2012 National Baseball Arbitration Competition

Tommy Hanson v. Atlanta Braves

Submission on Behalf of Atlanta Braves

Midpoint: $3.9 million
Submission by Team 26
Tommy Hanson:

Exhibit 1: MLB Service Time (01/2013): 3.120

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Tm</th>
<th>Lg</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L-1-2</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>CG</th>
<th>SHO</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>HBP</th>
<th>BK</th>
<th>WP</th>
<th>BF</th>
<th>ERA+</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>HR/9</th>
<th>BB/9</th>
<th>SO/9</th>
<th>SO/BB</th>
<th>Awards</th>
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<td>NL</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>1.159</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>89</td>
<td>1.454</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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</table>

4 Yrs: 453 32 .584 3.61 108 108 0 1 0 635.0 576 270 255 68 219 12 592 27 0 16 2668 110 1.252 3.1 1.0 3.1 8.4 2.70

162 Game Avg. 14 10 .584 3.61 34 34 0 0 0 0 200 181 88 80 21 69 4 106 9 0 5 840 110 1.252 3.2 1.0 3.1 8.4 2.70

I. Introduction

The Atlanta Braves (“Braves”) are a storied franchise, a member of the National League East that play their home games at Turner Field. In the 2005 amateur draft, the Braves selected Tommy Hanson from Riverside Community College in the 22nd round. Tommy Hanson should receive a $3.5 million salary for the 2013 season because the figure better approximates his value to the Atlanta Braves, which is lower than the figure that Mr. Hanson has submitted of $4.3 million. Since this decision will be resolved through arbitration, the relevant number to take into consideration, the “midpoint”, is $3.9 million. Mr. Hanson is a risky young pitcher with high potential upside, with pitching figures declining rapidly as his career continues. Mr. Hanson is in his first year of arbitration eligibility (“FAE”), having accumulated exactly 3.120 years of service time (“MLBST”). This brief will analyze the statistics and other relevant aspects of Mr. Bailey’s playing career, and will show that the value of Mr. Hanson’s service to the Atlanta Braves will be below $3.9 million, and therefore the arbitrators should determine his contract to be $3.5 million.

2. Id.
Pursuant to the Major League Baseball Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”), the arbitration panel looks to several prescribed factors to determine the appropriate salary for an arbitration eligible player who uses the arbitration process. Under Article VI, Section F, Part 12, subsections (a)-(b) of the CBA, the arbitration panel must consider (1) the quality of Mr. Hanson’s contribution to the Braves during the 2012 season; (2) the length and consistency of Mr. Hanson’s career contributions; (3) the record of Mr. Hanson’s past compensation; (4) comparative baseball salaries; (5) the existence of any physical or mental defects on the part of Mr. Hanson; and (6) the recent performance of the Braves, including its league standing and attendance as an indication of public acceptance.  

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. 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.  

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

Exhibit 2: Tommy Hanson’s Pitching Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Lg</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>W-L%</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>CG</th>
<th>SHO</th>
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<th>IP</th>
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<th>R</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>HBP</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>HBP+ BB</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>WP</th>
<th>BF</th>
<th>ERA+</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>H/9</th>
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<th>SO/BB Awards</th>
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<td>116</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1.183</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.454</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5 Id. at §12(b).
6 http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto01.shtml
During the 2012 season, Mr. Hanson did not provide the Braves Organization with a very strong performance to consider for determining his appropriate salary. His ERA spiked from a 3.60 to a 4.48, his homeruns allowed total figure jumped to 27 (nearly double the 2010 total), and his OPS (on base percentage+ slugging percentage) jumped from a mere .680 to .808. Although he maintained an impressive 161 strikeouts throughout the season, his strikeout percentage (total strikeouts/all plate appearances) significantly declined from 26.3% to 21.2%. Not only did his strikeouts suffer, with the strikeouts per nine innings ratio ((strikeouts*9)/innings pitched) dropping from a 9.8 to an 8.3, a 15.3% decline in just one season.\(^7\) Additionally, his walks per nine innings also saw disturbing growth, with a 15.6% increase totaling 3.7. In essence, these two figures imply that for every nine innings he pitched, he saw 1.5 less strikeouts and 0.4 more walks. Even worse, due to an injury to his lower back, Hanson’s performance after the All-Star break was horrendous, logging a 7.45 ERA in four starts.\(^8\) With a poor performance shortly after the All-Star break, Hanson appeared to be more of an issue to the Braves than expected. Additionally, he gave up the third most stolen bases among all starting pitchers in the Major Leagues, second in the National League just behind A.J. Burnett.\(^9\)

