

L U C I D D R E A M B A S E B A L L
Fantasy Baseball's Fantasy



LEAGUE RULES

2009 SEASON



Lucid Dream Baseball

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Introduction

Situation

Lucid Dream Baseball is a fantasy baseball league with persistent rosters and sophisticated strategy. Each player in the league will be the GM of their own Lucid Dream Baseball League (LDB) franchise, in complete control of team payroll, roster composition, game lineups, and management of the farm system. At the major-league level, rosters will resemble those of MLB franchises, with eleven-man pitching staffs and realistic positional balance. Financial constraints have been designed to resemble those of the top-tier of MLB organizations, and GMs will have the ability to engage in realistic transactions and roster moves to put their teams in the best position to win. Teams will play an unbalanced schedule, which should give rise to divisional rivalries, and scoring statistics have been chosen so that there will be as little difference as possible between a player who is good in “reality” and in “fantasy”. Rosters will be constructed in a similar fashion to actual major league rosters.

Organization

Organizational Tiers

Each LDB franchise has three tiers: Majors, AAA, and AA. The Majors level is a 25-man roster, and represents the “active” players on the team, the ones whose performance will affect scoring. The AAA group is a 7-man roster that will be in most cases composed of a GMs professional reserves, although minor-leaguers can be stocked away on this roster at the GMs discretion. The AA tier is for rookie-eligible players (those defined as prospects by Baseball America, having less than 131 MLB AB or 50 IP), and will provide a GM with a place to draft high-ceiling prospects and to hold on to them for future seasons. Each team can hold six prospects in AA at a time (in the ‘10 season, this number will be larger).

The Majors level closely resembles an MLB franchise. All 25 players are available for active duty, and are broken down into the following positions:

MAJORS TIER ROSTER COMPOSITION	
Batters	Pitchers
Catcher	5 Starting Pitchers
First Base	6 Relief Pitchers
Second Base	
Third Base	
Shortstop	
Left Field	

MAJORS TIER ROSTER COMPOSITION	
Center Field	
Right Field	
Utility (2 spots)	
Bench (4 spots)	

Internal Transactions

- **Optioning** - Players who have not accumulated more than four half-seasons of "Service Time" (LDB concept, see below) are eligible to be optioned to AAA at any time. This is an internal roster move. Players cannot be moved back into the AA roster at any point once they leave that tier.
- **Outrighting** - Players who have accumulated more than two seasons of "Service Time" are considered veterans, and cannot be sent to AAA without clearing 3-day waivers. This transaction is not revokable. If a player clears waivers, then they move to AAA. If the player is claimed, they are lost.
- **Purchasing a Contract** - Players in AA and AAA can be promoted to the Majors at any time, so long as sufficient roster space is available. Note that promoting a AAA player may add to their Service Time, and promoting a player out of AA to AAA or the Majors starts their arbitration clock, and locks them out of demotion to AA.
- **Disabled List (DL)** - Players on the Majors roster can be put on the disabled list if they currently are on an MLB disabled list. There are three DL spots per organization. Minor league affiliates do not get extra roster space for DL players.

Service Time

To determine veteran status, LDB will use an internally tracked concept of Service Time. Each time a player is promoted from the minors to the Majors-level for the first time in a particular half-season, and at the start of each half season, the player will accumulate one half-season of Service Time. Having more than four half-seasons of Service Time qualifies a player as a veteran, and they cannot be freely optioned to AAA. Players retain their Service Time even if they are dropped, waived, or traded.

Keepers

In the off-season, LDB GMs will be able to designate a select five players on their Majors roster who will be keepers. These players are retained for the next year at their current salary (Auction Value - 10% signing bonus, but no player can be paid less than 400k.). A player can be kept for three seasons, and then they become a free agent.

