



Padres Press Clips

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Who could field best prospects-only team?

By Jonathan Mayo MLB.com [@JonathanMayo](#)

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MLB Pipeline's [Top 100 Prospects list](#) is intended to project which players will have the most long-term success in the big leagues. But fans also want to know when these up-and-comers will get there and make an impact. One such question came via Twitter back in November: If all 30 organizations had to field their Major League clubs with only their prospects, who would be the best teams in 2019?

Trying to figure out who would have the best prospect lineups for the upcoming season warranted more than just a response in our weekly Pipeline Inbox. There might be some different teams on this list if it was a question of long-term lineups or projecting, say, a 2022 lineup.

Building lineups to compete in the big leagues in 2019 using only prospects isn't easy, as not every team has a big league-ready prospect at every position, not to mention a five-man rotation that's ready to contribute this season. When there was a hole, the best prospect closest to the big leagues was chosen to fill it. And there were some instances where a prospect a bit farther away was chosen due to the belief that he'd be more productive than a player knocking on the door.

An average of OFP (Overall Future Potential) grades has been used to rank the teams. Not surprisingly, the top four are also among the teams that are [best represented](#) on the Top 100 and are the top four in terms of Prospect Points.

Here's how the top four lineups stack up, using 2019 grades for those on the 2019 Top 100 and/or Top 10 by position lists and '18 grades for the rest (Top 30 team lists are coming in February).

1. [Padres](#) - Average OFP: 52.31

POS Name, ETA (OFP)

C: [Austin Allen](#), 2019 (45)
1B: [Josh Naylor](#), 2019 (50)
2B: [Luis Urias](#), 2019 (55)
3B: [Hudson Potts](#), 2020 (45)
SS: [Fernando Tatis Jr.](#), 2019 (70)
C/OF: [Francisco Mejia](#), 2019 (55)
OF: [Buddy Reed](#), 2019 (50)
OF: [Edward Olivares](#), 2020 (45)
P: Adrian Morejon, 2020 (55)
P: [Chris Paddack](#), 2019 (55)
P: [Logan Allen](#), 2019 (55)
P: [Cal Quantrill](#), 2019 (50)
P: [Jacob Nix](#), 2019 (50)

With 10 players on the Top 100, it's not shocking in the least to see the Padres able to put together the best prospect lineup. This lineup doesn't even include Top 100 prospects who are far away (looking at you, Luis Patino), but the system is so deep and is starting to create a backlog at the upper levels of the system, a sure sign San Diego looks poised to be that next team to make the jump from rebuild to contender.

2. White Sox - Average OFP: 51.92

POS Name, ETA (OFP)

C: Zack Collins, 2019 (50)
1B: Gavin Sheets, 2020 (50)
2B: Nick Madrigal, 2020 (55)
3B: Ti'Quan Forbes, 2020 (45)
SS: Laz Rivera, 2021 (45)
OF: Eloy Jimenez, 2019 (70)
OF: Luis Robert, 2020 (55)
OF: Luis Alexander Basabe, 2020 (50)
P: Dylan Cease, 2019 (60)
P: Dane Dunning, 2019 (55)
P: Alec Hansen, 2019 (50)
P: Kodi Medeiros, 2019 (45)
P: Jordan Stephens, 2019 (45)

The White Sox are actually third in Prospect Points and have fewer Top 100 guys than the Braves, but their ability to put a solid prospect at every position helps give them an edge. So does having a pair of players in the top 25 in Jimenez and Cease, who is the lowest-ranked player on the Top 100 with an overall 60 grade.

