2013 Tulane National Baseball Arbitration Competition

New York Mets vs. Ike Davis
Submission on Behalf of the New York Mets
Midpoint: $2.7 million
Submission by Team 38
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I. Introduction and Request for Arbitration Hearing

This brief analyzes the assets and contributions of first baseman, Ike Davis (“Mr. Davis” or “Player”), to be reflected in his 2013 contract with the New York Mets (“Mets”). 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.\footnote{See Basic Agreement between Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association} Specifically, under §VI(E)(10)(a) of the Basic Agreement, the criteria include: (1) the quality of Player’s contribution to the Mets during the past season, (2) the length and consistency of Player’s career contributions, (3) the record of Player’s past compensation, (4) comparative baseball salaries; (5) the existence of any physical or mental defects on the part of the Player, and (6) the recent performance record of the Mets.\footnote{Id. §VI(E)(10)(a).} Mr. Davis has accumulated 2.168 years of Major League Service Time (“MLST”) as of January 1, 2013, which entitles him to file a request for his first arbitration as a “Super Two.”\footnote{See Ike Davis Player Page, Baseball-Reference.com, available at http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/d/davisik02.shtml.}

Mr. Davis is a valued member of the Mets organization. However, the Mets are concerned with the inconsistency of his offensive production and his susceptibility to injury. The evidence presented in this brief supports such concerns and demonstrates that Mr. Davis is fairly entitled to a salary below the $2.7 million midpoint. Accordingly, the Mets respectfully request that this panel award Mr. Davis a 2013 salary of $2.4 million.
II. Quality of Player’s Contribution to the Mets during 2012

Mr. Davis returned from an injury-shortened 2011 season\(^4\) and accomplished career highs in both home runs (HRs) and runs batted in (RBIs). Specifically, Mr. Davis’s 32 HRs was 13 more than his previous career-high in 2010,\(^5\) and was the highest number of HRs hit by any National League (NL) first baseman.\(^6\) Mr. Davis’s 90 RBIs was 19 more than his previous career high, which earned him a Top Ten ranking among NL first basemen.\(^7\) Additionally, Mr. Davis continued his superb defense, by committing only eight errors in 1,235 chances.\(^8\) Overall, the Mets were pleased with Mr. Davis’s contributions to the team in these categories.

Unfortunately, Mr. Davis’s exceptional defense and career highs in HRs and RBIs were overshadowed by his failure to meet the Mets’ expectations in several categories. Mr. Davis had career lows in key offensive statistical categories such as batting average (BA), on-base percentage (OBP), and on-base + slugging percentage (OPS).\(^9\) Furthermore, Mr. Davis struck out (SO) a career-high 141 times in 584 plate appearances (PA).\(^10\) As Figure 1 below illustrates, Mr. Davis ranked in the bottom half of both MLB and NL first basemen in key categories.

**Figure 1: Davis’s 2012 Offensive Production in Select Categories (Rank among MLB first basemen / among NL first basemen)**\(^11\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PA</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>584</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15/8)</td>
<td>(T14/10)</td>
<td>(T17/9)</td>
<td>(19/10)</td>
<td>(21/11)</td>
<td>(14/6)</td>
<td>(16/7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^5\) See Ike Davis Player Page, supra note 3.


\(^7\) Id.

\(^8\) See Ike Davis Player Page, supra note 3. This equated to a .994 fielding percentage.

\(^9\) Id.

\(^10\) Id.

\(^11\) SeeSortable Player Statistics, supra note 6. MLB rankings out of 23 first basemen with a minimum 450 PAs. NL rankings out of 11 first basemen with a minimum of 450 PAs.
As a prototypical power hitter and corner player, the Mets and its fans rely upon Mr. Davis to produce offensively and come through for his team in clutch situations. Regrettably, Mr. Davis led the Mets in SOs, and had the lowest team BA and OBP. Furthermore, the Mets are not pleased with his lack of success with runners in scoring position (RISP). In 2012, Mr. Davis had a career-low .214 BA with RISP.