Players in the (LDB) Majors and (LDB) AAA who are signed to long-term deals (contract status of K1/2/3) are eligible to be kept. Mid-season free agents are automatically free agents after the season ends. Starting in the offseason prior to 2010, each team will be allowed to designate one of their mid-season free agents as their "home-town hero". The home-town hero gets a one-year contract extension at six million dollars (and a contract status of HT). The home-

town hero cannot be extended beyond that one year, and must be a player who logged non-September call-up time in the Majors, and is no longer rookie-eligible.

“Home-grown” players do not count against the keeper total. Home-grown players are those players that a GM drafts through the amateur draft into their AA system. After their promotion to AAA or the Majors, they are subject to the following salary schedule:

“HOME-GROWN” SALARY STRUCTURE	
Year 1	.4 million
Year 2	.6 million
Year 3	1.2 million
Year 4	3.6 million

If a Home-grown player is traded, they remain on the same salary structure when they join their new team, unless they are released and not claimed on waivers.

A GM can promote a player in the second half of a the LDB season (week 11 or later) without burning a full year of eligibility. These players are “super-twos”, and are treated exactly like home-grown players for keeper purposes, but they follow an accelerated salary promotion scale. A GM can decide upon promotion whether they want they player to use up a year of eligibility or to be a super-two at promotion time through an email to the commissioner. Super-twos follow the salary structure below:

“SUPER-TWO” SALARY STRUCTURE	
Year 0 (promotion year, only in final half of season)	.4 million (prorated)
Year 1	.6 million
Year 2	1.8 million
Year 3	3.6 million
Year 4	3.6 million

The Game

Lucid Dream Baseball League

The Lucid Dream Baseball League is divided into two subsidiary leagues: the Federal League and the Union Association. Each team will play another team for a week at a time (Monday to Sunday), with each statistical category repre-

senting a game, meaning that fifteen games are in play each week. Teams will play teams within their league (and possibly division) more often than teams outside their grouping. Advancement to the playoffs will be determined by league/division winners and then rounded out with wildcards as necessary. Each year a number less than half of the total teams will advance to the playoffs.

Lineups

A batter is eligible to play a position if CBS Sportsline designates the position as the player's primary position, or if they have played 15 games at the position in the current year or 20 in the previous. A starting pitcher is eligible if CBS Sportsline designates the pitcher as a starter, or if they start five games. A relief pitcher is eligible if CBS Sportsline designates the pitcher as a reliever, or if they relieve in ten games.

Lineups and pitching rotations will be maintained on CBS Sportsline, and will be subject to Sportsline's rules and restrictions.

Scoring

Lucid Dream Baseball scores the ten active batters and up to eleven active pitchers each day on the following statistics:

LUCID DREAM SCORING	
Batters / Fielders	Pitchers
On-Base Percentage (OBP)	Net Quality Wins (NQS) [2*Quality Starts + Wins - Losses - 2*Games Started]
On-Base Plus Slugging Percentage (OPS) [OBP + SLG]	Win Percentage Added (WPA) [see Fangraphs for information on WPA]
Runs Scored (R)	Run Expectancy over 24 Base/Out States (RE24) [see Fangraphs for information on RE24]
Runs Batted In (RBI)	Home Runs Allowed (HRA)
Home Runs (HR)	Pitcher Strikeouts
Adjusted Stolen Bases (ASB) [Stolen Bases - Runner Caught Stealing/2]	Earned Run Average (ERA)
Poor Outs (POOR) [K + 2xGIDP]	Baserunners per Inning Pitched (aWHIP) [(Hits + Walks + Hit Batsmen)/ Innings]

LUCID DREAM SCORING

Defensive RZR Plus-Minus (+/-) [based on Hardball Times Revised Zone Rating (RZR) data; for **fielders** the formula is $-.88 \times \text{balls in zone} + .96 \times \text{balls fielded} + .48 \times \text{balls fielded outside zone} + .24 \times \text{double play turned or started} + .24 \times \text{outfield assist}$) the formula for **catchers** is $+1.6 \times \text{caught stealing} - .44 \times \text{steal allowed} - .24 \times \text{passed ball} + .24 \times \text{double play started or turned}$. See owner's supplement in early February 2009 for defensive data.

