Team Number 6

Dexter Fowler v. Colorado Rockies

Side represented: Dexter Fowler
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I. Introduction

This brief demonstrates the contributions of Dexter Fowler to the Colorado Rockies during the 2012 season, in preparation for his upcoming salary arbitration hearing. The hearing will be conducted according to article VI(E)(10)(a) of the Major League Baseball Collective Bargaining Agreement, which allows for five criteria to demonstrate a player’s value to his club.¹ Those five categories are the player’s past performance and consistency, the player’s mental and physical health, history of past compensation, the team’s performance, and comparisons to the salaries of other comparable players.²

Based on these five criteria, it is clear that Dexter Fowler is worth a salary above the midpoint of 4.3 million and should be awarded his request of 4.6 million dollars for the 2013 season due to his performance and consistency, health, past compensation, team performance and performance relative to other comparable MLB players.

In the following pages, this brief will first demonstrate the quality of Major League player that Fowler has been over the past few seasons, specifically his platform year of 2012, using the first four criteria. This brief will then use the fifth criterion – player comparisons – to demonstrate that the 4.6 million dollar player offer is a fair and accurate assessment of Fowler’s value.

II. Dexter Fowler

Performance and Consistency

Dexter Fowler is a long, speedy center fielder for the Colorado Rockies (the “club”). Though his service time is only 3.168, he is second time arbitration eligible since he qualified as

² Id.
a “Super Two” prior to the 2012 season. At 26 years old, Fowler is one of the most promising and exciting players in all of Major League Baseball. He demonstrated this by performing excellently in 2012: posting career highs in multiple offensive categories, being among the National League (“NL”) offensive leaders, and performing well in the outfield.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPs</th>
<th>ABs</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>H</th>
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<th>SO</th>
<th>OBP</th>
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<td>132</td>
<td>439</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>114</td>
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<td>128</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>454</td>
<td>0.300</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>128</td>
<td>0.389</td>
<td>.978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hitting primarily from the first or second position in the order, Fowler finished the 2012 season with a batting average of .300, an on-base percentage of .389 and impressive .474 slugging percentage, all of which were significant improvements from his previous two major league seasons. Fowler demonstrated the steady statistical improvement one would expect from a top prospect and had a breakout 2012 season.

Fowler finished near the top of the NL in Triples (4th in NL with 11), On Base Percentage (6th in NL at .389) and Batting Average (13th in NL at .300) making him one of the most formidable offensive threats in the National League. Once on base, Fowler was also a very successful base runner, safely stealing a base on 71% his attempts. He achieved this for a club that ranked below the league average in stolen bases, attempts, and stolen base percentage – Fowler was one of the few players for the club who presented any threat on the base path.

Fowler is also a good center fielder due to his size and speed. Fowler proved exemplary in 2010, finishing third in the NL with a .996 fielding percentage even though he played all of his

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3 http://www.baseballprospectus.com/card/card.php?id=47493
5 http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/batting/_/league/nl
home games at Coors Field which has a notoriously expansive outfield.\textsuperscript{7} For 2012, Fowler posted a fielding percentage of .978 and a Range Factor (“RF”) of 2.29.\textsuperscript{8}

Fowler has performed at a very high level throughout the first few years of his career and improved in his 2012 platform year. His offensive improvement and continued skills on the bases and in the outfield make Dexter Fowler one of the most valuable players in the National League.

