2020 Off Season

Bear with me, this is going to be a long one, but I’ll break it down by pieces.

**Rookies/Pre-Arbitration**

We have 9 guys worth bringing back to the opening day roster that will either get a rookie contract or pre-arbitration contracts. They are Brusdar Graterol, Randy Dobnak, Devin Smetlzer, Fernando Romero, Zach Littell, Cody Stashak, Mitch Garver, Willians Astudillo, and Luis Arraez. On average, each will probably get around $600K unless they decide to bump Garver up. To be safe, I estimated Garver could get around $800K for good performance.

**Arbitration**

We currently have 9 players that are arbitration eligible on the roster for 2020 (more than 3 Service Years, but less than 6). 5 Pitchers and 4 Hitters. They are Jose Berrios, Taylor Rogers, Trevor May, Sam Dyson, Tyler Duffey, C.J. Cron, Miguel Sano, Byron Buxton, Eddie Rosario and Ehire Adrianza. The only one of these guys I don’t see extending an offer to is Sam Dyson. I used FanGraphs Arbitration Traditional Statistics Estimation for Pitchers to estimate their salaries. I used the traditional statistics estimation as the arbitration board has historically favored traditional stats, as they are not Sabermatricians.

Pitcher Equation: New Salary = Old Salary-218,081+18,135\*IP+51,428\*SV+61,113\*W-2,251\*IP\*ERA

Hitter Equation: New Salary = Old Salary-300,240-3,322\*PA+45,572\*HR+10,763\*RBI+19,236\*PA\*AVG

**Club Options:**

Martin Perez has a club option for $7.5M with a $500K buyout and Nelson Cruz has a $12M club option with a $300K buyout. I believe we should buyout Perez and retain Cruz.

**Guys Under Contract:**

The Twins have Max Kepler, Jorge Polanco, and Marwin Gonzalez under contract for next year. Gonzalez is set to make $9M, Kepler is set to make $6.25M, and Polanco is set to make $3.83M.

**Roster:**

That leaves us at 22 players on the roster, with one starting pitcher (that has a reasonable amount of experience), 9 relievers, and 11 position players and a DH. Their contracts for next year could look like this:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Pos | Contract | 2020 Pred Salary | Buyout |
| Jose Berrios | SP | ARB 1 | $3,700,000 |  |
| Brusdar Graterol | SP/RP | Rookie | $600,000 |  |
| Randy Dobnak | SP/RP |  | $600,000 |  |
| Devin Smeltzer | SP/RP |  | $600,000 |  |
| Taylor Rogers | RP | ARB 2 | $4,100,000 |  |
| Trevor May | RP | ARB 3 | $2,100,000 |  |
| Tyler Duffey | RP | ARB 1 | $3,650,000 |  |
| Fernando Romero | RP | Pre-ARB | $600,000 |  |
| Zach Littell | RP | Pre-ARB | $600,000 |  |
| Cody Stashak | RP |  | $600,000 |  |
| Mitch Garver | C | Pre-ARB | $800,000 |  |
| Willians Astudillo | C | Pre-ARB | $600,000 |  |
| C.J. Cron | 1B | ARB 3 | $7,300,000 |  |
| Luis Arraez | 2B | Pre-ARB | $600,000 |  |
| Miguel Sano | 3B | ARB 2 | $5,400,000 |  |
| Jorge Polanco | SS | 5Y $25.75M | $3,833,333 |  |
| Byron Buxton | OF | ARB 2 | $3,000,000 |  |
| Eddie Rosario | OF | ARB 2 | $7,000,000 |  |
| Max Kepler | OF | 5Y $35M | $6,250,000 |  |
| Ehire Adrianza | UTL | ARB 4 | $2,000,000 |  |
| Marwin Gonzalez | UTL | 2Y $21M | $9,000,000 |  |
| Nelson Cruz | DH | Club Opt | $12,000,000 |  |
| Martin Perez |  | BUYOUT |  | $500,000 |
| **25 Man Payroll** |  |  |  | **$75,433,333** |

