

# 2023-24 Offseason Discussion

Please review this document and feel free to post comments online in the league's email thread. The goal is for MMDBL owners to have a fruitful discussion on the topics below prior to our vote.

## Topic 1 – Improving Game Play Experience and Promoting Sportsmanship

Several owners indicated to me last season the following:

1. It's a bummer when an opponent goes on auto once their team is out of playoff contention.
2. It's a bummer when an opponent goes on auto because they're getting killed.
3. It's a bummer when an opponent doesn't show up and doesn't tell you in advance.
4. It's a bummer when an opponent complains all the time.

I agree with all of these "bummers." As for Item No. 3, our current "[MMDBL Gaming Etiquette and Requirements](#)" address when an opponent doesn't show in time and doesn't provide any advance warning. I've been online when managers are hedgy as to whether or not they should proceed after twice extending the game start time and I encourage them to – yes – go ahead and play the computer manager. That is their right. As for No. 4, the "Commissioner's Discretion" section of the "MMDBL Gaming Etiquette and Requirements" allows for several types of penalties, including expulsion, if someone's behavior becomes a detriment to the league. Item No. 1 and Item No. 2, however, are not fully addressed. For purposes of this discussion, I'll categorize No. 2 in the same category as No. 4 – a conduct issue. As for Item No. 1, I agree that this is something I want to nip in the bud.

### PROPOSAL – 4<sup>th</sup> Round Draft Order Based on Owner Attendance Points Earned

Here's how it would work:

- Every team starts with 90 Attendance points
- Each team gets 6 zero-penalty absences to account for life experiences and other items that cause an inability to play. Note: If an owner has an extended absence due to travel, illness or life circumstance, they should contact the commissioner and the commission can, at his discretion, allow for additional zero-penalty absences.
- Each absence counts as -1 off the 90-point starting total (and all subtractions take effect only after zero-penalty absences.)
- The process for monitoring:
  - Commissioner will review each box score and track when "Computer Manager" is named as the manager.
  - After 6 "grace" occurrences for a given team, -1 will be applied to their point total for each additional occurrence.
  - This will be tracked on a tab in the Master DB.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Round draft order will be based on most-to-least points and, in the event of ties, worst-to-first in terms of prior-season record.
- Additionally, any team with less than 81 Attendance points will lose their 4<sup>th</sup> Round pick and pick at the end of the draft. To lose this pick, an owner would have to blow through their 6 "grace" absences *and* have more than 9 additional absences. Another way to think of it is that you could computer manage 17% of your games and NOT lose a pick – that's a lot of computer-managed games. Any lost pick would be restored if the team is taken over by a new owner in the offseason.

## **Topic 2 – Expanding the Trading of Draft Picks**

Three seasons ago we began allowing the trading of draft picks. We currently allow only Round 1 and 2 draft picks to be traded. Some owners have indicated that they'd like this expanded to create more flexibility, especially at the trade deadline.

The primary reason for limiting the trading of picks was to avoid having a team "go for it" and deal all of their picks and then to have the manager quit after the season. That's still a concern for me as it would be difficult to find a new owner if the team they are taking over has very few early picks with which to improve their team. We could mitigate this concern, however, by restoring picks for new owners.

### **PROPOSAL – Provide Ability to Trade Picks in Rounds 1 Through 5**

- Teams could trade Round 1 through 5 picks. These are Day One picks. Day Two picks – picks beginning in Round 6 and after – would not be tradeable.
- Supplemental picks could not be traded.
- If a manager quits, the new owner would have picks restored, but as a supplemental pick at the end of each round in which their team's pick was traded. (Note: This would slot in "worst-to-best" with other supplemental picks, if applicable.) A team that acquired a pick from a quitting manager would still retain that pick.

## **Topic 3 – Draft Picks as Roster Spots**

We currently do not count draft picks as occupying a roster spot until the off-season begins. At that time, we then count draft picks as occupying a roster spot. This means that if an owner wants to only retain 14 or 17 players in order to qualify for supplemental round picks, that they must count excess acquired draft picks among their retained player count.

Upon reflection, this policy could be considered mildly anti-competitive in that it forces the receiving team to potentially cut a player it might prefer to keep in order to retain the draft pick. Given that the MMDBL is trying to ride the fine line between being both a Legacy League and a Draft League, it makes sense to revisit this policy. The idea behind a Legacy League is that you should be able to keep the core of players that you've built over time. The idea behind a Draft League is that you should be able to draft well and quickly become competitive. Many of the changes we've made in recent years have been to strike a better balance between these two objectives. This proposal advances the goal of balance.

### **PROPOSAL – Draft Picks Never Occupy a Roster Spot**

- At no point in time will excess acquired draft picks occupy a roster spot.
- Currently, an acquired draft pick is considered "excess" if it represents more picks than a team is otherwise slotted in the trade-eligible rounds. Therefore, if a team acquired 2 picks but traded 1 of their own, then they'd only have 1 excess acquired draft pick occupying a roster spot.
- This will no longer be applicable as excess acquired draft picks are treated the same way as a team's normal draft picks in that they'd never occupy a roster spot.
- However, rosters must be 40-man:
  - Therefore, a team trading a draft pick and acquiring an extra player must immediately cut a player to reduce their roster to meet the 40-man requirement.

