SKYLINE (SKY) BASEBALL LEAGUE RULE BOOK

Version 4.0

1. Game Overview

The Skyline Baseball League (SKY) is an Out of the Park (OOTP) baseball online fictional professional league that simulates on a daily (seven in-season days per sim) schedule at 12pm ET (10am ET on weekends). We use Slack as our primary communications platform and are a premium StatsPlus league. The league will upgrade yearly as soon as it is determined that the latest build is stable and reliable. Willingness to a yearly upgrade is a GM requirement.

The SKY is a fictional take on the real-life MLB, with a few differences. The main difference is that the major league is not split up into two leagues, but rather four regionally aligned divisions of eight teams each:

Atlantic Division
Atlanta Braves
Baltimore Orioles
Cincinnati Reds
Miami Marlins
Philadelphia Phillies
Pittsburgh Pirates
Tampa Bay Rays
Washington Nationals

North Division
Boston Red Sox
Cleveland Indians
Detroit Tigers
Minnesota Twins
Montreal Expos
New York Mets
New York Yankees
Toronto Blue Jays

Central Division
Chicago Cubs
Chicago White Sox
Colorado Rockies
Houston Astros
Kansas City Royals
Milwaukee Brewers
St. Louis Cardinals
Texas Rangers

Pacific Division
Arizona Diamondbacks
Las Vegas Knights
Los Angeles Angels
Los Angeles Dodgers
Oakland Athletics
San Diego Padres
San Francisco Giants
Seattle Mariners

The Atlantic and North Divisions form the Eastern Region, while the Central and Pacific Divisions form the Western Region.

Because of this league structure, the playoff format is unique; go to section 2.2 for the playoff structure and rules

The regular season consists of 156 games with 12 games scheduled against each of the other seven division members and a 3-game series scheduled against every other team. We do not have an All-Star Game, however we do select All-Star honors (we just don't play the actual game).

1.1 History of baseball in the world of SKY

In the early years of baseball in the United States, leagues were largely regional and compartmentalized. Prior to 1980, the four major leagues were the Northern Baseball League, Atlantic League, Western League, and the Central League. During the 60's and 70's when flight as a method of transportation became more accessible, people began to wonder: why can't Los Angeles play New York?

Beginning in the spring of 1980, the Skyline Baseball League formed as an American super-league, thus combining all four regional baseball leagues under a single umbrella. For the first time in baseball history, teams from the west coast would play teams from the east. Each team would not only play its regularly scheduled 84 games against its own division, but it would also play games against every other team in the new super-league.

The four former league presidents decided that it would be best for baseball record-keeping if the stats and records of their previous leagues were retired to the historical archives to give way to the new super-league. After all, it wouldn't make sense to compare current players to former players from an era where a team would only play 84 games.

Thus, baseball in the SKY began in the year 1980 and has continued to this day.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Game Commissioner: The chief responsibility of the commish is to ensure the steady, successful, and on-time operation of the game. He will maintain the server, forums, Slack, Stats+, and all other necessary platforms. The commissioner also serves as the primary simmer and recruiter. In the event of a dispute, the commish will provide mediation between the two parties. The commish is the tie-breaker in all disputes and polls.

Draft Czar: The draft czar is responsible for providing the commissioner with the correct draft order by keeping up to date with processed draft pick trades, compensation picks, and league standings. This position is vital to the success of the league; if at any point the position of draft czar is vacant, all trading of draft picks must cease until it is filled.

Welcoming Party: The welcoming party is responsible for assisting the commissioner for onboarding a new member to the league, once they accept the Slack invite. Onboarding includes formal welcoming of the new owner to the group, guiding him/her through the "Getting Started" process, and assisting the new GM with any questions they may have. Welcoming party members should have a strong knowledge of league rules and league culture as well as the technical skills required to help new GMs with any problems. They will also assist with recruiting.

<u>**SKY Positions:**</u>
Game Commissioner: Michael Kadis
Draft Master: Jake Speller
Simmers : Alberto Luque, Jake Speller, Amin Liaghati, Sly Dejardins
Welcoming Party: Michael Kadis
Rules Guru : Trent Snider

General Manager Responsibilities: GM's are responsible for…

Understanding Game Mechanics – Online GMs are expected to understand how the OOTP game works. This does not mean that we expect our members to be experts. In fact, we welcome inexperienced players, but such players are expected to take some initiative to learn the game. The online OOTP manual is an excellent resource. GMs are also expected to understand that the SKY rule book is not an OOTP manual. The rulebook is for rules and procedures specifically for the Skyline League; commonly understood and universal knowledge is not included.

OOTP Updating/Upgrading – This league will always upgrade to the newest OOTP version as soon as it's deemed safe. This includes all patches and yearly versions. We may as a group decide to put off the latest version until it goes on sale. We do not recommend playing on the Mac Store version of the game. It is the one version which can sometimes take a few days for a critical update to get approved and be available for download. The league will not wait for any Mac Store GM's.

Regularly Exporting – Exporting in advance of each simulation is required. The export tracker shows a historical export percentage. Even if you don't have any changes, export so your history shows that you are an active member. It is ok to miss a few sims, but once a few consecutive sims are missed, a formal inquiry will be made. You may also be contacted if your overall export rate is lower than normal.
Reading the Announcements – Most of the time, what is posted in daily in Slack under "commish_announcements" will be the same. Regardless, please check it every day in case there is additional important information.

Responding to Slack/email – Please make every effort to respond to messages in a timely manner. We don't have room for members that don't communicate. If you receive an email, it's a last-ditch effort to contact you; by the time an email is sent, the league is probably at the point where we are already looking for a replacement.

Voting in Polls – It is your civic duty to vote in any polls. All polls will be published in Slack and are crucial to the success of the league, so every vote is needed. Voting for end of season awards and the Hall of Fame is also required. These kinds of things are important for fictional leagues to "come alive".

Being Active – Come out and talk to people! Online leagues are supposed to be social. This isn't the online league of five years ago where there were only message boards to communicate on. Slack gives us the opportunity to really make a connection. The league is better when people get to know each other. That won't happen when only a handful of people participate in the general chat. Participating at least semi-regularly shows that you are committed to the league.