3. Braves - Average OFP: 51.15

POS Name, ETA (OFP)

C: William Contreras, 2021 (50)
1B: Drew Lugbauer, 2021 (45)
2B: Derian Cruz, 2021 (45)
3B: Austin Riley, 2019 (55)
SS: Ray-Patrick Didder, 2019 (45)
OF: Cristian Pache, 2020 (55)
OF: Drew Waters, 2021 (55)
OF: Greyson Jenista, 2021 (45)
P: Mike Soroka, 2019 (55)
P: Kyle Wright, 2019 (55)
P: Ian Anderson, 2020 (55)
P: Touki Toussaint, 2019 (55)
P: Bryse Wilson, 2019 (55)

If this were merely a matter of putting together a pitching staff, the Braves would top this list. All five members of this rotation are in the Top 100, and there's depth behind this quintet with arms like [Luiz Gohara](#) and [Kolby Allard](#), who would be on any other team's all-prospect staff. Atlanta's pool of position players isn't quite as deep, a reason why we've "rushed" Waters to the big leagues a bit.

4. [Rays](#) - Average OFP: 50.00

POS Name, ETA (OFP)

C: [Nick Ciuffo](#), 2019 (45)
1B: Nathaniel Lowe, 2019 (50)
2B: Vidal Brujan, 2020 (50)
3B: [Brandon Lowe](#), 2019 (50)
SS: [Lucius Fox](#), 2019 (50)
OF: [Jesus Sanchez](#), 2019 (55)
OF: [Nick Solak](#), 2019 (50)
OF: [Joe McCarthy](#), 2019 (50)
P: [Brent Honeywell](#), 2019 (55)
P: Brendan McKay, 2019 (55)
P: Shane McClanahan, 2021 (50)
P: [Jose De Leon](#), 2019 (45)
P: Benton Moss, 2019 (45)

The Rays, like the White Sox, have a half-dozen players on the Top 100, but many of them are on this roster. Wander Franco, Ronaldo Hernandez and Matthew Liberatore are too far away to consider for this year. Honeywell is coming back from Tommy John surgery, as is De Leon, but they could both make an impact in the second half. Looking at how young and deep the system is, however, it wouldn't be too surprising to see the Rays in the top spot of this list in the years to come.

Padres' Fernando Tatis Jr. is No. 1 on ESPN's top-prospects list

Jeff Sanders

Among the game's top prospects, Fernando Tatis Jr. is second to no one if you ask [ESPN's Keith Law](#).

Not Vladimir Guerrero Jr.

Not ... well no other major ranking ([Baseball America and Baseball Prospectus](#) and [MLB.com](#)) had anyone but the Hall-of-Famer's son as baseball's top prospect until Law push the Padres' shortstop of the (near) future at the top of his top prospects series on Wednesday.

In fact, Law ranked nine Padres inside is top-101 prospects (subscription required), a group led by the 20-year-old Tatis at a premium position that has been a black hole for the Padres, developmentally speaking, for years.

No more.

Here's a look at where Law ranked the Padres' top prospects:

1 | SS Fernando Tatis Jr.

- “He's a big kid with the frame to end up growing out of the middle of the field, so there's some risk that he's an All-Star only at third base, but his continued progress at shortstop along with his performance with the bat as a teenager through Double-A mark him as a potential MVP candidate and the best prospect in baseball.”

7 | LHP MacKenzie Gore

- “He's an absurd athlete who repeats his contortionist's delivery, with its abrupt, high leg kick, and gets to the same point out front at release. The Padres were careful with him because he was just 19 and had the blister issue, so he made only 16 starts and threw 60²/₃ innings in 2018. The shackles on his workload should be looser this year, and assuming his blister issues are behind him, this should be a breakout campaign that gets him to at least Double-A. He has No. 1 starter upside thanks to his arsenal, command and athleticism.”

29 | C Francisco Mejia

- “Behind the plate, he's a work in progress but still more likely than not to end up a catcher. He has at least a grade-70 arm, and he's a good enough athlete to get to fringe-average, with a work ethic that Cleveland had long praised. His hands are fine, not great -- certainly not [Austin Hedges'](#) hands -- but good enough that I think he'll get close to average as a receiver and somewhere just below that as a framer. Even if he's a 45-grade defender overall, with his potential to hit .300-plus with some walks and 25-30 homers a year, he'd be a superstar.”

