

HISANORI TAKAHASHI

*Step one: win the fifth starter's spot, then
Step two: tell Mets fans he's not related to Ken.*



In the grand tradition of Masato Yoshii, Satoru Komiyama, and Ken Takahashi, Hisanori Takahashi is the latest past-prime pitcher the Mets have imported from Japan. To his credit, he's not quite as old as Komiyama or last year's Takahashi, but he is still short on stuff: his four-seam fastball tops out at around 90. His best pitch is a screwball he uses as a changeup, which some have suggested could be a good pitch in the majors. He also throws a two-seamer, a slider, and a curve, but none are considered above average.

You never really know what you're getting with Japanese players; the game over there is very different in many ways. Takahashi spent eight seasons in Japan, all with the Yomiuri Giants and chiefly as a starter—he's in the mix for the fifth starter's job but a relief role is more likely if he makes the team. In Japan, he consistently showed off outstanding control, walking just 2.4 per nine innings over his career. Unfortunately, he didn't have outstanding strikeout or home run rates, and they can't afford to slip any as he makes the transition to Major League Baseball.

As I said, considering we don't know how Takahashi will adapt to American baseball, it is more likely to end up in the 'pen. He is a southpaw, but his primary out pitch is a screwball; screwballers often show a reverse platoon split, so he probably won't be effective as a lefty specialist. A spot as a long reliever is his best chance. He probably won't make the big league team out of spring training, but a strong start at Buffalo could land him a spot in the back of the Mets' bullpen by June. —*Alex Nelson*

BATS: L HISANORI TAKAHASHI THROWS: L												
YEAR	AGE	TEAM OR MiLB LEVEL	G	GS	IP	BB	K	HR	K/9	BB/9	K/BB	ERA
2007	32	NPB	28	—	186.2	50	141	31	6.80	2.40	2.82	2.75
2008	33	NPB	23	22	122.0	30	94	16	6.90	2.20	3.13	4.13
2009	34	NPB	25	—	144.0	36	126	16	7.90	2.30	3.50	2.94
2010	35	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

P ADVANCED 04/02/75												
YEAR	AGE	TEAM OR MiLB LEVEL	GB%	LD%	BABIP	LOB%	Sw- STR%	IFFB%	HR/ FB%	FIP	xFIP	WAR
2007	32	NPB	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2008	33	NPB	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2009	34	NPB	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2010	35	CHONE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

FERNANDO TATIS

*On rare occasions Mets' bats had a pitcher in trouble
Tatis would come up and hit into a double.*



Tatis re-signed on a one-year deal in January; he will earn somewhere between \$1 and \$1.7 million, depending on incentives reached. This deal was one of the minor highlights of the Mets' offseason, as Tatis provides a league-average bat and the ability to play the corner outfield and infield spots capably. Not many utility men can put up a .330 wOBA, which most projections peg Tatis for in 2010.

Fan perception of Tatis seemed to be generally negative following 2009. The

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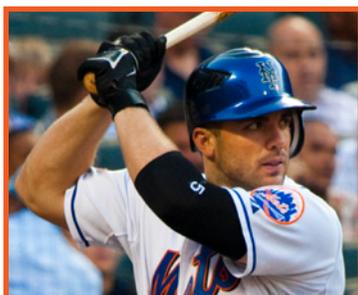
reason was obvious—he hit into 13 double plays, including a staggering nine between May 31 and June 24. Many would deem him “un-clutch” based on this, but in reality the double play barrage was probably more anomaly than anything else. This is a player who was the most clutch hitter on the team in 2008, per the FanGraphs Clutch metric—did he suddenly become a lousy choker in 2009? No, of course not. Clutch hitting performance fluctuates from year to year and is impossible to predict. Will Tatis be “clutch” in 2010? You might as well flip a coin to decide.

Using the context-neutral statistic WAR, Tatis was worth 1.7 wins over each of the last two seasons. This is outstanding, especially once you consider his playing time and salary. It would be nicer if Tatis were five years younger, but he has been durable over the last two seasons, and the chance that he suddenly falls off a cliff in 2010, production-wise, seems remote. —James Kannengieser

