you would expect: The hitting is at the corners—at least at first base—and in the outfield.

It shows me you better watch out you don't get Wallace Johnson as your first baseman. There's an abrupt drop-off. You'll be giving poor old Darrell his first baseman's mitt back. You'll end up moving Williams to third and calling up Steve Jeltz.

Like hell.

He was actually a pretty good scrub last year. You never know. This is what the game's all about. If it has any value, it's learning to love and hate Steve Jeltz.

Why wouldn't I move Evans to third, bring McClendon to first from the outfield, and instead love the 51st outfielder, Willie McGee?

At a market price of \$27, I don't think he was there with the scrubs. All I'm saying is that in the endgame crapshoot, the pickings on offense are slim throughout. It's been my experience that everyone wants to pack the corners, which makes it hard, whereas people get three good outfielders and figure they've taken care of that. I try to sneak a fourth and fifth good outfielder onto my team early, while they're still around.

If we comb through the charts in the previous chapter for the four cheapest National League scrubs at second base and in the outfield (averaging zero in for the leagues that didn't pick them at all), here's what we get:

SECOND BASEMEN	COST	EARNED	+/-
LENNY HARRIS	1	8	7
STEVE LOMBARDOZZI	1	0	-1
JEFF TREADWAY	1	13	12
DAMASO GARCIA	1	6	5
TOTAL	4	27	23

OUTFIELDERS	COST	EARNED	+/-
DWAYNE MURPHY	1	6	5
GREG GROSS	1	-1	-2
LEE MAZZILLI	1	2	1
GERONIMO BERROA	1	2	1
TOTAL	4	9	5

Are you telling me you'd spend \$8 for Lenny Harris? To tell you the truth, I can't get all that excited over Treadway.

I wouldn't spend \$2 for Lenny Harris. I wouldn't spend \$5 for Treadway. Let me emphasize right here that just because my prices show some marginal player earning a few bucks is no reason in itself to pay a few bucks. You pay as little as you possibly can. You're trying to win this crazy auction where everyone has the same amount of money. Every dollar counts, and you fight for the best deal you can get 23 times.

As a rule of thumb, I'd say that for any player you feel has little chance of earning more than \$5, don't pay more than one or two dollars under any circumstances.

By being chintzy here, can I go higher at the top?

Sure. A lot of people do that. But if they win that way, it's normally not because of who they bought at the top, it's because they got Jeff Treadway instead of Geronimo Berroa—and last April who would you have picked for \$1?

Know what? I'd still take Berroa. Lemke's going to be the second baseman. How often did you see Treadway's name in the boxes in September?

You didn't have a Rotisserie team and you noticed that?

I just like to follow baseball.

There were so few people following the Braves in September, we're lucky they published the box scores. What you're saying, though, is worth reiterating.

The \$13 you see next to Treadway's name is what his statistics were worth in the National League in 1989. The appendix—while it attempts to be forward-looking, moving people to their probable positions, zapping even significant contributions of people who moved out of the league during the season—is basically retrospective. You'll be zapping many more people; you'll want to change the order at each position;

and you'll certainly want to pencil in your own guesses as to what people will earn this year.

What I think they'll earn or what I'm planning to pay?

That's up to you. Why you would plan to pay more than you think they'll earn—especially in a start-up league—more or less eludes me, however.

What's "especially" about it?

I'll get to that. This is only the beginning.

What's next? The Player Profiles?

Why not? Bill James used to put them last, but I say, let the market decide. Apparently they were a big hit last year.

Anything I should know about them?

Yes. The three-year scans of earnings will throw you for a loss if you don't realize that the formulas for each year are different. Darryl Strawberry's best year was in '87, but he gets a much higher salary in '88; how come?

The rabbit ball in '87?

Exactly. The tendency in the market is to spend more on hitting when the home runs are flying, and trash pitching; the reverse should happen. Jimmy Key in '87 was much more valuable than Mike Moore last year, even though his record on the face of it wasn't as good.

