

Okay, so you have been hired as a General Manager for a baseball team in the Figment Universe. What comes next?

This document will hopefully guide you through the process and discuss navigating some of the unique aspects of Figment Baseball, especially when dealing with a league that leaves both the current and potential ratings hidden.

STEP ONE

SET UP YOUR GENERAL MANAGER PASSWORD

Those familiar with online leagues will already know this but the very first thing you should do after logging in with the password the commissioner gave you to get started is create your own password -one that you will not forget- as you will need to use it every time you open the league.

To do so simply click on your manager NAME across the top menu bar and there will be a drop down menu. Select "Manager Options"



This will bring you to a screen with a number of choices you need to set to ensure you have full control of your organization. First thing to do is click on SET MANAGER PASSWORD and give yourself a new password.

Once that is done stay on this screen and look to the right hand side where you will see a heading titled TEAM CONTROL SETTINGS. A couple may be grayed out as only your manager can control them (note you are the GM in this league, not the bench boss). Any that can be adjusted I recommend setting them to your control as you do not want the AI to be able to override any of your decisions like releasing minor leaguers.

Some GM's may leave the MINOR LEAGUE Lineups/Depth Charts/Pitching Staff to the minor league managers but I recommend you don't. It means a little more work on your part (but you can always ask the minor league manager to set the lineups/rotation for a particular level) but many find that the AI does an awful job giving top prospects the playing team they need.

So you now have a password set and you are in complete control of your organization.

At this point I would recommend doing a quick export to make sure you can send your changes to the league commissioner flawlessly. Note, you can export your team file as many times as you want to

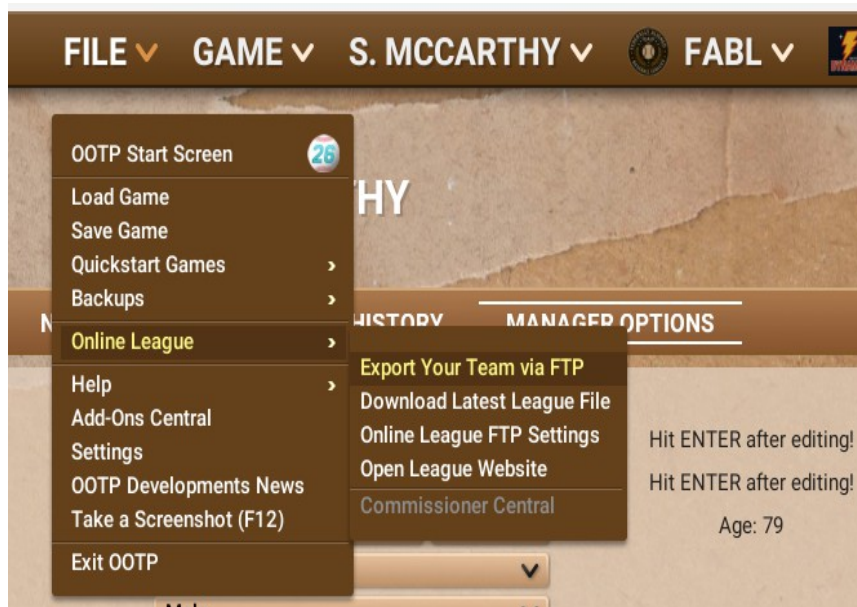
and the latest save will always be the one that the commissioner ends up with when he advances the game.

A couple of points to remember. 1- You must have the newest league file -ie, the same one the commissioner is using- in order for your export to work and 2- I recommend saving the game periodically if you are making a lot of changes so that you do not lose any of them should you wish to close and reopen the game and make more changes to export again before the next sim.

HOW TO EXPORT YOUR CHANGES

Online league veterans will already know this as it is the same process for virtually every league but for those newcomers when you “export” a team file what you are doing is sending all of the changes you have made to your organization on your computer to the commissioner so they can be implemented in game and appear when he posts the next league file. There are some exceptions such as during the World Championship Series but each time the commissioner does a new sim (usually daily Monday to Friday and typically in the early morning eastern time) he advances the game one week.

To export simply Click on the FILE dropdown, choose Online League and then select Export Your Team via FTP.



It should just take a few seconds to get a message confirming your export was successful. If it takes longer and eventually gives you an ERROR -202 message you need to toggle a setting. Should that happen instead of selecting Export Your Team via FTP choose the ONLINE LEAGUE FTP SETTINGS option. Once there you will see an option that says FTP MODE. It may say PASSIVE MODE, ACTIVE MODE or USE DEFAULT FTP MODE. You want it to say PASSIVE MODE but for many users with OOTP26 you need to switch it from Passive Mode to Active Mode and then back to Passive Mode for the export to work successfully. Once that is done you should be able to export your team via FTP and get the successful message. If not, post a message on the league communication channel (presently Slack) and someone will help you.

NOTE: For some users with OOTP26 every time you open the game they find they have to do the switch from Passive to Active and back to Passive Mode for their exports to work. Once it has been

toggled once they usually have no other issues until they close and reopen the game. When that happens they need to do the toggle again.

