

The Pressbox

By Lenny Luchtefeld
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Bank Accounts Proposal

Kevin and I want to thank all of you for your input on the proposal about each team's bank accounts and overall lack of funds in them during free agency. It was very clear that something needed to be done but what was the best solution was the real question. Your feedback caused us to take a second look at the initial proposal on the table. After much debate, our decision was to reduce the cash "supplement" from the originally proposed 7.5 million down to 3 million dollars (or 6 million after we double our money system).

We believe this a fair option based on all the feedback we had been given. One of the main reasons this proposal was even put forth was to ensure that teams who were, for whatever reason, desperately short of cash would be able to field a team without "selling" off their team's assets to do so. We believe that 6 million dollars will still prove valuable to those teams short of funds, while not providing the "unjust enrichment" that many of you expressed fear over.

The price of a 1-year contract will stay the same (\$200,000). Even without the cash supplement, simply doubling every team's bank account at the close of free agency will help a team whose main problem is filling IP or PA holes. If a team had 2 million after free agency, they would now have 4 million once we

doubled the money system. With 1-year contracts staying the same price, a team will now have twice the buying power!

When you then factor in an additional 6 million per team, as we implemented, it is clear that even a team in financial jeopardy should still be able to fill out their roster. In addition, the recently implemented MO-1,2,3 and MTM features should also provide for cost-effective ways of ensuring the requisite number of IP/PA's for the coming year. Another thing to take into consideration is the secondary free-agent process available after the rookie draft.

We should all consider this a wake-up call. The money we have in our bank accounts is our franchise's lifeline. Without this resource your team is in grave peril. This should be a reminder to all just how important money is to your franchise. When free agency rolls around next year, put much thought in before you commit millions and millions to one player. Sometimes, we simply need to say "no".

Just to be clear, this 6 million dollar bonus (after doubling) we each received should be considered a one-time thing. It is the first time in five years we have done it, and we believe it will be the final time. Also, it will not single-handedly turn any of our franchises

around. What it will do is provide a little cushion. It will enable teams to draft and sign players to fill out their roster for the coming season.

All contract values (except minor league, amateur, MTM, and 1-year deals) have been doubled. Here is just a reminder of the new contract amounts for the upcoming year:

- Σ 1-year deal: still \$200,000
- Σ 2-year deal: now \$1,000,000
- Σ 3-year deal: now \$2,000,000
- Σ 4-year deal: now \$4,000,000
- Σ 5-year deal: now \$8,000,000
- Σ Each additional year costs you 4 million dollars.
- Σ The cost of contract extensions is now 5 million per year, as opposed to 2.5 million.

Free Agency

Thanks go out again to Mark Lentz on yet another fantastic job on free agency again this year. He kept the ball rolling and free agency was completed in just 2 weeks. If you get a chance, please take the time to thank Mark for the job he does for the league. He devotes this entire 2 weeks to free agency. He wakes up and goes to bed thinking of nothing else but free agency during this period. It really does take a lot a dedication to take on this process and he does such a great job with it.

Christmas came a little early for all of us Brassballer's this year in the form of free agency. Man, we sure rang up a lot on our charge cards. And think about the interest we will have to pay when the bill comes due.

It was another banner year for money spent. The league spent a whopping \$342,885,000.00 on free agents. I don't even know how much that is, but it sure sounds like a lot when you say it. The team that held the line and spent the least was Columbus. The Buckeyes only spent \$2,376,000.00. The team on the other end of the spectrum was Stanley who shelled out \$23,406,000.00.

If my figures are correct, minus the 4 teams who showed some fiscal restraint, the rest of the league paid out an average of 91% of all their money in their bank accounts. Most teams spent in the neighborhood of 14-16 million this year to either keep or add new free agents.

Long Island signed the most players with 14 and Box City came in second with 12. Wauwatosa signed the least number of players, only inking 4 players to deals. The Long Island signing of 14 players cost \$18,415,000.00 or just over \$1,315,357 per player over the life of their contract. Box City spent \$16,527,000.00 on 12 players or \$1,377,250 per player.

The highest priced player signed was Ivan Rodriguez, taking 4-year deal worth \$12,001,000.00 with Gem City. Potential bargain signings or comeback players include: Alou 4 years at \$2,100,000.00 by Stanley, Pettitte 3 years at \$1,800,000.00 by Santa Barbara, O'Neill 2 years at \$1,501,000.00 and Shaw 3 years at \$1,501,000.00 both by Box City and Disarcina 2 years at \$525,000.00 with Metropolis. Potentially overpriced players include: Bush 4 years at \$4,000,000.00, D. Hamilton 3 years at \$6,000,000.00 and J. Hammonds 3 years at \$3,000,000.00. These last few guys must have had great agents.

All in all, I believe it was a very good year for free agency. Many players changed teams and that should spark some new competition from teams that haven't had a chance to participate in the post season. We strive for parity in the league. In the first 5 years of Brassball, we have had 4 different champions. With key free agent players changing addresses, we hope that this latest wave of signings will give us another new Brassball champion next year.

Trades

- 1) **Minnesota** send Jose Silva and Aaron Myette to **Columbus** for Paul Shuey.
- 2) **Fleetwood** trades its 2001 4th Round pick to **Metropolis** for Wally Joyner and Metropolis 2001 5th Round pick. (Fleetwood assumes all of Joyner's \$525,000 contract).
- 3) **Santa Barbara** trades Brian McRae and \$150,000 to **Metropolis** for Todd Hollandsworth. (All contracts are paid by original team).
- 4) **Plaza** trades Bobby Hughes (contract paid by Plaza) to **Metropolis** for \$90,000.00.

