Chapter 3
Notes for Masochists

Jerry Heath keeps closing in.

For the last several years, he's been refining his own method of determining player values, and now that he almost completely agrees with me, I can report he's doing a fine job. As he explains it, "Roti Val (Rotisserie Value) is calculated by analyzing 24 standard American and National Rotisserie Leagues serviced by Heath Research. A player's Seasonal AL Stats are added to the mid-place team in each Rotisserie League and then the standings are recalculated. The % of new Team Points attributable to the player is then applied to a Team Salary Cap of $260 and the average of the 24 results = Rotisserie Value."

This is the gestalt method of getting to the result that I've always attempted to achieve in four stages with my denominators. For a while it was clear to me that Jerry was doing something wrong, simply because his Roti Vals, applied to the players that leagues had on their initial rosters, far exceeded the salary cap, but this year he's pared his prices way down. Our 1992 totals are just about the same for hitters; his pitchers still add up to a few hundred dollars more than mine do, but, added together, his prices only exceed the league budgets of $2600 and $3120 by about 12 percent. It was always valuable to compare the way we ordered players; now it's instructive to put the prices side by side.

rk	NL	$AP	$JH	AB	HR	RBI	BA	SB
1	BONDS,Barr	53	43	473	34	103	.311	39
2	SHEFFIELD	46	37	557	33	100	.330	5
3	GRISSOM,Ma	45	37	653	14	66	.276	78
4	LANKFORD,R	42	38	598	20	86	.293	42
5	MCGRIFF,Fr	40	35	531	35	104	.286	8

rk	AL	$AP	$JH	AB	HR	RBI	BA	SB
1	PUCKETT,Ki	41	37	639	19	110	.329	17
2	ANDERSON,Br	41	35	623	21	80	.271	53
3	ALOMAR,Rob	40	32	571	8	76	.310	49
4	MOLITOR,Pa	39	32	609	12	89	.320	31
5	THOMAS,Fra	37	36	573	24	122	.323	3

The order is in perfect agreement. My prices would seem to be inflated, though, or else his deflated. But wait:

rk	NL	$AP	$JH	AB	HR	RBI	BA	SB
44	O'NEILL,Pa	16	20	496	14	66	.246	6
45	BLAUSER,Jf	15	19	343	14	46	.262	5
46	BASS,Kevin	15	18	402	9	39	.269	14
47	THOMPSN,Ro	15	18	443	14	49	.260	5
48	BREAM,Sid	15	18	372	10	61	.261	6

rk	AL	$AP	$JH	AB	HR	RBI	BA	SB
44	MALDONADO	19	22	489	20	66	.272	2
45	YOUNT,Robi	19	18	557	8	77	.264	15
46	OLERUD,Joh	19	21	458	16	66	.284	1
47	DAVIS,Chil	18	20	444	12	66	.288	4
48	PALMER,Dea	18	22	541	26	72	.229	10

One of us is either gypping or overpaying these lesser performers.

What's going on? This is not just a head-scratcher for the few who venture into this chapter looking for trouble. A huge strategy tilt one way or the other is at stake: if I'm right, towards the Cadillac players; if Jerry's right, towards the lunchpail set.

I'm right, Jerry, and here's why:

rk	AL	$AP	$JH	AB	HR	RBI	BA	SB
11	CARTER,Joe	34	33	622	34	119	.264	12
61	REIMER,Kev	16	18	494	16	58	.267	2

Isn't Joe Carter plainly more than twice as valuable as Kevin Reimer? Two Reimers have fewer homers, ribbies *and* stolen bases. But Jerry's method, which seems so solidly grounded in actual standings, finds that Carter is less than twice as valuable as Reimer.

To understand why, we have to picture the two players being plugged into the 24 actual leagues. The "mid-place" team certainly doesn't mean the team is in mid place in all four hitting categories. Some of them may be doing quite well in RBIs, for example, in which case the mammoth infusion of RBIs that Carter brings soon becomes superfluous.

The big performers earn their Cadillacs, if their owners know what they're doing; my prices are better at the top and therefore, mathematically, they are better in the middle. Paul O'Neill did *not* earn $20 last year. However, after much pondering of Jerry's data, I decided that O'Neill did earn more than Kevin Bass.

Yes, my prices say so, too, but this is only *after* I tightened up the RBI denominator and stretched the stolen base denominator just a little bit more. In my first set of formulas, which were consistent with the 1991 denominators, Bass was at the top of the five-player cluster that you see above, earning $17.

None of these five players were giants in any way; their modest efforts had to keep making a difference in all four categories. And there was Jerry, telling me that in 24 leagues Bass made less of a difference than O'Neill, whether I liked it or not. Two dollars less; 10 percent. It had to be dealt with.

