2013 Tulane National Baseball Arbitration Competition

Dexter Fowler vs. Colorado Rockies
Submission on Behalf of Mr. Dexter Fowler
Midpoint: $4.3 million
Submission by Team 38
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I. Introduction and Request for Arbitration Hearing

This brief analyzes the assets and contributions of centerfielder (CF), Dexter Fowler (“Mr. Fowler”), to be considered for his 2013 contract with the Colorado Rockies Baseball Club (“Club” or “Rockies”). The Basic Agreement between Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (“Basic Agreement”) governs the criteria to be considered for this hearing.\(^1\) Specifically, under §VI(E)(10)(a) of the Basic Agreement, the criteria include: (1) the quality of Mr. Fowler’s contribution to the Rockies during the past season, (2) the length and consistency of his career contribution, (3) the record of his past compensation, (4) comparative baseball salaries, (5) the existence of any physical or mental defects on the part of Mr. Fowler, and (6) the recent performance record of the Rockies.\(^2\) Mr. Fowler has accumulated 3.168 years of Major League Service Time (“MLST”) as of January 1, 2013, which entitles him to file a request for arbitration.\(^3\) Mr. Fowler was a “Super Two” and eligible for arbitration in 2012, thus 2013 marks the second time he is eligible.\(^4\)

Mr. Fowler is a valuable asset to the Rockies organization and enters this arbitration after his best season as a CF and leadoff hitter. Evidence of Mr. Fowler’s past performance and future potential will support his request for a 2013 salary above the $4.3 million midpoint. Accordingly, Mr. Fowler respectfully requests that this panel find that he is entitled to a salary arbitration award of $4.6 million.

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\(^2\) Id. §VI(E)(10)(a).


\(^4\) Id.
II. Quality of Mr. Fowler’s Contribution to the Rockies during 2012

Mr. Fowler had his best season as a CF and leadoff hitter in 2012. He experienced career highs in hits (H), home runs (HRs), runs batted in (RBI), batting average (BA), on-base percentage (OBP), slugging percentage (SLG), and on-base + slugging percentage (OPS). Mr. Fowler’s 2012 performance placed him among the best offensive CFs in the National League (NL), as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Fowler’s 2012 Offensive Production in Select Categories (Rank among NL CFs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triples</th>
<th>HRs</th>
<th>RBIs</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 (2nd)</td>
<td>13 (7th)</td>
<td>53 (6th)</td>
<td>.300 (3rd)</td>
<td>.389 (2nd)</td>
<td>.474 (4th)</td>
<td>.863 (2nd)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Minimum 450 plate appearances

Mr. Fowler’s 2012 performance proved valuable to the Rockies. As a leadoff hitter, it is Mr. Fowler’s duty to get on base and put his team in the best position to score runs. Mr. Fowler fulfilled his duty by leading the Rockies with a .389 OBP. Additionally, when Mr. Fowler is on base, he places pressure on opponents’ defenses because of his speed and keen base running ability. Mr. Fowler’s speed and base running skills are highlighted by his team-leading 11 triples (3B), which showcase his ability to create a spark for his team and provide excitement for Rockies fans. Furthermore, when Mr. Fowler is on base, chances are he is going to score a run. In 2012, Mr. Fowler crossed the plate 72 times.

III. Length and Consistency of Mr. Fowler’s Career Contribution

Mr. Fowler has welcomed a team leadership role and has become the Rockies organization’s mainstay in centerfield since 2009. Since 2009, Mr. Fowler has started 443

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6 See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3. Six Rockies players with a minimum of 375 at-bats were ranked.
7 Id. Fowler’s 72 runs scored was second on the team to Carlos Gonzalez, who had 89 in 2012.
games out of 535 games played for the Rockies. During that time, Mr. Fowler has either significantly improved his offensive production or maintained it. As supported by Figure 2 below, from 2009 to 2012, Mr. Fowler has increased his HRs by 225%, RBIs by 55%, Hs by 18%, SLG by 16%, BA and OPS by 12%, and OBP by 7%, all while appearing at the plate (PA) consistently over 500 times each year.9

**Figure 2: Fowler’s Career Offensive Production (Rank in NL)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>3B</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.406</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>.363(T17th)</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>.300(T15th)</td>
<td>.389(8th)</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.863(16th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Minimum 450 plate appearances