SETUP DONE. NOW WHAT?

Joining any new league and taking over a team can feel overwhelming and stats-only (no visible ratings) can often increase that feeling. However, once you get comfortable with your organization most FABL GM's find it is the only way to play OOTP.

The challenge is going from someone brand new to the league who knows nothing about his team or his minor league system. It takes time to get up to speed but this guide will walk you through a few of the early steps. For this writeup it is going to be assumed that you are joining the league in the off-season but the same principles apply if you are hired in the middle of the season as well.

Step 1- Make no rash decisions. Our General Manager's are usually very welcoming and quick to assist newcomers but I would suggest you do nothing in terms of trading in your first few weeks in the league. If you do feel compelled to make a deal I strongly suggest you run the offer past the commissioner before agreeing to anything. He does not own a team in the league and will give you valuable insight.

The first thing you want to do is go through your organization and figure just how your team stacks up. The ratings may not be visible but there are many sources in game that you can use for clues. Let's begin with your big league roster. We can worry about the minors later.

FRONT OFFICE

You can start anywhere but team finances and staff are as good a place as any. Click on the FRONT OFFICE tab for your club. Depending on the time of year it is there are 3 key things you can control on the FINANCES tab. They are ticket prices, Scouting Budget and Development Budget.

We are approaching an era with free agency so things may have to change depending upon your budget but the rule of thumb I have employed is to set my Scouting Budget and Development Budget as high as the game will allow me. I focus heavily on drafting and developing quality talent so I want as much money as possible spent on those two areas. The game will not let you go above a certain number each year so that is why it may change somewhat when you hit enter to confirm your choice. Note – these can only be adjusted during the offseason.

Ticket prices can only be set in the fall just after the World Championship Series. If you are at that point you can change the average cost of tickets. I tend to be fairly conservative but always do an increase each year. PRO-TIP- look in STATS+ (an online league support program) as there is a page there that lets you compare your average ticket price to the rest of the league.

The next tab in the FRONT OFFICE section that I really focus on is my PERSONNEL. I do not make changes for change sake so if you have every position filled you are probably set for now. The one spot you might want to look at is your SCOUTING DIRECTOR. In stats-only, you want an SD with the best ratings possible. Click on your SD and you will go to his main page. Ignore how he assesses International Free Agents as we do not have those in Figment Baseball. If he is not at least GOOD in the other three -and I value Scouting Amateurs the most- you might want to consider a change but to get started it is not essential.

NOTE- with all of your staff they can be poached by other organizations at the end of the year so make sure at some point during the season before the WCS ends that you sign any staff members you want to retain to contract extensions. If the contract runs out on a guy you lose him and will need to find a replacement.

NOTE 2- Be careful when you change Scouting Director because all of the scouting knowledge (accuracy level of scouting on players) disappears when he leaves so you will be starting from scratch with your new SD.

The final TAB in FRONT OFFICE to focus on is STAFF ROLES. Pretty self-explanatory as you need to assign your big league coaching staff to various teaching roles.

Once my FRONT OFFICE tab is looked at I next go to the PLAYER DEVELOPMENT tab. This is a key source of information for you and also where you assign your DRAFT BUDGET, which is money for signing bonuses of your next draft class. It may be grayed out as it is only available for adjustment in the off-season I believe.

On this tab you can get a good feel for your organization as the ORGANIZATIONAL DEPTH CHART gives you the ability to see who your Scouting Director believes are the best current players at each position as well as a drop-down to look at your top prospects.

This helps you immensely in getting to know your farm system.

Other sources of key information are the MEET THE TEAM tab which can be customized but lists your top players, top prospects and the Positional Rankings to show how your starter at each position compares with the rest of the league.

The TEAM CHEMISTRY tab is one I look at often as well. It is debatable how much of an impact chemistry has in the game and I will never let it be the main factor on keeping or cutting a player but if I have marginal prospects or depth guys with attitude issues I am fairly quick to get rid of them.

None of those tabs above or any of the others are substantially different from what you would see in a solo game. What may be different for you is the ratings screen is basically blank for players because they are hidden in Figment.

ASSESSING MY TEAM WITHOUT RATINGS

It is pretty important you get to know your team but as you start you can always ask your manager to suggest lineups and pitching staffs as you get to know your club. There is plenty of information to help you. Number one in a stats-only league is of course **the stats**. Nothing gives you a better indication of a big league player than the numbers he has produced in recent seasons. Make sure you look at fielding stats too for key defenders like your shortstop and center fielder.

In addition to the stats, you can read the written scouting reports provided by both your Scouting Director and OSA. There is some guesswork on your part required with young players and those getting into their mid and late thirties but for the most part it is fairly easy even without ratings to assess your major leaguers.

It is the minor leagues where it can be a real challenge and in my mind minor league management and

drafting is what separates good from great FABL General Managers.

One you have some familiarity with your big league roster I would suggest you find time to go over your minors pretty closely. Some use spreadsheets like excel while others use shortlists in game but I would suggest you find a way to keep track of your top prospects. You have five levels of minors, so about 125 players in your system but for the most part, all but 20-40 of them are really just filler. Don't ignore them completely because maybe a fringe prospect gets a big talent boost but if you have limited time use it to track and follow your top prospects.