Communicating Absences (Vacations) – If you're not going to have access to Slack and/or be able to export for more than 48 hours, you must either message the commissioner or set a Slack status with how long you're going to be away. We cannot assume that you're active if we can't reach you because you didn't tell anyone you were going to be away.

Acting Professionally– All GM's are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and professionally at all times. This includes your attitude toward other GM's as well as the management of your organization; all GM's are expected to do their best to put a competitive and under-budget team together as soon as possible.

NOTE: It's important to keep an open mind understand that this is ultimately a fictional league in a fictional baseball world. It's best to not assume something to be true just because it's like that or a certain way in MLB. Baseball is still baseball, but things like financials, schedules, and roster rules can be very different than the real-life MLB. That said, all well-established rules of baseball, capabilities of the OOTP product, and rules of the Skyline League are expected to be known and understood by all GM's. Circumstances that arise regarding GM misunderstanding of SKY, MLB, and/or OOTP rules and capabilities will be considered the fault of the GM and handled as such.

1.3 Game Settings

Use Complete Scouting System: YES
Scouting Report Updates: Bi-Monthly
Scouting Accuracy: Normal

Player Rating Scales: 20 to 80 (in increments of 5)
Show Ratings > Max: NO
Show Potential < Actual: NO
All player ratings are displayed relative to: Skyline Baseball League
Overall ratings based on all players: YES
Use Complete Coaching System: YES
Enable Owner Goals: YES

NOTE: One could argue—some in the league have—that having both owner goals enabled and having all GM's listed as "cannot be fired"—which we do, for obvious reasons—is sort of silly. And it probably is, at least at some level. But we like it. If nothing else, it's fun to watch your owner squirm and yet not be able to do anything to you.

Top Prospect List: Dynamic
Enable injuries: YES
Injury Frequency: Realistic
Delayed injury diagnosis: Never
Hide Injury Rating: YES
Position Player Fatigue: Average
Enable Suspensions: YES
Suspension Frequency: Normal
Aging and Dev Speed: 1.000
Talent Change Randomness: 100
Player Personality Settings: YES

1.4 League Rules

DH Enabled: YES
Active Roster Size: 25 players
Secondary Roster Size: 40 players
Expanded Roster Size: 40 players
Roster Expansion Date: First Tuesday in September
Post-Season Roster Rules: Enabled
Post-Season Roster Eligibility: Secondary Roster (40-man)

International Complex Size: 50 players
Spring Training Roster Size: 60 players
Waiver Period Length: 15 days (or longer, depending on the sim length)
Note for Commissioner: There should never be a "free waivers" period. Meaning that if a sim is supposed to be longer than the waiver length, you must make the waivers length at least one day greater that the sim length.

DFA Period Length: 21 days (during spring training and regular season; 50 days in offseason)
Disabled List Length: 7 days (and 60 days)

Trade Deadline: 2nd Tuesday in August; All trading stops until the offseason
Allowed to trade injured players, provided they were already injured when agreed.
Allowed to trade draft picks. See Chapter 3 regarding specifics.

Ghost players are **NOT** turned on

1.5 Game and Sim Schedule

As noted above, the SKY plays a 156-game schedule with every team playing 12 games against every other team in their division and then 3 games against every other team in the league. We sim every day, typically at 12 PM ET during the week, and 10 AM ET on the weekends (seven in-season days per sim). Though the timing of the sim may vary slightly, it will always be posted in Slack "commish announcements."

During the post season, we sim home stand to home stand (and will also try to sim multiple times in a night as long as the participating playoff teams are exported). The offseason schedule will vary based off of the in-game date but will always be posted in Slack "commish announcements". See section 2.2 for specific postseason sim information.

1.6 Important Sim Events

- Draft Pool reveals first Spring Training sim
- Draft goes live in StatsPlus on Opening Day
- Draft completes on the first Monday in June
- International Amateur Free Agents reveal on the first Monday in July
- Draft pick signing deadline on the second Monday in July
- Trade deadline on the second Tuesday in August
- Rosters expand on the first Tuesday in September.
- Season Awards voting begins in StatsPlus once the regular season completes
- Sim to offseason immediately following Skyline Cup Series
- Sim to arbitration first before free agency sim
- Rule 5 draft is last sim day before new year
- Sim to pre-season before "to Spring Training" sim
- Sim to Spring Training will lock all budgets (**commish will not adjust budgets**)

2. SKY League Structure and Rules

The Skyline Baseball League (SKY) is made up of four divisions, each consisting of eight teams. Each franchise will maintain a single Triple A (AAA), Double A (AA), Advanced Single A (A+), Single A (A), Low-Level (or Short Season) A (A-), Advanced Rookie (R+) and Rookie (R) team. No franchise may have more or less affiliates, or more or less than one affiliate at each level. **Ghost players are not permitted at any level.**

Each GM is responsible for keeping up to date with his/her minor league affiliates. This includes promotions/demotions, lineup and rotation changes, releases and signings, etc. AI assistance with some (or all) of these tasks can be setup in-game by changing the settings in the "Manager Options" screen on the GM Home Page, however it is recommended to handle all of this manually as you will generally find more success.

2.1 Roster Rules of the SKY

The SKY will not use a designated hitter. There are no foreign player or age restrictions in the SKY. The waiver length is 15 days (or longer), DFA period length is 21 days (50 days in offseason), and the disabled list is either 7 days or 60 days (players on the 60-day DL are removed from a team's 40-man roster, however will still accrue service time).

Player options years and the right to refuse assignment are enabled. Players can accrue 10-5 rights and thus veto trades, and no-trade clauses are allowed in contracts (but not recommended; see Section 3.7).

2.1.1 Major League Level
The highest level of each SKY organization is their Major League (ML) team. There are no limitations on ML level players. Teams at this level may have 25 players on their active roster. Note that these roster limits do not include players on the disabled list. All players on the Major League roster must be on the 40-man roster, though it is not required to keep the 40-man roster full.

NOTE: It is especially important to pay attention to your 40-man roster prior to the first sim of the regular season, as during spring training, non-40-man roster players can be added to the major league roster. If players are left on the final 25-man squad without addition to the larger roster, the commissioner (or another simmer) is unable to advance the sim. This is VERY frustrating (for all involved…one person's roster error can have 30+ others waiting for the sim).

