2013 Tulane Baseball Arbitration Competition

Ike Davis v. New York Mets

Submission on behalf of New York Mets
Mid-Point: $2,700,000
Team 39
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I. INTRODUCTION AND REQUEST FOR HEARING DECISION

In 2010, first baseman Ike Davis ("Mr. Davis" or "Davis") made his major league debut with the New York Mets ("Mets" or the "Club"). While the Mets organization appreciates Mr. Davis’s contributions during his short tenure, the organization has several reservations concerning Mr. Davis that stem from his injury history and inconsistent, diminishing performance. This brief analyzes Mr. Davis’s major league performance and accomplishments and illustrates why the Club’s salary offer is justified. In 2012, Mr. Davis earned $507,000.1 Respectfully, the Mets believe that Mr. Davis is entitled to a salary that does not exceed the Club’s offer of $2,400,000 for the 2013 season.

II. ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

Davis has amassed 2.168 years of major league service time ("MLS").2 Therefore, he qualifies as a Super Two. He is therefore eligible for a fourth year of arbitration per Section VI(e)(1)(b) of the Major League Baseball ("MLB") Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA").3

II. CRITERIA

This brief is governed by and adheres to Section VI(10)(e)(a)-(b) of the MLB CBA. According to the CBA, the arbitration panel may consider (1) the quality of the Player’s contribution to his Club during the past season; (2) the length and consistency of his career contribution; (3) the record of the 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 Club.4

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2 Id.
3 Major League Baseball Collective Bargaining Agreement, 20-21
4 Major League Baseball Collective Bargaining Agreement, 20-21
III. CAREER CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Mets are concerned that Davis is not suited to be the organization’s full-time first base because of his pedestrian career contributions.

a. Sub-Par Seasons

In comparison to other Major League corner infielders\textsuperscript{5}, Davis has produced mediocre numbers during his time with the Club.\textsuperscript{6} In his two full seasons with the Mets, most of his statistics fall outside the top 50\textsuperscript{th} percentile of major league corner infielders. He also generated some of the highest strikeout rates amongst corner infielders during each of these seasons.

| Table 1: Davis vs. MLB Corner Infielders (Percentile) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                | HR  | RBI | BA  | OBP  | SLG  | K%  |
| 2010           | 42% | 63% | 46% | 57%  | 43%  | 77% |
| 2012           | 87% | 70% | 13% | 16%  | 54%  | 84% |

Davis primarily hit fourth, fifth, and sixth within Mets line-up in his two full seasons.\textsuperscript{8} In both seasons, Davis’s batting average in each spot, with the exception of his average batting sixth in 2010, was below the league average for hitters that hit in those spots.

\textsuperscript{5} Corner infielders include both first basemen and third basemen.
\textsuperscript{6} It is appropriate to compare Davis to first baseman and third baseman because both positions profile similarly. Players that typically fill these positions bat in the middle of their respective teams line-ups and are expected to drive-in runs.
\textsuperscript{7} Player Stats, FanGraphs Baseball, http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=1b&stats=bat&lg=all&qual=400&type=8&season=2012&month=0&season1=2012&ind=0&team=0&rostr=0&age=0&filter=&players=0; http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=3b&stats=bat&lg=all&qual=400&type=8&season=2012&month=0&season1=2012&ind=0&team=0&rostr=0&age=0&filter=&players=0; http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=1b&stats=bat&lg=all&qual=400&type=8&season=2010&month=0&season1=2010&ind=0&team=0&rostr=0&age=0&filter=&players=0; http://www.fangraphs.com/leaders.aspx?pos=3b&stats=bat&lg=all&qual=400&type=8&season=2010&month=0&season1=2010&ind=0&team=0&rostr=0&age=0&filter=&players=0
Table 2: Batting Average by Position in Line-Up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Davis</th>
<th>MLB</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Davis</th>
<th>MLB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.269</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>0.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>0.256</td>
<td>0.265</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>0.216</td>
<td>0.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>0.269</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>0.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. INJURY HISTORY

On May 10, 2011, Davis collided with David Wright in pursuit of an infield pop fly.\textsuperscript{11} The collision resulted in damaged cartilage to his left ankle.\textsuperscript{12} As a result, Davis was on the 60-day disabled list for 141 days.\textsuperscript{13} During this span, Davis missed 126 games, which constituted approximately 78% of the Mets’ schedule.\textsuperscript{14} Because of the severity of Davis’s injury, the club is concerned about Davis’s fragility moving forward. Further, the Club is also concerned that this injury may have been a cause of Davis’s uninspiring platform year performance in 2012.

