TEAM 15

TOMMY HANSON

ATLANTA BRAVES

REPRESENTING: ATLANTA BRAVES
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction and Request for Hearing Decision 1
II. Quality of the Player’s Contribution During the Past Season 2
III. Length and Consistency of Career Contributions 4
IV. Past Player Compensation 5
V. Comparative Player Salaries 6
VI. Existence of Physical and Mental Defects 8
VII. Conclusion 9
VIII. Appendices 10
I. Introduction and Request for Hearing Decision

This brief analyzes relevant statistics, player attributes, team attributes, awards, player salaries, and other factors of the playing career of Tommy Hanson (“Hanson”), starting pitcher for the Atlanta Braves Baseball Club (the “Club” or the “Braves”). The Major League Baseball (MLB”) Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) between MLB Clubs and the MLB Players Association set the criteria to be considered in this arbitration hearing.¹

Under CBA Section VI, Part 12(a)-(b), specific areas of Hanson’s MLB service time are to be considered for the purposes of this hearing: (1) the quality of Hanson’s contribution to the Braves during the past season, including, but not limited to, his overall performance, special qualities of leadership, and public appeal; (2) the length and consistency of his career contributions; (3) his past recorded compensation figures; (4) comparative baseball salaries; (5) the existence of any mental or physical defects on the part of Hanson; and (6) the recent performance record of the Braves, including, but not limited to, its League standing and attendance as an indication of public acceptance.² The arbitration panel shall assign such weight to the evidence as shall appear appropriate given the circumstances, giving particular attention to, for comparative salary purposes, the contracts of players with MLB service not exceeding one annual service group above Hanson’s annual service group.³ Evidence of the following shall not be considered: the financial position of the Club, press comments and material on the performance of the Braves or Hanson, or offers made by either Hanson or the Braves prior to arbitration.

---

² Id. at §10(a)
³ Id.
On behalf of the Braves, we respectfully ask that the arbitration panel consider the analysis here and in oral hearing to find that Hanson is entitled to receive $3.5 million, a 554% salary increase and $2.965 million more than his 2012 contract.

II. Quality of the Player’s Contribution During the Past Season (See Appendix A)

Although he showed some encouraging signs last year, Tommy Hanson had a poor 2012 season relative to rest of the National League (“NL”). At bottom, he categorically failed to keep runners off base and prevent runs from scoring—the most important jobs of a starting pitcher. To the latter responsibility, Hanson’s earned run average (“ERA”) of 4.48 was not only the worst of his career, but was also the 5th highest in the NL last year among starters. To the former point, Hanson’s rate of walks and hits per inning pitched (“WHIP”) was extremely high for a starting pitcher as well, and at 1.454, was the second worst mark in the NL in 2012. To make matters worse, Hanson’s 71 walks allowed were the 9th most in the NL last year and the 27 home runs he surrendered ranked 4th. Thus, Hanson was not the dependable starter the Braves had hoped he would be last season, failing to live up to his expectations as a starting pitcher.

Evaluating the level of success hitters had against Hanson last year helps to explain these poor numbers. In 2012, batters opposing Hanson had a batting average of .277 (5th highest in the NL), an on-base-percentage of .347 (highest in the NL), and a slugging percentage of .464 (2nd highest in the NL). These rates indicate that Hanson was one of the most hittable pitchers in the National League last year.

Overall, Hanson failed to pitch efficiently on a consistent basis for the Braves in 2012, further impugning his value as a starting pitcher. Starters are expected to pitch deep into games

---

4 http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto01.shtml
5 http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/pitching/_/league/nl/order/true
6 http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/pitching/_/league/nl/sort/WHIP/order/true
to help preserve their teams’ bullpen and, at the same time, ensure their teams are competitively close, as well. Looking at a pitcher’s quality start percentage (“QS%”) helps evaluate a pitcher’s season-long and in-game durability and consistency. A pitcher is credited with a “quality start” if he pitches at least six innings and allows three or fewer earned runs.\(^9\) In the 31 games Hanson pitched last year, he registered only 10 quality starts; his quality start percentage (“QS%”) of 32% was the worst rate among pitchers with at least 160 innings pitched (“IP”).\(^{10}\) For a starting pitcher, whose job it is to give his team the best chance to win, these rates are unacceptable.