2.1.2 AAA, AA, A+, and A
From AAA through A, there is a limit of 26 players per team.

While there are no specific age limits for these levels, every effort should be made to either move players or release them. Please don't let a 28-year-old sit in A+ ball for four years. Please.

2.1.3 Short Season/Low A (A-) (U24)
Short Season (SS, or Low A) ball includes the Northwest and the New York-Penn leagues, and are designed for recently drafted college players and former high school draftees from a couple seasons prior that are not yet ready for full season ball.

These leagues have a limit of 30 players and are for players under 24 years old.

2.1.4 Rookie League Advanced (U22)
The Advanced Rookie level includes the Pioneer and the Appalachian leagues and are designated R+. These leagues are designed for second year high school draftees that are not yet ready for full season ball.

These leagues have a limit of 30 players and are for players under 22 years old.

2.1.5 Rookie Complex League (U21)
This level includes the Arizona and the Gulf Coast Leagues. These leagues are designed for high school players fresh out of the draft and/or 2nd year draftees that did not receive enough playing their first year.

These leagues are for players under 21 years old and have a soft limit of 30 players. (this means that although it's not hard-coded in the game, every effort should be made to keep this roster as close to 30 players as is possible)

2.1.6 International Complex
When a player is signed during International Amateur Free Agency (IAFA) or discovered, they are placed in your International Complex. Players at this level are generally around 16 or 17. All IAFA's are automatically assigned to the International Complex initially.

2.1.7 Roster Limits Disclosure
Players are ineligible to be in the U24, U22, and U21 leagues the day they turn 24, 22, or 21 years old respectively. Often, this is DURING the league's season. It is the GM's responsibility to keep ONLY eligible players on all of his/her rosters at all times. HINT: This will be most easily accomplished by treating these levels as having age requirements one year lower than what they actually are.

Roster and age limits are only checked when that season is active. Example, if it's April and R+ doesn't start until June, those rosters will not be checked until June. You could use it as "extended spring training" as a place to put the player instead of releasing him

It has been brought up that 26 players per team doesn't account for injuries that may happen during the season. While it's true that your team could be short players if one of your teams suffer an unusually large amount of injuries during a sim, that rarely happens. If you keep a well-balanced, 26-man roster at each level, one bad week of injuries can be navigated. However, a strategy is to use the DFA list as a "reserve" roster. Selecting "Designate Player for Assignment" on a player with a minor league contract will simply place them in the DFA list and they are protected there. Caution: Do not select "Waive and DFA" as that may place the place on waivers. Also, be careful to not allow the player to be released due to exceeding the 21 days of DFA. You can avoid this by placing the play on a roster and designating him again, thus resetting his clock.

There is also a game bug where when you export during a minor league's postseason, you will sometime get a message stating that you don't have enough players on your minor league playoff roster. Ignore this message as there are no playoff rosters in the minor leagues.

2.2 Postseason Rules and Structure

The SKY postseason will begin at the end of the regular season and consist of the top three teams from each division competing for the coveted Skyline Cup.

2.2.1 Division Cup and Wild Card teams
3 teams from each division qualify for the postseason. The team with the best record wins the Division Cup and the two teams with the next best record enter the division Wild Card Series for the chance to play in the Division Championship Series against the Division Cup winner.

2.2.2 Division Wild Card Series (WCS)
Series Length: 5 games
Home/Away: First wild card seed gets 2 home/2 away/1 home
Sim Schedule: One sim completes series

2.2.3 Division Championship Series (DCS)
Series Length: 7 games
Home/Away: Division Cup winner gets 2 home/3 away/2 home
Sim Schedule: Homestand to homestand

Once the 4 division champions are decided, the Atlantic Division Champion will face the North Division Champion in the Eastern Regional Championship and the Pacific Division Champion will take on the Central Division champion in the Western Regional Championship.

2.2.4 Regional Championship Series (RCS)
Series Length: 7 games
Home/Away: Best season record gets 2 home/3 away/2 home
Sim Schedule: Homestand to homestand

The two winners of each region's RCS will face each other for the Skyline Cup.

2.2.5 Skyline Cup Series (SCS)
Series Length: 7 games
Home/Away: Best season record gets 2 home/3 away/2 home
Sim Schedule: Homestand to homestand

NOTE: There will be no tiebreaker games. Head to head record will be the seeding tie-breaker, with division record being the 2nd tie-breaker. Further tie-breakers, if needed, will be determined by a meeting of the Rules Committee.

2.2.6 Playoff Rosters
Players must be on the secondary roster (40-man) prior to the roster expansion deadline (First Tuesday in September) in order to be eligible for the playoffs. The playoff roster screen has information about how and when you can make changes to your roster.

2.3 Acquiring Players

There are five ways for SKY teams to acquire players – waivers, trades, free agency, the SKY amateur draft, and International Amateur Free Agents (IAFAs).

2.3.1 Trades:
See Chapter 3.

2.3.2 Free Agency and Service Time:
Players become free agents after five years of "service time" in the SKY. Service time is accrued by being on the major league roster during the regular season. Spring training, opening day, and the postseason will not count towards a player's service time. Being on the disabled list, however, does count for service time. Be careful to not add a minor league player to the 60-day DL as that will count for service time, while the minor league 7-day DL does not.

Players will accumulate a year of service when they accrue 80 days and cannot earn more than 80 days of service in any given season.

In the game, service time is tracked by days. The profile screen changes it to years to make it easier to track. Another way to look at it is that a player become a free agent after 400 days of service, but he may only accrue 80 days in a season.

Additionally, players not on the 40-man roster are eligible for minor league free agency when they reach six professional (minor league) years (a player's number of professional years may be found in the player's contract tab and is different than the player's service time). To prevent such a player from entering minor league free agency, he must be placed on the 40-man roster or signed to a minor league extension.

2.3.3 Amateur Player Draft:
The SKY utilizes Stats+ to conduct the draft, which is then imported into the game on the first in-game Monday in June. The draft consists of 35 rounds, 36 rounds worth of created players, and begins in StatsPlus on Opening Day. The draft pool will be revealed after the first Spring Training sim. There are 1152 players in the draft pool.

The draft schedule will be posted by the commissioner prior to the draft.

