2013 National Baseball Arbitration Competition

Ike Davis v. New York Mets
Submission on behalf of The New York Mets
Midpoint: $2.7 million
Submission by: Team 19
# Table of Contents:

I. Introduction and Request for Hearing Decision .................................................................1  
II. Quality of the Player’s Contributions During the Past Season........................................1  
III. Length and Consistency of Career Contributions..........................................................4  
IV. Past Player Compensation ..............................................................................................5  
V. Comparative Baseball Salaries .......................................................................................5  
VI. Physical or Mental Defects ............................................................................................9  
VII. Recent Performance of the Club ..................................................................................10  
VIII. Conclusion ..................................................................................................................10
I. Introduction and Request for Hearing Decision

This brief analyzes the playing career of Ike Davis (“Mr. Davis”), first baseman for the New York Mets Baseball Club (“the Team”). The Major League Baseball Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) set the criteria to be considered in this arbitration hearing. Under CBA Section VI (F), Part 12(a)-(b), the scope of permissible information for this hearing includes: (1) the quality of Mr. Davis’ contribution to the Mets during the past season; (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 Mr. Davis; and (6) the recent performance record of the Mets. For comparative salary purposes, the contracts of players with MLB service not exceeding one annual service group above Mr. Davis’ annual service group are most probative. The New York Mets request that the Arbitration Panel find that Mr. Davis is entitled to receive the Team’s offer of $2.4 million.

II. Quality of the Player’s Contribution During the Past Season

The New York Mets are pleased that Mr. Davis was able to overcome a very poor start to put up solid power statistics for the 2012 season. His 32 home runs were tied for the fifth most in the National League, while his 90 runs batted in tied him for seventeenth most in the NL.\(^1\) The Team remains concerned, however, with the fact that Mr. Davis regressed or continued to struggle in other key statistical areas. Specifically, Mr. Davis had career lows in on-base percentage (.308), batting average (.227) and on-base plus slugging (.771), while continuing to struggle with left-handed pitching, strike outs (“SO”) and hitting at home.\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) “MLB Batting Stats,” ESPN, espn.go.com/mlb/stats/batting/_/year/2012/season/year/league/nl

Mr. Davis came into spring training recovered from a 2011 leg fracture that caused him to miss all but 36 games. His comeback took a detour, however, when Mr. Davis was diagnosed with Valley Fever, a fungal infection that can have varied side-effects. Luckily, Mr. Davis’ case of the infection was not severe and he was able to play a full schedule of baseball.

Mr. Davis struggled mightily during the first few months of the season. He did not record his first hit until the sixth game of the season and failed to reach a .200 batting average until June 27. Through June 8, Mr. Davis was hitting only .158 with 5 home runs, 21 RBIs, a .234 OBP, and a meager .273 slugging percentage. These were unacceptable numbers for a major league regular, especially one whose main attribute is power. Speculation was rampant that the Team would have to send Mr. Davis to the minor leagues to work on his swing. Fortunately, Mr. Davis began to improve and finished the first half of the seasons with a .201/.271/.388 slash line to go along with 12 home runs and 49 RBIs. This is not where the Team envisioned Mr. Davis, but taking into account his dismal start, it was reason for optimism.

Mr. Davis finished the season with healthy power numbers (32 HRs and 90 RBIs), but performed poorly in other key statistical areas, preventing Mr. Davis from being in the same

---

3 Id.
4 “Ike Davis Recovering Well From Ankle Woes,” ESPN, espn.go.com/blog/new-york/mets/post/_/id/ 36491/ike-davis-recovering-well-from-ankle-woes
7 Id.
9 Id.
class as hitters with similar power numbers. It is Mr. Davis’ inability to get on base consistently and hit left-handed pitchers that mar these otherwise solid statistics.

