

MLB Expansion Rules

December 29, 2020

Below are highlights of the major rules for this league. Each off-season during the Winter Meetings, rule proposals will be voted on and adjusted. Regardless of what is stated in the rules, if at any time a manager is acting in a way that is manipulating the system/rules/OOTP in a way that gains a competitive advantage, the commissioner has ultimate discretion to act (retroactively as needed) to correct the issue. Ultimate discretion as to enforcement and interpretation of the rules belongs to the commissioner.

League Info:

- History: 2020 was our inaugural season. MLBE started with the real-life rosters for all 30 teams. In the 2020-2021 off season, MLBE added the Portland Pioneers and Montreal Expos as our 2 newest expansion teams. An expansion draft was held (30 players selected by each team with a 3 max losses per existing team setup) and teams were established. As a result of expansion, the league went through division realignment and now has 4 divisions in each league with 4 teams per division.
- Background Info: MLB Expansion is created and run as a computer simulation expansion of Major League Baseball, or as close as we can possibly get. By joining MLB Expansion and choosing to run a MLB Organization as the General Manager, you have agreed to follow this league constitution and make decisions that do not go against MLB Expansion. All the decisions made by the League Office (MLBEXP Comish, AL Comish, NL Comish) will be made with consideration to these factors:
 - Realism: The League will intend to give each GM a Major League Baseball experience as a GM in an expanded version of the MLB. Thus, the rules for the league will try to promote things that will resemble the real MLB as close as possible.
 - The OOTP Game Engine: The game is limited in certain aspects of what it can do. This has led to the creation of some rules that will try to make as such that the game engine limits are limited as much as possible.
 - Detriment to the League: The pros and cons of the decision and how it will affect the MLB Expansion will be considered.

The MLBEXP is meant to be fun, but trying to give as an authentic experience and as competitive of a league as possible. The competitiveness of it will create emotions and feelings that could take away from the experience, and while it is encouraged to be exciting, there should be nothing that should be viewed as egregious. This means that any egregious acts such as but not limited to: gain an advantage, make any comments that stray from a friendly rivalry, will not be tolerated, and will lead to a removal from the league. Egregious acts to gain an advantage include, but are not limited to, exploiting the limitations of the OOTP Game Engine (some of which will be addressed later in the constitution) and lying (in trade negotiations, game strategy, etc.). If you are unsure if an action you are about to make is exploiting the limitations of OOTP, or unrealistic, ask the commissioner.

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- MLBEXP Set-Up: The league is meant to be as close to the MLB as we can possibly get.
 - Roster Size:
 - MLB: 26 players (Expansion to 28 in September),
 - AAA/AA/A: 30 players
 - Rookie/GCL/DSL: 37 players
 - INT: 50 players
 - Trade Deadline: July 31
 - Expanded Rosters: September 1.
 - Service Time: The number of days of service time to count as 1 year in the 2020 season is 125 days.
 - Waiver Period: 7 days (but is adjusted to be 3 days longer than the number of in-game days in a sim during the offseason)
 - DFA Period: 10 days (adjusted to 5 days longer than the waiver period during the offseason).
 - Waived Player Restrictions: Players that you acquire off waivers may not be waived again for 20 days in game.
 - ML Options/Refusal of Assignment: Minor league option years are turned on; players can refuse minor league assignment.
 - 10/5 Rule & No-Trade Clauses: Players with 10/5 rights can veto trades, as well as any players with a no-trade clause.
 - Assets that can be Traded:
 - Any Player other than as specifically restricted (e.g. recent FA signings)
 - Draft Picks
 - Drafted Players Are Immediately Eligible for Trade
 - Injured Players
 - International Bonus Pool Budget - \$5 M Cap
 - Scouting/Coaching: Both turned ON, with scouting set at 20-80 scale, with normal accuracy.
 - Other: If there are any other questions regarding anything, please ask your Commissioner.
 - Playoffs: 4 Division Winners plus two Wild Cards in each of the AL and NL
 - DH: On for Both Leagues
 - Injury Frequency – set to Normal
- Transactions

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- Contract Extensions (existing players): The permitted lengths of player contract extensions is based upon the service time of each player on the “secondary roster” as noted in the Contracts screen of the player in OOTP (The number of years completed can be found by rounding down the year count) as follows (see also, limits on team/player options below):
 - **No Time on the Secondary Roster**: May only receive this exact extension, whether or not the player accepts or asks for different terms does not matter, they must accept this EXACT extension or nothing else. The OOTP Game Engine does not handle these contracts well but we wanted to give you ONE option to do (as this can be done in the MLB) so if you do, please know the risk. The contract is the contract that was given to Luis Robert and will be used to be able to offer a prospect: 8 Years 88 Mil [YR1 1.5 MIL, YR2 3.5 MIL, YR3 6 MIL, YR4 9.5 MIL, YR5 12.5 MIL, YR6 15 MIL, YR7 20 MIL, YR8 (Team Option) 20 MIL]
 - **Less Than 3 Full Years**: may sign an extension UP TO 4 years in length.
 - **Completed 3 or 4 Full Years**: may sign an extension UP TO 5 years in length.
 - **Completed 5 Full Years**: No restrictions on a contract extension.

Any violation of the above will be dealt with by the commissioner at his discretion, which may include, but not limited to, the immediate voiding of the contract and release of the player into free agency upon completion of the season to which the illegal contract was made.

