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
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MLB Collective Bargaining Agreement, “2012-2016 Basic Agreement” Article VI(E) § (10)(a) - (b), pp. 20-21
I. Introduction and Request for Hearing Decision

This brief analyzes the assets and contributions of first baseman Isaac Benjamin Davis (Davis) to be reflected in his 2013 contract with the New York Mets (Mets). This arbitration hearing is governed by the Major League Baseball (MLB) Collective Bargaining agreement (CBA). According to the CBA, the following criteria shall be considered in determining a player’s award:

The quality of the Player’s contribution to his Club during the past season (including but not limited to his overall performance, special qualities of leadership and public appeal), the length and consistency of his career contribution, the record of the Player’s past compensation, comparative baseball salaries . . . , the existence of any physical or mental defects on the part of the Player, and the recent performance record of the Club including but not limited to its League standing and attendance as an indication of public acceptance.¹

Davis has reached 2.168 years of Major League Service Time and thus is eligible for first-time arbitration as a “super two.”

Despite Davis’ homerun performance during the 2012 season, the Mets are concerned with Davis’ prior inconsistent contribution and with the possibility of re-injury to Davis’ left ankle. Because of these and other factors, the Mets contend that an award below the $2.7 million midpoint would be fair, and, as such, the Mets request this panel award Davis a salary of $2.4 million.

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

At the end of the 2010 season and the brief 2011 season, Davis showed potential to lead the Mets to a playoff berth, and even at the end of the 2012 season, Davis hit thirty-two home runs.²

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¹ MLB Collective Bargaining Agreement, “2012-2016 Basic Agreement” Article VI(E) § (10)(a) - (b), pp. 20-21.
runs and was ranked fifth in the National League in the home run category.² But despite hitting multiple home runs, the 2012 season for Davis overall was not up to the standard the Mets hoped it would be.

### TABLE 1: 2012 Season Breakdown³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEAR</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>.227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coming off of the 2011 season with only April and May to count for actual playing time, Davis ended April 2012 with a batting average of .185, with one-third of those at-bats being attributed to strikeouts (24). May 2012 ended just as poorly. Davis’ batting average dropped to .154 for the month of May (.170 to-date), and he doubled his strikeouts for a total of forty-nine.

While Davis increased his batting average in June and August, .264 and .284 respectively, Davis’ overall performance during the year was not up to expectations. In addition

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² Seasons in Top 25 of Major Categories, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL'.
³ Ike Davis Career Stats, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195#gameType='R'&sectionType=gameLog&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL'.

2
to having a poor batting average, Davis continued to increase his strikeout numbers through to the end of the season. At the end of the 2012 season, Davis had a .227 batting average and 141 strikeouts. From his major league debut in 2010, Davis’ batting average dropped forty points and his strikeout count had increased.

While the Mets recognize that Davis has the potential to increase his batting average in addition to lowering the number of times he strikes out, the organization believes that $2.4 million is a fair offer taking into consideration Davis’ contribution in home runs and batting average in the 2012 season.

III. Length and Consistency of Career Contributions

In 2010, the Mets purchased Davis’ contract, and Davis took the starting position at first base. But because of an ankle injury in 2011, it is difficult to show consistency in Davis’ performance. A comparison of the 2010 season with the 2012 season provides the best evidence for Davis’ inconsistent contribution to the Mets organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLB Total</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>1171</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>.252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While he played most of the 2010 season, Davis ended 2010 with a .264 batting average and struck out 138 times over 147 games. When comparing the 2010 season with the 2012

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4 Ike Davis Career Stats, http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195#gameType='R'&sectionType=career&statType=1&season=2012&level='ALL'
season, not only did the number of hits and batting average fall, but Davis increased his strikeouts from 138 to 141. While comparing only two full seasons is difficult to firmly establish a trend of performance, observing Davis’ statistics in those two seasons shows an inconsistency in Davis’ career contribution to the team.

It should be noted that the few games Davis played in 2011 showed his capability to lead the Mets in batting average. However, his injury in 2011 was a major setback that clearly showed in his performance in 2012. Davis’ initial numbers in the months of April and May demonstrate the difficulty of regaining momentum after missing almost an entire season. And while Davis showed stronger performance in June and August, he was not able to establish a good batting average at the end of the season. Though Davis’ thirty-two homeruns in 2012 may be a considerable element in the Mets’ determination to increase Davis’ salary from $506,690 to $2.4 million, Davis’ inconsistent contribution is strong evidence not to increase that number beyond the midpoint.

IV. **Past Player Compensation**

After the Mets purchased Davis’ contract in 2010, Davis was given a one-year agreement at $432,000, just above the $400,000 minimum salary required by Major League Baseball, to play for the Mets in 2011. Because Davis appeared to be on his way to establishing a great batting average and better home run numbers in 2011, he was given $506,690 for the 2012 season, just above the new minimum of $480,000, despite only playing one and one half months in 2011.