Hanson’s 2012 performance placed him among the least valuable pitchers in the NL last year. Although Hanson won a career-best 13 games last year, wins are not necessarily indicative of a pitcher’s individual performance because they depend largely on factors out of his control. For Hanson, this proved especially true. The Braves scored over 4.5 runs per start for Hanson, which was well above the league average.\(^{11}\) Hanson’s below average ERA, WHIP and QS% suggest that, had the Braves provided the league average for run support, Hanson’s win total would have gone down considerably.\(^{12}\) Hanson’s season was not only poor relative to the rest of the NL, but was also the worst of his career, as he surrendered a career-high 87 runs.\(^{13}\) Furthermore, Hanson also allowed more walks (71), home runs (27), and hits (183) in 2012 than he had allowed in any of his previous three seasons as a starter.\(^{14}\)

Finally, Hanson cannot possibly be effective as a starter if he misses his spot in the rotation, which he did several times during the heat of the pennant race in August. Hanson

\(^9\) http://207.56.97.150/articles/qstart.htm
\(^{10}\) http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/pitching/_/league/nl/sort/QSPct/type/expanded/order/false/minip/160
\(^{13}\) http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto01.shtml
\(^{14}\) Id.
missed time in August due to a back injury, his second trip to the DL for an upper-body injury in as many years.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, he was unable to help the Braves when they needed him most.

\textbf{III. Length and Consistency of Career Contributions (See Appendix A)}

To determine a player’s worth during the arbitration process, it is important for the panel to analyze the player’s career numbers in order to help forecast a reasonable expectation of their value in the upcoming year. The most important year in this evaluation is the player’s platform year because it helps illuminate trends in the player’s performance, thus making it easier to predict their future value.

Many of Hanson’s statistical trends indicate that he has been regressing as a pitcher, and that his overall career numbers are not indicative of his present value. Hanson’s career ERA of 3.66 and career WHIP of 1.25 are misleading because they mask the fact that his performance has been in a steady decline since his rookie season.\textsuperscript{16} For example, Hanson’s ERA has risen in each of the past four seasons, going from an impressive 2.89 in 2009 to a disappointing 4.48 in 2012.\textsuperscript{17} His WHIP has also steadily increased since his rookie year, going from the 1.183 mark in 2009 to the 1.454 rate he registered in 2012.\textsuperscript{18} In addition to this, Hanson has struggled to stay healthy for the Braves, and has been placed on the DL in each of the past two seasons.\textsuperscript{19} After suffering a partially torn rotator cuff in 2011 and missing the final two months of the season, Hanson was again placed on the DL in 2012 for a back injury.\textsuperscript{20} These injuries raise concerns about Hanson’s durability as a starting pitcher, and it is as of now unclear if his shoulder is even fully healed.

\textsuperscript{15} \url{http://www.cbssports.com/mlb/players/playerpage/1616925/rss}
\textsuperscript{16} \url{http://www.fangraphs.com/statss.aspx?playerid=9129&position=P#advanced}
\textsuperscript{17} Id.
\textsuperscript{18} Id.
\textsuperscript{20} Id.
Hanson’s health and overall performance are not the only areas that have been in decline since his rookie year. For example, Hanson’s increased walk rate (8.5% in 2011 to 9.3% in 2012) and declining strike-out rate (26.3% in 2011 to 21.2% in 2012) imply that he has worse command of his pitches now than he had earlier in his career.\(^{21}\) Hanson’s 2012 performance affirms his dwindling command. Last year, Hanson walked more batters per nine innings (“BB/9”) than all but one NL starter.\(^{22}\) Hanson’s declining command and increased walk rate have now made it harder for him to get through innings efficiently, as evidenced by the fact that he threw the sixth-most pitches per inning in the NL last year (16.7).\(^ {23}\)

This, along with Hanson’s declining ability to pitch quality starts and get batters out, have made him a less valuable pitcher than he was earlier in his career. In his rookie season, Hanson recorded a QS of 57%, but this since dropped to a league-worst 32% (among pitchers with 160 IP) last season. Further, in addition to the career-high ERA and WHIP he posted in 2012, Hanson allowed more runs, walks, hits, and home runs last season than he had allowed in any of his previous seasons.\(^{24}\) The overall-declining trend of Hanson’s performance indicate that his 2013 season will likely be closer to his 2012 season rather than his rookie one, thereby reducing his value to the team.

