

The twenty-fifth part of my draft preview series is on the Colorado Rockies and their scouting director Bill Schmidt. Schmidt has run the Rockies' drafts since 2000, but I will focus on the most recent five years.

**Owner:** Charlie Monfort, bought club in 1992

**General Manager:** Dan O'Dowd, first season was 2000

**Scouting Director:** Bill Schmidt, first draft was 2000

### ***Looking Back***

#### **2005 Draft: \$6.0 Million Budget**

**1. Troy Tulowitzki, SS, Long Beach State, #7 Overall:** Tulowitzki was a solid top ten draft prospect in 2005, and he projected to be an excellent big league shortstop. He had above-average power and above-average defensive tools, a rare combo for a college shortstop. Following players selected: Wade Townsend, Mike Pelfrey, Cameron Maybin. Signing bonus: \$2,300,000.

**2. Chaz Roe, RHP, Lafayette HS (KY), #32 Overall:** Roe was an extremely projectable prep arm that had major helium in his senior year of high school. He was a solid two-way player, as well, making him an athletic prep arm with talent even for the back of the first round. Following players selected: John Drennen, Ryan Tucker, Cesar Ramos. Signing bonus: \$1,025,000.

**3. Daniel Carte, OF, Winthrop, #52 Overall:** Carte was a solid all-around collegiate athlete with good tools in most areas. He made himself into a good supplemental first round to second round option, showing good raw power, arm strength, and speed. Following players selected: Craig Italiano, Paul Kelly, Zach Simons. Signing bonus: \$670,000.

**4. Zach Simons, RHP, Everett CC (WA), #55 Overall:** Simons was another projectable arm, though he had already done some filling out between his years at Everett. More of a third to fifth round pick, Simons was a bit of surprise this early considering his lack of command, but he did have a big enough arm for this selection. Following players selected: Chris Mason, Jon Egan, Ryan Mount. Signing bonus: \$635,000.

**5. Kyle Hancock, RHP, Rowlett HS (TX), #87 Overall:** Hancock was a bigger prospect entering his senior year than leaving it. He was a possible late first-round option early on, but fell more to the third to sixth round area, where he offered a fairly polished arsenal for a prep arm. Following players selected: Bryan Morris, Tommy Manzella, Chris Robinson. Signing bonus: \$475,000.

**Other Notable Selections:** 2B Corey Wimberly (6th), Alcorn State, \$145K bonus.

### **2006 Draft: \$6.2 Million Budget**

**1. Greg Reynolds, RHP, Stanford, #2 Overall:** Reynolds was a legitimate top ten pick in the 2006 class, but quite a few people second-guessed his selection at such a high slot. He featured a polish arsenal with good command, but he didn't offer much upside over being a mid-rotation starter. Following players selected: Evan Longoria, Brad Lincoln, Brandon Morrow. Signing bonus: \$3,250,000.

**2. David Christensen, OF, Douglas HS (FL), #46 Overall:** Christensen was a solid all-around athlete that projected to be a good starting right fielder if everything went as planned. However, he was more of a third to fifth round prospect, and the Rockies took him with the second pick of the second round. Following players selected: Josh Butler, Mike Felix, Chris Tillman. Signing bonus: \$750,000.

**3. Keith Weiser, LHP, Miami (Ohio), #78 Overall:** Weiser was a solid college lefty that profiled best for the back of the rotation. A decent third to fifth round prospect, he featured solid-average stuff, but he also featured below-average command, and his handedness really helped him get such a high draft slot. Following players selected: Nick Fuller, Shelby Ford, Tony Butler. Signing bonus: \$455,000.

**4. Craig Baker, RHP, Cal State Northridge, #108 Overall:** Baker fit perfectly into this draft slot on most boards, as he was a solid college arm with fair upside. He had bounced around between the rotation and bullpen at Northridge, and his plus curveball got him drafted this high. Following players selected: Alex Cobb, Jared Hughes, Ricky Orta. Signing bonus: \$265,000.

## **5. Helder Velazquez, SS, Puerto Rico Baseball Academy, #138**

**Overall:** Velazquez was more of a seventh to tenth round pick as a defense-first shortstop. He wasn't a solid hitter, and he didn't project for any power, but he had the defensive tools of a gold-glover and was signable. Following players selected: Shawn O'Malley, Pat Bresnehan, Nathan Adcock. Signing bonus: \$209,000.

**Other Notable Selections:** C Michael McKenry (7<sup>th</sup>), Middle Tennessee State, \$135K bonus.

## **2007 Draft: \$3.7 Million Budget**

**1. Casey Weathers, RHP, Vanderbilt, #8 Overall:** Weathers was a senior college reliever, so it didn't make the most sense that he'd go in the top ten picks. He was more of a mid- to late-first round prospect, but he featured plus stuff and proven success at the back of the bullpen. Following players selected: Jarrod Parker, Madison Bumgarner, Phillippe Aumont. Signing bonus: \$1,800,000.

