Are statistics the enemy? History shows that we are not as good at projecting player performance as we think we are. In fact, we're terrible at it! The numbers imply a level of precision that is impossible to achieve and force us into making bad decisions. We choose the wrong players at the draft table. We pay too much, or fail to go an extra dollar in auctions. These decisions cost us in the standings.

Ron Shandler's Other Book shows us that players are a lot more alike than they are different, and we can leverage these similarities on Draft Day. His Broad Assessment Balance Sheet (BABS) presents each player's skills and risk factors as assets and liabilities, and creates a structure that allows fantasy leaguers to build more competitive rosters. [Read the Introduction here](#).

Excerpts from *Ron Shandler's Other Book*

"Baseball analysis is all about finding patterns in data. We see a batter hitting 8, 10 and 12 home runs in successive years, and we immediately label that as a growth trend. Maybe it is. (But) we don't even know how real 8, 10 and 12 are, so it's difficult to conclude that there is any trend at all. That 8-HR year could have been 13 if five of his doubles had traveled another 5 feet. That 12-HR year might have been 9 if not for those three nights when the wind was blowing out."

"I love Alcides Escobar. He doesn't hide his volatility. It's all-clothes-off, out there in the Kansas City sun. He trumpets the fact that there's no way to pin him down. But while his data set is impossible to project into 2016, it's perfectly consistent within a normal range. You probably couldn't convince many people, but this is the same player every year."

"If you're overpaying for a speculation at the draft, you're also potentially passing up on profit opportunities later on. As much as you think you can find profit in every player, you only get 23 chances, and there are at least a dozen other guys in your league, all thinking the same way."

"If there's one thing that I've learned about breakouts, it's that they don't typically arise in a straight line out of a trackable growth trend. Most folks perceive a breakout player's dollar values to look something like this: $8, $10, $13, $25. But the reality is, most breakouts look more like this: $8, $13, $10, $38 – a massive, unexpected spike."

"Aren't all variables built into the projections? Most of us touts attempt to do that, but how do you quantify risk? The adjustments we apply to the projections are often just arbitrary – we'll lop off a bunch of AB or IP to account for how long we *think* a hurt player might be out, or we'll make subjective decisions about the qualitatives. There's little science behind it yet we'll be drafting our teams off whatever numbers are on our cheat sheets."

"Most reputable touts go through a meticulous process of fitting plate appearances and innings into the available playing time on each team. That's an admirable effort and vital for accurate fantasy valuations. But let's be honest here; the only players for whom these projections are even close to being on target are full-timers who stay healthy all season. Of the full-timers in last year's Top 300, there were only 148 who stayed healthy all year, and that included 21 relief pitchers broadly defined as "full-timers.""

"Think about the record-keeping we do during a draft. Most of us probably just add our drafted players to an empty roster sheet. If we are using a laptop, we probably have a spreadsheet or software program that displays our team's projected bottom line stats, maybe compared to targets that we've set. This is all driven by our inaccurate projections. Given that these projections attempt to incorporate both skill and risk factors into the stats themselves, the end result is one big mess. What's more, it's a one-dimensional view of our players and our team, and that's just not good enough."

"Revere's lack of power could be considered a liability, but a lack of counting stats doesn't inherently do damage to your team. There are opportunity costs from not being able to roster a better player, but it's different in the ratio categories. A bad batting average or ERA can do real damage. That's why those are considered Liabilities."

"Without a doubt, catchers are the most frustrating position players to project, and own. Last year in the FSTA Experts League, I thought I had scored a coup by drafting Jonathan Lucroy and Devin Mesoraco (both ranked among the top five catchers) in rounds 5 and 7. But I should have been smarter. History shows that catchers cannot be counted on to string together many productive seasons."

"For what it's worth, the last time a first baseman stole 20 bases in a season and then followed up with another 20-SB performance was 16 years ago. That was Ryan Klesko. The interesting thing about Klesko was that he never stole more than 6 bases in any season before or after those duel 20-SB campaigns. In fact, there has been only one 20-SB season for a 1Bman since then — Derek Lee in 2003. Firstbasemen generally are not called on to steal; their bat is too important to risk injury on the basepaths."

