

First Year Player Draft (Amateur Rule 4 Draft)

Written by Jeff Euston

Tuesday, 30 January 2007 15:22

MLB holds its First Year Player Draft in early June. The 30 clubs select players in reverse order of won-lost records from the previous season. If two or more clubs finished with identical records in the previous season, the earlier draft pick is awarded to the team that finished with the worst record two seasons ago. Additionally, the draft order may be altered if a club receives an additional draft pick (or picks) as compensation 1) for losing a free agent to another club or 2) for failing to sign a player selected in the previous year's draft.

The draft runs no longer than 50 rounds. Each club may select only one player for each of its major league, AAA and AA rosters but is not limited to the number of picks for the A level. (Choices no longer alternate between leagues, as they did before MLB ended the practice after the 2004 draft.) Clubs are not permitted to trade a draft pick.

Eligibility

The following are eligible to be selected in the First Year Player Draft (MLR 4):

- Residents of the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico and any other U.S. territories who have not previously signed minor- or major-league contracts.
- Non-residents attending high school or college in the United States.
- Previous draftees who did not sign contracts, chose to enroll in four-year colleges and subsequently completed their junior year in college or turned 21 years old.
- All other foreign-born players are ineligible. (See International Players.)

Signing

- Clubs must offer each draft pick a minor-league contract within 15 days after he is selected.
- A club holds exclusive negotiating rights with a drafted player until August 15, except for college seniors, who may sign at any time.
- Once a player drafted has signed with the club, he cannot be traded until an entire year has elapsed (Incaviglia Rule).

Failure to Sign

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- A drafted player who does not sign and attends a four-year college is not eligible for the draft again until he completes his junior year of college or turns 21 years old.
- A drafted player who does not sign and does not attend class at a four-year college is eligible for the next First Year Player Draft. However, a club may not draft a player in two consecutive drafts without the player's written consent.
- If a team does not sign its pick in the first two rounds (including the supplemental round between the two), it receives a compensatory selection in the following year's Rule 4 Draft that is one pick after the slot of the player who did not sign.
- If a team does not sign its third-round selection, it receives a compensatory selection in a new supplemental round between the third and fourth rounds in the following year's draft.