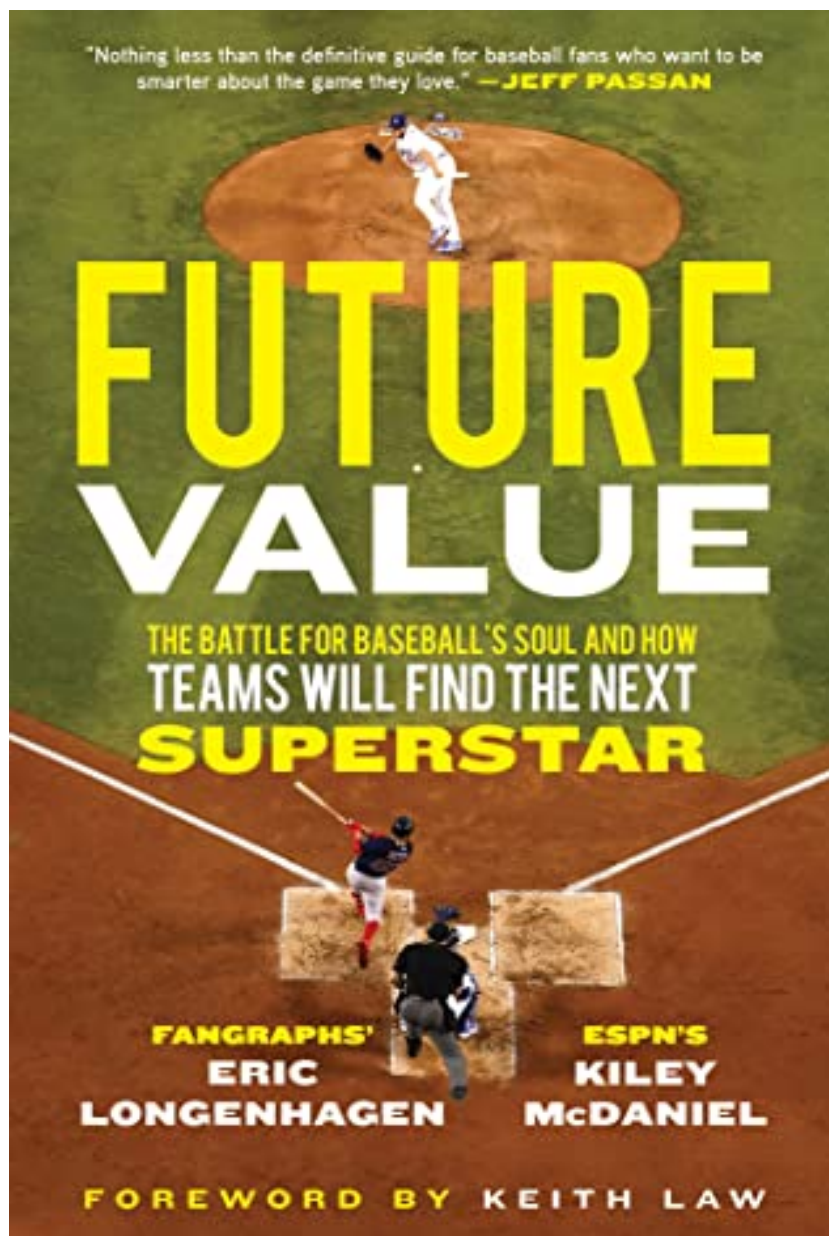


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# Future Value: The Battle for Baseball's Soul and How Teams Will Find the Next Superstar Book PDF Download



By:  
Eric Longenhagen

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### John

This is a weird review to write, because there are two really divergent grades I want to put on this book. The information contained within is good and useful; this shouldn't surprise anyone, as Eric and Kiley have been in the game for quite a while and are terrific at what they do. The writing, on the other hand, needed at least a few more rounds of editing. In addition to just copy-editing stuff, there were issues throughout of shifting author POV/perspective, changing person within the span o

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### Albert

This is an interesting book that probably shares more about the current Major League Baseball front

office and scouting cultures than almost any book out there. If "The MVP Machine: How Baseball's New Nonconformists Are Using Data To Build Better Players" by Ben Lindbergh and Travis Sawchik is about the new methods for player development in baseball, this book is about the new methods for scouting in baseball. In addition to how to scout modern baseball and value players in the age of spin rates

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The first part of the book talks through the different kinds of baseball scouting on a high level: amateur, international, and professional scouting. The Braves' amateur scouting director provides commentary on his past draft picks and scouting stories. He also discusses one of the author's stint as a Braves employee and conduit between scouting and analytics in the MLB draft room. The Yankees, Rays, and Dodgers international scouting directors share their insights and stories of chasing July 2 prospects. Here, the authors show how they are clearly connected in the industry, as well as have experience working for MLB organizations. There are plenty of great, inside stories on how a certain player was drafted or developed, with area scouts or scouting directors talking through the history behind how they made a decision on a player.