"From Ian Kinsler down to Dustin Pedroia on this list are eight 2Bmen who are, for all intents and purposes, similarly skilled. Below average power and speed, moderately helpful batting average. What that means is that you are not likely going to get more than 15 HRs or 15 SBs from any of them, and any attempt to separate them with more precision will run afoul of the random winds of statistical variability. Six of the eight names also have some injury risk attached to them, which further muddies the waters."

"Clayton Kershaw is a god. Chris Sale and Max Scherzer are nearly as holy. In fact, their individual profiles are close enough that any one of the three could be ranked ahead of the others. That does not necessarily mean one of them will be the top earner come October – that honor is often reserved for an outlier who has his one shining (*cough* Keuchel *cough*) season – but among the three, I wouldn't be surprised to see Sale or Scherzer finish ahead of Kershaw."

"Remember that, despite owning the skills and the role NOW, top-ranked closer Wade Davis has never saved even 20 games in a season. Ditto for 8th-ranked Ken Giles."

CONTENTS

On the next page is a sample of what the current National Fantasy Baseball Championship ADPs looks like as evaluated by BABS. Here are the key takeaways:

The faux precision of statistical projections force us to find differences between players whose skills are essentially the same. Look: Paul Goldschmidt, Josh Donaldson, Nolan Arenado, Andrew McCutchen and Edwin Encarnacion own pretty much identical skill/risk profiles, yet they are ranked 2, 5, 7, 14 and 21, respectively. That means, if you miss out on Donaldson at #5, you can just as well roster Encarnacion at #21 and get virtually the same player. Any differences between them are not projectable because the statistical variability at that level is too wide.

The BABS spreadsheet in this book ranks like players together and shows the variance with marketplace values so you can easily identify profit opportunities.

	ASSETS									LIABILITIES						
	BATTER	Pos	Tm	PT	Pw	Sp	Av	Pk	Rg	Av	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
	PITCHER	Pos	Tm	PT	Er	K	Sv	Pk	Rg	Er	Inj	Ex	Nw	Pk	Ag	Rg
1	Trout,Mike	8o	LAA	F	P+	s	AV									
2	Goldschmidt,Paul	3	ARI	F	P+		AV									
3	Harper,Bryce	o9	WAS	F	P+		AV				inj-					
4	Kershaw,Clayton	SP	LA	F	E+	K+										
5	Donaldson,Josh	5	TOR	F	P+		AV									
6	Correa,Carlos	6	HOU	F	PW		AV					EX				Rg
7	Arenado,Nolan	5	COL	F	P+		AV									
8	Machado,Manny	5	BAL	F	p		AV				inj-					
9	Bryant,Kris	5	CHC	F	P+	s						e				
10	Stanton,Giancarlo	o9	MIA	F	P+		AV				inj-					
11	Rizzo,Anthony	3	CHC	F	PW		AV									
12	Altuve,Jose	4	HOU	F		SB	AV									Rg
13	Scherzer,Max	SP	WAS	F	ER	K+										
14	McCutchen,Andrew	8o	PIT	F	P+		AV									
15	Pollock,A.J.	8o	ARI	F	p	SB	AV									
16	Cabrera,Miguel	3	DET	F	PW		AV				inj-					
17	Betts,Mookie	o8	BOS	F	p	SB	AV					e				
18	Gordon,Dee	4	MIA	F		S+	AV									
19	Arrieta,Jake	SP	CHC	F	ER	KK										Rg
20	Posey,Buster	23	SF	F	p		AV									
21	Encarnacion,Edwin	3	TOR	F	P+		AV									
22	Abreu,Jose	30	CHW	F	PW		AV									
23	Marte,Starling	o7	PIT	F	p	SB	AV									
24	Springer,George	o9	HOU	F	PW	SB	a				INJ	e				
25	Davis,Chris	3o90	BAL	F	P+		a									Rg
26	Sale,Chris	SP	CHW	F	ER	K+										
27	Bautista,Jose	o90	TOR	F	P+		a									
28	Bumgarner,Madison	SP	SF	F	ER	KK										
29	Fernandez,Jose	SP	MIA	M	ER	K+					INJ					
30	Greinke,Zack	SP	ARI	F	ER	k							Nw			Rg

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