**The Mario Mendoza Memorial League of Fantasy Baseball Official Rules**

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# Goal of Mendoza Baseball

Mendoza Baseball is an experimental fantasy baseball game run by a baseball fan and amateur programmer. The goal of Mendoza Baseball is to simulate as closely as possible the experience of owning and being the general manager of a Major League Baseball franchise. Transactions, roster rules, team financial performance and other details are designed to simulate the real thing. Player performance is scored using techniques informed by the latest research and calibrated to advanced metrics like Wins Above Replacement. Mendoza scoring and transaction rules are continually evolving in response to new research on performance value as well as changes in the structure of MLB.

# Scoring

Mendoza league standings are based on well-established, sabermetric techniques, and constantly evolve to keep up with the most recent research. League standings are built upon estimates of team runs scored and team runs allowed. These, in turn, are based on an evaluation of individual performance within the team, derived from sabermetric concepts such as value over replacement player.

## W-L Record

Winning percentage is calculated using Bill James' Pythagorean Theorem:

Win PCT = (Runs Scored)2 ÷ [(Runs Scored)2 + (Runs Allowed)2]

Total wins and losses for each team are calculated by multiplying the team winning percentage by the total number of games played.

## Runs Scored Calculation

### Base Formula

The base formula used to determine batter performance is Jim Furtado's Extrapolated Runs (XR). Extrapolated runs for each player are calculated as a simple weighted sum of all relevant hitting stats[[1]](#footnote-1).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stat** | **Weight** | **Example** | **Value** |
| Singles | .500 | 103 | 51.5 |
| Doubles | .720 | 46 | 33.1 |
| Triples | 1.040 | 1 | 1.0 |
| Home Runs | 1.440 | 29 | 41.8 |
| Stolen Bases | .180 | 1 | 0.2 |
| Caught Stealing | -.320 | 1 | -0.3 |
| Walks | .340 | 106 | 36.0 |
| Hit By Pitch | .340 | 3 | 1.0 |
| Intentional Walks\* | -.090 | 4 | -0.4 |
| Sacrifice Hits | .040 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Sacrifice Flies | .370 | 7 | 2.6 |
| Strikeouts\* | -.008 | 96 | -0.8 |
| Grounded into Double Play | -.370 | 13 | -4.8 |
| Batting Outs (AB-H) | -.090 | 377 | -33.9 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Extrapolated Runs |  |  | 127 |
| XR/27\*\* |  |  | 8.80 |

\* Incremental Values. IBB are also included in total walks, and strikeouts are included in total batting outs.  
\*\* XR/27 is included as a rate statistic that indicates the number of runs a team would score in a game (27 outs) if the player occupied all nine lineup positions. XR/27 is calculated as XR ÷ (AB + SAC + SF + CS + GIDP - H) \* 27.

### Position-Level Playing Time Requirements

In order to ensure that each team fields a lineup with the proper distribution of field positions, each of the nine field positions is subject to a maximum limit of 800 and a minimum limit of 650 plate appearances, with the exception of the pitcher/DH position, which has no minimum PA requirement. These limits are based on the average plate appearances by a ninth-place hitter and a leadoff hitter, respectively. The range of playing time provides an owner with some latitude to minimize the contribution of less productive hitters by limiting their plate appearances to the minimum number in a way that is analogous to making out a lineup.

If a team accumulates more than 800 plate appearances at a given position, production from that position is pro-rated to 800 plate appearances. For example, if a team accumulates 1000 PA and 100 XR at a single position, the production at that position is pro-rated to 800 PA and 80 XR. If a team does not accumulate at least 650 plate appearances at a given position, it accrues playing time (XR and outs) from a “replacement level” player for each of the remaining plate appearances. Replacement level is league-specific and position-specific, as discussed in Section 2.5.

### Team-Level Playing Time Adjustment

Playing time at the team level is normalized to 162 games per year. If the total number of outs made by the nine field positions is greater than 162 games times the actual number of outs per game, the team XR is pro-rated downward to determine team runs scored. No adjustment is made to the team XR if the team has not accumulated enough outs at the team level.

## Pitcher Runs Allowed Calculation

### Base Formula

The number of runs allowed by a team’s pitching staff is a function of each pitcher's runs allowed (RA) and innings pitched (IP).

### Pitcher Playing Time Adjustment

Pitcher playing time is normalized to 162 games per year based on the average number of innings per game in the current year. If the total number of innings pitched by the team is greater than the target, the team RA is pro-rated downward. If a team does not accumulate enough innings during the year, it accrues playing time from a “replacement level” pitcher for each of the remaining innings. Replacement level varies by league, as discussed in Section 2.5.

### Reliever Innings Leverage

Innings and runs allowed for relief pitchers are adjusted depending on the role assigned to them. Each team designates up to one closer, two short relievers, and up to twelve middle and twelve long relievers. When calculating team runs allowed, innings pitched and runs allowed are multiplied by the leverage adjustment factor for each reliever position. The leverage adjustment factor for each reliever position is listed in the table below. The adjustment is made after the replacement player innings have been added, so that reliever leverage has no effect on the number of innings that are required from replacement players.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mendoza Reliever Position** | **Innings Leverage Adjustment Factor** |
| Closer | 1.67 |
| Short reliever | 1.33 |
| Middle reliever | 1.00 |
| Long reliever | 0.67 |

### Starts Made by Mendoza Relief Pitchers

If a pitcher that is used as a reliever in Mendoza makes a start in MLB, that appearance will be logged as a start in Mendoza, regardless of which relief position the player is assigned in Mendoza.