**Building For 2020 – Free Agency**

As recent history has proved, the best way to build a team is to develop hitters internally and acquire pitchers externally. Therefore we should target pitching. Traditionally, Twins teams are usually around $115M-$120M in opening day salary. That gives us around $40M-$45M to play with. Our priority should be to bring in at least 2 SP. Here are 7 guys the Twins could go after. To estimate their contracts, I used FanGraphs free-agency contract estimator.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Pos | Pot Contract | Est 2020 Sal |
| Gerrit Cole | SP | 5Y $193M | $40,700,000 |
| Zach Wheeler | SP | 4Y $92.9M | $25,900,000 |
| Jake Odorizzi | SP | 3Y $65.6M | $26,300,000 |
| Dallas Keuchel | SP | 2Y $19.7M | $11,000,000 |
| Madison Bumgarner | SP | 3Y $46.5 M | $17,600,000 |
| Brett Anderson | SP | 2Y $19.7M | $11,000,000 |
| Michael Pineda | SP | 1Y $9M | $9,000,000 |

Pot Contract - Not meant to reflect actual years. Just a guesstimate on what they may want/get.

Michael Pineda - Will probably have to take a pay cut due to PED suspension.

**Best Case Scenario**

We bump our payroll up to $140M-$145M. With that we are able to sign Cole and Wheeler. Cole is in very good position to earn himself the largest salary ever. Wheeler, even though he has been somewhat shaky, has 4 really good pitches and has only really been hurt by his two-seam that he throws almost 30% of the time. I have faith Wes Johnson is smart enough to tell Wheeler to do the same thing Cole did and drop the two-seam and become primarily a 4-seam, slider, curve, change-up guy like Cole did. Each of those pitches produced similar wOBAs to Coles 4-seam, slider, curve and change-up. Wheeler also brings Cole like velocity. Now we can also re-sign Odorizzi for a similar price tag but I value Wheeler a little higher than Odorizzi because he brings high velocity. Something Twins starting pitching lacks compared to other playoff teams.

**Most Likely Scenario**

Our payroll sits between $115M-$120M. We can still sign Cole, but then we will more than likely will have to try to Martin Perez someone, which I hope we will not do. That means everyone besides Cole is on the table. In this case I would like to see them prioritize Wheeler and Odorizzi. For sure getting one of them.

**Worst Case Scenario**

We try play the “small-market team” too hard and look to have a payroll around $100M. That means Cole, Wheeler, and Odorizzi are more than likely off the table. I have a hard time believing this will happen after coming off a 101-win season, with the Indians right on our tails and with the White Sox that have loads of money to spend.

All free agents have a choice on where they land though. Minnesota could offer then a favorable contract, but they could deny it in favor of a different team.

**Building For 2020 – Trades**

Trades are not usually my forte, but Ill take a stab at what our philosophy could be. Like I stated earlier good teams (like us) usually develop hitting internally. Good teams also get good pitching externally (not us, currently). We have a surplus of minor league hitting talent and potentially some pitching prospects to trade away as well. We also have a couple hitters on the roster that could be trade pieces. I’m going to name absolutely no one though because, once again, trades are NOT my forte. But, guys like Mike Minor, Kirby Yates, Robbie Ray, Ken Giles, etc. could possibly be available if we fail to make a big enough splash in free-agency.

**My Hopes for The Roster**

SP – Free Agency Pickup (Cole), Free Agency Pickup (Wheeler/Odo), Berrios, Dobnak (or Traded for SP) and Graterol

RP – Littell, Duffey, May, Rogers, Stashak, Smetlzer, Romero

Hitters – Garver (C), Astudillo (C), Cron (1B), Arraez (2B), Sano (3B), Polanco (SS), Rosario (OF), Buxton (OF), Kepler (OF), Adrianza (UTL), Marwin (UTL), Cruz (DH), and Kirlloff or Gordon based on positional need.