Not only were Mr. Hanson’s numbers considerably worse than his prior years, but his pitching velocity also suffered its largest decline throughout his platform year.\(^10\) Specifically, his fastball, which average at 92.7 MPH in 2010 declined all the way down to 89.7 MPH, a 3% decline in the two year period. Additionally, his slider and curveball speeds also sunk to their all-


time lows, as Mr. Hanson has adjusted to the newly developed pitching motion that he has begun to utilize.

**Exhibit 3: Tommy Hanson’s Velocity Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Fastball Velocity</th>
<th>Two Seam Fastball Velocity</th>
<th>Slider Velocity</th>
<th>Curveball Velocity</th>
<th>Changeup Velocity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>92.2</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>82.6</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>92.2</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>83.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>81.2</td>
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</table>

With such disturbing statistical trends for Mr. Hanson coinciding with a reduced velocity on most of his pitches as he begins to adapt with his new motion, Mr. Hanson’s platform year appears to be a tell-tale sign of a risky pitcher.

**III. Length and Consistency of Player’s Career**

Mr. Hanson has been a relatively valuable asset to the Braves since he joined the team. He finished third in the National League Rookie of the Year Voting behind Chris Coghlan and J.A. Happ, earning an impressive 11 wins in 21 starts. With having such a limited sample size, Hanson’s performance in the 127.2 innings pitched appeared to show signs of a talented young prospect. However, Hanson has been unfortunately plagued by injuries throughout his career, and has never been able to eclipse the 180-inning standard level more than once. He suffered from a few minor injuries throughout his years with the Braves, one such occurring in June 2011 where he was placed on the DL for a shoulder injury. The first substantial injury that kept Hanson out of action for an extended period occurred in August of 2011, where he suffered from

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11 Id.  
tendonitis and a rotator cuff tear.\textsuperscript{14} This was heavily a result of his throwing motion, and led to 
the need for Mr. Hanson to alter his approach at the mound.

Another key feature to the reasoning behind Hanson changing his pitching motion was 
based on the extremely poor statistics regarding opposing stolen bases against him. Not 
extremely evident in his 2009 campaign, the delayed motion in delivering the pitch made the 
Braves much more susceptible to opponents stealing bases, evinced by the 33 stolen bases on 37 
attempts against Hanson in 2010. In fact, Mr. Hanson gave up the fourth most stolen bases in the 
entire MLB in 2010, fifth worst in 2011, and third worst in 2012.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Exhibit 4: Tommy Hanson’s Stolen Base Statistics}\textsuperscript{16}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Stolen Bases</th>
<th>Caught Stealing</th>
<th>Percentage Successful SB</th>
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</thead>
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<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

While this improved pitching motion has provided the Braves with some optimism 
regarding the amount of stolen bases given up, his 31 successfully stolen bases did not provide 
extreme signs of improvement. Not only has Mr. Hanson’s career been known for his awkward 
pitching motion, he also has had a few minor injuries provide his team with his overall 
durability. After coming off of the Disabled List already in 2012, Hanson received a concussion

\textsuperscript{14} \text{http://hardballtalk.nbcsports.com/2011/08/26/diagnosis-for-tommy-hanson-small-tear-in-rotator-cuff/}  
\textsuperscript{15} \text{http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/pitching/_/year/2010/league/nl/sort/stolenBases/type/opponent-batting}  
\textsuperscript{16} \text{http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto01-pitch.shtml}
in a one car accident on the way to the Braves’ Disney World complex.\textsuperscript{17} Between the uncertainty regarding his injuries, statistics, and uncertainty resulting from a changed pitching motion, it is unlikely for the Braves to consider Hanson as a consistent, beneficial contributor.

