2013 National Baseball Arbitration Competition

Ike Davis v. New York Mets

Submission on Behalf of Ike Davis

Midpoint: $2.70 million

Submission by: Team 27
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I. Introduction and Request for Hearing Decision

This brief reviews the contributions of first baseman Isaac Benjamin “Ike” Davis (“Mr. Davis”) to be considered in determining his 2013 contract with the New York Mets (the “Mets”). Mr. Davis’ contract with the Mets expired at the conclusion of the 2012 season. Unfortunately, the Mets have not been able to come to a fair agreement with Mr. Davis for the 2013 season. Although he has not reached his third year of MLB service, Mr. Davis is salary-arbitration eligible (SAE) based on his accumulation of 2.168 years of MLB service under the “Super Two” guidelines in the CBA.2

The Mets are only offering Mr. Davis $2.4 million for next season. However, the evidence presented in this brief, under the guidelines of the CBA, show that Mr. Davis is deserving of his salary request of $3 million. Thus, Mr. Davis respectfully requests that this panel find that he is entitled to a 2013 salary exceeding the $2.7 million midpoint between his final offer and that of the Mets.

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

In his platform season, Mr. Davis had a successful season with the Mets primarily playing first base and hitting clean up. Although Mr. Davis had a slow start offensively, he picked up steam significantly as the season progressed, ending the year with 32 homeruns (“HRs”), the fourth most in the National League (“NL”).4 The most telling statistic of Mr. Davis’ excellent second half of the season was his increase of 229 points in OPS after the All-Star

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3 Id. at Art. VI(E)(10).
break.\(^5\) His second half of the season OPS increase to .888 placed him second in the NL among all eligible first baseman (200 plate appearance minimum) for the same timeframe.\(^6\)

Additionally, Mr. Davis’ 20 HRs in the second half of the season were the fifth best in all of baseball.\(^7\) The chart below shows Mr. Davis’ 2012 offensive statistics and the significant increases Mr. Davis made in the second half of the season, especially in the more telling categories of OBP and OPS.

| TABLE 1: Ike Davis Offensive Production- Platform Season (Rank in NL)\(^8\) |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Season:           | G   | AB  | R   | HR  | RBI | AVG. | OBP | SLG |
| 2012:             | 156 | 519 | 66  | 32  | 90  | .227 | .308 | .462 |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | .771 |
| Pre All-Star:     | 81  | 268 | 30  | 12  | 49  | .201 | .271 | .388 |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | .659 |
| Post All-Star:    | 75  | 251 | 36  | 20  | 41  | .255 | .346 | .542 |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | .888 |

### III. Length and Consistency of Career Contributions

Mr. Davis was drafted 18\(^{th}\) overall in the 2008 MLB draft at the age of 21 by the Mets.\(^9\) After only two years in the minor leagues and an outstanding 2010 spring training camp Mr. Davis became the Mets starting first baseman on April 19, 2010.\(^10\) His offensive production, defensive skill, and vast public appeal over his 2.168 years of MLB service have clearly earned him a salary valuation above $2.7 million.

Mr. Davis had a standout rookie season in 2010. He excelled both offensively and defensively. Among NL rookies Mr. Davis was second in runs (73), doubles (33), walks (72),

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\(^5\) [Ike Davis, Splits, MLB.com](http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195&c_id=nym#gameType=R&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level=ALL).


\(^8\) [Ike Davis, MLB.com](http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195&c_id=nym#gameType=R&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level=ALL).


extra-base hits (53), OBP (.351), and OPS (.791).\textsuperscript{11} He was also third in RBIs (71), SLG (.440), and HRs (19).\textsuperscript{12} Additionally, in 2010 he finished 11\textsuperscript{th} out of the 24 qualified NL first basemen in OPS (200 plate appearances to qualify).\textsuperscript{13}

Perhaps even more impressive than his offense was his defense. Mr. Davis ended the year with the second highest UZR/150, which is an advanced baseball metric that considers all aspects of defense, among all first basemen.\textsuperscript{14} Taking into account both his fielding and hitting Mr. Davis finished seventh in the voting for NL Rookie of the Year.\textsuperscript{15}

