2013 NATIONAL BASEBALL ARBITRATION COMPETITION

TOMMY HANSON V. ATLANTA BRAVES (MLB)

SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE TEAM

ATLANTA BRAVES

Player Demand:  $4.30 Million

Club Offer:  $3.50 Million

Midpoint:  $3.90 Million

Submitted by: Team 21
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Delivery adjusted, Hanson no longer hits pause, MLB.com, February 13, 2012.


mlb&c_id=mlb.
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE ARBITRATION HEARING BETWEEN THE ATLANTA BRAVES AND TOMMY HANSON, STARTING PITCHER.

This brief analyzes the statistics, attributes, salaries, comparative salaries, and additional factors regarding the playing career of Tommy Hanson (the “Player” or “Hanson”), starting pitcher for the Atlanta Braves (the “Club” or the “Braves”) in order to settle salary differences for the upcoming 2013 season. The Major League Baseball (“MLB”) Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) between the Major League Baseball Players Association (“MLBPA”) and the thirty MLB Clubs lays out guidelines for an arbitration hearing.

The Braves selected Hanson in the 22nd round of the 2005 MLB Amateur Draft. Hanson made his major league debut on June 7, 2009 against the Milwaukee Brewers. He has since acquired 3.120 years of Major League Service (“MLS”) time, making him first year arbitration eligible for the 2013 MLB season.¹ The Club respectfully requests that the arbitration committee award Hanson a $3.5 million salary for the 2013 MLB season.

II. REQUEST FOR A HEARING DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE CLUB

The criteria for the arbitration hearing between Hanson and the Braves are set by the 2012-2016 Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) between the Clubs and the MLBPA. Under Section VI, Part E(10)(a)-(b) of the CBA, certain areas of Hanson’s MLB time are considered for purposes of this hearing:

(1 hereafter “A”) the quality of Hanson’s contribution to the Braves during the past season (i.e., platform year), including, but not limited to, his overall performance, special qualities of leadership, and public appeal; (2 hereafter “B”) the length and consistency of his career contributions; (3) his past recorded compensation figures; (4 hereafter “C”) comparative baseball salaries; (5) the existence of any mental or physical defects; and (6) the recent performance record of the Club, including its League standing and attendance.²

Hanson has been a fine addition to the Braves. Nevertheless, his quality of performance and his physical endurance have been inconsistent during his platform season and throughout his career. Therefore, the Club believes Hanson’s request for $4.3 million is unreasonable. The club’s offer of $3.5 million is in line with these factors and prior comparable arbitration-eligible players. For these reasons, Hanson should receive $3.5 million for his 2013 contract.

A. Quality of Tommy Hanson’s Contribution During the Past Season

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>W</th>
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<th>ERA</th>
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<td>183</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>161</td>
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<td>5</td>
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In 2012, Tommy Hanson put forth his worst performance since his MLB career began in 2009. His 2012 platform year statistics support a lower salary offer of $3.5 million for Hanson.

For starters, Hanson had lackluster in-game statistics during his platform season of 2012. His earned run average (ERA) spiked to an MLB career high 4.48 while allowing 183 hits and 95 runs. While he had a respectable 161 strikeouts, his 71 walks allowed offset the strikeouts and resulted in 87 earned runs allowed, which was more than any past year of Hanson’s career. This struggle with control resulted in a walks plus hits per innings pitched (WHIP) of 1.45, which amounted to a nearly 0.3 point spike from his previous two years.⁴

Second, Hanson has shown a lack of endurance in 2012. Due to a back injury, Hanson pitched less than six innings in 11 of his last 13 starts of the season. He posted an earned run average (ERA) of 5.69 during this stretch with 11 home runs, 81 hits and a 0.296 batting average against in 68.0 innings pitched. The Braves ended the season at 94-68, just four games behind the National League East Winners, the Washington Nationals and eventually lost in the one-game wild card playoffs to the St. Louis Cardinals.⁵

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³ http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto01.shtml
⁴ Id.
Braves may have been able to overtake the Nationals and avoided this wild-card play-in game in the first place, giving them a much better chance of advancing in the playoffs.