You can see from the five AL lunchpailers that I'm not completely in step with Jerry still. In 24 leagues, Robin Yount did not help a mid-place team as much as Dean Palmer did. Them's the facts; my denominators are the theories. Is the explanation that my batting average denominator is too tight? Could be. Jerry's computer doesn't divulge the breakdown of how the categories are affected. But I do break down my prices by categories in the next chapter, and you'll see that the batting champion, Edgar Martinez, gets $14 for his specialty, no more than Cecil is awarded for his ribbies, and far less than Gonzalez gets for his long flies.

Two other observations before turning to pitchers.

You'll notice that the top five hitters in the National League earn significantly more than the top five American League hitters: Is this simply because the NL average player was, as usual, such a wimp? (My formulas have been long celebrated -- by me, anyway -- for the way they emphasize league differences.)

Nope. League hitting differences were rather minimal last year. The fact is, the stars in the National League shone more brightly in 1992, which even Jerry's computer, despite its inherent aversion to stardom (something it shares with the mechanical forecasters), concedes.

On the other hand, you may have noticed that hitters 44 through 48 in the American League have both better stats and earn more money, in both pay scales, than hitters 44 through 48 in the National League. Has the greater depth in the AL finally asserted itself?

Yes and no. There is greater hitting depth, for the simple reason that there are nine hitters in each lineup. But the more important explanation is that there are, or were, more American League teams. The practical effect is exactly the opposite of what NL owners might expect.

The greater depth that the DH affords in AL leagues has always been more than wiped out by the fact that there are twelve Rotisserie teams. Two more teams at the auction, the same number of extra major league teams to fight over. (I learned what it was like to have *no* extra teams to fight over last year. Bruce Buschel, Steve Stoneburn and I picked teams in a windshield wiper draft from among the Mets, Braves and Reds. The whole thing took 20 minutes, there were no roster changes allowed from then on, and the winner was to be decided by simply adding up what the 23 players on each team earned in my formulas. As those who read this chapter are bound to know, the formulas are designed to give the average team $260 worth of value, while the winning team usually drafts around $300 worth of value. And the winner was -- Stoneburn, $257. My players earned $245, Bruce's $233.)

On the pitching front, well, what fun would the game be if there still weren't a few rather sizable battles going on?

rk	NL	$AP	$JH	IP	W	SV	ERA	Rto
1	JONES,Doug	50	41	112	11	36	1.85	9.11
2	MADDUX,Gre	42	44	268	20	0	2.18	9.10
3	SMITH,Lee	38	24	75	4	43	3.12	10.56
4	TEWKSBURY	36	41	233	16	0	2.16	9.15
5	SCHILLING	35	40	226	14	2	2.35	8.91

rk	pitcher	$AP	$JH	IP	W	S	ERA	Rto
1	ECKERSLEY	51	39	80	7	51	1.91	8.21
2	CLEMENS,Ro	42	42	247	18	0	2.41	9.67
3	MUSSINA,Mi	40	41	241	18	0	2.54	9.71
4	MONTGOMERY	36	29	83	1	39	2.18	9.58
5	APPIER,Kev	33	37	208	15	0	2.46	10.15

The fact that my prices for relievers are quite a bit higher than his doesn't bother me; that's easily explained the way Joe Carter was explained. Many mid-place teams were already doing all right in saves and don't get the full benefit of these huge additions. Yet what about Tewksbury, Schilling, Appier? If Jerry's

right and they're worth that much more than I say they were worth, how come we agree, essentially, on Maddux, Clemens and Mussina?

rk	NL	$AP	$JH	IP	W	SV	ERA	Rto
76	INNIS,Jeff	5	9	88	6	1	2.86	12.38
77	ANDERSEN,L	5	4	35	1	2	3.34	8.74
78	OSBORNE,Do	5	9	179	11	0	3.77	11.61
79	SABERHAGEN	5	7	98	3	0	3.50	10.23
80	JONES,Jimm	4	9	139	10	0	4.07	11.24

rk	pitcher	$AP	$JH	IP	W	S	ERA	Rto
76	JOHNSON,Rn	7	12	210	12	0	3.77	12.75
77	HABYAN,Joh	6	13	73	5	7	3.84	13.00
78	FREY,S	6	11	45	4	4	3.57	12.11
79	WHITESIDE	6	9	28	1	4	1.93	11.89
80	KRUEGER,Bi	6	9	161	10	0	4.30	11.83

Is it possible that Jimmy Jones could have been worth $9? I just don't think so. He's not even a one-category player, inasmuch as he helps in one, hurts in two.