MLB and the Rockies have recognized Mr. Fowler for his contributions. In 2009, Mr. Fowler was on the ballot for NL Rookie of the Year.11 Most recently, Rockies Manager, Jim Tracy, has commented on Fowler’s consistency and contribution to the Club. Specifically, Mr. Tracy stated, “You go back and look at what Dexter Fowler did [in 2011], compared to how consistent he's been [in 2012]. He had a very special second half in 2011, and was still standing out there at game 159, 160, 161 when we were very beat up like we are right now, but he was still out there grinding it. And you know what? Managers, they don't forget that type of stuff. Believe me.”12

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8 Id. Mr. Fowler has played in over 125 games in each of the last four years of his MLB career.
9 Id.
11 See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3.
IV. Record of Mr. Fowler’s Past Compensation

Figure 3 below shows that the Rockies have placed a higher value on Mr. Fowler’s performance and potential by paying him above the league minimum in each of his three years in MLB before he became arbitration-eligible.\footnote{See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3.}

**Figure 3: Fowler’s MLB Compensation History (2008-2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MLB Min.\footnote{See MLB Minimum Salary, Spotrac.com, available at <a href="http://www.spotrac.com/terms/mlb/mlb-minimum-salary-69/%7D">http://www.spotrac.com/terms/mlb/mlb-minimum-salary-69/}</a></th>
<th>Salary\footnote{See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3.}</th>
<th>% Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$401,000</td>
<td>+0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$406,000</td>
<td>+1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$414,000</td>
<td>$424,000</td>
<td>+2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012\footnote{Mr. Fowler was a Super Two in 2012, and thus was arbitration-eligible for the first time. Mr. Fowler and the Rockies avoided arbitration by settling for $2.35 million.}</td>
<td>$480,000</td>
<td>$2,350,000</td>
<td>+389.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Physical or mental defects

Mr. Fowler has competed in 548 MLB games in five years.\footnote{See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3.} Of those 548 games, Mr. Fowler has started 448. Considering the wear and tear that an everyday player’s body goes through during a season – especially one that is on base and on the field as much as Mr. Fowler – Mr. Fowler has only been placed on the 15-day Disabled List (DL) twice in his career.\footnote{See Dexter Fowler Player Card, Baseballprospectus.com, available at http://www.baseballprospectus.com/card/card.php?id=47493.} When Mr. Fowler was on the DL, it was for minor injuries – the first on 8/25/09 for a bruised right knee; the second on 6/7/11 for a left abdominal strain.\footnote{Id.}

VI. Comparative Baseball Salaries to Mr. Fowler

In comparison to other CFs who are arbitration-eligible for the second time, Mr. Fowler’s career and platform season performances support his request for $4.6 million. Specifically, the players most comparable to Mr. Fowler include: Michael Bourn and Cody Ross.

\footnote{See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3.}
**Dexter Fowler vs. Michael Bourn**

Centerfielder and leadoff hitter, Michael Bourn, entered into his second arbitration-eligible year in 2011. In 2011, Mr. Bourn was awarded $4.4 million - $100,000 above the midpoint in this case. In 2010, Mr. Bourn’s first arbitration-eligible year, he earned $2.4 million - $50,000 more than Mr. Fowler’s salary in his first arbitration-eligible year (2012). Prior to 2010, Mr. Bourn earned salaries almost equivalent to Mr. Fowler. Specifically, in his first three full seasons in MLB (2007-2009), Mr. Bourn earned an average of $403,500 per year, just over $6,800 per year less than Mr. Fowler earned in his first three full MLB seasons (2008-2010). Although Mr. Fowler and Mr. Bourn had similar salaries prior to their second arbitration-eligible year, Mr. Fowler outdid Mr. Bourn in several statistical categories both in his career and platform season.

In a career comparison, Mr. Fowler started 29 more games than Mr. Bourn, while appearing 202 more times at the plate (PA). Additionally, Mr. Fowler has gathered 41 more Hs, 37 more doubles (2Bs), and twice as many triples (3Bs) in his career compared to Mr. Bourn. Mr. Fowler has also outpaced Mr. Bourn in several MLB “power” categories. Specifically, Mr. Fowler belted an additional 17 HRs, drove in 60 more runs, and earned almost a 100-percentage point higher SLG than Mr. Bourn. Although these numbers are notable, more impressive is Mr. Fowler’s comparable performance in career statistics relevant to lead-off hitters, namely runs

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22 Id.
23 Id.
24 See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3; see Michael Bourn Player Page, supra note 20.
25 Id. Mr. Fowler had 50 triples in 2012, compared to Mr. Bourn’s 25 triples in 2010.
26 Id.
scored (R), BA, OBP, and OPS. Figure 4 demonstrates that Mr. Fowler outperformed Mr. Bourn in all such career statistics.