The increase from $500,000 to $2.4 million is an indication that the Mets are confident Davis will continue to do well in the 2013 season. While Davis did excel in the home runs in

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6 Id.
2012, the Mets are apprehensive about Davis’ increased number of strikeouts and his previous ankle injury. Thus, $2.4 million is sufficient to compensate and award Davis for his past performance and low enough to guard against the Mets’ apprehensions of another year full of injuries.

V. Comparative Baseball Salaries

The $2.4 million offer to Davis shows a correlation between batting average and strikeout count, and when considering other organizations and similarly situated players, the correlation becomes more apparent. Two points of comparison establish justification for the Mets’ offer to Davis: the younger Pirates first baseman Garrett Jones and the more seasoned Twins first baseman Justin Morneau.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3: Comparative Baseball Salaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garrett Jones (2012)</strong> – MLST 2.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justin Morneau (2007)</strong> – MLST 2.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Season</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a “super two,” Jones took his $2.5 million counteroffer to the Pirates $2.25 million offer to arbitration where the arbitration panel found for the Pirates organization. Jones’ petition for $2.5 million could hardly be considered a significant increase from $2.25 million; however, Jones’ low performance in 2011 was sufficient justification for the panel to hold in favor of the Pirates’ lower offer. Just as Davis’ had a low batting average, Jones’ batting average

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was only marginally better. Furthermore, a .243 batting average combined with 103 total strikeouts for 2011 gave the arbitration panel adequate cause to side with the Pirates organization. The only significant difference between Jones and Davis is Davis’ homerun numbers. Notwithstanding the better homerun numbers, Davis’ poor batting average and high strikeout numbers provide the reasoning behind the offer from the Mets.

In contrast, Morneau’s performance demonstrates the more significant increase to his salary after the 2006 season. Even though Morneau had a similar amount of homeruns when compared to Davis, Morneau had fifty less strikeouts than Davis and his batting average was nearly one hundred points higher. The Twins recognized Morneau’s exceptional accomplishments and awarded him a $4.115 million increase over his previous year’s salary of $385,000.10

Thus, because Davis’ performance in 2012 is more comparable to Pirates’ first baseman Garrett Jones, and falls well short of Justin Morneau’s performance, the $2.4 million for 2013 is more than fair.

VI. Existence of Physical or Mental Defects

With five home runs and twenty RBIs, Davis ended April 2011 with a .337 batting average and his performance in May was not far behind. By May 10, Davis hit two more home runs and still had a batting average above .300. However, while playing the Rockies in Colorado, Davis rolled his left ankle after colliding with third baseman David Wright in an attempt to catch an infield fly ball. An MRI showed that Davis suffered a bone bruise and sprained ankle.11 While not normally considered to be a season ending injury, two more MRIs conducted on Davis’ ankle before the All-Star break determined that his injury was not healing.

and, in addition to a bone bruise, there was cartilage damage.\textsuperscript{12} Even though Davis kept the ankle immobilized in a boot and received a cortisone shot to alleviate the pain, Davis continued to feel discomfort in his ankle, and at the beginning of August, Davis announced he would not be returning for the rest of the 2011 season.\textsuperscript{13} While there was a possibility that Davis would have to have surgery on his ankle, his ankle improved, and by November, he had resumed workouts without any pain.\textsuperscript{14}

Despite playing the entire 2012 season without any problems, the likelihood of re-injury to the same ankle is a possibility and a major consideration in determining Davis’ 2013 salary. The issue is even more compounded because the Mets organization has dealt with multiple player injuries over the past few years.\textsuperscript{15} To have success as a ball club, the players must remain healthy, and for that reason, Davis previous injury has greater weight than it might have for other teams.

\textbf{VII. Recent Performance of the Club}

For the past three seasons, the Mets have struggled to maintain competing numbers and have failed to make a playoff berth since 2006. Furthermore, since 2008, the Mets have failed to maintain a winning record.\textsuperscript{16} Undoubtedly, a team’s goal every season is to win a World Series championship, and in order to accomplish that goal, it is imperative that the players remain healthy.


TABLE 4: New York Mets 2010-2012 Seasons\textsuperscript{17}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>PCT</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Road</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>47-34</td>
<td>32-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>34-47</td>
<td>43-38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>.457</td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>38-43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the major reasons for the Mets’ poor performance since 2008 has been constant injuries not only from its pitching staff, but also from the position players themselves. In the 2012 season, the Mets saw more pitchers and position players end up on the disabled list than in previous seasons. It is undisputed that a healthy team contributes not only to a greater winning percentage but to team morale.

TABLE 5: New York Mets Three-year Disabled List\textsuperscript{18}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mets are concerned with its continuing poor performance and the correlation to injured players. For those reasons, the organization is apprehensive about extending a higher salary to a player that has been on the disabled list for almost one-third of his Major League Starting Time.

VII. Conclusion

Davis has the potential to be a valuable asset to the Mets organization and help the team to a winning season. However, because of Davis’ performance in 2012 and injury in 2011, $2.4 million is a fair offer, especially when compared to other players that were similarly situated. Therefore, the New York Mets respectfully request this panel find the $2.4 million offer to be an appropriate salary for the 2013 season.