

How the Cliff Lee Offers Are Reminiscent of Kevin Brown Contract

Written by Maury Brown

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Last night, Rangers managing partner Chuck Greenberg held a conference call with print media to announce that they had upped the ante by giving [Cliff Lee](#) a menu of [several offers to choose from](#) . This

after the Yankees added one more year to a 6-year, \$142 million dollar offer.

Greenberg said that 7-year, \$142 million deal that [Carl Crawford](#) landed earlier in the day with the Red Sox was reason to make the offer, presumably a reference to the years in the contract.

All I could think of was **Kevin Brown**.

For those that don't remember, Brown was the first player to land a contract with a total value of over \$100 million (\$105 million, to be exact). The deal was for, you guessed it, 7 years with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1998.

The comparables go beyond just money. Brown, too, was in his mid-30s at the time. What is uncertain is whether Lee's career path will go the same as Brown's. He followed up his contract year with solid numbers (18-9 with a 3.00 ERA), but injuries plagued him beyond that.

For the two principles vying for The Love of Lee, it's becoming a matter of garnering the best free agent in this year's class, but also a matter of timing and pride.

For the Yankees, it's missing out on other targeted players. Rumors persisted that they were interested in an outfielder, like [Jayson Werth](#) or [Carl Crawford](#) , although Brian Cashman said Crawford was never on the radar.

Be that as it may, they need pitching to deal with the erratic performance of AJ Burnett, and need a top-tier starter beyond this year as [Andy Pettitte](#) is at the end of his career.

For the Rangers, it's a matter of keeping what they know got them to the World Series for the first time in franchise history. They also have a source of revenue to work from that won't always be there.

When reports first surfaced of a [20-year, \\$3 billion television contract extension](#) with FOX Sports Southwest, Evan Grant of the Dallas-Morning News was quick to point out that the deal was [front](#)

[loaded with possibly as much as \\$80 million in cash](#)

. If true, that extra money, along with the deep pockets of investors in the Rangers new ownership group, can go toe-to-toe with the Yankees in terms of years, and more importantly, dollars.

In the end, one begins to wonder whether it is the competition, the fact that both the Yankees

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and Rangers seem more concerned about losing the battle over the player they covet, than whether they are setting themselves up for a bad contract. Lee might very well be the [Cliff Lee](#)

we've seen for one, two, or maybe even three seasons. But, after that, the possibility seems great that the velocity and/or control will begin to wane, and when that happens, hitters are liable to feast. None of this takes into account that over that much contract time, the chances for injury are all the more great.

Will [Cliff Lee](#) be the next Kevin Brown? It seems that we won't know any earlier than sometime next week. If the Yankees or Rangers bump a deal to 8-years... Well, all sense of common sense will have gone out the window.



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