\textbf{Mental and Physical Health}

Fowler has remained healthy and able to play for the club for most of his career. In 2012, he played 143 of the clubs 162 games.\textsuperscript{9} The only significant injury he suffered was a wrist injury that caused swelling which he dealt with for the last 11 games of the season. For those remaining 11 games, Fowler was unable to bat, but still contributed to the club as a defensive replacement.\textsuperscript{10} Other than the late season wrist injury, Fowler never missed more than two consecutive games due to injury. Fowler was healthy for the majority of the 2012 season and able to play for the club at a very high level, as he has been able to do for his entire career.\textsuperscript{11}

Prior to the 2012 season, Fowler only suffered two other injuries, which caused him to miss significant game time. He suffered an abdominal strain in 2011 – an injury that is not uncommon to major league players due to the swinging and throwing motions the sport requires.\textsuperscript{12} That injury has not recurred since. In 2009, Fowler fouled a ball off his kneecap and was forced to miss two weeks.\textsuperscript{13} He has seen no ill effects from that injury since.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/f/fowlede01.shtml
\item \textsuperscript{8} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{9} http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/f/fowlede01.shtml
\item \textsuperscript{10} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{11} http://www.baseballprospectus.com/card/card.php?id=47493
\item \textsuperscript{12} http://www.baseballprospectus.com/card/card.php?id=47493
\item \textsuperscript{13} Id.
\end{itemize}
Past Compensation

For the first three years of his career from 2009 to 2011, Fowler made just slightly more than the league minimum salary. Fowler was paid $401,000 in 2009 ($1000 above the minimum), $406,000 in 2010 ($6000 above the minimum), and $424,000 in 2011 ($10,000 above the minimum).\textsuperscript{14} Before the 2012 season, when Fowler was first time eligible for salary arbitration, he and the club agreed on a base-salary of $2.35 million.\textsuperscript{15}

Team Performance

The Colorado Rockies have not made the playoffs since qualifying as a wildcard in 2009, Fowler’s rookie season.\textsuperscript{16} Last season, 2012, the club finished with a record of 64-98, third worst in the NL and last in the NL West.\textsuperscript{17} Offensive production was not an issue for the club as it scored the 3\textsuperscript{rd} most runs in the NL, but its pitching was the worst of all 30 Major League Baseball teams.\textsuperscript{18} Dexter Fowler contributed to the club’s impressive offense at the plate and on the bases and was vital to the success the club did have, but he was not able to save the club single-handedly as he has never pitched to a single batter in his career.

III. Player Comparisons

Fowler was eligible for arbitration prior to the 2012 season - qualifying as a Super 2.\textsuperscript{19} He is now in his second year of arbitration eligibility and is comparable to other players eligible for arbitration for the second time, most often players with 4+ years of MLS time.

\textsuperscript{14} http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/f/fowlede01.shtml
\textsuperscript{15} Id.
\textsuperscript{16} http://espn.go.com/mlb/standings/_/date/20091003
\textsuperscript{17} http://espn.go.com/mlb/standings/_/date/20121003
\textsuperscript{18} http://espn.go.com/mlb/standings/_/group/5/sort/pointsFor/order/true/date/20121003
\textsuperscript{19} http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/f/fowlede01.shtml
Fowler hits for a high average, with lots of extra base hits, double digit homeruns, and a high on base percentage. Cody Ross, Angel Pagan and Adam Jones are comparable players who had similar statistics to Fowler in their second year of arbitration. All three players made comparable salaries during their platform year, performed well during their platform year, and received a significant raise in salary for the next season.

**Cody Ross**

**Cody Ross (2007 – 2009)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>GP</th>
<th>Abs</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>3B</th>
<th>HRs</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>SO</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>173</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>0.260</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td>1.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>559</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>0.992</td>
</tr>
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</table>

For the 2009 season, after one year of arbitration eligibility, Cody Ross and the Florida Marlins agreed on a 2010 salary of 2.225 million dollars.\(^{20}\) At the time, Ross was the starting center fielder for the Marlins and played a majority of the time, but also spent time as a right fielder.\(^{21}\) For the purposes of an accurate statistical comparison, all games played are taken into account for his offensive statistics listed above, but only the games played as a Center Fielder are taken into account for the defensive statistics.