44 | RHP Chris Paddack

- “Paddack's limitation is his breaking ball, which he throws in the mid-70s, average if you like it, a grade 45 pitch if you don't. The argument that he'll barely need it with two other plus pitches seems valid to me, especially since his fastball plays up, thanks to huge extension out front in his delivery. He's an easy mid-rotation starter who could be a top-20 starter in the game if he holds up physically and that curveball ends up at least a solid-average weapon for him.”

46 | LHP Adrian Morejon

- “He has looked impressive whenever he has pitched, and there's still some upside remaining, but the key for him in 2019 will be making 20-plus starts and showing that he can hold up without more arm trouble under a starter's workload.”

50 | RHP Luis Patino

- “He's small but athletic and repeats his delivery well. If you're going on pure upside, he's in the top 25 or so with the Hunter Greenes and Sixto Sanchez of the prospect world, but there's real reliever risk here -- one scout who liked Patino said the whole package "screams reliever" -- between the size and need for a third pitch, which keeps him toward the middle of the rankings.”

56 | 2B Luis Urias

- “If his bat plays as expected, with high averages and OBPs, he'll be a regular at second base with above-average or even plus defense. There's a high utility infielder floor here too, given his positional versatility and ability to make contact; but the Padres are certainly hoping for more, given Urias' history of performance throughout the minors.”

80 | LHP Logan Allen

- “The Padres have so many famous prospects at this point that Allen often ends up a forgotten man in discussions of their system. But he is quite close to major-league-ready and has a higher floor than many better-known Padres kids because he's a left-handed pitcher with control and an assortment of weapons.”

103 | LHP Ryan Weathers ([from Law's just-missed prospects list](#))

- “His stuff is fine for his age, and his command is very advanced. I heard some comments about the body, but I have no doubt about his athleticism, even though you might assume otherwise from his appearance. I still think he's a midrotation starter whose command and feel to pitch will help his stuff play up, but maybe he jumps onto the list after his first pro year.”

2019 Position Rankings: Second Base

Keston Hiura (Photo by Bill Mitchell)

By [Kyle Glaser](#) on January 30, 2019

Second base becomes more of an offensive position each passing year in the majors. In that sense, the prospect crop of 2019 fits right in.

The second base prospect class of 2019 is filled with players who have considerable offensive potential. [Keston Hiura](#) is one of the best hitters in the minors at any position, while [Luis Urias](#), [Nick Madrigal](#) and [Garrett Hampson](#) are all undersized with little power but show the contact skills to become everyday players anyway. [Vidal Brujan](#) is another riser who projects to make an offensive impact, combining growing power, elite speed and an advanced feel to hit.

While the top of the class is strong, the depth falls off rather quickly. Upper-level performers [Brandon Lowe](#), [Cavan Biggio](#) and [Kevin Kramer](#) still face questions over just how much impact they'll make in the majors, while the remainder of the group is filled with players who either need bounceback years ([Jahmai Jones](#), [Isan Diaz](#)), face age-relative-to-level questions ([Andy Young](#), [Nick Solak](#)), or are teenagers with a long way to go ([Luis Santana](#), Tucupita Marcano).

Still, it's a solid crop that should produce some everyday players at the top and has some notable breakout candidates below. If anything, the group should only reinforce second base's growing status as an offensive position.

Rating: 3 of 5 stars

1. [Keston Hiura](#), Brewers
2. [Luis Urias](#), Padres
3. [Nick Madrigal](#), White Sox
4. [Vidal Brujan](#), Rays
5. [Garrett Hampson](#), Rockies
6. [Brandon Lowe](#), Rays
7. [Cavan Biggio](#), Blue Jays
8. [Kevin Kramer](#), Pirates
9. [Shed Long](#), Mariners
10. [Jahmai Jones](#), Angels
11. [Jeter Downs](#), Dodgers
12. [Eli White](#), Rangers
13. [Isan Diaz](#), Marlins
14. [Andy Young](#), D-backs
15. [Nick Solak](#), Rays
16. [Esteury Ruiz](#), Padres
17. [Luis Santana](#), Astros
18. [Tucupita Marcano](#), Padres
19. [Yunior Severino](#), Twins
20. [Luis Arraez](#), Twins