Each pick in the first round is required to be executed within six hours. Each subsequent rounds' picks must be made within four hours. These times are tracked in Stats+. If a team's draft time expires, they will be put on auto-pick in Stats+. In addition, if a team's total draft time (also tracked in Stats+) exceeds 16 hours, they will be put on auto-pick in Stats+ and will not be able to switch back to manual.

NOTE: Any pick timer that begins after 11 pm ET will not expire until 7 am ET (of the next day) at the earliest. This "night-timer" is IN ADDITION TO the normal four or six-hour time limit per pick. The night timer does not pause your overall 16-hour limit. The easiest solution is to check the draft before you go to bed.

As noted above, the draft is completed in-game during the sim that begins with the first Monday in June. Once the draft is completed in-game, some of your draft picks will need to be signed, based either on bonuses they demand or that they are slotted to receive by the game. Draft picks remaining unsigned past the in-game deadline will be removed from your organization (and re-enter the draft pool at a later date). If you fail to sign a draft pick from rounds 1-5, you will receive a pick in the following year's draft's corresponding supplemental round, which begins at pick 33. The supplemental draft order will be the same as the overall draft order of the draft in which the picks are made.

NOTE: Each team may only have one compensation pick in each round. The reason for this is to prevent the abuse of overloading picks for a single draft. The picks also need tracked which can get complicated if a team has more than one comp pick, especially since these picks can be traded. The intent of the draft is to sign your players.

The draft order is set using the inverse order of the last in-game regular season record. If there are two teams that finish with identical records, the tiebreaker will always be to look at the prior season.

2.3.4 Waivers:
Players that are waived by one team may be claimed by another within 15 "in-game" days (thus, players will appear on waivers for no fewer than two sims). Players claimed from waivers must have their salaries assumed by the claiming team and are placed on that team's 40-man roster if appropriate. Also, players that have been on waivers long enough to be claimed by a team, cannot be traded until they clear waivers.

NOTE: Waivers will always be at least one day greater than the sim length. This rule is to eliminate the "free waivers" period that some teams get away with.

2.3.5 International Amateur Free Agents (IAFAs):
The IAFA pool is released annually in-game on the first Monday in July. There is a $6 million soft cap per team on IAFA signings. If you go over the cap, there are escalating penalties (as discussed on the IAFA screen).

In addition, periodically your scout will sign international players as discoveries, and they will also be placed in your international complex. However, GM's have no control over this OOTP feature.

2.3.6 Rule 5 Draft
The Rule 5 draft takes place during every offseason (again, the commissioner will publish an offseason schedule). The Rule 5 draft will utilize the in-game draft feature and the draft order will not change from what the game provides.

Player eligibility follows the same rules as laid out in MLB and OOTP with one exception: players cannot be drafted if they are under 23 years of age at the time of the draft. It is not necessary to protect players that are younger than 23 years of age at the time of the draft even though they will show up in the Rule 5 draft pool.

If you intend to use multiple rounds for picks, ensure you don't forget to paste your list to all the rounds.

NOTE: Make sure your unprotected players do not turn 23 years of age on a date on or near that of the Rule 5 draft

Note for Commissioner: It is necessary to check everyone's Rule 5 draft list before the draft to ensure they are not trying to draft players under 23. Even though it's well publicized, GMs will often try to sneak one in, and it's easier to prevent them from being drafted rather than fix it after.

2.4 League Financials

2.4.1 General Structure
The SKY runs a unique structure for its league operations that promotes competitiveness and parity. Team budgets are derived from the standard league-wide national media contract baseline of $85 million per team. Ticket prices are locked at a fixed price of $25.00, but attendance drives the ability for team budgets to fluctuate upward or downward depending the on the team's success at drawing fans.

Budgets are set by owners, consider the entire revenue stream, and are typically in the range of $150-200 million total for player salaries, coaching salaries, scouting budgets, international amateur free agent budgets, and development budgets.

GM's are encouraged to spend what they're budgeted, or they will forfeit the excess, as there is a maximum of $1 million in cash accessible in each teams' budget. In NO CASE will money remaining at the end of one in-game financial year "carry over" to future years' budgets. If you have a problem with this, take it up with your in-game owner. Good luck with that.

The league's financial settings are set to remain static at 2017 levels. The minimum player salary is $500,000. There is no salary cap ("soft" or "hard"), no revenue sharing and no luxury tax.

As mentioned above, GM's are expected to utilize their entire budget, and to do so in such a way that leads to competitive teams at all levels at all times. This, of course, does not mean that some teams cannot be in "rebuilding" mode while others are in "win now" mode, but having $10 million of excess room in your budget on a continual basis is not a good recipe. If nothing else, devote any "extra" money to the scouting and/or player development budgets during the off-season and/or pre-season.

2.4.2 Free Agency Rules
Players become free agents after five years of ML service in the SKY. As noted above, 80 days will give a player credit for a full year of service. If a player is ready for the big leagues, call him up.

Players are eligible for arbitration after three years of service. If, at any time, you decline to offer arbitration to a player, the player becomes a free agent.

Pro Tip: Offer arbitration eligible players you want to keep a one-year extension. You'll get a slight player morale boost (and maybe even a Fan Interest boost). Players don't like going through arbitration.

The SKY does not use any type of "qualifying offer" contracts, does not recognize any type of free agent other than "unrestricted" (no Type A/Type B stuff from pre-2012 in the MLB), and (thus) does not offer compensation draft picks to teams that lose free agents in the off-season. This is done to encourage trading.

2.4.3 Contract Rules

GM's may offer a contract to any player, for any amount, without any limitations other than a strict five-year contract maximum. Players in advance of free agent status may be offered a contract extension by their GM at any time, for any amount, without any limitations other than a strict five-year contract maximum.

2.4.4 Amateur Draft Negotiations

As noted above, some drafted players (generally from rounds 1-5) will require a bonus before they sign with your team. If you fail to sign them before the deadline, they will re-enter the draft at a later date and you will lose the rights to that player. If you fail to sign a draft pick from rounds 1-5, you will receive a pick in the following year's draft's corresponding supplemental round, which begins at pick 33. The supplemental draft order will be the same as the overall draft order. Each team may only have one compensation pick in each round.

