2013 National Baseball Arbitration Competition

Tommy Hanson v. Atlanta Braves
Submission on Behalf of the Atlanta Braves
Midpoint: $3.9 million
Submission by: Team 25
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION AND REQUEST FOR HEARING DECISION.................................1

II. THIS ARBITRATION PANEL SHOULD AWARD HANSON $3.5 MILLION
BECAUSE THE CRITERIA WEIGH IN FAVOR OF THE BRAVES’ FINAL OFFER ....2

   A. Hanson’s 2012 Contribution Favors an Award of $3.5 Million..................2

   B. Hanson’s Lack of Consistency and Declining Trend Throughout his Career
Favors the Club’s Offer of $3.5 Million..........................................................2

   C. The Braves’ Submission of $3.5 Million is in line with Hanson’s Historical Salary
Schedule............................................................................................................4

   D. In Determining Hanson’s Salary, the Arbitration Panel Should Analyze the
Similarities Between Hanson and Similar Starting Pitchers such as Jair Jurrjens
and Phil Hughes...............................................................................................4

   E. Hanson is an Injury Prone Player Recovering from an Injury and has Declined
in Productivity due to Injuries.................................................................6

   F. The Atlanta Braves’ Pitching Staff Had Great Success in the 2012 Season,
Despite Hanson’s Lackluster Numbers.........................................................7

III. CONCLUSION..................................................................................................8
I. INTRODUCTION AND REQUEST FOR HEARING DECISION

This brief analyzes the assets and contributions of right-handed starting pitcher Thomas J. Hanson (“Hanson”) to be reflected in his 2013 contract with 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 the CBA Section VI, Part 12(a)-(b), the criteria to be considered in this arbitration hearing include: (1) the quality of the Player’s contribution to the Club 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 contribution; (3) the record of the Player’s past compensation; (4) comparative baseball salaries; (5) the existence of any physical or mental defects; and (6) the recent performance record of the Club, including but not limited to its League standing and attendance as an indication of public acceptance.\(^2\) The arbitration panel shall give particular attention, for comparative salary purposes, to the contracts of Players with Major League service not exceeding one annual service group above the Player’s annual service group.\(^3\) Evidence of the following shall not be admissible: (1) the financial position of the Player and the Club; (2) press comments or similar materials bearing on the performance of either the Player or the Club, except that recognized annual Player awards for playing excellence shall not be excluded; (3) offers made by either the Player or the Club prior to arbitration; (4) the cost to the parties of their representatives; and (5) salaries in other sports or occupations.\(^4\)

---


\(^2\) /d. at § 10(a)

\(^3\) /d.

\(^4\) /d. at § 10(b)
Hanson is a valued member of the team and shows extraordinary talent; however, the Club has concerns with his struggles to maintain consistency that have led to his decreasing productivity. The evidence of his past performance and future potential presented in this brief and in oral argument demonstrates that Hanson is fairly entitled to a salary below the $3.9 million midpoint between his offer and that of the Club. The Braves respectfully request that this panel find that he is entitled to a 2013 salary arbitration award of $3.5 million.

II. THIS ARBITRATION PANEL SHOULD AWARD HANSON $3.5 MILLION BECAUSE THE CRITERIA WEIGH IN FAVOR OF THE BRAVES’ FINAL OFFER

A. Hanson’s 2012 Contribution Favors an Award of $3.5 Million

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tommy Hanson</th>
<th>Atlanta Braves</th>
<th>RHP</th>
<th>2012 Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hanson performed adequately for the Braves as a starting pitcher during the 2012 season. The Braves were impressed with Hanson’s ability to win 13 games and the Braves wish to handsomely reward him with a substantial raise of almost three million dollars (up from $535,000). However, the Club is concerned because Hanson’s 2012 season was his worst season to date. Hanson’s ERA ballooned up to 4.48 and his WHIP increased to 1.454.

B. Hanson’s Lack of Consistency and Declining Trend Throughout his Career Favors the Club’s Offer of $3.5 Million.

Although Hanson has shown glimpses of superior talent, he has not consistently performed at that level.