IV. Past Player Compensation (see Appendix B)

Since his Major League debut in June of 2009, Hanson has accrued 3.120 years of MLB service,\(^ {25}\) thus making him arbitration-eligible for the first time. After making $435,000 in 2010

\(^{21}\) Id.
\(^{22}\) http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=all&stats=pit&lg=nl&qual=y&type=8&season=2012&month=0&season1=2012&ind=0&team=0&rost=0&age=0&filter=&players=0&sort=10,d
\(^{23}\) http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/pitching/_/league/nl/sort/pitchesPerInning/type/expanded-2
\(^{24}\) Id.
and $456,000 in 2011, the Braves signed Hanson to a one-year contract worth $535,000 in 2012.\(^26\)

V. Comparative Baseball Salaries (see Appendix C)

In light of Hanson’s career contributions and future prospects, the Braves have offered a salary of $3.5 million for the 2013 season. Hanson has countered with a requested salary of $4.3 million. The midpoint between these figures is $3.9 million. If the arbitration panel finds that Hanson is worth one dollar less than the midpoint, then it must grant the team’s offer over the player’s request. The following section will highlight why the Club’s proposal of $3.5 million is more appropriate in light of this midpoint and in light of the compensation awarded to players with similar positions, production, and service time.

The first comparable player for Hanson is Max Scherzer (“Scherzer”), a starting pitcher for the Detroit Tigers (“Tigers”). Scherzer’s career numbers include an ERA of 3.92, a WHIP of 1.305, a strikeout-per-nine-inning (“K/9”) rate of 8.72, and a strikeout-to-walk (“K/BB”) ratio of 2.85.\(^27\) These stats closely resemble Hanson’s career stat line, which reads: 3.61 ERA, 1.252 WHIP, 8.40 K/9, and 2.70 K/BB.\(^28\) While Hanson has the tight edge in terms of their career ERAs and WHIPs, Scherzer has better K/9 and K/BB rates over the course of his career. More importantly, Scherzer outperformed Hanson during their platform years. In 2011, Scherzer’s platform year, he registered an ERA of 4.43, a WHIP of 1.349, a K/BB ratio of 3.11, and a BB/9 ratio of 2.58. These stats are still noticeably better than the stat line for Hanson’s platform year, which reads: 4.48 ERA, 1.454 WHIP, 2.27 K/BB, and 3.7 BB/9.\(^29\) Thus, there is no question that Scherzer was a more effective starting pitcher than Hanson in their platform years.

\(^{26}\) Id.  
\(^{29}\) Id.
Additionally, Scherzer’s career trend at the time of his arbitration indicated that he was progressing as a pitcher. Scherzer registered a quality start 48% of the time in 2011, which was much better than Hanson’s 32% rate during his platform year. During his platform season, Scherzer set career-bests in a number of statistics: he won 15 games, started 33 games (“GS”), had a BB/9 of 2.58, and had a K/BB of 3.11. He was walking fewer batters while simultaneously keeping his strikeout rate high, suggesting he was very in command of his pitches. In contrast, during Hanson’s platform season, he increased his walk rate and decreased his strikeout rate (see Appendix A), suggesting he was losing his command and his efficacy as a starting pitcher.

Perhaps most significantly, and possibly relevant to command, Scherzer never went on the DL during his three seasons whereas Hanson has been on the DL in each of the past two seasons. Scherzer ultimately received a contract of $3.75 million for the 2012 season, which is well below the $3.9 million midpoint here. Upon receiving his contract, Scherzer had performed much better in his platform year and had less of an injury history than Hanson did, thus indicating that Scherzer was more valuable to his team than Hanson is now to his. Since Scherzer’s salary of $3.75 million is well below the midpoint in this case, it is evident that Hanson does not deserve a salary equal to or higher than the $3.9 million midpoint, so the team’s offer of $3.5 million must prevail.

The second comparable player is Mike Pelfrey (“Pelfrey”), a starting pitcher for the New York Mets (“Mets”). Overall, Pelfrey far outperformed Hanson in their platform seasons and also showed a much better career trend at the time of his arbitration hearing than Hanson does.

