



League News December 2003

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Free Agency Recap

Below is a review of free agency. Each team's efforts were reviewed and ranked. These rankings are one man's opinion. (A different man for each league.) Don't read too much into them.

National League

(NL Reporter – Ray Martin)

1. Charlevoix- Outstanding free agency signings, spent heavy but locked up two-thirds of their OF for years to come with the signings of Vlad and Shawn Green. This alone would have made for an exemplary free agency but the pocket book stayed open with the signings of Al Leiter and Derek Lowe, this buttressed a deficient area where Suppan and Rich Harden were in line to be at the top of the staff. Any starting pitching at all makes this team a contender as the bullpen is filled with nasty arms with Farnsworth and Lidge on board. A surprisingly versatile and useful card was retained with Guillen.

A. Leiter	2	\$6,200,000	\$3,100,000
K. Farnsworth	3	\$6,510,000	\$2,170,000
R. Branyan	3	\$2,400,000	\$800,000
V. Guerrero	7	\$49,390,000	\$7,055,714
D. Lowe	4	\$12,000,000	\$3,000,000
M. Matheny	2	\$3,200,000	\$1,600,000
C. Guillen	2	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000
S. Green	5	\$17,200,000	\$3,440,000
S. Sparks	2	\$1,500,000	\$750,000
M. Tucker	2	\$3,400,000	\$1,700,000

2. Metropolis-Andy "The New Boss" Wiesner has been awaiting this season to make his move and it was clear in the acquisitions. Pedro Martinez is the key as he has the #1 rotation guy to pitch in games 1, 4, and 7 in each playoff series. The acquisition of Randy Johnson is risky, but when you have Steinbrenner pockets, this amounted to tip money at the local booty bar. Gaining Nen reinforces this and also suggests that Andy is gunning more for 2005 than 2004, but the playoffs are clearly likelihood and anything can happen, unless of course Toledo is getting swept by Cook County.

P. Martinez	5	\$35,250,000	\$7,050,000
R. Johnson	3	\$6,456,000	\$2,152,000
R. Nen	4	\$4,679,000	\$1,169,750
C. Baerga	1	\$678,000	\$678,000

3. Ocala-Clearly the most bang for the buck and strategic planning for this perennial juggernaut. Look at the arms alone with Mota, Cormier, Quantrill and Alvarez. Anybody think Corey is Dodger fan? I doubt it, but he sure did manage to acquire everything that they did right last year, save Gagne. But even without Gagne these arms added to Hawkins, Rhodes and Reed is just plain criminal. If you do not beat him down by the fifth, you better hang-up the gone fishing sign. Whatever you do, don't hit it to Center as old man Finley will continue to roam effortlessly and supply some surprising veteran pop. Michaels as a pinch hitter should be highly devastating to some closers around the league as well. Dollar for dollar, this was calculated brilliance.

R. Cormier	2	\$4,500,000	\$2,250,000
G. Mota	4	\$9,200,000	\$2,300,000
S. Finley	3	\$13,320,000	\$4,440,000
P. Quantrill	3	\$5,082,000	\$1,694,000
W. Alvarez	2	\$2,900,000	\$1,450,000
J. Michaels	2	\$1,800,000	\$900,000

4. Gem City with limited funding also distinguished themselves with some astute signings. Ponson and Radke were relative bargains and bring solid cards to Gem City. Stephenson quietly is also likely to win 10 games and swing guys like Brower and White should help in getting games late to the hands of Benitez. These bullpen additions add to an already formidable group, but the future of this team will be at the hands of their starting pitching, there will clearly be softball games played without another premium arm. Not to be overlooked Kenny Lofton will have a superior card and Osik in platoon is devastating versus lefties with a .378 batting average and an OB% of well into hall of fame levels.

