

Thursday, February 10, 2005

The Eric Byrnes deal

Signing Eric Byrnes for about \$2.2 million means that, if the A's want to get their money's worth at the same rate they got last year (a little more than \$1.2 million per win), he'll need to be worth around two wins over a replacement outfielder.

In his first season of full-time play last year, Byrnes was worth a little over five wins over replacement, according to BP's WARP, and he compiled a little over 33 VORP. PECOTA's projection for him this year has him falling off to 22 VORP, figuring he peaked last year, at 28. I don't see any reason to argue with that estimate, and whether we use the "10 runs to a win" baseline or estimate that he'll pick up a WARP per every six VORP or so (5 to 33), he's over that "two wins" baseline I mentioned earlier.

Now, with Byrnes being 29 and in the big money (relatively) years of his career, even if he lasts the year with Oakland, I wouldn't be surprised to see him traded next off-season, as he'll probably be due for another salary bump while being well into the decline phase of his career. What we can hope for, on two levels, is that he has a monster year. If he ends up just pounding the ball all season and finishes as, say, the third-best hitting outfielder in the AL, that can help push the A's toward the playoffs while also enhancing his trade value (perhaps the Pirates will still be interested).

It's a little sad to talk about Byrnes being in decline because it seems like he just got here. I guess that's because he's been kicking around the high minors and the A's bench for so long that he's grown old (again, relatively) without getting much of a shot at a full-time job.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 12:15