Mr. Davis’ platform season statistics illustrate his difficulty in making consistent contact and getting on base. Mr. Davis struck out in 24% of his at bats while posting a .227 average and a .308 OBP. His average and OBP are well below the NL average of .254 and .318 respectively.\(^\text{10}\) The club is fearful that Mr. Davis relies on his home run power to the detriment of the rest of his offensive game. This is supported by the fact that Mr. Davis’ second half power surge was accompanied by a drop in RBIs (49 down to 41) and 2Bs (14 to 12).\(^\text{11}\) A look at the players who accompany Mr. Davis on the home run and RBI leaderboards further demonstrates his need for a more well-rounded offensive game. Out of the 13 players in the NL with 30 or more home runs, Mr. Davis had the least amount of hits, and the lowest average, OBP, SLG, and OPS.\(^\text{12}\) Out of the 18 players in the NL with 90 or more RBIs, Mr. Davis again had the lowest amount of hits, and the lowest average, OBP, and the second-lowest OPS.\(^\text{13}\) Clearly, Mr. Davis needs to improve his all-around offensive numbers.

Two final statistics are particularly troubling when looking at Mr. Davis’ platform season: his inability to hit left-handed pitching and his play at home. First, Mr. Davis hit a paltry .174 against left-handers with only 8 HRs, 19 RBIs, and a .225 OBP.\(^\text{14}\) If he does not improve these numbers, the Team may have to platoon Mr. Davis against left-handed starters, significantly hurting his value as an every-day player. Second, Mr. Davis struggled mightily at home, hitting only .188 with 11 HRs, a .277 OBP, and a .342 SLG. The Team needs Mr. Davis

\(^{10}\) “MLB Team Stats,” ESPN, espn.go.com/mlb/stats/team/_/stat/batting/order/true


\(^{12}\) “MLB Batting Stats,” ESPN, espn.go.com/mlb/stats/batting/_/year/2012/seasontype/2/league/nl

\(^{13}\) Id.

to be able to perform significantly better at home, where teams are expected to pick up the majority of their victories. The Team commends Mr. Davis for coming back from his early-season struggles to put up respectable power numbers, but respectfully submits that his value is substantially hurt by his poor performance in other key areas.

III. Length and Consistency of Career Contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ike Davis- Career</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0.264</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>0.383</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Davis was drafted by the Mets in the first round of the 2008 MLB draft (18th overall). After a brief stint in the minors to start 2010, Mr. Davis made his major league debut on April 19 and performed solidly starting as a rookie. He hit 19 home runs and collected 71 RBIs while putting up a slash line of .264/.351/.440. Mr. Davis started out strong in his second season, but it ended after only 36 games when he sustained cartilage damage in his left ankle. As discussed above, his third season was a mixed-bag. He put up career highs in home runs and RBIs while regressing significantly in many other statistical categories. After his promising rookie season, an unfortunate injury and general inconsistency has made it difficult to determine whether Mr. Davis will still be able to develop as the Team had once hoped.

As a super-2 eligible player who missed the majority of his second season, there is not a significant amount of bulk statistics available to determine Mr. Davis’ anticipated career trajectory. What is clear from his career statistics is that Mr. Davis has significant power-hitting

16 Id.
17 Id.
18 “Ike Davis Recovering Well From Ankle Woes,” ESPN, espn.go.com/blog/new-york/mets/post/_/id/36491/ike-davis-recovering-well-from-ankle-woes
potential, but remains handcuffed by his inability to consistently get on base as a power hitter, hit left-handed pitching, or rely on other facets of his game outside of hitting home runs. This is evidenced by his career .252 average, .336 OBP, over 2:1 SO/BB ratio, and .217 average against lefties.\(^{19}\) Also troubling is comparing Mr. Davis’ rookie performance to his platform season. Mr. Davis had less runs, hits, doubles, and walks to go along with a lower average, OBP, and OPS. His strike out totals also increased. Mr. Davis’ increased home run and RBI total does not signal an overall upward trend when these other statistics are taken into consideration. The team remains hopeful that Mr. Davis can develop his skills and become a well-rounded hitter, but as of now, his bulk statistics and lack of consistency points to this being anything but a certainty.

### IV. Past Player Compensation

Mr. Davis is in his first year of arbitration eligibility, and as such, his salary has been near the league minimum up until this point. Mr. Davis was paid $432,000 for his services in 2011 and $506,690 in 2012.\(^{20}\) That is $18,000 above the league minimum for 2011 and $26,690 above it for 2012.\(^{21}\) Mr. Davis has made a total of $938,690 in yearly salary to date.