### Relief Appearances Made by Mendoza Starting Pitchers

If a pitcher that is used as a starter in Mendoza makes a relief appearance in MLB, that appearance will be logged as a middle relief appearance in Mendoza, with leverage of 1.0.

## Defensive Runs Saved

### Base Formula

The number of runs allowed by a team’s pitching staff is adjusted based on the defensive performance of position players. Mendoza Baseball uses Baseball Info Solutions’ Total Runs Saved (TRS, also known as Defensive Runs Saved (DRS)) metric[[2]](#footnote-2). TRS measures a player’s defensive performance relative to league average at his position. A TRS score of +10 means that a player saved 10 runs relative to league average. These 10 runs are subtracted from the team’s Runs Allowed. TRS are normalized to full season to develop a rate statistic: TRS162, representing the total runs saved from playing 162 games at a given position. TRS are not applied to pitchers; pitchers’ defensive performance is already captured in the pitching runs allowed calculations.

### Defensive Playing Time Adjustment

Defensive playing time is normalized to 162 games per year. If the total number of innings played by the team at each position is greater than the target, the team TRS is pro-rated downward. If a team does not accumulate enough innings played during the year at a given position, it accrues playing time from a “replacement level” defensive player for each of the remaining innings. Replacement level varies by league, as discussed in Section 2.5.

### Players Played Out of Position

Mendoza players can be played at positions other than what they play in MLB, subject to the position eligibility requirements discussed in Section 3.5. However, their defensive performance is adjusted to reflect differences in difficulty for each position. The adjustments listed in the table below are for a full season (162 games played at a position). For example, if Player X plays first base for 162 games in MLB but his Mendoza owner plays him at catcher for 162 games, his defensive performance will be adjusted downward by 21 runs. No adjustment is made for playing at an easier defensive position; a first baseman playing catcher is penalized 21 runs per 162 games, but a catcher is given no additional credit for playing first base.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLB Position** | | | | | | | |
| **Mendoza  Position** | **C** | **1B** | **2B** | **3B** | **SS** | **LF** | **CF** | **RF** |
| C | - | -21 | -7 | -10 | -4 | -16 | -13 | -16 |
| 1B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2B | - | -14 | - | -3 | - | -9 | -6 | -9 |
| 3B | - | -11 | - | - | - | -6 | -3 | -6 |
| SS | - | -17 | -3 | -6 | - | -12 | -9 | -12 |
| LF | - | -5 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| CF | - | -8 | - | - | - | -3 | - | -3 |
| RF | - | -5 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

## Replacement Level

Teams that do not accumulate enough playing time at a given position receive playing time from a “replacement level” player. This feature is meant to mimic the ability of MLB teams to promote players from their minor league system in the event of an injury to a starter or other need of playing time, an ability that Mendoza teams do not have. However, providing this ability to Mendoza teams involves a tradeoff, because the higher the replacement level, the less incentive a Mendoza team has to field a complete roster. In order to provide incentives for active roster management, Mendoza Baseball uses a replacement level that is lower than is commonly used to calculate Wins Above Replacement. These values are recalibrated periodically as the MLB run scoring environment changes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Replacement Team W-L** | **Runs Scored per Game** | **Batter OBP** | **Pitching Runs Allowed per Game** | **Defensive Runs Saved per 162 Games** |
| 0-162 | 0.00 | .000 | 9.00 | -10 |
| 27-135 | 2.87 | .250 | 5.98 | -8 |

### Position Adjustment

Replacement-level production is also position-specific for field position players. Runs Scored per Game are multiplied by the Adjustment Factors listed in the table below to determine position-specific production levels in runs per game or XR27. For example, a replacement-level catcher produces 2.87\*.836 = 2.40 runs per 27 outs.

A similar adjustment is made for defensive performance. If the league replacement level is set to 27 wins, a replacement-level catcher saves -8/.836 = -9.6 runs per 162 games, i.e., allows 9.6 runs more than the average catcher.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Replacement Level Adjustment Factor** |
| Catcher | 0.836 |
| First Base/DH | 1.100 |
| Second Base | 0.918 |
| Third Base | 0.965 |
| Shortstop | 0.886 |
| Left Field | 1.036 |
| Center Field | 1.004 |
| Right Field | 1.033 |
| Pitcher | 0.119 |

## Daily Standings Updates

Mendoza standings are updated daily based on an estimated number of games played thus far in the year. The daily standings provide an indication of how each team is faring at any given time. However, final league standings are calculated based on the cumulative stats accrued by each team at the end of the year. This means it is possible for a team’s win total to increase one day and decrease the next day. Thus, the daily standings are only indicative of what the final result would be if the season ended on that day.

## Earnings

Each Mendoza owner pays his team payroll into a pot that is divided among all owners according to the formula described below. In addition, some owners pay luxury taxes. The earnings formula is designed to simulate the economic system of MLB by providing financial rewards both to teams that win and to teams with low payrolls. There is no explicit “revenue-sharing”, i.e., monies that are collected from high-revenue teams and distributed to low-revenue teams. However, this dynamic is implicit in the formulas below, and the system as a whole does a reasonable job of simulating MLB earnings.

There are three types of earnings: regular earnings, bonus earnings and luxury tax earnings.