V. Castilla	2	\$3,750,000	\$1,875,000
B. Radke	4	\$12,750,000	\$3,187,500
C. Moeller	3	\$2,750,000	\$916,667
K. Osik	1	\$750,000	\$750,000
A. Benitez	3	\$2,500,000	\$833,333
J. Brower	3	\$2,000,000	\$666,667
S. Ponson	6	\$19,800,000	\$3,300,000
G. White	2	\$925,000	\$462,500
G. Stephenson	2	\$3,200,000	\$1,600,000
K. Lofton	2	\$4,400,000	\$2,200,000
D. Bautista	2	\$2,400,000	\$1,200,000

5. Stanley signed an entire Of with three acquisitions, all of which will someday get votes for the Hall of Fame. Gonzalez, Edmonds and Alou will augment this team chances and fortify the middle of the batting order. Jermaine Dye is a risk, but the price is right. King is a useful lefty set-up. Overall, many risks here with the MASH team, as only the DL in the past will keep these players out of the Hall and only the DL in the future will limit Stanley from greater strides in upcoming campaigns.

J. Gonzalez	4	\$13,000,000	\$3,250,000
J. Edmonds	5	\$30,000,000	\$6,000,000

M. Alou	3	\$4,800,000	\$1,600,000
R. King	2	\$2,400,000	\$1,200,000
J. Flaherty	1	\$300,000	\$300,000
J. Dye	3	\$2,200,000	\$733,333
T. Goodwin	1	\$500,000	\$500,000

6. Bloomington should see some benefits from these acquisitions, but many of these players could get turned around for future parts depending on the GM's intentions. Either way Rodriguez, despite his injury history, is a relative bargain at this price. Durham is useful and Piazza is another good risk. Vaughn, always a professional and gentleman, has surrounded himself with class acts and good character with the signings of Rivera, Williams and Conine. Too early to tell if these players are all staying for the season, but tremendous trade fodder and late season trade material by any accounting.

R. Durham	3	\$6,125,000	\$2,041,667
P. Rodriguez	4	\$17,675,000	\$4,418,750
M. Rivera	3	\$11,745,000	\$3,915,000
J. Conine	2	\$3,254,000	\$1,627,000
B. Williams	3	\$14,875,000	\$4,958,333
D. Cruz	2	2894000	\$1,447,000
M. Piazza	3	8500000	\$2,833,333

7. Springfield certainly made good use of their money and acquired some solid cards for the upcoming season. More so than any other team they were able to get the best cards with the least names attached. Galarraga, Remlinger and Cordero are each very useful when played properly. Myers is simply an outstanding card, that is only limited by the diminished usage. Money well spent here and a nice augment to quickly blossoming franchise.

T. Graffanino	2	\$1,500,000	\$750,000
G. Myers	2	\$3,500,000	\$1,750,000
A. Galarraga	1	\$750,000	\$750,000
A. Levine	2	\$1,600,000	\$800,000
M. Remlinger	2	\$1,800,000	\$900,000
T. Geene	1	\$300,000	\$300,000
W. Cordero	2	\$3,100,000	\$1,550,000

8. Glen Allen secured the services of Dmitri Young clearly a solid card for the upcoming season and given his history of riding a bicycle to the ballpark through the proverbial hoods of Cincinnati and Detroit, a pretty down to earth gentleman as well. Mike Hampton rebounded sharply under the tutelage of Mazzone and should help Glen Allen over the next three seasons. Cora and McClemore are versatile and help to round out a 25 man roster quite nicely.

M. McClemore	2	\$1,350,000	\$675,000
M. Hampton	3	\$10,000,000	\$3,333,333
D. Young	3	\$11,000,000	\$3,666,667
A. Cora	1	\$700,000	\$700,000

9. North Georgia continues rebuilding process and manages to get some useful parts for the next two seasons. Schoenweiss and Mercker should add some serviceable depth to the pen, while

Robinson, Dellucci and Merloni are serviceable and versatile bench players that allow seasons to get completed. For 2 million some able assistance was clearly garnished.

S.			
Schoeneweiss	3	\$2,900,000	\$966,667
K. Mercker	2	\$1,100,000	\$550,000
K. Robinson	2	\$600,000	\$300,000
D. Dellucci	2	\$600,000	\$300,000
L. Merloni	2	\$1,000,000	\$500,000

10. Fleetwood certainly filled some holes with some minimum dollars. 12 players were acquired and each should be serviceable parts, truly many of them were a bargain. If Lieber rebounds then his signing will be a coup at 2 million for the three years. Same goes for Wickman. Fultz, Rusch, and Grimsley are all serviceable and eliminate digging in the draft. Oliver and Ashby both aid in eating some innings. Due to injuries and untimely retirements the pitching staff is ailing, but the offense already in place will make for some entertaining ball games and quite possibly keep them in the hunt.