The Mets have two additional concerns regarding Mr. Davis. First, the Mets are troubled by Mr. Davis’s inability to hit left-handed pitchers (LHP). Mets’ manager Terry Collins expressed in September that, “One of the things [the Mets have] to do…is…get Ike to be a little more productive against left-handed pitching. He’s going to see a lot of left-handed pitching and we’ve got to get him going because if he starts doing damage against lefties it will change the other dynamics of the lineup.” Figure 2 below validates the Mets and Terry Collins’s concerns, by showing a notable difference between Mr. Davis’s offensive production against left- and right-handed pitchers (RHP).

Figure 2: Davis’s Offensive Production Comparison between LHP and RHP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Split</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vs. Left</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>0.225</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. Right</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.253</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0.523</td>
<td>0.868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, the Mets are worried about Mr. Davis’s ability to recover quickly from injury. Specifically, the Mets are concerned that Mr. Davis’s slow start to the 2012 season was attributable to his inability to recover from an ankle injury that both shortened his 2011 season and ended it prematurely. As Figure 3 below highlights, Mr. Davis began the 2012 season with a

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12 See Ike Davis Season Stat Summary, MLB.com, available at http://mlb.mlb.com/team/player.jsp?player_id=477195#gameType=R&type=career&statType=1&season=2012&level=ALL. Mr. Davis was ranked against teammates with a minimum 400 PAs.
13 Id.
15 See Ike Davis Player Page, supra note 3.
.185 BA in April, followed by a .154 BA in May.\footnote{Id.} Considering such low BAs, it is no surprise that Mr. Davis struggled in all offensive categories during those months. Mr. Davis’s OPS - one of the most important offensive production measures for power hitters - was almost 500 percentage points lower in May as compared to June.\footnote{Id.} Additionally, Mr. Davis fell short of expectations in the HR category, belting only five HRs in the first 48 games of the season.\footnote{Id.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td>0.241</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.264</td>
<td>0.363</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>0.257</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III. Length and Consistency of Player’s Career Contribution

Mr. Davis’s 156 games played in 2012 gives the Mets hope that he is healthy and can be a key contributor to the organization in 2013.\footnote{Id.} However, the Mets feel Mr. Davis’s lack of MLB experience decreases his value, especially compared to other players with similar years of MLST.\footnote{Id.} Moreover, when evaluating Mr. Davis’s performance in the two full seasons he has played, the Mets are concerned by the decrease in Mr. Davis’s offensive production in key statistical categories. Although Mr. Davis has increased his HRs, RBIs, and SLG by 68%, 26%, and 5%, respectively, from 2010 to 2012, the Mets are particularly uneasy about Mr. Davis’s 14% decrease in BA and OBP (14%), and near 3% drop off in OPS.\footnote{Id.} Additionally, the Mets are not thrilled by Mr. Davis’s consistency in striking out around 23% of the time in both the 2010

\footnote{Mr. Davis competed in only 36 games in 2011, compared to 147 games in 2010 and 156 games in 2012.}
\footnote{See Ike Davis Player Page, supra note 3.}
and 2012 seasons. Figure 4 below illustrates Mr. Davis’s career offensive production in such statistical categories.

**Figure 4: Davis’s Career Offensive Production (Rank among NL first basemen)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>601 (8th)</td>
<td>19 (T5th)</td>
<td>71 (Last)</td>
<td>138 (7th)</td>
<td>.264 (6th)</td>
<td>.351 (4th)</td>
<td>.440 (5th)</td>
<td>.791 (4th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td>.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>584 (8th)</td>
<td>32 (1st)</td>
<td>90 (4th)</td>
<td>141 (9th)</td>
<td>.227 (10th)</td>
<td>.308 (Last)</td>
<td>.462 (6th)</td>
<td>.771 (7th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>1334</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, the Mets are encouraged by Mr. Davis’s future potential and his level of talent, demonstrated by some of the success he has had at a rather young age. However, the Mets prefer more evidence of his ability to produce consistently throughout consecutive full seasons in order to accurately measure the expected return on its investment into Mr. Davis.

**IV. Record of Player’s Past Compensation**

Figure 5 below shows that the Mets have placed a higher value on Mr. Davis’s performance and potential by paying him above the league minimum in each of his three years in MLB prior to becoming arbitration-eligible. The Mets justifiably based Mr. Davis’s compensation on the assumption that he would improve upon his promising 2010 season.

