

2023 MLB Mock Draft Analysis

By: Ethan Kagno

First Round

1. Pittsburgh Pirates - Paul Skenes, RHP, Louisiana State ([Video](#))

It seems as though an LSU Tiger is a lock for the first overall pick. Whether it's Paul Skenes or his teammate Dylan Crews, the Pittsburgh Pirates select first for the second time in the last three seasons. I think they opt for the former.

Skenes utilizes his large 6-foot-6 247-pound frame to throw an upper 90s fastball that regularly hits triple digits with good arm-side run, a mid-80s slider with tight shape, and a high 90s changeup with good tail. His sturdy lower half helps him command and control the zone with ease. One thing I noticed was how quiet his lead shoulder stays which helps him hide the ball and create even more deception with his elite arsenal. I think he rises relatively quickly through the minors, as his elite stuff could currently play at the big league level.

Comparison: Stephen Strasburg

2. Washington Nationals - Dylan Crews, OF, Louisiana State

That leaves Skenes' teammate, and arguably the best prospect in the draft class, to the Nats. The reigning Golden Spikes Award winner is too good to pass up here and brings all five tools to the diamond.

Crews possesses power to all fields and can easily drive the ball from wherever in the zone. He has very good bat-to-ball skills and hits the ball hard gap to gap. Able to work the count and rarely punches out (68 BB/45 SO in 2023). Very solid defensively, Crews should likely stick in CF although he has the ability to move to either of the corner outfield spots given his arm and athleticism.

While the Nationals do have good OF depth in their farm system (James Wood, Robert Hassell III, Elijah Green, among others), it seems unlikely that they pivot and find a college or high school arm at under-slot value. If Crews ultimately gets taken first overall, the Nats have an easier choice here and simply take Skenes.

Comparison: Andrew McCutchen

3. Detroit Tigers - Wyatt Langford, OF, Florida

The second-best college outfielder in this draft is clearly Wyatt Langford. If Crews didn't exist, there's a clear case to be made that Langford is the top overall selection. The College World Series champ is an easy choice for Detroit at pick three.

The Florida Gator offers immense five-tool upside with his promising raw power and above-average hit tool. Langford at 6-foot-1, 225 pounds, has a muscular and thicker build than your speedy center fielder but still shows solid speed at the position. Calm and confident at the plate, Langford drew 90 walks in 132 games for Florida and showed gap-to-gap power throughout college. Langford reminds me of a right-handed version of Gavin Cross who was taken early in last year's draft.

Comparison: Adam Duvall

4. Texas Rangers - Max Clark, OF, Franklin HS (IN)

I'm a real big fan of Max Clark - and so will the Rangers be at fourth overall. The first high schooler off the board offers plenty of traits that any front office will drool over. Clark is a speedster and profiles well in center given his strong arm as well. While the power is still under development, he could still be a 20/20 guy in the bigs. Most of the tools are there and it will be fun to see how his power progresses as he's still just 18 years old.

Clark was a three-sport athlete (baseball, basketball, football) in high school and put up video game numbers on the diamond. In 28 games his senior year, Clark hit .646 with 52 walks and only 5 strikeouts and his OPS was a cool 2.023.

Comparison: Cedric Mullins

5. Minnesota Twins - Kyle Teel, C, Virginia

I may be higher on Kyle Teel than anyone else. The versatile backstop and ACC Player of the Year could become the highest-drafted catcher in Twins history since Joe Mauer in 2001.

Teel is super athletic and his IQ behind the dish is nothing short of spectacular. He possesses a plus arm and is the prototypical catcher defensively that teams yearn for. While he has the ability to hit 20+ homers in the majors, his contact is what I think will stand out the most offensively and help provide a boost into the top-five picks.

Comparison: A left-handed-hitting J.T. Realmuto

6. Oakland Athletics - Walker Jenkins, OF, South Brunswick HS (NC)

The A's would be foolish to pass on the sweet-lefty-swinging high schooler Jenkins if he were to fall past five. A toolsy player that would be at the focal point of the Las Vegas rebuild in a handful of years, the UNC recruit has a strong frame and athletic component to his game that shouldn't see him go lower than this.

His power projects as a plus and his hit tool isn't far behind. Not as quick as Max Clark or dynamic as Wyatt Langford, but could still slot into a corner outfield position given a plus arm. He has a quiet and smooth lower half and uses quick hips to get around the ball.

Comparison: Austin Meadows

7. Cincinnati Reds - Rhet Lowder, RHP, Wake Forest

Lowder's strong postseason run cements him as the first college arm, not named Paul Skenes, taken off the board. While the Reds could prefer the fellow college-righty Dollander or prep southpaw Meyer, I think Lowder has the potential to become an ace; with a filthy changeup and tremendous control standing out the most.