T. Sturtze	2	\$715,000	\$357,500
J. Lieber	3	\$2,273,000	\$757,667
B. Wickman	2	\$515,000	\$257,500
B. Boehringher	2	\$615,000	\$307,500
J. Grimsley	2	\$715,000	\$357,500
G. Zaun	2	\$515,000	\$257,500
A. Fultz	2	\$615,000	\$307,500
G. Rusch	2	\$1,015,000	\$507,500
D. Oliver	2	\$1,365,000	\$682,500
A. Ashby	1	\$408,000	\$408,000
K. Stinnett	2	\$515,000	\$257,500
D. Glanville	1	\$383,000	\$383,000

11. Columbus retained a key part in Hidalgo and the rebuilding will be much easier with a solid asset in place.

R. Hidalgo	6	\$20,500,000	\$3,416,667
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12. Port Richey also retained a key part with the acquisition of Encarnacion. The future of Port Richey is much brighter with the cannon fortifying RF for the foreseeable future.

J. Encarnacion	3	\$4,800,000	\$1,600,000
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American League

(AL Interim Reporter – LD)

1. Talk about adding talent to your ballclub. With big money pockets, Santa Barbara splurged adding some bona fide stars to turn their squad into a playoff contender. Adding Nomar, Carlos Lee and Lowell to Garrett Anderson gives this club a mighty fine middle of the lineup. Throw in the addition of Aaron Boone to go with mainstays Jacque Jones and Erubiel Durazo and this team certainly has the offense to take them to the playoffs.

N. Garciaparra	7	\$40,250,000	\$5,750,000
A. Boone	4	\$15,000,000	\$3,750,000
C. Lee	5	\$25,000,000	\$5,000,000
E. Perez	2	\$1,200,000	600000
M. Lowell	4	\$16,000,000	\$4,000,000

2. Bakersfield didn't add any new players to its ballclub, but they did retain their critical free agents. Keeping Garcia and Ortiz gives any club two top-shelf starters. However, keeping these two in Bakersfield, gives the Rattlers an awesome four-man crew, with Hudson and Wade Miller already under contract. Derrek Lee will put up solid batting numbers, steal some bases and play awesome defense. The pitching staff will appreciate having Lee back for the next four seasons.

F. Garcia	6	\$29,033,000	\$4,838,833
R. Ortiz	4	\$15,070,000	\$3,767,500
D. Lee	4	\$12,200,000	\$3,050,000

3. The re-signing of Alex Rodriguez alone made the Mudcats free agency look good. Even though Minnesota is in rebuilding mode, who better to build your team around. This guy makes the other players around him better. As long as the money doesn't go to his head, this should reap benefits for Minnesota for the next seven years. In addition to A-Rod, the Mudcats filled other holes, adding three lefties to the pen to add balance along with filling holes in the rotation and at first base.

JT Snow	2	\$1,400,000	\$700,000
I. Valdes	2	\$1,400,000	\$700,000
S. Sauerbeck	2	\$1,000,000	\$500,000
W. Roberts	1	\$225,000	\$225,000
A. Rodriguez	7	\$58,732,000	\$8,390,286
S. Kline	3	\$2,000,000	\$666,667
F. Menechino	1	\$202,000	\$202,000
E. Yan	1	\$210,000	\$210,000
B. Groom	1	\$300,000	\$300,000
R. Reed	1	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000
D. Hocking	2	\$600,000	\$300,000

4. Like Minnesota, Box City kept its star player, Miguel Tejada. Box City locked up Miggy for 5 years at a very reasonable \$5.6 Mill per. This isn't bad considering Tejada can smack the ball as good as any non-Mudcat shortstop and is one of the league's slickest fielders. The duo of Michael Young and Tejada will frustrate many groundball hitters. This will have a positive impact on the young staff. The Parcelmen also retained their slugging LF in Raul Ibanez. Ibanez won't put up spectacular numbers, but he isn't a slouch either. LaRue was retained to hinder the opponent's running game and connect for a few ding-dings. The Parcelmen also signed some veteran arms to help the younger pitchers develop.

