



SMART FANTASY BASEBALL

GUIDE TO THE BEST FANTASY BASEBALL RESOURCES

Welcome to the SFBB Guide to the Best Fantasy Baseball Resources.

There are hundreds of websites, blogs, tools, and books devoted to the subject of fantasy baseball. These are the ones that earn the SFBB seal of approval.

Nearly all of the resources that follow are also available to you free of charge. The only items that will cost you are books available for purchase.

I have surely neglected to include some very valuable resources. Please let me know of any other websites, tools, or blogs that you think are worthy of the SFBB seal of approval. You can e-mail me at SmartFantasyBaseball@gmail.com.

I can't thank you enough for taking the time to follow SFBB. Be smart.

~ Tanner Bell



ONLINE TOOLS & WEBSITES

FANGRAPHS PROJECTIONS [\(LINK\)](#)

Fangraphs offers a variety of great projection systems in a free and easily downloadable that can be used in any spreadsheet application. The projections first become available in the preseason and are a great resource for [making your own player rankings](#). Once the season begins, several of the projection systems are updated daily to provide you with rest-of-season projected statistics for every player.

MLBDEPTHCHARTS.COM [\(LINK\)](#)

[Playing time and where a player bats in the lineup are two of the most significant predictors of a player's production](#), and there is no better site to view each MLB team's current depth chart and recent batting order.

Monitoring lineup trends and knowing where players hit in the order is a great way to gain a competitive advantage over the rest of your league.

PITCH F/X DATA AT BROOKSBASEBALL.NET [\(LINK\)](#)

This may be the best site out there for doing individual pitcher analysis ([here's an example of some research I did on Max Scherzer early in the 2013 season](#)). The site allows you to get information about pitch type, pitch speed, and pitch results (hit, strikeout, line drive, fly ball, called strike, etc.). This is great for evaluating pitchers and also serves as a way to understand hitter outcomes as well (Have pitchers realized player Y can't hit a curve ball? Is he seeing an increase in curve balls? Are his results improving against the pitch?).

This information is available at several other outlets on the web, but a great advantage of BrooksBaseball are the beautiful charts that allow you visually spot trends in data. I'm getting old, so it's getting more difficult to look at a huge table of raw data and spot trends.

All this information is also available in usable tables you can copy and paste into a spreadsheet.

MY LINEUP TOOL AT BASEBALLPRESS.COM [\(LINK\)](#)

Let me get back on my soap box and preach about playing time again... I'm nothing if not consistent.



We've all missed out on statistics, lost in a H2H league by a run or two, or lost a daily fantasy contest because a game was rained out. Baseball Press' My Lineup Tool is free and gives you early and accurate lineup information. You'll know which players are in the lineup, where they are batting in the order, and if their game is threatened by weather.

Here is a two part series about how to sign up and start using this great tool ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#)).

RAZZBALL.COM PLAYER RATER AND PLAYER PAGES ([LINK](#))

Razzball's Player Rater gives concrete information about the statistical value of each and every player. Trying to evaluate a three-for-three player trade? Or if trading hitter X for pitcher Y is reasonable? Start here.

I believe the Player Rater is driven off of the theory of [Standings Gain Points](#), so you can see that Miguel Cabrera was the most valuable fantasy player during the 2013 season, earning 10.3 standings points (3.2 in HR, 3.3 in RBI, etc.). Clayton Kershaw has been the best pitcher, earning 8.6 points (2.7 in ERA, 2.8 in WHIP, 1.8 in Ks, etc.).

The player rater can be customized for your league type, league size, and league provider (Yahoo or ESPN).

Each individual player page at Razzball contains similar information and also includes projected statistics for the next week. Each hitter's next 7 opponents are outlined and a projection for each game is provided.

There is more information than I can even go into here. But watch [this video](#) for an example of how to utilize Excel to harness some of the information on these player pages.

CONSENSUS PROJECTIONS AT FANTASYPROS.COM ([LINK](#))

It is generally accepted that combining multiple forecasting models results in improved and more accurate forecasts. This same thinking can be applied to baseball projections, which are just another forecast. The act of aggregating and averaging various projection models can be difficult... Unless you use the [consensus projections](#) at FantasyPros.com.