This injury also affected the quality of his pitches.\(^6\) Hanson’s average fastball velocity in 2012 was a modest 90.38 mph, down from 93.46 mph just two years earlier.\(^7\) An argument could be made that his fastball has lost velocity because of his partial rotator cuff tear in 2011, but this further shows Hanson’s struggles to stay healthy.

Finally, Hanson’s 2012 season was marked by a less than stellar record of 13-10 with a win-loss percentage of .565.\(^8\) Hanson’s inability to finish games, especially near the end of the season, was a significant factor in determining the ill fate of the Braves. The Braves counted on Hanson to perform as he had in the beginning of his career, but Hanson fell short in 2012.

**B. Length and Consistency of Tommy Hanson’s Career Contributions**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>G</th>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>116</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>182</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>4.48</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>183</td>
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<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Yrs</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>108</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>635.0</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>35.9</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hanson started his career incredibly strong, receiving the third highest amount of votes for National League Rookie of the Year. However, his performance has tapered off in the subsequent three years in several areas.

First, Hanson’s endurance has been poor throughout his career however as a result of several injuries during the last two years, it has become exceptionally alarming. In 2011, Hanson missed significant time due to a torn rotator cuff in his shoulder, an injury which had been

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bothering him since 2010.\textsuperscript{10} Because of this he missed the final two months of the 2011 season, and the Braves missed the playoffs due to a late season spiral where the pitching simply fell apart. The Braves needed Hanson to contribute and he was not there to do so.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Age & G & SB & CS & CS\% & lgCS\% & PO \\
\hline
2009 & 22 & 21 & 18 & 8 & 31\% & 29\% & 1 \\
2010 & 23 & 34 & 33 & 4 & 11\% & 29\% & 1 \\
2011 & 24 & 22 & 30 & 3 & 9\% & 28\% & 0 \\
2012 & 25 & 31 & 31 & 11 & 26\% & 27\% & 1 \\
\hline
4 Yrs & 108 & 112 & 26 & 19\% & 28\% & 3 \\
162 Game Average & 34 & 112 & 26 & 19\% & 28\% & 3 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Hanson’s Career Stolen Bases Allowed Statistics\textsuperscript{12}}
\end{table}

This injury also affected Hanson in the 2012 season, as he had to change his delivery in order to address his arm issues, which have led to a very high amount of bases stolen while he was pitching.\textsuperscript{13} In 2012, his earned run average was the highest of his career at 4.48 and opposing base runners stole 31 bases (the second highest of his career) while he was on the mound.\textsuperscript{14} It is true that more base runners were caught stealing while Hanson was on the mound in 2012, but this was only due to more base runners allowed by Hanson. The fact is in the past two years Hanson has had the fourth worst stolen base percentage in the league, allowing 90\% of stolen base attempts to be successful, and the three pitchers that are behind Hanson all had far fewer stolen base attempts against them.\textsuperscript{15}

Even when Hanson was healthy for the first year and a half of his career, he lacked the endurance to finish games. Hanson has pitched only one complete game in his four years in the league.\textsuperscript{16} Hanson’s performance has been marked by inconsistency in this area throughout his four years in the league, fluctuating each year, from a low of 127.2 innings pitched in his first

\textsuperscript{11} Id.
\textsuperscript{12} http://www.baseball-reference.com/players/h/hansoto01.shtml.
\textsuperscript{13} Id.
\textsuperscript{15} Id.
\textsuperscript{16} Id.
year to a high of 202.2 in his second year. This lack of consistency takes away from Hanson’s value to the Braves. In addition to the lack of consistency in innings pitched, Hanson has consistently given up more home runs each year he has been in the league. From 2009 on, he has allowed 10, 14, 17, and 27 homeruns in successive years. His propensity for giving up the big hits hurts the Braves’ chance to win every time he is on the mound.