**Figure 5: Davis’s MLB Compensation History (2010-2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MLB Min.</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>% Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$414,000</td>
<td>$432,000</td>
<td>+ 4.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$480,000</td>
<td>$506,690</td>
<td>+ 5.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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23 Id. Mr. Davis struck out 138 times in 601 PAs in 2010; he struck out 141 times in 584 PAs in 2012.
24 See Sortable Player Statistics, supra note 6. 2010 rankings among nine NL first basemen with a minimum of 500 PAs; 2012 rankings among 11 NL first basemen with a minimum of 500 PAs.
26 See Ike Davis Player Page, supra note 3.
V. Physical or Mental Defects

The Mets factor injuries strongly into its calculation of a player’s value to his team. Therefore, when a player sustains an injury, his value may decrease accordingly. This is such the case with Mr. Davis. At just 25 years old, Mr. Davis suffered a season-ending ankle injury after colliding with teammate, David Wright, during a game against the Colorado Rockies on May 10th, 2011. Consequently, on May 11, 2011, Mr. Davis was placed on the 60-day Disabled List. As a result of the collision, Mr. Davis suffered cartilage damage to his tibia. As such, there was much uncertainty as to whether the damage would require surgery. Although Mr. Davis did not undergo surgery, he missed 126 consecutive games in 2011 and did not compete in another professional game until the 2012 MLB season. In sum, the Mets are concerned that such an injury may affect his ankle’s durability in future seasons.

VI. Comparative Baseball Salaries of Equivalent Players

In comparison to other corner players (i.e. first basemen, third basemen, left- and right-fielders) who are arbitration-eligible for the first time, Mr. Davis’s career and platform season performances support the Mets’ request for a $2.4 million 2013 salary for him. Specifically, the players most comparable to Mr. Davis include: corner infielder, Casey McGehee, and corner outfielder, Seth Smith.

Casey McGehee vs. Ike Davis

Corner infielder, Casey McGehee, entered his first arbitration-eligible year in 2012,
having played a majority of his MLB career at third base.32 In 2012, Mr. McGehee avoided arbitration and received a $2.538 million salary - $162,000 below the midpoint in this case.33 Although Mr. McGehee salary’s was below this case’s midpoint, he outperformed Mr. Davis in several categories.

In a career comparison, Mr. McGehee started almost 100 more games than Mr. Davis, while appearing 355 more times at the plate.34 Additionally, Mr. McGehee has gathered 112 more hits and drove in 56 more RBIs than Mr. Davis.35 Despite having a significant number of additional PAs, Mr. McGehee has earned a higher career BA (.265 vs. .252) and has struck out less frequently (16% vs. 23%).36 As Figure 6 below evidences, Mr. Davis has had slightly better career numbers in OBP, SLG, and OPS, however, these statistics must be discounted due to the considerably less number of PAs he has had in his three-year career.

**Figure 6: Career Offensive Comparison between McGehee and Davis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
<th>SO %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McGehee</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>1,334</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.797</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a platform season comparison, Mr. Davis outpaced Mr. McGehee in RBIs, OBP, SLG, and OPS, and had a slight edge over Mr. McGehee in BA (.227 vs. .223).38 Although Mr. Davis outdid Mr. McGehee in such categories, it is important to note several other attributes that justify Mr. McGehee’s added value in comparison to Mr. Davis.

First, Mr. McGehee was a much more reliable hitter in the clutch. Specifically, Mr.

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34 See Casey McGehee Player Page, supra note 32; see Ike Davis Player Page, supra note 3. 355 PAs typically equates to over half a season’s worth of PAs for an everyday player.
35 Id.
36 Id.
37 Id.
38 Id.
McGehee hit .244 with RISP, compared to Mr. Davis’s .214 BA. Mr. McGehee has also performed better in the late innings of close games, compiling a .365 BA compared to Mr. Davis’s .302 BA. Second, although Mr. Davis is three years younger than Mr. McGehee, unlike Mr. Davis, Mr. McGehee has not suffered any serious injuries and is thus more dependable in regards to his health. Mr. McGehee has missed only two games in his career, compared to Mr. Davis’s 127 games. Finally, unlike Mr. Davis, Mr. McGehee has gained postseason experience – an attribute that adds significant value to a MLB team. In his platform season, Mr. McGehee participated in both the NL Divisional Series and Championship Series.

