

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

# Happy Bobby Bonilla Day! Celebrating 12 years of payments.



By Glynn A. Hill

July 1, 2022 at 4:58 p.m. EDT



Bobby Bonilla, shown playing for the Mets in June 1992, will get a check from the team for \$1,193,248.20 every July 1 until 2035. (Osamu Honda/AP)

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Of all the obscure holidays on the sports calendar, perhaps the most important to sports fans is July 1 — a.k.a. Bobby Bonilla Day — an occasion to observe the annual custom when the six-time all-star gets paid.

Bonilla hasn't played in the majors since 2001, but every July 1 since 2011, the Mets have cut him a check on a day that's come to be celebrated by fans [and even new team ownership](#).



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The contract dates back to the 1999 season, when the then-36-year-old Bonilla was struggling on the diamond and often clashing with manager Bobby Valentine. The Mets wanted to cut him but he was still owed the \$5.9 million left on his contract, so Bonilla and his agent offered team executives a deal: He would go quietly if the Mets deferred his salary for 12 years, at an 8 percent annual interest rate, and paid it off over 25 years starting in 2011.

“I always wanted to be able to spend money in retirement the way I did as an active player and that was important to me,” Bonilla said during a [recent interview](#) with the Action Network.

Former team owners Saul Katz and Fred Wilpon had been heavily involved in Bernie Madoff’s investment schemes for years, [earning 10 to 14 percent returns annually](#) through the late Wall Street financier, who orchestrated the [largest Ponzi scheme in history](#). Under Bonilla’s proposal, they could take the \$5.9 million that wouldn’t be paid to Bonilla and invest it with Madoff. They anticipated a \$60 million-70 million profit off the arrangement, earning far more than the \$29.8 million they eventually would have to pay Bonilla over 25 installments.

But three years before the payments were to start, Madoff’s scheme began to unravel. Now, every July 1 until 2035, Bonilla will get check for \$1,193,248.20 from the Mets.

Bonilla also receives additional payments through a separate [deferred-contract plan](#) with the Mets and the Baltimore Orioles, with whom he played from 1995-1996. Those payments, which began in 2004, provide \$500,000 a year for 25 years.

Bonilla told the Action Network that he does not celebrate Bobby Bonilla Day, though “it’s really amazing how I’m probably more famous for that deal than the career I had.”

On July 1, “my text messages blow up,” he added. “It’s way bigger than my birthday.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2022/07/01/bobby-bonilla-day-mets/>



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Happy Bobby Bonilla Day!

Bobby gets his 12th installment of \$1,193,248.20 today.

The Mets have so far paid him \$14,318,978.40 for him to NOT PLAY the 2000 season.

There is 13 years and \$15,512,221.60 left.

There have been no discussions to buy him out early.

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Bobby Bonilla on every July 1st until 2035



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It's ANOTHER Bobby Bonilla Day!

Today the [#Mets](#) send a check of \$1,193,248.20 to The former [#Pirates](#) OF

[#Mets](#) have so far paid him \$14 MILLION

13 years and another \$15 Million. 🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆🏆



11:08 PM · Jun 30, 2022



Bobby Bo had his moments as a player. Even more remarkable is a professional athlete thinking this long term! Good for him! Who feels sorry for billionaire team owners, especially Bernie Madoff's pals? Steve Cohen is no cleaner.

TJB