Finally, Hanson’s fastball has lost velocity each year over the past three years. Since 2010 his fastball has gone from an average of 93.46 mph to 90.38 mph in 2012, dropping more than 3 mph. Consequently he has had to rely more on his slider in current years. In 2012 he threw the slider 30% of the time which was an increase from 2009 where he threw only 24% of his pitches as sliders. Throwing more sliders leads to more wear and tear on a pitcher’s arm. Considering all of Hanson’s past problems with endurance and his loss in quality of pitches, this makes Hanson a risky player and lowers his value. Therefore, the Club’s offer of $3.5 million is the only reasonable valuation of Hanson’s services to date.

C. The Comparative Baseball Salaries of Tommy Hanson to his Service Class and Prior Arbitration Eligible Players

1. John Danks - $3.45 million

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<td>184</td>
<td>417</td>
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17 Id.
20 Id.
21 Id.
John Danks (“Danks”) of the Chicago White Sox (the “White Sox”) was first-time eligible for arbitration following the 2009 season. He was awarded a one-year salary of $3.45 million based on his performance through the 2009 season, which is just below the Club’s offer to Hanson in this arbitration hearing. He is a left-handed starting pitcher and performed very similarly to Hanson in their respective performances leading up to their first years of arbitration eligibility. But while Hanson and Danks are similar in many respects, Danks performed better in several areas.

Hanson and Danks had similar records their platform years as Hanson went 13-10, while Danks went 13-11. Both players allowed just over 180 hits, around 90 runs, between 25 and 30 home runs and close to 85 earned runs. However, Danks posted a far superior earned run average in his platform year at 3.77. He pitched almost 30 more innings while improving his ERA, proving that he had more endurance than Hanson. Finally, in his platform year Danks’s fielding was much more efficient with only two errors in 42 fielding chances compared to Hanson’s five errors in 22 fielding chances.

Danks also showed consistent improvement each year he was in the league leading up to his platform year. This differs from Hanson who peaked his first year and has been fluctuating in his performance in subsequent years leading up to his platform year. Danks’s ERA improved by almost 2.00 points between his first and his third year in the MLB. Danks’s innings pitched

24 Id.  
25 Id.  
27 Id.  
28 Id.  
29 Id.  
30 Id.  
31 Id.
and games played also increased between his first and third years in the MLB showing an increase in stamina.\(^{31}\)

Hanson is similar to Danks in many areas but Danks seems to be improving while Hanson is getting worse each year. Danks’s one-year salary of $3.45 million is appropriate for Hanson because the two players are similar in many areas of performance. However, the Club must give credit to Hanson’s stellar performance in the beginning of his career; thus they have offered a salary slightly higher than what Danks received in 2010. Therefore, the Club’s offer of $3.5 million is a reasonable offer considering the similarities between Hanson and Danks.

2. **Felix Hernandez - $3.8 million**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>G</th>
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</table>

Felix Hernandez ("Hernandez") of the Seattle Mariners (the "Mariners") was first-time arbitration eligible after the 2008 season.\(^{34}\) Hernandez was awarded a one-year salary of $3.8 million based on his performance through the 2008 season, which is slightly lower than the $3.9 million midpoint between Hanson’s request and the Club’s offer.\(^{35}\) Hernandez and Hanson had similar experience in the four years leading up to first year arbitration, but Hernandez performed at a higher level later in his career and improved each subsequent year. Therefore, Hanson’s salary should be lower than the $3.8 million Hernandez received in his first year of arbitration.

