**Secrets to Auction Drafting in Re-Drafts**

***Chad Mossing***

A growing trend in fantasy drafts is bucking the usual snake draft format and turning to auction style drafts. The benefits of an auction draft are very alluring to fantasy players because everyone has a chance at Christian McCaffery, Michael Thomas, and Saquon Barkley. It’s an exciting prospect that you have an opportunity to have more than one first round talent on your team….at a price of course. Auction drafts offer endless roster options, more personalized roster construction, and advanced strategies with your budget that snake drafts just simply lack. You can nab all your sleepers and take advantage of value, or spend your money like Elon Musk and SpaceX, fast and furious and getting both McCaffery and Michael Thomas for a star heavy team.

If you haven’t participated in an auction draft, I highly recommend at least doing a year trial run with your league. Since auction drafts are more like the movie *Inception,* they are more complicated, and so researching and mock drafting are even more important. Tools like Fantasy Pros Auction Simulator, Draft Assistant, and Auction Calculator are amazing tools for your auction draft needs. With that being said, I wanted to write out some less known, and advanced tips for new and veteran auctioneers can use to edge out their league. Remember tier drafting is your friend!

**Budget For Entire Roster or Position, Not Each Roster Spot**

Budgeting is key for auction drafts, and auction drafts very in priced budgets percentages do not. And some analysts will tell you Budget each spot and how much you are willing to pay. For example I’d have to say I’d spend max on RB1 $70, RB2 $30, and so on down to bench spots that can range anywhere from $15 for my top bench player to $1. This creates a huge problem. You become more worried about the price then the player.

Being too specific with your prices cap flexibility which is HUGE in fantasy drafts because there is always surprises when dealing with supply and demand or bidding wars. Make a budgeting sheet, doesn’t need to be official but allocate either per position or total roster:

*\*Based on $200 budget, 16 player roster no TE -but with RB/WR/TE flex*

**Positional:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| QB | $5 | 2.5% |  |
| RB | $120 | 60% |  |
| WR | $65 | 32.5% |  |
| K/DST | $2 | 1% |  |
| BENCH | $8 | 4% |  |
| Total | **$200** | **100%** |  |

This is just an example, and if you are in a Full-PPR league by all means move money from RB to WR, if you want a better QB add money to that position. The beauty of auction drafts is the outlook of your roster is based on what you believe so budget how you want your team to look. Here I’m showing spending high on running backs and finding value in the mid-tier receivers.

**Total Roster:**

**Stars & Scrubs:** Acquire 2-4 studs (1st and 2nd round players) using 50%-80% of your total budget

**Balanced Team:** Allocate 50%-70% of budget on starting roster allowing you to soak up value and build a strong bench

**Hybrid Approach:** Draft 3 studs at 45%-70%. Key here is getting 1 player you are 100% sure on producing 1 player you think will break out into top 10 (Think like snake draft and the players around that 1 and 2 round turn) and 1 discounted top player that fell through the cracks due to injury, team change, or just the league is low on (Gurley, Hopkins, Thielen are examples of players that should outproduce their ADP)

I find that the total roster budgeting works the best because I’m not overly worried about my positional budget. I go after the players I’m extremely confident in and go after those. I find allocating 80%-90% of my budget to my starters is optimal. I never pay more than $1 on K or D/ST and I have had success in the past with finding sleepers so spending on fringe starters to place on the bench isn’t for me.

This also allows me to be more flexible in the early stages of the draft. I can go get whatever running back or receiver I want and then go back to my budget and see what I can still spend without sacrificing the rest of the draft.

**Do NOT Be Afraid To Spend:**

Everyone is nervous to spend almost half of their budget on one player. Granted it is risky, but if you are confident in your ability to identify sleepers in the $10 and under bargain pile, then go out and get players that put you over the top. Too many times people cap themselves by saying “I’m not spending over $60 dollars on any one player”. That’s fine do that, and I’ll call you a fantasy hipster. This is fake money not money to manage your investment opportunities.

Value based approach center around not overspending but if the first 6 backs all go over AAV, then what will happen to the next six? Economically, supply and demand states that if the demand is higher than the supply the prices will increase. So let us say 6 backs when to 4 teams out of 12 (2 managers went big on RB). Now you have only 4-5 fringe RB1 backs left with 8 teams with zero running backs, and those are conditions for bidding wars to start.