All positions are normalized based on the previous year's mean per inning performance such that an average inning at any position scores zero. All positions receive a weighting as follows:

C - 2.023
 1B - 1.000
 2B - 1.885
 SS - 2.026
 3B - 1.628
 LF - 1.250
 CF - 1.667
 RF - 1.250

Just as in baseball, there can be no ties. If a statistical category ends in a tie at the conclusion of the week, then the system will award a win to the "home" team for that week. Each week, each team must meet the league minimum Innings Pitched requirement of 48 innings per week¹. Teams that fail to reach this threshold will lose the following pitching categories that week: NQS, HRA, ERA, and aWHIP. Forfeits will be recored in the standings as "FUs" (fuck-ups), and will count as losses in the standings, but for the purposes of determining the following season's draft position, will count as wins.

An escalating penalty will be in effect in 2009 for teams that repeatedly miss the innings requirement. Missing the requirement in more than one week will result in a fine of one million dollars penalty per week of missed innings after the first violation. The fines will be deducted from the following season's payroll. Fines are deducted after luxury tax calculations are made.

Playoffs

With 14 teams, the playoff structure will be designed to reward division winners while maintaining a compelling wild-card race. Six teams will reach the Lucid Dream Playoffs. Each of the division winners will receive a first-round bye, and the second- and third-place teams in each division will play in the League Wildcard Series (LWS). The win-

¹ This requirement is based on the assumption that five starters should make an average of six starts a week, and the average innings pitched per start is approximately six. Relievers who are regularly used over a full season should pitch at least two innings per week.

ners of each Wildcard Series matchup will face their respective division winner in the Lucid Dream Division Series (LDS) for the right to appear in the Lucid Dream Series, the league championship. The league with the best inter-league record's champion gets home-field advantage in the Lucid Dream Series (henceforth known as "The Dream"). In the playoffs, if the scoring result is tied (with an equal number of categories for each team), the tiebreaker will be Earned Run Average, followed by Runs Scored, followed by Home Runs (batter), followed by Home Runs (pitcher), followed by adjusted Strikeouts, followed by Adjusted Stolen Bases, followed by Win Percentage Added, followed by On-base Plus Slugging, followed by Run Expectancy, followed by On-base Percentage, followed by Baserunners per Inning, followed by Runs Batted In, followed by Plus-Minus.

Schedule

Scheduling will be announced by the commissioner before the auction / draft each year. Scheduling will be unbalanced, meaning that teams will play teams within their grouping more often than teams outside the grouping (league and/or division). For 2008, each team will play their divisional opponents twice each, and each team from the other division once. The only exception to this will be the team's designated "natural rival". Each team will be paired randomly with one team from the other division, and will play that team twice instead of once.

Finances and the Auction

Finances

Each team will begin the season with an amount of cash equal to the MLB luxury tax threshold,² plus any cash carried over from the previous year, plus 2.8 million to pay seven AAA players the league minimum of 400k. Teams are not allowed to carry any unspent cash from the auction that exceeds fifteen percent of the luxury tax threshold. Cash from previous years is not subject to the carryover restriction.

Payroll is tracked on a weekly basis. Teams will only pay players for the weeks during which they play for the team, except in cases where a player is dropped and clears waivers. Upon acquiring a player in trade or through waivers, the acquiring team will owe the player the balance of the player's annual salary. If a player is acquired by waivers, the waiving team will no longer be responsible for the balance of the player's annual salary.

Players signed as free agents during the season will be paid a prorated share of the league minimum, \$400k.