\(^{31}\) Id.
\(^{34}\) Id.
\(^{35}\) Id.
Hernandez’s platform year was far more impressive than Hanson’s platform year. Hernandez topped Hanson in the category of ERA with a 3.45 and pitched 26 more innings than Hanson. While Hanson’s record was better than Hernandez in his platform year, Hernandez had 14 more strikeouts than Hanson resulting in 10 fewer runs allowed, earned runs allowed, and home runs allowed. Hernandez also threw two complete games while Hanson threw none.

Hernandez was also more effective than Hanson in the four years leading up to his arbitration. Hernandez was a strikeout threat for every player that stepped up to face him, putting down over 165 batters each of his three years leading up to arbitration. Hanson, on the other hand, fluctuated in his strikeouts with his worst year coming in 2009 with just 116.

Hernandez has proven to be a strikeout pitcher who has allowed significantly fewer runs than Hanson has. Furthermore, Hernandez pitched more innings than Hanson did both in his career leading up to his first year arbitration and in his platform year. Hernandez received just below the $3.9 million midpoint between Hanson’s demand and the Club’s offer. Since Hanson did not perform as well as Hernandez, Hanson should receive a salary below $3.8 million.

3. **David Price - $4.35 million**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 7 – Tommy Hanson v. David Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tommy Hanson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
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<td>David Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Totals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36 Id.  
37 Id.  
David Price ("Price") of the Tampa Bay Rays (the "Rays") was first-time arbitration eligible after the 2011 season.\textsuperscript{43} He was awarded a one-year salary of $4.35 million (just above Hanson’s demand) based on his performance through the 2011 season.\textsuperscript{44} Price’s performance far exceeded Hanson’s performance in the first four years of his career.

Price’s platform year was significantly stronger than Hanson’s platform year. Price’s ERA was lower than Hanson’s with a 3.49 and Price had over 50 more strikeouts than Hanson.\textsuperscript{45} In addition to a high amount of strikeouts, Price allowed fewer walks than Hanson with just 63 showing demonstrating more accuracy and control than Hanson.\textsuperscript{46} In his platform year, Price also proved he had more stamina than Hanson. With just three more game appearances, Price pitched about 50 more innings than Hanson, establishing Price’s ability to last longer in games than Hanson.\textsuperscript{47}

Price’s career contributions are superior to Hanson’s career numbers especially in the two years leading up to arbitration. Price’s ERA was far lower at 2.79 in 2010 and 3.49 in 2011, his platform year.\textsuperscript{48} While Hanson’s strikeouts have fluctuated every year, the lowest being 116 in 2009 and the highest being 173 in 2010, Price struck out more batters each of the three years leading up to his platform year.\textsuperscript{49} In the two years leading up to his arbitration, Price struck out 188 and 218 batters respectively.\textsuperscript{50} Price has also shown more endurance throughout his career, pitching more innings each year, including over 200 innings in each of the two years leading up to his arbitration.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{43} Id.
\textsuperscript{44} Id.
\textsuperscript{45} Id.
\textsuperscript{46} Id.
\textsuperscript{47} Id.
\textsuperscript{48} Id.
\textsuperscript{49} Id.
\textsuperscript{50} Id.
\textsuperscript{51} Id.
Price has demonstrated during his platform year and throughout his career that he is worth the $4.35 million salary he received his first year of arbitration. Because his performance and endurance was superior to Hanson, it is unreasonable to give Hanson a salary close to Price.

III. CONCLUSION AND REQUEST FOR A HEARING DECISION

Hanson has been a fine pitcher for the Atlanta Braves. He started off his MLB career strong in 2009 with solid numbers and a lot of potential for future success. However, since then he has showed a lack of consistency, little endurance, and he has lost velocity on his pitches. When looking at pitchers with similar experience, he compares much more closely to John Danks ($3.45 million) than Felix Hernandez ($3.8 million) or David Price ($4.35 million) in performance statistics and stamina. Therefore, the Player’s demand of $4.3 million is unreasonable and the Club’s offer of $3.5 million is appropriate for Tommy Hanson for the upcoming 2013 season.