

SUPREME COURT OF FANTASY JUDGMENT

Going, Going, Gonzalez v. Fantasy Baseball League

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI FROM A FANTASY BASEBALL LEAGUE

Decided May 16, 2010
Cite as 1 F.J. 29 (May 2010)

Factual Background

An anonymous fantasy baseball league (hereinafter referred to as “fantasy league”) is hosted on CBS Sportsline’s fantasy sports platform. The league is organized and run by an anonymous commissioner (hereinafter referred to as “commissioner”) who input several settings on CBS’s fantasy commissioner program. This fantasy baseball league is comprised of fourteen teams, each consisting of eighteen players on a roster. The fantasy league is a head-to-head points league, and there are point values associated with various MLB statistics.

League members are permitted to make transactions throughout the season, including add/drops and trades. The commissioner has set up the league where individual team owners can add free agents and then drop players from their roster on their own. In order for a transaction like this to be effective, the team must adhere to the roster requirements set up by the commissioner (these are not known to the Court).

On Sunday, May 9, 2010, a team owner (hereinafter referred to as “Going, Going, Gonzalez – a/k/a GGG”) made a transaction by adding a free agent. In doing his subsequent drop, he selected Carlos Gonzalez, outfielder on the Colorado Rockies, as the player to drop from his roster. On Monday, May 10, 2010, GGG posted a message on the league message board informing everyone else that he made a mistake in dropping Gonzalez. Rather, his intent was to drop Carlos Gomez, outfielder on the Milwaukee Brewers, instead. He requested that everyone else forego adding Gonzalez as a free agent and allow him to reacquire him at the end of the following week since GGG was last in the league’s waiver priority order.

After seeing this request, the league’s commissioner went into GGG’s team page to fix the mistake and add Gonzalez back onto his roster, as requested. However, when the commissioner arrived onto GGG’s team page, he noticed that Carlos Gomez was not even on his team. As a result, the commissioner denied GGG’s request to reacquire Gonzalez.

Procedural History

The commissioner was initially going to grant GGG’s request for a correction to his alleged mistake by adding Gonzalez back to his roster. This decision was based on GGG’s timely message to the league indicating that a mistake had been made. It was also based on it appearing to be an obvious oversight and mistake because there could be no justification in dropping Gonzalez based on his statistics, performance, and position in the Rockies’ starting lineup and

SUPREME COURT OF FANTASY JUDGMENT

friendly hitting confines at Coors Field. On the other hand, Carlos Gomez is not a starting player and does not appear to have the ability to achieve similar numbers or success to Gonzalez. Dropping Gomez seemed more like what GGG meant to do than dropping Gonzalez.

After discovering that GGG never had Gomez to begin with, the commissioner denied GGG's request to reacquire Gonzalez.

Issue Presented

- (1) Should GGG be permitted to reacquire Carlos Gonzalez or does GGG's dishonesty about having Carlos Gomez on his roster justify the commissioner's decision to deny the request?

Decision

Normally the Supreme Court of Fantasy Judgment is extremely tough in its stance on personal due diligence of team owners to check their own rosters and team pages to ensure that their lineups and rosters are correct. However, this Court understands that people can make mistakes, even when money is on the line. As a result, this Court was inclined to rule that GGG should have been permitted to reacquire Gonzalez based on the fact that GGG alerted the rest of the league to this mistake within 24 hours, and the fact that there is no mistaking the talent and potential between Carlos Gonzalez and Carlos Gomez. On its face, it appeared to be an honest mistake that was caught in a timely manner and attempted to be corrected. If the facts and circumstances of the case were any different, perhaps this would be where the analysis ends.

However, when the commissioner discovered that GGG did not have Carlos Gomez on his roster, this Court has changed its tune. The commissioner did his due diligence by checking the transaction history for Carlos Gomez and discovered that he was not drafted, nor was he ever on anyone's fantasy team until this past week. The commissioner further inquired with GGG about this dilemma, but GGG never responded. There was not any other player on GGG's roster that was similar to Carlos Gonzalez or Carlos Gomez.

This type of deceitful action undermines the integrity of this fantasy league, and fantasy sports in general. There is an unwritten and understood man code for fantasy sports that has existed for decades, which falls outside the scope of league constitutions, commissioner service packages or money prizes. This unwritten code includes the proviso that one will not cheat at fantasy sports. Here, GGG's motives and intentions were clearly established by the way he meticulously played on the commissioner's and league's emotions and trust.

The commissioner of this league should be applauded for his generosity in allowing GGG to correct a mistake made once he realized it. However, he should be applauded threefold for denying this request once he realized he had been scammed. If there are any repercussions that can take place for such actions, they should be taken very carefully. This type of behavior may warrant expulsion from the league due to the severity of the offense.

SUPREME COURT OF FANTASY JUDGMENT

Based on this premeditated attempt to deceive the commissioner and the league, this Court upholds the commissioner's decision to deny GGG's request to reacquire Gonzalez.

IT IS SO ORDERED.