

2026 Tulane International Baseball Arbitration Competition

Mason Miller vs. San Diego Padres
Submission on Behalf of Mr. Miller
Midpoint \$4,000,000
Submission by Team #17

I. Introduction

This brief analyzes the assets and contributions of Mason Miller (hereafter “the Player” or “Mr. Miller”) to be reflected in his 2026 contract with the San Diego Padres (hereafter “the Club” or “the Padres”). The 2022-2026 BASIC AGREEMENT (“CBA”) between Major League Baseball (“MLB”) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (“MLBPA”) governs the scope of this arbitration hearing and sets the following criteria for determining Mr. García’s salary award: (1) the quality of the Player’s contribution to his Club during the past season; (2) the length and consistency of his career contributions; (3) the record of the Player’s past compensation; (4) comparative baseball salaries; (5) the existence of any physical or mental defects on the part of the Player; and (6) the recent performance of the Club, including, but not limited to, its League standing and attendance as an indication of public acceptance.¹ For competitive salary purposes, the arbitration panel will give particular attention to the contracts of players with Major League service not exceeding one annual service group above the Player’s annual service group.²

Mr. Miller has accumulated 2.166 years of Major League service time and qualifies as a first-time salary arbitration eligible (“1T SAE”) player.³ Mr. Miller has filed for a salary of \$4.5M and the Padres have filed at 3.55M, creating a salary midpoint of \$4M. The purpose of this arbitration hearing is to determine whether Mr. Miller’s contributions warrant a salary above or below the midpoint salary figure of \$4M. Mr. Miller enters first-time arbitration-eligibility coming off of an exceptional platform year in **2025 in which he was a finalist for the Hoffman Award, recognizing the best Relief Pitcher in the National League.**⁴ Mr. Miller has earned a

¹ MLB Collective Bargaining Agreement. “2022-2026 Basic Agreement,” Article VI(E) § 10(a)-(b) pp. 20-21.

² *Id.* at § 10(a).

³ <https://www.fangraphs.com/players/mason-miller/31757/stats/pitching>

⁴ <https://www.mlb.com/news/2025-mlb-reliever-of-the-year-award-candidates>

salary above the \$4M salary midpoint due to (1) his unparalleled quality, (2) his consistent and durable production in high leverage roles, (3) his career success as a closer, and (4) his career award recognition. Therefore, Mr. Miller respectfully deserves a salary above the \$4M midpoint.

II. Previous Compensation

Mason Miller's Total Career Compensation ⁵				
Year	Team	Age	Service Time	Salary
2023	OAK	24	0.166	\$720,000
2024	OAK	25	1.000	\$740,000
2025	OAK/SD	26	1.000	\$765,000
2026 Status	First Year Arbitration-Eligible		2.166	\$2,225,000

III. Quality of Player's Contributions During the Platform Season

Mason Miller's Statistics (2025 Platform Season)													
Team	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR
OAK	38	38.3	20	0	60.53%	1.73	29	76.30%	18	5	1.02	1.79	0.9
SD	22	23.3	2	10	13.64%	1.57	17	77.30%	11	1	0.73	1.36	1.2
2 Tm	60	61.7	22	10	43.33%	1.67	46	76.70%	29	6	0.91	3.15	2.1

In 2025, Mr. Miller endured a rollercoaster of a season only to finish strong down the stretch and receive award recognition. Mr. Miller captured the closer's role with the Athletics in his PY-1 and continued to dominate in that role in the first half of the PY, prior to his trade to the Padres. In 38.3 IP over that span, Mr. Miller's accrued a 1.73 gmLI, 76% LC%, and over 60% of his Relief Appearances were Save Opportunities. In these appearances with the Athletics, he recorded 20 saves (out of 23 opportunities), a 1.79 WPA and .9 aWAR. Mr. Miller's performance reaffirmed his standing as one of baseball's premier closers, demonstrating exceptional consistency in high leverage situations.