BATS: R FERNANDO TATIS THROWS: R												
YEAR	AGE	TEAM OR MiLB LEVEL	PA	AB	Avg	OBP	SLG	R	RBI	HR	SB	CS
2007	32	AAA	571	496	.276	.360	.486	90	67	21	8	6
2008	33	NYM	306	273	.297	.369	.484	33	47	11	3	0
2009	34	NYM	379	340	.282	.339	.438	42	48	8	4	1
2010	35	CHONE	406	369	.257	.325	.417	46	47	12	3	2
OF-1B ADVANCED 01/01/75												
YEAR	AGE	TEAM OR MiLB LEVEL	BB%	K%	BABIP	wOBA	wRC	wRC+	vBat	vFld	vPos	WAR
2007	32	AAA	10.9%	20.8%	.307	.365	86.0	113	—	—	—	—
2008	33	NYM	9.5%	21.6%	.343	.372	47.8	131	11.9	-2.0	-3.1	1.7
2009	34	NYM	5.8%	15.9%	.312	.338	48.2	108	3.5	3.7	-3.0	1.7
2010	35	CHONE	7.6%	19.8%	.292	.327	47.9	98	-0.7	0.8	-9.3	0.4

DAVID WRIGHT

*He entered Citi Field as the Man of the Hour
But how on earth did he lose all of his power???*



If there's one thing we learned unequivocally about David Wright in 2009, it's that he has clearly been exposed as the mediocre ballplayer he is. His skill set is already declining at age 28, and it should be patently obvious to even the most casual fan that he lacks both the talent and the intestinal fortitude to cut it in New York. The Mets' top priority for 2010 should be to ride Wright out of town on a rail, taking back whatever anyone is willing to offer in return.

Somewhere, someone actually thought that sentiment, and they should be ashamed. Last season was obviously an off year for Wright, who saw his strike-out rate spike and his slugging percentage tank, two stats that intuitively will directly correlate well with one another. Swing harder, hit the ball harder while whiffing more frequently. Wright's home run-per-flyball rate plummeted to 6.9%, almost ten full percentage points below his 2008 mark of 16.7% and seven points below his career average of 13.9%. One might naturally blame that decline on Citi Field, but Wright was equally inept at hitting home runs away from home.

The good news here is that there are a number of signs that suggest that 2009's power outage was an outlier and not the beginning of a new trend. One strong indicator is that Wright's line-drive rate held steady, which likely suggests that he is hitting the ball as hard as ever but hasn't seen his customary payoff. His walk rate remained strong, as did his batting average, the net result of which was a .390 on-base percentage, right in line with his career norm.

On a more subjective level, there were rumors that Wright adjusted his swing to suit Citi Field and that he might have masked a nagging leg injury for part of the year. These are largely unsubstantiated, but either could certainly help to explain his decline in the power department.

Another area of concern for Wright is his defense, which continued its de-

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scent last season into the abyss of decrepitude. Apart from his genuinely good 2007 season, Wright has run the gamut from “so-so” to “downright awful,” with the latter serving as a reasonable approximation of his 2009 performance. Plus/Minus rated him at -11 runs saved; UZR had him at -10.4. Wright’s superlative offense has been especially valuable at a semi-premium position like third base. However, that advantage could be easily offset if he continues to cost the Mets upwards of a win—relative to an average defender—with the glove. Reassigning him to first base, e.g., would probably be premature at this point, but if his glove spends another season or two in a morass of ineptitude, it’s something the Mets will have to seriously consider.

Let’s end on a high note, though: David Wright will play 2010 as a 27-year-old, and his .907 career OPS is second only to Miguel Cabrera among active under-thirties. He’s a terrific player who, if 2009 turns out to be the aberration it appears to be, should return to being one of the best all-around players in baseball. —*Eric Simon*

BATS: R DAVID WRIGHT THROWS: R												
YEAR	AGE	TEAM OR MiLB LEVEL	PA	AB	AVG	OBP	SLG	R	RBI	HR	SB	CS
2007	24	NYM	711	604	.325	.416	.546	113	107	30	34	5
2008	25	NYM	736	626	.302	.390	.534	115	124	33	15	5
2009	26	NYM	618	535	.307	.390	.447	88	72	10	27	9
2010	27	CHONE	649	568	.305	.391	.502	97	98	23	20	6

3B ADVANCED 12/20/82												
YEAR	AGE	TEAM OR MiLB LEVEL	BB%	K%	BABIP	wOBA	wRC	wRC+	vBat	vFld	vPos	WAR
2007	24	NYM	13.2%	19.0%	.356	.420	141.2	160	55.5	4.9	2.4	8.4
2008	25	NYM	12.8%	18.8%	.321	.397	130.3	148	44.0	3.4	2.3	7.4
2009	26	NYM	12.0%	26.2%	.394	.368	94.3	128	21.4	-10.4	2.1	3.4
2010	27	CHONE	11.9%	21.7%	.355	.393	112.2	144	34.5	-6.0	2.3	5.2