---

5 “Hanson Stats”, http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto01.shtml
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tommy Hanson</th>
<th>Atlanta Braves</th>
<th>RHP</th>
<th>'09-'12 Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Back in 2009, Tommy Hanson was one of the most heralded young prospects in the game, a 22-year-old 6-foot-6 righty whom Baseball America ranked number four on its Top 100 Prospects list after an outstanding 2008 season split between High-A and Double-A.³⁷ By the first week of June, he was in the majors, kicking off an abbreviated rookie season in which he would post a 2.89 ERA and strike out 8.3 per nine in 21 starts — a stellar debut.

In four big league seasons, he has reached the 180-inning level just once, that back in 2010 at the age of 23, when he threw 202 2/3 innings of 3.33 ERA ball. By today’s standards, that’s a heavy workload for a young pitcher, and it may have contributed to the two months Hanson spent on the disabled list in 2011 due to a rotator cuff strain and tendonitis in his shoulder.³⁸ He threw just 130 innings that year, and while his strikeout rate climbed to 9.8 per nine, his walk and home run rates increased as well, as did his ERA.³⁹ He was back up to 174 2/3 innings last year, but his performance was much worse; Hanson’s home run and walk rates both balloon, and his strikeout rate, while still high, came back to earth. He also spent 17 days on the DL with a lower back strain, and was less effective after returning (4.99 ERA over 48 2/3

³⁸ /d.
³⁹ /d.
innings) in mid-August.\(^{10}\) Hanson’s ERAs have increased in every season since his rookie year. Additionally, Hanson has given up more home runs in each year since he debut in the majors. Normally, young pitchers start progressing and trending towards better statistics; however, through Hanson’s career his statistics have continued to decrease.

C. **The Braves’ Submission of $3.5 Million is in line with Hanson’s Historical Salary Schedule**

In 2005, the Braves drafted Hanson in the 22\(^{nd}\) round of the Amateur Draft.\(^ {11}\) In 2010, the Braves gave him a salary of $435,000. In 2011, the Braves increased his salary to $456,500, and increased his salary once more in 2012 to $535,000.\(^ {12}\) For the 2013 season, the Braves believe that their last best offer of $3.5 million is reflective of a player of his present caliber. The Braves offer would award Hanson with a substantial raise that is $2,965,000 greater, by 654%, than what Hanson was paid in 2012.

D. **In Determining Hanson’s Salary, the Arbitration Panel Should Analyze the Similarities Between Hanson and Similar Starting Pitchers such as Jair Jurrjens and Phil Hughes**

If the Arbitration Panel determines that the Braves’ last best offer is more appropriate, Hanson will earn a 2013 salary that is on par with statistically comparable starting pitchers.

\(^{10}\) Id.
\(^{11}\) Id.
\(^{12}\) Id.
Successful starting pitchers not only have the ability to produce good statistics on a given night, but they can consistently produce good statistics throughout their career. Tommy Hanson came into the league as a highly touted pitching prospect that had the potential to become a dominating force in baseball; much like Jair Jurrjens. Hanson has posted a 3.61 ERA and 1.252 WHIP over his career. Like Hanson, Jurrjens’ has a 3.52 ERA and 1.301 WHIP for his career. Hanson and Jurrjens also have very similar platform numbers. Hanson had a slightly better ERA than Jurrjens his platform year, 4.48 and 4.64, respectively. However, Jurrjens posted a better WHIP than Hanson, 1.393 and 1.454, respectively. Despite having similar numbers, Hanson is still requesting $4.3 million. However, Jurrjens was only paid $3.25 million. Hanson is requesting $1 million dollars more than Jurrjens, and $650,000 above the midpoint.