- Restrictions on Player/Team Options: The availability of a GM to use team/player options or opt outs in a contract are restricted based on the length of the contract being signed as follows, provided, however, that *team options* are only allowed in the final year(s) of a contract:
 - **1-3 Years**: will be limited to no more than 1 option (Team, Player, Vesting) OR opt-out (either or, not both).
 - **4 or more years**: will be allowed to have UP TO 2 options (Team, Player, Vesting) OR one option and an opt-out
 - **Team Options**: allowed only at the end of contract (if two team options on a 4+ year deal then must be final 2 years).
- Vesting Options: Vesting options (AB, IP, G, etc) are not permitted. Any contract with a vesting option that was entered into after the 2021 season will be automatically converted into a guaranteed year. Vesting options entered into after June 17, 2020 (real life date) will not be permitted.
- Free Agent Contracts: You may offer any type of contract to a Free Agent, provided, however that:

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- No Vesting Options: Vesting options are not allowed (same rule as in the “Vesting Options” section above).
- Team Options: Team options are allowed, provided, however that the amount of the buyout must be equal to no less than 25% of the annual value in highest value year of the contract (Example: 3 years; year 1-\$2 mil, year 2-\$4mil, year 3-\$8mil team option; buyout must be at least \$2mil as that is 25% of highest value year (\$8M))
- Amateur Acquisitions: The FYP Draft will take place in Stats+. The Rule 5 draft will take place the same way, with the draft pool being locked 2 days ahead of the in-game date (protecting your players will be your job).
- International Free Agency: \$5M Default Cap.
- Trades:
 - Size of Trade/Proportion: In a trade, there is a maximum number of 3-pieces to 1-piece ratio. There is also a maximum of 8 pieces sent by either team in the trade. Attempting to circumvent these rules will result in a voided trade and potential loss of a draft pick at commissioner’s discretion.
 - Trade Restrictions:
 - Recently Signed Free Agents: Players signed to a contract in the offseason may not be traded until June 1 of the season that follows their signing (applies to Free Agent signings only; does not apply to players extending with their own team).
 - Trade’s Must be in Budget: No trade shall be allowed if either team will be in the red (negative budget or cash) after the deal is completed.
 - Prior Posting Requirement: Any player on 26-man roster or in top 100 prospects must be posted on the trade block for at least 24 hrs before a trade can be posted involving a player (this is done to allow full access to offers from the entire league).
 - How to Submit a Trade: To be processed, trades must be posted in the Slack section #finalized-trades. Trades must be posted in the following format to be processed.

Team 1: :team_emoji:
Pos. First_name Last_name (Level) – % Retention
Pos. First_name Last_name (Level)
\$ Cash, \$ INT FA, Draft Picks

Team 2: :team_emoji:
Pos. First_name Last_name (Level)
Pos. First_name Last_name (Level)
\$ Cash, \$ INT FA, Draft Picks

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- How to Confirm a Trade: Once a team posts a trade, each team owner must reply to that post confirming the trade and with a 1-2 sentence explanation of their reasoning for the trade. Managers are encouraged to deal with other GMs in good faith and are highly discouraged from agreeing to trades in private slack messages with another GM that they are not prepared to carry through with. In the event that there is clear evidence of a trade agreed to by both sides in private thread, evidence that can be verified via screenshot or live screencast, the commissioner has discretion to process such trade and fine the owner who backed out of the deal by an amount equal to 10% of their entire team budget for the following season. Deal fairly with your fellow players.
- Trades are then finalized by including them in your team's export. All teams trade exports will need to match to be enacted.
- Trading Cash: Cash can only be traded in increments of \$100,000.
- Salary Retention: The maximum amount of salary retention in a deal is 50%.
- Trade Rejection: The commissioner reserves the right to reject any trade believed not to be in the best interest of the league. Commissioner will review any trade that (i) receives 10 or more thumbs down once posted and/or (ii) in which the OOTP AI claims is severely one-sided (by both trading AI GMs). Although Commissioner will review such trades, it is highly unlikely that a trade will ever be rejected even if one-sided as GMs should be free to make the moves they desire and "fairness" is too subjective to govern.
- Offseason Events: There are several things that will happen in the offseason that are meant to make the league more realistic and keep some participation in the offseason.
 - Coach Recruitment: Any GM may make an offer of an MLB level job to a member of another team's minor league coaching staff. If such offer is made, the team who currently employs such coach shall (i) have a right to promote them to an MLB role and retain the coach or (ii) agree to let him go, provided, however that (A) the hiring team must make him an offer of \$1M per year for no less than 3 years and (B) the team losing the manager shall get 50% of the year 1 salary from that coach.
- GM Responsibility
 - Budget: GM's must be under budget at all times (in Green). Budgets for player development and scouting can be changed during the offseason and must be set prior to the first day of Spring Training and will be locked thereafter (as per standard OOTP settings).
 - Exports: GMs are expected to export each day whether or not any changes are made to their team. Failure to export for 4 days in a 7 day week is ground for removal. If you are going to be away and will not be export, please notify the commissioner. There are certain key dates that are required export days:

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- Day before ST begins
 - Opening Day
 - Arbitration Filing Day
 - Day before the Rule 5 Draft
- Rosters: Rosters must be kept within the size limits.
 - **DFA**: Players should not be left on DFA if the number of days left in their DFA allocation will be exceeded in the next SIM. Players left in DFA for a period that expires within a sim shall be released at the discretion of the league and/or subject manager to a \$50,000 fine per instance
 - **Lineups**: GM's are expected to have complete lineups for all MLB and minor league levels.
- Behave
 - Don't make it personal
 - Stop when asked to by League Officials
 - Communicate
- Slack/Stats+
 - Its expected to be active, get to know each other and respond. It does not take much. All league-wide notifications will be handled via slack only.
- OOTP
 - Export Your Team: File, Online, Export Team
 - Download File (each upload): file, online, download latest file
- Governance
 - Any proposed rule changes require a 2/3 Majority to be enacted.