

# **The Grandest Salami Takes Japan**

## **Background**

The Grandest Salami is an online league that has been running in Out of the Park Baseball since 2018. The current iteration of TGS is the second league. TGS 1.0 ran from OOTP 19 to OOTP 22 and lasted 18 seasons. TGS 2.0 started in February of 2022 and is currently halfway through its 10th season with human GMs in control.

Each Major League Baseball franchise has seven full minor league affiliates, with full finances, player development, draft, international amateurs, etc.... being a part of the experience.

In addition to MLB, and its minor league affiliates, TGS runs three international leagues (Japan, Korea and Mexico), and three independent leagues (American, Atlantic and Northwoods (IRL College Summer League).

## **Issue**

Because the TGS MLB experience is rather in-depth, and the league competitiveness is perhaps unequaled among the OOTP online community, it can be quite intimidating or challenging to those looking to experience the joys that are OOTP online leagues.

Additionally, there are those who do have the experience or drive to compete in something like TGS MLB, but don't necessarily have the time to devote to the full experience. There's a lot of areas to micro-manage in TGS MLB, and while a team can certainly be competitive without micromanaging, there are certain personalities who cannot stop themselves from that enjoyment without managing every facet of the organization.

## **Proposed Solution**

Starting for the 2032 season, human managers will be taking over all twelve franchises in the Japanese Professional Baseball League. Because of the reduced size of the league, 12 teams compared to 32, and the single minor league affiliate, this should be a vastly different experience that TGS can offer to those who might not be quite sold on something as in-depth and engrossing as a full TGS MLB experience.

## **Concerns**

The biggest concern from my standpoint, is that everyone in TGS recognizes/understands that the JPBL is not a minor league, or a secondary league, compared to MLB in TGS. While there is nothing stopping GMs from moving between leagues if team openings happen, JPBL is not going to be run with the intention that it is a feeder league, or proving ground, before someone is given an MLB franchise, and are therefore "inferior" to TGS MLB GMs/happenings. The JPBL is merely going to be a different flavor of TGS to taste, rather than some children's menu.

To help alleviate that concern, TGS will have full S+ and Discord support for all JPBL games, players, GMs and events the way they happen with MLB.

## **General League Environment**

The primary objective in establishing the JPBL for human GMs is to shift the emphasis toward constructing a competitive baseball team for the upcoming season, and away from concerns over future franchise building. Various decisions and rules have been implemented to condense the focus of GMs, prioritizing immediate team-building concerns over long-term considerations.

The aim is for all 12 GMs to perceive, at the onset of the offseason, a viable pathway to assemble a team capable of contending for victory in the upcoming season.

In the context of managing the JPBL, the prospect of implementing the posting system holds significant intrigue. However, balancing the posting system with financial considerations would be a persistent challenge. Furthermore, the reliability of the OOTP contract logic introduces another layer of complexity. The concern is that a player, deemed exceptionally valuable, may effectively be too valuable to post through this process. This dilemma comes from the apprehension that the GM might face difficulties leveraging the posting system to compensate for the lost value. Consequently, there's a potential scenario where a player opts for an economically favorable contract extension to continue playing in Japan, stressing the downsides of the existing contract logic.

With that being said, here are the general rules that will be in place for JPBL teams:

- No contract extensions
- Japanese players are limited to four-year contracts, and four years of initial team control.
- Foreign players are limited to single year contracts.
- Foreign players are limited to six per team.
- 29-player active rosters
- Full DH in both Leagues
- Minor league affiliate that acts as a reserve team (no restrictions on player movement)
- Five round draft w/ lottery (exact setup TBD)
- Perhaps a non-traditional playoff format (ladder, dbelim, idk)
- Player Development Budgets Disabled
- No contract extensions

The hope is the above rule choices will help guide the league playstyle towards more short-term thinking to help better support the type of GM that the league is being designed for. Eliminating contract extensions keeps the player pool active and refreshed, eliminates the need for GMs to consider extensions at all and shifts their decision making to the season at hand, and ensures that young Japanese players get made available to MLB teams in a manner that is somewhat realistic while not requiring manual intervention at the hand of the commissioner.

## **Beta Season**

As previously announced, we are going to run the 2032 JPBL season with a full 12 human GMs as a beta test season.

Seeing as this will be the first season anyone has watched or played in JPBL or been a part of a league with such a different ruleset from MLB, there's going to be several things I'm particularly interested to hear feedback on.

Foremost among my concerns is the player pool depth and demands. Both MLB and JPBL share an identical league reputation, thereby limiting hurdles for JPBL teams signing players solely to financial considerations. While recruiting players poses no inherent challenges, the acquisition of Japanese players for specific positions may present a slight challenge. Although resolving the depth of the Japanese player pool is a gradual process, it's something to consider.

Following player pool considerations, our attention shifts to the financial dynamics and demands within the JPBL I don't think it should be a challenge to build a team, but it's going to be something to look at for sure.

Outside of those two main issues, it's figuring out the little intricacies of the league, and then tweaking the schedule so that it runs in parallel with MLB during the season flawlessly, but more importantly, the playoffs so they aren't stepping over each other.

The goal with the playoffs would be to either sync them up so both leagues happen simultaneously or offset them in a way that both leagues see their playoffs treated equally in terms of sim priorities, but also doesn't step on the other league happenings. I think the decision that's made here is largely down to the format of the playoffs more than anything, with either option with a solution that could work.

### **Timelines**

I would expect to add everyone to the TGS Discord sometime around January 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>. We will wrap up the MLB playoffs around January 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, at which point GMs will be taking over their JPBL franchises, which will try to happen on the first day of the "Offseason" for JPBL and allow GMs the maximum flexibility for 2032.

Almost immediately there's going to be an amateur draft that will occur. It's only five rounds, so it's not going to be super in-depth, but it will happen.

Then Spring Training will probably start up around early February, and regular season games a week later? More info to come as we get closer obviously.

The 2032 season would then wrap up around the end of March.