**2. Brian Rike, OF, Louisiana Tech, #72 Overall:** Rike was another player that was picked a little early by most industry standards, as he was more of a third to fifth round bat. He featured solid tools and good makeup, and that made him a solid draft prospect for teams looking for polished college outfielders. Following players selected: Barry Enright, Grant Desme, Denny Almonte. Signing bonus: \$450,000.

**3. Lars Davis, C, Illinois, #102 Overall:** Davis is yet another player that was picked a little early, as he looked like a fifth to eighth round prospect, though one with fairly good upside. He featured an excellent bat, but most teams didn't think he'd stick at catcher, as he was new to the position and was a little big. Following players selected: Reynaldo Navarro, Scott Carroll, Danny Carroll. Signing bonus: \$337,000.

**4. Isaiah Froneberger, LHP, Forest Park HS (GA), #132 Overall:** Froneberger was polarizing in the scouting community, as he was a short, stout lefty with solid-average stuff. He was a relief prospect at the time, and that's never great for a prep arm. However, he looked like a fifth to seventh round arm, and the Rockies took him in the fourth round. Following players selected: Sean Morgan, Corey Kluber, Nolan Gallagher. Signing bonus: \$200,000.

**5. Connor Graham, RHP, Miami (Ohio), #162 Overall:** Graham was a steal in the fifth round, as he looked like more of a second or third round prospect. He had a big arm, but not a lot of command, and his stuff wavered from start to start. Following players selected: Tyrell Worthington, Chance Corgan, Joseph Dunigan. Signing bonus: \$143,000.

**Other Notable Selections:** RHP Cory Riordan (6<sup>th</sup>), Fordham, \$120K bonus; RHP Parker Frazier (8<sup>th</sup>), Bishop Kelley HS (OK), \$100K bonus.

### **2008 Draft: \$4.2 Million Budget**

**1. Christian Friedrich, LHP, Eastern Kentucky, #25 Overall:** Friedrich was a possible early first-round arm, featuring solid mid-rotation stuff from the left side. However, he fell to the Rockies in the late first round for reasons unknown, and Colorado got a great first round steal. Following players selected: Daniel Schlereth, Carlos Gutierrez, Gerrit Cole. Signing bonus: \$1,330,000.

**2. Charlie Blackmon, OF, Georgia Tech, #72 Overall:** Blackmon was moving up boards quickly as a senior, having been fairly new to full-time hitting. He featured true five tool potential, a rarity in college baseball, and he looked like a second to fourth round draft prospect because of those tools. Following players selected: Bryan Shaw, Tyler Chatwood, Scott Bittle. Signing bonus: \$563,000.

**3. Aaron Weatherford, RHP, Mississippi State, #103 Overall:** Weatherford was a solid second or third round relief arm, having proven himself as a closer at the highest level of collegiate competition in the SEC. He featured solid stuff with setup man upside, with perhaps room for more over time. Following players selected: Kevin Eichhorn, Ryan Chaffee, David Adams. Signing bonus: \$350,000.

**4. Ethan Hollingsworth, RHP, Western Michigan, #137 Overall:** Hollingsworth was a solid back of the rotation option anywhere from the second to fourth round in the draft. He featured average stuff across the board, but had above-average command, helping him achieve good results with prototypical size or stuff. Following players selected: Ryne White, Buddy Boshers, Corban Joseph. Signing bonus: \$215,000.

**5. Chris Dominguez, 3B, Louisville, #167 Overall:** Dominguez was a

talented draft-eligible sophomore that featured plus power and a plus arm, two tools that graded out well against almost every collegiate competitor. However, as a solid second or third round prospect, when he fell to the Rockies here, they couldn't get the money together to sign him, and he returned to Louisville and became the Giants' third-rounder in 2009. Following players selected: Collin Cowgill, Khiry Cooper, Chris Smith. DID NOT SIGN.

**Other Notable Selections:** C Kiel Roling (6th), Arizona State, \$140K bonus; OF Delta Cleary (37th), LSU-Eunice JC (LA), \$250K bonus.

### **2009 Draft: \$7.9 Million Budget**

**1. Tyler Matzek, LHP, Capistrano Valley HS (CA), #11 Overall:** Matzek was a true top ten talent, and a few teams had him right behind Stephen Strasburg as their number two arm in the entire draft class. However, he wasn't considered the most signable, and the Rockies got a steal here for under \$4 million. Following players selected: Aaron Crow, Grant Green, Matt Purke. Signing bonus: \$3,900,000.

**2. Tim Wheeler, OF, Sacramento State, #32 Overall:** Wheeler was a solid mid- to late-first round collegiate outfielder with average to plus tools. As a potential five-tool college outfielder, Wheeler found himself in rare company, and the Rockies were lucky once again when Wheeler fell to them. Following players selected: Steve Baron, Rex Brothers, Matt Davidson. Signing bonus: \$900,000.

**3. Rex Brothers, LHP, Lipscomb, #34 Overall:** Brothers was another player that could have easily gone in the middle of the first round. He featured a plus fastball-slider combination that worked well as a starter in college, though some teams saw the next Billy Wagner. The Rockies got lucky to grab him with the second pick of the supplemental first round. Following players selected: Matt Davidson, Aaron Miller, James Paxton. Signing bonus: \$969,000.

