6. Andrew Velazquez, SS/2B

Position: SS/2B  
DOB: 07/14/1994 (Age: 20)  
Height/Weight: 5'8", 175 lbs  
Bats/Throws: S/R  
Drafted: Seventh round, 2012 by Diamondbacks (Fordham Prep, New York)  
Last Year's Rank: NR (Diamondbacks)  
ETA: 2017  

Tools Breakdown (Future Grades):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hit</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Run</th>
<th>Arm</th>
<th>Glove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scouting Report

Andrew Velazquez posted impressive numbers this year in his return to the Midwest League, slashing .290/.367/.428 with a career-best 42 extra-base hits and 50 stolen bases in 134 games at Low-A South Bend. The 20-year-old also set a new minor league record by reaching base in 72 consecutive games.

However, Velazquez’s time in Arizona’s system was short lived, as he was traded this offseason to Tampa Bay along with 2013 draftee Justin Williams in exchange for Jeremy Hellickson.

The switch-hitting Velazquez may be undersized at 5'8", 175 pounds, but he knows how to handle the bat from both sides of plate and possesses more power than his size suggests. At the same time, his game also features plenty of swing-and-miss, and it’ll be interesting to track the adjustments he makes next season in the Florida State League.

Other than that, Velazquez’s plus wheels and feel for reading pitchers/situations make him a consistent threat on the basepaths, and it’s easy to see him swiping 25-30 bases as an everyday big leaguer.

Defensively, Velazquez has the range and arm strength to remain at shortstop, but his actions and fielding mechanics are on the raw side and will need to be cleaned up as he moves up the ladder. Yet even if he’s forced off shortstop in the coming years, Velazquez’s overall profile should still be a clean fit at second base, and perhaps even center field.

Ceiling (OFP): 50 (major league regular)—High risk
If warmer weather is a friend to a power hitter like senior first basemen Sal Annunziata, it’s also a reminder that his final stanza at SHU is upon him.

Annunziata, who with a pair of hits on April 29, at Saint Peter’s, surpassed Mo Vaughn for eighth on Seton Hall’s all-time hit list, said he’s not focusing too much on carving a path to an MLB career of his own right now.

“I don’t really focus on that too much,” said the Bronx, N.Y., native. “My main goal here, right now in this season, is to win out the rest of the conference, make it to the Big East championship and win. Whatever I’m lucky enough to have after that would be great. I’m just going to play my best baseball and hope for the best.”

If the Pirates are to make a deep run at the tournament title, Annunziata will need to play his best and continue producing at the plate. Currently, he leads the team with five homers and is tied for second on the team with 23 RBI’s.

For Annunziata, that’s just part of another day at the office—a calm approach to the game, but one that could help bring Annunziata and his team to their first title since 2011.

“I think understanding that it’s such a hard game, if there’s going to be ups and downs, the most important thing is just staying even-keeled—being confident in yourself and being confident in your teammates no matter things are going.”

After starting 48 of 51 appearances as a freshman, Annunziata started all but one as a sophomore and by his junior season he started in all of his 51 appearances, posting a career-high .330 batting average to go along with 49 RBI’s and a .503 slugging percentage.

His role now as a senior hasn’t changed according to Annunziata.

“No different from what I’ve been asked the last few years. Just be the guy to come through to produce, keep guys loose and just play the right way, every single day,” Annunziata said.

While the consensus belief is that Annunziata will indeed continue to make baseball his craft, the social and behavioral sciences major has some kind of idea of what’s next, if it can’t be baseball.

“I could definitely get into some kind of sports psychology,” he said. “Playing baseball is a very mentally, emotionally taxing game. I’ve learned a good deal about that playing as much as I have.”

But for the senior, who last season as a junior picked up honors that included All-Big East second team and All-NJCAA first team, it’s hard to mention his future without talking about baseball—something that has helped provide helpful lessons relating to seemingly everything.

“Baseball is almost a direct correlation to the lessons you learn in life,” he said. “It teaches you to be a humble, but confident person. It’s taught me so much about life—how to handle failure, how to handle success, all of the above.”

With graduation from the university and the program ahead, Annunziata said his best memory at the Hall has yet to happen.

“The biggest memory I definitely want to have is winning a championship,” he said. “That’s the goal for the rest of the year.”