IV. Existence of Physical or Mental Defects

Although a very young pitcher, Mr. Hanson has gone through some drastic changes throughout his pitching career to simply ensure that he would have a future in baseball. Dating all the way back to 2010, Mr. Hanson always had concerns based out of his right shoulder due to his pitching motion.\textsuperscript{18} His continuous issues with his arm continued to plague his performance, causing him to miss the entire last two months of the 2011 season after being placed on the DL for the last two months resulting from the partially torn rotator cuff and tendonitis in his throwing arm.\textsuperscript{19} While players are oftentimes very capable to recover from these sorts of complications through minor changes in their pitching motions, these adjustments often require additional time for the pitchers to develop their skills and “relearn” the optimal pitching motion. In fact, Mr. Hanson has even been quoted as saying “My legs and the timing aspect are what I need to get the most comfortable with, because it is a little different in terms of how the timing goes.”\textsuperscript{20} This readjustment appears to be clearly taking him some time, as his pitching velocity has declined in almost every category.\textsuperscript{21} While there may be potential room for improvement in his velocity figures, the Braves need to focus their attention on his platform season statistics.

The pitching motion has not been the only cause for concern for the Braves regarding Mr. Hanson. In his platform year, Mr. Hanson was also placed on the 15 day Disabled List with a

\textsuperscript{17} \url{http://espn.go.com/mlb/spring2012/story/id/7606684/spring-training-2012-atlanta-braves-tommy-hanson-back-camp-bruised-better}
\textsuperscript{18} \url{http://mlb.mlb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20120213&content_id=26677354&vkey=news_mlb&c_id=mlb}
\textsuperscript{19} Id.
\textsuperscript{20} Id.
\textsuperscript{21} \url{http://www.fangraphs.com/statss.aspx?playerid=9129&position=P#platediscipline}
lower back strain.\textsuperscript{22} Although not necessarily a baseball related injury, Mr. Hanson also suffered a concussion while driving to Spring Training in February of 2012.\textsuperscript{23} The Braves must be extremely cautious with where they plan to invest their money for young talented pitching, and the 2012 season was a year of headaches and frustration dealing with the various setbacks that limited Mr. Hanson’s time on the mound. Even more concerning, his statistics when he pitched healthy were not extremely convincing, showing that the issues with his rotator cuff could be the cause of the decline in his pitching abilities. Since the team is being asked to determine a valuation of his pitching services to the organization this year, blind optimism in him “coming around” does not appear to be an optimal decision for the Braves. Thus, the value of his services should fall well below $3.9 million, with an opportunity for growth in the years following to see how his progression continues.

\textbf{V. Past Compensation}

For his time served in Atlanta, plagued with injuries and changed pitching motions, Mr. Hanson has thus far seen reasonable, but not substantial salary increases. In 2010, the Atlanta Braves paid the Player $435,000. After a relatively successful season completing over 200 innings, the Braves increased his salary to $456,500 in 2011, a 4.94% salary increase. The optimism going into the following season was much lower. In fact, Hanson was injured for a substantial portion of the 2012 season which only allowed him to start 130 innings.\textsuperscript{24} With a growing ERA and doubling home runs per nine innings pitched ratio, the Braves had to consider Mr. Hanson’s future with the organization with skepticism. However, the Braves still gave him a

\textsuperscript{22} http://atlanta.sbnation.com/atlanta-braves/2012/7/31/3207477/tommy-hanson-injury-atlanta-braves
\textsuperscript{24} http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto1.shtml#contracts
$535,000 salary, a shocking 17.2% increase from the prior year. The team recognized that his higher win percentage was relevant for the consideration, and also recognized the opportunity to see improvements in his performance after altering the pitching motion.

After a year like his 2012 season, increasing his salary by more than 700% does not appear to be justified. His waning velocity, underperformance in key statistical areas such ERA and WHIP, and his proneness to injury appear to create major doubts for the Braves organization. As will be identified in the player comparisons section, a more reasonable percentage increase to annual salary should be slightly below a 630% increase in salary, thus justifying an overall salary below the $3.9 million midpoint. Other pitchers that have earned comparable statistics to Mr. Hanson, especially during his platform year, generally received much less than a 700% increase in his contract during the First Year of Arbitration Eligibility.

