After some grand-standing that delayed the announcement, another example of what bothers many about MLB is once again in full view this weekend as San Diego’s Adrian Gonzalez (with a full year left on his contract) has been traded to the Red Sox for a trio of Boston farmhands, with the two more advanced prospects figuring to spend 2011 in AA. While the haul of prospects can be analyzed and overanalyzed (because that’s what is done with prospects), hearing that Gonzalez was headed to the East Coast reminded me of this, written last June about how the Red Sox have paid handsomely in the area of draft picks for a couple of years and have been successful in flipping their bonus baby draft picks into MLB players, with whom they can then negotiate exclusively:

The practice is likely to become more commonplace as the mid-to-small-market teams begin their rebuilds with an eye on young, cost-controlled talent who may have been high draft picks with large signing boneses. When a team like Arizona is ready to tear-down, teams like the Red Sox have the most sought-after currency in MLB – young, cheap talent whose signing bonuses have already been paid to them.

Now, teams like the Red Sox truly sit in the catbird’s seat, where they can pull the players that they truly want to keep off of the table (as they did with Buchholz last year) and give other teams a list of intriguing talents (even if they’re the second-tier of Red Sox prospects) for the

team to choose from. Teams like the Indians remain beholden to the teams that have spent more money in the draft (though they do still need to pick the right players) as the only place to make up for a dry pipeline is to pick through the farm systems of teams that have young talent, but aren't necessarily harvesting that talent for their own parent club.

In case you were wondering, the three players that San Diego netted from Boston were Casey Kelly ($3M signing bonus, the 7th highest bonus in the 2008 draft despite being the 30th pick), Reymond Fuentes ($1.134M signing bonus which, to be fair, was not an overslot payment), and Anthony Rizzo ($325K signing bonus, nearly three times the bonus paid by the Indians to Bo Greenwell, who was drafted 8 slots before Rizzo), who will now go to the Padres' organization with the hopes that one (or more) of them will arrive around the 2012 season or so. Assuming any of them make it to San Diego, the Padres will hold club control over them for the requisite six years at a controlled cost.

Meanwhile, the Red Sox are likely to lock up the 28-year-old Gonzalez (the best player that most of America has never heard of…until now) with the financial ramifications of a not-yet-signed-extension already being dissected at length in Boston.

And so it goes…