Beginning at 12:01 am the Monday of week 12, GMs can request payroll expansion from their "ownership group" in the form of a loan against the following season's payroll. Payroll expansion can be any amount up to 7.5% of the league salary cap (12.2 million in 2009). The expanded payroll provides the team with space to acquire players in trade at the deadline. It cannot be transferred to another team or carried to the following season, but it can be used to acquire players that would otherwise put a team over budget, either through trade, the waiver wire, or mid-season free agency. In the following season, teams will forfeit 3/4ths of the amount requested for expansion. (Teams presumably make extra revenue from being in the playoff hunt when they ask for the extra cash from ownership, offset-

² LDB's salary cap is pegged to Major League Baseball's luxury tax thresholds as specified in the MLB-MLBPA current collective bargaining agreement. In 2009, the cap is 162 million. In 2010, the cap is 170 million. In 2011, the cap is 178 million. The CBA will be then be renegotiated, and LDB will determine an appropriate cap once the new agreement and luxury tax structure is in place.

ting some of the borrowed money.) Teams making use of the ownership loan must announce whenever they obtain a new chunk of financing to the league via email in order to ensure that no team exceeds their allowed borrowing.

A team is not required to request the entire 7.5% available if they do not deem the entire sum necessary. If a team receives cash from other teams in later deals, they can pay back the loan and avoid

The trade deadline will be at exactly 12:00:00 am on July 20th. All trades must have a CBS timestamp of 11:59 Sunday or earlier, or have been announced and confirmed by both parties via emails to the commissioner before 12:00:00 am. Either of these conditions will be sufficient to meet the deadline.

The Auction

The league auction will take place at a date designated by the commissioner. The first phase will be the amateur draft. This draft populates a team's AA roster spots, and lasts until each team has filled all six spots. Teams will be allowed to promote players out of AA mid-draft. Any player added through the amateur draft is subject to the home-grown salary progression. Rules for AA eligibility are that the player must be MLB rookie-eligible (less than 131 AB or 50 IP, not counting September call-up experience). In 2009, players will be allowed to hold more than 6 players in AA, but not until the general MLB Opening Day. The six spot limit will be enforced until the first MLB game or the draft, whichever comes later.

AA draft order will be done in ascending order by wins from the previous season. Wins are used rather than the winning percentage to remove any advantage from intentionally forfeiting games by missing the innings requirement.

The auction will be presided over by the commissioner. Each GM on their turn will nominate a player by making a nomination. All of the owners will then submit bids in a public auction. Whoever turns in the highest bid will be awarded the player. Bids must be rounded to a hundred thousand for sums under five million, the nearest quarter million under ten million, and the nearest million for sums of twenty million or above. No bid can be under 400 thousand dollars. In the event of a tie, the tie-breaker will go to the team that comes first in the nomination order after the GM who nominated the player. If the GM who nominated the player is involved in the tie, they will win the player over other tiebreakers.

The final component of the draft, after all paid spots are filled on every roster, will be the reserve (AAA) draft, which will last up to seven rounds. If teams have keepers who are in AAA, they may pass on their turn. Every player chosen in the AAA draft receives the league minimum salary. Up to three AAA players may be granted non-guaranteed contracts. NG players can be freely swapped for a replacement player who is in the same player grouping (starter, reliever, infielder, outfielder, catcher) for the duration of April. Replacement players cannot be swapped for other replacement players. NG players cannot be kept at the conclusion of the season.

No LDB team will depart the 2009 auction with greater than thirty-two players above the AA tier. The Disabled List will open after the AAA draft section has completed.

Hometown Hero

Beginning with LDB 2009, during the offseason owners will be allowed to pick one player on their roster who was acquired by the owner in-season as a free agent to be the "Hometown Hero". The hometown hero can be kept for the following season for six million dollars on a one-year contract. The Hometown Hero always becomes a free agent after the one-year contract. The Hometown Hero can not be a player acquired by trade. Each team is allowed up to

one Hometown Hero, but it is not mandatory to declare one. Hometown Heroes do not count against the five-man keeper total.