At the onset of the 2011 season Mr. Davis was on pace to have an even more outstanding year. He even broke a Mets record by having a RBI in nine out of his first ten games.\textsuperscript{16} Unfortunately, he would suffer an ankle injury on May 10\textsuperscript{th} (more on the injury in section VI) which would cut his season short.\textsuperscript{17} However, even after just 36 games Mr. Davis’ .925 OPS was enough to place him in 7th out of the 63 first basemen that had over 100 plate appearances in 2011.\textsuperscript{18} Additionally, Mr. Davis was on track to hit over 100 RBIs and nearly 30 HRs.\textsuperscript{19} The chart below shows Mr. Davis’ offensive statistics for his three MLB seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: Ike Davis Offensive Production-Career and Individual Seasons\textsuperscript{20}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Season:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{11} 2010 Regular Season MLB Baseball Batting Statistics – NL Rookies, ESPN.com
\textsuperscript{12} Id.
\textsuperscript{13} Id.
\textsuperscript{14} Leaders, Fangraphs.com, http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=1b&stats=fld/lg=all&qual=y&type=1&season=2010&month=0&season1=2010&ind=0&team=0&rost=0&age=0&filter=&players=0
\textsuperscript{15} Id.
\textsuperscript{18} Leaders, Fangraphs.com, http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=1b&stats=bat/lg=all&qual=100&type=1&season=2011&month=0&season1=2011&ind=0&team=0&rost=0&age=0&filter=&players=0&sort=10,d
\textsuperscript{19} Ike Davis, MLB.com, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195&c_id=nym#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL'.
\textsuperscript{20} Id.
Even with slightly less defensive accomplishments in 2011 Mr. Davis’ currently ranks sixth among all first basemen in UZR/150 in the Major Leagues with over 2,500 innings played between 2010 and 2012.21

Among just the Mets players with more than 800 plate appearances over the last three seasons Mr. Davis has been consistently in the top echelon. He is third in OPS, second in HRs, and second in RBIs.22 He also has the second best fielding percentage and best UZR/150 among all Mets who have played more than 1,000 innings the past three years.23

Furthermore, Mr. Davis’ early success made him a fan favorite in New York. Immediately fans began posting “I like Ike” banners in Citi Field, and buying “I like Ike” t-shirts.24 Part of Mr. Davis’ allure is his outstanding pedigree paired with his early success, but also playing a large part is his Jewish heritage.25 There have been few standout Jewish players in the history of MLB, and never has there been one on the Mets.26 And with New York home to the highest Jewish population in the world outside of Tel Aviv, Mr. Davis represents the possibility of playing in the big leagues to a culture that has not had a lot of examples of such.27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>WAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td>.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAREER:</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>1171</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 Id. at http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=all&stats=bat&lg=all&qual=800&type=8&season=2012&month=0&season1=2010&ind=0&team=25&rost=0&age=0&filter=&players=0.
23 Id. at http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=all&stats=fld&lg=all&qual=1000&type=1&season=2012&month=0&season1=2010&ind=0&team=25&rost=0&age=0&filter=&players=0.
25 Id.
26 Dave Waldstein, Ike Davis’s Real First Name has a History of its Own, N.Y. Times (April 22, 2010), http://bats.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/22/ike-daviss-real-first-name-has-a-history-of-its-own/?src=me.
Mr. Davis’ power hitting, outstanding fielding, and specialized public appeal over the last three seasons with the Mets has clearly earned him a salary valuation above $2.7 million dollars.

IV. Past Player Compensation

Mr. Davis has earned close to the MLB minimum salary throughout his 2.168 years of MLB service, however, his contribution to the Mets during those years has been anything but minimal.

