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Top 5 Baseball Speedsters

By Kevin Bourassa

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5. **Joey Gathright**– Tampa Bay Devil Ray(OF, Minors)

Joey Gathright has been called the fastest player in the league, he's even been called the fastest man in the world, but he hasn't yet received big-league playing time. Gathright could be that guy, who gets to the 100 SB mark. He'll have to wait however with a crowded list of OF's on Tampa Bay. Joey Gathright is so fast, so athletic that he can jump over a car... the long way. "But I can't do it anymore," Gathright said. "It's in my contract. I'm not allowed to jump over cars anymore. Can't jump fences, either." Gathright could get a call to the majors sometime in 2004. Steals projection this season: 45, between Minors and Majors.

4. **Rafael Furcal**– Atlanta Braves(SS)

If Rafael Furcal got more SB opportunities he could easily steal 50+ bases in a single season, but the Braves don't send him enough. Furcal stole 25 bases last year, and was caught stealing just twice. With Furcal's speed, he should get twice as many steals as he did last season. In 2000, Furcal stole 40 bases, so why aren't they sending him now? SB aside, Furcal showed his speed last season when he scored 130 runs in the Braves leadoff role, good enough to place him 3rd in the majors. With some of the big-name sluggers gone from Atlanta, the Braves need to find a new way to produce runs, and Furcal will be a key part in that. Steals projection this season: 40

3. **Carlos Beltran** – Kansas City Royals(OF)

Carlos Beltran stole 41 bases last season, and was only thrown out 4 times. That's a ration of 10 steals per 1 time being thrown out, and thats an amazing ratio. Beltran can not only run the basepaths well, but he hit 25 HR, batted in 100 RBI and batted .307 last season. Carlos Beltran is an all-around fantasy god. He should steal more bases this season, because he missed 20 games last season due to injuries. Carlos Beltran is a 4–10 pick overall, and he won't disappoint you with his speed. Steals

Top 5 Baseball Speedsters

projection this season: 55

2. Juan Pierre – Florida Marlins(OF)

Pierre led the leagues in SB last season, so why isn't he the top speedster? Well he did get CS 20 times. Pierre is on a Florida team that loves to run, 5 Florida hitters stole double-digit bases last season, and Pierre was their leader. Batting at the top of the order, Pierre would get on base and then he would proceed to try to steal second. Pierre attempted a steal about once every 3–4 times he got on base. Pierre's fantasy value skyrocketed last season, and he should get around the same amount of steals this season as he did last year. Steals projection this season: 58

1. Carl Crawford – Tampa Bay Devil Rays(OF)

So you might be asking, why Crawford over Pierre or Beltran? Carl Crawford stole 55 bases last year,

in his first full season, Crawford stole 55 bases and was CS 10 times. That's 5.5 SB per 1 CS, which is a whole lot better than Juan Pierre's ratio. Crawford should only improve his speed over the next few seasons, in which his whole team will be improving around him. In his best season Crawford could steal 70+ bases and score 120+ runs. Steals projection this season: 63

Kevin Bourassa is a writer for

Important Aspects Of A Baseball Coach

By Sintilia Miecevole

Being a baseball coach can be very rewarding. It is a big responsibility, though. You are basically the 'leader' of your team, and how you act will directly affect how the assistant coaches and the players act. There are some tips you can follow to make yourself a better baseball coach. These tips are:

1. Give everyone on your baseball team a responsibility. Make each and every person on the team feel if they don't do something, it won't get done! Any accomplishments made by a member of the team are shared by the whole team. (It is important to give recognition to individuals, though.)
2. Help everyone on your baseball team make good, informed decisions. As the baseball coach, you need to guide and teach the players to make the good decisions you want them to make. Don't bully the baseball team to do what you want them to do, just encourage them to do what is best.
3. Always treat your baseball team like they are winners! If your baseball players feel like winners, they will be more likely to win.
4. Let everyone on your baseball team know you care. Be interested in every individual baseball

Top 5 Baseball Speedsters

player. Encourage them and show them your support. Look at your behavior around your baseball team and evaluate it carefully.

5. Help your baseball team understand the meaning of playing with good sportsmanship! Good sportsmanship is just as important as winning. Make sure your baseball players understand the meaning of fair play from the moment you become their baseball coach.

6. Make sure you motivate and reward your baseball team players. Just knowing the basic skills and strategies of baseball won't necessarily make you a very good baseball coach. Being a baseball coach is truly more than just teaching these things. A really good coach can motivate a baseball team to do its best! Good baseball coaches understand and can empathize with the players' feelings of joy, anger, anxiety, frustration, and pride.

7. Don't make your baseball practices boring or repetitious. Shake up practices by playing games and teaching new techniques and plays. Since only 9 players can play at a time, make sure to keep the rest of the baseball team feeling useful by having them keep score or charting pitching and offence. Make sure to keep each baseball player feeling they have an important role in winning.

8. Make sure you have a plan for your baseball team. Just like a teacher needs to plan for the school year, a baseball coach needs a plan for the season. Having no plan is a sure road to failure.

9. Give your baseball team enough time to review things they have learned. Whether at the end of a practice or the end of a game, give your players time to review what has been learned and what could be improved upon. Keep the review as positive in tone as possible.

10. Make sure you communicate with your baseball team. If you cannot get across to your baseball team what you want, how will they know what to do?

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