**Exhibit 5: Tommy Hanson’s Contract Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$456,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$535,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VI. Comparable Players**

It is difficult to find pitchers in the exact same position as Mr. Hanson. In evaluating a player that is most comparable in situations, it would appear relevant to consider the contracts received by the players during their first year of arbitration eligibility.

**Exhibit 6: Comparable Players Stats and Salaries at First Year Eligibility(Platform Year)**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Record</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>HR/9</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>SO/9</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>% Salary Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shaun Marcum(2011)</td>
<td>13-7</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>200.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.156</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>$3.95 m</td>
<td>364.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon Morrow(2011)</td>
<td>11-11</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>179.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.115</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>$2.3 m</td>
<td>462.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Hanson(2012)</td>
<td>13-10</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.454</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>$3.5 m</td>
<td>554.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In evaluating the figures above, it would appear as though Mr. Hanson’s appropriate salary would fall somewhere in between those earned by Brandon Morrow and Shaun Marcum. Although a slightly younger prospect, Mr. Hanson’s 2012 performance did not quite appear to be as strong as the year by Mr. Marcum. With a higher ERA, HR/9, and a substantially higher WHIP than Mr. Marcum, it would appear that an appropriate salary would be below the $3.95 m earned in 2011 for better statistics. In fact, Hanson’s statistics appeared much more in line with SP Brandon Morrow, who only received a salary of $2.3 million.

**VII. Recent Performance of Club**

The Braves had a very strong season in 2010 during Mr. Hanson’s rookie campaign with the team, notching a 91-71 overall record, finishing merely six close games behind the powerful Philadelphia Phillies.\(^{28}\) The Braves made the playoffs, a series in which Hanson pitched four awful innings to the San Francisco Giants, earning 4 runs and 5 hits in the losing National League Divisional Series game.\(^{29}\) After having seen Mr. Hanson pitch for over 200 innings in 2010, the organization was extremely optimistic that the team would be able to pick up some more wins behind this hard-throwing fly ball pitcher going into 2011. However, the team fell to 89-73, a staggering 16 games behind the divisional leader.\(^{30}\) With the extreme decline in innings

pitched by Mr. Hanson, it would seem as if his presence did not have a substantial impact on the team’s overall success in 2011. Mr. Hanson made a fairly reasonable comeback in 2012 after altering his motion, and helped guide the Braves to a 94-68 overall record.\textsuperscript{31} However, these praises cannot be sung to loudly regarding his performance, considering he was placed on the disabled list intermittently throughout the season. Additionally, it is significant to note that there did not appear to be a large draw for fans to come out to Turner Field when Hanson was on the mound for the Braves.\textsuperscript{32} As a result, it does not appear extremely relevant to look to Mr. Hanson’s performance as an indication of the fans “pulse” to the team. Put another way, the fans do not appear necessarily influenced in deciding to attend the games based on his starting status.

\textbf{Exhibit 7: Hanson’s Innings Pitched v. Annual Attendance}\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
Year & Innings Pitched & Annual Attendance \\
\hline
2009 & 127.2 & 2,373,631 \\
2010 & 202.2 & 2,510,119 \\
2011 & 130.0 & 2,372,940 \\
2012 & 174.2 & 2,420,171 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textbf{VIII. Summary and Conclusion}

In his short career in the major leagues, Tommy Hanson has shown that he possesses the ability to be a successful starting pitcher. The Braves are appreciative of his contributions to the team’s achievements, and are generally optimistic about his future. His past performance, however, raises some reasons for concern. He has at times struggled with consistency, with his vital pitching statistics declining at an alarmingly high rate. His injury issues likewise raise questions about his capacity to perform to the best of his ability over the course of an entire season.

\textsuperscript{31} \url{http://www.baseball-reference.com/leagues/NL/2012.shtml}
\textsuperscript{32} \url{http://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/ATL/attend.shtml}
\textsuperscript{33} Id.
season. With an injury prone pitcher who recently changed his pitching approach, the Braves must proceed with extreme caution in determining an appropriate salary. For the foregoing reasons, the Atlanta Braves respectfully request that the panel determines Mr. Hanson’s value to be under $3.9 million, and thus the appropriate salary figure should be $3.5 million.