The Wake Forest product mixes a mid-90s two-seamer with arm-side run and a high spin mid-80s slider with solid depth but is inconsistent at times. He commands his plus changeup well and troubles hitters on both sides of the plate. Mechanically, Lowder's closed front shoulder and tilt in his delivery take pressure off his elbow. I think this is where consideration for Lowder begins.

Comparison: Mike Clevinger

8. Kansas City Royals - Chase Dollander, RHP, Tennessee

Dollander burst onto the scene as a transfer with Tennessee in 2022 after an abysmal freshman season at Georgia Southern. In his two years as a Volunteer, Dollander amassed 228 strikeouts and only allowed 43 free passes.

His strong four-pitch mix starts with a mid-90s heater with good carry and induces swing and miss. A powerful slider with sweep and has the ability to be one of his better pitches. His curveball and changeup still have some work to do but they still grade in as average at best. Control and command have been the larger issue in the past season however his athleticism and projectible 6'2" frame bring intangibles a team like the Royals will seriously consider here.

Dollander's compact windup mimics the likes of one of the best pitchers in the league, when healthy of course, in Jacob deGrom. Could he be just as good? It's possible, but this seemed like a strong physical comp in addition to both arms displaying plus-plus fastballs.

Comparison: Jacob deGrom

9. Colorado Rockies - Arjun Nimmala, SS, Strawberry Crest HS (FL)

Arjun Nimmala should be the first prep infielder off the board over the likes of Houck and Miller. Nimmala will be just 17 at the time of the draft and clearly has still more projection left from his 6-foot-1, 170-pound frame.

Nimmala has a quick twitch swing and sneaky pop which may not be so sneaky as he continues to grow. The right-handed hitter possesses an open stance and seems comfortable in the box with a high finish after making contact. He should be able to tap more into his raw power as he develops and is average at the very least in all other categories. The Florida State recruit should be able to stick to shortstop given his athleticism and range.

Comparison: A young Manny Machado

10. Miami Marlins - Jacob Wilson, SS, Grand Canyon

One of the best pure hit tools in the draft belongs to Jacob Wilson. While the power isn't a strong part of the game, it still grades out as average. Despite his twitchy presence in the box, this hasn't hampered his swing as he manages to get the bat fast through the zone. He uses decent speed on the basepaths to rack up extra bases and has some of the best bat-to-ball skills among fellow draft prospects. Imagine a future major league lineup consisting of Wilson and Luis Arraez up the middle...that'd be fun. Given his above-average arm and high baseball IQ, a move to the hot corner shouldn't be an issue if needed.

Son of former major leaguer Jack Wilson, Jacob's ability to limit strikeouts like his father once did could see him rise quickly through the minors to join an exciting young Marlins squad.

Comparison: Jack Wilson

11. Los Angeles Angels - Noble Meyer, RHP, Jesuit HS (OR)

The top lefty and prep arm in the draft class is a steal for the Angels at 11. Noble's two-seam fastball has crept into the high-90s and features good tail. Meyer relies on a high spin slider as a putout pitch and Meyer himself claims it as his best weapon. His third pitch is an average changeup with solid arm action and works nicely to round out his repertoire. Meyer has messed around with a cutter and curveball but we'll see how they develop.

The Oregon commit comes in at a lanky 6-foot-5, 185 pounds, but could still grow out into his frame. He generates solid extension down the mound, paired with excellent arm action and good depth with his breaking ball pitches. Meyer's calm mound presence and high IQ bolster him amongst the top pitching prospects in the draft. I hate to continue throwing out deGrom comps left and right, however, Meyer has said he models his game after the ace and there are many similarities in his delivery.

Comparison: Jacob deGrom

12. Arizona Diamondbacks - Colin Houck, SS, Parkview HS (GA)

Houck has a quick and compact swing, not much movement in the box, and drivability to all fields. Above average contact hitter with raw power, though most of it is pull-side. The Georgia native possesses a narrow and somewhat closed-off stance with a relatively flat bat through the zone - a lot of line drives with gap-to-gap ability.

Houck is a very athletic 6-foot-2 and has a strong arm that could play from third base as well. While he turned down offers from top football schools to play quarterback, the Mississippi State commit will likely turn to pro ball instead.

Comparison: A right-handed Chase Headley

13. Chicago Cubs - Nolan Schanuel, 1B/OF, Florida Atlantic ([Video](#))

One of my favorite players in the draft, Schanuel was dominant throughout his collegiate career with FAU. Schanuel had a good workout with the Cubs in mid-June and this team could seriously consider the power-hitting lefty here.