**Figure 4: Career Offensive Comparison between Fowler and Bourn**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.364</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourn</td>
<td>1,941</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>.682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Fowler has also outperformed Mr. Bourn in the same statistical categories relevant to leadoff hitters in his platform season. This is shown by Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5: Platform Season Offensive Comparison between Fowler and Bourn**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourn</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, Mr. Fowler surpassed Mr. Bourn in the following power categories during his platform season: HRs (13 vs. 2), RBIs (53 vs. 38), and SLG (.474 vs. 346). Considering Mr. Fowler bested Mr. Bourn in such statistical categories (which are also attractive to MLB fans), had Mr. Fowler’s platform season been in 2010, more likely than not, he would have enjoyed All-Star honors just like Mr. Bourn did.

Several other attributes make Mr. Fowler a more valuable CF and leadoff hitter, as compared to Mr. Bourn. First, Mr. Fowler has proven himself more reliable in the clutch. Specifically, he has a career .297 BA with runners in scoring position (RISP), compared to Mr. Bourn’s .288 BA. Mr. Fowler has also performed better in the late innings of close

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27 Id.
28 Id.
29 Id.
30 See Dexter Fowler and Michael Bourn Regular Season Batting Leaders, MLB.com, available at [http://mlb.mlb.com/stats/sortable.jsp?c_id=mlb&tcid=mm_mlb_stats#statType=hitting&elem=%5Bobject+Object%5D&tab_level=child&click_text=Sortable+Player+hitting&sectionType=sp&page=1&ts=1357321211970](http://mlb.mlb.com/stats/sortable.jsp?c_id=mlb&tcid=mm_mlb_stats#statType=hitting&elem=%5Bobject+Object%5D&tab_level=child&click_text=Sortable+Player+hitting&sectionType=sp&page=1&ts=1357321211970).
games, compiling a .297 career BA compared to Mr. Bourn’s .234 BA. Second, Mr. Fowler is a switch hitter, which has allowed him to hit left-handed pitchers more successfully in both his career (.289 vs. .233) and in his platform season (.315 vs. .229). Third, Mr. Fowler has been healthier than Mr. Bourn in his career. Mr. Fowler has missed a total of 46 games, compared to Mr. Bourn’s 65 games; the most consecutive games Mr. Fowler has missed is 14, compared to Mr. Bourn’s 37 consecutive games. Finally, Mr. Fowler reached his second arbitration-eligible season at a younger age (26 vs. 27). In MLB, youth is a valuable attribute because a MLB Club typically can get more MLST out of a younger player.

**Dexter Fowler vs. Cody Ross**

Outfielder Cody Ross has played all three outfield positions in his career, however, he has played the most games in centerfield and thus is a fair comparison to Mr. Fowler. Mr. Ross entered his second arbitration-eligible year in 2010 and was awarded $4.45 million - $150,000 above the midpoint in this case. In 2009, Mr. Ross’s first arbitration-eligible year, he, like Mr. Fowler, was awarded a salary over $1.8 million above the league minimum. Prior to 2009, Mr. Ross earned salaries near the league minimum just like Mr. Fowler. Although Mr. Fowler and Mr. Ross had comparable salaries prior to their second arbitration-eligible year, Mr. Fowler has outperformed Mr. Ross in several statistical categories both in his career and platform year.

31 Also known as “Close/Late” in statistical compilations, “late innings of close games” is the seventh inning or later with the batting team ahead by one run, tied, or has the tying run on base, at bat, or on deck.
32 See Dexter Fowler and Michael Bourn Regular Season Batting Leaders, supra note 30.
33 Id.
34 See Dexter Fowler Player Card, supra note 18; see Michael Bourn Player Card, supra note 21.
35 See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3; see Michael Bourn Player Page, supra note 20. Mr. Fowler’s MLST was 3.168 in 2012, compared to Mr. Bourn’s 4.028 in 2011.
38 Id. Ross’s $2.225 million in 2009 was $1.824 above the league minimum; Fowler’s $2.35 million in 2012 was $1.87 million above the league minimum.
39 Id.
In a career comparison, Mr. Fowler started 68 more games than Mr. Ross, while appearing significantly more times at the plate (2,143 vs. 1,653). Additionally, Mr. Fowler has gathered more Hs (497 vs. 398), 2Bs (102 vs. 99), and six times as many 3Bs in his career compared to Mr. Ross. Although Mr. Ross bettered Mr. Fowler in power categories such as HRs and RBIs leading up to his second arbitration-eligible year, Mr. Fowler’s career 225% increase in HRs and 55% increase in RBIs proves that he has the ability to put up strong power numbers in the future. Most important to this comparison, Mr. Fowler’s performance in career statistics relevant to leadoff hitters clearly differentiates him from Mr. Ross. Figure 6 below illustrates that Mr. Fowler outperformed Mr. Ross in Rs, BA, OBP.