If you want a value-based approach the advice is still grab at least one first round player, then wait on the rest of the draft and snag value when it comes. Let me put it this way, if you don’t draft a top 12 player in auction can I have your first-round pick in a snake draft? You will obviously say no. So don’t get too caught up in prices and leave the draft with 8 mid-tier, mid-round guys you’ll never win a championship that way. 70% of players drafted will go for $10 or less, so don’t get caught up with not spending.

**Nominate With Purpose:**

Please, please, please do not just throw random names out. Do not use your first few nominations on defenses and kickers (if your league still requires them). Every nomination is important it fuels the auction draft. I have a system that has been sneaky good to me allowing for perfect buying conditions now and later.

First nomination is a throw away star. If you are low on Dalvin Cook, throw him to the wolves. He’s a good player no doubt, but if you have someone else in his tier that you like more let Cook play a vital role and take a good chunk of change out of a league mate’s pocket. And if you already added a top RB to your roster you get some players out on your next RB candidate

Coming around to your second and third nominations it gets a little different. A lot of the league has been spending their budget, but now is not the time for sleepers because I will bet there are still one or more fantasy hipsters out there waiting their turn to pounce. You should have 3-5 players in these early rounds that are still have stud potential. Here’s the time to nominate guys that you want, but do not have to have.

One of two things will happen. One people will start a bidding war, which is good for you because they are going to overpay and leave you with more spending power. Or he goes for a price that you find acceptable and you add another good piece to your roster.

When you get to the mid rounds of nomination take a look at everyone’s budget and roster. With the Draft Assistant tool it is a total breeze and gives you an advantage. If you have some of the most money to spend nominate sleepers you like and get them even if it’s a little more than anticipated. If your spending power is on the lower end GET MONEY SPENT! Best players available that you won’t have a shot at anyway call their name and even the odds.

**Be Active Early**

It’s extremely difficult to predict how the conditions in the auction draft may or may not change. The quicker I fill 3-5 roster spots the better I feel and the more I can see ahead in the draft. If you want to be in control of the draft you must be active early.

Owner A: $148 left on budget / 1 RB on roster / 33 total players drafted

Owner B: $53 left on budget / 2 RB 2 WR / 33 total players drafter

Now looking at these two owners who would you rather be? For me, its Owner B for a of couple reasons. The owner might not have the premium spending power, but traditionally the best players are nominated first with a few exceptions. Some people do throw out low guys hoping to get some steals etc. But to me I see an owner who has probably 3 top 30 players and a sleeper. With some spare change to grab any value that comes to them.

You may say Owner A could be in the driver’s seat, but their possible range of outcomes is still tenth to the fifteenth degree. Owner A has to bid on almost every player the next few rounds trying to sort through players with question marks all over the place and make a decision. Or they have to overpay to grab top available players because losing out on the last in a tier of WR’s or RB’s means a huge dip in production from the next. And all owners know that!

Owner B has a good base to their team, as well as created an environment within the auction of buying on value rather than need. With a good roster early in the draft you can allow the to ebb and flow of the auction to fall right into your lap. Staying away from bidding wars, or auction trends of overspending on a position. It is so much harder trying to guess correctly when prices will fall or rise, betting on players sliding, or other players being frivolous that I am trending to solidifying as much of your roster as possible early. Eliminate the unknowns and you can see how the puzzle pieces fit into your roster.

**Know Your League:**

This piggybacks off of the eliminating the unknowns. Pre-draft prep is a must and knowing the secrets of your league plays a key role in knowing how parts of the auction can play out. One easy tip is literally your league mates’ favorite teams. Is your league based near Lake Erie? Those Dawg Pound junkies are going to overspend on that entire offense if you need money off the board that’s who you nominate and stay away from. If you cannot stand America’s Team and Zeke annoys you, that Cowboys friend you have is probably more than happy to spend more for Elliott than you. So focus your money on other backs in that tier which probably will go cheaper.

Look at past patterns, who pays up for QB? Do they already have a QB? If they do, then now might be a good time to start bidding on QBs in your budget range. Are people more prone to hold onto money later in the draft, or do they act more like a bachelor party? This gives you an idea on if you can afford a top RB or double up on some tier two options. If they pinch fake dollars like they pinch real pennies getting a big name or two early could be the value there.

Auctions may seem confusing, or chaotic, but there isn’t a more fun draft day then opening up the floor for some good competitive bidding. As long as you stay ahead of the curve you should dominate your league’s auction draft.