### Earnings Based on Total Wins

Half of the gross league payroll is divided among teams according to the number of wins. Each team’s number of wins is divided by the sum of all teams’ wins, and the result is multiplied by 50% of the league payroll to determine the team’s regular earnings.

### Earnings Based on Division Standings

The other half of the gross league payroll is divided among teams according to position in the standings. Under the default formula, the first place team receives X shares, where X is the number of teams in the league. The second place team receives X-1 shares, etc. The last place team receives one share. In some cases, leagues have established league-specific payouts for division winners, conference winners, league champions and wild cards.

### Luxury Tax Earnings

Luxury tax revenues are divided equally among all teams.

# Rosters and Lineups

## Major League Roster (40-man roster)

The Major League Roster consists of up to 40 players from the Eligible Player Pool. Players on the Major League Roster must be assigned to a field position, to the injured list, or on optional assignment to a minor league affiliate.

## Active Roster (30-man roster)

The Active Roster consists of up to 30 players from the Major League Roster. Players on the Active Roster must be assigned to a field or bench position in the daily lineup. Players must be part of the Active Roster in order to be eligible for inclusion in the daily lineup. During the month of September, the Active Roster can be expanded to 40 players.

## Minor League Rosters

Each Mendoza team may maintain a Minor League Roster. There are two categories of minor league players:

* Minor League Free Agents: Each team may maintain a roster of up to 20 Minor League Free Agent players from the Eligible Player Pool.
* Reserve Clause Players: Each team may maintain an unlimited number of players who were originally acquired via the Minor League Draft and are not yet in the Eligible Player Pool.

## Spring Reserve Roster

Prior to Opening Day, Mendoza teams may assign players to the Spring Reserve Roster. This enables the team to evaluate a provisional 30-man Active Roster and submit draft lineups for Opening Day. Players can be moved back and forth between the Spring Reserve Roster and the Major League Roster at any time without restriction. Players must be moved from the Spring Reserve Roster to a regular roster as soon as possible after Opening Day.

## Daily Lineup Submission

Daily lineups may be submitted up to seven days in advance. If a team does not submit a new lineup, the previous day’s lineup is carried over. The deadline for submitting a lineup each day is 12 PM Eastern Time.

A team’s daily lineup consists of up to 30 players. Each team must designate at least one player at each of the nine field positions (including pitcher) in order for a lineup to be valid. Lineups that do not include at least one player at each position are rejected.

### Batters

* Catcher
* First base
* Second base
* Third base
* Shortstop
* Left field
* Center field
* Right field
* Designated hitter/Pinch hitter (optional)

Up to 6 players can be assigned to each field position. At least one player must be assigned to each position except DH/PH.

### Pitchers

* Starting pitcher (up to 12)
* Closer (1 only)
* Short reliever (up to 2)
* Middle reliever (up to 12)
* Long reliever (up to 12)

A valid lineup must have at least one pitcher, but there is no requirement to fill any of the specific pitcher roles, e.g., a team is not required to designate a closer.

### Bench Position

In addition to the above positions, batters and pitchers may also be placed at a “Bench” position. Players listed at Bench do not contribute to Mendoza team stats but do count toward the 30-player maximum.

## Position Eligibility

### Batters

At the beginning of the season, *primary* eligibility is established at any position at which a player started at least 5 Major League games or played at least 45 innings in the Major Leagues during the previous year. If he did not start at least 5 games or play at least 45 innings at any position, he will initially be eligible at a single position based on minor league playing time and/or pre-season publications (mlb.com, Baseball Prospectus, STATS Notebooks, etc.). During the season, a player receives primary eligibility at an additional position once he starts at least 5 games or plays at least 45 innings at that position.

For left field, primary eligibility is established when the player starts at least 5 games or plays at least 45 innings at either left field or right field.

A player will receive *secondary* eligibility at additional positions under the following conditions:

* 1B: Started at least two games in the last year or three games in the last two years, or played at least 18 innings in the last year or 27 innings in the last two years at 1B; AND has primary eligibility at C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, LF, CF or RF.
* 2B: Started at least two games in the last year or three games in the last two years, or played at least 18 innings in the last year or 27 innings in the last two years at 2B; AND has primary eligibility at 3B or SS.
* 3B: Started at least two games in the last year or three games in the last two years, or played at least 18 innings in the last year or 27 innings in the last two years at 3B; AND has primary eligibility at 2B or SS.
* LF: Started at least two games in the last year or three games in the last two years, or played at least 18 innings in the last year or 27 innings in the last two years at LF; AND has primary eligibility at CF or RF.
* RF: Started at least two games in the last year or three games in the last two years, or played at least 18 innings in the last year or 27 innings in the last two years at RF; AND has primary eligibility at LF or CF.

There is no distinction between primary and secondary eligibility for lineup submission or scoring; any player can be played for any number of games at any position for which he has either primary or secondary eligibility.

### Pitchers

All pitchers are eligible to be used as either a starting pitcher or a reliever. However, pitcher performance will be adjusted depending on the role as described in Section 2.3.

## Assigning Newly-Acquired Players

After acquiring a new player, whether in a Mendoza auction, through a trade, or other means, the player must be assigned to a roster and position before any other transaction can be made.

# Transactions

## Injured List

There are two types of injured list in Mendoza Baseball, a 10-day Injured List and a 60-day Injured List.

### 10-Day Injured List

Players that are on the 10-day injured list of their MLB teams may be placed on the Mendoza 10-day Injured List. Players who are on the 10-day IL continue to count against a team’s 40-man Major League Roster.