The middle of the book is about the details of baseball scouting: how to scout hitters, pitchers, and to summarize the complete evaluation of a player. Here is where the title of this book comes from, "Future Value," which is the authors' prescriptive measurement for prospects and they expect to perform in the big leagues under the framework of WAR, scaled to a 20-80 scouting grade. I found the recalls of examples of hitters with different types of swings to explain certain aspects of swing mechanics to be helpful, because I could visualize from memory Adrian Beltre homering on one knee, or Jose Bautista's big leg kick, or Javier Baez's bat waggle. Some interesting pitching insights from scouting include how it's easier to identify horizontal movement (cut, run/tail) than vertical movement of fastballs when scouting in person, possibly leading to the industry-wide undervaluing of rising fastballs for decades. There are helpful notes on understanding how to interpret spin rate, that high spin on four seamers up in the zone and low spin on two seamers down in the zone are both effective (middle-ground spin rate is the worst). Plenty of discussion on the value of "makeup" and inconsistent ways it's evaluated as well, but not entirely promoting nor disregarding the concept.

The final part of the book talks about the use of data in modern baseball and about each MLB organization and where they're at, with the authors reporting on each team's organizational philosophy in terms of roster construction. There are thoughts on high-speed video, how it confirms that pitches tend to miss bats due more to location rather than timing. Some changes in the game

include an anecdote on pulling a pitcher with the platoon advantage in favor of a pitcher with high fastballs in an opposite-handed matchup against a batter who struggled against high fastballs. Here, there are detailed thoughts from front office members and coaches on current trends with the league, plenty of front office and GM gossip (especially the Astros), including the orgs most likely to lay off scouts next after the Astros.

In terms of writing style, it reads like a couple hundred pages of FanGraphs articles. There are coherent themes, but there's a lot of "more on that later" to end paragraphs. I don't think this was an effective way to build anticipation for later parts of the book. It's a pretty poorly edited book, such as "its" vs. "it's," "expand" instead of "expound," etc. A lot of run-on sentences, with heavy use of parentheses to further explain points or provide caveats. This style reads fine as a FanGraphs article, but probably not as a book. Some concepts are explained multiple times, leading to the perception that the book was organized by joining together disparate articles about how to run a baseball front office or how to get a job in baseball. For instance, "getting turned in" by an area scout is explained at least a couple times in different chapters. There's also a somewhat condescending tone when making various points made throughout the book that the authors feel are obvious (minor league pay, scouting vs. analytics paradigm, fans of baseball vs. employees of baseball etc.).

Who is the intended audience for the book? Some of the early chapters is review for voracious readers of MLB Trade Rumors, Baseball America, and FanGraphs, whereas casual baseball/sports fans will likely find the content so esoteric and detailed as to potentially feel alienated and fall behind. Explanations include on the minor league farm systems, player development contracts, the Rule 5 Draft, options, waivers, wOBA, wRC+, ERA estimators, etc. These read like a 2020 best practices manual on baseball operations, so up-to-date with 2020 that the 26-man roster is referenced (as well as potential minor league contraction). Yet there are portions of the introduction where even casual sports fans will find elementary, for instance, the reminder that batting average is "the number of hits divided by at-bats."

I expect the small subset of baseball fans who know their favorite team's A-ball prospects and the difference between TrackMan and Edgertronic will enjoy this book, as well as employees from all 30 front offices rushing to buy this to learn about their competition. Players and their families, advisors, and agents should read this book to get up-to-date on how they're evaluated. If you want to work in baseball, this is probably one of the most informative reads to give you a realistic look at what it means to be a scout or a front office employee for a Major League Baseball club. In addition to a chapter devoted to how to get a job in baseball, there's even salary range tables for different levels of front office employees and scouts that you won't find on Glassdoor.

Will this book age well after 2020? Hard to say. Tectonic changes in the MLB were always likely to happen in 2020 and beyond, even before the pandemic potentially accelerated some of these changes. Minor league team contraction and an international draft are on the horizon. Some of this is addressed in the book. It even addresses whether some of its discussion will be rendered moot in a few years, as a kind of hedge against the criticism against the outdated lessons of "Moneyball" under the backdrop of the overarching theme of finding undervalued talent. If this book becomes

successful enough to release a paperback version with a new afterword to the paperback edition, undoubtedly the authors will discuss and predict how the pandemic changes scouting and MLB organizations forever. It's a good one, unique in its reporting and inside information amongst the many baseball books released in 2020, and very useful for those interested in how baseball operations actually works.

## Russel Henderson

A fantastic look at the worlds of amateur scouting and prospect development. They go piece by piece, ranging from the draft to IFA to pro scouting and on to the data and technology revolutions in evaluation and development. Some of these subjects are remarkably dry, but they pepper the book with anecdotes of successes and failures and use recent prospects to illustrate points theyâ€™re trying to make. They succeed in bringing out a book that is both instructive for someone familiar with the subject

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## Roxanne

I really loved the book. Three people in my family played pro baseball and one of them also did scouting. Scouting had changed from actually seeing the players play and using all this new technology and data to pick who would be a good player. The book talks about the various ways you can scout players, the Draft, The farm System (minor league players) and also International systems. Then they have a rating system where each player gets a number for hitting or pitching. The new future of baseball

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## Scot

I was extremely disappointed by this book. It's an interesting topic, and the authors clearly have a lot of knowledge and information to share. But the book is terribly written - it reads like a term paper written as a last-minute all nighter by someone who forgot to take their ADHD meds. The



organization is terrible - it jumps almost randomly from topic to topic and then back again; the phrase "we'll discuss this in more detail later" shows up repeatedly; and sentences saying the exact same thi

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Not recommended, at all. The authors can do better.