M. Williams	2	\$801,000	\$400,500
J. LaRue	4	\$10,500,000	\$2,625,000
M. Tejada	5	\$28,001,000	\$5,600,200
R. Ibanez	4	\$8,000,000	\$2,000,000
M. DeJean	1	\$801,000	\$801,000
K. Rueter	3	\$2,751,000	\$917,000
R. White	1	\$301,000	\$301,000

5. Plaza didn't spend fanatically like the other tycoons in the league, but they did sign two very nice sluggers in Preston Wilson and Geoff Jenkins. These two will fill the holes in the middle of the lineup in this up-and-coming team. The Lions will surprise many teams with its solid core of young players. Plaza will not be a doormat like recent years. The remaining additions were acquired to fill holes. Once again, Jeff Reboulet managed to find a home for the season. Miracles never cease to happen.

P. Wilson	6	\$31,800,000	\$5,300,000
G. Jenkins	5	\$19,000,000	\$3,800,000
B. Mayne	2	\$1,100,000	\$550,000
J. McEwing	2	\$625,000	\$312,500
J. Vander Wal	2	\$1,200,000	\$600,000
J. Reboulet	2	\$600,000	\$300,000
T. O'Leary	1	\$230,000	\$230,000
M. Walbeck	1	\$202,000	\$202,000

6. The Derry Heifers did their best to retain their core of free agents. All key free agents were retained with the exception of Carlos Lee. The squad did receive a Compensation Pick (B) for the loss of Lee. With the resigning of Guzman, who will play shortstop. Izturis looked like a sure thing, but now the trade market may drive the starter. Varitek was a very nice re-sign. There aren't many catchers in the league better than him. The jury is still out on Benson. This may turn out to be a steal or bust. Only time will tell.

K. Benson	3	\$3,500,000	\$1,166,667
P. Reese	2	\$600,000	\$300,000
C. Guzman	5	\$11,000,000	\$2,200,000
J. Varitek	4	\$14,000,000	\$3,500,000
C. Floyd	3	\$7,000,000	\$2,333,333

7. Brooklyn took what it had left in funds to sign to two more quality arms. Javier Vazquez left the perennial contender in Ocala for greener (\$\$\$) grass. Time will tell if this has an impact on his career win totals. Trachsel also was lured to the Brooklyn for a nice chunk of change. With Kerry Wood already under contract, this will give the Bulldogs a solid 1-2-3 combination. Will the offense score enough runs is the real question. Adding Alomar would seem like a nice solution, but not any more. Alomar defense is also in question as the shoe-in 1 was only given a 3 this year. Blanco should eliminate opponent running games for a very reasonable price.

J. Vazquez	6	\$45,000,000	\$7,500,000
R. Alomar	2	\$2,000,000	\$1,000,000
S. Trachsel	3	\$9,000,000	\$3,000,000
H. Blanco	1	\$250,000	\$250,000

8. Toledo signed some players that fit some into some very nice platoon roles. It appears that the Mudhens are not ready to just give the division crown away. The squad added some pop in Palmeiro, some speed in Eric Young and very nice right-handed reliever in Felix Rodriguez.

Mike Bordick and Miguel Cairo will need to play important roles in the upcoming season for the Mudhens to retain their division crown. Gary Bennett and Brook Fordyce will compete for Toby Hall caddy job.

M. Bordick	1	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
R. Palmeiro	1	\$4,001,000	\$4,001,000
M. Cairo	2	\$750,000	\$375,000
F. Rodriguez	2	\$2,600,000	\$1,300,000
E. Young	1	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000
G. Bennett	2	\$900,000	\$450,000
B. Fordyce	1	\$600,000	\$600,000

9. Talk about getting bang for your buck. Hessville signed more players than any other team in Brassball. If they could have signed 7 more players, they could have filled out their full 25-man opening day squad. The team focused on infielders and pitching in the signing spree landing 7 and 9 respectively. The re-signing of Alex Gonzalez was one the clubs primary targets. They were able to retain him for a modest \$2.8 Mill per season. Not bad for a slick fielding shortstop with some pop.