You could go through your minor league system team by team and read the scouting reports and add those with potential to a short list or if you have less time take a look at your team in the prospect pipeline and you can make shortlists from the top prospects there.

I like shortlists because they quickly let me identify which players I want to keep an eye on closely in my minor league system.

VIEW : Pitching Stats 1* FILTER : Custom

POS	#	Name	Inf	Age	B	T
SP	49	Dan Willmore		27	L	L
SP	24	Steve Burke		25	R	R
CL	15	Bill Sloan		24	R	R
SP	37	Joe Bradley		22	R	R
SP	4	HAL REEVES	@	22	R	R
SP	7	HARRY TRINITY	@	21	L	L
SP	22	ALEX TRAVERS	@	20	R	R
SP	6	JOE RHODES	@	19	R	R
SP	13	GARY MCLAUGHLIN	@	18	R	L

For example on the screen above the INF column tells me which players are on a short list so I want to make sure those guys are in my starting rotation and pitching regularly. I use shortlists for just two purposes as a GM – one my prospect list of top players in my system as mentioned here- and two to identify draft pool talent. (More on that later).

So now I have identified my top prospects. The next step is to make sure they are playing at the proper level. This is not much different from what you would do in a solo league except you need to rely on stats, scouting reports and also the players age rather than just look at his ratings.

I never hesitate to challenge a prospect on my shortlist. If he is producing at his current level I move him up. I also rarely will start college age draft picks in short A or Rookie ball. I want prospects playing so the only time I tend to hold a guy back a bit is if he cannot start at the next level because I already have a prospect there at the same position.

SCOUTING THE DRAFT

Once I have looked at my front office and big league rosters along with making my list of top prospects my biggest focus regardless of the time of year is preparing for the next draft. In Figment we usually do the draft in two phases. The first is conducted through the Stats+ add-on and is run in January of our league year. It covers the first 10 rounds of the draft. The remaining 10-15 rounds are done in game and completed when the game actually processes the draft in June.

Because rounds 1-10 are done in January you do not have the benefit of an In-game Mock Draft (although the league newspaper This Week in Figment Sports generally does at least a one round mock shortly before the draft) or the scouting combine. This is done on purpose to keep the “fog of war” up and make drafting a little less predictable and a little more challenging.

Your main source of information for the draft is your written scouting reports on the players plus also a feature of OOTP exclusive to online leagues (at least I believe it is still exclusive). It is called the DRAFT LIST and is a tab option from the DRAFT SCREEN. What it allows you to do is ask your Scouting Director for his recommendations for each round of the draft. It is available as soon as the calendar flips to January 1 in game and the SD does update it regularly as we advance. I do not rely entirely on his recommendations but use it as a tool, particularly to aide my selections in later rounds.

The key to your SD providing you a quality list is giving him the time to scout the draft pool. For this reason almost every sim throughout the year I am assigning my SD players from the draft pool to scout.

Not all GM's do this but I recommend using shortlists to narrow down your draft targets. There are usually more than 400 players in the draft pool and it is not necessary to really scout them all. I am focused on round 1-10 so when the current draft is completed in June I immediately start scouting the next draft.

It is not a lot of work but if you spend 10-15 over four or five sims in July you can read the scouting reports and narrow potential draft candidates down by assigning those you are interested in to shortlists and then ignoring the rest.

PRO-TIP – Make three short lists for your draft – Rounds 1-2, Rounds 3-5 and Rounds 6-10 could be there names. Then each sim go through a few players (maybe one position each day) and assign those with good scouting reports to the appropriate list. This means when the draft gets closer you have far less prep work and you can focus your scouting directors draft attention all year just on guys on your shortlists. You do not need to worry about all this right now if you are just starting in the league and you can reach out to GM's on our slack channel for advice on preparing for the draft. The takeaway should be that **Preparing in Advance for the Draft is Essential.**

SUMMARY

What do you do when you first join the league? That was a lot of information above but the quick answer is the same as you would do in any solo game.

Focus on your team and organization and start to familiarize yourself with the club. If it is late in the year or getting close to the draft, make it a priority and use your Scouting Director, his draft list which becomes available in game after January 1, and shortlists to organize yourself.

And ask questions on our slack channel either in the main chat or by private message to our commissioner or veteran GM's. All of us really enjoy stats-only but realize there is an adjustment period so we are more than willing to help you get up to speed.

Do not try to do everything at once. A whole organization and draft pool takes time to get comfortable with so use the tools at your disposal (things like OSA prospect pipeline, Positional strength rankings or your Scouting Director's Draft List) to help you.

Get comfortable exporting even if you make very few changes. Maybe even start small with a few adjustments to some of your minor league teams. And ask questions on Slack. We have all been in your shoes before – feeling perhaps a little overwhelmed by the scope of the figment universe (and we have not yet touched on the hockey, football or basketball leagues) but this is a very immersive, fun world and you will learn a little more and get more comfortable in it every day.