### 60-Day Injured List

Any player who is on his MLB team’s 60-day IL may also be placed on his Mendoza team’s 60-day IL. A player who is on the 60-day IL does not count against his team’s 40-man Major League Roster.

### Activation by MLB Team

When a player on a Mendoza IL is activated from his MLB team's IL, his Mendoza team must clear a space for him on its roster. No other roster moves will be allowed until the player is activated.

## Optional Assignment

Players with less than three years of Major League service time or who are not on the active roster of an MLB team can be placed on optional assignment to a minor league affiliate. Players on optional assignment remain on the Major League Roster but are removed from the Active Roster and are therefore not available to be placed in the major league lineup. There is no limit to the number of times a player can be optioned or recalled. However, each optional assignment must last at least ten days. Options may be revoked prior to the ten-day minimum stay if a player on the team’s active roster goes on the injured list.

## Moving Players between the Minor League Roster and the Major League Roster

Players with less than 6 years of service time can be demoted to the Major League Roster to the Minor League Roster at any time. However, all players must pass through Assignment Waivers before they can be assigned to the Minor League Roster. Players may be promoted from the Minor League Roster to the Major League Roster at any time. Players with more than 6 years of service time cannot be placed on Assignment Waivers unless they are under long-term contract to their Mendoza team (with the contract extending into the following season). Players signed to Minor League Contracts in the Instant Auction are placed directly on the Minor League Roster.

## Waivers

There are two types of waivers in Mendoza Baseball: Assignment Waivers and Release Waivers. A team may seek waivers on any player at any time. A waived player is immediately removed from the team’s Major League Roster. Waivers last seven days, during which time any team may place a claim on the waived player. At the end of the seven days, all waiver claims are evaluated, and the player is awarded to the team with the worst record. The claiming team assumes the player contract and all salary obligations. During the first 30 days of the season, the final record from the previous year is used to establish waiver claim priority.

### Assignment Waivers

Assignment Waivers allow a player to be moved from the Major League Roster to the Minor League Roster. If no team claims a player on assignment waivers, he is automatically assigned to the waiving team’s Minor League Roster.

### Release Waivers

If a player on Release Waivers is not claimed during the seven-day period, he is automatically released and is available to be signed by any team during the next weekly free agent auction. The waiving team continues to be responsible for the player’s salary for the remainder of the contract term. Players that are under long-term contract (contract extending into following season) cannot be placed on release waivers.

## Releasing Players from the Minor League Roster

A player can be released from his Mendoza team’s Minor League Roster at any time. The releasing team continues to be responsible for the player’s salary for the remainder of the contract term. Players that are under long-term contract (contract extending into following season) cannot be released.

## Trades

Trading is permitted between January 15th and August 31st each year. Trades must be submitted to the Commissioner for approval using the "Propose Trade" form. The trade is official immediately upon Commissioner approval. Teams may trade players for other players, cash or both. However, any cash included in a trade must be approved by the commissioner and counted against the team's salary cap. No other considerations may be offered or accepted in a Mendoza trade.

# Player Contracts and Team Payroll

## Player contracts

Player contracts are signed by submitting the winning bid in any Mendoza Free Agent Auction. When signing a player, a team commits to pay the salary of the player as determined in the auction for the duration of the contract. A team may transfer the contract and salary obligation to another team through a trade or waiver claim. Player contracts are voided and the salary obligation is eliminated when a player is removed from the Eligible Player Pool for reason of death, interleague trade or retirement from MLB. The salary obligation is retained for all other transactions, including reserving, disabling, or releasing a player.

## Multi-Year Player Contracts

Mendoza leagues may choose to allow multi-year player contracts. In order to ensure the integrity of multi-year contracts, one year of salary is due at the end of the year for each player on a multi-year contract. This amount is withheld from the team’s end-of-year disbursement.

## Transferring a Contract

Contracts are transferred from one Mendoza team to another via trades or waiver claims. Salaries of transferred contracts are assigned to teams based on the number of days the player spends with each team and the total number of days in the contract. For example, a player signed during the Spring Auctions is paid over 182 season days. If the player is traded on the 100th day of the season, the original team pays 100/182 of the player’s salary, and the new team pays 82/182 of the salary. A player signed on the 50th day of the season is paid over 132 days. If this player is traded on the 100th day of the season, the original team pays 50/132 of the salary, and the new team pays 82/132 of the salary.

## Refund for MLB Suspensions Without Pay

In the event that a player is suspended without pay by MLB, Mendoza team owners will receive a refund for the player’s salary for the duration of the MLB suspension.

## Eligible Player Pool

The Eligible Player Pool is established each year in early March and comprises all players in camp with an MLB team of the appropriate league that have made their MLB debuts. In addition, international free agents who sign major league contracts with total salary obligations greater than $10 million are added to the Eligible Player Pool during spring training. Players that are not in camp with an MLB team of the appropriate league as of March 1 are assumed to be retired and are excluded from the Eligible Player Pool. Minor League players are not part of the Eligible Player Pool and cannot be signed to a Mendoza contract, but are eligible to be drafted in the Mendoza Minor League Draft.

During the season, players who are called up from the minor leagues are immediately added to the Eligible Player Pool and are available to be signed during the next weekly auction, except during the Minor League Draft when they are held out of the Eligible Player Pool. The Eligible Player Pool is not updated for players that are released by their MLB teams, hence a Mendoza team remains responsible for the salary of a player that is released by his MLB team until for the remainder of the season. Treatment of players who are traded to the opposing MLB league may be different for each Mendoza league, as described in the following subsections.

