



League News *December 2002*

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2002 Free Agency Co\$tly

With the new salary system finally making its free agency debut it was expected that the 2002 class was going to reap huge financial benefits. Oh boy did they! I'm starting to wonder if BRASSball's new salary system was hatched by Don Fehr and not us owners. Mags Ordonez, Bob Abreu, Tim Hudson, Kerry Wood, Eric Chavez and Andruw Jones will all be making over six million dollars per season for the foreseeable future. Also of note was the lack of news coming from the compensation eligible players. Last off-season 11 of 15 such players switched teams. This class though only saw two compensation eligible players put on new duds- Kerry Wood and Ken Griffey Jr. Junior also had the distinction of being the last player on a contract from the original draft who had not experienced Free Agency. Way back in February of 1995 Junior was the Number One pick in the inaugural draft (for trivia buffs, Frank Thomas went second and Bonds third). Here are a bunch of lists that breakdown what unfolded over the past few weeks.

Most Signings

Toledo	15
Racine	15
Stanley	14
Springfield	13
Brooklyn	12
Gem City	12

Least Signings

Box City	0
Bloomington	1
Moline	1
Charlevoix	1
Georgia	3

Largest percentage of Free Agency dollars spent

Cook County 72.0%

Brooklyn	61.8
North Georgia	57.0
Gem City	51.7
Minnesota	47.9

Least percentage of Free Agency dollars spent

Box City	0.0%
Bloomington	0.6
Charlevoix	1.2
Moline	1.9
Plaza	7.6

Six players whose agents are enjoying larger cuts than expected

Frank Castillo	Hessville	3yr 7.09M
Kevin Millar	Minnesota	3yr 9M
Mike Lieberthal	Plaza	4yr 8.2M
Herbert Perry	Racine	3yr 6.9M
Paul Byrd	N. Georgia	4yr 18.59M
Todd Walker	Gem City	5yr 14.1M

Six Players whose agents were told, "You're fired!"

Lee Stevens	Metropolis	1yr 450K
Jeff Nelson	Columbus	2yr 900K
Tom Gordon	Cook County	2yr 600K
Chris Carpenter	Hessville	2yr 772K
James Baldwin	Brooklyn	2yr 2M
Todd Ritchie	Glen Allen	3yr 2.5M

Six largest contracts inked (total dollars)

Tim Hudson	Georgia	\$45,000,000
Kerry Wood	Brooklyn	45,000,000
Eric Chavez	Metropolis	42,000,000
Andruw Jones	Georgia	32,440,000
Magglio Ordonez	Iowa	30,000,000
Bob Abreu	Fleetwood	30,000,000

Five players who are wondering why they even bothered filing

Mike Venafro	Glen Allen	\$200,000
Chris Brock	Columbus	200,000
Kelly Stinnett	Columbus	201,000
Bobby Estalella	Hessville	204,000
Wilton Guerrero	Brooklyn	205,000

Four teams that I think came out of Free Agency strengthened significantly

Springfield Isotopes. Jon's squad was already armed with some fine young pitching so he decided to go out and get some hitters. Oh boy did he! Not often you land the 3-4-5 heart of a batting order in free

agency. Jon reeled in Larry Walker, Jeff Bagwell and Luis Gonzalez. He also retained Corey Koskie to man the hot corner. Lastly, Jon was able to back up those young starters by picking up a trio of solid relievers: Howry, Embree and Shuey.

Stanley Sioux. When you already have Randy Johnson on your squad whom better to add then Curt Schilling? Well Paul did just that. Paul also landed the underrated Woody Williams and the effective glove of Mike Bordick. Paul's yearly search for a closer yielded Jose Mesa this time around. All this to mount yet another charge up Mount Ocala ☺

Iowa Rubes. Most importantly Tom was able to keep Magpipes in corn country. He secured the veteran bats of Ellis Burks, Tino Martinez, Robin Ventura and Craig Biggio. Plucking out young lefty Damaso Marte has to be icing on the cake! It appears that Rube faithful may finally realize their playoff dreams.

Cook County Maulers. Kevin started off his free agency by landing the huge lefty bat of Jason Giambi with a management friendly contract (6yr 28.5M). The signings of Mike Timlin, Mike Stanton, Eddie Guardado and Tom Gordon give Kev an instant bullpen to surround Mariano Rivera. Tim Wakefield should be another solid swingman for the Maulers, ala Terry Adams this past season.

Honorable mention: Box City, Plaza and Bloomington. Yep, these guys barely spent anything this offseason. In the case of Lenny- nothing actually. Maybe they are wisely awaiting a free agent class next year that makes this one look like chopped liver. A few names for your consideration: Vladimir Guerrero, Pedro Martinez, Derrek Lee, Cliff Floyd and three of the Great Shortstop Quartet- Miggy, Nomah and A-Rod. Oh my...

Interesting Poll Result

In a recent print edition of Baseball America they presented the results of a poll they conducted at the GM meetings back in November. They collected responses from 50 front office executives from various ML teams (including the majority of GM's themselves) on a multitude of questions. One question in particular, and its result, was quite interesting. Here it is:

“Did you grow up playing Strat-O-Matic or similar statistics-based game?”

YES 50%
NO 50%

WOW! I don't know about you but I was stunned by that percentage. I knew Billy Beane played Strat and I suspect some others did as well (J.P. Ricciardi, Theo Epstein), but I guess I assumed most of the front office positions were still filled by ex-ballplayers. Here is the response from Brad Kullman from the Reds:

“...Then I went to Strat-O-Matic and never went back. I loved the lefty-righty splits. You could see how much the sacrifice bunt and the hit-and-run really don't matter much.”

