



# First Contract to Break 10 Billion in Franchise History

KT said on the 25th, "We signed a non-FA multi-year contract with pitcher Ko Young-pyo for a five-year total of 10.7 billion won guaranteed amount of 9.5 billion won, option of 1.2 billion won."

A KT official who contacted "My Daily" on the 23rd said, "We agreed on a five-year contract. However, we are coordinating the amount and details." At that time, the total contract was known to be around 10 billion won, signed at 10.7 billion won, and will be together until 2028.

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Ko Young-pyo, a graduate of Hwasun High School and Dongkuk University, started his professional career by being selected by KT as the 10th overall pick in the first round of the second round of the 2014 KBO Rookie Draft. As a founding member, Ko pitched in 231 games during his seven seasons and recorded 55 wins, 50 losses, and seven holds.

Having entered the KBO league for the first time in the 2015 season, he served as a bullpen pitcher until the 2016 season. He then settled down as a starting pitcher from the 2017 season. He posted an ERA of 5.08 with 125 strikeouts in 141  $\frac{2}{3}$  innings with 8 wins, 12 losses and 1 hold in 25 games in the 2017 season, and an ERA of 5.13 with 134 strikeouts in 6 wins, 9 losses and 142 innings in the 2018 season. After the 2018 season, he joined the military and solved his military problems as a social worker, and returned just ahead of the 2021 season.

From the 2021 season, Ko Young-pyo went beyond representing KT to become a pitcher representing the KBO League. In the 2021 season, he won his first double-digit victory with 130 strikeouts and an ERA of 2.92 with 41 walks in 26 games, 11 wins, 6 losses and 166  $\frac{2}{3}$  innings. In the 2022 season, he also recorded an ERA of 3.26 with 156 strikeouts with 39 walks in 28 games, 13 wins, 8 losses and 182  $\frac{1}{3}$  innings.

Last season, Ko Young-pyo also managed to establish a good balance in KT's starting lineup. At the beginning of the season, KT fell to the bottom of the team, suffering from a number of injuries. However, Ko Young-pyo held out and William Cuevas joined the team, and the starting rotation regained stability. In the end, KT ended the regular season in second place.

In the 2023 season, Ko Young-pyo had a record of 12 wins, seven losses, 114 strikeouts, and an ERA of 2.78 in 28 games 27 starts and 174  $\frac{2}{3}$  innings. Since then, he has pitched in Game 3 of the playoffs against the NC Dinos in the postseason, and pitched six innings of three hits, two walks, five strikeouts and no runs. Having suffered two consecutive losses, KT successfully reversed the mood thanks to Ko's good pitching, and successfully advanced to the Korean Series by winning three consecutive games. Since then, Ko has started the Korean Series twice, allowing seven runs six earned runs in one loss and 10 innings, recording 14 hits, three walks and six strikeouts.

In particular, Ko Young-pyo has a record of greed. He is a quality start QS, with three earned runs or less over six innings. As the nickname "high quality start," he achieves many QSs every season. In 25 games in the 2021 season, he recorded 21QS 84%, 10 quality start plus QS+, with three earned runs or less over seven innings, 28 games in the 2022 season 21QS 75 percent, 13QS+ 46.4 percent, and 27 starters in the 2023 season, 21QS 77.8 percent and 17QS+ 63 percent. For the first time in the history of the KBO league, Ko is a pitcher who has achieved 20QS or higher for three consecutive years.

"I think I did it 21 times for three consecutive years. And I am personally satisfied with the fact that I did more QS+ this year. I want to do more than 80 percent QS next year 2024," Ko said in December last year.

The fact that there are many QSs and QS+s means that starting pitchers are responsible for many innings without ups and downs. As such, it creates a situation where bullpen pitchers can also be saved. In the regular season, the more QSs the starters have, the easier it is to operate the bullpen.

In recognition of his value, Ko has signed a multi-year, non-FA contract for the first time in KT. "He is a big player in our team who contributes both internally and externally to baseball. He has done very well over the past three years. He was one of the best players in Korea," a KT source said on Sunday. "I had many thoughts, and I think about future value as well as salary negotiations and free agency players. Both the club and Ko positively agreed."

Ko Young-pyo is the 12th player in the KBO league to sign a multi-year non-FA contract. In December 2021, Moon Seung-won of the SSG Landers five years, 5.5 billion won and Park Jong-hoon five years, 6.5 billion won became the first non-FA multi-year contract players. Afterwards, he signed a five-year contract worth 10.7 billion won, following Han Yu-seom SSG, five years, 12 billion won, Koo Ja-wook Samsung Lions, five years, 12 billion won, Kim Kwang-hyun SSG, four years, 15.1 billion won, Park Se-woong Lotte Giants, five years, 9 billion won, Koo Chang-mo NC Dinos, six years, 12.5 billion won, Lee Won-seok Kium Heroes, 2+1 years,

1 billion won, Kim Tae-gun KIA Tigers, 3 years, 2.5 billion won, Choi Hyung-woo KIA, 1+1 year, 2.2 billion won, and Kim Sung-hyun SSG, 3 years, 600 million won.

He became the 12th non-FA multi-year contract signing and the 4th non-FA multi-year contract signing player to surpass 10 billion won approx. In terms of contract size, he ranks fourth overall, and is third only after Kim Kwang-hyun and Koo Chang-mo in terms of pitchers alone.

He also became the first player in the KT franchise history to sign a contract worth over 10 billion won approx. KT was not a team that spends a lot of money in the FA market. The biggest contract Ko Young-pyo signed before the 2018 season was a four-year contract worth a total of 8.8 billion won 4.4 billion won in down payment and 4.4 billion won in annual salary. The next biggest contract is for Yoo Han-joon six billion won for four years, Park Byung-ho three billion won for three years for the 2022 season, and Kim Sang-soo two years and 2.9 billion won for four years for the 2023 season. However, KT succeeded in signing the biggest contract in the franchise history by recognizing the value of Ko Young-pyo who will become an FA after the 2024 season.

"Ko Young-pyo is the biggest franchise star in the team. He is a player who is taking the center stage in the pitching staff. He is a role model not only for his talent but also for his juniors, so he signed a multi-year non-FA contract. I hope he will continue to play the role of ace," KT general manager Na Do-hyeon said.