Additionally, Tommy Hanson and Phil Hughes also have similar numbers. Hanson has a better career ERA of 3.61 versus Hughes’ 4.20 career ERA. However, Hughes’ career WHIP is

---


---
just slightly lower than Hanson’s, 1.266 and 1.252, respectively. Despite having lower career numbers, Hughes had a significantly better platform season than Hanson. Hughes’ platform ERA was 4.19 versus Hanson’s 4.48, and Hughes’ platform WHIP was a low 1.248 versus Hanson’s high 1.454. Hanson and Hughes’ numbers are similar; Hanson has slightly better career numbers, but Hughes’ has significantly better platform numbers. Although their numbers are comparable, Hanson is requesting $1.6 million more than Hughes’ 2011 salary of only $2.7 million. Hughes’ $2.7 million is even $1.2 million below the midpoint of $3.9 million.

Due to the statistical similarity between Tommy Hanson, Jair Jurrjens, and Phil Hughes, Hanson’s award should be in the range of those two players. Jurjens has closer career numbers to Hanson than Phil Hughes; however, both Hughes and Jurjens have superior platform numbers. According to these comparables, the closer range should be closer to $2.7 million (Hughes’ award) and $3.25 million (Jurjens’ award), not in the $3.9 million range set by Hanson’s $4.3 million request. The Braves’ offer takes into account that Hanson has had a slightly stronger career than these two comparables, however, Hanson’s platform statistics are inferior to both players. Therefore, the Braves feel that $3.5 million, which is significantly more than both of these comparables is more than fair for Hanson’s 2013 salary.

E. **Hanson is an Injury Prone Player Recovering from an Injury and has Declined in Productivity due to Injuries**

Coming back from a shoulder injury that plagued him late in 2011, Braves starting pitcher Tommy Hanson had a disappointing 2012, posting a career worst in ERA (4.48) and WHIP (1.45). After the 15-day DL stint, the right-hander went less than six innings in 11 of his
last 13 starts, posting a 5.69 ERA during that stretch.\textsuperscript{14} He was coming back from a shoulder injury last season as well, adjusting his delivery in the process.\textsuperscript{15} Hanson actually went into the All-Star Break with a 3.71 ERA and 93 strikeouts in 106 2/3 innings. He missed time in August with a back injury, but put up an ugly 5.69 ERA from July 14 on.\textsuperscript{16} Hanson's average fastball velocity was only 89.7 miles per hour on the year, down from 92.7 miles per hour just two years earlier.\textsuperscript{17} The drop-off might be related to his partially torn rotator cuff or it might have to do with a recent decision to change his delivery; either way the Braves consider this a significant concern.

F. The Atlanta Braves’ Pitching Staff Had Great Success in the 2012 Season, Despite Hanson’s Lackluster Numbers.

In the 2012 season, the Braves’ pitching staff ranked 4th overall in WHIP and BAA, 5th in ERA, and 20th in Quality Starts.\textsuperscript{18} The Braves’ average ERA of 3.42 was significantly lower than Hanson’s abysmal 4.48 ERA. The Braves’ WHIP of 1.230 was better than Hanson’s 1.454 WHIP. The Braves’ pitching staff as a whole was one of the most dominating pitching forces last year, however, Hanson’s statistics lack similar numbers. Hanson’s ERA and WHIP are both below the team average by over a run and .244, respectively. Logically, in terms of statistics, Hanson was in the bottom-half of the pitching staff on the Braves in 2012. As a team, Hanson actually diluted the power that the Atlanta Braves’ pitching staff contained.

\textsuperscript{14}“Deeper Concerns about Hanson”. http://mlb.si.com/2012/11/30/tommy-hanson-jordan-walden-braves-angels-trade/
\textsuperscript{15}/d.
\textsuperscript{16}/d.
\textsuperscript{17}/d.
\textsuperscript{18}“Atlanta Braves Team Info”, http://espn.go.com/mlb/team/_/name/atl/atlanta-braves
III. CONCLUSION

The Braves believe that $3.5 million is a fair and accurate salary for Hanson, taking into consideration his decreasing production and lack of consistency due to injury. As shown with comparative salaries, pitchers who have performed as efficiently as Hanson earn less than what he is asking for, despite displaying consistent health and production. Pitchers with that are equally effective and have pitched equivalent innings receive significantly less than the Braves last best offer. The Braves respectfully request the Arbitration Panel find that the Club’s offer of $3.5 million is fair compensation for Tommy Hanson.