---

31http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/pitching/_/league/nl/sort/QSPct/count/81/qualified/false/type/expanded
now. During his platform season, Pelfrey won 15 games while posting a 3.66 ERA, a 1.37 WHIP, a QS% of 62, and a 3.0 BB/9 rate.\textsuperscript{34} In comparison, Hanson’s stat line for his platform year reads: 13 games won, a 4.48 ERA, a 1.454 WHIP, a QS% of 32, and a 3.7 BB/9 rate.\textsuperscript{35} Not only was Pelfrey’s ERA almost a full run better, but he also registered a quality start at twice the rate that Hanson did during his platform year. What’s more, Pelfrey recorded more starts than Hanson, so his QS suggests that he was more consistent over a longer period. Pelfrey’s superior performance during his platform year, coupled with the fact the Pelfrey never spent time on the DL,\textsuperscript{36} shows why Hanson deserves less than the $3.925 million salary awarded to Pelfrey during his first year of arbitration eligibility. Since the midpoint in this case is a mere $25 thousand below the salary that the far-superior Pelfrey was awarded, it is clear that the Braves’ offer of $3.5 million is more appropriate for Hanson than his requested $4.3 million figure.

John Danks (“Danks”), a starting pitcher for the Chicago White Sox, provides another solid indication of the market value for a player of Hanson’s caliber. In comparing the players’ contract seasons, Hanson had a worse ERA (3.77 vs. 4.48), a worse WHIP (1.283 vs. 1.454), a worse BB/9 (3.28 vs. 3.70), and a worse QS% (0.63\textsuperscript{37} vs. 0.32). Danks signed a deal for $3.45 million after his platform year. Hanson is not worth almost a half-million dollars more, so his value again must fall well below the $3.9 million midpoint in this case, meaning that the team offer must prevail.

\section*{VI. Existing Physical or Mental Defects}

Hanson has suffered multiple upper-body injuries during his career and has spent a considerable amount of time on the DL since he first entered the league in 2009. The first time

\textsuperscript{34}http://www.fangraphs.com/statss.aspx?playerid=5203&position=P  
\textsuperscript{35}http://www.fangraphs.com/statss.aspx?playerid=9129&position=P  
\textsuperscript{36}http://www.fangraphs.com/statss.aspx?playerid=5203&position=P  
Hanson was placed on the DL was in 2011 due to a partially torn rotator cuff that caused him to miss the final two months of the season, including the team’s playoff games. Hanson was also placed on the DL in 2012 as well, but this time for a back injury. These injuries have correlated with a drop-off in Hanson’s velocity, and Hanson has never undergone surgery to repair these injuries. Whether tied to his shoulder problems or something else, Hanson’s velocity is probably not coming back—studies have shown that pitchers lose velocity as they age, and Hanson will not likely defy the norm given his injury history. More importantly though, it is not clear if the rotator cuff injury Hanson suffered in 2011 ever healed, thus casting doubt to whether Hanson’s arm is, and will ever again be, fully healthy.

VI. Conclusion

Tommy Hanson has had a respectable major league career so far, and the Braves are looking forward to his contributions in the future, as evidenced by the 554% pay increase they are proposing for 2013. Because of Hanson’s performance during his platform year, though, along with the overall decline exhibited in his numbers, the fact that Hanson’s career numbers are respectable though does not, on its own, justify the pay raise he now seeks. Judging by the trends evident in Hanson’s career, it is not likely that he will be worth $3.9 million, the midpoint in this case. In light of the established market for comparable pitchers, the Braves ask the arbitration panel to find that Hanson be awarded a $2.965 million increase in salary to $3.5 million for the 2013 season.

39 http://www.cbssports.com/mlb/players/playerpage/1616925/rss
### Appendix A:

**Tommy Hanson Year by Year Career Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>K/9</th>
<th>BB/9</th>
<th>K/BB</th>
<th>QS%</th>
<th>WAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>127.2</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>202.2</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1.174</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.169</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1.454</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1.252</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix B:

**Tommy Hanson Year by Year Salary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Minor League Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$435,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$456,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$535,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix C:

**Comparative Baseball Salaries for Tommy Hanson**

**Tommy Hanson**
*Atlanta Braves*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>K/9</th>
<th>BB/9</th>
<th>K/BB</th>
<th>QS%</th>
<th>WAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1.454</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1.252</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Max Scherzer**
*Detroit Tigers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>K/9</th>
<th>BB/9</th>
<th>K/BB</th>
<th>QS%</th>
<th>WAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.349</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1.305</td>
<td>8.72</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mike Pelfrey**
*New York Mets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>K/9</th>
<th>BB/9</th>
<th>K/BB</th>
<th>QS%</th>
<th>WAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1.377</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>1.455</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**John Danks**
*Chicago White Sox*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>K/9</th>
<th>BB/9</th>
<th>K/BB</th>
<th>QS%</th>
<th>WAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>200.1</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1.283</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>534.1</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>1.329</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>