⁵ https://www.sportrac.com/mlb/player/_id/73359/mason-miller

However, Mr. Miller was traded to the Padres on July 31, 2025, in exchange for the number three prospect in baseball, and assumed a hybrid role. In his first month with the Padres Mr. Miller accrued 2 RAPP (Relief Appearances) in the 7th inning, 7 in the 8th, and 2 in 9th. Yet in the next, and final month of the regular season, Mr. Miller accrued 5 RAPP in the 7th and 6 in the 8th. Although in lesser role with the Padres, Miller pitched to a 1.57 gmLI with a 77% LC%. As mentioned Mr. Miller, although in an unfamiliar role, pitched to elite quality as he earned a Hold or Save in half of his outing and totalled 1.2 aWAR (more than his 38 Games with the Athletics) and a 1.39 WPA. This value and dominance in the role was acknowledged when Mr. Miller was listed as a finalist for the National League Trevor Hoffman Award to recognize the best reliever in the NL. Additionally, Mr. Miller pitched in games 1 and 2 of the NLWC Series where he faced 9 batters and struck out 8, resulting in a postseason stat line of 2.2 IP, 8K, 0 H, and significantly a .12 WPA and .7 cWPA (both placing 2nd amongst PS SD RP).

IV. Length and Consistency of Career Contributions

Mason Miller Statistics (Platform Year)														
YR	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR	Awards
2023	10	33.3	0	1	0.0%	.71	0	0.0%	1	0	1.2	.23	.7	
2024	55	65	28	0	50.9%	1.84	43	78.2%	30	5	.88	3.48	2.4	AS, ALL-MLB TM 2, ROY-4
2025	60	61.7	22	10	43.3%	1.67	46	76.7%	29	6	.91	3.15	2.1	Hoffman-F
TOT	125	160	50	11	47.9%	1.67	89	74.80	60	11	.96	6.86	5.2	

As the Athletics selected Mr. Miller in the third round of the 2021 MLB Amateur Draft, he quickly rose through the system. He made his MLB debut on April 19, 2023 and started four games prior to an elbow that led him to miss 104 games. In his return, Mr. Miller was used in a

very flexible role, including being used as an “Opener” in which he finished the season with 6 GS, only 4 RAPP and a 1.20 WHIP with 1 Hold.

Following a strong spring training, Mr. Miller earned the closer’s role and never looked back. Mr. Miller saw 31 SV Opportunities, which was 56% of all of his RAPP, while sporting a dominant 90% SV%. Mr Miller’s 8 SV and American League leading WPA (1.73) , fWAR (1.1), and Strikeouts (28) in the first month of the season, led to Mr. Miller receiving the prestigious AL Reliever of the Month Award.⁶ Mr. Miller’s dominant first half, which included 15 Saves (T-10th), 3.79 FIP (2nd), 1.77 gmLI (10th) and a 46% K% (1st) [ranks in AL among RP with 25 IP min.] resulted in his first All Star Game Selection. Mr. Miller’s success was recognized with a selection to the All-MLB Team 2nd Team and a ROY-4. **Mr. Miller’s 4th place ROY finish was the highest for a RP since Alexis Diaz in the NL (2022)⁷ and Emanuel Clase in the AL (2021)⁸.**

Since the start of 2024, Mr. Miller has been one of the most utilized and most efficient relievers in all of baseball as evidenced by the 2nd best WPA (6.63), 7th best SV% (87.72%), 10th best gmLI (1.75) in all of baseball. Although in uncharted territories with the Padres bullpen construction, from August 1st on, Mr. Miller still accrued 1.1 fWAR, 12 Sv+Hlds, 11 SD, and 1.36 WPA, leading the team in all categories (RP min. 20 IP). Mr. Miller’s elite quality in elite roles over his career, and specifically the last two years, supports the finding of a respectful 1T salary.