### Immediate Release

For an AL-only or NL-only league that selects the Immediate Release option, players that are in spring training camp with an MLB team of the opposite league are excluded from the Eligible Player Pool. During the season, players who are traded into the corresponding MLB league are immediately added to the Eligible Player Pool and are available to be signed during the next weekly auction. When a player is traded *out* of the corresponding MLB league, his Mendoza contract is voided and his Mendoza team receives a credit equal to the remaining salary that would have been owned. The remaining salary also does not count against the Mendoza Salary Cap.

### End-of-Season Release

For leagues selecting the End-of-Season Release option, players that are traded to the opposite MLB league remain in the Mendoza Eligible Player Pool until the end of the current season. All interleague trades are processed and contracts voided during the off-season. Players who are traded *into* the corresponding MLB league are added to the Eligible Player Pool during the off-season following the MLB trade.

### End-of-Contract Release

For leagues selecting the End-of-Contract Release option, players that are traded to the opposite MLB league remain in the Mendoza Eligible Player Pool until they are eligible for free agency. This occurs when they reach 6 years of MLB service time or at the end of their current contract, whichever comes later. Players who are traded *into* the corresponding MLB league are added to the Eligible Player Pool during the off-season following the MLB trade.

### All-MLB Leagues

For all-MLB leagues, the Eligible Player Pool includes all players employed by any MLB team.

## Relationship to Minor League Draft

Minor League players that are signed through the Mendoza Minor League Draft become part of the Mendoza Eligible Player Pool once they have made their MLB debuts. Minor League players are held out of the Eligible Player Pool while the Minor League Draft is taking place. These players are made eligible for the Weekly Free Agent Auction upon conclusion of the Minor League Draft.

## Salary Cap

Team payrolls may not exceed the Salary Cap for more than three consecutive days. Team payroll includes the salaries of players on both the minor league and the major league rosters. Cash that changes hands as part of a trade is also counted against the salary cap. Administrative fees are not counted against the salary cap. The Salary Cap for 2023 is **$235**.

### Penalty for Salary Cap Violation

Violation of the salary cap will result in loss of the team's highest-paid player. If the team is still above the cap after subtracting the salary of the player lost, the team will lose the next-highest paid player, and so on until the team payroll is below the salary cap. A penalty will also be imposed that is equal to the salaries of the players lost. The penalty counts against the salary cap. The players lost become available for bidding during the next free agent auction.

A team that is over the salary cap will not be allowed to make any transactions except for the purpose of reducing payroll below the cap. Transactions that would put a team over the cap will not be allowed.

## Luxury Tax

A Luxury Tax is assessed against team payroll amounts above the Luxury Tax threshold based on the Collective Bargaining Agreement between MLB and the MLB Players’ Association. Luxury Tax monies are distributed equally among all teams in the league. Administrative fees are not assessed a luxury tax. The luxury tax rate for 2023 is **50%** on payroll above **$185.**

# Auctions and Drafts

## Types of Mendoza Auctions

### Spring Free Agent Auctions

Each Mendoza league holds one or more Spring Free Agent Auctions each year. The dates, closing times, and assignment of players to auction dates are determined by the league commissioners, subject to a completion deadline. The default format is as follows:

* All players in the eligible player pool are randomly assigned to one of three auction pools.
* Bidding closes at pre-specified times on all players in each auction pool, generally (though not necessarily) on different days.
* Any players not signed during a given auction continue to be available for subsequent auctions. Players not signed by the end of the third auction are made available for the Instant Auction.

### Weekly Free Agent Auction

During the regular season, free agent auctions are held weekly. Weekly Free Agent Auctions close at 10 PM Eastern Time each Thursday and are subject to the same auction rules as the Spring Auctions. The first weekly auction is held during the second week of the regular season. The final weekly auction is held on the first Thursday after the first Monday of September.

### Instant Auction

Any Eligible Player Pool players not signed at the conclusion or the Spring Auctions or during a Weekly Free Agent Auction are available to be signed to a Minor League Contract in the Instant Auction for the Mendoza Minimum Salary. Players signed in the Instant Auction are placed directly onto the signing team’s Minor League Roster. Unless otherwise stated, players are eligible to be signed in the Instant Auction starting 24 hours after the scheduled close of the final Spring Auction or the Weekly Auction in which they appeared.

## Auction Rules

### Bid Submission

Mendoza bids constitute a binding contract offer for the price and duration specified by the owner. All bids are submitted via the bid submission form available on the Mendoza site. The minimum bid is the Mendoza Minimum Player Salary, and all bids must be in 25-cent increments. If a team submits more than one bid on a player, only the most recent bid will be active. However, all bids that are less than or equal to the current auction price will be rejected, regardless of the owner.

### Mendoza Minimum Player Salary

The Mendoza Minimum Player Salary for Pool Eligible Players is $0.50/year. The salary for Minor League Players is $0.25/year.

### Price Calculation

Mendoza Baseball uses "second-price" auctions. This means that the auction price is equal to the second-highest bid, except in the case where a bid results in a new winning bidder, in which case the auction price is equal to the second-highest bid plus 25 cents.