2.4.5 Over-Budget Teams

Teams that are over-budget are prevented (by the OOTP game structure) from signing (and in some cases extending) players, from making trades that do not result in a net gain of "budget space" (decrease of negative budget space), and in some cases are prevented from signing draft picks that require or demand bonuses and IAFAs. You will be much more successful as a GM (and enjoy the game ever so much more) if you treat your budget as a hard cap.

2.4.6 Cash Interpretation

In OOTP, cash is essentially a budget modifier. If a team has a positive cash balance, their available money will increase by the amount of that positive cash balance. Similarly, if a team has a negative cash balance, their available money will decrease by the amount of that negative cash balance.

During trade negotiations, cash may be used up to when the available money reaches zero. This means that you can trade more cash than you currently possess because the extra cash comes out of your budget, which lowers your available money

2.5 Tiebreakers

2.5.1 Post-season seeding

There will be no tiebreaker games. Head to head record will be the seeding tie-breaker, with division record being the 2nd tie-breaker.

2.5.2 Draft order

If there are two teams that finish with identical records, the team with the worse record the season prior, will pick first. If the record is still tied, continue to go back a season.

3. Trading with Other Teams

Trades are the lifeblood of any online OOTP league. You cannot win unless you know how to effectively work the trade block. There are three good ways to announce your intent to trade to everyone in the SKY: using the trade block located in-game, announcing through Slack on the "tradeblock," or by using the "Trading Block" feature on the league forum page. Another great way to trade is to message GMs directly to offer or inquire about a player. Some of the best deals are for players no one knew was available.

3.1 What can be traded?

Trades may involve any team asset (player, draft pick, or cash) with a few exceptions.

3.1.1 Players
Any player in your organization may be traded unless they hold a no-trade clause, their contract is going to expire and it's already in the offseason, or they have been on waivers long enough to be claimed by a human GM (players may not be traded until they clear waivers).

3.1.2 Draft Picks
Draft picks from rounds 2-35 may be traded, including supplemental picks if applicable. Only the picks in the upcoming draft are available to trade with the following exception:

When a draft is active (and **only when a draft is active**) in Stats+ (from the moment when the draft timer starts), draft picks from that draft cannot be traded for a player or cash. They have to be traded for another draft pick. Draft picks from the next draft become available and can be be traded for players, cash, etc.

3.1.3 Cash
Cash may be included in any trade as long as there is room in "**Total Money Available**".

NOTE: As stated in Section 2.4.6, cash is simply a modifier for total money available. We use total money as the amount of "cash" we can include. If you have $1,000 cash but your TMA is $5,000 over the budget, you do not have "cash" to trade.

3.1.4 Salary Retention
Teams may elect to retain a percentage of the contract for a variety of reasons. A team can retain up to 50% of a contract in increments of 5. Multiple teams can retain various percentages all the way up to 100%.

Salary retention always refers to the amount of the entire contract, not the percentage of salary the team is responsible for.

3.1.5 What cannot be traded?

- Staff/personnel (coaches/trainers/scouts) may not be traded

- 1st round draft picks may not be traded

- Players on waivers long enough to be claimed by a human GM, may not be traded

- You may not post a trade that involves more than 5 players and/or 5 draft picks. The game will not allow it. For example, I can select 5 players and 5 picks from one team, but I can't select 6 players and 5 picks.

- Teams may not retain more than 50% of a player's salary to make a deal work, and the percent retained MUST be a multiple of five (10% is good, 30% is good, but 95% is not good—via the first half of this rule--, and 28.2875% is not good—via the second half of this rule). This is also an OOTP game engine issue.

- As mentioned in section 3.1.2, while the draft is active, current year's draft picks cannot be traded for any kind of asset other than another draft pick from either the current year, or next season's draft.

3.2 Going over budget during a trade

When 2 teams agree on a trade, neither side may go over budget for the year with one exception. Before the trade deadline, there are some conditions where a team can go over budget to complete a trade. The team must have a positive "Total Money Available" balance before the trade, and the game date has to be at least July 1st. This simulates asking the owner for additional funds for a playoff push. If a team meets the following exceptions, they may go over budget during a trade:

- They have a winning record, or
- They are 10 games or fewer back from the division leader, or
- They are 5 games or fewer back from a playoff seed (#3), or
- They are in 4th place in their division.

These conditions must be met when the trade is processed (post-sim). Trade posts are also allowed in anticipation of meeting these conditions.

Once the trade deadline passes, no more trades can put a team over budget.

3.3 When will trades be processed?

All trades will be processed after the sim. They are processed after the sim to speed up the pre-sim process (if it were to be done before, it would add 10-20 minutes in some cases). After the trades are processed, the file will be uploaded immediately, and the GM will be able to place the players where they choose.

There is an exception. Some GMs are overly fretful of injuries and may want the trade to be processed pre-sim. If both GM's agree that a trade can be processed pre-sim, include *Pre-Sim* in the post subject, similar to what we do when trading draft picks.

NOTE: If both GM's agree to this, the commish is only going to action the trade. He will not make any corresponding moves or lineup changes.

3.4 Posting a trade

Trades must be posted on the forums in the "Posted Trades" forum and can only involve two teams. That said, GM's are allowed to trade assets that haven't rigorously been acquired yet, as long as that asset is a part of earlier confirmed trade.

Trade posts MUST be formatted in such a way for the commissioner to process them in a timely manner, as follows:

The title must include both team names (i.e. "PIT/PHI Trade"), and if a draft pick is involved must include "(20XY Draft Pick)". If you don't include this, it will be easy for the commissioner to miss the trade of the pick when creating the draft order, which could result in you losing out on your pick.

The body of the post must include what each team is SENDING (not getting), along with the full (first and last) name (please spell correctly) and level (ML, AA, A-, R+, etc.) of each involved player. If the draft has already started in StatsPlus, the body of the post must specify which pick number is being traded ("2003 Draft Pick 5.16," for example). If a draft pick is involved and the draft order for that year has not be finalized, the post must specify the original owner of the pick. For example, 2003 2nd round pick (from PIT).

All trades must be confirmed before they are processed Confirmation is also done in the "Posted Trades" forum and MUST include the "quoted" or "copied/pasted" original body of the trade. Under extreme circumstances, the commish can process a non-confirmed trade if contacted by both GMs on Slack.