TABLE 3: Ike Davis Salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>League Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010:</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011:</td>
<td>$432,000</td>
<td>$414,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012:</td>
<td>$506,690</td>
<td>$480,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Comparative Baseball Salaries

Mr. Davis’ offensive and defensive achievements throughout his short career are impressive. However, comparisons to similar players of years past provide the most tangible and compelling indications of Mr. Davis’ value. These comparisons clearly indicate that Mr. Davis is worth more than $2.70 million.

a. Corey Hart ($3,250,000 in 2009)

The comparison between Corey Hart (“Mr. Hart”) and Mr. Davis plainly shows that Mr. Davis’ value exceeds $2.70 million. Both players’ statistical accomplishments over the same amount of time are very comparable. After three seasons in the majors and receiving near the league minimum in salary, Mr. Hart received more than a 700 percent raise for his first salary arbitration eligible season increasing his salary to $3.25 million.30 However, while Mr. Hart’s

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numbers are impressive, they are exceeded by both Mr. Davis’ career and platform year accomplishments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player (Platform Year)</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Career</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>HR</td>
<td>RBI</td>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>OPS</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>HR</td>
<td>RBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis (2012)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>1171</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Platform Season:**

Mr. Davis’ had a more successful platform season than Mr. Hart. Although Mr. Hart had a higher batting average, Mr. Davis’ outperformed Mr. Hart in the more important statistic of OPS. He also hit substantially more HRs while only having one less RBI.

**Career:**

Through their platform season Mr. Davis and Mr. Hart played a substantially different amount of games, because Mr. Davis is a super two player. Therefore, instead of looking at totals in career statistics a more beneficial metric is a number that relates to output per at bat. Mr. Hart has a better overall batting average, however, Mr. Hart and Mr. Davis’ OPS is almost identical. Through his platform year Mr. Hart averaged .150 RBIs per at bat. Mr. Davis slightly outperformed him with an average of .159 RBIs per at bat. Mr. Davis separates himself from Mr. Hart in HRs. Mr. Hart averaged a mere .039 HRs per at bat, while Mr. Davis averaged .050 HRs per at bat, a difference of 28 percent.

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31 *Ike Davis*, MLB.com, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195&c_id=nym#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL'; *Corey Hart*, MLB.com, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=430611#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL' (career stats through his platform season only).

32 Id.
33 Id.
34 Id.
35 Id.
36 Id.
37 Id.
Mr. Davis and Mr. Hart are very comparable players. The important aspect is that for such comparable numbers Mr. Hart received more than a 700 percent salary increase in his first SAE season. Therefore, Mr. Davis deserves a similar salary raise, which far surpasses the $2.70 million midpoint.

b. Brett Gardner ($2,800,000 in 2012)

In the most recent class of first time SAE players, Brett Gardner (“Mr. Gardner”) is the most comparable player to Mr. Davis. While Mr. Gardner alternates between left field and center field and is a slightly different type of hitter than Mr. Davis, their overall success at what they do makes them very similar. Mr. Gardner received near the minimum in salary for his first three seasons. Then he received a salary increase to $2.80 million in 2012. However, while Mr. Gardner’s achievements are impressive, Mr. Davis’ accomplishments easily match them and even surpass them.

Table 5: Comparative Hitting Statistics between Ike Davis and Brett Gardner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player (Platform Year)</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis (2012)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner (2011)</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Platform Season:

In comparing Mr. Davis’ and Mr. Gardner’s platform seasons, Mr. Davis substantially outperformed Mr. Gardner when it came to HRs, RBIs, and OPS. While Mr. Gardner was very

39 Id.
40 Id.
41 Ike Davis, MLB.com, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195&c_id=nym#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL'; Brett Gardner, MLB.com, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=458731#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL' (career stats through his platform season only).
42 Id.
successful in the not shown statistic of base stealing (49 stolen bases)\(^{43}\), speed on the bath paths is much more replaceable than power hitting. Additionally, it is not as attractive to fans.

**Career:**

Like the comparison with Mr. Hart above, here Mr. Davis and Mr. Gardner also played a substantially different amount of games going into their first SAE season. Therefore, statistics based on amount per at bat are more telling as opposed to totals. While their batting averages are similar, Mr. Davis has outperformed Mr. Gardner in terms of OPS going into their first SAE season.\(^{44}\) While Mr. Gardner averages more runs per at bat, Mr. Davis’ averages 355 percent more HRs at bat and 77 percent more RBIs per at bat.\(^{45}\)

Although Mr. Davis is more of a power hitter, and Mr. Gardner a base stealing leadoff hitter, their success early on in their careers have made them comparable. Most importantly Mr. Gardner’s success earned him a salary of $2.80 million. Clearly, Mr. Davis’ similar success and more fan friendly style of play have earned him a valuation of $2.70 million.