Once you're at the main projection page at FantasyPros.com, look for the link mentioning the projection data is the "Consensus of # Sources". Click this link and you'll then be able to include or exclude specific projection models from the data below.

2014 FANTASY BASEBALL PROJECTIONS

Zeile Consensus Projections

Mixed League | AL Only | NL Only | Rankings | Auction Values | ADP

Hitters Pitchers 1B 2B 3B SS C OF

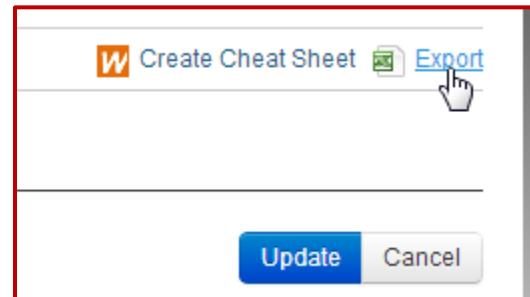
Hitter Projections: [Consensus of 5 Sources](#)

Latest Update: 2/14/2014



	Source Name	Site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Site Projections	ESPN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Site Projections	CBS Sports
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steamer Projections	Steamer Blog
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clay Davenport	Clay Davenport
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CAIRO Projections	RLYW.net

After you update the information to include your desired sources, the list can be exported into Excel.



COMPOSITE PROJECTIONS FROM MLB FANTASY 411 ([LINK](#))

Similar to the consensus projections from FantasyPros, [Cory Schwartz](#), of [Fantasy411](#) fame, releases composite projections each season. The interesting thing about these projections is that he averages an anonymous set of projections and then appears to make adjustments for his own playing time estimates, applies a R and RBI formula, and uses a customized SB formula. We don't have a way of knowing which resources are used (it's kept a secret), but I'd guess there are several very well-known resources included (for example, Todd Zola converts the projections into dollar values). The projections are available for download [here](#).

BATTED BALL DISTANCE AT BASEBALLHEATMAPS.COM ([LINK](#))

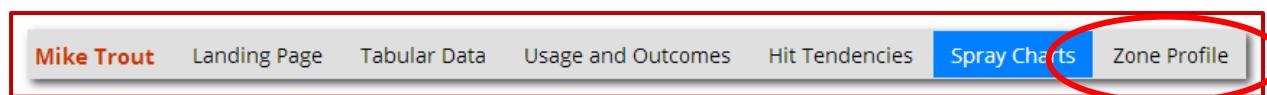
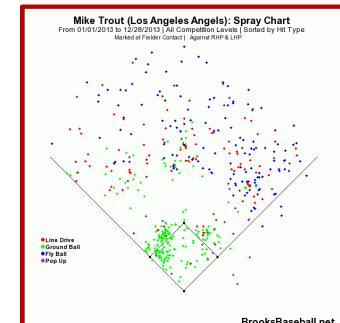
This site calculates the average distance of home runs and fly balls (among other things) for individual players and shows you the progression over time. This allows you to analyze the legitimacy of home runs and answer questions like, "Does Player X's batted ball distance support their current home run total?"

HOME RUN TRACKER AT HITTRACKERONLINE.COM) ([LINK](#))

Hit Tracker allows you to overlay a player's home runs on any ballpark in MLB. If a player is traded from Detroit to Texas and you want to know if the home run distance translates to the new ballpark, this is the place to go.

HITTER SPRAY CHART INFORMATION AT BROOKSBASEBALL.NET ([LINK](#))

In addition to the pitcher tools mentioned above, every hitter has a "Spray Chart" tab at BrooksBaseball.net. You can easily use the filter settings to view the batted ball profile for any hitter (where they hit line drives, ground balls, fly balls, and pop ups). These spray charts can be helpful for things like determining why a player's BABIP is changing (is he too pull happy and being shifted by opposing defenses) or if a hitter changes parks and you want to see where he hits fly balls to.