3.5 Trade Post Examples

Standard Trade post

Post subject: PIT/PHI Trade (2003 draft picks)

PIT sends:

SP Joe Bird ML
1B Jon Smith AA
2003 2nd round pick (From LAD)

PHI sends:

LF Josh Dobbs ML (15% retained)
SS Ken Bell R+
2,000,000 cash

Trading picks during an active draft

Post subject: PIT/PHI Trade (2003/2004 draft picks)

PIT sends:

2003 draft pick 2.7
2003 draft pick 13.7
2004 3rd round pick (from LAD)

PHI sends:

2003 draft pick 2.3
2004 4th round pick (from PHI)

3.6 Unprocessed Trades

If a trade is not processed after a sim, one of four things has happened:

1. The trade has resulted in a team dropping to a negative "Total Available Money"

2. The trade violates the rules or is improperly formatted to the point that the commissioner cannot quickly process the trade.

3. During the sim, a player gets injured and is out for longer than 7 days. The file will upload, and the two parties will decide if they want to make a change or go through with the trade. This is an exception where a (replacement) trade will be processed pre-sim. The two GMs should leave instructions if they want the player placed in a specific spot.

4. A player with a no-trade clause (or 10-5 rights) exercised his right to reject the trade (see Section 3.8).

In NO case will the upload of the new league file be delayed while two GM's debate an unprocessed trade.

Unprocessed trades will be noted in the sim announcement. This is for informational purposed only and is not intended to be a public blast.

3.7 Trade deadline

The SKY deadline for trading players will always be the second Monday in August of the in-game year. Since trades are processed after the sim, once the sim that takes us to the second Monday in August occurs, no more trades will be allowed (the only exception to this rule would be an injury to player involved in a trade, as detailed in Section 3.6 above).

NOTE: The trade deadline is a hard time of the export deadline posted by the commissioner in the sim announcement post. Trades must be confirmed before the deadline time or they will not be processed. Invalid trades are not allowed to be renegotiated past the deadline. This hard deadline time was established to simulate the deadline that real GMs face. Because of this hard deadline time, the commissioner is encouraged to schedule the trade deadline sim an hour late.

3.8 No-trade clauses

In OOTP you may offer players a no-trade clause when signing them to free agent (or extending them) contracts. However, this can cause issues if you ever want to trade the player. First of all, there is no way to find out which team or teams the player will or will not accept a trade to other than attempting to trade him to that team. In online leagues, the matter is even more difficult, because the only way to trade is to post and hope for the best. There is no list of players with no-trade clauses, and (even if there were) no one is going to check every trade to see if any of the players involved is/are on it. As such, if the trade is rejected by the player, it will be voided, and now the commissioner (and/or other simmer) will know to not attempt any future trades involving that player. As such, while there is no specific rule that you can't attempt to trade a player with a no-trade clause, doing so is usually a waste of time. The trade might make it through, but it's rare and usually you get only one shot with a player who chooses to execute his right to reject a trade.

3.9 Trade Veto Rule

This is not a league where have we trade veto system. 99.9% of all trades will go through, no matter how unfair they seem to some GMs. There are three instances in which the commissioner will veto a trade:

1. When there is reasonable proof of collusion between two GMs to intentionally make one team stronger or weaker.
2. When a trade is based on a false assumption of a league rule or setting. For example, trading all your picks in order to save money for the future.
3. When a trade is made but an involved GM leaves the league before the trade is processed.

If any league member believes that a trade should be vetoed due to one of the 3 reasons mentioned above, please bring it up immediately to the commish group.

4. League Customization

League customization is a very important tool to increase GM immersion and reduce GM turnover. The ability to modify stadiums, player details, turn former players into coaches, and change your logo have all greatly improved our enjoyment of the league and really sets the SKY apart from others.

4.1 Stadium Modifications

There are a few ways to turn your team's baseball cathedral into your own. You can name your stadium and change dimensions. Stadium names can be changed at any time. To submit a modification request, please post in the SKY Customization forum.

NOTE: Simply changing your stadium dimensions will not affect the simulation; we know what you mean, but it requires a change to the park factors of the stadium, which is not an option at this time.

4.2 Commissioner Turned Coaches

Commissioner turned coaches (CTC) generally will have better initial coaching ratings than computer generated coaches, so it's important to have some guidelines and awareness of the process:

-Requesting a player to be turned into a coach does not automatically give you the right to the coach. The coach may be signed by anyone.

-All players turned into coaches will be created as position coaches with an option for manager preference if qualified.

-Not all players may be turned into coaches. For a player to be turned into a coach, he must have both "Intelligence" and "Work Ethic" ratings of "Normal" or higher, and to have a manager option, his "Leadership" rating must be "High." The hitting or pitching ratings of a player turned coach will relate to the type of player he was, and these ratings (as well as the "Personality" and "Management Style" of the player turned coach) may not be changed unless the GM/requester has a good reason why it should be changed.

-Not all GMs have the right to request that a specific player be turned into a coach. A GM has the right to request that a player be turned into a coach if the GM or his current team 1) drafted, signed as an IAFA, or was the first SKY organization to employ the player at the ML level, or 2) employed the player in the SKY at the ML level for at least four complete in-game seasons (this means more than one GM may have request rights on the same player).

-Player turned coach requests may be made by posting in the SKY Customization forum, will be processed at the start of the SKY postseason, and will be announced in Slack "commish_announcements"

4.3 Player Detail Changes

GM's may change the cosmetic details of players in order to improve immersion by adding family, friends, and etc.

Changes may include name, HT/WT, face, number, anything in the history, and birthday (within 365 days). College players cannot be edited to a HS age. The commish has the right to deny any change for various reasons like silly names, for example.

Players may be changed at any time, but once a player has been promoted to the ML, they are ineligible to be changed, with some exceptions. Ask the commish if you want an exception.

To request a change, post in the SKY Customization forum.

4.4 Relocation and Logo Changes

Relocation and team name changes for the ML will almost always be denied. The first two steps would be to find a realistic ML city and have a new skyline logo created by Txranger on the OOTP forum, and even then, your chances aren't great.

Minor leagues relocation and team name requests are a little easier to get approved, but:

-Each organization is required at all time to maintain one and only one AAA, AA, A+, A, A-, R+, and R franchise.