V. Comparative Baseball Salaries

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<https://www.mlb.com/press-release/press-release-mason-miller-named-al-reliever-of-the-month-for-march-april-2024>

⁷ https://www.baseball-reference.com/awards/awards_2022.shtml

⁸ https://www.baseball-reference.com/awards/awards_2021.shtml

Mr. Miller deserves a salary above the \$4M salary midpoint due to (1) his unparalleled quality, (2) his consistent and durable production in high leverage roles, (3) his career success as a closer, and (4) his career award recognition. This is clearly evidenced by comparisons to other 1T SAE players who earned salaries at or above the \$4M midpoint. These players include Camillo Doval at \$4.525M, Alexis Diaz at \$4.5M, and Jhoan Duran at \$4.125M.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Doval each lost the closer's role in the final two seasons, however, Mr. Doval lost the role due to poor performance whereas Mr. Miller was traded to a team and was in a new role due to their roster construction and bullpen usage. Moreover, Mr. Miller's role, quality and value in the PY surpassed that of Mr. Doval while Mr. Miller's career quality and value either matches or surpasses Mr. Doval's.

Furthermore, Mr. Miller is comparable to Mr. Diaz on the career look as they have spent similar time in the Closer's role and pitched to a very similar quality. Additionally, Mr. Miller separates himself from Mr. Diaz with a stronger role in the PY as evidenced by gmLI, LC, and LC%, coupled with immensely superior value (WPA, aWAR, SV+Hld).

Lastly, Mr. Miller's career role and consistency is nearly identical to Mr. Duran's as they were both one of the most efficient relief pitchers entering their respective 1T SAE. Further, while Mr. Miller and Mr. Duran accrued very similar bulk in their PY, Mr. Miller's quality and value was twice that of Mr. Duran's (aWAR, WPA).

When comparing these players to Mr. García, it is clear that he has earned a salary above the \$4M salary midpoint.

A. Camilo Doval (\$4.525M Salary)

Mason Miller vs. Camillo Doval Platform Year Statistics														
Player	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR	Awards

Miller	60	61.7	22	10	43.3%	1.67	46	76.7%	29	6	.91	3.15	2.1	Hoffman-F
Doval	62	59	23	5	45.2%	1.39	42	67.7%	26	10	1.58	.62	-0.2	

Mr. Doval earned a first-year arbitration salary of \$4.525M while posting his worst season to date. Mr. Doval and Mr. Miller both saw a decrease in Sv Opp down the stretch in the PY, however, Mr. Miller accrued more or higher LC, LC%, WPA, aWAR, and Sv+Hld. In the final two months of the season, Mr. Miller and Mr. Doval each totaled under 5 Sv Opp and Mr. Miller finished with more LC, as well as a stronger LC% and gmLI. In nearly identical PY bulk, Mr. Miller outperformed Mr. Doval both in the closer's role and when in uncharted territory. Mr. Miller's value was incomparable to Mr. Doval's as the latter accrued -.2 aWAR and an 80 ERA+. Mr. Miller's 2.1 aWAR (T-9th), and 3.15 WPA, was recognized with the Reliever of the Month award in September and was named a finalist for the NL Reliever of the Year Award. In contrast, Mr. Doval did not receive any award recognition in the PY.

Mason Miller vs. Camillo Doval Career Statistics

Player	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR	Awards
Miller	125	160	50	11	47.9%	1.67	89	74.8%	60	11	.96	6.86	5.2	AS, ALL-MLB TM 2, ROY-4, Hoffman-F
Doval	228	221.3	92	11	48.7%	1.75	168	73.7%	105	39	1.27	3.98	3.4	AS

Although Mr. Doval had a strong career and accumulated greater volume prior to his 1T SAE, Mr. Miller's career is highly comparable in role and leverage and superior to Mr. Doval in quality and value. Both pitchers have been heavily trusted and used consistently in late-inning, high leverage relief roles. They accrued nearly identical LC% and Sv Opp/RAPP% as well as recording a gmLI within 5% of each other. Despite fewer total innings, and thus opportunities, due in part to injury and nearly one less year of service time, Mr. Miller's run prevention and value metrics exceeds Mr. Doval's totals substantially: (WHIP: .96 v. 1.27; WPA: 6.86 v. 3.98;

aWAR: 5.2 v. 3.4). While Mr. Doval holds an advantage due to having more time in the role, in a comparable role Mr. Miller pitched to a more efficient tune as evidenced by the rate of SD/RAPP (MM:50% v. CD: 46%) and SV% (MM: 87.7% v. CD: 82.8%).