V. PLATFORM YEAR

a. Decline in Performance

When Davis returned from his injury in 2012, he simply was not the same player that he was in the 2010.\textsuperscript{15} His numbers regressed in almost every major statistical category for a hitter. Most notably, he experienced a significant decline in batting average ("BA"), on-base percentage ("OBP"), and on-base plus slugging percentage ("OPS"). The Club is very concerned that his 2012 statistics reflect the type of player that Davis will be moving forward.

\textsuperscript{11} Mets’ Ike Davis working the comeback trail, Newsday, http://www.newsday.com/sports/baseball/mets/mets-ike-davis-working-the-comeback-trail-1.3459651
\textsuperscript{12} Ike Davis, Baseball Prospectus, http://www.baseballprospectus.com/card/card.php?id=DAVIS19870322A
\textsuperscript{13} Ike Davis, Baseball Prospectus, http://www.baseballprospectus.com/card/card.php?id=DAVIS19870322A
\textsuperscript{14} Id.
\textsuperscript{15} Because Davis missed 126 games in 2011, the number of games are at bats are not large enough to truly evaluate his progression as a professional baseball player.
Table 3: Ike Davis - 2010 vs. 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BB</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</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0.264</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>0.440</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 (Platform)</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Performance Against Divisional Opponents

The success of a team’s season depends largely on its performance against divisional foes. The Mets face their divisional opponents 18 times each, representing approximately 44% of their total games. Because divisional opponents make-up a significant portion of the team’s schedule, a player’s success against divisional opponents should be strongly considered in determining his salary arbitration award. During his platform year, Davis struggled against teams in the National League East (“NL East”), his current division. His batting average, OBP, SLG, and OPS against the NL East were all lower than his overall 2012 season statistics.

Table 4: Ike Davis vs. NL East

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012 Season Totals</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis vs. NL East</td>
<td>0.217</td>
<td>0.305</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0.726</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Struggles Under Pressure

Davis also struggled under pressure during the 2012 season. One June 1, 2012, the Mets were 29-23 and were one game out of first place in the NL East. Ike contributed very little to the Club’s success during this period. In fact, he was one of the Mets’ worst hitters. Out of the 9 Mets that had 90 or more plate appearances (“PA”) during the first two months of the season, Ike Davis produced the worst batting average, OBP, SLG, and OPS.

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Had Davis been a positive contributor throughout the entire season, the Mets may have prolonged their playoff hopes. Moreover, Davis missed several opportunities to drive in runs. He was a clean-up hitter\(^21\) in almost 50% of his at bats in 2012.\(^22\) Therefore, his primary role was to knock in runs and he was unsuccessful in situations where he had opportunities to do so. In fact, his play was worse when runners were in scoring position (“RISP”) in comparison to his overall season statistics.

**Table 6: Ike Davis with Runners in Scoring Position**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012 Season</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runners in Scoring Position</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>0.289</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**d. Poor Performance at Citi Field**

The Mets play 50 percent of their games at Citi Field.\(^24\) Therefore, it is crucial that the Club’s player enjoys success at its home field; unfortunately, this was not the case with Davis. In 2012, Davis’s home numbers were abysmal and significantly below his statistics at visiting fields.

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\(^21\) A clean-up hitter bats fourth in a baseball line-up.

\(^22\) Ike Davis Splits, ESPN.com, http://espn.go.com/mlb/player/splits/_/id/30532/ike-davis

\(^23\) Id.

### Table 7: Ike Davis – 2012 Home vs. Away

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Away</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td>0.619</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### e. Struggles Against Left-Handed Pitchers

Davis lacked success against left-handed pitchers (“LHP”) in 2012. During his platform year, Davis produced a batting average of .253 against right-handed pitchers (“RHP”) and .174 against LHP. Davis’s inability to hit both types of pitchers is a glaring vulnerability and diminishes his value not only as a clean-up hitter, but also as a full-time starter. This statistic also indicates that Davis may be more valuable as a platoon player than a full-time first baseman.

#### f. Ike Davis v. Lucas Duda

At this point in time, the Mets organization is uncertain as to whether Davis will even be the starting first basemen in 2013. Lucas Duda, who has played first base in the past, may be a more reliable first base and clean-up option for the Mets at that position moving forward. Duda produced both a higher batting average and on-base percentage than Davis in 2012.