Schanuel's disciplined approach at the plate saw him walk more than he struck out with the Owls; including a stellar 71 walks opposed to just 14 strikeouts in 2023. Schanuel crowds the plate and utilizes a high leg kick to start his swing. While this may be more of a ceiling in terms of where Schanuel is selected, I am bullish on the former Hyannis Harbor Hawk of the Cape Cod Baseball League, where I was able to watch many of his games last summer.

Comparison: Anthony Rizzo

14. Boston Red Sox - Thomas White, LHP, Phillips Academy (MA) ([Video](#))

White is a lanky left-hander at 6-foot-5, 210 pounds but has a good feel for his body. He struggled at times with control but excels with a mid to high-90s fastball that plays well up in the zone. He has good movement on his curveball and his changeup has solid depth to round out his three-pitch mix.

I saw White take on the Orleans Firebirds of the Cape Cod Baseball League last summer at Fenway Park. A team that featured Travis Honeyman, Luke Keaschall, Kevin Sim, and Bennett Lee, to name a few. White pitched two innings, allowed no hits, and struck out two while walking three. He showed some control issues as pointed out before, but settled in. I think the Red Sox lure the Vanderbilt recruit, and Massachusetts native, in hopes that White becomes a future ace.

Comparison: Max Fried

15. Chicago White Sox - Matt Shaw, SS, Maryland ([Video](#))

There's much to like about Terps middle infielder, Matt Shaw. The Brimfield, Massachusetts native earned 2022 CCBL MVP honors during his stint with the Bourne Braves where he slashed .360/.432/.574.

Shaw carries an athletic build with an impactful bat and defensive versatility. He's also shown off some speed with 21 thefts on the Cape and 18 more during his last season with Maryland.

Comparison: Brian Dozier

16. San Francisco Giants - Enrique Bradfield Jr, OF, Vanderbilt

The flying Vandy center fielder will be a hot commodity around this spot as the Giants add some speed to the organization. Obviously, he'll steal bases at every level and be a plus defender in the outfield. He should be able to emulate what Esteyru Ruiz and Ronald Acuna have done between the basepaths so far this season.

Bradfield seems destined to hit in the leadoff spot at the major league level. He excels at reaching base and getting his bat on the ball, whether it's turning singles into doubles or perfectly executed bunts. While there isn't too much power, his lean 6-foot-1 170-pound frame provides plenty of value elsewhere.

Comparison: Chone Figgins

17. Baltimore Orioles - Hurston Waldrup, RHP, Florida

Waldrup is a phenomenal talent and further raised his draft stock with a solid postseason performance for the Gators. Offers a solid three-pitch mix with a mid-high 90s FB and a firm slider that has improved since his freshman year. He misses bats with a devastating splitter that should continue to give batters nightmares throughout the minors.

The only knock that has the Florida star sliding to the middle of the first round, rather than a top-10 pick, is his inconsistencies with command and control. If he improves to be able to repeat a fluid delivery, he could be a bargain en route to joining a young Baltimore rotation.

Comparison: Ryne Stanek

18. Milwaukee Brewers - Aidan Miller, 3B, Mitchell HS (FL)

Miller has high offensive upside here at 18 and offers an above-average arm at the hot corner. The third prep infielder off my board has plus power and could always slide across the diamond to fill the need at first base if necessary.

He has been a solid hitter thus far throughout high school competition, but I ultimately think he is a power first bat in pro ball. If he can keep up what he's shown to this point, he could pay dividends for Milwaukee.

Comparison: Alec Bohm

19. Tampa Bay Rays - Tommy Troy, SS, Stanford ([Video](#))

The Stanford Cardinal standout is a versatile infielder that has some pull-side pop and all-around athleticism; showcased throughout his collegiate career. He had a dominant showing on the Cape in 2022 where he was named the league's top prospect. Touching on Troy's athleticism and versatility, he played a strong second and third base while primarily slotting in at short. At 5-foot-10, 195 lbs, Troy profiles similarly to fellow college bat Matt Shaw who should be looked at in this range as well.

The San Jose, CA native should be an MLB regular one day if he continues to find the barrel and make hard contact resulting in high exit velocities. His flexibility around the infield could provide value as well.

Comparison: Ian Kinsler

20. Toronto Blue Jays - Jacob Gonzalez, SS, Mississippi

Not entirely sure Jacob Gonzalez makes it this late in the draft but if he's still on the board at #20, I think it would be a great landing spot for him.

His main strengths lie within his 6-foot-2 frame offensively, using a powerful stroke from the left side with above-average power and the ability to drive the ball gap to gap. Below average runner but could also profile well at third base given his offensive makeup and strong arm defensively.

Comparison: Marcelo Mayer

21. St. Louis Cardinals - Bryce Eldridge Jr, 1B/RHP, Madison HS (VA)

The massive 6-foot-7 two-way prep star with a solid three-pitch mix (FB, SL, CH) on the mound, and a compact lefty swing at the plate. If pitching ultimately doesn't work out for him at the higher levels, his athleticism could help his value if he were to be slotted into a corner outfield spot given his plus arm in addition to playing at first base.