Like Fowler, Ross is a center fielder who hits for a high average, lots of extra base hits, and hit double-digit homeruns in his platform season. In 2008, prior to his first year of arbitration eligibility, Ross hit .260 with 29 doubles and 22 HRs with a perfect 1.000% Fielding Percentage (“FP”).\(^ {22}\) That performance merited him his 2009 salary figure of 2.225 million dollars.\(^ {23}\) In 2009 Ross improved upon his 2008 numbers by posting a .270 average, with 37 doubles, 24 homeruns


\(^{21}\) Id.


\(^{23}\) Id.
and a solid .992 FP.\textsuperscript{24} Based on that platform year, in his second year of arbitration eligibility, Ross agreed with the Marlins to a one year deal worth 4.5 million dollars – a raise of 2.225 million dollars from the previous season.\textsuperscript{25}

Fowler’s career average is in line with Ross’s; however, Fowler took a significant step forward in 2012 by posting a .300 average, which is significantly better than the .266 he posted prior to his first arbitration year.\textsuperscript{26} Comparing their platform seasons for the second year of arbitration eligibility, Fowler hit for a much better average (.300) and OBP (.389) than Ross which made him a more productive top of the order player. Historically, Fowler has hit more extra base hits than Ross, but in their platform years Ross improved his output (38 extra base hits) while Fowler dropped off slightly (29 extra base hits).\textsuperscript{27} Even with that slight dip from previous seasons, Fowler was still among the league leaders in triples. In addition, Ross and Fowler scored a nearly identical number of runs for their clubs during their platform year (Ross, 73; Fowler, 72).\textsuperscript{28}

Ross is a very solid player with more power at the plate than Fowler at this point in his career but was paid a nearly identical salary for his platform year as Fowler. Ross’s improvement from the 2008 to 2009 season was very steady, but in not one statistical category did he have a break out year. While Ross’ numbers did improve from year to year, it was not a significant jump like that of Fowler. Ross maintained his position as a very solid MLB outfielder, while Fowler jumped to potential All Star status. Ross received a raise of 2.225 million dollars for a solid statistical improvement in most categories, which Fowler can match and beat in most cases.

\textsuperscript{24} Id.
\textsuperscript{25} Id.
\textsuperscript{26} http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/f/fowlede01.shtml
\textsuperscript{27} Extra Base Hits are defined as Doubles or Triples. http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/f/fowlede01.shtml
If granted a 2.225 million dollar raise, Fowler’s 2013 salary would be 4.575, which is nearly identical to the 4.6 million dollar figure that was requested. Looking at Ross’ statistical progression and corresponding salary, it is clear that Fowler value to club is at least the 4.6 million dollar figure that was requested.

**Angel Pagan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>Abs</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>2B</th>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>3.02</td>
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</table>

* In 2008, Pagan only played 2 games in CF, not enough to provide an accurate sample of defensive statistics to compare Pagan and Fowler

In 2010, after one year of arbitration, Angel Pagan was paid a base salary of 1.5 million dollars.29 That season, Pagan was the starting center fielder for the New York Mets, but also spent time in RF and LF.30 For the purposes of an accurate statistical comparison, all games played are taken into account for his offensive statistics listed above, but only the games played as a CF are taken into account for the defensive statistics.

Prior to his first year of arbitration eligibility, Pagan showed a lot of promise by hitting .306 with 33 extra base hits and 6 HRs in 88 games before injuries cut his season short.31 That performance warranted the 1.5 million dollar salary figure for 2010.32 During the 2010 season, his platform year for his second arbitration, Pagan stayed healthy and played in 151 games, hitting .290, with 38 extra base hits, 11 homeruns and a .985 FP.33 Pagan’s statistical improvement came from his ability to stay healthy, but on a per game basis his number regressed in a number of offensive and defensive categories.

30 Id.
31 Id.
32 Id.
Pagan and Fowler are very comparable players because they both hit for a high average, with lots of extra base hits, and double-digit homeruns during their platform year. Comparing their seasons, Fowler hit for a higher average (.300), more homeruns (13), drew more walks (68) and had a higher OBP (.389) than Pagan. Although Pagan hit more extra base hits, Fowler used his superior speed more often in recording more triples. Defensively, Pagan and Fowler are also of comparable value to their teams as both contributed to more than two but less than three outs per game for their club, as measured by Range Factor per nine innings. Pagan did not improve from 2009 to 2010 like Fowler did between 2011 and 2012.