SPRAY CHART COMPARISON TOOLS FROM BILL PETTI ([LINK](#))

Bill Petti has worked with Jeff Zimmerman (of BaseballHeatMaps.com) to create a comparison tool for spray charts. You can use this to compare the batted balls from one ball park to another ball park, one hitter to another hitter, one pitchers batted balls to another pitcher, or one hitter in 2013 to the same hitter in 2012. You can read more about how to use these tools [here](#).



BATTING LINEUP HISTORY FOR EACH MLB TEAM AT BASEBALL-REFERENCE.COM ([LINK](#))

Where a player hits in the lineup matters. For every spot a player moves down the order (lead off to second, fifth to sixth, etc.), that player [loses approximately 0.1 plate appearances per game](#), or about 16 plate appearances over the course of the season. While those numbers seem small, a change like that can really affect a player's value. Check out [this write up](#) about how you can easily check where players bat in the lineup using Baseball-Reference's [lineup pages](#).

WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN YOUR LEAGUE CALCULATOR ([LINK](#))

[Do you know the historical averages that it takes to win your league?](#) I mean, do you really know the stat totals you need to win in a given year? If you play in a league with an established history, [this free downloadable Excel tool](#) can help you answer these questions and help you create a draft plan tailored to the specific tendencies in your league.

NFBC AVERAGE DRAFT POSITION RESULTS ([LINK](#))

The NFBC is a national fantasy baseball challenge that requires an entry fee of \$150 to play in the cheapest competitions. That fact alone lends some credibility to the results of these drafts. The NFBC leagues are 15-team, traditional 5x5 categories, with traditional 23-man starting rosters (14 hitters, 9 pitchers). While you may not play in a 15-team league, if you play in a traditional rotisserie league, these ADP results will be much more reflective of what you will see in a skilled league where the lineups and draft results are not tailored to non-traditional setups used by many ESPN and Yahoo! leagues.

NFBC FINAL STANDINGS AND CATEGORY RESULTS ([LINK](#))

If you don't have an established league history that can tell you the amount of HR required to win a mixed league, or if you want a larger data set than just your own home league, NFBC statistical results are available here (click on the desired stat to review – [BA](#), [R](#), [HR](#), [RBI](#), [SB](#), [ERA](#), [W](#), [WHIP](#), [K](#), [SV](#)). For example, out of 1,140 NFBC teams in the 2013 online draft competition, the team with the most home runs had 327 and the team with the least had 138.

PODCASTS

I'm a huge fan of podcasts as a way to get my hands on more fantasy baseball information. The audio is a nice change of pace from the typical reading of fantasy information. I also spend a lot of time in the car driving to work, I can listen while I'm getting a work out in, and I can also listen in the office while I'm working on other things. Podcasts are a great way to get your hands on information.



BASEBALL HQ RADIO ([iTUNES LINK](#)) ([RSS FEED](#))

This podcast runs twice a week and is loaded with separate American and National League perspectives, minor league information, and daily fantasy game analysis. But the real gem in each episode is the interview host Patrick Davitt has with a fantasy baseball expert (and we're talking respected experts like [Ron Shandler](#) (creator of Baseball HQ, among many other accomplishments), [Todd Zola](#) (creator of Mastersball.com, fantasy author all over the web), [Jeff Erickson](#) (senior editor at Rotowire, expert league winner, writer of the year), and [Larry Scheeter](#) (five time TOUT Wars winner). These interviews are my favorite resource for learning new strategies and to gain exposure to different ways of thinking about fantasy baseball.

TOWERS OF POWER BASEBALL HOUR ([iTUNES LINK](#)) ([RSS FEED](#))

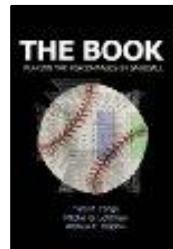
[Jason Collette](#) and [Paul Sporer](#), [two of my most trusted fantasy baseball information sources](#), put out roughly three podcasts per month. The episodes are usually about two hours long and are full of advanced fantasy baseball information. The duo uses statistics and sabermetrics to support their fantasy analysis and they're also entertaining to listen to.

MLB.COM FANTASY 411 ([iTUNES LINK](#))

Another great podcast with frequent interviews from fantasy baseball experts. [Cory Schwartz](#) and the guest discuss news, two-start pitchers, and listener e-mail questions. Listening to resources like these talk strategy and player analysis is a tremendous learning opportunity.

