

# BOSTON RED SOX



**Best Pro Debut:** LHPs **Abe Alvarez** (2) and **Justin Sturge** (12) backed up their reputations as control specialists. Alvarez didn't allow an earned run and had a 19-2 strikeout-walk ratio in nine short-season starts. Sturge went 4-0, 1.08 with a 36-6 K-BB ratio in 42 innings overall.

**Best Athlete:** The Red Sox added several quality athletes to a system sorely in need of them. OFs **David Murphy** (1), **Mickey Hall** (2), **Chris Durbin** (10) and **Chris Turner** (15) are multi-tooled players, and Boston believes they all have good chances to play center field.

**Best Pure Hitter:** OF **Matt Murton** (1) over Murphy and Hall. Murton flourished with wood bats in the Cape Cod League the last two summers. Murphy batted .346 in the short-season New York-Penn League before a promotion to high Class A.

**Best Raw Power:** Murton. His bat and power are plus tools, and his speed and range are average. The only tool he's lacking is arm strength, which is why he's relegated to left field.

**Fastest Runner:** Turner has plus speed. Most of the Red Sox' position-player picks are average runners.

**Best Defensive Player:** SS **Ignacio Suarez** (24) can field and throw with any shortstop in the system, but hit just .222 with short-season Lowell.

**Best Fastball:** RHP **Jon Papelbon** (4) pitches at 89-94 mph and reaches 96 mph out of the bullpen. RHP **Jason Smith** (49), a home-state product, hit 95-96 mph last summer but pitched at 88-92 as a high school senior.

**Best Breaking Ball:** RHP **Beau Vaughan** (3) has three

average or better pitches, starting with his slider. Vaughan adds a 90-94 mph fastball and a changeup.

**Most Intriguing Background:** The Red Sox drafted four relatives of their employees. Only C **Erich Cloninger** (35), the grandson of Boston pitching coach Tony Cloninger, turned pro. The others opted for college: SS **Chris Johnson** (37), the son of Double-A manager Ron; OF **Dallas Williams Jr.** (42), the son of their big league first-base coach; and C **Scott Thomas** (43), the son of special assistant Lee. LHP **Brian Marshall's** (5) twin brother Sean signed with the Cubs as a sixth-round pick.

**Closest To The Majors:** As a lefthander with outstanding pitchability in a thin system, Alvarez will get to the big leagues faster than most 2003 draftees. The Red Sox signed only two high school players.

**Best Late-Round Pick:** LHP **David Sanders** (30), Smith and Turner all have much more upside than their draft position would indicate. Turner and Smith were considered tough signs. Sanders showed three fringe-average pitches on the Cape in 2002.

**The One Who Got Away:** Six-foot-5, 230-pound OF **Josh Morris** (20) would have given the Red Sox another athletic outfielder if he hadn't decided to go to Georgia.

**Assessment:** Boston shifted its focus heavily to college players, with Hall and Smith its only high school signees. The Red Sox added athletes and players who could advance quickly to restock the upper levels of their system.



RODGER WOOD

**David Murphy**