B. Alexis Diaz (\$4.5M Salary)

Mason Miller vs. Alexis Diaz Platform Year Statistics														
Player	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR	Awards
Miller	60	61.7	22	10	43.3%	1.67	46	76.7%	29	6	.91	3.15	2.1	Hoffman-F
Diaz	60	56.3	28	0	53.3%	1.47	42	70.0%	22	6	1.30	.84	.4	

Following a decrease in role and performance in the PY, Mr. Diaz earned a first-year arbitration salary of \$4.5M. Although Mr. Diaz maintained the closer's position in the PY longer than Mr. Miller, their leverage and usage statistics evidence comparable, high-leverage relief role. Mr. Miller accrued greater RAPP, LC% and gmLI in the PY and their totals over the final 2 month were within 10-15% of each other. These metrics combined with the advantage in PY bulk proves Mr. Miller was trusted the same if not more than Mr. Diaz in their respective PY. When analyzing their efficiency, Mr. Miller accrued more SV+Hld than Mr. Diaz as well as a significantly better SD/RAPP rate (MM: 29/60 v. AD: 22/60). Although Mr. Diaz accrued a plethora of Saves in the PY, his lower-leverage closer role and lack of value or impact resulted in no award recognition. On the Contrary, Mr. Miller's dominant first half and strong finish, including the NL Reliever of the Month Award for September, resulted in being named as a Finalist for the NL Reliever of the Year Award.

Mason Miller vs. Alexis Diaz Career Statistics														
Player	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR	Awards

Miller	125	160	50	11	47.9%	1.67	89	74.8%	60	11	.96	6.86	5.2	AS, ALL-MLB TM 2, ROY-4, Hoffman-F
Diaz	190	187.3	75	15	45.3%	1.74	139	73.2%	85	24	1.14	8.07	4.2	AS, ROY-5

When looking at both players’ career resumes Mr. Miller and Mr. Diaz pitched in very similar roles and accrued comparable value. Mr. Miller separates himself from Mr. Diaz in his run prevention as evidenced by the difference in their WHIP, AVG, OPS, and ERA. Mr. Diaz bests Mr. García in quantity or bulk, but Mr. Miller outpaces Mr. Diaz in most usage and role rate statistics such as SvOpp/RAPP, LC%, and SV/RAPP. Both players accrued an AS in their PY-1 and down ballot ROY votes in their PY-2. However, Mr. Miller distinguishes himself with his selections to the All-MLB Team 2nd Team and the NL Reliever of the Year Finalists.

C. Jhoan Duran (\$4.125M Salary)

Mason Miller vs. Jhoan Duran Platform Year Statistics														
Player	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR	Awards
Miller	60	61.7	22	10	43.3%	1.67	46	76.7%	29	6	.91	3.15	2.1	Hoffman-F
Duran	58	54.3	23	7	43.1%	1.82	48	82.8%	34	10	1.16	1.53	.7	

Mr. Duran earned a salary of \$4.125M in his first-year of arbitration eligibility, closest to, yet still above, the midpoint in this hearing. Mr. Duran and Mr. Miller had very similar PY despite Mr. Miller’s trade and assumption of a new, high-leverage role. Down the stretch, in the final 3 months of the season, Mr. Duran pitched in a higher role although he saw his gmLI on a downwards trend. On the contrary, Mr. Miller pitched to a higher quality and saw his gmLI increase .53 points from August to September. Further, in those final two months, Mr. Miller held opponents to a .342 OPS and in those 22 RAPP accrued 1.36 WPA, .77 ERA, .73 WHIP, and 11 SD compared to Mr. Duran who posted -.02 WPA, 3.60 ERA, and 1.35 WHIP in 21 RAPP.