- And a team acquiring a draft pick must select a claim from the ZXFA list to expand their roster to meet the 40-man requirement. This extra signee is like a DL claim in that they are automatically released back to the ZXFA pool at the end of the team's season.
- **Consideration:** I'd be OK implementing this change immediately. Please discuss the ramifications of this aspect, as well.

## Topic 4 – Supplemental Picks and Competitive Balance

Last year, we moved the supplemental picks for cutdown to 14 from after Rounds 2 and 3 to after Rounds 1 and 2; and we moved the supplemental pick for cutdown to 17 from after Round 4 to after Round 3. The purpose was to provide greater compensation to teams which deemed that their rosters were not good enough to retain 18 or more players.

Also the 14- and 17- player thresholds applied to any combination of Core Status, +3 Status or excess acquired draft picks. Teams may retain up to 20 qualified players – the “Core 20” – and they may retain an additional 3 players who meet the +3 Status criteria, which is a non-carded player, an “F” durability player, or a player who is severely limited (see “Roster Management Rules” on website.)

Picks may be included in Core or +3, and +3 may also be included in Core, but Core cannot be included in +3. Again, the purpose of this is as follows:

- Limiting a team to keeping no more than 20 of its core players who will be carded and expected to contribute in the upcoming season is designed to enable a team that has built a solid core to keep that core. This is a key Legacy aspect.
- The +3 enables teams to protect an injured, uncarded or limited player who they consider to be part of their future core but which likely won't contribute much in the upcoming season. This is also a Legacy aspect, originally designed to give teams a place to stash longer-term prospects (Note: I've had Luis Campusano as a +3 for 3 years, for example.)
- Retaining fewer players than the Legacy aspects of the league allow is a Draft League feature in that we want to provide a route to competitiveness for teams that cut deep in order to improve their roster. The compensatory picks become a way to help these teams fill some of their extra roster holes earlier than teams that cut fewer players. Not having compensatory picks would be anti-competitive in that these teams would be asked to fill all of their extra roster spots in Round 18 and beyond.

**Question:** With the changes made last year in terms of moving the supplemental picks up, and if excess acquired picks no longer require a roster spot, are we doing enough for competitive balance? The goal is to enable quicker turnarounds, but not to assure them. For example, we don't want the compensatory picks to be so lucrative that it doesn't pay to have a Legacy focus. The goal should be to build a solid long-term competitive core but use the compensatory picks when needed to accelerate the development of a competitive core.

### PROPOSAL – Add one more compensatory pick after Round 5 (Day One)

- Teams that cut to 17 or less would get an additional supplemental pick after Round 5.
- The picks would be in order of a) who kept the fewest, and b) worst-to-best record.
- This mean teams cutting to 14 or less would get a total of 3 supplemental picks – after Rounds 1, 2 and 5; and teams cutting to 15-17 would get a total of 2 – after Rounds 2 and 5.

- At the end of Day One, the gap between the number of players on each team’s rosters would be reduced (see table to right).
- Note: Deeper-cutting teams that acquired picks would *further* close the gap of rostered players at the end of Day One of the draft. This seems like the right metric to consider for competitive balance – **rostered players at the end of Day One**. Our compensatory system should help close that gap, but trading should be encouraged to further help teams close that gap – a true “stick and carrot” balance.

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Players Kept After Cutdown	Players On Roster After Day One	Players On Roster After Day One
14	21	22
17	23	24
20	25	25
23*	28	28

Doesn't include acquired picks  
\* Including +3

## Topic 5 – Overworked Pitchers

Last year, we voted down a proposal to require overworked pitchers – pitchers who turn purple and have 0 innings remaining – to be demoted. The discussion at the time was that a) it was allowed in the game (and we shouldn’t legislate against what’s allowed in the game), and b) that overworked pitchers are reduced in terms of effectiveness and have a heightened risk of injury.

This past season, several owners complained about the overworked pitcher issue again. Our league rules prohibit voting on the same proposal for a 2-year period, so since we voted on disallowing use of overworked pitchers in the 2022-23 offseason, it cannot be voted on again until the 2025-26 offseason. We could vote on a modified proposal but I would caution against anything that is not easy to implement.

One such proposal would be that any pitcher that turns purple in the regular season is ineligible for the post-season. This is easy to implement, but it would still enable pitchers who turn purple in the post-season to keep on being used. It would require that a manager know to stop a pitcher’s usage when they have 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of an inning left in the regular season. I could get behind something like this, however, I could see a manager simply forgetting to yank a pitcher, having them go purple and then losing them for the post-season. And what if this happened to an ace starting pitcher?

I’m not floating a proposal here. However, I’m open to a proposal that is fair. One final note – if you don’t like an opponent using an overworked pitcher who is just as good as your best relief, you could always do the same. I don’t condone it, but my point is that we’re not trying to solve an issue of fairness, but realism, which are two different things.

## Topic 6 – Ghost Runners in Extra Innings

We need to see how Dynasty League is going to address this in game play. Will they follow the MLB? Or will they give leagues a choice?

**PROPOSAL** – If given a choice, adopt MLB rules for extra innings games.

- This would take effect in our 2024 season, subject to how Dynasty League presents its options in the Commissioner’s module.

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