### Table 8: 2012 BA and OBP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duda</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>0.329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, Duda excelled hitting with RISP were in scoring position in 2012, generating a batting average of .274, where Davis, as mentioned previously, batted a mere .214.

Over his career, he also shined as a clean-up hitter, sporting a career BA .294 in the clean-up

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25 [Ike Davis Splits](http://espn.go.com/mlb/player/splits/_/id/30532/ike-davis)
26 [Id.](#)
27 [Lucas Duda](http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/split.cgi?id=dudalu01&year=Career&t=b)
28 [Lucas Duda Splits](http://espn.go.com/mlb/player/splits/_/id/30953/lucas-duda); [Ike Davis Splits](http://espn.go.com/mlb/player/splits/_/id/30532/ike-davis)
29 [Id.](#)
spot, compared to Davis’s mediocre average of .259.\textsuperscript{30} Further, Duda hits both RHP and LHP equally well. In 2012, he batted .240 first RHP and versus .239 against LHP.\textsuperscript{31} Duda’s balanced success against RHP and LHP supports the idea that he may represent a better option than Davis. Overall, because of Duda’s strengths and contributions, Ike Davis may be expendable.

VI. COMPARABLE PLAYERS

Because Super Two player reach arbitration a year earlier than most other players do, they provide a unique challenge to finding comparable players. Comparing Super Two players to players who were eligible after accumulating three years of service time can be challenging because of the difference in time each player had had to amass their respective statistics.

a. Kendrys Morales & Ian Stewart

Two players that provide apt comparisons to Davis are Ian Stewart (“Stewart”), a third baseman, and Kendrys Morales (“Morales”), a first baseman. Both corner infielders were arbitration eligible for the first time in 2010.

Stewart, like Davis, was a Super Two when he was arbitration eligible with an MLS of 2.154.\textsuperscript{32} In 2011, Stewart received a one-year contract from the Rockies worth $2,287,500. He is the best comparison to Davis because of his similar service time and because his offensive statistics are strikingly similar to Davis’s.

Morales, a player with an MLS of 3.057 at the completion of the 2010 season, provides an adequate player comparison for Davis because he is a 1B that is primarily featured as a

middle of the lineup hitter for his team.\textsuperscript{33} In 2011, Morales received a one-year contract from the Angels worth $2,975,000.\textsuperscript{34} Although Davis has almost a year less of MLS\textsuperscript{35}, Morales is an appropriate comparable to Davis because the CBA allows for players with more service time to be considered as long as they do not have more than one year of experience than the player they are being compared to.\textsuperscript{36}

Davis, Stewart, and Morales have some similar career statistics. All three players succeed at getting on base at a similar rate and have produced similar RBI and HR numbers. Morales, however, is the best hitter and distinguishable from Davis and Stewart because of his superior BA, SLG, and OPS. Stewart produced the worst BA, SLG, and OPS of the three players. Davis’s BA, SLG, and OPS closely mirrored Stewart’s.

Table 9: Davis vs. Stewart and Morales - Career Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
<th>MLB</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morales (06-10)</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td>3.057</td>
<td>$2,975,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis (10-12)</td>
<td>1334</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td>2.168</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart (07-10)</td>
<td>1282</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td>2.154</td>
<td>$2,287,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{35}Id.
\textsuperscript{36}Major League Baseball Collective Bargaining Agreement,18.
While Davis was produced more HR and RBI during platform year than Morales and Stewart did during their respective platform years, his BA, OBP, and OPS were inferior to those of Morales and Stewart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>HR</th>
<th>RBI</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>OBP</th>
<th>SLG</th>
<th>OPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morales (2010)</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.290</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart (2010)</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0.256</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>0.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis (2012)</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.308</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Davis vs. Stewart and Morales - Platform Year Performance

Davis’s award should fall between Stewart’s salary of $2,287,500 and Morales’s salary of $2,975,000. The average of both salaries is $2,631,250, which is below the $2,700,000 midpoint in this arbitration case. Because Davis is much more similar to Stewart than he is Morales, he should receive a salary below the midpoint and the aforementioned average of Morales and Stewart’s salaries.

VI. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Mr. Davis should be awarded a 2013 salary arbitration award of $2,400,000 from this arbitration panel.

Id.