Based on his 2010 platform year, Pagan agreed to a one year, 3.5 million dollar deal with the Mets for the 2011 season – a raise of 2 million dollars over the previous season. Fowler had a statistically equivalent, if not more productive year, in his platform year and does not have the marked injury history that Pagan carries. Thus, it is clear that Fowler should get at least a 2 million dollar raise based on his production, and improvement from previous seasons. In this case, if Fowler were to receive a 2 million dollar raise, his salary would be 4.35 million for the 2013 season, which is above the 4.3 million dollar mid-point mark between the player and club offer. Based on this analysis, it is proper to award Fowler 4.6 million for the upcoming season.

Adam Jones

Adam Jones (2009 – 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>GP</th>
<th>ABs</th>
<th>Hits</th>
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<td>113</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>2.78</td>
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35 http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/p/paganan01.shtml
37 http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/p/paganan01.shtml
38 http://www.baseballprospectus.com/card/card.php?id=PAGAN19810702A
Adam Jones is a very accomplished center fielder for the Baltimore Orioles. Two seasons prior to his first year of arbitration eligibility, Jones won a Gold Glove and made the All-Star team. His career accomplishments allowed him to reach an agreement with the Orioles for a salary of 3.25 million dollars for the 2011 season in his first year of arbitration eligibility.

Like Fowler, Jones plays center field, runs well, hits for average, hits a high number of extra base hits, and hit double-digit homeruns in his platform year. For the 2010 season, Jones hit .284, with 30 extra base hits, 19 HRs and a .984 FP. That production, plus his All-Star performance and Gold Glove awards from previous seasons led to a 3.5 million dollar salary figure for the 2011 season. During that 2011 platform year, Jones production remained very consistent with previous season, with his only significant variation being a slight increase in HRs (25 for 2011) and a subsequent increase in RBIs. There was an insignificant dip in his batting average, and then for the 3rd consecutive year, his FP dropped slightly. Adam Jones during the 2011 season was remarkably similar to Adam Jones from the 2010 season. But after the 2011 season he was award a 2012 salary figure of 6.15 million – an increase of 2.9 million dollars over his 2010 salary.

When comparing their platform years, Jones clearly had more power at the plate as he hit twice the number of homeruns than Fowler, but Fowler scored more runs (72), had more extra base hits (18 2Bs, 11 3Bs), had more than twice as many walks (68), had a higher average (.300) and had a higher OBP (.389). Additionally, for their platform years, they struck out at the same

40 Id.
41 Id.
42 Id.
43 Id.
rate and both stole 12 bases. Other than HRs and the corresponding increase in RBIs, Fowler was a slightly better player than Jones in their platform years. More importantly, Fowler significantly improved on his previous season numbers in his platform year, while Jones basically kept his career status quo. Since this is a question of a raise in salary, it seems clear that Fowler has earned at least the same 2.9 million dollar raise as Jones based on comparable increases in production. Such a raise would make Fowler’s 4.6 million dollar player offer a bargain for the club. This comparison to Jones makes it clear that Fowler deserves to earn 4.6 million for the 2013 season.

IV. Conclusion

Dexter Fowler should be paid 4.6 million for the 2013 season because of his performance during the 2012 season. Fowler drastically improved his average and on base percentage while continuing to develop as a power hitter. Fowler was one of only 23 players in the entirety of MLB to hit .300 or above with double digit HR’s. Fowler has no lingering injury history and has played in 82% of the clubs games over the last four seasons. His consistent improvement, durability, and on field production merit him a raise of at least 2 million dollars – which would put him above the midpoint of 4.3 and closer to Fowler’s requested salary of 4.6 million dollars for the 2013 season.

47 http://espn.go.com/mlb/stats/batting