**Figure 6: Career Offensive Comparison between Fowler and Ross**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a platform season comparison, Mr. Fowler outdid Mr. Ross in additional statistical categories. As proven by Figure 7 below, Mr. Fowler earned a higher BA, OBP, SLG, and OPS in his platform season, while practically equaling Ross in Rs. All such statistics are relevant to a MLB Club in evaluating a player’s role as a leadoff hitter.

**Figure 7: Platform Season Offensive Comparison between Fowler and Ross**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>.270</td>
<td>.321</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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40 See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3; see Cody Ross Player Page, supra note 36.
41 Id. Mr. Fowler had 50 triples in 2012, compared to Mr. Ross’s 8 triples in 2010.
42 See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3.
43 See Dexter Fowler Player Page, supra note 3; see Cody Ross Player Page, supra note 36.
44 Id.
Several other attributes make Mr. Fowler a more valuable centerfielder and leadoff hitter, as compared to Mr. Ross. First, Mr. Fowler has proven himself to be more clutch hitter. Specifically, he has a higher BA with RISP in both his platform season and career compared to Mr. Ross. Mr. Fowler also performed better in the late innings of close games during his platform season, compiling a .325 BA compared to Mr. Ross’s .304 BA. Second, Mr. Fowler has been a more reliable hitter when base runners need to be moved. Specifically, Mr. Fowler has accumulated 34 sacrifice hits in his career, compared to Mr. Ross’s two. Third, unlike Mr. Ross, Mr. Fowler is a switch hitter, which has allowed him to hit right-handed pitchers more successfully in both his career (.263 vs. .253) and in his platform season (.293 vs. .266). Fourth, Mr. Fowler has been healthier than Mr. Ross in his career. Mr. Fowler has missed a total of 46 games, compared to Mr. Ross’s 103 games; the most consecutive games Mr. Fowler has missed is 14, compared to Mr. Ross’s 66 consecutive games. Finally, Mr. Fowler reached his second arbitration-eligible season at a younger age (26 vs. 28), which not only proves his ability to perform and remain healthy at the Major League level, but also is a testament to his maturity, knowledge of the game, and work ethic.

VII. Recent Performance Record of the Rockies

The Colorado Rockies finished the 2012 season at the bottom of the NL West standings, having won only 64 out of 162 games. Consequently, the Rockies organization experienced its
lowest average game attendance in the last four years.\textsuperscript{51} A major factor contributing to the Rockies dismal record was its 5.22 earned run average (ERA).\textsuperscript{52} On the other hand, offensively, the team ranked among the Top Ten in MLB in key statistical categories such as hits (1\textsuperscript{st}), triples (2\textsuperscript{nd}), batting average (2\textsuperscript{nd}), OPS (3\textsuperscript{rd}), SLG (4\textsuperscript{th}), runs scored (6\textsuperscript{th}), OBP (6\textsuperscript{th}).\textsuperscript{53} Considering Mr. Fowler’s career highs in all such categories (except triples) in 2012, Mr. Fowler’s performance clearly factored into those rankings. In order to compete in the NL West and boost attendance, the Rockies will need to improve its pitching staff, but also maintain the consistency of its offensive production. Therefore, Mr. Fowler is a necessary asset to the Rockies, especially considering his improved offensive production since becoming an everyday starter in 2009.

VIII. Conclusion

Mr. Fowler has played an increasingly more valuable role in the Colorado Rockies organization since breaking into MLB in 2008. Since then, Mr. Fowler has become an everyday starter in centerfield, has remained healthy, and has ranked among the top NL centerfielders in several statistical categories all before the age of 27. Mr. Fowler’s career highs and performance in 2012 are just a snapshot of his potential to become one of the best leadoff hitters in MLB and help the Rockies become a NL West contender in 2013 and beyond. Considering both Mr. Fowler’s determination to remain a key contributor to the Colorado Rockies in 2013 and the evidence outlined in this brief, Mr. Fowler respectfully requests this panel to award him a $4.6 million salary for the 2013 MLB season.

\textsuperscript{52} See Sortable Team Stats, MLB.com, available at http://colorado.rockies.mlb.com/stats/sortable.jsp?c_id=col#sectionType=st&elem=%5Bobject+Object%5D&tab_level=child&click_text=Sortable+Team+pitching&statType=pitching&page=1&ts=1357301866405. In 2012, the Rockies were last in MLB with a 5.22 ERA. The next highest ERA in MLB was 4.78.  