Mason Miller vs. Jhoan Duran Career Statistics

Player	G	IP	SV	HLD	SV Opp/RAPP	gmLI	LC	LC%	SD	MD	WHIP	WPA	aWAR	Awards
Miller	125	160	50	11	47.9%	1.67	89	74.8%	60	11	.96	6.86	5.2	AS, ALL-MLB TM 2, ROY-4, Hoffman-F
Duran	174	187.3	58	26	37.4%	1.69	136	78.2%	95	22	1.08	8.1	4.4	

Over the course of their pre-arbitration careers, both players spent significant time in the closers role. The discrepancy in Sv Opp is solely from Mr. Duran's PY-2 when Mr Miller was ailing an elbow due to the Athletics' misuse. In identical time over the last two years (RAPP-MM: 115 v. JD: 117), Mr. Miller and Mr. Duran have each mirrored each other's roles. Specifically, they each accrued 50 SV in 57 Appearances and a 1.75 gmLI, while Mr. Miller has recorded 10 Holds to Mr. Duran's 8. In that two year look, Mr. Miller nearly doubled both Mr. Duran's WPA (MM: 6.63 v. JD: 3.54) and aWAR totals (MM: 4.5 v. JD: 2.2). Further, while Mr. Miller was selected at the end of each of his past two seasons with award recognition, Mr. Duran never earned any award recognition. While both players spent time on the IL in their careers, Mr. Duran's PY was hindered by 33 days on the IL due to an oblique. While both players spent ample time in high leverage relief roles, Mr. Miller's quality, run prevention and overall value to the club is significantly stronger than that of Mr. Duran.

VI. Existence of Physical or Mental Defects

Mr. Miller does not have any mental defects. Unfortunately, following four starts to begin his Rookie year, Mr. Miller spent 121 days on the Injured List (IL) due to an elbow injury. He returned that season for the remaining 23 team games and pitched in 6 of them including two more starts.⁹ In 2024, Mr. Miller had a freak injury to his left pinkie finger as he suffered the

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<https://www.fangraphs.com/players/mason-miller/31757/game-log?position=P&gds=&gde=&season=2023&type=1>

injury when Mr. Miller awkwardly placed his hand on the training table.¹⁰ Although this injury resulted in just 15 days on the IL, Mr. Miller returned from his injuries in superb form and remained one of the most effective relief pitchers and closers in baseball.

VII. Performance of the Club

Upon Mr. Miller joining the Padres at this year's trade deadline, the Club went on to make the Postseason only to lose in the NLWC round against the Chicago Cubs. Mr. Miller was one of the most impactful players and was a key catalyst to the September and Postseason surge by the Padres. From August 1st on, Mr. Miller led all Padres pitchers in WPA, WPA/LI, ERA, ERA-, FIP, and finished 2nd in fWAR (1.1), only behind ace Dylan Cease. Mason Miller was one of, if not the best pitcher for the Padres down the stretch of the PY, when it mattered most. Mr. Miller further provided such a profound impact in his multiple RAPP during the NLWC where he struck out 8 of the 9 batters he faced.

VIII. Conclusion

Mr. Miller has quickly and emphatically blossomed into the most powerful closer and one of the most productive and efficient relievers in all of baseball over the last two seasons. In addition to his dominant regular season production, Mr. Miller's success has been prominently recognized with Award Accolades. With his stellar run prevention, consistent usage in high leverage roles, and award recognition, Mr. Miller compares himself best to the players who have earned salaries at, or above, the midpoint of \$4M. Therefore, Mr. Miller respectfully requests a salary of \$4.5M for the 2026 season.

¹⁰ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/2024/07/25/mason-miller-injury-mlb-trade-deadline/74549012007/>