**4. Nolan Arenado, 3B, El Toro HS (CA), #59 Overall:** Arenado wasn't on my radar as a second round option, looking to me like a third to sixth round option as a solid prep bat. He had defensive questions, having been a prep shortstop, and some teams wanted to try him at catcher. However, the Rockies liked his bat enough to draft him as a third baseman in the top half

of the second round. Following players selected: Eric Smith, Trayce Thompson, Tommy Mendonca. Signing bonus: \$625,000.

**5. Ben Paulsen, 1B, Clemson, #90 Overall:** Paulsen was a solid college hitter that lacked much upside beyond being a possible second-division starting first baseman. He was a third to fifth round prospect with a solid hit tool, though his other tools, including his power, were fringy. Following players selected: Wil Myers, Justin Marks, Robbie Erlin. Signing bonus: \$391,000.

**Other Notable Selections:** RHP Chris Balcom-Miller (6<sup>th</sup>), West Valley JC (CA), \$125K bonus.

Bill Schmidt is now the longest-tenured scouting director in Major League Baseball, and he has that honor by a couple years. Having already run ten drafts for Colorado, the question of when he'll step aside has to be answered. An average scouting director usually only goes for 5-7 years if all goes well, as the stress and workload of the job is simply enormous. Keeping a competitive edge is so important, and the burnout rate for scouting directors is so high that they are usually promoted within an organization, usually to a special assistant to the general manager position, or they move on in another organization, as a scout, crosschecker, assistant general manager or in a similar special assistant role. The job is just too hard. However, Schmidt ran his tenth draft in 2009, and it was probably his best draft to date, showing that he's not slowing down, which is simply incredible. He has been a successful team with long-time general manager Dan O'Dowd, and after Schmidt was promoted to the Vice President level three years ago, he became part of the elite group of scouting directors that have true influence in the personnel decisions of their organization outside of just drafting players. It's a lot on Schmidt's plate, but he handles it with such results that it's easy to say that he's one of the best scouting directors in baseball. Looking at some high-level trends in Schmidt's five most recent drafts, I think it's fair to say that he shows a solid preference for college arms over prep arms and college bats over prep bats. There are notable exceptions, but that's the general trend. It's hard to count Matzek in trending, because he was easily the best player available at that pick. Schmidt likes solid all-around players that aren't one-dimensional, and while he doesn't draft the most athletic players in the draft, he gets some of the most well-rounded

ones, leading to an easier transition to pro ball. This is just some obvious stuff, but it's worth pointing out that Schmidt likes these types of players.

In terms of draft budgeting, the Rockies are more of a year-to-year type of club than most. They haven't generally set themselves on a particular yearly budget, making predicting their budget for this year especially hard. In the most recent five years, the Rockies have spent the 13<sup>th</sup>-largest amount on draft bonuses, a respectable amount for a solid ballclub. They picked early on in the draft for a number of those drafts, though, so a lot of the money went directly to those picks, including three top ten picks and the highest bonus of all in Matzek. They spent the 8<sup>th</sup>-highest amount on bonuses last year, mainly because of Matzek and a pair of extra picks in Wheeler and Brothers, so that's information that is hard to incorporate into future guesses. They own picks 26, 47, 76, 107, 140, and every 30 picks after that in the 2010 draft, representing all their natural picks in each round plus a supplemental first round pick as compensation for losing Jason Marquis. I'd expect a budget back down closer to the \$4-5 million range they were in for the 2008 draft, but I could be wrong. I think the maximum amount we'll see is \$5.5 million, which would put them in the middle of the pack or just below it.

Looking at who the Rockies might want in the early rounds, I have them picking Chad Bettis in the first round in my latest mock draft, following that up with Jacksonville State's Todd Cunningham in the supplemental first round. Both fit into the Rockies' molds for drafting, and I think both would succeed in those slots and in the organization. Other possible names might include Brandon Workman, Bryce Brentz, and Alex Wimmers in the first round, then Jarrett Parker, Bryan Morgado, and Justin Grimm in the supplemental first round. Beyond that I could see players such as Ross Wilson, Logan Darnell, Kolbrin Vitek, and Kevin Rhoderick for the second round. Other names to keep in mind include Scott Woodward, Thomas Royse, Turner Phelps, and Gauntlett Eldemire, though those are all speculative. I expect a college-heavy group of players, especially considering their first-round pick isn't until the 26<sup>th</sup> slot. They will probably find a very solid arm or bat from the college ranks there, and then follow it up with a number of college bats and arms, though I suspect they're heavier on junior college players after the success of some of their finds in recent years. They do have a solid presence here in Georgia, so I wouldn't

be surprised to see some Georgia names come up, with Grimm already named and players such as Brandon Cumpston and Alex McRee as later names. The Rockies will probably have a solid draft, but it won't be as spectacular as last year, when they were able to get three players that were legitimate first round names in their first three picks. I always trust Bill Schmidt to find solid talent, even without those early picks, so expect a solid draft class to enter Colorado once again.

\*Bonus information came from BA.

What do you guys think? What will the Rockies do?