And yet Jerry's method is completely unbiased; it doesn't know from Bret Saberhagen, and if it says Jones helped 24 different real-life Rotisserie teams more than Saberhagen, we -- or I -- have a problem.

I've talked to Jerry about this, and he's said that exactly *which* mid-place team he picks makes a big difference. If he plugs pitchers into all the teams in fifth, the pitchers are worth X. If he plugs them into the sixth-place teams they're worth Y. Y is much greater than X.

My guess is, the lower he goes, the less the bad stuff -- bad ERA, bad ratio -- hurts. This no doubt relates to Les Leopold's argument: Averages aren't averages; you start from the bottom just the way you do with quantities. In theory, that's fine. In practice, I say hooey. I don't care what happens to these second-division teams. They're not my role models and I ain't paying $9 for Jimmy Jones' stats.

And even so, there are many, many things that I find delectable in these prices of Jerry's. I invite people of a like persuasion to savor the fact that Bill Krueger was worth as much as Jimmy Jones. Same number of wins, worse ERA and ratio (and more of them; more innings). League differences *do* exist in pitching, and will for as long as National League pitchers pitch to National League pitchers. No one else in this business pays the slightest bit of attention to them (Ron Shandler gives Maddux a 1992 "R8" -- Rotisserie rating for a standard eight-category league -- of 62; Clemens gets 53), but Jerry's vindicated me, by heavens! Check out Randy Johnson and Donovan Osborne. Beautiful!

Most shocking of all, there's Doug Jones earning more than Eckersley with 15 fewer saves. In part this is a Catch-22; since all closers get stiffed for getting too many saves, Eckersley gets stiffed worse than anyone. (That, by the way, is my explanation for Maddux, Clemens and Mussina; once a pitcher has gone past Tewksbury's 16 wins, he, too, starts going off the chart. What else can it be?) Nevertheless, there is what amounts to a saves scarcity in the National League, and the NL pitching formula consequently uses a much smaller saves denominator.

Here are the formulas for this year's prices:

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NL 1992
$HR = 13 (HR/3.6)/6.355
$RBI = 13 (RBI/15.37)/6.355
$SB = 13 (SB/6.2)/6.355
$BA = 13 (((1245.5+Hits)/(4700+AB)-0.265)/0.0012)/6.355

$W = 8.67 (Wins/2.5)/4.237
$S = 8.67 (Saves/2.7)/4.237
$ERA = 8.67 ((3.38-(394.333+ER)/((1050+IP)/9))/0.04)/4.237
$Rto = 8.67 ((11.30-((1318.33+H+BB)/((1050+IP)/9)))/0.07)/4.237

AL 1992
$HR = 13 (HR/4.5)/6.355
$RBI = 13 (RBI/17.77)/6.355
$SB = 13 (SB/5.3)/6.355
$BA = 13 (((1231.4+Hits)/(4700+AB)-0.262)/0.0012)/6.355

$W = 8.67 (Wins/2.5)/4.237
$S = 8.67 (Saves/3.4)/4.237
$ERA = 8.67 ((3.85-(449.17+ER)/((1050+IP)/9))/0.04)/4.237
$Rto = 8.67 ((11.97-((1396.5+H+BB)/((1050+IP)/9)))/0.07)/4.237
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Hitting decreased somewhat in both leagues last year. In order to keep a continuity from year to year -- a key goal of the salary scans -- the denominators should have been changed only slightly. To reflect the lessons of Jerry Heath's prices, I changed the SB and HR denominators much more drastically (there were 12 percent fewer homers in the NL, for instance, and the home run denominator dropped 20 percent).

Just what are the lessons? I believe the stolen base category, like saves, keeps spreading out further and further each year. Conversely, the two redundant pairs -- ERA and ratio, home runs and RBIs -- get tighter each year. Managers know what they've got to do, and can get away with not doing. The parity that exists in Stage Three leads to the dumping of categories, and the dumping of categories leads to even more parity. In September, every home run that Dean Palmer hits draws blood. Marquis Grissom is running in a league of his own.

Ah yes, the 1993 formulas.

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NL 1993
$HR = 13 (HR/5.2)/6.355
$RBI = 13 (RBI/17.7)/6.355
$SB = 13 (SB/7.3)/6.355
$BA = 13 (((1287.8+Hits)/(4700+AB)-0.274)/0.0012)/6.355

$W = 8.67 (Wins/2.5)/4.237
$S = 8.67 (Saves/3.0)/4.237
$ERA = 8.67 ((3.95-(460.833+ER)/((1050+IP)/9))/0.04)/4.237
$Rto = 8.67 ((11.90-((1388.33+H+BB)/((1050+IP)/9)))/0.07)/4.237
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