



## The Albert Pujols Elbow Saga

Written by

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Some of us have been following the Albert Pujols Elbow saga, let's call it A.P.E or APE! I figured it's such a hot topic that it's probably quality draft guide material and useful to everyone involved.....

*March 7, 2008 as posted on the blog [www.thefantasyman.com](http://www.thefantasyman.com)*

*[Here is the latest article I found on MLB.com](http://www.MLB.com) on the "APE" situation. It pretty much confirms what we've said earlier in that it looks like Pujols will play until the pain is just too much. According to this article, the cut off is July 31st. If the Cards stink and Pujols quits by July 31st, he'll have enough time to get the Tommy John Surgery and rehab and be ready for opening day 2009!*

So now, knowing this, here is how I would deal with this from a fantasy perspective....



### The Snake Draft

Pujols is falling as far as the middle of the second round in some snake drafts. To be honest, if he lands to me anywhere in the 2nd round, I have to take him, especially in keeper leagues. Hey, if the Cards stink, which hopefully they will, you'll have Pujols in 2009 as a keeper along with your other first rounder (assuming all things work out)! Plus, if Pujols gets off to a hot start, which I have a hunch he will, you should have plenty of time to pick up a young player with some upside to take his place off the waiver wire....maybe a Daric Barton type for example. Also, knowing the situation ahead of time, maybe it would be wise to load up on corner infielders early in the event that at some point you lose Pujols later in the season. It's not out of the ordinary to draft Ryan Howard at 1B in the late first round, Pujols now in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> for your CI slot, and say Justin Morneau as your DH in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. as an example. Clogging up your DH slot is not a

bad idea when it's clogged up by a .280/35/120+ potential hitter. Not to mention, you load up on the power categories and get yourself about 110 potential HR's (Howard at 50, Morneau at 35 and Pujols at about 25). Yes, I think with a hot start, Pujols can hit 20-25 in the first half. Obviously, that's a high projection but you get the point! Then you draft a guy like Kevin Kouzmanoff, Edwin Encarnacion, or Josh Fields maybe as a bench guy later in the draft in case Pujols craps the bed at some point earlier than expected. Or take a shot on Joey Votto, stick him on your bench, let Votto work out his first half kinks and when he explodes in the second half, he's ripe right off the bench when Pujols goes down....that's how you deal with this APE situation in a snake draft!

### **The Auction League**

Even better, in auction leagues, you can now land Pujols in the \$30-\$35 range and maybe even cheaper after this article gets around which could mean a huge discount in 2009 in keeper leagues if he opts for the surgery half way through the year. So if you are in a keeper league and you're in rebuilding mode, this is an option you seriously need to look at. Ask yourself this question.... Would you pay \$25-\$35 just to get Pujols at his best for half a season?? Honestly, I think I am crazy enough to do it being I paid upwards of \$60 last year for Pujols in a \$260 league, so \$30 is a nice discount in my eyes!

Lastly, look, I am never one to panic about news like this, but it looks promising that Pujols will opt for the surgery on July 31st...I just don't see the Cards having a shot with Chicago, Milwaukee and maybe Houston looking great on paper this year in the N.L. Central. I also feel, and it's just a hunch, that with all this "hoop-la" that Pujols will bust out of the gates on fire! I mean, isn't that how these things always seem to work out? Remember when everyone said Alfonso Soriano would suck in Washington??? Then the guy goes 40/40!! Ridiculous! I just have this feeling it could happen with Pujols.

So draft him in the 2nd round if he falls to you knowing the risk and that you will lose him by mid season, and make sure you compensate for that later in the draft.



*Here is what I posted here on 1.25.08 on my blog [www.TheFantasyMan.com](http://www.TheFantasyMan.com)*

Yesterday, I participated in the [Krause Publications 2 Expert League Draft](#) which will be featured in the March issue of [Fantasy Sports Magazine](#). I had the 5th pick. I was sitting there thinking I'd have a great shot at David Wright but also though if one of Alex Rodriguez, Hanley Ramirez, Albert Pujols or Jose Reyes slipped, I could grab one of them. Turns out, David Wright gets picked 4th leaving Pujols available for me to take 5th. I just couldn't resist!

This story gets more interesting though. The St. Louis Dispatch reports that [Pujols as been battling elbow problems](#). At this point, according to reports, they say he can't extend his elbow all the way. This is the main reason he slipped to me in the draft. The manager with the 2nd pick who was all set to pick Pujols, opted for Hanley Ramirez instead after hearing this news. It seemed like a panic move to me. Are you aware that Pujols hit .346 in the second half last season with this same problem?

There is a solid chance that Pujols does not last the entire season, especially if the Cardinals are out of the race. For now, it appears that Pujols will be ready by spring training and will play through this. My belief is that if he hit .346 with this problem last year in the second half, there's no reason to think that he can't continue hitting and putting up first round type numbers in the first half of 2008 (or at least until the pain is too much to bear). I look at it like this... If he starts hot and lasts until the All-Star break, I'll have plenty of time to find a back up option and prepare for the worst. As its stands now, there are a couple of quality 1B's available on the waiver wire in this particular league, which has no reserves, only two DL slots. On the other hand, this could turn out to be a bunch of analysts getting to excited and jumping ship much too early, in which case, will allow Pujols to fall in drafts more consistently.

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