### V. Comparative Baseball Salaries

It is difficult to find a player comparable to Mr. Davis because of his small sample size as a super-2, which is further hindered by his missing almost all of the 2011 season with an injury. For a comparable player to be probative of Mr. Davis’ value, they must be in their first year of arbitration eligibility, play a position typically reserved for run producers (1B, 3B, corner outfield), and have been paid a one-year contract similar to the $2.7 million midpoint here. The following comparisons fit these criteria.

---


In 2010, James Loney entered his first year of arbitration as a 26 year-old first baseman who played in parts of 4 seasons, starting full-time in the previous 2. He avoided arbitration and signed a one-year contract for $3.1 million. Like Mr. Davis, Mr. Loney is a run-producer who bats in the heart of the lineup.

Entering his first year of eligibility, Mr. Loney had a much larger sample size than Mr. Davis due to his extra time in the league and Mr. Davis missing most of the 2011 season (463 games to 339). In their platform seasons, both players batted in 90 runs while playing in 150+ games. How they went about producing those runs is very different, however. Mr. Davis relied on his 32 home runs, while Mr. Loney hit only 13 home runs and instead relied on a superior average (.281 to .227) and OBP (.357 to .308). In only 2 more games, Mr. Loney had more hits (162 to 118), runs (73 to 66), walks (70 to 61), and struck out far less (68 to 141). Taking all these statistics under consideration, it is clear that Mr. Loney out-produced Mr. Davis offensively, even without a high home run total.

In addition to a superior platform season, Mr. Loney has a longer history of production. Whereas Mr. Davis’ next best RBI total was 71, Mr. Loney hit 90 RBIs the preceding season. He was also consistent with his other offensive statistics, including hits (172), average (.289), OBP (.338), and runs (66). This is the consistency that Mr. Davis has not been able to display due his terrible first half in his platform year and his missing most of the 2011 season.

It is not fair to compare aggregate numbers since Mr. Loney has played in more games than Mr. Davis, but comparing statistical percentages is a good indication of where the players stand in relation to each other. Here, Mr. Loney has a better career average (.295 to .252), OBP (.354 to .336), and OPS (.809 to .797). All things considered, Mr. Loney has been more productive and consistent throughout his career. He also had higher production in his platform year, and is deserving of his $3.1 million salary. Mr. Davis must be valued far below Mr. Loney, in accordance with nearly all the offensive indicators. How far below that number becomes clear when comparing Mr. Davis to players with contracts below the $2.7 million midpoint.

In 2012, Casey McGehee entered his first year of arbitration as a 29 year-old third baseman who had been a full-time starter the past 2 seasons and most of the 2009 season. He avoided arbitration and signed a one-year contract worth $2,537,500 very near the $2.7 million midpoint here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casey McGehee - MLST 3.028 - $2,537,500 million - 2012 First Time Arbitration Eligible</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.499</td>
<td>0.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>0.285</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>0.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>0.265</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.426</td>
<td>0.746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2009, Mr. McGehee burst onto the scene with a .301/.360/.499 slash line to go along with 16 home runs and 66 RBIs in just 116 games. The next year, Mr. McGehee built on those numbers and hit 23 home runs and 104 RBIs with a .285/.337/.464 slash line. It seemed like Mr. McGehee was ready for stardom, but he dropped off considerably in 2011, his platform year. His numbers went down across the board, and he managed only 13 home runs and 67 RBIs with a .223/.320/.346 slash line as he entered his first arbitration-eligible season.

---

25 Id.
Mr. Davis arguably had a better platform season because of his home run and RBI totals, but as discussed above, his overall offensive numbers do not indicate an upward trend. Mr. Davis had a solid rookie season, followed by an injury-shortened season where he briefly flashed his potential, and then regressed in most facets his platform year. Mr. McGehee had two strong seasons followed by regression. The question surrounding Mr. McGehee in his arbitration year is the same question presented now: how do you value potential after a subpar season?

Mr. McGehee’s rookie season was stronger that Mr. Davis’ as he had only 3 less home runs, 5 less RBIs, a higher average, and a higher OBP in 31 less games. His 2010 season was the best all-around season for either player, but the platform season that followed was worse than Mr. Davis’. The $2,537,500 contract signed by Mr. McGehee is a reflection of a player that showed serious potential, only to regress as he approached arbitration eligibility, similar to Mr. Davis. Considering that Mr. Davis did not have as strong a rookie season as Mr. McGehee, and no season where he reached the performance level of Mr. McGehee in 2010, it is fair to value Mr. Davis below $2.5375 million, which is far below the midpoint at issue in this arbitration.

