2013 Tulane National Baseball Arbitration Competition

Tommy Hanson vs. Atlanta Braves
Submission on Behalf of Mr. Tommy Hanson
Midpoint: $3.9 million
Submission by Team 38
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I. Introduction and Request for Arbitration Hearing

This brief analyzes the assets and contributions of right-handed, starting pitcher, Tommy Hanson (“Mr. Hanson”), to be considered for his 2013 contract with the Atlanta Braves Baseball Club (“Club” or “Braves”). 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. Hanson’s contribution to the Braves 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. Hanson, and (6) the recent performance record of the Braves.\(^2\) Mr. Hanson has accumulated 3.120 years of Major League Service Time (“MLST”) as of January 1, 2013, which entitles him to file a request for his first arbitration.\(^3\)

Mr. Hanson is a valuable asset to the Braves organization and enters this arbitration as one of MLB’s top starting pitchers. Evidence of Mr. Hanson’s past performance and future potential will support his request for a 2013 salary above the $3.9 million midpoint. Accordingly, Mr. Hanson respectfully requests that this panel find that he is entitled to a salary arbitration award of $4.3 million.

II. Quality of Mr. Hanson’s Contribution to the Braves during 2012

Despite missing 62 games in 2011 because of a shoulder injury,\(^4\) Mr. Hanson proved that he is once again a dependable starter in the Braves pitching rotation. Mr. Hanson pitched 174

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1. See Basic Agreement between Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association
2. Id. §VI(E)(10)(a).
2/3 innings (IP) in 2012, his second-highest career mark. Mr. Hanson also earned a career-high 13 wins (W) in 2012. Considered to be a power pitcher, Mr. Hanson ranked among the Top 25 of National League (NL) starting pitchers in power categories such as strikeouts (SO) and strikeouts per nine innings (SO/9).

Mr. Hanson made key contributions to the Braves in 2012, and led its starting pitchers in several categories. As Figure 1 below shows, Mr. Hanson led the Braves’ starters in games started (GS), SOs and SO/9. Additionally, Hanson’s 13 Ws contributed greatly to the Braves’ 2012 record, and allowed the Braves to earn a trip to the NL Divisional Series. Overall, 2012 was a season where Mr. Hanson not only proved that he could recover from injury, but also that he can be relied upon to put his team in a position to win – a starting pitcher’s most important role.

### Figure 1: Hanson’s Rank Among Braves Pitchers in Select Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GS</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>SO/9</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Mr. Hanson has become one of the Braves’ most reliable starting pitchers since breaking into MLB in 2009. In 2009, Mr. Hanson finished third in NL Rookie of the Year voting. As

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5 See Tommy Hanson Player Page, supra note 3. His career high in innings pitched is 202 2/3, set in 2010.
6 Id.
7 See Sortable Player Statistics, Fangraphs.com, available at http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=all&stats=bat&lg=all&qual=y&type=8&season=2012&month=0&season1=2012&ind=0. 13 NL CF’s were ranked.
8 See Sortable Team Statistics, Fangraphs.com, available at 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=1&age=0&filter=&players=0. Rank is out of three pitchers with a minimum of 100 IP.
10 Id.
11 See Tommy Hanson Player Page, supra note 3.
Figure 2 below supports, since 2009, Mr. Hanson has thrown an average of 155 innings per year, and has consistently earned over 10 Ws in each of his four seasons with the Braves.\footnote{Id.} Mr. Hanson has also been effective against the hitters he has faced throughout his career, measured by his low walks + hits per innings pitched (WHIP) ratio of 1.25.\footnote{Id.} Typically pitchers who carry a WHIP of 1.25 or below are considered to be among the most effective pitchers in MLB.

Additionally, Mr. Hanson has been dominant as a power pitcher. Since 2009, Mr. Hanson has been averaging nearly 150 SOs per year, which equates to almost nine SO/9.\footnote{Id. Mr. Hanson has averaged 148 SOs per year and 8.5 SO/9.}

**Figure 2: Hanson’s Career Pitching Statistics in Key Categories (Rank in NL)**\footnote{See Sortable Player Statistics, supra note 5. 2010 rankings out of 58 pitchers, 2011 rankings out of 68 pitchers, 2012 rankings out of 62 pitchers.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>SO/9</th>
<th>SO/BB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>127.2</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>202.2</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Minimum 120 IP