External Transactions

- Designation for Assignment - Players who are going to be cut or demoted can be designated for assignment. Designation immediately removes the player from the 25-man roster, and subjects them to the 3-day waiver process. Players who are designated are available to trade for the next three days. If they are not traded after three days, they are given to the highest waiver claimant. If the player is not claimed on waivers, the player is cut. Designation is not revokable. Starting in 2008, LDB will award no refunds for players unclaimed on waivers.
- Mid-Season Free Agents - Any unsigned player can be acquired mid-season. Players who are acquired mid-year are paid the league minimum, (prorated share of four hundred thousand dollars, based on week acquired). Note that amateurs and players not available yet in the player universe are available for claim by contacting the commissioner. Players cannot be added to AA mid-season.
- Waiver Claim - Any player on waivers can be claimed. At the end of the “waiver period”, the number of days the player is designated for waivers, the claim will be awarded to whatever team made the claim that has the lowest overall season-to-date record, measured on the date of expiration of the waiver period. In the case of a tie, the player will first be awarded to the team with the lowest division record. In the case of a further tie, the player will be awarded to the team in a different division. In the case of a further tie, the previous season’s record will be used, with the award to the team that finished in a lower standing. In the case of a further tie, the winning teams will publicly auction on the player for the rights to acquire. Funds paid toward acquisition do not offset any of the assumed salary burden, and are on top of the assumed salary. Awarding a player results in the acquisition of that player, pending roster space being made available for the new player. The claiming team assumes the remaining salary burden of the player, calculated by remaining weeks in the LDB regular season.
- Trading - Trades can occur at any point in the off-season, and during the season up until the league trade deadline, which will be specified before each season starts³. Trades can involve players and cash, but just as in MLB, players cannot be dealt straight-up for cash. Trades will be subject to approval by a vote of the other managers in the league. If greater than one-half of the non-involved managers veto a trade, the trade will be cancelled. The veto window three days. In LDB beginning in 2008, all trades will be immediate. A veto of a trade will be retroactive. The players traded will have their stats count for their “new” teams even if the trade is retroactively vetoed.
 - I. Draft Picks - Draft picks can be exchanged in a trade. It is allowed to exchange picks for any year in the future, and conditional trades (i.e. trade only effective if one team’s pick is better than another team’s) are allowed. The reserve and amateur drafts will continue with extra rounds until every team has completely filled its roster spaces and/or has run out of funds to draft players.
 - II. Vetoes - In Lucid Dream Baseball, because of the complex nature of transactions and the balance between performance, salary, and future potential, it is understood that some trades may seem unbalanced from a near-term perspective, but may assist the “losing” owner in their long-term plan. With this in mind, the veto threshold for trades will be half the unin-
volved owners in the trade.

³ In 2007, to fall at the 2/3rds point, or at week 14 in a 20-week schedule (on Sunday night at midnight).

Planned Changes for LDB 2010

Playoff Rosters

Playoffs in 2010 will be fought with shortened pitching staffs. Teams will bring three starters and two relievers to each playoff round. All pitching stats will be treated as rates to eliminate advantages from two-start pitchers in counting-stat categories.

The End of Poor Outs

In 2010, GIDP will be merged with RBI as a negative factor ($RBI - 2 \times GIDP$). Strikeouts will no longer be a negative category.

Luxury Tax

In the 2009-2010 offseason, a luxury tax will be assessed against cash carried over. The luxury tax brackets are as follows:

LDB 2010 LUXURY TAX BRACKETS	
0-15 million	no tax
15-25 million	50% tax
25+ million	75% tax

The tax rates are marginal, meaning that the first fifteen million is tax free, the ten million from 15-25 million is taxed at 50%, and only funds above 25 million are taxed at 75%.

Uncapped AA Rosters and new AA Draft Format

After the AA draft ends in 2009, there will no longer be a cap on the number of players in each organization's AA system. From 2010 forward, each team will get three AA picks regardless of the current number of players in the organization's farm system.