**Seth Smith vs. Ike Davis**

Seth Smith is an appropriate comparison to Mr. Davis because, like Mr. Davis, Mr. Smith is a left-handed hitting, corner player that has spent the majority of his career hitting in the middle of his team’s lineup. Furthermore, Mr. Davis and Mr. Smith have strikingly similar career and platform season offensive statistics. Mr. Smith entered his first arbitration-eligible year in 2012 and was awarded $2.415 million - $285,000 below the midpoint in this case.

As Figure 7 illustrates below, Mr. Smith and Mr. Davis’s careers nearly mirror each other in most offensive categories. However, as Figure 7 also shows, Mr. Smith has outpaced Mr.
Davis in key offensive categories for hitters positioned in the middle of the lineup. Specifically, Mr. Smith has earned a higher BA (.275 vs .252), OBP (.348 vs .336), SLG (.485 vs .461), and OPS (.833 vs .797), as well as has struck out less of the time (17% vs. 23%).

**Figure 7: Career Offensive Comparison between Smith and Davis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
<th>SO%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>1,449</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>1,334</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.797</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, unlike Mr. Davis, Mr. Smith has had postseason experience – an invaluable asset to a MLB team. Mr. Smith has earned a career .364 postseason BA in 12 PAs, having played in two NL Divisional Series, a NL Championship Series, and the World Series. Mr. Smith has also dodged the Disabled List throughout his career. In three full seasons in MLB, Mr. Smith has only missed a total of six games for minor wear and tear injuries compared to Mr. Davis’s 127.

In a platform season comparison, Mr. Davis outdid Mr. Smith in HRs (32 vs. 15) and RBIs (90 vs. 59). Although Mr. Davis outperformed Mr. Smith in such categories, Mr. Smith had the upper hand, once again, in BA (.284 vs .227), OBP (.347 vs. 308), SLG (.483 vs. 462), OPS (.830 vs .771), and SO percentage (17% vs. 24%). It is also important to note that, unlike Mr. Davis, Mr. Smith’s BA, OBP, SLG, and OPS almost matched his career marks in such categories, further proving to his organization that he is capable of meeting or exceeding its expectations of him.

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46 See Seth Smith Player Page supra note 44; see Ike Davis Player Page supra note 3.
47 Id.
48 Id.
49 See Seth Smith Player Card, supra note 45; see Ike Davis Player Card supra note 27.
50 See Seth Smith Player Page supra note 44; see Ike Davis Player Page supra note 3.
51 Id.
VII. Recent Performance Record of the New York Mets

The Mets finished the 2012 season in 4th place in the NL East Division with 74 wins, and 24 games behind the Division-leading Washington Nationals.\textsuperscript{52} As a result, the Mets missed the MLB playoffs for the sixth straight year. The team ranked in the bottom half of MLB teams in offensive production categories such as BA (19th), OBP (T18th), SLG (T26th), and OPS (T25th).\textsuperscript{53} The Mets have also ranked in the bottom half of MLB teams in HRs for the past three seasons. Considering such unattractive production and performance, it is no surprise that the Mets organization has watched its average game attendance decrease around 7% per year throughout Mr. Davis’s career.\textsuperscript{54} The Mets organization is desperate for a turnaround and must regain the support of its fans. Therefore, it will need significant improvement in offensive production from its players, especially from power hitters such as Mr. Davis.

VIII. Conclusion

Mr. Davis continues to mature as a professional baseball player and has shown the Mets promise in regards to his ability to make significant contributions. Mr. Davis’s 2011 season-ending injury, however, raises concern within the organization because it prevented him from proving that he can produce offensively in consecutive seasons. Although Mr. Davis performed exceptionally well in some statistical categories in 2012, it would be in the Mets organization’s best interest to remain cautious of Mr. Davis’s ability to produce consistently over the course of the next season. Based on the evidence provided in this brief, the Mets respectfully request that this panel award Mr. Davis a salary of $2.4 million for the 2013 MLB season.