Furthermore, Mr. Hanson is a valuable starting pitcher because he is not only dependable at home, but is also on the road. In fact, Mr. Hanson’s career home and road statistics are almost identical, as illustrated by Figure 3 below. One of Mr. Hanson’s major career accomplishments came on the road versus the Houston Astros on June 12, 2011.\footnote{Associated Press, Hanson Leads Braves Past Astros, FoxSports.com, Jun. 13, 2011, available at http://msn.foxsports.com/mlb/story/Tommy-Hanson-Atlanta-Braves-Houston-Astros-14-strikeouts-061211.} Specifically, Mr. Hanson attained a career-high 14 SOs in seven innings, matching the most SOs ever recorded at Minute Maid Park in a single game.\footnote{Id.}
**Figure 3: Hanson’s Career Home and Away Performance in Key Categories**\(^{18}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IV. Record of Mr. Hanson’s Past Compensation**

Figure 4 below shows that the Braves have placed a higher value on Mr. Hanson’s performance and potential by paying him above the league minimum in each of his three years in MLB before he became arbitration-eligible.

**Figure 4: Hanson’s MLB Compensation History (2008-2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MLB Min.(^{19})</th>
<th>Salary(^{20})</th>
<th>% Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$435,000</td>
<td>+8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$414,000</td>
<td>$456,500</td>
<td>+10.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$480,000</td>
<td>$535,000</td>
<td>+11.46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**V. Physical or mental defects**

Mr. Hanson’s minimal injury history should not be detrimental to his valuation. As previously mentioned in Section III, *supra*, Mr. Hanson has thrown an average of 155 innings per year in his career, and has consistently provided the Braves with 10 or more Ws each year. With such a high number of innings pitched, some injuries are to be expected. Although Mr. Hanson has been placed on the 15-day Disabled List (DL) three times in his career, he has only suffered two injuries.\(^{21}\) Mr. Hanson’s two times on the 15-day DL in 2011 were due to tendinitis in his throwing shoulder – a common injury experienced by pitchers.\(^{22}\) His most recent trip to the 15-day DL was on 7/31/12 due to low back strain – completely unrelated to his previous

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\(^{18}\) See Tommy Hanson Player Page, *supra* note 3.


\(^{20}\) See Tommy Hanson Player Page, *supra* note 3.

\(^{21}\) See Tommy Hanson Player Card, *supra* note 4.

\(^{22}\) Id.
shoulder injury.\textsuperscript{23} Despite such injuries, Mr. Hanson has proven to the Braves that he could recover quickly from them and provide the organization with a significant amount of innings every year.

VI. Comparative Baseball Salaries to Mr. Hanson

In comparison to other starting pitchers who are arbitration-eligible for the first time, Mr. Hanson’s performances support his request for $4.3 million. Specifically, the pitchers most comparable to Mr. Hanson include: Justin Masterson and Mike Pelfrey.

\textit{Tommy Hanson vs. Justin Masterson}

Right-handed, starting pitcher, Justin Masterson entered into his first arbitration-eligible year in 2012 with nearly the same amount of MLST as Mr. Hanson.\textsuperscript{24} In 2012, Mr. Masterson was awarded $3.825 million – $75,000 below the midpoint in this case.\textsuperscript{25} Although Mr. Masterson’s 2012 salary was below the midpoint in this case, he is a fair comparison to Mr. Hanson. As discussed below, Mr. Hanson outdid Mr. Masterson in several statistical categories, especially in his career.

In a career comparison, Mr. Hanson started 21 more games than Mr. Masterson, while edging him in IP by 21 \textfrac{1}{3}.\textsuperscript{26} This proves that Mr. Hanson has gained more experience as a starting pitcher compared to Mr. Masterson. Additionally, as Figure 5 below illustrates, Mr. Hanson has earned more Ws, has maintained a lower ERA and WHIP, and has struck out more

\textsuperscript{23} Id.
\textsuperscript{26} See Tommy Hanson Player Page, supra note 3; see Justin Masterson Player Page, supra note 24.
batters in his career compared to Mr. Masterson. Mr. Hanson has also outpaced Mr. Masterson in SO/9 and SO/BB.

**Figure 5: Career Pitching Comparison between Hanson and Masterson**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>SO/9</th>
<th>SO/BB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanson</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masterson</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>613.7</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several other attributes make Mr. Hanson a more valuable starting pitcher, as compared to Mr. Masterson. First, Mr. Hanson is able to provide the same level of consistency and dependability on the road. Specifically, he has a career 23-12 record with a 3.68 ERA, compared to Mr. Masterson’s dismal 12-23 record and 4.68 ERA. Second, although Mr. Hanson has suffered some injuries and has missed starts, he, unlike Mr. Masterson, has never undergone a major surgery. Finally, Mr. Hanson reached his first 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.