BJ Surhoff	1	\$522,000	\$522,000
T. Womack	2	\$1,022,000	\$511,000
F. McGriff	2	\$822,000	\$411,000
D. Burba	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
T. Van Poppel	1	\$222,000	\$222,000
A. Sele	3	\$2,900,000	\$966,667
J. Tam	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
T. Driskill	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
J. Fassero	1	\$422,000	\$422,000
A. Gonzalez	3	\$8,500,000	\$2,833,333
R. Mendoza	3	\$2,022,000	\$674,000
E. Karros	1	\$922,000	\$922,000
A. Fox	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
B. Gil	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
J. Mabry	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
S. Parris	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
D. Jackson	1	\$322,000	\$322,000
J. Sosa	2	\$822,000	\$411,000

10. Moline had some holes to fill around its superstar, Barry Bonds. At press time, rumor had Bonds leaving in trade for some young talent. The Cutters added some middle-infield help in Jose Vizcaino, Ramon Martinez and Rey Sanchez. In addition, the squad added Greg Norton, Edgardo Alfonzo and Todd Zeile to fight it out for the third-base starter spot in spring training. Also, Moline signed three catchers. In all, the Cutters were able to sign 12 players to help fill out its roster.

R. Martinez	1	\$688,000	\$688,000
T. Pratt	2	\$1,008,000	\$504,000
R. Sanchez	2	\$1,008,000	\$504,000
D. Veres	2	\$1,138,000	\$569,000
J. Vizcaino	1	\$325,000	\$325,000

T. Zeile	1	\$768,000	\$768,000
G. Norton	2	\$758,000	\$379,000
J. Franco	2	\$1,000,000	\$500,000
E. Alfonzo	3	8238000	\$2,746,000
S. Hitchcock	3	2008000	\$669,333
D. Miller	3	2008000	\$669,333
M. DiFelice	2	508000	\$254,000

11. Unlike previous years, Cook County did not fill in the final pieces of its playoff juggernaut. The financial commitments of being a perennial playoff team finally caught up with the Maulers. As a result, it looks like this will be the first time in many years that the Maulers are not one of the dominating teams (or even a playoff contender) in Brassball. Like Bloomington before them, all dynasties must come to an end. The ownership of this team is aggressive so don't expect the GM to sit on his hands. It shouldn't be long before they are pushing towards another playoff run once their farm system and bank accounts are replenished.

D. Relaford	3	\$3,250,000	\$1,083,333
D. Wilson	3	\$2,002,000	\$667,333
S. Alomar	2	\$600,000	\$300,000

12. Boston did not sign any players in free agency. It was not due to not trying. The Rust pushed A-Rod to make a determination. Rebuild with the team that he had called home for more than 7 years or move to the bright lights of Boston. Manny Ramirez and A-Rod would have made a lethal pair for the Rust, but it was not to be. In the end, Minnesota shelled out the cash to match Boston's offer and keep A-Rod in the land of 10,000 lakes.

Compensation Picks Awarded

Six clubs received compensation picks for the loss of restricted free agents

Compensation A

Ocala (Javier Vazquez)
Cook County (Nomar Garciaparra)
Bloomington (Preston Wilson)
Minnesota (Mike Lowell)
Toledo (Geoff Jenkins)

Compensation B

New Hampshire (Carlos Lee)

American League Reporter Needed

As you may have noticed, Ray Martin authored the Free Agency Recap for the NL. As the NL Reporter this is one of his responsibilities. In addition to this article, he also will write a post-draft article that will summarize each of the NL teams drafts and the team's outlook for the upcoming season. During the season, he will author the monthly summaries. Lastly, he will write the NL playoff summaries based on the information provided by the playoff teams. For his efforts, Ray will be paid a salary of \$3,750,000.

This position in the AL is still vacant. If you have interest in this position, please let me know ASAP.