-The request has to make sense for the league. For example, you can't move a Pioneer League team to Florida or a Gulf Coast League team to California. You also can't negatively affect the schedule of any league. However, you could come to an agreement with another league member to coordinate moves.

The best thing to do is to just ask the commish if you want to make a change and if approved, post in the SKY Customization forum.

5. Sim Violations and Missed Exports

The SKY has a strict policy regarding roster violations and exports. Roster violations halt the sim, and the simmer has to take action in order to advance. Exporting with violations is inexcusable, as the game will warn you that you have a violation when exporting.

Frequently missing exports is also unacceptable, since inactive teams lose games and thus negatively affect the competitive integrity of the league.

5.1 Missing Exports

Missing an occasional export is not a big deal. But since each simulation covers seven in-game days, missing multiple exports in a row can have a devastating effect.

Missing four consecutive exports (during spring training and/or the regular season) is grounds for a commissioner-triggered AI re-organization (especially if your organization gets out of whack due to missing an in-game months' worth of exports, which it usually will).

5.2 Sim Violations

The action taken as the result of a violation that halts a sim will depend on the circumstances. An incomplete list of common sim violations includes:

5.2.1 Over the roster/age limit:
The commissioner may demote, promote, or DFA a player of his choosing to get the roster below the limit. It is reasonable to expect the commissioner to pick a player with limited value, but he/she shouldn't have to spend more than a few seconds doing so. No changes to lineups/rotations will be made.

NOTE: The above will only fix the problem if there are just a few players causing the violation. If there is evidence of a gross negligence, a commissioner-triggered AI re-organization will be the result.

5.2.2 DFA time expired:
When a player is designated for assignment during spring training and/or the regular season, the team has 21 days (normally three sims) before that "in game" 21 days of time expires. Before the next (fourth) sim, the player will be released, and the GM's team will suffer any costs or penalties as if they were the ones to release him.

NOTE: Drafted players that receive bonuses, signed free-agents, and players obtained via trade will almost always go into DFA. Please check your DFA list every sim.

COMMISH NOTE: Take extra care when releasing players from the DFA list around draft time. Although technically their fault, you should not release players that have just signed from the draft. Just move them to R ball if 18, or A- if college aged.

During the offseason, the DFA time will be extended to 50 days and all players for whom the DFA time has expired will be moved to AAA or the ML roster if on an ML contract. If there's not room on the 40-man roster, the player gets released. Please don't put the commissioner in a position where he/she has to release a big-time free agent signing because you never moved him to your 40-man roster and there's no room. Please. Pretty please. Please, please, please.

5.3 Replacing an Inactive Member

As noted above, if you're going to miss a few exports, let someone know. When a GM misses four consecutive exports, he/she will usually get an email from the commissioner about his/her status. It is reasonable for the commissioner to expect a reply within 24-48 hours. If the GM is not heard from for 24-48 hours, it will be assumed that the GM has "ghosted" and is not coming back.

It cannot be emphasized enough that since Slack is the primary communications platform, that is where the reply is expected. You may get an email, but it's usually after the decision has already been made to begin looking for a replacement.

The commissioner will use his/her own judgement when deciding whether or not to replace an owner, considering both past activity and overall league standing.

6. New Members

Welcome to the Skyline Baseball League! The instructions below should get you up and running. If you have any issues please feel free to contact me (in Slack, LAD - Michael). You can also post in #general. We have a great group of GM's who are usually happy to help out.

6.1 Getting the game files

Detailed instructions can be found by going to http://skylinebb.us and click on the "Getting Started" tab at the top of the page. The starter file doesn't include the accountsdata_gms.dat file, which has the info needed to download league updates and to export. That file can be requested from any league member.

6.2 Getting the graphics files

The graphics files are the pride of the SKY. If you don't properly install the graphics (logos and uniforms), then you won't get to enjoy the Skyline logos as it is intended.

The starter file now contains all the SKY graphics.

6.3 Important league sites

There are a few different sites that you will need access to, each of which are detailed below:

6.3.0 League Landing Page
Skylinebb.us is our professionally crafted landing page and it is a one stop shop for every league reference. Please bookmark this page and you'll never get lost.

6.3.1 Slack
Slack is our primary means of communication. We do not use email to send out announcements or for day to day communication. We don't use forums for general conversation. Slack replaces it all. It is required for membership, and you will struggle in this league without it.

Check your spam folder if you didn't receive your invite. The Slack league name is skylinebaseball.slack.com. Your email has to be the same email the invite was sent to. When signing up, please add your real first and last name if it's not already there. Everyone is tracked by their real name (we won't remember Miami is starboy7364, for example). **Your display name should be city abbr - name, like "PIT - Joe." This allows you to be easily identified and everyone to associate you to the correct team in Stats+.** You also need your team logo as your avatar, which will be provided for you.

6.3.2 Skyline Forum
The forums can be found at https://statsplus.net/skylinebaseball/forum/index.php. The forum hosts league rules, commish action requests, transaction posts, and league articles. You will need to register to post on the forum. When registering, it may ask for a spam bot password, which is baseball.

Your username again should be city - name, though it's not as big of a deal as the slack username.

6.3.3 StatsPlus
Stats+ is the latest and greatest 3rd party OOTP online league application. Stats+ allows each owner to draft mobile while using his/her own scout's ratings.

Signing in for the first time is tricky, because you won't know if you did it right until the commissioner associates your account. To register, go to https://statsplus.net/skylinebaseball/, sign in with slack, and message the commissioner so he/she can associate you as the user for your team.

6.3.4 League HTML Reports
League reports are the standard OOTP HTML reports. They are very useful for checking out the league on the road, and (even if you're not on the road) are worth checking out from time to time. No sign-in is needed and they can be viewed here.

6.3.5 Export Tracker
When you send an export in game, the game doesn't necessarily know that the file reached the server. To verify, you must go to the export tracker. The tracker is a feature of Stats+, but you don't have to be signed in to verify. It's recommended to check this after you export, or at the very least when you have an important export.
https://statsplus.net/skylinebaseball/exports

The Tracker simply checks to see if there's an export file on the server that was created after the league file was created. It cannot check the game date. The exported game date must match the simmer's game date, or the export will not take.