Comparison: Kyle Gibson/Spencer Jones

22. Seattle Mariners - Chase Davis, OF, Arizona

Davis has gained some helium in the last few months. Currently ranked the 39th overall prospect (per MLB Pipeline), teams love the raw power from the left side. My concern is strikeouts. It's power over contact and his long swing is the culprit of some swing and misses. Regardless, the former Wildcat offers above-average speed and a plus arm in the outfield, likely destined for a corner spot. Based on recent reports this is likely his floor, with teams like the Red Sox and White Sox rumored to have interest as well.

Comparison: Carlos Gonzalez

23. Cleveland Guardians - Brayden Taylor, 3B, Texas Christian ([Video](#))

There isn't really a specific tool that jumps off the page for the left-handed third basemen from TCU. Taylor put in some good work on the Cape in 2021 and briefly in 2022 before playing for Team USA and increasing his draft stock as a first-round talent this year. He has great plate discipline and can work deep in the count to see quality at-bats. He has the ability to drive the ball to all fields and 15-20 home runs seem realistic on a yearly basis.

Comparison: Kyle Seager

24. Atlanta Braves - Sammy Stafura, SS, Panas HS (NY)

Stafura is a raw athlete with plus speed as a solid defender up the middle. Offensively, his swing is reminiscent of Christian Yelich, albeit from the right side. It's a high front leg load and compact swing with quick hands through the zone. He makes hard contact and his pull-side power is most noticeable as he's a power-over-hit type.

Comparison: Zach Neto

25. San Diego Padres - Charlee Soto, RHP, Reborn Christian Academy (FL)

The 6-foot-5, 17-year-old checks a lot of boxes with a live fastball that has ticked triple digits alongside an above-average slider and changeup/splitter as secondary options. Considering his large frame, Soto converted to the mound full-time after playing as a switch-hitting shortstop.

Soto is quickly becoming one of my favorite prospects in this draft, and it wouldn't surprise me if he went higher than 25th overall on Sunday. A first-round selection should be enough to pry the recruit away from the University of Central Florida.

Comparison: Taijuan Walker

26. New York Yankees - Blake Mitchell, C, Sinton HS (TX)

Mitchell will likely be the second catcher taken off the board behind top-10 pick Kyle Teel. The LSU commit has had success on the mound as well but his offensive profile could also lead him towards a corner outfield spot. It's a plus-plus arm with average defensive skills behind the dish. There are strikeout concerns here and he doesn't have the smoothest swing. He's also a below-average runner, thus seeing him fall to the end of the first round seems likely.

Comparison: Cal Raleigh

27. Philadelphia Phillies - Yohandy Morales, 3B, Miami

Another college bat that could very well end up in the 15-20 range of this draft. However, I think the swing and miss concerns are a factor here and until he gets those ironed out, he will be a power-over-hit type with a lower average.

There is a lot to like for the corner infield type; his 6-foot-4 225-pound frame with a solid arm should see him stick at third or move across to first given his size.

Comparison: Mark Trumbo

28. Houston Astros - Brock Wilken, 3B, Wake Forest ([Video](#))

I saw a lot of Brock Wilken during his two stints on the Cape in 2021 and 2022, winning MVP in the former year with Harwich while slashing .302/.430/.519. The strength and raw power are obvious and are the best part of his game. While swing and miss on breaking pitches is still a concern, his solid play defensively at third with a strong arm and high baseball IQ fits him well into the first-round discussion.

Comparison: Rhys Hoskins

Prospect Promotion Incentive Picks

29. Seattle Mariners - Colt Emerson, SS/3B, Glenn HS (OH)

Competitive Balance Round A

30. Seattle Mariners - Joe Whitman, LHP, Kent State

31. Tampa Bay Rays - Dillon Head, OF, Homewood-Flossmoor HS (IL)

32. New York Mets - Kevin McGonigle, SS/2B, Monsignor Bonner HS (PA)

33. Milwaukee Brewers - Ralphy Velazquez, C/1B, Huntington Beach HS (CA)

34. Minnesota Twins - Walker Martin, SS, Eaton HS (CO)

35. Miami Marlins - Cameron Johnson, LHP, IMG Academy (FL)

36. Los Angeles Dodgers - George Lombard Jr, Gulliver Prep (FL)

37. Detroit Tigers - Travis Sykora, RHP, Round Rock HS (TX)

- 38. Cincinnati Reds - Cole Carrigg, C/SS/OF, San Diego State ([Video](#))**
- 39. Oakland Athletics - Mitch Jebb, SS, Michigan State ([Video](#))**