

American League Newsletter

Top Stories:
DRAFT-DAY APPROACHES
SALARY PROPOSAL #2
UPCOMING DEADLINES

As if you didn't know, this coming Saturday will be our 7th BRASSball Rookie Draft. Festivities begin at 10AM eastern time, though you should plan on checking into the chat room at least 10-15 minutes early, if at all possible. Corey will be conducting two trial runs this week: Tuesday, Jan 30 9:00 pm CST and Friday, Feb 2 9:00 pm CST. IF neither of these times work for you, contact Corey and he'll do his best to accommodate your schedule.

It is VERY important that each of us be certain that we can enter the room without any difficulty. Corey has e-mailed specific directions for entering the room, and Lenny copied those in his NL Newsletter. Any problems, Corey is your man! Come 10AM Saturday, we want all 24 of us to be ready to draft!

January Trades

1. METROPOLIS trades Columbus's 2nd round pick and 1.6 million to TOLEDO for Carlos Pena and Alberto Castillo (pd).
2. NORTH GEORGIA trades Eric Owens to SANTA BARBARA for Ron Coomer, Shane Spencer, and McKay Christensen.
3. METROPOLIS trades Ben Diggins to OCALA for Ocala's 7th round pick in 2002.
4. COOK COUNTY trades Pete Harnisch and \$1,036,333 to BOX CITY for Jay Buhner and Ed Sprague.
5. METROPOLIS trades the #17 and #90 overall picks in the upcoming draft, and John Mabry (pd) to COLUMBUS for their #1 and #2 picks in 2002.
6. OCALA trades Russ Branyan, and Ocala's #2 in 2002 to METROPOLIS for Long Island's 1st round pick, and Columbus's, Fleetwood's, and Long Island's 4th round picks.

REVISED SALARY DISCUSSION

This month I wanted to "officially" unveil a second option for us as we consider the pros and cons of switching to a year-to-year salary structure. Mark and Corey have spent considerable time devising a plan which would serve our purposes. Here's another. It is the "official" system of the WINTER BRASS league, and it has been in play for a couple years now. I am a strong believer in this model, as I think it adds a tremendous dose of realism to our league. In addition, I believe it would be relatively "pain free" to implement, as we will retain the same contract "language" we currently use. The only difference is that, going forward, contracts would no longer be paid with the clumsy lump sum system we have now.

I know there has been some concern over possibly taking our simple yet effective system and making it more complicated than its worth. I understand that mindset, but I think it is unfounded. This system is very easy to comprehend, and once everyone gets familiar with it, I believe you'll wonder why we weren't always doing things this way!

Here's how it works. We (I) would have to do a minor conversion of each of our rosters. What we do is

break out each team's roster into a "4-year plan". With this plan, you can see how your payroll shapes up from year to year. This will allow an owner to effectively budget his money both short term and long term. For instance, if I wish to sign Julio Lugo to a 3 year contract under our current system, I have to cough up 2 million to do it. Never mind that in real life, a team would only be responsible for one year's worth of that 2 million. Under this proposed model, this is exactly how it would work. My team would have to pay \$666,667 immediately, to cover the cost of this year's salary ($\$2,000,000 / 3 \text{ years} = \$666,667$). Then, the new roster sheet would detail that I was further "obligated" to pay Lugo \$666,667 in each of the next 2 seasons. The difference is, I would not have to pay the second and third year's salary until the year it came due.

That's the easy part. The tricky part is taking our current rosters, and plugging them into this new system. Pretty easy to do though. I have included a sample sheet which includes the rosters for Minnesota and Morris to assist in comprehending what we'd do. Each team would receive all the money back into their bank account for FUTURE years of contracts they had already "paid in full" under our current system.

For example, Minnesota paid Jason Giambi \$13.5 million this past off-season over two years. If we switched to the new system I am proposing, the Mudcats would receive back \$6.75 million for the second year of the contract that, under this new system, wont come due til 2002. As you can see, Minnesota will have to pay \$22,930,714 of that money he gets reimbursed when we convert to the new system, at the beginning of the 2002 season for players he'll have under contract (not to mention other players they would need to sign to fill out their roster). The same would occur for all of us for players we prepaid in full, but who have additional years remaining after the current one.

In future years, any player we sign will simply require the first year's payment. The KEY to this system is making sure our teams remain solvent. Since we would still only be getting \$35 million per season, each team would need to make sure they budgeted wisely so they could pay all their player's when the contracts are due to be paid each year. In Minnesota's case, their bank account would rise from its current level of \$1,995,042 to \$35,371,470, or a difference of \$33,416,428 (which represents the total amount of salary they paid for future years on all their current players).

Please note that players tabbed with a "pd" would not entitle their current team to reimbursement for any outstanding seasons. These players would be handled a bit differently. Essentially, they would play for free for any future seasons they are on a team's roster.

A system like this would likely require a couple minor "tweaks" to our current salary structure. Specifically, we would likely have to change the total costs of contracts which were 6 years or more. Currently, a 6 year deal costs 12 million bucks. Under our current system, that's a ton of cash to come up with all at once. Under this new system, a team would only have to pay 2 million of that per year, which is next to nothing when one considers we get \$35 million per season. In order to prevent teams from signing all their players to 7, 8, or 9 year contracts and making us A "keeper league", we would likely have to adjust the minimum cost of these larger year contracts upward a bit. (The Winter BRASS league increased the cost of the 6 year deal to 16 million, or 2.67 million per year).

Also, in an effort to ensure no team leveraged all their future money for a one year run, thus leaving their team in financial peril for future years, Lenny and I are discussing having a rule in place whereby each team MUST, at ALL times, have at LEAST \$10 million dollars more in their bank account (including the \$35 million they would receive after the current season) than they are committed to paying the following year. For example, if my team is obligated to pay \$35 million next year to players under contract, I must have at least \$10 million in my account now. This way, when I get my \$35 million after the current season, I still have 10 million extra to fill out my roster. This aspect of the proposal is a MUST in my view. It is just a matter of how much the limit must be. In truth, a team should have a much higher buffer than this. A team

which doesn't budget for future years is playing with fire under this system.

That's all I'll say about this for the moment. I know we are all studying for next week's draft. Still, take a close look at the roster sheet I attached to this e-mail and see how our current system changes under this new proposal. I think you'll find it a system that is innovative yet easy to understand. I welcome your comments on the matter.

MORRIS LIVES!!

The Morris Monarchs are back in our midst. Jack Howard has taken the helm of the Queens Kings, and relocated them to Morris, Illinois. We welcome Jack back, and hope for a much longer stay than the first time!! ;)

Upcoming League Deadlines:

FEBRUARY 8th: CONTRACT SIGNINGS FOR ALL DRAFTED PLAYERS ARE DUE!!

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW! HAVE A GREAT DRAFT!!!