NOTE: In your StatsPlus preferences, you may elect to have a message sent to your personal Slack channel when an export reaches the server. It's extremely highly recommended to use this feature.

6.3.6 Twitch Broadcast Feed
During important sims (especially during the postseason), the sim will broadcast over Twitch. The Twitch channel is http://twitch.tv/coolyourboots.   It will always be announced when the sim is going to be broadcasted in Twitch.

7. Hall of Fame

Beginning in 2010, the Skyline League will open up the Skyline Hall of Fame to celebrate 30 seasons of the unified super-league. Players must have accrued least 10 years of service in the SKY to be eligible for the HOF. Service time prior to 1980 may count; stats accrued prior to 1980 will not.

Players may remain on the ballot for 20 years post retirement (changing to 10 years beginning in 2020). A player cannot be included on the HOF ballot if he had ML time during the prior in-game season.

Human only ballots (future change possible) will be collected, and 80% of votes is required for election. Players with less than 5% of votes will be dropped from consideration. Each elector will be permitted to vote for a maximum of ten eligible players and a minimum of zero.

8. Rule Changes and Additions

In the Skyline league, nothing has to be a static rule just because it's always been that way. Every GM, no matter their seniority, is allowed to advocate for change if it makes the league better. Understand that not everything will get approved or even an agreement that it's a problem. This chapter will help outline the process.

8.1 Proposing a change or addition
All GM's have the right to propose a rule change or addition. The process has been simplified from years past. If a GM has an idea for either a rule change or addition, they are encouraged to speak to the Commish directly beforehand. All serious rule change requests will be considered.

8.2 Discussion of the change or addition
If a rule change or addition is deemed worthy of either being implemented or in the very least discussed a bit more, then one of a few things can happen.

A) The Commissioner can implement the change on his own.

B) The Commissioner will create a small group of 4-5 current GM's which are in good standing to have a discussion about the proposal. After the discussion, the Commissioner may choose to either implement the change, deny the change, or go to a vote in which the all the league GM's will vote on the proposed rule change.

The Commissioner can also deny the proposed rule change if he thinks it is not beneficial to the evolution of the league.

8.3 Voting Procedures
Sometimes a rule change or addition requires a league vote. The procedure will be kept as simple as posible and can vary slightly depending on the severety of the change.

The usual procedure will be the Commissioner posting a forum thread in the league forum with the important details and the voting options. He will then post a poll in the #polls channel on Slack. All GM's are required to vote as part of their membership duties as a SKY GM.

8.4 Important info regarding voting
Please note that most of the time, there is going to be a fairly short timer when a vote is open. This is done to create a sense of urgency. This ensures that instead of a GM that is maybe lazy that day will read the thread anyways and vote, instead of maybe putting off voting for a day or two. Another reason for the timer is to minimize too much chatter in the Slack chat. I truly believe all our GM's should always vote with their own thoughts, and not someone else trying to dictate the vote in the chat. Having a timer eliminates any potential of a vote dragging on too long.

MOST of the time, a simple majority vote will be enough to implement a change. On a more important vote, the Commissioner may decide to put a steeper threshold on a rule passing.

As mentioned above, it is your duty to vote on any official polls that are posted. All voting is being tracked and if you are found guilty of never voting, or missing the vote frequently, this will be considered as good as ghosting and you could be relieved from your GM duties.

There is no minimum number of GM's required to vote on rule changes. The Commish will use his discretion in case for whatever reason there are a shortage of votes on a particular topic to extend a vote beyond the end time.

There is also no specific time when a rule is to be implemented. If a rule can be change immediately without disrupting the current season, then it will be done. Any rules which have a direct impact on the game play (eg. adding DH) would be implemented in the offseason.

If you ever have any concerns about rules, please feel free to message the Commish in Slack (@LAD - Michael)

9. Top Ten Things to Know Version

SKY Rules (the full version is required reading); Top Ten Things to Know Version:

1. The Skyline Baseball League (SKY) is a fictional OOTP baseball online league that simulates daily (seven in-season days per sim) at 12 pm ET during the week, and 10 am ET on the weekends. We use Slack as our primary communications platform and are a premium Stats+ league.

2. The 32 teams in the league are divided into four eight-team divisions. The regular season consists of 156 games (12 games vs. each division team and three vs. every other team). The playoffs consist of the top three teams from each division.

3. We use fictional players, full minors (each franchise is required to have one team at each of the seven minor-league levels; no ghost players are allowed) and have no age or nationality requirements/restrictions on the player pool.

4. A full 35 round first year player draft is held each in-game year in Stats+ as soon as the draft player pool is released every in-game spring training. An international amateur free agent (IAFA) list is released every in-game July, with each team having a $6 million maximum.

5. We play with complete coaching, player personality, owner goals, and scouting (20 to 80 scale), normal suspensions and injury settings (7-day and 60-day disabled lists), no DH, active and expanded (40-man) rosters, and full waivers (15 days or longer) and DFA (21 days).

6. With a standard league-wide national media contract baseline of $85 million per team and ticket prices locked at $25 for all teams, budgets are set by owners and are typically in the range of $150-200 million total for player and staff salaries and scouting, IAFA, and development budgets.

7. The league's financial settings are set to remain constant at 2017 levels every year. The minimum player salary is $500,000. Players remain on minimum salary for three years and arbitration for two years before reaching free agency. There is no salary cap, revenue sharing, or luxury tax. There is a maximum of $1 million in cash accessible in each teams' budget; money remaining at the end of one in-game financial year does not "carry over" to future years' budgets.

8. There are no limits on player contracts other than a strict five-year contract maximum. The SKY does not use any type of "qualifying offer" contracts, all FAs are considered "unrestricted," and no compensation is given to teams that lose FAs in the off-season.

9. Trades of both major and minor league players, draft picks, and (up to the $1 million available in yearly budgets) cash are encouraged; trades are processed on a daily (in-game weekly) basis post-sim until the (in-game) trade deadline of the second Monday in August.

10. We are very active on Slack, sort of out of our minds, and really enjoy each other's company, competition, and our league. Currently we are full, but we encourage you to contact our commissioner ([Michael Kadis](#)) about getting put on a waiting list for the next time there is an opening.