**VI. Existence of Physical or Mental Defects**

Mr. Davis has no physical or mental defects that would justify his devaluation. However, like most baseball players he has had some injuries in his career. Regardless he has shown himself to be a physically and mentally tough everyday player.

Prior to his time in the majors, Mr. Davis’ most serious injury occurred in the summer of 2007, during his sophomore year of college.\(^{46}\) He had a bone spur in his left wrist which required

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\(^{43}\) *Id.*

\(^{44}\) *Id.*

\(^{45}\) *Id.*

surgery.\textsuperscript{47} He followed the surgery with an extremely successful junior year of college baseball, and his wrist has never given him a problem since.

In 2010, Mr. Davis played 147 out of 150 possible games (was in the minors for the first 12) and had no health problems.\textsuperscript{48} In 2011, Mr. Davis’ second season in the majors was cut short by a collision with third baseman David Wright on May 10th, resulting in an ankle injury.\textsuperscript{49} While the injury was severe enough to make Mr. Davis miss the remainder of the season, it did not require surgery.\textsuperscript{50} Mr. Davis only had a sprain and bone bruise with cartilage damage.\textsuperscript{51} He had an extensive rehabilitation and rest period and did not miss any time in 2012 because of the ankle injury.

In 2012 Mr. Davis played 156 games missing only a couple games for the stomach flu and match-up considerations.\textsuperscript{52} However, two unfounded rumors emerged in 2012. First, that Mr. Davis is affected by the lung infection Valley Fever.\textsuperscript{53} While he does have it, it has not shown any symptoms in him, which is the most common outcome.\textsuperscript{54} Second, that he has been staying up too late and being irresponsible.\textsuperscript{55} This anonymous rumor is unsubstantiated and Mr. Davis has never been warned or notified of any wrongdoing on his part by any member of the Mets organization.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{47} Id.
\textsuperscript{48} Ike Davis, MLB.com, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195&c_id=nym#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL'.
\textsuperscript{50} Id.
\textsuperscript{51} Id.
\textsuperscript{52} Ike Davis Latest Updates, CBSSports, http://fantasynews.cbssports.com/fantasybaseball/players/updates/1666191.
\textsuperscript{54} Id. (two thirds of people with Valley Fever are not affected by the disease).
\textsuperscript{56} Id.
VII. Recent Performance of the Club

In 2012 the Mets went 74 and 88, a disappointing 24 games behind division winner Washington Nationals. As the team looks to have a better season in 2013, hitting, and especially power hitting will be essential. While the Mets pitching statistics, including WHIP and ERA were middle of the road, their hitting statistics lagged behind. They finished 26th in HRs and 23rd in SLG. Since Mr. Davis’ led the team in both these areas his power hitting will be critical to their future success so the team can begin to give its pitchers more support.

VII. Conclusion

Mr. Davis is a New York fan favorite. As critical as that is to the currently struggling Mets franchise, his power hitting and stellar first base play are even more important. By proving himself a reliable player and hitting over 30 HRs, 90 RBIs, and a .770 OPS, Mr. Davis clearly established his value past $2.70 million. This is further evidenced when he is compared to recent first time SAE players Corey Hart and Brett Gardner. They both accomplished similar achievements to Mr. Davis, albeit less in many regards and each received salary raises over 500 percent. Based on his history and most recent performances Mr. Davis should receive a similar valuation surpassing the $2.70 million mark. Thus, Mr. Davis respectfully requests this panel to find in his favor.

58 Leaders, Fangraphs.com, http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=all&stats=pit&lg=all&qual=0&type=8&season=2012&month=0&season1=2012&ind=0&team=0,ts&rost=0&age=0&filter=&players=0
59 Leaders, Fangraphs.com, http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=all&stats=bat&lg=all&qual=0&type=8&season=2012&month=0&season1=2012&ind=0&team=0,ts&rost=0&age=0&filter=&players=0