

Insights from Moneyball SQL Analysis

1. Salary Structure and Market Benchmarks

- Player salaries increased consistently from approximately \$476,000 in 1985 to over \$3.4 million by 2001.
- Cal Ripken Jr.'s salary showed a steady climb, peaking above \$2.4 million near the end of his career, suggesting a declining return on investment.
- Alex Rodriguez held the highest salary recorded in MLB at the time.
- The top home run hitter in 2001 earned \$10.3 million, setting a high benchmark for evaluating power hitters.

2. Undervalued Talent and ROI Opportunities

- Several players, including Pedro Feliz, Pablo Ozuna, and Jose Ortiz, earned under \$202,000 in 2001—well below the league average.
- The best value per hit in 2001 included:
 - A.J. Pierzynski at approximately \$1,909 per hit
 - Aaron Boone at approximately \$3,571 per hit
- Four players ranked among the top 10 for both lowest cost per hit and lowest cost per RBI:
 - Torii Hunter
 - Paul Lo Duca
 - Terrence Long
 - Doug Mientkiewicz

3. Player Performance Trends

- Ken Griffey Jr. peaked in home run production with 45 HRs in 1993. By 2001, his performance showed signs of decline.
- Cal Ripken Jr.'s high salary in later years was not aligned with peak performance levels, signaling possible overvaluation.

4. Team-Level Patterns

- The Seattle Mariners led the league in total hits in 2001 with 1,637. The Oakland Athletics followed with 1,469.
- The five teams with the lowest average salary in 2001 were:
 - Anaheim Angels
 - Arizona Diamondbacks
 - Atlanta Braves
 - Baltimore Orioles
 - Boston Red Sox