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Predicting Major League Talent Through the First-Year Player Draft

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Oral Presentation O1.3

**PREDICTING MAJOR LEAGUE TALENT THROUGH THE
FIRST-YEAR PLAYER DRAFT**

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The Major League Baseball first-year player draft is a relatively unexplored topic. Until two years ago it was not even televised, even though other major sports drafts like basketball and football are major television events. I predict the probability of reaching the major leagues and the probability of a player “making it big” in the major leagues for a player drafted based on a series of variables, like draft position, whether a player is left-handed, and the schooling the amateur has received. This should help a team determine which players are most risky, and which players are most likely to make it to and succeed in the major leagues. The conceptual framework underlying my work is human capital theory. A multivariate regression model is used to predict the probability that a drafted player will make it to the major leagues. The major results of the study are that draft rank is the most important variable; scouts are effective at identifying and ranking talent. The other important finding is that college players are significantly more likely to make the major leagues, but high school players are more likely to make it big and become superstars in the major leagues.