If the league totals change drastically, the profile of the average hitter changes noticeably. But he's still worth \$13. The average pitcher fluctuates in ERA and ratio, and remains worth \$8.67. These are the figures to keep in mind for the three-year scans:

AVERAGE PLAYERS FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS

NATIONAL LEAGUE	HR	RBI	SB	BA	ERA	RATIO
1987	11	49	11	.273	4.00	12.22
1988	8	41	11	.259	3.31	11.03
1989	8	42	10	.257	3.36	11.27

AMERICAN LEAGUE	HR	RBI	SB	BA	ERA	RATIO
1987	14	53	9	.267	4.31	12.36
1988	10	47	8	.263	3.85	11.87
1989	9	46	8	.264	3.76	11.92

It's even bigger with decimals, yet the home run decline by the American League hitter from 14 to nine in three years is still fairly dramatic.

You keep talking about the different league contexts; last year it doesn't look all that big to me.

It's nice to know one person is going to read the masochist chapter, but briefly, you're right about hitting, wrong about pitching. Sabers-hagen in the National League would be worth \$39. That is, if you just moved his statistics over. If you moved him over—well, I don't think the pitchers would even like to bunt against him. Did you see the way he pitched inside last year?

But hitting prices, they don't change that much?

Why do I keep thinking you're in a mixed league?

They change a little. Vince Coleman in the American League would be worth \$32 instead of \$29.

How come?

Look, everyone else is already reading the Player Profiles. You're supposed to be standing in for most people, and they don't give a hoot. Okay, steals are more scarce in the American League.

All I wanted to know.

Anyway, it does raise the question of how to show Viola, Langston, Oddibe McDowell, and so forth. Not to cut it too fine, I decided to list their statistics overall, then total what they earned in each league. That's just for 1989; for 1987 and 1988, I apply the formula of the league they spent more time in. The parentheses indicate which league they spent less time in.

The next question is where to place the players who qualify at several positions. Is Hojo a shortstop or is he not? He's not, and yet you'll find him under shortstops. Indeed, if you even look for him under third baseman, it's a sign you're not focused; you're musing dreamily about real baseball.

As far as I'm concerned, the numbers are the essence of the profiles. As enjoyable as they are to write, the comments are almost superfluous.

Many of them are already outdated, or proven flat wrong, by the time the book comes out. My idea is generally to look for things that have to do with our narrow perspective, but occasionally I'll stray off hopelessly. Often I have almost nothing to say, and sometimes far too much.

This is where you make your predictions?

They're implied, I suppose, but it's not my purpose to get into the prediction game. That's your job.

Because a friend of mine who read your book last year, when he heard I was going to be talking to you?

Yes?

He said, if Patton says he won any money, will you ask him if he has separate comments for himself?

I'm sure—wasn't he kidding?

It didn't sound like it.

Well, kindly remind him what I just said. About whose job it is . . . I said it last year . . . That's really great, you know, telling me something like that, just when I'm about to stick my head in a noose again.

I'm sorry.

I feel like not saying anything. Trouble is, the book would be too short.

Hey, the guy's a jerk. I know him well. Gotta place our own bets.

Right on.

I'll tell you what: If I see anything really stupid in your comments, I'll tell you afterwards, okay?

No, not okay.

That's all right, too. Let's see now—how's it organized again?

By position, alphabetically.

But you have to let me talk to you at the end, just in case there's anything else?

I don't have to. But I will.



NATIONAL LEAGUE CATCHERS

DAMON BERRYHILL	AB	HR	RBI	SB	BA	\$
1988 CHI N	309	7	38	1	.259	9
1989 CHI N	334	5	41	1	.257	8

A good example of the range of opinions about "position scarcity"—his low market price (in Chapter 1) was \$4, his high \$25! Yet, even with his injury, he earned his keep in three of the five leagues.

CRAIG BIGGIO	AB	HR	RBI	SB	BA	\$
1988 HOU	123	3	5	6	.211	3
1989 HOU	443	13	60	21	.257	22

It's puzzling why Biggio's average salary was so low (\$3) last year. He earned that drinking his cup of coffee in '88. In Heath's 25 established leagues, it's higher (\$7), but it's obvious his name won't be coming up in many auctions this spring.