Trades

24. Minnesota trades Kevin Millar and Terry Adams to Toledo for Eric Young, Todd Ritchie, Mike Lamb, Miguel Cairo, and Toledo's 2005 2nd and 4th round draft choices.
25. Cook County trades Troy Glaus and Mike Timlin to New Hampshire for Christian Guzman, Joe Borchard, Scott Hairston and New Hampshire's 2004 1st round draft choice.
26. Boston trades Octavio Dotel to Metropolis for Aramis Ramirez and Ben Howard.
27. Moline trades Barry Bonds and Mark Grace to Metropolis for Carlos Zambrano, Juan Cruz, Brad Wilkerson, Wilson Betemit and \$2,000,000.
28. Stanley trades Ryan Vogelsong, Gavin Floyd and Stanley's 2005 1st round draft choice to Fleetwood for Chipper Jones and Fleetwood's 2005 4th round draft choice.
29. Gem City trades Matt Williams and \$585,000 to Metropolis for an autographed 8x10 picture of the Apache Chief.
30. Toledo trades Gary Bennett to Boston for Boston's 2004 4th round draft choice.
31. Toledo trades Casey Blake, Randall Simon and Toledo's 2004 5th round draft choice to Box City for Bill Mueller.
32. Charlevoix trades Carlos Guillen and Ty Howington to Boston for Ben Howard and Boston's 2004 3rd round draft choice.
33. Brooklyn trades Josh Fogg to Charlevoix for \$300,000.
34. Toledo trades Travis Lee, Mike Maroth, Orlando Hudson and Toledo's 2004 Bonus round draft choice to Cook County for Jason Giambi, Tom Gordon and Brian Bullington.
35. Moline trades Greg Maddux to Santa Barbara for Chris George, Rich Aurilia, Salomon Torres, Khalil Greene and \$1,000,000.
36. Brooklyn trades Kerry Ligtenberg and \$667,000 to Santa Barbara for Rob Mackowiak and Todd Hollandsworth.
37. Cook County trades Christian Guzman, Reggie Taylor and Andres Torres to Boston for Carl Crawford and Mike Restovich.
38. Toledo trades John Riedling, Bryan Bullington, Terry Adams and Gary Glover to Charlevoix for Kyle Farnsworth and \$950,000.

Upcoming League Deadlines

January 15 th	Deadline for releasing amateurs prior to the draft. Amateurs not released prior to this date remain on the roster until the completion of the draft.
February 25 th	30-man protected list due to Draft Conductor.
March 1 st	30-man protected lists (of all 24 teams) sent out by Draft Conductor
March 6 th	Brassball Draft (begins at 11 am EST/10 am CST)

Articles

Jim Clark has the only article this month.

Mets Watch December 2003

Good bye old friends

With the closing of another season, the roster will change as players move on to other teams or careers.

- David Justice has retired as a player to become an announcer for ESPN, so we will see you around next season.
- Eric Karros, Danny Bautista, Jason Grimsley were offered contracts by the Mets but decided to play for other teams next year.
- Chad Kreuter, Greg Colbrunn, Jose Vizciano, Damian Jackson, Bob Wickman, Esteban Yan, Andy Ashby, Scott Mullen and Mike Venafro were not tendered contracts by the Mets making them free agents.
- Thanks for your help guys!

to go through the free agent process because we looked short of starters with the injuries to Milton and Hernandez. Yes, we paid more, but it was worth the risk for a #2 behind Zito! Now with the signing of Hampton for #3, we can use the 'kids' to fill out

The New Kids

The general manager briefly mentioned this group of young pitchers for the Mets that will see a lot of action next season.

They include: Runelvys Hernandez

Jeriome Robertson

Claudio Vargas

Colby Lewis

Oscar Villarreal

Juan Rincon

Mike MacDougal

Wes Obermueller

Hello new friends!

At the end of last season, the Mets made a trade that may have gone unnoticed by the fans that were busy watching the playoffs.

- ✓ Glen Allen acquired Sean Casey, who went to school at the University of Richmond, commented "It will be a homecoming of sorts, since I already lived there for four years. I still have some friends in the area."
- ✓ Veteran Left-handed starter Mike Hampton to join the rotation.
- ✓ Switch Hitter Dimitri Young to provide protection for Albert Pujols and Trot Nixon in the lineup.
- ✓ Mark McLemore another Switch hitter who can play the infield or outfield.
- ✓ Alex Cora infielder will help stabilize the youngsters with the departure of veteran Jose Vizciano.

The Rocket Returns



The Mets resigned Roger Clemens for next season. G.M. Clark briefly commented, "I could not allow Roger to go through the free agent process because we looked short of starters with the injuries to Milton and Hernandez. Yes, we paid more, but it was worth the risk for a #2 behind Zito! Now with the signing of Hampton for #3 we can use the 'kids' to fill out the rotation