2013 TULANE BASEBALL ARBITRATION COMPETITION

DEXTER FOWLER V. COLORADO ROCKIES
Submission on behalf of Dexter Fowler

Player’s offer: $4.6 million

Club’s offer: $4.0 million

Midpoint: $4.3 million

Submission by Team 35
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I. INTRODUCTION


Section VI (F), Part 12 Subsections (a)–(b) of the CBA, provides an arbitration the following criteria: (1) the quality of Fowler’s contribution to the Club during the past season, (2) the length and consistency of his career contributions, (3) the record of Fowler’s past compensation, (4) comparative baseball salaries, (5) the existence of any of Fowler’s mental or physical defects, and (6) the recent performance of the Club; including, but not limited to MLB standing and attendance as indication of public acceptance.\(^1\) However, the panel shall not consider the financial position of the Club, press comments or press material on the performance of Fowler or the Club.\(^2\)

Fowler is a second time eligible player seeking a $4.6 million contract, while the Club has offered $4 million, with a $4.3 million respective midpoint. Based on such criteria, Fowler respectfully submits this brief, based on his contributions and performance, which merits a $4.6 million salary.

II. PAST SEASON PERFORMANCE

Fowler had an outstanding all-around 2012 season, finishing with single season career bests in games (143), hits (136), home runs (13), RBI (53), walks (68), average (.300), on-base

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2 Id.
percentage (.389), total bases (215), and slugging percentage (.474).\(^3\) Fowler’s .300 average ranked 14\(^{th}\) in the National League, his .389 on-base percentage ranked 10\(^{th}\) among the National League and his 11 triples were 4\(^{th}\) among all major league players.\(^4\)

In fact, Fowler’s value was so immense, that he is one of only five players to hit for a .300 average, .375 on-base percentage, .450 slugging percentage, with 10 stolen bases and 12 home runs in all of Major League Baseball. The only American League player on that list was 2012 Rookie of the Year and MVP Runner-Up, Mike Trout. The other three National League players were perennial All-Stars: David Wright, Andrew McCutchen and 2011 NL MVP Ryan Braun.\(^5\) Therefore, Fowler’s 2012 campaign not only eclipsed the value of an everyday player, but propelled his value into an elite class of all-around talent, not to mention his added value as both a centerfielder and leadoff hitter.

A) **Dexter Fowler, the Leadoff Hitter:**

Last season, Fowler batted primarily in the leadoff role, which compiled 256 of his 454 (56\%) at-bats.\(^6\) Successful leadoff hitters’ goal is to reach base any way they can. Among all major league leadoff hitters, Fowler ranked second in on-base percentage, third in batting average, and tenth in walk per plate appearance ratio (.128).\(^7\)

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\(^4\) *Id.*


Table 1: Dexter Fowler v. Centerfielders, Leadoff hitters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fowler</th>
<th>Centerfielders</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Leadoff hitters</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBP</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLG</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.443</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Fowler stole only 12 bases last season, he was highly efficient on the base paths. Fowler finished 20th among all players, with 21 extra bases taken throughout the year at an impressive 65% - over 20% higher than the league average of 41%.11 Fowler’s impressive extra base efficiency was second best of all players with 20 or more extra bases taken.12

B) Dexter Fowler, the Centerfielder:

Not only is Fowler a leadoff hitter, but more importantly, a centerfielder. During the season, Fowler played centerfield in all 116 starts.13 Among all major league starting centerfielders, Fowler ranked third in on-base percentage, fourth in batting average,14 and had a league best 12.8% walk percentage.15

Fowler also had the fifth highest offensive win percentage, which is the percentage of games a team wins with nine of the same player batting, assuming average pitching and

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8 Id.
12 Id.
Therefore, even despite a dismal season for the Club, Fowler maintained the fifth best offensive win percentage. To further demonstrate Fowler’s inherent value to the Club, Table 2 illustrates Fowler’s team-added value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Dexter Fowler v. Club</th>
<th>Fowler</th>
<th>Club (w/o Fowler)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBP</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLG</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.433</td>
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</table>

Fowler’s numbers were tremendously higher than other members of the Club. Fowler’s average was 29 points higher than the Club, while his slugging was 41 points above Club averages. Most notably, his on-base percentage was 67 points higher, demonstrating an incredible ability to get on base, thereby providing a better opportunity to score.