Mr. Davis below $2.5375 million, which is far below the midpoint at issue in this arbitration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.293</td>
<td>0.372</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>0.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>0.247</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td>0.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>0.253</td>
<td>0.323</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2012, Garrett Jones entered the season as a super-2 arbitration eligible first baseman and right fielder. He avoided arbitration and signed a one-year contract worth $2.25 million, below the $2.7 million midpoint here. Mr. Jones is a helpful comparison as he too is a super-2 like Mr. Davis, although he has a larger sample size (419 games to 339).

---

27 Id.
Like Mr. Davis, the promise Mr. Jones showed early in his career tailed off in his platform year. In only 82 games in his first season with significant action, Mr. Jones hit 21 home runs with 44 RBIs, a .293 average, a .372 OBP, and a tremendous .567 slugging percentage. His next season was similar to Mr. Davis’ platform season. He hit 21 home runs with 86 RBIs, but his slash line dropped to .247/.306/.414. His numbers dropped in his platform years, but he was still able to get on base more consistently than Mr. Davis with his .243 average and .321 OBP. It was not the season his team anticipated, and they were left to value a player who had showed great promise only to tail off in his platform season.

For his career, Mr. Jones has a very similar batting average (.253 to .252), OBP (.323 to .336), and slugging percentage (.450 to .461) as Mr. Davis. As a fellow super-2, Mr. Jones has more games, home runs, and RBI than Mr. Davis as well, although he has played in 60 more games. If Mr. Davis had an additional 60 games, he would most likely surpass Mr. Jones’ power numbers, but would remain a statistically similar player. This would place Mr. Davis slightly above Mr. Jones’ $2.25 million salary, but below Mr. McGehee’s $2.5375 million, as discussed above. This would value Mr. Davis almost directly at the $2.4 million offered by the Team in this arbitration. It is a fair valuation of the potential and uncertainty that surrounds Mr. Davis, and it is well below the $2.7 million midpoint.

VI. Physical or Mental Defects

In Mr. Davis’ brief career, he has suffered two injuries of note. The first injury was a rolled ankle that resulted in cartilage damage and kept Mr. Davis out for all but 36 games of his sophomore season. The second injury occurred in spring training of his platform season, where

28 “Ike Davis Recovering Well From Ankle Woes,” ESPN, espn.go.com/blog/new-york/mets/post/_/id/36491/ike-davis-recovering-well-from-ankle-woes
he contracted a fluke bout of Valley Fever.\textsuperscript{29} Mr. Davis never exhibited any symptoms of the disease, however.\textsuperscript{30} The Team feels that these injuries are no longer issues, and expect a healthy Mr. Davis entering the 2012 season.

\textbf{VII. Recent Performance of the Club}

Despite Mr. Davis’ early season struggles, the Mets were able to play well and entered the all-star break with a 46-40 record.\textsuperscript{31} Unfortunately, the team faltered in the second half to end the season with a disappointing 74-88 record.\textsuperscript{32} Interestingly, the Team’ and Mr. Davis’ fortunes did not match up, as the Team excelled while Mr. Davis was struggling and began to slide as he started to come out of his slump. The Team drew only 2,243,803 fans on the season, its fourth straight season of declining attendance.

\textbf{VIII. Conclusion}

In his short career, Mr. Davis has flashed the potential to become a solid power-hitting first baseman, but has also struggled through contact issues and the inability to hit left-handed pitching effectively. The Team is hopeful that Mr. Davis can put forth a more well-rounded effort as he did in his rookie season, while maintaining the home run and RBI totals he put up in his platform season. The fact remains, however, that Mr. Davis has only played in slightly more than two major league seasons, and it is not a certainty that he is the player we saw in his rookie season rather than the version we saw struggle in 2012. The Mets respectfully request that the Arbitration Panel value Mr. Davis according to the apt comparisons made above, which would place him well below the $2.7 million midpoint.

\textsuperscript{30}Id.
\textsuperscript{32}Id.