### Bidding and Price Calculation in Multi-Year Leagues

If allowed by the league, owners may offer contracts of up to five years’ duration. Bids of different duration are compared by converting each bid to an "equivalent value" for a common length of time. The winning bid is the one with highest equivalent value. The equivalent value formula gives owners a small discount for offering contracts of longer terms. The auction price is then equal to the second-highest equivalent bid, converted to the number of years offered by the winning bidder. Leagues also specify the minimum bid allowed for multi-year contracts.

Multi-year contracts may be offered only during the Spring Auctions. Only 1-year contracts may be offered during the Weekly Free Agent Auctions.

### Overtime Bidding

If a bid is submitted with less than two minutes remaining in a Free Agent Auction, the auction close time for that player is extended by two minutes. Each subsequent bid extends the closing time by another two minutes from the time of the last bid. The auction closes two minutes after the last bid is submitted on a player.

### After the Auction Close

After the Spring Auction, owners will have until the final spring roster deadline to assign a roster spot to newly acquired players. Prior to Opening Day, players can be assigned to the Spring Reserve Roster. For all other Mendoza auctions, players must be assigned before any other roster move can be made.

### Limitations on Outstanding Bids

No team may have outstanding bids greater than two times the salary cap. Bids that would cause a team to exceed this limit are rejected. Total outstanding bids can be reduced by lowering the bid price on a winning bid.

## Minor League Draft

### Description

Mendoza leagues may elect to hold a Minor League Draft to allow teams to acquire prospects before they reach MLB. Leagues may elect to allow drafts of up to ten players. Mendoza teams draft in the reverse order of the prior year’s standings.

### Mandatory Participation

If a league elects to hold a Minor League Draft, all teams are required to participate and select a player during each round. If a team is unable or unwilling to participate, the league Commissioner will make draft selections on the team’s behalf and the team’s ownership status will be reviewed at the end of the season. Commissioner selections will occur at the end of the round following the round with the missed pick. For example, if a team misses its 2nd round pick, the Commissioner shall select for that team at the end of the 3rd round.

### Eligible Minor League Players

The Eligible Minor League Player pool for the Minor League Draft includes all minor league baseball players with ID numbers at <http://www.milb.com> that were drafted or signed by their MLB team prior to the start of the season, and that had not yet made their MLB debuts by the end of the previous season, with the exception of certain International Free Agents.

Minor league players who debut during the current season are held out of the auctions until the conclusion of the Minor League Draft.

Players that are signed or drafted by MLB teams during the current season are not eligible for the Mendoza draft until the following season.

Players that are traded between MLB leagues while the Mendoza draft is underway are ineligible to be drafted until the following year.

### Entering a Draft Pick

Draft picks are entered on the Mendoza Draft Board. The owner must enter the player’s 6-digit MLB ID#. These can be found in the URL bar for the player's page on the MILB.com website. For example, the player’s MLB ID# is highlighted in yellow below:   
  
[www.milb.com/player/index.jsp?sid=milb&player\_id=660162#/career/R/hitting/2017/ALL](http://www.milb.com/player/index.jsp?sid=milb&player_id=660162#/career/R/hitting/2017/ALL)

Entering the ID# serves as the sole verification of the pick; it is therefore incumbent on the owner to enter the correct ID#.

If the player is not already registered in the Mendoza system, the owner will be prompted to enter the player’s name, team and position. Owners should take extra care to ensure that the information entered is accurate.

### International Free Agents

International free agents that sign Major League contracts with total salary obligations greater than $10 million are added to the Eligible Player Pool and are available in the Free Agent Auction. All other players signed as international free agents are eligible to be drafted.

### Signing Bonuses

Drafted Minor League Players are eligible to receive signing bonuses of up to $8. Bonuses are awarded on a sliding scale based on MLB.com’s Top 100 Prospects list and team Top 30 prospects. The annual salary for Minor League Players is $0.25. Signing bonuses and minor league salaries count against the Mendoza Salary Cap during the year in which they are paid.

### Compensation Draft Picks for Players Lost to Interleague Trades

Mendoza teams may be eligible for Compensation Draft Picks if they lose players due to interleague trades. Compensation Draft Picks are awarded under the following conditions:

* The player was on a Mendoza team’s roster at the time of the interleague trade;
* AND the player has less than 4 years of MLB service time;
* AND the player had salary of less than $6 during the previous year;
* AND the player is either a current or recent top prospect OR a current or recent top performer at his position.

The round in which the Compensation Draft Pick is awarded is determined as follows:

* First Round:
  + If the player’s previous year salary was less than $2,
  + AND the player is ranked between 1 and 100 in the current year’s MLB.com Top 100 Prospects list,
* Second Round:
  + If the player’s previous year salary was less than $2,
  + AND the player was ranked between 1 and 100 in the MLB.com Top 100 Prospects list the previous year,
  + OR the player is ranked between 1 and 5 in the MLB.com Top 30 prospect list for his team,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 40 pitchers in the MLB by RAP the previous year,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 10 players in the MLB at his best field position by XR the previous year,
* Third Round:
  + If the player’s previous year salary was less than $2,
  + AND the player was ranked between 1 and 100 in the MLB.com Top 100 Prospects list two years before,
  + OR player is ranked between 6 and 10 in the MLB.com Top 30 prospect list for his team,
* Fourth Round:
  + If the player’s previous year salary was less than $4,
  + AND the player was ranked between 1 and 100 in the MLB.com Top 100 Prospects list three years before,
  + OR the player is ranked between 11 and 20 in the MLB.com Top 30 prospect list for his team,
  + OR the player was ranked between 1 and 10 in the MLB.com Top 30 prospect list for his team in the previous year,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 80 pitchers in the MLB by RAP the previous year,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 20 players in the MLB at his best field position by XR the previous year,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 40 pitchers in the MLB by RAP two years before,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 10 players in the MLB at his best field position by XR two years before,
  + OR the player’s previous year salary was greater than or equal to $2 and less than $4 and the player would otherwise be eligible for First, Second or Third Round compensation,
* Fifth Round:
  + If the player is ranked between 21 and 30 in the MLB.com Top 30 prospect list for his team,
* Sixth Round:
  + If the player is ranked between 11 and 20 in the MLB.com Top 30 prospect list for his team the previous year,
  + OR the player was ranked between 1 and 10 in the MLB.com Top 30 prospect list for his team two years before,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 80 pitchers in the MLB by RAP two years before,
  + OR the player ranked in the top 20 players in the MLB at his best field position by XR two years before,
  + OR the player’s previous year salary was greater than or equal to $4 and less than $6 and the player would otherwise be eligible for First, Second, Third, Fourth or Fifth Round compensation,
  + OR the player was drafted in the past three years and is not eligible under any other criterion.

If there is more than one compensation pick at the end of a round, the picks are made in the same order as the regular draft picks.

### Prohibition on Trading Draft Picks and Minor League Players

Mendoza teams may not trade draft picks. In addition, players that are acquired via the Minor League Draft may not be traded until either (a) the off-season following the year in which the player is drafted, or (b) the player is called up to his MLB team, whichever comes first. Mendoza owners may not include a “player-to-be-named-later” in a trade.

# Reserve Clause and Player Service Time

## Players with Less than Six Years’ Service Time

Players with less than six years’ MLB Service Time are bound to their teams by the Reserve Clause and may have their contracts unilaterally renewed. In some cases, a small raise in salary may be required. In addition, players with less than three years’ service time may be placed on optional assignment to a minor league affiliate. Players who meet service time requirements have the right to salary arbitration, described in the next section.

## Salary Arbitration Rights for Players Who Meet Service Time Requirements

Players with more than three years and less than six years of MLB Service Time, along with players designated by MLB as “Super Two” players, have the right to salary arbitration. In salary arbitration, the player and the owner submit salary offers to an arbitrator, who chooses either one side or the other based on which offer is closer to the arbitrator’s neutral view of a fair market salary. The arbitrator must choose a winning side, i.e., they may not choose a number in between the two offers.

Mendoza Baseball uses an Arbitration Simulator to estimate both the player’s and the arbitrator’s view of the player’s fair market salary. The Arbitration Simulator uses MLB performance data from the past three years and salary data from the most recent Mendoza season. Salary scales are league-specific and position-specific. The player’s fair market salary is discounted depending on service time:

* 70% for players with two years of service time;
* 60% for players with three years of service time;
* 40% for players with four years of service time; and
* 30% for players with five years of service time.

The decision to offer arbitration and the arbitrator's decision are binding and result in a contractual obligation to the player for the following year.

### Process for Completing Mendoza Salary Arbitration

1. Owner submits a salary offer. Submission of a valid salary offer begins the arbitration process and renews the player’s contract for the following year. The owner may not submit an offer that is less than the player’s current salary. The owner will have only one chance to submit an offer, and may not change that offer at a later time.
2. Player submits a salary request based on performance during the past three years and expected average salaries for the following year.
3. If the owner’s offer is higher than the player’s request, the player will immediately accept the owner's offer, the arbitration process will terminate, and the player’s salary will be equal to the team’s offer.
4. After seeing the player’s salary request, the owner may opt to terminate the arbitration proceeding and allow the player to become a free agent. The player will then be available to be signed by any team in the subsequent Spring Auction.
5. The owner may offer to settle at the midpoint between the owner’s offer and the player’s request. If the player and owner numbers are close, the player may accept the offer. If this occurs, the arbitration process terminates and the player's salary is established at the settlement price.
6. If no settlement is reached, the case goes to hearing, and the arbitrator selects the offer that is closer to their own salary estimate.
7. Results of arbitration cases are announced after the arbitration deadline.

### Declining to Offer a Contract, i.e., “Non-tendering”

Owners are not required to offer contracts to Reserve Clause players. Owners that do not wish to offer contracts must “non-tender” the player by selecting that option on the contract extension page. Non-tendered players become free agents and are available to be signed by any team in the subsequent Spring Auction.

## Eligibility for Free Agency

Players with more than six years of service time are eligible for free agency and may not have their contracts renewed. These players can be signed by any team during the Spring Auction with no restriction or penalty.

## Minor League Players

Minor League Players are bound to their teams by the Reserve Clause and may have their contracts unilaterally renewed. Minor League Players may remain on the Minor League Roster until the off-season after their first MLB appearance.

## Major League Players on Minor League Roster

Major League Players that are on a Mendoza team’s Minor League Roster may be re-signed during the off-season, if otherwise eligible based on MLB Service Time. These players must either be added to the Major League Roster by Opening Day, or else must pass through waivers before being reassigned to the Minor League Roster.

# September Rules

There are several rules changes that are in force during September of each year.

## Active Roster

During September, the Active Roster is increased from 30 to 40 players. Up to 40 players can be included in a Mendoza team’s daily lineup.

## Trades

Trading is not allowed during the month of September. Any trade that is submitted to the commissioner after midnight on September 1 will be rejected by the commissioner.