**Tommy Hanson vs. Mike Pelfrey**

Right-handed, starting pitcher, Mike Pelfrey also entered into his first arbitration-eligible year with nearly the same amount of MLST as Mr. Hanson does in 2013. Mr. Pelfrey entered his first arbitration-eligible year in 2011 and was awarded $3.925 million - $25,000 above the

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27 Id. Mr. Masterson’s platform season (2011) was the first time he won more than 10 games, compared to Mr. Hanson who has won 10 or more games in each of his four seasons.
28 Id.
29 Id.
30 See Tommy Hanson and Justin Masterson Regular Pitching 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.
31 See Justin Masterson Player Card, supra note 25. In October 2011, Mr. Masterson underwent surgery for a torn labrum.
32 See Tommy Hanson Player Page, supra note 3; see Justin Masterson Player Page, supra note 24.
midpoint in this case.\(^{34}\) As discussed below, Mr. Hanson outpaced Mr. Pelfrey in several statistical categories, especially in his career.

In a career comparison, Mr. Hanson edged Mr. Pelfrey in Ws (45 vs. 43), while earning a significantly less ERA (3.61 vs. 4.31).\(^{35}\) Additionally, as Figure 6 below shows, Mr. Hanson has been more effective against hitters, earning a 21 percentage-point lower career WHIP than Mr. Pelfrey.\(^{36}\) Furthermore, Figure 6 demonstrates that Mr. Hanson is much more powerful as a starting pitcher, as he noticeably outpaced Mr. Pelfrey in SO, SO/9, and SO/BB.\(^{37}\)

**Figure 6: Career Pitching Comparison between Hanson and Pelfrey**\(^{38}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>WHIP</th>
<th>SO/9</th>
<th>SO/BB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanson</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelfrey</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several other attributes make Mr. Hanson a more valuable starting pitcher, as compared to Mr. Pelfrey. First, Mr. Hanson is much more effective against right-handed hitters. Specifically, he has a career 3.23 ERA with 302 SOs and a 1.12 WHIP, compared to Mr. Pelfrey’s 4.12 ERA, 210 SOs, and 1.31 WHIP.\(^{39}\) Second, Mr. Hanson provides much more consistency and dependability on the road. Specifically, Mr. Hanson’s career 23-12 record and 3.68 ERA on the road outpaces Mr. Pelfrey’s 17-20 record and 5.32 ERA.\(^{40}\) Finally, Mr. Hanson reached his first arbitration-eligible season at a younger age (26 vs. 27), thus providing his Club with potentially more future MLST.\(^{41}\)


\(^{35}\) See Tommy Hanson Player Page, *supra* note 3; see Mike Pelfrey Player Page, *supra* note 33.

\(^{36}\) Id.

\(^{37}\) Id.

\(^{38}\) Id.

\(^{39}\) See Tommy Hanson Player Page, *supra* note 3; see Mike Pelfrey Player Page, *supra* note 33.

\(^{40}\) Id.

\(^{41}\) Id.
VII. Recent Performance Record of the Braves

The Atlanta Braves finished the 2012 season in second place in the NL East Division, having won 94 games.\(^{42}\) Although the Braves organization did not finish atop the NL East standings, its 94-68 record was good enough to make the postseason as a Wild Card team.\(^{43}\) A major factor contributing to the Braves’ superb record was its 3.27 team earned run average (ERA) – a mark that placed the Braves fifth among all MLB teams.\(^{44}\) In light of Mr. Hanson’s stellar 3.61 ERA and career-high 13 Ws, he clearly made a positive impact on the Braves organization’s ERA and contributed greatly to its Ws.\(^{45}\) In order to contend in the NL East and vie for a postseason spot in 2013, the Braves will depend heavily on the consistency of its pitching staff. Therefore, Mr. Hanson is a necessary asset to the Braves, especially considering his reliability as a starter since breaking into MLB.

VIII. Conclusion

Mr. Hanson is a rather talented pitcher who has been an invaluable asset to the Braves organization since breaking into MLB in 2009. Mr. Hanson has demonstrated his ability to win games and lead the Braves in several power pitching categories. At just 26 years old, Mr. Hanson’s career numbers have proven that he has the potential to become one of the best starting pitchers in MLB and help the Braves be a NL East contender in 2013 and beyond. Although Mr. Hanson has suffered a couple of injuries, he has shown the Braves his resilience to combat and recover from them by pitching a considerable number of innings each year. Considering both Mr. Hanson’s determination to remain a key contributor to the Braves in 2013 and the evidence

\(^{43}\) Id.
\(^{44}\) See Sortable Team Statistics, supra note 8.
\(^{45}\) See Tommy Hanson Player Page, supra note 3.
outlined in this brief, Mr. Hanson respectfully requests this panel to award him a $4.3 million salary for the 2013 MLB season.