

Foreword

By Clay Link

Rob Silver wrote the foreword for the first edition of *The Process*. Going from Rob Silver to myself is like going from Carlos Correa to Jack Mayfield or from Mike Trout to Michael Hermosillo. A big net loss, to be sure, but I'm honored nonetheless that Jeff and Tanner would ask me.

I've had the privilege of knowing Jeff Zimmerman for several years, since shortly after I first broke into the fantasy industry as a student intern at RotoWire. I have gotten to know him even better in recent years while competing against him in the League of Alternative Baseball Reality (LABR) and am proud to call him a friend. Jeff is not only one of the smartest and nicest people in the fantasy baseball world, but he's also one of the most driven and transparent. Nobody has this game completely figured out, but Jeff will be damned if he's not going to try to solve this thing. Jeff's also going to show his work, because he doesn't just want to figure this out for himself. He wants to elevate everyone's understanding of the game and of themselves as rotisserie players. He wants to elevate the conversation.

What lies in these pages is the most thorough tackling of the larger questions of rotisserie baseball that you'll find anywhere in this world (physical or digital). Jeff and Tanner examine concepts such as cognitive biases and measurement of intrinsic value, they dig into the tricky, inexact science of FAAB, and they also introduce new ideas and theories. They weigh the pros and cons of numerous valuation systems. They dispel myths and narratives with historical evidence. Do players over 30 really come with more downside? How much does past production really matter? Are first- and second-round pitchers really more risky than hitters in that range? Over at RotoWire, we produce a fantasy baseball annual, but the vast majority of that magazine is the A-Z player section, which provides season outlooks for 1,200-plus individual players. You will find individual player analysis and 2020 fantasy baseball cheat sheets there as well, but what Jeff and Tanner do in *The Process* is look at broader concepts and strategies and get to the heart of what goes into our fantasy baseball decision-making — the good and the bad, the smart and the ill conceived.

Jeff and Tanner provide the tools you need to succeed in rotisserie baseball and provide the blueprint along with those tools so that you can understand the concepts for what they actually are and not just in the abstract. What they do such a good job of is making this information digestible. One of the very first things said in this book is "don't be intimidated," and while that may seem impossible for some after a quick glance at the table of contents, they do a tremendous job of explaining these concepts and making them relatively easy to grasp. This is not a slog to get through. In fact, if you have a passion for rotisserie baseball, I think you will find this to be quite the page-turner. If you're new to the game and

don't really know where to start with your own research, this is a great place to begin. Jeff and Tanner have provided the knowledge base from which to build.

Baseball is a constantly evolving game, and *The Process* has been updated to reflect the current landscape. The additions to this year's version are excellent, and Jeff and Tanner have taken a critical look at their own work and removed some things that they determined were of little practical value in hindsight. What bleeds through when reading *The Process* is what we should all strive for as fantasy players; passion, accountability, objectivity, level-headedness, and always looking for that extra edge and striving for a deeper understanding of ourselves and this silly game we love. Jeff's life's work is in fantasy baseball, and to see someone as motivated, passionate, and good as he is at this, who's still very much grounded and eager to turn over the next stone, is motivating. This is a deep dive into the countless, shifting variables and theories of rotisserie baseball, stripped of the subjectivity and narratives; a labor of love if I've ever seen one.