New Address Info

Fred has retired to the sunny climes of Florida and as such has a new e-mail address. It is: flambrec@tampabay.rr.com Please update your address books accordingly.

Trades

A huge amount of post free agency trade activity.

16. Fleetwood trades Steve Sparks and \$1,500,000 to Hessville for a bag of peanuts.
17. Charlevoix trades Lance Berkman to Metropolis for Carlos Pena, Juan Rivera, Brad Lidge, Peter Bergeron, Chin-Feng Chen, Russell Branyan, Julio Zuleta and Metropolis' 2003 7th round draft choice.
18. Cook County trades Rick Aurilia to Santa Barbara for Milton Bradley, Carl Everett and \$1,850,000.
19. Minnesota trades Gary Bennett to Racine for Racine's 2003 4th round draft choice.
20. Santa Barbara trades Wilson Alvarez and \$2,657,666 to Metropolis for a bag of popcorn.
21. Metropolis trades Chuck Finley to Fleetwood for Fleetwood's 2003 4th round draft choice.
22. Minnesota trades Juan Acevedo to Iowa for Eric Young.
23. Minnesota trades Sean Casey and Mike Koplove to Toledo for Ramon Hernandez.
24. Fleetwood trades Shannon Stewart, Fleetwood's 2003 2nd round draft choice and Fleetwood's 2004 4th round draft choice to Toledo for Shane Halter and Toledo's 2003 1st round draft choice
25. Glen Allen trades Gary Glover, Armando Rios and Glen Allen's 2004 5th round draft choice to Toledo for Orlando Hernandez and Ricky Ledee.
26. Santa Barbara trades Eli Marrero to Toledo for Ryan Franklin and Wiki Gonzalez.
27. Minnesota trades Shawon Dunston, Greg Zaun and \$400,000 to Metropolis for a box of cracker jacks.
28. Plaza trades Tony Womack to Stanley for Neifi Perez.
29. Cook County trades Jeff Fassero and \$450,000 to Plaza for a bag of popcorn.
30. Cook County trades Jason Grimsley to Glen Allen for \$150,000.
31. Fleetwood trades Damian Easley to Fleetwood for \$125,000.
32. Toledo trades Kelly Wunsch, Roberto Hernandez and Jim Mecir to Columbus for Columbus' 2003 6th round draft choice and Columbus' 2004 4th round draft choice.
33. Toledo trades Deivi Cruz to La Crosse for La Crosse's 2004 5th round draft choice and \$100,000.
34. Toledo trades Jeromy Burnitz to Georgia for \$100,000.
35. Toledo trades Tim Drew and Nelson Cruz to Charlevoix for Julio Zuleta, Kory DeHaan and \$200,000.
36. Hessville trades Tom Glavine to Cook County for Jack Wilson, Milton Bradley, Clint Nageotte, Abraham Nunez-pit and Robert Person.
37. Glen Allen trades Steve Trachsel to Cook County for Roger Clemens, David Justice, Todd Jones, JR House and Cook County's 2004 4th round draft choice.
38. Toledo trades Matt Lawton, Julio Zuleta, Tom Lampkin and Columbus' 2004 4th round draft choice to Columbus for Columbus' 2004 3rd round draft choice and Columbus' 2004 5th round draft choice.

Upcoming League Deadlines

January 15th Deadline to release or re-sign amateurs. Any amateur who is resigned can not be cut until after the draft. [Please note that this deadline moves up to October in 2003.]

Next Issue of League News

The schedule comes out. All Star game host is announced.

Articles

Jim Clark has an article for us. Enjoy.

Interview between Glen Allen Mets General Manager Jim Clark and Associated Press National Correspondent Bugs Bunny.



BB: OK, the Mets won the National League East and lost to the Ocelots again this year in the playoffs, so what's next for the team?

JC: Of course the off season for the players is a busy time for the GM with trades and free agency then the rookie draft before next season starts.

BB: So, what's up Doc?

JC: First we signed a couple of our young prospects, Luis Vizciano and Ramon Vazquez to three-year contracts. Second we purchased the right of Chris Gomez from Box City and signed him. We are constantly scouting the trade wire for ways to improve the team and then offered contracts to over a hundred free agents.

BB: What were you looking for?

JC: A starting pitcher, couple hitters, bullpen help, an outfielder, catcher...

BB: Excuse me, but didn't free agency end December 15?

JC: Yeah, Bugs it did.

BB: Well who did you get?

JC: We were able to resign our free agents, Eric Milton, Todd Ritchie and Mike Venafrro and signed back up catcher Chad Kreuter.

BB: Who else did you get?

JC: That's all I was able to do.

BB: What happened to all those hundreds of names on the list and you only got one? What happened Doc?

JC: There was a restructuring of the funds in the accounts causing redistribution that cause me to underestimate the value inherent in the players available on the free agent market.

BB: Come on Doc; explain what you just said so my readers could understand.

JC: I did not put in high enough bids to get the guys that I wanted.

BB: So now what are you going to do?

JC: Make some trades. First I sent Gary Glover and Armando Rios to Toledo for Orlando

Hernandez and Ricky Ledee. Then I sent Steve Trachsel to Cook County for Roger Clemens, David Justice, Todd Jones and JR House.

BB: So how does the team look now?

JC: The starting pitching looks good with Zito, Clemens, Milton and Hernandez.

BB: And?

JC: The bullpen as improved with the purchase of Jason Grimsley and addition of Todd Jones.

BB: And?

JC: Ledee and Justice help in the outfield or DH.

BB: And?

JC: I want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

BB: Doc, I still see some holes in your lineup.

JC: Maybe Santa will bring ...