BOOKS

THE BOOK ([LINK](#))

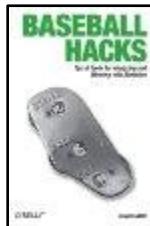


A must read if you're looking to take your understanding of baseball statistics and sabermetrics to the next level. This book definitively answers a lot of questions you've encountered about baseball and proves the answers with stone hard facts. Questions like "Does a hot or cold streak have any predictive value?", "Is a sample size of 25 at bats against a particular hitter/pitcher at all predictive of future results against the same hitter/pitcher?", and "How much of an advantage does a right handed batter have against a left handed pitcher?".

All of these questions and answers affect how you set your fantasy lineups and make roster decisions.

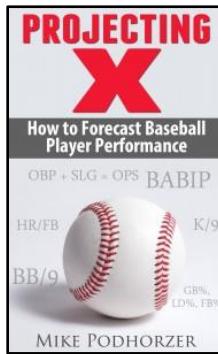


BASEBALL HACKS ([LINK](#))



This is my single favorite resource in this whole list. The book is loaded with 75 different technology and data-related “hacks”. And the book walks you through how to implement each hack using free resources. From using Microsoft Excel to obtain data, to how to plot spray charts, to creating your own baseball statistics databases, I’ll be spending the entire offseason playing around with the information in this book. It’s not for the faint of heart, some experience and familiarity with technology is highly recommended.

PROJECTING X ([LINK](#))



I had long wanted to develop my own fantasy baseball projections, and this book by [Mike Podhorzer](#) delivered. It gives step-by-step instructions for projecting hitters and pitchers, walks you through specific Excel formulas to use, and links to other valuable articles on the web to help educate you on advanced baseball metrics helpful to building projections. Not only did this help me build projections, but it's been extremely educational in helping me understand how statistics like strikeout rate, walk rate, BABIP, HR/FB, and a player's batted ball profile all fit together to form an entire stat line. I liked it so much that I built an Excel template to help improve upon some of the methods discussed in the book. Mike Podhorzer liked the tool I build so much he agreed to bundle it together and sell it with *Projecting X*. The bundle is only available through Smart Fantasy Baseball. You can read more about the “Projecting X Bundle” [here](#) or see a couple short videos about the product [here](#).

SPREADSHEET TOOLS & RESOURCES

CHANDOO.ORG ([LINK](#))

I believe Microsoft Excel is a tool every great fantasy baseball player should be using. And simply put Chandoo.org is the best online Microsoft Excel resource I've ever come across. There's an “[Excel Basics](#)” section if you're just getting started with Excel. There's an “[Advanced Excel](#)” section if you're looking to take your skills to the next level.

If there's a task you're trying to accomplish with baseball data, you can likely find your answer at this site.

But Microsoft Excel isn't free you say? Don't think you can't implement the ideas or use the tools from SmartFantasyBaseball just because you don't have access to Excel. There are high quality and [free alternatives available to you](#). Excel is the greatest and most powerful spreadsheet program out there, but you can get in the ball park with Google Sheets and Open Office



(Disclaimer: my step-by-step guides won't 100% translate to these other programs though).

GOOGLE SHEETS ([LINK](#))

Google gives free access to its powerful spreadsheet application. All you need is to register for a Google account or to log in using your Gmail account. All you need to use the program is a recent web browser. You don't even need to install any programs. The spreadsheet program is powerful, your files are all stored in the cloud and are available from any device or computer, and you can easily share access to your files with others.

OPEN OFFICE ([LINK](#))

Open Office is a legitimate and free alternative to Microsoft Excel. It's a powerful program with nearly all of the functionality available in Excel. Open Office is installed on your computer, giving you more powerful results and faster speeds than Google's web-based solution.

MESSAGE BOARDS

If you're looking to interact with other intelligent fantasy baseball owners dedicated to the craft, message boards are a great place to look. But we all know that not all message boards are created equally. These two groups/message boards are worthy.

ROTOJUNKIEFIX ([LINK](#))**TOWERS OF POWER FANTASY HOUR FACEBOOK GROUP ([LINK](#))**