## Weekly Auctions

The final weekly auction is held on the first Thursday after the first Monday in September. Players who make their Major League debut on or after September 1 will not be included in the final weekly auction. These players can be signed during the following spring auction.

# Payments

## Deposit

Reserving a Mendoza team requires a non-refundable deposit of **$100**. This deposit will be returned in the event that the Mendoza league folds before the start of the regular season. The deposit pays the admin fee, and the remainder serves as a credit toward salary obligations from the spring auction.

## Admin Fee

The administration fee for Mendoza leagues is **$50** per team per year. This fee is assessed during April of each year. The admin fee is **$25** per team per year for a Mendoza owner’s second and third teams. Subsequent teams are available with no additional admin fee.

## Team Payrolls

Mendoza owners must submit payment for their entire team payroll by May 1of each year. All payroll monies are disbursed at the end of the year according to the formula described above under "Standings".

## Method of Payment

Payment must be made via Paypal to [commish@mendozabaseball.com](mailto:commish@mendozabaseball.com).

## End-of-Year Disbursement

Mendoza Baseball will send monies owed to Mendoza teams by November 30 of each year. End-of-year disbursements for each team will be sent via Paypal to the e-mail address registered at Mendoza Baseball. Paypal may require owners to establish Paypal accounts to receive these funds. Paypal does not currently charge for these accounts, but does levy a transaction fee on money transfers.

## Retaining Funds at Mendoza Baseball

Mendoza teams may opt to have a $100 deposit withheld from the end-of-year disbursement in order to retain their franchise ownership for the following year. Teams that do not opt to retain at least $100 in their Mendoza accounts are made available to prospective new owners. Teams may opt to retain any amount of additional funds in their Mendoza accounts. Mendoza Baseball does not pay interest on funds held in Mendoza accounts, but retaining funds at Mendoza Baseball helps owners avoid Paypal transaction fees of 3.5% or higher.

# Governance

## League Commissioner

Each league is governed by a commissioner selected from among league owners. The commissioner is designated by the Mendoza Administrator with the advice and consent of the league. The commissioner is vested with the authority to act in the best interests of the league in establishing the league preferences, recruiting owners, approving or rejecting transactions, resolving disputes, and monitoring owner behavior. Commissioners have broad authority to take necessary enforcement actions against owner misbehavior including fines, temporary suspension of privileges, and in severe cases, franchise revocation. The Commissioner must exercise prudent judgment and act consistently and in the best interests of the league at all times.

## Override of Commissioner Decision

Any commissioner decision can be overridden, or a new commissioner selected, by a vote of two-thirds of league owners. The owners must email their votes directly to the Mendoza Administrator. The Administrator will implement the decision of the league once he has received affirmative emails from two-thirds of league owners.

## Mendoza Administrator

All other authorities rest with the Mendoza Administrator. In particular, the Administrator may suspend or revoke a Mendoza franchise for failure to make payments when due. In addition, the Administrator reserves the right to change the rules at any time in order to enhance the simulation. However, every effort will be made to seek feedback on proposed changes and to minimize disruptions to existing owners, particularly those with players signed to long-term contracts.

## E-mail Notification

Certain Mendoza transactions require owners to take timely action. For example, an owner that submits the winning bid on a player in a Mendoza auction has three days to find a roster spot for that player. Also, if a player on a Mendoza IL is activated by his MLB team, the Mendoza owner will have seven days to move the player to an active roster spot. Mendoza Baseball generally sends automated daily e-mail notifications to owners in these circumstances. However, e-mail notification is a courtesy only. Mendoza owners are responsible for maintaining their rosters according to Mendoza rules, and the roster rules will be enforced regardless of whether e-mail notifications are sent or received. Mendoza emails are sometimes marked as “spam” or “junk” and delivered to bulk mail folders. Owners are encouraged to add [commish@mendozabaseball.com](mailto:commish@mendozabaseball.com) to their contact lists and take other steps to whitelist it to prevent these emails from being diverted.

## Announcements

From time-to-time, the Administrator may need to make general announcements that affect all leagues. The forum for doing this is the Mendoza Discussion Board. It is the responsibility of each owner to periodically check the Mendoza Discussion Board for news, announcements, updates, etc.

## Anti-Competitive Behavior

Mendoza Leagues are designed to be competitive leagues. Anti-competitive behavior is strictly forbidden and will not be tolerated. Examples of anti-competitive behavior include:

* Fixing or attempting to fix prices in a Mendoza auction
* Agreeing not to bid on specified players in a Mendoza auction
* Agreeing to share end-of-season earnings
* Agreeing to considerations in a trade other than players and cash as reported to the Commissioner

Trades made for the primary purpose of shedding payroll do not necessarily constitute anti-competitive behavior, nor do trades that involve a tradeoff of future vs. current value, such as a veterans-for-prospects trade. League commissioners must consider the unique aspects of Mendoza Baseball relative to other fantasy baseball games, in particular the simulation of franchise economics and the ongoing nature of franchise ownership. With these considerations in mind, league commissioners have the authority to use their best judgment in the long-term interests of the league to define and take enforcement actions against anti-competitive behavior.

1. For more details on Extrapolated Runs, see Jim's [Baseball Think Factory Website](http://www.baseballthinkfactory.org/btf/scholars/furtado/articles/IntroducingXR.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://fieldingbible.com/Fielding-Bible-FAQ.asp> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)