Bits and Pieces

Robert Smith, who took over the Abilene franchise after free agency, has picked a new name for his team. Robert has chosen the Brooklyn Bulldogs as his new team name. Good luck to Robert in the upcoming year. We hope his stay with us is a lengthy one.

CD-ROM VERSION 5.0 - INTERNET PLAY IS ON THE WAY!

I'm sure most of you have seen this by now but I thought I would post this again just in case you haven't gotten it. I'm not sure how much the Internet charge will be but it could be a very exciting way for us Brassballer's to play a series or the playoffs. Heck, if it works out like they say, the whole league could log on and watch the entire playoffs online as they are played.

Version 5.0 of the CD-ROM Baseball Game will be the first to support Internet Play. Strat-O-Matic has partnered with another company in order to make our game available via the Internet. We will be making another announcement regarding this exciting option shortly, so please stay tuned. The exact launch date of the Internet service has yet to be determined, however you can be assured that the Version 5 you purchase will be fully compatible and capable of Internet play when it debuts. (Note: Internet play will require an additional fee).

In addition to that exciting news Strat-O-Matic CD-ROM Baseball Version 5.0 will have a multitude of great new features! As always we have attempted to add the most commonly requested features along with new innovations we develop ourselves. Please

note that the Version 5.0 game is scheduled to be shipped in early March. We believe that you will be extremely pleased with this list:

- Σ **"Super Hal" Lineup Depth chart** - You can now define a depth chart to be used by Super Hal when it wants to rest players from your preset lineup. You define the "pecking order" of potential subs for each position. You can define up to five depth charts, one for each preset lineup.
- Σ **"Super Hal" Platoons** - You can also define platoons by telling Super Hal that you never want to rest a particular player in a particular preset lineup. By doing this for one player in the "vs. lefties lineup" and for another player in the "vs. righties" lineup you define platoons. This feature can also be used to insure that Hal does not rest certain players in a key series. For instance you might tell Super Hal it's okay to rest your slugger when you send your computer manager to the last place team in your league, but when you're sending a computer manager to your arch-rival (who you're fighting with for a playoff spot) you can force Super Hal to start him.
- Σ **"Super Hal" Define Starting Pitchers** - If your league uses predefined schedules you can assign the starting pitcher for any scheduled game. This information, along with the other new Super Hal settings, will be exported with your computer manager.
- Σ **Newspaper Game Story** - Provides an exciting game story describing each game's major events! You'll be surprised how good these game stories read, and you'll be amazed how the computer can recognize important events and report on them. Available as part of the box score or as a separate report.
- Σ **Pitch Around option** - This has been one of the most frequently requested features (no wonder, with the likes of Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa terrorizing baseball)!
- Σ *** Fantastic new statistics and reports** - New reports display a host of statistics that the game now tracks for players and teams. Incredibly detailed, you can now see exactly how each player performed in a variety of situations. Statistical breakdowns by lineup slot, in clutch situation, with the bases loaded, and much more. Separate starting/relieving pitcher statistics are maintained along with many other new categories. A "Detailed Team" report recaps this information for each team allowing you to see, for instance, team-wide batting statistics for each slot in the batting order. If you love statistics you'll go crazy for these new reports!
- Σ *** Traditional Fielding Statistics** - Now you can view putouts, assists, errors, fielding average, for each player (by position) and for each team in the league. Overall league totals are also available.
- Σ **Catchers blocking the plate** - An exciting new play has been added where catchers will sometimes try and block a runner from scoring. On certain close plays at the plate the catcher's ability to block the plate will be challenged. His ability can make the difference between the runner being called safe or out.
- Σ **Realistic throwing errors** - have been added to the cut-off play as part of the maximum rules.
- Σ **Backup League Function** - Offers a quick and easy way to back up an entire leagues rosters and statistics.
- Σ **Print Files** - are now stored in separate folders for each league

- Σ **Box Score** - now lists game time, blown saves and holds.
- Σ **Pitch Count System** - has been improved to be more aware of game-to-game effect. For instance, a reliever who throws a large number of pitches in one game will not be able to throw as many the very next game.
- Σ **Play by play improved.** All play by play files have been updated this year. Over 15,000 lines of play by play are included. And for just \$5 more you can enjoy thousands of more lines of team specific play by play, updated to include interesting events from 1999. We highly recommend purchase of this option, as it will enhance your enjoyment of both the play-by-play during the game and of the Newspaper Game Stories.
- Σ **Kudos included.** The previous four versions of the CD-ROM Baseball game have consistently received great reviews from the leading gaming magazines such as PC Games and Computer Gaming World. We expect Version 5.0 to continue that tradition.
- Σ **Requirements:** The Windows version requires a CD-ROM drive and Windows 3.1, Windows '95 or Windows '98 (Note: Win NT is not currently supported). Macintosh version features a true Mac interface and requires a CD-ROM drive and System 7.5 or above. Both require systems equipped with at least 8 Megabytes of RAM and 20 Megs of free hard-drive space.
- Σ * Note: For these new statistics to be accumulated properly in play-by-mail leagues, gamers must transfer statistics to the league statistician with Game Files instead of subset stats. Automatic subset stats can still be used with these leagues (such as stats by month). If a league continues to use manual subset stats to transfer their statistics then these new categories will not be accumulated properly.

Upcoming Deadlines

Jan 25th... Your 30 man protected list due to the Draft conductor and your LD.