III. CAREER CONTRIBUTION AND SALARY

Fowler’s not only excelled during his platform year, but throughout his career. In fact, Fowler is one of four players to have 500 plate appearances, 40 extra base hits, a .260 batting average, .750 OPS and at least 10 steals for four consecutive seasons. The other three are recurrent All-Stars: Ryan Braun, Justin Upton and Brandon Phillips.18

During Fowler’s rookie season, he participated in 135 games, finishing with a .266 batting average, an effective .363 OBP and 27 stolen bases, propelling Fowler to finish eighth in Rookie of the Year voting.19 The following year, Fowler finished with a .262 average and .347 OBP in 132 games, while also leading all of Major League Baseball with 14 triples that season.20

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18 Batting Season Finder, Baseball-Reference, [http://tinyurl.com/bxvj45d](http://tinyurl.com/bxvj45d)
19 Id.
20 Id.
Fowler was a positive contribution to an above-.500 Club, which missed the playoffs by eight games.  

In 2011, Fowler surpassed his previous single season record of 14 triples, finishing with 15, which was third best among all of Major League Baseball. Fowler also finished with a .266 batting average and .363 on-base percentage in 125 games. Following 2011, Fowler received $2.35 million for his contributions.

IV. COMPARATIVE BASEBALL SALARIES

Typically centerfielders are considered the captains of the outfield and, among other “up-the-middle” defenders, constitute a vital role in a team’s defensive success. Fowler is no exception. As such, players are awarded higher premiums for important positions. Specifically, the Club has an elevated interest in a centerfielder for an above-average sized outfield.

Players are not evaluated by one characteristic or statistic, such as home runs or stolen bases, but rather composite statistics reflecting all-around play. Fowler has clearly demonstrated his all-around success as a player, and more importantly as a centerfielder. Therefore, Fowler should be valued not only among elite players in the league, but among those with distinguished defensive responsibility.

A) Michael Bourn:

Michael Bourn earned $4.4 million as a second time eligible player, $100,000 above the midpoint in Fowler’s case. However, Fowler was a far more effective player in both his platform season and throughout his career. Therefore, the panel should find in favor of Fowler’s request.

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Despite the fact that Bourn and Fowler played in almost the same amount of games during their platform year, Fowler had more triples, home runs, RBI, walks, and most importantly had a better average, on-base percentage, slugging percentage and OPS than Bourn. Fowler’s average was 35 points higher, his on-base percentage was nearly 50 points higher and his OPS was a remarkable 197 points better. Fowler managed to draw more walks than Bourn, which is vital to the success of a leadoff hitter, despite less at-bats. Obviously, the ability for a hitter to reach base vastly improves the likelihood of a team scoring runs. Fowler’s advantageous ability to reach base is imperative to the Club’s offensive success.

Although platform years are important to the evaluation of a player’s value, careers in their entirety are also considered. Fowler’s best year was clearly his platform year, but he still continued to outperform Bourn throughout the rest of his career. In fact, Fowler’s career continues to widen the gap between him and Bourn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Dexter Fowler v. Michael Bourn (Platform season)</th>
<th>Salary: $4.40 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourn</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Dexter Fowler v. Michael Bourn (Career)</th>
<th>Salary: $4.40 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourn</td>
<td>558</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fowler had more triples, home runs, RBI and walks, while recording a better average, on-base percentage and slugging percentage. Triples in general, let alone in a leadoff spot, put a team in a prime position to score. However, one drawback from an individual perspective is the likelihood of stealing a base is enormously rare. Fowler also has twice as many triples as Bourn, which suggests stolen bases do not necessarily indicate Bourn’s superior speed. In addition, Fowler had 41 more hits, 37 more doubles and 36 more runs than Bourn.

As a whole, Fowler has had a superior career to Bourn. Although Fowler’s career average is below his platform year, his career average still exceeds Bourn’s career average. Furthermore, Fowler’s career on-base percentage is over 30 points higher than Bourn, which suggests Fowler gets on base three percent more frequently than Bourn – another valuable characteristic of a leadoff hitter. Not only has Fowler hit for a higher average and reached base far more frequently, but Fowler has also hit more than twice as many home runs and scored more runs.

Bourn’s awarded salary ($4.4 million) was above the midpoint requested for Fowler ($4.3 million). Bourn’s platform year was similar to career averages and suggested little improvement. Instead, Fowler’s extensive improvement should yield an enhanced increase in salary. Therefore, Fowler should not only be awarded more than Bourn for his superior career and platform year contributions, but also his upward trend and noticeable improvement. Thus, the player’s offer ($4.6 million) more accurately reflects Fowler’s value than the Club’s offer ($4 million) below Bourn’s awarded salary.

B) Martin Prado:

Martin Prado was awarded $4.75 million as a second time arbitration eligible player, $150,000 more than Fowler requested, despite an enormously inferior platform season. Contrary
to both Fowler and Bourn, Prado has played more than 90% of his career in left field and second base. In Fowler’s case, he Club’s inequitable $4 million offer seems exceptionally unfair considering Fowler’s elevated defensive responsibility and far superior platform season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary: $4.75 million</th>
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Table 5: Dexter Fowler v. Martin Prado (Platform season)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>3B</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler27</td>
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<td>530</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prado28</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.385</td>
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</table>

Fowler and Prado participated in a similar number of games, yielding the same number of home runs and RBI. However, Fowler outperformed Prado by compiling more hits, runs, triples and stolen bases. Fowler also had twice as many walks, despite 60 less plate appearances. As a result, Fowler’s on-base percentage was 87 points higher and his OPS was a whopping 196 points higher. Additionally, Fowler’s batting average was 40 points higher than Prado’s, demonstrating Fowler’s far more efficient hitting.

| Salary: $4.75 million |

Table 6: Dexter Fowler v. Martin Prado (Career)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>3B</th>
<th>HR</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler29</td>
<td>548</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>.434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Prado’s career average and on-base percentage were far superior to his own platform season, his other career contributions were still inferior to Fowler’s. Throughout their careers, Fowler recorded 31 more runs, 40 more triples, 51 more stolen bases, and 121 more walks. Consequently, Fowler had a better on-base percentage by 23 points, even despite Prado’s higher career batting average.

Prado recorded his worst year to date and was still awarded $4.75 million from his previous salary. On the other hand, Fowler recorded his best year to date. Furthermore, Fowler substantially outperformed Prado not only through his platform year, but through his entire career. Fowler has had better career numbers, albeit marginal, Prado was still awarded more than Fowler’s request. Moreover, Prado’s salary is $150,000 more than Fowler is asking for and $450,000 more than the midpoint between Fowler and the Club’s offer. Therefore, it would be unjust to provide Fowler with the Club’s offer $750,000 less than Prado’s awarded salary.

V. PHYSICAL/MENTAL DEFECTS

Fowler has no current physical or mental defects of any sort. Fowler has remained healthy and physically able to perform throughout his career. Throughout the season, Fowler experienced typical nicks and minor injuries all baseball players are susceptible to, but did not miss more than three games at any point in the 2012 season, or at any point since his trip to the 15 day disabled list back in June of 2011.  

VI. TEAM PERFORMANCE

For the second straight season, the Colorado Rockies missed the playoffs and finished with a below .500 record. Although 2011 was a disappointing season for the Colorado

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Rockies, 2012 was dismal, as the Club finished with 64 wins and 98 losses, finishing last in the NL West Division.  

**VII. CONCLUSION**

Dexter Fowler has been an increasingly positive contribution to the Club throughout his career. Fowler’s most recent success confirmed his extraordinary potential and marked his best season to date. Furthermore, Fowler has validated his role in the leadoff spot, recording a career high in walks and career best in average and on-base percentage. Not only has Fowler proven his talent as a leadoff hitter, but has done so as an imperative member of the team in centerfield. As a centerfielder, Fowler has outperformed his respective competition.

Additionally, Fowler has outperformed previous comparative baseball players. Fowler’s previous season substantially outperformed Prado’s platform season, yet Prato was awarded a salary $150,000 higher than Fowler’s requested salary. Additionally, Fowler significantly outperformed Bourn not only during his platform season, but his entire career, yet Bourn was awarded a salary $100,000 higher than the midpoint in this case. Fowler should be awarded $200,000 more than Bourn because of Fowler’s vast outperformance of Bourn, which justifies a marginal salary increase. At the absolute least, Fowler’s superior numbers should yield a salary equal to Bourn’s, which was still above the midpoint between Fowler and the Club. Therefore, we respectfully request that the panel award Fowler’s $4.6 million salary, rather than the Club’s $4 million salary.

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